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The Department of Language Education, Kathmandu University publishes the Journal of English Language Education (ELE) Praxis annually. ELE Praxis is a peer-reviewed journal focusing on the contributions of student communities. This Journal aims to contribute to the building process of English language education by providing a forum for scholarly discourse on enhancing the understanding of the impact of English language education in indigenous communities. JELE Praxis promotes sharing experiences, knowledge generation, values inculcation, and skills acquisition among individuals and institutions. We concentrate on analyzing and developing theories in localized contexts and comparative perspectives to achieve these aims. We welcome papers from scholars on English language education, particularly on classroom practices, language policies, media of instruction, and the impact of English in local indigenous communities, which brings issues from local, regional, and global contexts.   We welcome full-length research papers, opinions, reflective notes, review papers, book reviews and abstracts of students' defended dissertations.

Scholars often debate the advantages and disadvantages of English language education in South Asia. Some see it as full of opportunities for young aspirants to see and understand the high-tech world of the West. On the other hand, some argue that this system of education homogenizes Western ideology, exterminating our indigenous knowledge system, displacing our linguistic and cultural diversity and attacking the very self-identity of our age-old traditions. In such a scenario, we need a balanced approach to English language education, preserving our linguistic and cultural knowledge systems and accessing the potential for human development in the West through English. We believe such an approach enables us to save ourselves from possible conflicts of ideologies and transform ourselves into a just and peaceful society. JELE-Praxis promotes critical discourse on all these aspects to build new theoretical and practical insights. The Journal encourages theorizing local phenomena and perspectives based on empirical data. This approach enables us to interpret our realities from a novel perspective.

JELE Praxis invites scholarly papers from all authors, including research students. We expect your contributions to enrich the existing knowledge and help us understand this complex phenomenon better.

Inquiry and Comment

For any general questions and comments about the double-blind peer-review process, the Journal, or its editorial policies, we encourage you to contact us at dle@kusoed.edu.np

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Supervising Dissertations of Struggling Research Scholars: An Autoethnographic Inquiry

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Abstract

In this autoethnographic study, I explore research scholars' emotional and psychological challenges while preparing their dissertations. To gather data, I reflect on my experience supervising three M Phil in English Language Education students at a university in Nepal. These scholars faced difficulties from the initial stages of preparing their dissertation proposals to defend their dissertations and went through a range of experiences, from trauma to satisfaction. To better understand the scholars' perspectives on dissertation writing, I examined McCann and Pearlman's (1990) theory of vicarious trauma, Astin's (1999) theory of person and environment, and Bronfenbrenner's (1979) theory of ecological models of human development. The study revealed that scholars often experience depression and trauma at certain stages of dissertation writing. This study highlights the crucial role of the supervisor, not just in academic matters but also in the mental well-being of scholars. The insights contribute to the discourse on how personal characteristics and environmental factors influence an individual's academic development. It emphasizes the importance of the supervisor's role in understanding scholars' needs and interests to create a suitable research environment for struggling scholars.

Keywords: *Supervision, dissertation, struggling, scholars**, academic trauma.*

Introduction

Supervising dissertations involves both emotional and intellectual challenges. Hence, it requires a practical approach. We, supervisors, are pressed by the dilemma of the university quality control and scholars' emotional and academic challenges. As a supervisor, I always try to integrate the personal experiences of my scholars and their cultural identities and provide support through guidance and feedback in the research process.

I work at one of the teaching and research universities in Nepal. My department specializes in teaching and research in language education. I specialize in theoretical and applied linguistics, particularly in the discourses on the impact of Western ideology on the indigenous knowledge system and postcolonialism, focusing on marginalized communities, western hegemony and local varieties of English. I successfully supervised approximately 45 M Phil in English Language Education dissertations in the last ten years.

My university's M Phil program contains coursework and a dissertation. To be an M Phil graduate, a scholar must complete 24 credits and a dissertation of nine credits. It is a three-semester program to be completed in one and a half years.

However, most scholars take extra time to meet the requirements, particularly in writing the dissertation. As a university requirement, scholars prepare research proposals and defend them before the research committee, usually during the course. The scholars work under the assigned supervisors, and supervisors recommend dissertations to the research committee when they consider the documents ready for defence. After the defence, scholars work further to address the feedback from the research committee members. In this way, supervising a dissertation is a continuous process of mentoring scholars.

In this autoethnographic paper, I critically reflect on my experience supervising Master of Philosophy (M Phil) dissertations. Postcolonial theory, decolonial methodologies and indigenous knowledge systems influenced my academic scholarship and philosophy. I studied English literature and linguistics at university and taught courses on critical discourse analysis, advanced qualitative research, contemporary thoughts, and World Englishes. Reading and continuous discussions with my students in these areas enabled me to understand the Western hegemony on marginalized communities' educational and cultural spaces in South Asia. I advocate the agency of indigenous communities in my writing and formal and informal discussions. I believe the agency provides these communities with their voice of conscious subjecthood through my research scholars' intellectual and reflective capabilities. In the meantime, such intellectual capabilities inspire scholars to interpret their world and construct meaning in order to make their voices heard forever in a more expansive academic space.

To explore and reflect on my experience as a dissertation supervisor for M Phil in English Language Education (ELE), I follow the research method of autoethnography. Autoethnography as a research method involves self-reflection and narratives to analyze personal experiences in the author's cultural context. On the other hand, it combines ethnography and biography with a focus on self-analysis. In this paper, I use my experience to understand the relationship between the supervisor and scholars and their academic achievements. My experiential anecdotes connect the supervisor's self with the social context of my research area (Ngujiri et al., 2010), i.e., the M Phil in ELE communities. Like a typical autoethnographic study, I use my personal experience to explore my social and professional context (Ellis & Bochner, 2000; Mendez, 2013). I believe this autoethnographic study provides the Nepali scholarly community with a unique perspective on dissertation supervision through self-reflection and analysis in supporting scholars' academic and professional growth.

The concept of student involvement in higher education received ample discussion from theoretical perspectives, particularly in writing a dissertation. For this paper, I looked into the issue from two theoretical frames— the vicarious trauma theory (McCann & Pearlman, 1990) and the person-environment theory (Astin,1999; Bronfenbrenner, 1993). McCann and Pearlman (1990) argue that exposure to traumatic events impacts an individual's academic achievements. Individuals often experience these traumatic events, fearing rejection

by the research committee members. Repeated exposure to such events affects the scholar's mental well-being and leads them to hopelessness and depression, causing anxiety. In this paper, I explore the emotional well-being of scholars and the role of a supervisor in creating a supportive environment for their successful completion of dissertations.

The theoretical frame of person-environment (PE, hereafter) emphasizes the interdependence between individuals and their environment (Astin, 1999). Astin argues that the environment in which individuals exist, not their innate characteristics, shapes their behaviour and development, including academics. In other words, the environment shapes individuals' behaviours and characteristics. Based on Astin's argument, I recognize that the environment at the university, the research community and the supervision process contribute to completing writing dissertations. Bronfenbrenner (1979) proposes ecological systems theory, and I consider it an extension of PE theory. I argue that not only the immediate environment of a scholar but several other systems influence their academic environments. These systems could be micro-, meso-, exo- and macrosystems. According to Bronfenbrenner, a microsystem is a scholar's immediate environment; different microsystems interact in the mesosystem. The exosystem does not directly interact with the individual's choice but influences their development. The scholar's cultural and belief systems form the macro system. This theory enables me to recognize that these different sub-systems influence the scholar-supervisor relationship, affecting the supervision process based on the university's ideology, research community and cultural values of the scholar's immediate environment.

Emotional and Psychological Aspects

I critically reflect on the emotional and psychological aspects my scholars undergo while preparing their dissertations. One of my most moving experiences as a supervisor was working with Nani, an M Phil scholar in English Language Education. Nani came from an indigenous community in the Kathmandu Valley, and her educational background was in literature, not education.

One evening, when I was preparing to sleep at about half past ten at night, my mobile phone beeped up, and a low voice came 'sir' from the other side and remained silent for the next thirty seconds. I said 'yes' and expected the caller would continue the conversation. However, the prolonged silence irritated me, and I asked what I could do. A girl in a depressed voice said, 'I would give up writing the dissertation'. Now I know the caller was Nani, who defended her dissertation proposal that day, and the Department head assigned me to supervise her. 'Why do you want to give up? ' I asked. After a few seconds of silence, she said, 'I think I am not made for things like all these things. I feel as if I were empty and knew nothing. ' 'How can that be? ' I asked her not to panic and to see me in the office whenever she felt free. I also asked her to sleep well. Then I bade her good night.

Nani's experience was traumatic when she defended her dissertation proposal. I sensed a feeling of humiliation and failure in Nani's conversation. All these feelings of inadequacy are common reactions to traumatic events. McCann and Pearlman's (1990) vicarious trauma theory provides a framework for understanding Nani's experience. This theory argues that an individual traumatic experience leads her to a new cognitive, emotional and physical functioning. The person internalizes these shifts, leading to symptoms like post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Coming again to the case of Nani, she experienced emotional stress because of a traumatic experience while defending her dissertation proposal. The emotional distress caused her feelings of humiliation and a lack of response to the comments from the research

committee members. The comments triggered these emotional reactions, causing her to give up the idea of writing the dissertation.

Such emotional reactions are frequent among research scholars. Regular meetings with the supervisor and counselling sessions can prevent the scholars from having a severe traumatic experience. These meetings and counselling sessions will mitigate the impact of trauma when she gets adequate support and guidance. In this way, I understood that the supervisor provides academic guidance and emotional support to scholars. In this case, Nani's exposure to the trauma profoundly impacted her academic journey, especially her emotional and psychological well-being (Shaw, 2020).

Unlike Nani's case, the case of Shanta was different. I knew Shanta had some issues with coherence when writing academic texts. He was good at reading volumes of books and articles but found it challenging to filter out what was relevant and not in a particular context. We worked hard, and I could not see any further improvement in his writing. I had two options with Shanta. First, I could ask him to give up the idea of getting a degree. Second, recommend the dissertation and face the research committee. I opted for the second. I could not go for the first. I realized he learnt a lot of things and read a lot, though he failed to create coherence in academic writing; despite my guidance, he could not do it independently. I took his dissertation to the research committee. The research committee decided the dissertation needed improvement, and the candidate had to defend it again. He was a bit frustrated because he thought he did it well. It took about three months to convince his shortcomings in the dissertation, and finally, he agreed to defend it again. He defended and graduated. Now, he works in a reputed institution.

The case of Shanta is representative of the challenges that scholars face while writing dissertations. Shanta found it difficult to filter out relevant information from his experience and reading and use it appropriately to create coherence in his writing. He struggled to do it independently. I recommended his dissertation for the defence so that I could protect his self-esteem and he could maintain his academic aspirations. As informed by vicarious trauma theory (McCann & Pearlman, 1990), I understood that working with struggling students causes additional emotional stress. The ecological system theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1993) and Astin's (1999) theory of person-environment theory informed me that Shanta's extensive reading enabled him to understand his issues. Shanta's case was representative of average Nepali students. We all come from the oral tradition. Therefore, seeking coherence in academic writing is alien to someone like Shanta, who hailed from a remote village in eastern Nepal. Shanta's generation was the first to read and write in his community.

Reflecting on these socio-cultural aspects of our society, I understood I should not overlook his academic achievement in the dissertation writing process. My decision to recommend his dissertation for defence created an environment to achieve his academic goals, though it meant additional work for both of us. I realized the university's academic environment and the research committee's guidance allowed struggling students to face academic writing challenges. As a supervisor, I realized exemplary efforts and timely advice helped the student achieve positive outcomes, though the path to success was not straightforward.

Personal and Environmental Aspects in Writing Dissertation

Personal and environmental aspects influence the quality of academic writing, like a dissertation for a university degree. In this section, I explore the story of Narul, whose dissertation I supervised. He struggled with academic writing because he never studied the course of academic writing in his school and college education. I examine how understanding

scholars' personal and environmental factors enables the supervisor to design appropriate learning environments based on their needs and preferences.

Narul came from a remote district of eastern Nepal. In his district, he went to one of the government schools that never focused on academic writing. When he joined as an M Phil scholar in English Language Education, he felt empty with any academic writing. He told me to guide him in preparing his dissertation proposal that he had to defend before the research committee.

The anecdote tells how an individual's experience and environment can impact academic performance. In this case, Narul's schooling in a remote government school did not provide him with the necessary academic skills for academic writing, particularly in the context of a higher university degree. Astin's (1999) person-environment theory informs us that an individual's experiences and environment can significantly impact his/her academic performance and readiness for certain tasks. In Narul's case, several factors contributed to his academic performance. His school and college curricula did not prioritize academic writing, a prerequisite for a higher university degree. Lack of exposure to academic writing in his school and college environment could have resulted in not valuing this skill. However, the change in environment, i.e., from a remote village school to a highly-resourced university environment, provides him with opportunities for learning new skills and professional growth. The new environment at the university provided him with the opportunity to interact with faculty members and peers and positively improved his writing. Individuals' backgrounds shape their values, interests, and attitudes, influencing their motivation to learn and succeed in different areas. Astin (1999) suggests that educators need to be aware of these factors and design learning environments appropriate for individual learners' needs and preferences.

Narul was interested in learning English through technology. Based on his interest, I decided to work on how teenagers exploit smartphones when learning English. Then, he started working on the concept. I asked him to talk to students about using smartphones to learn English.

This anecdote highlights the importance of understanding and aligning a student's interest with the research area. Aligning the student's interest with his research engages the researcher in the research process. After a series of meetings with him, I recognized his area of interest; I suggested he should work on learning English with technology. This suggestion triggered his interest, and he immediately accepted. I asked him to read some literature in the area so that we could be specific. This approach improved his engagement and motivation towards his research. Astin (1999) argued that students' involvement in academic activities and their sense of belongingness to the academic community are fundamental to their academic performance.

Following Bronfenbrenner (1993), I argue that Narul's professors and peers formed his microsystem. He interacted with several professors, his class peers, and other university research scholars. This was his mesosystem. Despite the academic discourse he created with his reading and interactions at the university, Narul had the cultural and social values that remained with him. These values formed his macro system. These theories enabled me to understand that supervisors can facilitate struggling students by creating an environment that fosters a research environment, creating an exosystem and aligning their research to their interests.

I asked Narul to write a chapter on the historical development of the use of technology in Nepali education. I wanted him to get acquainted with the relevant literature.

He wrote a few pages, but that was not enough to include a chapter in his dissertation. However, that gave him an idea of how scholars write academically. Our several meetings convinced me that he was a good storyteller and better at making stories from others. So, I asked him to use narrative inquiry as his research method and read the literature. He brought interesting stories from teenagers about how they brought smartphones to classrooms, though they were prohibited.

The personal characteristics of Narul, for example, are his storytelling abilities, which interface with the environment, i.e., writing about the use of technology in Nepali education. This interface shaped his learning and academic development. As a supervisor, I realized that he was good at telling stories; I exploited his ability to create narratives of his research participants. Since Narul was writing a dissertation for an academic degree, he had to show that he thoroughly understood his research area.

Narrative inquiry as a research method enabled Narul to explore the stories of his teenage research participants who brought smartphones to classrooms despite the prohibition. Narul's use of narrative inquiry for his dissertation illustrates the importance of understanding the impact of his ability on his academic development. I also consider the prohibition of smartphones in classrooms to be an environmental factor that influences his research participants' behaviour. The students and school authorities perceived the use of smartphones in classrooms differently. Narul further explored the teenagers' positive attitudes to technology in the classroom environment. Informed by Astin's (1999) theory of person-environment, I argue that Narul's narrative inquiry enabled him to understand better the environmental impact on his participants' learning behaviour.

Narul again struggled in the stage of data interpretation and discussion. I asked him to take a month's leave from his school and stay with me at my home. We cooked together and discussed his dissertation over dinner and tea time. He learned that interpretation refers to converting the raw data into the jargon of the research area. After interpretation, a researcher discusses how he created new knowledge substantiating his claims from the relevant literature.

Brofenbrunner (1993) provides a framework for understanding how the interaction between various environmental systems influences an individual's development. Narul's struggle with data interpretation and discussion of his interpretation from the theoretical perspective of the digital divide links to the ecological system theory proposed by Bronfenbrenner. At the microsystem level, Narul struggles with his dissertation and takes a month's leave from his school. At his mesosystem level, Narul interacts with his supervisor, other professors and peers at the university. These series of interactions enabled him to conceptualize and develop the dissertation. Taking him home and providing direct support and guidance gave Narul a new perspective to reflect on his dissertation writing. The macrosystem is the third system in Bronfenbrenner's (1993) ecological model of human development. I interpret Narul's struggle with data interpretation and developing themes related to his socio-cultural norms since he was never exposed to academic writing before, i.e., in his school and college education (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

During the research process, he extensively read the theory of the digital divide, mainly concentrating on the writings of van Dijk (van Dijk, 2005). He talked to his teenage research participants and their teachers and realized he was perceptually wrong about using smartphones in classrooms. Narul, a school leader, previously believed that using smartphones spoils children. One day, he confessed that children use smartphones for creative works, solving physics and maths problems, though some use them to watch pornographic materials. However, he concluded that their interests did not last in such materials, and they

concentrated on their studies. He experimented at his school by allowing smartphones in his classroom, and he reported his children enjoyed learning English with smartphones. These days, he is teaching his students how to exploit the learners' creativity with a chatbot like ChatGPT.

Narul's experiences working with me shaped his beliefs and perceptions of using smartphones in classrooms. Individuals' behaviour and development are the product of the interaction between their characteristics and environment (Astin, 1999). My supervision, reading about the digital divide and interacting with his teenage research participants influenced Narul's perception of using smartphones in classrooms. Before writing the dissertation, Narul perceived that smartphones spoil children, as many parents and teachers do in South Asia. This perception was the product of his experience and socio-cultural beliefs. However, his continuous interaction with his research participants, the part of his environment, and reading van Dijk's theory enabled him to challenge his assumed beliefs. Instead of banning smartphones in classrooms, Narul experimented with using them in classrooms, and it was quite a different experience. This experience enabled him to develop new teaching strategies to harness students' creativity.

Conclusion

For this paper, a critical reflection on my experience supervising three of my scholars reveals that research scholars face emotional and psychological challenges while preparing their dissertations. Regular meetings with the supervisor to sort out the issues serve as counselling sessions for the research scholars as these meetings provide them with emotional support. The cases of Nani and Shanta demonstrate that academic writing challenges lead to emotional distress and traumatic experiences. Different factors could trigger these challenges, but the most common is underscoring their work by the research committee members.

The story of Narul illustrates that personal and environmental factors significantly affect academic performance. I discuss these findings using Astin's person-environment theory and Bronfenbrenner's ecological system theory. By aligning students' interests with the research area, creating a conducive research environment, and addressing the impact of the environment on students' behaviour and development, supervisors and educators can facilitate students' engagement, motivation, and academic performance. Ultimately, the article concludes that with the right efforts and timely guidance, students can overcome academic writing challenges and achieve positive outcomes, even though the path to success may not always be straightforward.

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Integration of Social Networking Sites in the English Classroom: My Signature Pedagogy

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Abstract

This paper is based on an English teacher's reflection; she shares her experience of using Social Networking Sites (SNS) to improve English writing skills in limitedly resourced secondary-level classrooms in Nepal. The narratives were revisited and reviewed based on the conversation history of SNS groups to see the learning dynamism, and they were subsequently analyzed and interpreted under themes and subthemes. The paper shares the major takeaways of the reflection.

Keywords: *Signature pedagogy, social, networking English, classroom.*

Introduction

Since I admire integrated teaching and learning, I have long advocated the integration of technology and technology-based deeper learning skills. My passion became much stronger when COVID-19 brought massive school closures across the world, and billions of children remained out of the classroom globally. A dramatic shift in the concept and engineering of education and the distinctive rise of e-learning appeared in the picture, whereby teaching was to be undertaken remotely and on digital platforms (Suri, 2021). It was not easy to make the shift from physical school to online in Nepal with very limited human resources as there was a big question mark on students' accessibility to ICT tools and technology (Giri & Dawadi, 2020; Suri, 2022). My school chose to use the ZOOM platform for live classes and WhatsApp/Messenger as another digital platform that we consider common among parents to disseminate news and notice instantly. The real journey of integrating Social Networking Sites (SNS) in teaching-learning started at this point; I was curious about adopting new approaches but was overwhelmed at the same time.

In the beginning, accessibility was a major agenda, but later, engagement appeared to be a real and serious concern for all subject teachers, including English teachers. Soon, I realized that the journey through fancy or tailored learning management tools could not take us to our targets unless we engaged students via the most familiar SNS tools like Messenger and WhatsApp (Anderson, 2007; Bansal, 2014). Even though many teachers and students spend a greater part of their time on social media platforms for entertainment or news updates, they are not familiar with the pedagogical uses of social networking sites (Global

Mobile Statistics, n.d.). In the meantime, I found that most secondary-level students in my school were tech-savvy, self-expressive, and open to new ways of doing things, including using social network applications. That was the silver lining at the edge of learning achievement chaos.

Personally, I love innovative pedagogy, and I keep taking risks and trying new interventions each day. After the rise of virtual learning, technology integration has become a part of my daily lesson plan. Moreover, I have followed up on the posts, webinars, and research reports of inspiring scholars in the field of technology-integrated language learning. According to Palalas and Hoven (2013) and Kukulska et al. (2015), the integration of mobile apps into teaching-learning applications has been widely explored, and most of the results show that Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) applications are getting higher mileage because they are quite handy. In this scenario, this paper portrays how I integrated SNS into English language classes, particularly the use of WhatsApp and Messenger in writing activities of secondary-level English classes.

Methodology

This paper is based on my reflection on collecting data, revising the classroom artefacts, and linking them with learning theories for new insights. In recent years, reflection has been a crucial cognitive practice in research, largely practised in qualitative research (Karin et al., 2002). As my class has been participating in the online discussion on WhatsApp-messenger, I observed and revisited the conversation threads and included the conversation initiated by the teacher along with students' responses/reactions in the loop. Scholars have also claimed that the reflective researcher does not merely report the findings of the research but, at the same time, questions and explains how those findings are constructed as an active observer (Steier, 1995; Guillemin Gillam, 2004). Following the same philosophy, based on the analysis of the entries on WhatsApp and Messenger groups, I posed specific questions to myself during this reflective write-up so that my view and experience with SNS integration could be ascertained. In this paper, I answer the question:

As an English teacher, what is my experience with using WhatsApp and Messenger to support secondary-level students in writing?

The collected information through reflections were discussed under the themes and sub-themes that emerged via a systematic, comprehensive examination of the data.

Dynamics of SNS Groups in the Teaching-learning Process

I used WhatsApp to assign offline tasks, submit tasks to the students, and initially provide feedback on the submitted tasks. Even though it was a single inbox for all subjects, there was excitement and enthusiasm for the first few months. It seemed like everyone was amazed that SNS could be used for a full-fledged academic programme; seeing the whole school shriek at that circular-coloured app was so astonishing. Gradually, I found it was a complicated tool to manage as there was a single door to enter for all the subjects and there was a lot of hassle in scrolling ups and downs for a single search. Finally, I created a parallel Messenger group for each subject I used to teach: English and Social Studies, for which I gave a special name, 'Englisocial Group-9' and 'Englisocial Group-10'. A thorough revisit to the SNS groups, vigilant analysis of the loop of entries and the responses by the teachers and students helped me sketch the multiple dimensions of the usage of SNS and its potentiality to be used as a platform to practise English writing skills for secondary level students of a low resourced classroom.

Building Blocks and Gradual Release of Responsibility

The theme, 'Building blocks and gradual release of responsibility,' is subdivided into two sub-themes: students' participation and affordance. I noticed that students' attainment with virtual entries in the 'Englisocial Group' for English writing tasks had different levels. Some students were excelling in all aspects of the target, but some were giving unproductively ample amounts of time to online-based learning as they struggled either with the gadgets, power supply, and internet connection or walked miles to get to the place with an internet connection. There are only one or two students who have rarely attempted. It, thus, proves that affordance incorporates two areas in general: the physical (features of Apps) or ease to use and the socio-economical or psychological state (Shrestha, 2016; CEHRD, 2020;). The students' irregularities, connection issues, low proficiency in writing, and the limited time allocated for teaching English could not push me back from my goals; rather, I shifted my classroom strategies with new interventions.

I set a tiny step at a time; first, I recognized a few tech-savvy students and delegated them the roles of task editor, co-editor, and time tracker on a rotational basis. In the beginning, editors always asked me for support; they wanted a readymade solution from me. I empowered them with a brief group call on Messenger each day, but later, they started resolving the problem independently and came to me for final approval only. The best part of that process was that they practically learned the culture of feedback; they showed maturity in providing and receiving feedback. The next step was the mentorship scheme. In that process, mentor and mentee groups were formed on a rotational basis so that more students could get the opportunity to grow with the learning of responsibility and approval.

Curriculum Integration and Connection to the Face- to- face Classroom Activities

My teaching principles were based on an interactive and democratic classroom; the SNSs, such as WhatsApp and Messenger, could more potentially capture language outside the classroom. Moreover, students could analyze their language production and learning needs, construct artefacts, and share them with others. Most importantly, they could provide evidence of progress gathered across various settings and in various media. I used SNS according to the demands of the students and the nature of the lesson we were dealing with. The purpose was obvious: monitoring, correcting/re-correcting, and providing feedback. How we connected the classroom activities to SNS fully depended on the content and the context. The best part, above all, was that the SNS groups allowed me to provide feedback without worrying about the time limitation of the classroom (40 or 45 minutes), which served my teaching principles for a democratic and interactive classroom.

I created a separate WhatsApp- Messenger group, 'Englacial' to improve students' writing skills. I believed all students were in the exciting realm of the Social Studies class while focusing on active learning and offering practical strategies for effectively integrating the English language skills into the Social Studies curriculum. Every evening after school, I introduced an issue related to the ongoing topic of Social Studies, and the students initiated the discussion, which I probed further, eliciting and encouraging them to be more logical or justifiable in that process. That process promoted inquiry-based learning and critical thinking on the part of the students. In the meantime, they practised writing spontaneous and meaningful texts in English. I often chose topics of global concern from the Social Studies curriculum to integrate them with English lessons, especially geography, such as natural disasters or historical topics like World Wars, civilizations, and international relationships. I motivated the students to develop their writing skills in English by sharing the evaluation rubrics. My criteria of evaluation were new to the students with respect to the content, organization of the thesis statement and supporting details, fluency in the ideas, accuracy and punctuation, logical coherence, use of personal and public experiences, and issue-based real

anecdotes. As a class, we decided on a way to provide feedback each time with a new technique: sometimes, it was written-narrative or symbolic feedback, as well as verbal, individual, and whole class feedback. Normally, our feedback depended on the situation the piece of writing had created.

Summary and Major Takeaway

The paper highlighted an English teacher's perspective on the value and mechanism of using SNS in her classrooms and offered an ecologically valid perspective on incorporating social networking sites such as WhatsApp and Messenger. It exemplified how an English teacher took advantage of the SNS affordance to connect the inside and outside of the class to create more language use opportunities. The given takeaway is supported by previous literature and invalidates the claims of those who still refuse to adapt to the rapid technological advancements in the teaching-learning process. Further, it implies that teachers would soon find themselves to be anachronistic if they did not accept the need for digital literacy in teaching-learning. The points below present the major takeaway of the study:

1. Social media platforms can be integrated into a learning management system (LMS) because an integrated system allows for longer-term learning impacts and higher student engagement (Warschauer,2018).

2. As an English language teacher, one can use WhatsApp for one-on-one exchange of texts to address individual students' expectations and support their writing needs, discuss course contents, and update assignments.

3. Students can contact their course instructors via WhatsApp and Messenger regardless of time, physical distance, or office working hours, which can reduce delays in the feedback on the writing draft (Belal,2014).

4. SNS-based communication groups can enrich the learning experience and make it relatively easy for teachers to contact the learners at their convenience (Son, 2016).

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Struggles of Women Teachers: A Narrative Inquiry

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Abstract

Women teachers struggle to fit into their family responsibilities and the workplace; often, they cannot perform well while trying to balance both. Against this backdrop, this study aims to explore the experiences of women teachers to understand their professional struggles in their workplace. It is a qualitative study, where I purposively selected four women teachers from Far-West (Kailali) as my research participants. They teach in private and public schools. I interviewed them to collect the information required for this study. Simultaneously, I recorded and transcribed the data, then coded, categorized, and thematized them as patterns emerged. The study indicates the gender discrimination in the workplace and home of women teachers and the difficulty for them to balance their work life and responsibilities at home. The findings reveal that most women teachers have left their jobs to look after their families and children, and after a few years of gap, they struggle to find a job. A flexible policy can help women teachers sustain themselves in teaching jobs.

Keywords: *Far-west, women teachers, professional struggle, motherhood, inequality*

Introduction

Even though women teachers seem to be hardworking, they struggle for their professional growth, unlike their male counterparts. They have different kinds of struggles in their professional lives. Most women teachers face common problems in sustaining themselves in the profession. In my personal experience, I felt the same and found many women teachers sacrificing their professional careers for their children and in the name of the responsibilities of the family. Comparatively, male teachers have fewer responsibilities at home as we have defined gender roles in our society. Hence, the study about the women English language teachers' profession and their struggles in getting into the career and eventually balancing their work lives and other household responsibilities seem highly significant. Demarse (2005) argues that the narratives of women about balancing their home

and work responsibilities are often challenging, and their home responsibilities hinder their professional development. However, Bhatta (2023, 2024) explores the stories of women English language teachers, narrates the struggles of women teachers in learning English, and even explains how English language proficiency helped them be empowered.

Similarly, according to Ruohotie-Lyhty (2013), in the first year of the teachers' life, a career is a comprehensively advised area; the aspects which assist in accepting a struggle instead of satisfaction so that a particular person engages in teaching create his/her career distinctiveness are yet less considered. Women teachers have their professional work as an additional job. Very few institutions have a record of their professions. However, even the well-established institutions working for the well-being of the teachers do not record women teachers' work at the school and university levels (Khadka, 2020). In the Nepali context, women teachers have a family and working life to be taken care of together, which educational institutions often ignore. These institutions should keep a record of each working woman so they can have some plans to sustain the women teacher's profession.

Employed women face challenges like assimilating and establishing stability. However, several complications arise while acting in their different roles, which coincidently puts them under a tremendous burden. This study discovers the experiences of female teachers in their professional struggles in the context of Far-west (Kailali) Nepal. Bista (2004) highlights that several women are eligible for teaching. However, family members are unwilling to allow them to join schools and communities as their career choices, and school principals also prefer male teachers, following the notion that males should run schools. These tell us that women struggle to advance in this traditional, male-dominated society. Women teachers in the male-dominated community lack support from families despite their academic qualifications. They suffer due to this orthodox view of the family and society. In this regard, Dunifon and Gill (2013) argue that women teachers are burdened with the heavy dual responsibilities of home and work. Teaching and homemaking are both works of great responsibility, and women are expected to work flawlessly in both areas, such as superhumans.

In the context of Nepal, many studies are conducted on the struggle of teachers for their development and identity construction (Neupane, 2023, 2024; Neupane & Bhatt, 2023; Neupane et al., 2022), teachers' wellbeing (Bhatt, 2022, 2023), and role of school culture on teachers' professional development (Bhatt & Kapar, 2024) among others; however, paucity of studies exclusively highlighting the struggles of women is evident. Even policy research indicates the least investment in teacher professional development in Nepal (Neupane & Joshi, 2022). However, teachers have developed professionally through self-directed efforts (Bhatt, 2021). At this pretext, this study aims to explore the experiences of women teachers concerning their struggle for their growth in the context of Far-west (Kailali), Nepal. The issue has its roots in my experiences of witnessing the Far-west as, often notoriously known for gender discrimination in society; for example, the *chaupadi* system and prioritizing men in the general scenario. The *chaupadi* is a practice of isolating women during their menstruation cycle because the menstruation blood is considered impure. This practice is strictly observed in the Far-west region of Nepal. In this research, I explore women teachers' experiences to understand social inequality in terms of gender biasedness.

Methodology

I worked under the interpretivism paradigm for this qualitative research. I purposively selected the research participants who have worked in public and private institutions for over five years. I interviewed four women teachers working in the Far-west of the Kailali district for the information for this study. I adopted the empowerment theory as it gives power to the

powerless and helps to gain social, economic, and political power. I interviewed my research participants face to face and via Zoom to collect the data. I recorded the interviews with the participants with their consent. However, I promised them that I would not reveal their identity or the institution's name to maintain the ethics of my study. The research site was the Kailali district of the Far-west province.

Balancing Professional/Personal Life Challenges to Sustain in the Profession

Most married women face difficulties in their day-to-day life in the Nepali context. Men are 'breadwinners' and women 'homemakers,' creating more trouble for working women than men in Nepal (Subedi, 2010). A woman is supposed to look after the household chores, family, and children. Working women are supposed to be in a better position. However, 'nurturing' or 'caregiving' roles are still measured as womanly, which becomes a challenging task for women to accomplish household and workplace responsibilities. Women cannot abandon their domestic duties due to the customary social perceptions toward them. As a consequence, women's professional lives get shorter. Fenstermarker and West (2002) state that gender emerges not as an individual quality but as something that is accomplished in interaction with others. Clark argues that workers' struggles for their professional and personal lives reflect their struggle for survival in professional competition. (cited in Raya & Delina, 2013). Women need to dedicate extra time and effort to their personal and societal roles and deficiencies to provide more involvement in their professional roles. Women with children work at lower-level positions, and educational organizations demand advanced modes of instruction, leading to youngsters being the institutions' preferences (Fox, 1991; Perna, 2001).

Women teachers face difficulties in sustaining their profession due to the dual responsibilities of home and workplace. In the Far-west context, the struggles of women teachers in the Kailali district suppress them in their commitments. Women are supposed to work more hours at home based on the gender roles directed by the socio-cultural practices of our society. If women wish to be job holders, they also do not enjoy any help at home. They have to manage time to complete dual responsibilities, forcing the females to leave their jobs and care for their family responsibilities and kids. The same is true for women teachers in the private and public sectors.

Jyotika's anecdote describes her experiences of balancing her professional and family responsibilities, mainly when she was pregnant and had children.

> *… she was strong before marriage and could also make a solid professional presence. The family trusted her. However, things began to change after the wedding. She felt pressured to get home on time, and her family members began to question if she was late. She described it as threatening her professional life because she could not balance her professional and family responsibilities.*

Ultimately, she resigned from the school principal position because she had to prioritize her family's well-being, particularly her children. She returned to the same school after her second child. I connected the struggle of Jyotika with the theory of professional and personal conflict (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). This notion recommends that balancing professional and family responsibilities is challenging for women with children. In the case of Jyotika, she prioritized her family responsibilities over her professional ones, as evidenced by her resignation during her second pregnancy and rather join a nearby school to be able to manage her family responsibilities. Similarly, Binu narrates the story of her professional career struggle before and after marriage. She succeeded in gaining professional stability in a government school before marriage. However, she had to leave the job after marriage for a

few years. She had to sacrifice her career for her family. Now, she has struggled for her professional stability in the new place. She is hopeless about starting to teach at the grassroots level. English will provide her with new opportunities, as Sen (2002a, pp. 583–658; 2004a, pp. 336–337) addresses the capability approach that has been noted to address the opportunity dimension of freedom and justice but not the procedural dimension.

Furthermore, Binu states that she gradually did well in teaching but could not manage her family responsibilities and professional duties together. In this context, Moscovitch and Drover (1981) take empowerment as a process to access power. Being empowered means being powerful. Binu was able to struggle in a new place, as she was confident that English would not let her down. The scuffle of professional and personal stability is demarcated as a worker's view that several fields of individual time, household maintenance, and effort are sustained and combined by a least of role struggle (Clark, 2000; Anderson & Yeandle, 2005).

The story of Binu also represents the hardships women faced in managing their personal and professional lives. She narrated that *she had to leave a secure job for her family and children.* Women in Nepal have shared instances of facing gender discrimination through disparities such as insecure employment, lower wages compared to men, lack of respect, and inadequate or absent benefits (Kunwar et al., 2014).

Another participant, Basanti's narrative, describes her experiences of shifting to a new place and starting from the beginning for a professional career. She narrates:

> *...she was teaching at a lower-secondary level before marriage, and after marriage, she shifted to a new place; starting grade teaching was challenging. She felt she was good at multitasking as she could do all the household chores on time and go to a job. She has to wake up early for her household responsibilities. She said that she would already be tired before going to school with her mind full of household affairs.*

I felt that Basanti's work pressure aligns with the study by Rout, Lewis, and Kagan (1999). They found that females in India experienced significant stress at sunrise to go for work and, when they return after work, to do all the critical work aimed at the household.

From the story of Basanti, I assumed that women teachers have to struggle alone for their professional careers while devoting their time to family and children, too. Dual duties always cause trouble in the working environment. Freedom of mind in the workplace makes the work best done. Nevertheless, despite her struggles, she was an independent lady with the courage to establish herself professionally. Here, the characteristics of the capability approach match with the reality of Basanti as the capability approach emphasizes what individuals are successfully capable of doing and being: that is, on their proficiencies (Robeyns, 2005). The welfare of the individual, integrity and progress are theorized about the public's competencies to purpose: their actual prospects to start the events they want to be involved in and be who they need to be. These actualities and activities, for example, working systematically, make life appreciative. As Wallerstein (1992) states, empowerment is a primary element of society that encourages people to liberate and create social justice.

Likewise, Basu, currently working in a public school, shares her story of having all her responsibilities at home as well as at work. Her husband went to his duties and did not share their child's responsibilities. Moreover, walking a long distance up the hills carrying the child on her back was very painful. She did not get leave for 45 days during her second pregnancy, and the school deducted her salary during her maternity leave.

> *...she continued teaching with the tiny baby on her back and the other baby in her hand, and all the necessities in one bag sometimes; while going to school, she used to*

feel like a tourist. There was no proper room to breastfeed her child in the school either.

I connect Basu's struggle with critical theory (Tyson, 2006). The experiences of Basu provoke traditional gender roles prevalent in our society. The traditional gender roles make men perform as rational, substantial, defending, and significant. They cast women as sensitive (unreasonable), weak, nurturing, and passive (Tyson, 2006). These traditional roles have created a considerable gap between male and female workers. As Basu's husband concentrated more on his work, Basu worked harder, taking care of the house, rearing the child, and working as a professional at the same time.

In common, both men and women, as professionals, need to have a stable professional and personal life. The challenges for females are more significant than for males. Women get pregnant and go through childbirth. They have to meet the family expectations and struggle to overcome continuous family and social inequality, unlike men, the "second shift" over the care of children and the household (Drago & Williams, 2000 as cited in Ward & Wolf-Welll, 2004). The stories above reflect the women teachers' struggle with dual roles. With these stories, it seems that women teachers prioritize their families over their profession. In the work of Sen and Nussbaum, both consider communal customs and conducts that form female preferences and affect their aims and active selections (Sen, 1990a; Nussbaum, 2000). Sen further argued that the policies should focus on the ability of the person to maintain the excellence of their life, even eliminating the difficulties so they can value freedom.

Impact of Gender Inequality at the Workplace and Home

There is discrimination between men and women in our society. The patriarchal social system and values create discrimination among men and women regarding their roles. Nepali culture has defined roles for boys and girls differently. Males are apparently the providers and have a special place in the family, while women are the caretakers and homemakers. Nepali society prioritizes masculine values that empower men and make women inferior.

Primarily through family and recognized institutional structures, in most cases, gender inequality jerks. Most women are dominated in the labour market as women lack stability between professional and personal life, which seems to be the obligation of women in most nations (Örtenblad et al., 2017). Women sometimes work with minimum pay to provide for the family. In Nepal, more than half of the population are women. However, they face discrimination directly or indirectly in different stages of life at home and in the workplace. As stated in the Nepal labour force survey, the ratio of working women is 45.7 per cent, amongst which only 10 per cent get paid for their work, and the rest of the women are unpaid family workers engaged in farming with little knowledge of technology and basic farming training (NLFS, 2017). Some women work at home, while others who work professionally get no payment for their work. Due to the socio-cultural tradition, most women suffer. The following anecdote from Jyotika illustrates:

During the sports outing, the administrator focuses more on the male teachers, as this is also part of educational activities. She felt she was not asked about participating in some training sessions. The senior teachers would say that she would have difficulty travelling, so they appointed a male. Even when she was appointed, the school principal and some teachers said they could not work under her, probably due to her gender.

These gender roles discriminate against women, effectively explaining the variations occurring nowadays. Despite all these variations, Jyotika knows her potential, as Whitmore

(1988) discusses on the common assumption of empowerment: understanding one's needs better than others. I understood empowerment is an ongoing process where individual awareness and knowledge play a vital role in understanding distinct requirements well than anyone else; consequently, one becomes powerful, realizing self.

Basu shared that her husband went to work, and she had to look after the house and children and do her job. She remembered once she was selected to go for scout training. However, male teachers were preferred while sending to the same". Here, empowerment theory talks about providing economic, social, and political power to the powerless so they can decide for themselves. Basu also decided about herself.

Binu narrated her story: *"Women teachers get fewer opportunities than men teachers. In the name of being women, opportunities are not given".* There should be justice in society to empower women. According to the United Nations (2014), strong economies, justice in communities, achieving the goal of development, and improving quality of life are central principles of empowerment.

Basanti shared her experiences of facing issues in decision-making; the school committee members ignored listening to female teachers and decided to consider the opinions of the male teachers only. The school coordinator was also only men. She worked harder comparatively than the male teachers, but she was not trusted. They overlooked her. Here, Basanti may have found some differences. To get empowered, one needs to experience some struggle to tackle the situation. The Cornell Empowerment Group (1989) states power as the capability of some individuals and administrations to produce unpredictable and predictable effects on others. Gender discrimination and biased behaviour happen in such a way as to bind, change, and repeatedly prohibit females' right to labour, travel, tie a not, dissociate, and involve in socio-cultural, financial, and administrative actions (Gupta et al., 2021).

Similarly, Sen (1995, p. 268; 2004a, p. 337) states that the competency methodology agrees on an evaluative universe which does not amount to a concept of integrity. Furthermore, Sen is concerned that integrity should encompass aggregate and distributive considerations, a feature lacking in the capability approach. Additionally, a theory of justice necessitates practical elements like the principle of non-discrimination, which the capability approach does not encompass.

All the participants have encountered some inequality in their workplaces and homes. Male teachers, whoever was there, got selected in their place. The prevalent trend cannot achieve the targeted goal if they do not feel equality in the workplace. According to a report in the UN's Human Development Report, the Gender Inequality Index (GII) measures the loss in human development within a nation caused by gender inequality. It assesses potential losses using three dimensions: reproductive health, empowerment, and labour market participation. Nepal is positioned at 118th place with a GII value of 0.480 (UNDP, 2017).

The study found that women teachers have always sacrificed their work-life for their families. My research participants have left their jobs for the sake of their children and their family responsibilities. Men seem to be silent and do not react to family responsibilities. The socio-cultural tradition has also influenced female teachers to engage more in family life. The women are found to be struggling from the root level in their second-time enrollment in teaching. I find this painful for female teachers. Once they are enrolled, they are qualified enough for the job to apply for the same position they were working in earlier. This shows that most of the institutions do not trust female teachers. A few female teachers cannot concentrate on the teaching-learning process as they are disturbed by the chores and children at home. Female teachers work harder than male teachers but are not trusted. They are not

given the freedom or opportunity to participate in training or sports activities. The male teachers pretend to make the female teachers participate in other school activities, saying it will be difficult for them as they are women with full household responsibilities. The workload at home also hampers the women's work lives as they are mentally disturbed by dual burdens. The most important thing is that women are supposed to look after the family, children, and other responsibilities at home; what are the responsibilities of males? A breadwinner is the earning member of the family; what about the women working as well as looking for all the duties at home? Gender inequality has made women feel inferior. Men grab the opportunity and leave the burden of household responsibilities on women.

Nonetheless, these female teachers have been empowered through their struggles. Sometimes, the difficult way also leads to beautiful destinations. Similarly, female teachers have empowered themselves to struggle with difficult circumstances.

Conclusion

The study suggests that women teachers need freedom in their workplace and home to enjoy all the responsibilities. The socio-cultural tradition needs transformation through the change in the perception towards women. Society is for our well-being, not for discrimination. Women seem to suffer a lot when enrolling in teaching after their babies; educational institutions should make some policies for working women and help them sustain themselves in their profession for a long time by providing proper time. Women teachers are found to leave their jobs primarily because of the children. To solve this problem, the school can make a small nursery for the children and may keep a caretaker so that the females can concentrate properly during their working hours. Taking care of the family is not only a womanish job. The male should also contribute and help the women and help them be strong in every field. Man earns bread for the family, so they are superior; women also make the family. Therefore, women have equal social status.

Gender discrimination shows inferiority and superiority; every human must learn about equal contribution. Women and men should divide the workload to maintain a good environment of equality at home and in the workplace. The government policy on providing maternity leave needs to be revisited and built equally for teachers working in public and private schools. For proper involvement and professional sustainability, female teachers need an equal environment and practice of equality in the workplace and at home. Female teachers need rewards to get motivated toward their work.

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Writing for Specific Audiences: A Comparative Study of Teaching Writing in Nepal and the U.S.

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Abstract

This paper explores the disparities in teaching writing and evaluation between the United States and Nepal, focusing on the crucial concept of writing for a specific audience. In the U.S., there's an increasing emphasis on the need for students to tailor their writing to cater to distinct audiences. However, the educational system in Nepal primarily values rigid rules and standards over audience-oriented writing. I argue that teaching students to write for specific audiences is paramount for effective communication and underscores the concept of "learning transfer," where knowledge gained should be applicable across different contexts. While U.S. education standards advocate audience-oriented writing, standardized tests often fail to assess this essential skill. I contend that incorporating audience-specific writing assessments in standardized tests can significantly improve writing education. Some data were collected from 15 secondary-level English language teachers in Nepal. Findings demonstrate that instructors are not aware of the practice of teaching writing for a specific purpose. Ultimately, the paper calls for a shift in writing instruction to prioritize adaptability, context, and the intended audience. It underscores that writing is fundamentally about communication and that understanding the specific audience's needs is vital for effective expression, irrespective of geographical and educational system differences.

Keywords: *Composition, purpose, audience, communication, exam, threshold concept*

Introduction

When Professor Warren drew differences between school literacy, rhetorical literacy and threshold concepts on the blackboard in our Rhetoric and Composition class, I suddenly wanted to pick this issue for Nepal. According to him, "school literacy" is heavily influenced by rigid writing rules, and students are expected to write without audiences and pass an examination, while "rhetorical literacy" stresses writing for communication and the need for a specific audience. So, threshold concepts can serve as possible solutions to bridge the wide gulf between "school literacy" and "rhetorical literacy." "The concept of recursion in writing and its application in revision is the threshold (or double threshold) most essential to writing

reader-based papers" (Todd, 2013, p. 4). When it comes to writing, students must hold the authority to make decisions to fulfil the necessities of their intended audiences. National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) demands that "Generation Alpha (and Gen Z) should be making important and intentional decisions about writing for authentic audiences" (as cited in Warren, 2022, p. 1). As writing teacher educators, we must encourage our students to learn to customize their writing to meet the individual needs of intended audiences. Prominent professional literacy organizations consistently advocate this principle. For instance, (NCTE) emphasizes the significance of providing students with diverse writing experiences that illustrate how writing can vary based on its intended purpose, audience, and contextual elements. In a statement, the Council of Writing Program Administrators, NCTE, and the National Writing Project (2011) emphasize the need for students to possess the "ability to analyze and act on an understanding of audiences, purposes, and contexts" (p. 1). Additionally, the Conference on College Composition and Communication prioritizes the consideration of real audiences as the second "Principle of Sound Writing Instruction." Ultimately, there is a clear and unanimous consensus in the field that students should be equipped with the necessary competencies to write effectively for target readers.

Regardless of this agreement among teacher organizations and writing centers in the U.S., there are several pieces of evidence to believe that many "state-mandated assessments of writing fail to measure students' ability to adapt their writing to the needs and expectations of specific audiences" (Warren, 2022, p. 1). He adds that in his home state of Texas, the state-administrated standards demand that students exhibit their writing competence for target readers right from standards 3 through 12. In the same way, in Nepal too, curriculum designers and educator trainers do not seem to be aware of it or are not intrigued by the idea of encouraging learners to write for an audience. Learners are just instructed to produce compositions to demonstrate their knowledge, vocabulary, and control over writing mechanics. This reveals that some educators still maintain the notion that writing can be effective without considering real-life audiences.

Need for the Culture of Writing for Specific Audiences

The significance of instructing learners to tailor their composition work to suit particular readers is paramount. To comprehend why this is crucial, we can approach the issue from the standpoint of "learning transfer," a subject that has engaged educational scholarship for many years, as indicated by the work of Perkins and Salomon (1992). The transformation of learning happens when knowledge acquired in one setting is effectively used in another. Unlike apprenticeship or internship models, the formal education system consists of distinct and isolated levels, often distant from the practical environments where knowledge should be applied efficiently.

In this system, one group of students is educated separately from those in the next, and educational stages are often isolated from one another. Formal education itself tends to operate independently of the professional world. This structural setup creates a challenge where knowledge and skills acquired in one educational setting are unlikely to transition seamlessly or be useful at the next level. This challenge underscores why writing teachers invest considerable effort in ensuring "vertical alignment[1]" and establishing standards for higher education and career aspirations.

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[1] Vertical alignment in education involves planning the progression of what students should learn in a content area across different grade levels, connecting concepts to create a cohesive, long-term teaching plan.

Recently, scholars in the field of literacy have shifted their attention to studying learning transfer in the context of writing. Notable researchers such as Beaufort, Driscoll, Wells, Nowacek, Robertson, Taczak, and Yancey have explored this concept. One particular lens through which scholars have scrutinized the issue of learning transfer that relates to writing is the differentiation between "well-structured" and "ill-structured" complications, a framework attributed to King and Kitchener (1994) and Wardle (2013). To simplify, a "well-structured problem" consists of one unequivocal correct answer, akin to the mathematical calculation 5 X 2, where the answer is unequivocally 10. Similarly, in a fill-in-the-gap exercise with a universal truth, "The _____ rises in the east," where the obvious answer is "sun." These answers remain constant regardless of one's educational level or professional expertise.

On the other hand, "ill-structured problems" do not have a single clear-cut solution and can be effectively addressed in multiple ways. Writing tasks almost always fall under the "ill-structured" classification. In layperson's terms, it allows instructors to encourage their students to engage in a rigorous writing process where they feel comfortable making several mistakes before producing an acceptable composition. Focus on students' writing level in the first draft and assess their progress over the stages of writing. And grade their writing improvement, engagement in writing processes, and efforts, which can be more justifiable. Needless to say, this is rarely practised in Nepal, as the product outweighs the process in our classrooms.

Additionally, we can consider two students, both of whom achieve a perfect score of 100% on a math test; it is reasonable to assume that they have arrived at the exact same answers to the same math problems by following almost the same formula or steps. However, when it comes to scoring 100% in an English essay, it is not because they have produced identical essays. Instead, they have each tackled the writing problem in distinct yet equally effective ways. Furthermore, it is essential to recognize that an essay scoring 100% in an English class might receive a lower score in a history class, primarily due to differing purposes and target audiences in these two academic disciplines.

Most educators face significant challenges when teaching subjects that revolve around "ill-structured problems." The difficulty becomes even more pronounced if learners must approach these poorly formed problems as if they were "well-structured." This inclination arises from the convenience of teaching students a set of conventional rules and guidelines, as opposed to instilling in them adaptable tactics that are supposed to be tailored to the specific characteristics of each unique issue. For instance, within the domain of English education, writing teachers frequently confront challenges with students who excessively rely on first-person pronouns or employ them incorrectly in their writing. A straightforward approach to address this issue is to treat it as if it were a well-defined problem and implement a rule: students must avoid using first-person pronouns in formal writing environments. While this approach may yield results in the short term, it hampers the transfer of skills. Students who internalize this strict prohibition on the use of first-person pronouns may inappropriately apply this rule to formal writing settings where it does not fit. In this context, Hyland (2002) puts forth his claim very carefully here:

> In this article I briefly explore the most visible expression of a writer's presence in a text: the use of exclusive first person pronouns. I show that not all disciplines follow the same conventions of impersonality, and that in fact there is considerable scope for the negotiation of identity in academic writing. I argue that by treating academic discourse as uniformly impersonal we actually do a disservice to our students, and

that as teachers, we might better assist them by raising their awareness of the options available to them as writers (p. 351).

In relation to Hyland's notion of academic writing conventions and rules, I also claim that students are likely to write better if we do not impose a set of rules in the name of good writing. 53.8% of my participant students admitted that they feared writing tasks because of fixe~~d rules and guidelines, which is further illustrated by the following figure.~~

Figure 1

Reasons why Nepali students find writing challenging
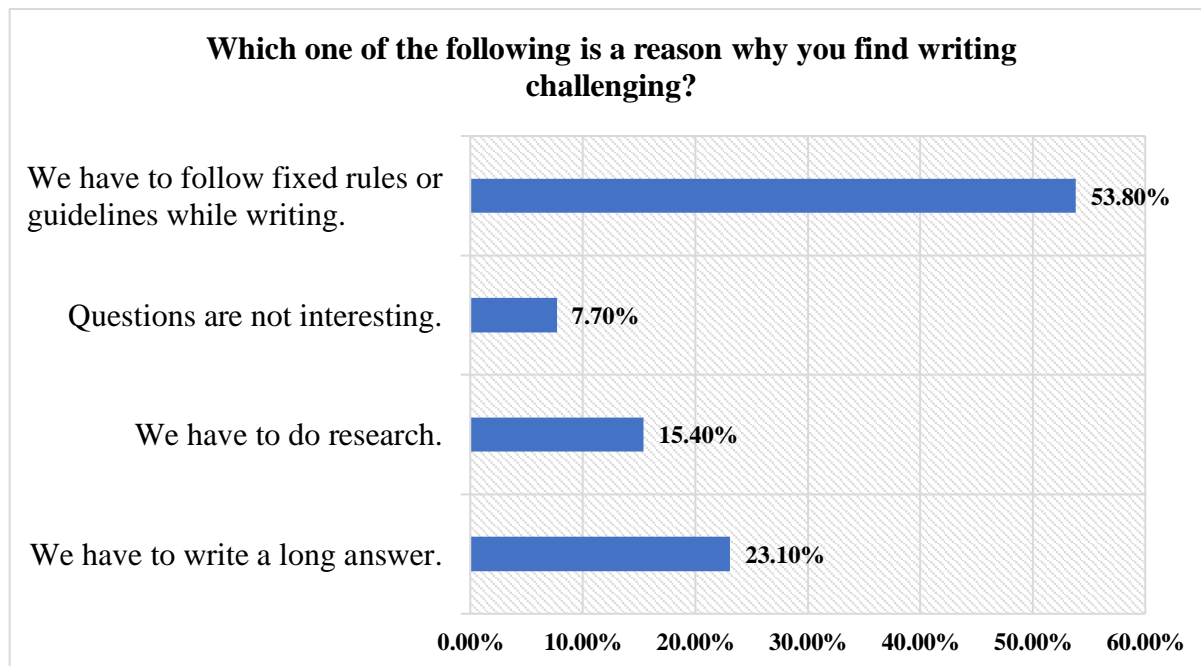
To gather some data with respect to Nepali students' views on conventional rules of writing, I conducted a small survey using Google Forms. A total of 13 students submitted the Google Forms. All the participants graduated from private higher secondary schools situated in Kathmandu, Nepal, where the medium of instruction was English. Based on the data obtained and analyzed, it can be concluded that most students in Nepal do not feel motivated to write, owning to rigid conventional rules and guidelines. Students want to write how they want because writing means expressing one's thoughts. Therefore, fixed rules are a hindrance to students' free expression in writing, and this must be taken into account by educators.

Following up Hyland's claims, it can be argued that the choice of the first-person pronoun has to rely on an author/student. As educators, we cannot impose fixed rules on their writing. As highlighted by Graff and Birkenstein (2018), advanced writing tasks in college often demand students to distinguish their personal viewpoints from those of others. This task becomes unnecessarily difficult when students feel compelled to avoid first-person pronouns entirely. This dilemma asks What students should think when one teacher instructs them to refrain from using first-person pronouns, only for another teacher to encourage their use? For students accustomed to viewing writing as a well-defined problem governed by strict regulations, the logical inference might be that one teacher's approach is correct while the other's is incorrect. However, this confusion stems from the inherent nature of writing itself. In its very essence, writing is an ill-structured problem that does not neatly adhere to a fixed set of rules. Students who perceive it otherwise develop a skewed comprehension of the craft of writing.

Rigid rules for writing should be replaced with the idea of flexibility to allow students to customize their compositions to the particular demands of varying readers (Beaufort, 2012). To illustrate this adaptability, take into account the practical applications of a writing assignment akin to one featured on the tenth-grade State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) test in 2017. Emphasizing this point, Warren (2022) underscores that tenth-grade students were tasked with the following prompt: "Compose an essay expressing your viewpoint on whether an individual can elect to pursue happiness." Similarly, tenth-graders were presented with the following prompt in the English paper of the Secondary Education Examination (SEE), the board examination in the secondary school system of Nepal which the National Examination Board is conducting: "Write an essay giving your views on "Use of Cell phone in school life" (Poudel, 2022). The problem here is the context. A series of questions arise here: Who is the reader? Should students write in formal or informal language? Do students and their possible audiences need to follow a certain writing convention? Can students use first-person pronouns in the assigned essay? These STAAR and SEE questions can be labeled as ambiguous.

When composing a message to console a friend who has lately lost her or his grandparent, it is entirely appropriate to employ an informal style, replete with colloquial language and personal anecdotes, and to address the recipient directly. However, when it comes to drafting a research paper for school or college, it becomes imperative to adopt a more objective persona, adhere to a formal writing style, and integrate academic citations to cater to a broader academic readership. Conversely, when crafting a farewell speech for the final day of school, it is appropriate to draw upon personal experiences within the school, maintain a tone that resonates with the occasion, adjust the text/script for effective oral delivery, and make a direct appeal to the school's educational values and memorable moments. Importantly, neither of these approaches holds inherent superiority or inferiority over the other, as the guidelines for each are contingent upon the specific context. However, students addressing those essay questions in the STAAR test and the SEE were not provided with a particular audience or scenario; instead, the tasks were given to them as a well-defined problem, inadvertently declaring a single "correct" approach to essay composition.

The Culture of Writing without an Audience at School

The tendency to push students to write without considering a specific target audience has a deep-rooted history that predates standardized tests in both the United States and Nepal. Despite its origins in the rhetoric dating back to Aristotle, who notably underscored the importance of considering the audience in public discourse, stating that in public speaking, the "someone addressed" is the "objective of the speech" (Warren, 2022), this Aristotelian tradition began to fade during the Enlightenment era with the emergence of the concept of the "autonomous text" (Olson, 1977).

The notion of the autonomous text embodies an idea where meaning is solely and obviously conveyed through the written words on any sheets of paper, making the interpretation equally accessible to everyone and rendering the consideration of the intended audience inappropriate. Olson (1977) argues that the concept of the autonomous text gained prominence during the Enlightenment for two main intentions. Firstly, the advent of the printing press facilitated the dissemination of texts to a "more diverse readership than ever before," prompting writers to adopt a template/style that didn't rely on readers with similar background knowledge. Secondly, the rise of scientific inquiry in the seventeenth century necessitated a mode "of writing that could establish and preserve objective scientific knowledge," making it universally comprehensible to all readers. As a result, the original form of academic conventions reflected a deliberate attempt to produce texts that were

completely obvious, neglecting culture-laden judgments and appeals directed toward specific readers.

It may come as no surprise to experts in literacy that scholars have long regarded the concept of the autonomous text as "a compelling myth" (Geisler, 1994, p. 26), an idealized objective that remains unattainable, even for researchers who rely on an extensive reservoir of "contextual knowledge in their reading and writing" (Cazden, 1989). Nevertheless, even if the notion of the autonomous text is fictional, it has been widely accepted as a valuable construct within conventional teaching and writing. For example, scholars have observed that writings prepared to instruct academic subjects for school-level education serve as autonomous entities (Haas, 1994). Because the primary objective of these writings is to convey "the approved representation of society's validated knowledge" (Olson, p. 108), they adopt a writing style that appears to "emanate from a source beyond human limitations" (p. 109). This default mode of formal writing proved to be something that students aspire to emulate, rendering the requirement of a target reader seemingly unnecessary.

The Need for a Particular Reader in Inflexible Exams

The combination of the traditional approach of treating texts as standalone entities and the prevalence of large-scale, high-stakes writing assessments creates a situation where students may not develop the essential skill of writing for specific audiences despite the inclusion of this skill in content standards. Research indicates that inflexible parameters drastically shape how writing educators instruct writing in their classrooms (McCarthey & Woodard, 2018). For example, in a study conducted by McCarthey and Woodard (2018), where 20 instructors from 4 districts in the same state were interviewed and observed, only four teachers deviated from the "district-mandated curricula based on state standards." This suggests that when state standards advocate effective approaches, such as the importance of teaching students to write for a target reader, educators are inclined to adjust their teaching methodologies accordingly.

Education standards should not be considered as a separate entity, especially when we desire to couple them with evaluations designed to gauge their effectiveness. At least, in theory, a standards-based education system evidently delineates the specific knowledge and performance levels that students should attain within a given year. Board or summative examinations should work in conjunction with these parameters, thus serving as a reliable indicator of each student's academic progress. In this framework, parameters play a central role in shaping curriculum and instructional practices, and summative assessments naturally reflect what students have learned throughout the year. However, America's model of stand-based education introduces challenges to this framework. While "students spend over 1,000 hours in school" annually (U.S. Department of Education, 2008), only about 10-15 hours are allocated for state and federal accountability assessments (Council of the Great City Schools, 2015). In Nepal, as "per the government rules, schools need to open for 220 days in a year and classes need to be conducted at least 1,064 hours (for 190 days) every year" (Ghimire, 2020). However, there is no fixed amount of time allocated for learning assessments. Comparatively, small assessments are tasked with measuring a substantial amount of student achievement. It is logical to infer that, in certain academic subjects, state standards may encompass so much course material that it cannot reasonably be assessed within these limited timeframes. In such scenarios, even the most exemplary content standards can fail to be sufficient to assert that students acquire all the necessary subject-specific information.

A question arises to be pondered upon. What happens if educational parameters are not evaluated through assessments and the syllabi that instructors are expected to deliver fail to feature on the tests? A substantial body of scholarship indicates that, especially in

composition cases, parameters that are not examined may tend to be disregarded or underemphasized in composition classes (McCarthey, 2008). For instance, a survey involving over 600 instructors representing three different states, conducted by O'Neill, Murphy, Huot, and Williamson (2006), revealed that the major portion of writing instructors had adjusted their approaches to align with the explicit requirements of state-administered examinations. The degree of these adjustments and teachers' dissatisfaction with them became evident through their answers to unstructured survey questions. A teacher in California, for example, expressed concerns about the state-administered examination, saying, "Oh yes, it's caused panic. Soon we'll be teaching directly to the test, I'm afraid" (p. 99). A teacher from Georgia noted that the test "compels us to focus on practising the five-paragraph essay to better prepare our students for the test" (p. 101). These responses suggest that the test content influences the curriculum and directs instructional approaches, even if writing instructors perceive mismatches between the test content and what they should teach. Rather than curricula determining assessment measures, it appears that assessments are driving the curriculum. In this context, merely being part of state evaluations and examinations might not ensure that content is course material; it must also feature in exams.

Results

According to Warren (2022), for the school year 2020/2021 in the U.S., a total of 12 states, which accounts for 24% of the states, had plans to conduct composition assessments that necessitated learners to compose their essays for a particular target reader. Since some states examine learners in several high school grade levels and/or demand students compose different essays as part of a single evaluation, a total of 69 essay writing examinations were planned to be conducted. Out of these 69 essays, 14, or approximately 20%, required learners to write with a specific reader in mind. Further details about these 69 essays are provided below.

Among the 55 state-administered essay writing examinations that discourage learners from writing for any intended readers, 23 tests, constituting 42%, require learners to read course material and craft an essay investigating it. Roughly 29% of state-administered essay writing examinations that do not particularize any readers are classified as "non-source-based essays" (Warren, 2022, p.9). In such assessments, learners are tasked with composing informational or persuasive essays based on their existing knowledge rather than information presented within the test itself. Warren adds that approximately "20% of essay tests that do not" define a target reader prompt learners to create essays that draw on external sources included in the "testing materials" (p. 10). For instance, students receive two sources and corresponding instructions in a sample test from the Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program. Finally, about "9% of state-mandated essay tests that do not specify a specific audience" require learners to create short works of creativity like stories, fiction, etc. (p. 10). For instance, the Louisiana Educational Assessment Program instructs high school students to complete tasks of this nature. "Of the 12 states that administer high school writing tests that" necessitate learners to write for an intended reader, 8 of them (Arizona, California, Hawai'i, Idaho, Oregon, South Dakota, Vermont, and Washington) employ the examination developed by the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) (p. 10). This consortium was established to construct standardised tests that complied with the Common Core State Standards (CCSS).

Discussion

The most promising finding in the research undertaken by Warren (2022) and his team is "that all 50 states and the District of Columbia have adopted content standards that require students to write for specific audiences" in mind (p. 12). Regrettably, he states, "only 24% of

states actually test this skill" (p. 12). Given the widely recognized status of examinations that can influence a writing curriculum, we may be encouraged to deduce that many writing instructors are training future teachers for a where learners are not tasked with producing writing tailored to intended readers.

In the U.S., when high-stakes assessments disregard the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE, 2016) recommendation that writing is evaluated "over a substantial period of time" (para. 4) and "from initial through to final drafts" (Applications section, para. 3) students learn that writing does not entail complicated composition procedures across several revisions. But in Nepal, "[v]arious classroom activities and techniques should be used to help the learners to learn more. The following techniques/activities can be used as tools for formative assessment . . . portfolios, written samples" (Secondary Education Curriculum 2077, 2020, p. 56). The problem is that there is no specific mark allocation for writing processes or portfolios. Of 25 formative evaluations, tentatively, an English teacher may allot 2/3 marks for students' written work, which means Nepali students earn points based on their final products during the year-end exams, not for their revisions.

While evaluations require student writers to "form and articulate opinions about some important issue . . . without time to . . . read on the subject "(Guiding Principle 1, para. 2) learners feel that their understanding of a chapter or course does not weigh as much as producing well-structured prose. Additionally, when evaluations do not prompt student writers to compose "for a range of audiences," (Guiding Principle 2) they get the impression that the objective of writing is to create graded but not genuinely read documents. Standardized examinations inadequately assess authentic writing mainly because they neglect to provoke student writers to produce a composition with an intended reader in mind, which could be their most significant flaw. While it may be generous to suggest that writing tasks (essays, stories, dialogue, paragraphs, news articles, reports, character sketches, summaries, press releases, descriptions, biographies, etc.) must align with authentic writing tasks, it is challenging to envision real-world writing contexts outside educational environments where we instruct our students to write without the existence of any particular audience in mind, which happens to resemble the idea of shooting without aiming.

Figure 2
The culture of teaching writing for a specific audience in Nepal
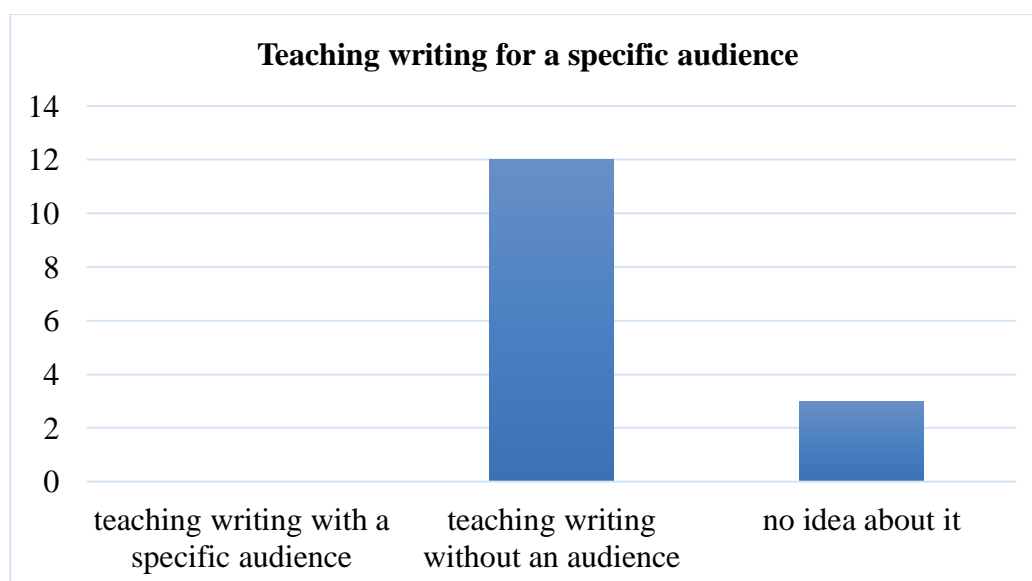
A survey was conducted, and data was collected from a total of 15 secondary-level English language teachers in Nepal using Google Forms. 80% said that they teach writing by adopting different teaching prompts, brainstorming, sample answers, guidelines, rules, etc. They concentrate their attention on helping students generate ideas and produce a well-crafted composition. They also admit that they still allow a certain amount of grammar and writing mechanics points. 20% of the respondents confess that they have never thought about it. They just instruct students to follow the given instructions and write creatively, critically, and proficiently. They have mentioned that it does not matter who the audience is. Unfortunately, none of the respondents teach writing in class for a specific audience. This small size sampling does not endorse the idea of generalizing teaching writing culture in Nepal; nevertheless, it hints that in our writing classes, students are still bound to follow certain writing conventions and stick to the same structure, tone, style, language, etc. In other words, these students are writing to meet the "objectives" of passing a test rather than cater to the needs of an audience.

Despite the persistence of standardized testing, we must not be discouraged from our efforts to advocate for improved assessments. Each state in the U.S. has implemented benchmarks requiring students to compose texts for particular readers. Those teachers working in one of the 38 states lacking evaluation of this standard should advocate for incorporating assessments that do so. Although the exam's validity may still be inadequate, developing a new culture of adopting the notion of writing for a particular group of audiences tends to increase the chances of teaching this vital skill. Meanwhile, teacher trainers or master trainers in writing should equip future teachers to navigate curricula for teaching writing that may conflict with the best teaching strategies in composition classes across the world.

Implications for Nepali Teachers and American Teachers

For Nepali teachers who teach English, the implications are manifold. The paper indicates that the prevailing culture in Nepali classrooms tends to prioritize the final product over the writing process. The emphasis on adhering to fixed writing rules, rather than encouraging adaptability and flexibility in writing strategies, deters students from experimenting with stream-of-consciousness writing, allowing their thoughts to flow freely without the constraints of structure or interruption. Writing should be treated as a process because in the words of Silva (1990), a process-based approach is important to facilitate "a positive, encouraging, and collaborative workshop environment within which students, with ample time and minimal interference, can work through their composing processes. The teacher's role is redefined as a coach to help and provide strategies in different stages of writing" (p.15). Nepali educators may need to reconsider their approach, moving away from the inclination to treat writing as a well-structured problem governed by strict regulations. The need for a specific audience in writing is highlighted, emphasizing the importance of contextualizing writing tasks. Teachers in Nepal might benefit from incorporating real-world equivalents of writing tasks, acknowledging the diverse contexts in which writing is applied, and fostering a more audience-centric writing culture.

Moreover, addressing the disconnect between teaching fixed rules and the inherently ill-structured nature of writing problems is crucial. It calls for a shift in mindset, recognizing that writing, by its nature, requires adaptable strategies tailored to the uniqueness of each problem. Combining process-based writing and iterative revisions with a specific audience in mind, wherein, as Barthes elucidated in 1977 (as cited in Sommers, 1980), these revisions reshape their thoughts to construct a coherent argument. It also tends to build students' confidence to write with an uninterrupted flow. In their own words, the students have moved beyond the primary purpose of writing, "to express myself" or "to tell myself what I've

learned." Moreover, students hone their ability to reflect on their writing drafts, as described by Flower in 1979, which he termed "reader-based."

Conversely, the paper draws attention to the challenge of high-stakes assessments shaping curriculum and instructional methods for U.S. writing teachers. While content standards advocate for teaching learners to write for intended readers, the mismatch between standards and assessments creates a gap. Teachers may find themselves compelled to match their teaching methods to the requirements for standardized tests, possibly compromising the improvement of essential writing skills. The need for learners to craft writing tailored to specific readers is underscored, yet the reality of assessments often overlooks this critical aspect. U.S. teachers should advocate for assessments that truly reflect the nuanced nature of writing, emphasizing the importance of evaluating writing over a substantial period and across multiple drafts. This is because, as Cheung (2016) contends, writing instructors need to deepen their understanding of the cursive tendency "of the writing process as well as know what constitutes good writing." He further argues that students, when mindful of the objective, readers, and situation in their composition pieces, are likely to employ academic writing elements and stages, such as paraphrasing, work citation, word choice, judicious use of first-person pronouns, choice of voice, strategic thinking, and argument structuring. The discrepancy between what standards endorse and what assessments prioritize may necessitate a careful balance for educators, ensuring that the demands of standardized testing do not overshadow authentic writing processes. U.S. teacher educators must also significantly contribute to preparing future writing educators to navigate these challenges and champion effective writing instruction, even within the constraints of standardized education systems.

Conclusion

In summary, the idea of writing for a specific audience has developed as a response to changes in media, technology, and communication theory. It is a recognition that effective communication requires understanding addressing the unique needs, interests, and preferences of different audience groups. This approach is essential for successful marketing, persuasive writing, and effective communication in a variety of contexts. It is imperative to realize that writing does not mean meeting "objectives" to pass exams but " communicating oneself." To communicate one's ideas and feelings, he or she must know the rhetorical context or a specific audience. Communicating ideas without an audience in mind resembles the idea of a shot in the dark. Hence, it is high time for instructors to familiarize themselves with the threshold concepts of teaching writing and imbue their students to write for intended audiences. Writing something without an intended audience is similar to shooting without aiming at anything.

Someone might argue that there are several differences between Nepal and the U.S. in terms of writing cultures, education systems and assessment administration. Nevertheless, the point I am making here is that regardless of different geographical places, education systems, and mediums of instruction, when it comes to writing, we, writing instructors, must instil in our students the idea of a specific audience for effective communication. To put it more straightforwardly, at the conclusion of the semester or academic year, pupils are composing papers to transform their ideas and evidence into others effectively. English language teachers (Nepali or American) can realize this accomplishment only through a series of iterative revisions conducted with a specific audience in mind. During these revisions, students transform as their thoughts are reshaped to form a coherent argument. In other words, we can assert that students have progressed beyond the primary goal of writing for self-expression or personal reflection. Furthermore, they demonstrate the ability to reflect on the writing process itself, often described as a "reader-based" approach.

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Learners' Perspectives and Experiences on the Factors Influencing Speaking: A Systematic Review

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Abstract

This article reviews recent publications (n=23) on learners' perspectives and experiences on the factors influencing speaking. We downloaded articles using keywords such as "improving speaking skills," "learners' experiences on improving speaking," "factors influencing speaking," and "learners' perception of the factors influencing speaking" from different databases like Google Scholar and ERIC. Employing the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis (PRISMA) framework, we extracted findings from articles on learners' perceptions and experiences on factors influencing speaking and methodological trends applied in the selected studies. First, we categorized factors affecting speaking performance into sociocultural, pedagogical, linguistic, and psychological as per the perspectives and experiences of the learners. Then, we conducted the methodological review. The review result showed that the selected articles employed qualitative approaches, questionnaires, and interviews for data collection and thematic analysis to interpret the data. The review indicated that few studies are conducted in the Nepali context focusing on the learners' perspectives and experiences on the factors influencing speaking. The underrepresentation of these issues needs to be addressed to enable learners and instructors to develop effective strategies for enhancing speaking skills.

Keywords: *Speaking skills, Nepal, systematic review, and factors affecting learners' speaking skill*

Introduction

This review presents the perceptions and experiences of English language learners on the challenges and factors that influence their speaking. Speaking is the fundamental skill a child learns, which plays a pivotal role in communicating and surviving in society. According to Al-Roud (2016), to foster successful communication between people in this contemporary time, among the four skills of language, speaking is claimed to be important (Limeranto & Bram, 2022). In the same way, Riadil (2020), putting forward a practical stand, argues that the English language is also exercised for social and higher education and in the workplace,

apart from day-to-day conversation (Limeranto & Bram, 2022). People in any field, from daily life to the professional or education sector, can realize the importance of speaking and its impact on using it properly. Following that, in 1983, Yuke and Brown considered that students would be judged based on their speaking skills (Jezhny & Bapir, 2021). According to a recent national study of the Basic Communication Course, Kelsen (2019) and Burns (2019) contended that for general education, the frequently needed communication skills course is public speaking (Hadi, Izzah, & Masae, 2020). Thomas (2019) defines fluency as "how well learners communicate meaning rather than how many mistakes they make in grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary" (Hadi, Izzah, & Masae, 2020).

Many factors hinder mastering speaking skills, as found in research conducted in different areas. Riadil (2020) presents through research that Indonesian EFL learners cannot speak English fluently even though they have been learning it for several years in formal school (Limeranto & Bram, 2022). Likewise, in a study conducted in Gaza, Al Nakhalah (2016) found that a few issues like fear of committing mistakes, anxiety, shyness, and insufficient self-confidence that EFL undergraduate students encountered in speaking (Limeranto & Bram, 2022). Urrutia and Vega (2010) studied a similar issue with 40 students from a public school studying in 10th grade, 20 boys and 20 girls. Being afraid of getting humiliated and criticized, these students were not involved in the speaking activities, though they did well in listening and writing exercises (Jezhny & Bapir, 2021).

Knowing the perspectives and experiences of the learners concerning the challenges they face while speaking, learning, and mastering to gain confidence and fluency is very important. Though there are studies on how teachers develop and grow professionally (Neupane, 2023, 2024; Neupane & Bhatt, 2023; Neupane et al., 2022), studies on language learners' development, particularly speaking is scarce. Unless the learners and facilitators know the cause, the strategies to resolve for betterment cannot be found and worked on. Review results indicated that much research was conducted in different countries, but the same was not the case in Nepal. We found three research studies, one on perception and the other on experience regarding speaking skills. This showed the need to work on research concerning the perception and experience of difficulties in speaking skills in Nepal. The research would eventually support the learners as well as educators in being aware of the factors that influence speaking through the perspectives and experiences of the learners of different countries. Following this would help them make proper strategies according to the causes to improve the learning, which gives a sound output. In this review, answers to the following questions will be tried to be found:

- What are the learners' perspectives concerning the challenges influencing their speaking skills?
- What are the learners' experiences concerning the challenges influencing their speaking skills?

Method

In this review, we used the systematic review aligned with the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis (PRISMA) approach 2020. PRISMA 2020 offers revised reporting guidelines for systematic reviews that consider improvements in finding, selecting, evaluating, and synthesizing studies (Page, 2021). It includes an enlarged checklist with reporting guidelines for every item, a 27-item checklist, the PRISMA 2020 abstract checklist, and updated flow diagrams for the original and updated reviews (Page, 2021). The tool is designed to be utilized in systematic reviews that either incorporate syntheses, such as paired meta-analysis or other statistical synthesis techniques or do not incorporate synthesis, as when just one suitable paper is found (Page, 2021). This can be used

to update, original, or continuously update (often known as "living") systematic reviews (Page, 2021).

For this review, we considered only the research article published in English concerning the perception and experience of learners regarding speaking difficulties. The research conducted solely focused on the teachers' perceptions and experiences in the same context were excluded. However, we considered learners' and teachers' combined perceptions and experiences in a few articles. While searching for the relevant articles, we used keywords like learners' perception of speaking skills, learners' experiences about speaking skills, and factors affecting learners' speaking skills on Google Scholar. we went through journals and articles published in NELTA and IJELTA. The screening, inclusion, and exclusion process and the total number of articles that were considered for the theme synthesis are shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1

PRISMA flow chart
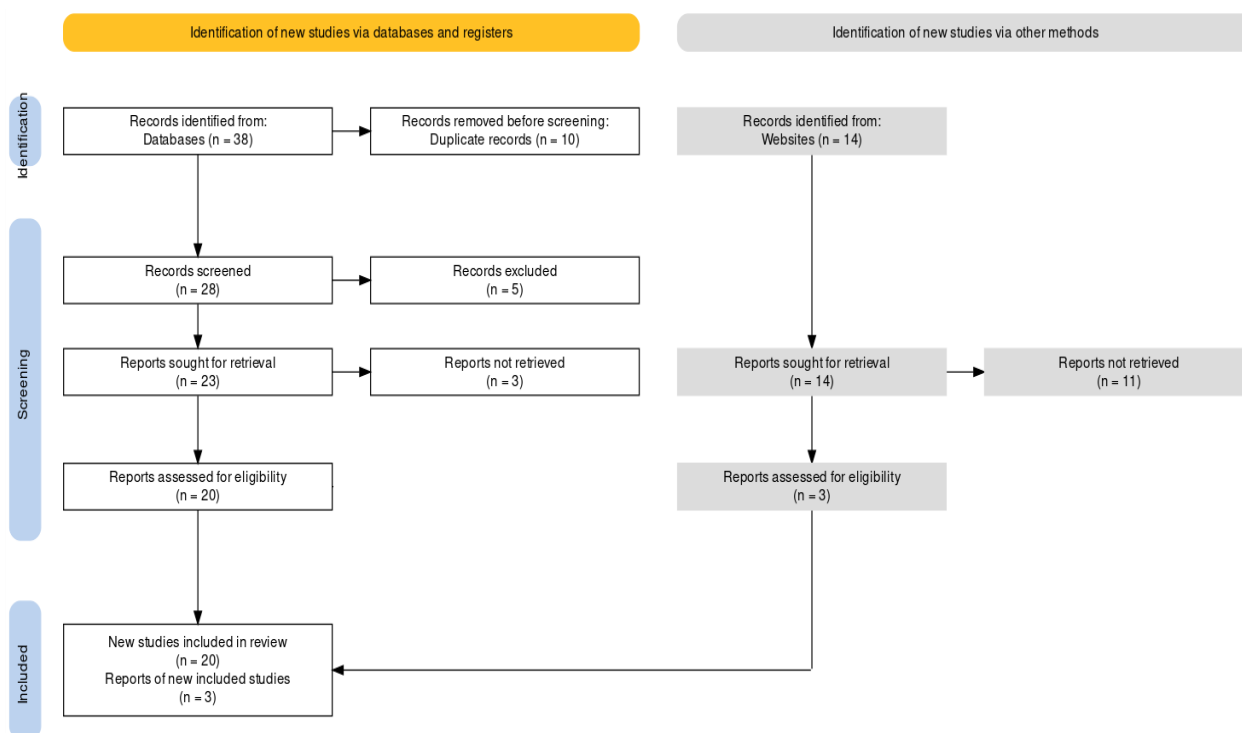
Initially, we downloaded 52 articles; 38 were from Google Scholar, and 14 were from NELTA & IJELTA. Upon checking later, we removed ten articles as they were duplicates, and similarly, in the next step, screening of the title and abstract, we excluded five more as they were way back in time for this study. After that, for the screening of the full text, 37 articles were taken into consideration. During this, 14 articles were excluded, three from the database downloaded and 11 from the website downloaded, as they were irrelevant and focused only on the teacher's perception. Finally, as Figure 1 clearly shows, by the end of the inclusion and exclusion process, 23 articles were taken for the thematic synthesis.

Similarly, in Table 1 (see Appendix), it can be seen that 23 articles have been considered for this systematic review. These 23 articles are from different contexts as you can see Britain (n = 1), Iraq (n = 1), Bangladesh (n = 1), Indonesia (n = 5), Iran (n = 1), Malaysia (n = 2), Nepal (n = 3), Philippines (n = 1), Saudi Arabia (n = 2), Taiwan (n = 1), Thailand (n =

2), Turkey (n = 2), and United Kingdom (n = 1). This systematic review includes research articles from 2007 to 2023 concentrating on the perception and experience of English learners regarding the factors influencing speaking skills. For the analysis process, we extracted thematic concentration, categories and influencing factors, findings, and remarks in a table after thoroughly reading the articles. We compared, contrasted, and synthesized the findings of both research questions as follows.

Learners Perceptions of Factors Influencing Speaking

Among the 23 articles, nine are on learners' perceptions about the factors that influence one's ability to speak. In research conducted in Iraq (Jezhny & Bapir, 2021), university learners perceive that speaking skills are affected majorly by three categories of facto: methodology, linguistics, and psychology. Methods of teaching that include listening, oral practice, games, and group work activities support the learning. Similarly, background knowledge and rich vocabulary positively affect speaking performance. Though a lack of grammatical knowledge doesn't negatively affect, corrective feedback hurts speaking performance. As per Indonesian English as Foreign Language (EFL) graduate students' perspectives, similar to the above-mentioned research, a lack of advanced vocabulary affects speaking, and adds up that a lack of pronunciation affects speaking (Limeranto & Bram, 2022).

EFL undergraduate learners in Turkey (Basöz & Erten, 2019) have the same belief that speaking is influenced by instructional methods, teachers, materials, and practice (Jezhny & Bapir, 2021), pronunciation (Limeranto & Bram, 2022), and vocabulary knowledge (Jezhny & Bapir, 2021 and Limeranto & Bram, 2022). Classmates, the environment in the classroom, the number of students, motivation, anxiety, fear of making mistakes, fear of mockery, topic interest, familiarity with the issue, shyness, introversion, self-perceived communication ability, and prior communication experience are also the factors affecting English communication included in the same study. Likewise, findings similar to the above research can be received that the oral proficiency of pupils is mainly affected by factors like motivation, vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, and teaching strategies along with a different factor, curriculum, from the research mentioned above (Pangket, 2019). A study in Nepal agrees that curriculum, practice, activities, grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation affect learners' acquisition of speaking abilities, as reported by community school students (Kandel, 2022).

Malaysian students are fearful of making mistakes, are too shy to speak or are not accustomed to speaking in English, and lack motivation and preparation (Basöz & Erten, 2019) and correcting students' mistakes (Jezhny & Bapir, 2021) affects their speaking performance (Shalihah, Supramaniam, & Kholidi, 2022). A review article written in Malaysia shows even with adequate language abilities, students who have low self-esteem, high anxiety, and low motivation have significant trouble speaking (Leong & Ahmadi, 2017). Another study in Iran on EFL learners' perceptions adds further that willingness to speak English is influenced by task type, the interviewee's age, sex, familiarity, grade, speech correctness, the topic of discussion, personal characteristics, perceived speaking anxiety, teacher's role, some teachers are dictators, and classroom atmosphere (Riasati, 2012). Similar to some of the above studies, university students in Bangladesh believe that anxiety, poor English background, inadequate self-assurance, insufficient drive, anxiety, little practice, inadequate vocabulary, and poor pronunciation are some hurdles in speaking English (Suchona & Shorna, 2019).

Learners' Experiences of Factors Influencing Speaking

The experiences of English language learners concerning the factors influencing speaking abilities are discussed in the remaining 14 articles. According to EFL university students in Saudi Arabia, learning to speak English requires a variety of factors, including psychological ones like drive, self-doubt, anxiety about learning a second language, shyness, and introversion; pedagogical ones like instructor feedback, classroom atmosphere, topical knowledge, and interest; and linguistic ones like vocabulary knowledge, grammatical understanding, and accurate pronunciation (Elsayed, 2022). In addition to psychological elements such as pupils' lack of motivation, confidence, shyness, and anxiety over making mistakes, the high school students provide reasons for lack of vocabulary and incorrect pronunciation to be the use of their mother tongue in linguistic factors (Jahbel, 2017).

In her narrative inquiry, Azizi (2022) from Indonesia shares her experience that strategies like reading on social media, focusing on vocabulary development, watching YouTube, singing, and using Discord App helped improve her English speaking skills (Azizi, 2022). In the same way, Thai and Vietnamese EFL) students concur that the most important element influencing strategy selection is motivation, followed by experience learning English and gender, in that order (Khamkhien, 2010). Another narrative inquiry of Chinese pre-sessional students getting ready to enroll in a British institution sheds light on how prior experiences and desired outcomes influence the growth of communication in a second language (Wilson, 2023). Similar to the study of Elsayed (2022) and Khamkhien (2010), EFL learners in the United Kingdom describe the factors causing anxiety as cognitive and linguistic factors – rigid and formal classroom settings, classroom presentation, anxiety about making mistakes and others' opinions of you, the role of the language teacher, differences in how people view themselves, linguistic challenges, pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary, and sociocultural factors Social milieu and restricted exposure to the language of interest, cultural distinctions, social standing and self-concept, and gender (Tanveer, 2007).

Likewise, linguistic factors include pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar; affective factors - anxiety, low self-confidence, and motivation, and performance conditions - teachers correct mistakes and plenty of time not given to speaking English have been experienced by 10th-grade students of Indonesia which bring difficulties in speaking performance (Afebri, Aderlaepe, & Muhsin, 2019). One more study on variables influencing Thai students' speaking anxiety concludes that a lack of vocabulary is the root cause of their inability to produce spoken utterances (Hadi, Izzah, & Masae, 2020). Similar factors were experienced by university students of Turkey that impacted the learners' motivation, which they divided into classroom effects – should be light, clean, and materials intact; parental factors – should motivate learners, and the attitude of the teacher-learners show low motivation when teachers couldn't use the technological materials during teaching (Ekiz & Kulmetov, 2016).

Saudi EFL learners categorize the speaking performance influencing factors into external and internal factors - shyness, peer pressure, and anxiety, and sociocultural factors – fear of disappointing the teacher, lack of exposure to the target language outside of the classroom, ignorance of the cultural nuances, and fear of making a mistake or receiving negative feedback (Alrasheedi, 2020). Speaking in English frequently and being motivated to speak English turned out to be the best choices for Taiwanese students (Huang, 2010). Discussing the speaking problems in English, Thai students confirmed that the main causes were found to be a low degree of difficulty in terms of management in the teaching and learning of English, exposure to the language, personality, motivation, and attitude characteristics, and there was no discernible difference in the learning of males and girls (Jindathai, 2015).

In the context of Nepal, two articles were found in which learners' experiences with challenges in speaking skills have been discussed. Gambhir Bahadur Chand concludes that problems of speaking were personal, social, linguistic, environmental, and teacher-related issues were the root causes of speaking difficulties, along with mother language, inadequate course material, and classroom culture as shared by the Bachelor-level students (Chand, 2021). Similarly, in a case study, Surendra Prasad Ghimire talks about secondary students learning through social media in which the learners agree that Facebook and YouTube aided in improvement by fostering a cooperative learning atmosphere. They can improve their speaking, listening, reading, and writing abilities and develop their confidence in English speaking (Ghimire, 2022).

Conclusion

After a thorough exploration of the 23 articles, the factors affecting speaking skills according to the learners' perceptions and experiences shared in these research could be classified into four categories: psychological, pedagogical, linguistic, and sociocultural factors.

Figure 2

Speaking influencing factors as per learners' perceptions and experiences
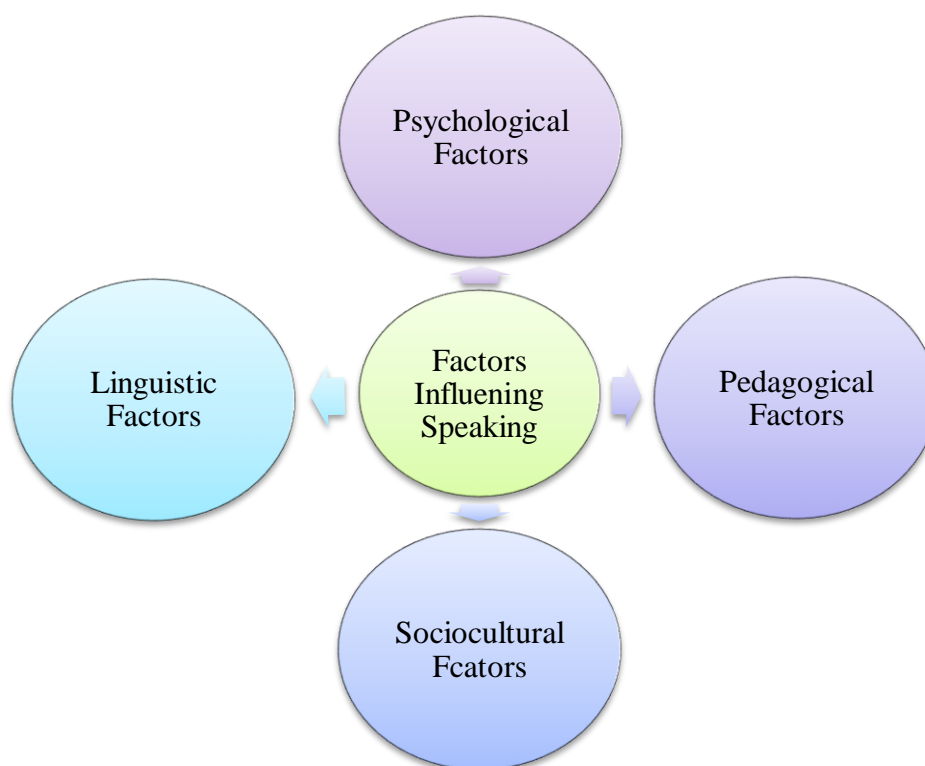
The psychological factors majorly include anxiety, shyness, lack of confidence, lack of motivation, and fear of making mistakes. Similarly, in terms of pedagogical factors, classroom atmosphere, lack of practice, instructors' feedback, curriculum, teaching strategies, and student behaviour are the influencing factors. When it comes to linguistic factors, grammar knowledge, vocabulary knowledge, and correct pronunciation impact oral performance. Sociocultural factors that affect learners' speech include mother tongue influence, prior understanding of the target language, and lack of exposure to the language.

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Appendix

Learners Perceptions and Experiences on Factors Influencing Speaking Research across Contexts

SN	Author(s) & Year	Thematic Concentration	Context
1	Muhammad Tanveer (2007)	Examining the elements that contribute to language anxiety in ESL/EFL learners during the speaking process and the impact it has on target language communication	UK
2	Attapol Khamkhien (2010)	Several factors influence Thai and Vietnamese EFL learners' reported usage of language learning strategies.	Thailand
3	Chiu-Ping Huang (2010)	Investigating factors that influence the use of oral communication techniques	Taiwan
4	Mohammad Javad Riasati (2012)	A qualitative study of the factors that EFL learners perceive as influencing their willingness to speak English in language classrooms	Iran
5	Supatsorn Jindathai (2015)	Factors associated with English speaking difficulties among Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology Engineering students	Thailand
6	Seda Ekiz and Zahitjan Kulmetov (2016)	The English language education factors impacting learners' motivation	Turkey
7	Khalil Jahbel (2017)	Factors influencing the speaking abilities of students at Malang High Schools	Indonesia
8	Lai-Mei Leong & Seyedeh Masoumeh Ahmadi (2017)	Examination of the elements affecting students' ability to speak English	Malaysia
9	Tutku BAŞÖZ1 & İsmail Hakkı ERTEN (2019)	A qualitative investigation of the variables influencing EFL students' willingness to speak English in class	Turkey
10	Willow F. Pangket (2019)	Factors impacting learners' development in oral English proficiency	Philippines
11	Hendriati Afebri, Aderlaepe & Muh. Khusnun Muhsin (2019)	Factors affecting SMA Negeri 1 Tiworo Kepulauan students' difficulties in speaking performance in the tenth grade	Indonesia

12	Iffat Jahan Suchona and Sadia Afrin Shorna (2019)	Students' views on English-speaking issues and their solutions	Bangladesh
13	Muhamad Sofian Hadi, Lidiyatul Izzah, Mareena Masae (2020)	The following factors influence Thai students' speaking anxiety during oral presentations: TSAI Faculty of Education.	Indonesia
14	Saleh Alrasheedi (2020)	Examining the elements affecting Saudi EFL learners' speaking ability	Saudi Arabia
15	Karzan A. Jezhny and Nazenin S. M Bapir (2021)	The view of university students on the elements affecting speaking ability	Iraq
16	Gambhir Bahadur Chand (2021)	English speaking difficulties for Bachelor's level students	Nepal
17	Mustafa Mohammed Sadek Elsayed (2022)	Investigating elements that impact Qassim University EFL students' development of English language speaking proficiency	Saudi Arabia
18	Jeane Theresia Limerantoa and Barli Bramb (2022)	Examining EFL graduate students' views and methods for developing their English speaking capabilities	Indonesia
19	Shree Krishna Kandel (2022)	Perceptions of teaching and learning speaking skills by teachers and students	Nepal
20	Mar'atun Shalihah, Kaarthiyainy Supramaniam & Muh. Azhar Kholidi (2022)	Factors affecting students' speaking performance in learning English: teachers' and students' perspectives	Malaysia
21	Surendra Prasad Ghimire (2022)	English language learning for secondary students via social media	Nepal
22	Heather Wilson (2023)	An account of ten Chinese pre-semester students' reflections on their interaction practices in advance of their study at a British University	Britain
23	Pedja Rifki Azizi	Narrative inquiry on improving speaking skills	Indonesia

A Critical Analysis of the English Textbook of Class Eight in Bangladesh

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Abstract

This critical analysis evaluates the English for Today (Class Eight) textbook used in Bangladesh, focusing on its effectiveness in enhancing language skills for eighth-grade students. The textbook, designed to improve reading, writing, listening, and speaking abilities, combines language study with practical use. While it emphasises collaborative learning and integrates historical insights, offering a comprehensive approach, the analysis identifies areas for improvement. The text praises the book's innovative tasks, such as dialogues and recipes, promoting conversational skills and real-life applications. However, it highlights the need for more advanced vocabulary and challenging exercises to enhance analytical and critical thinking skills. The review recommends enriching vocabulary, diversifying exercises, and upgrading content with the exam patterns to better prepare students for higher grades. The analysis anticipates the challenges of the upcoming textbook revision, emphasising the importance of addressing current shortcomings to enhance English language education in Bangladesh and aligning it with international standards. The study concludes by recognising students' eagerness to learn English, underscoring the vital role of curriculum improvements in preparing them for a globally competitive future.

Introduction

The *English for Today (Class Eight)* textbook (Roy et al., 2022) is pivotal in English language education, catering to the eighth-grade students in Bangladesh. The main goal of this book is to improve students' abilities in four language skills (reading, writing, listening,

and speaking) to strengthen their capability for effective communication. This review aims to offer a thoughtful assessment of the book's usefulness for eighth-grade students in the context of Bangladesh. However, it has also discussed some of the book's possible flaws, such as the need for more advanced lexical resources and challenging exercises to enhance analytical ability and critical thinking skills effectively along with language skills, as well as its benefits in giving accessible language learning resources along with cultural and historical knowledge.

It adheres to National Curriculum and Textbook Board [NCTB] guidelines and aims to provide a comprehensive language education beyond basic skills. Structured into ten thematic units, it combines written passages, vocabulary explanations, grammar clarifications, and practical exercises to bolster students' English proficiency.

Background

In the first edition (2012) of the textbook, the authors, M S Haque, Yesmin Banu, Surajit Roy Majumdar, Md Abdur Razzaque, Naima Shahzadi, and Nargis Akhter Banu, along with Adbus Subhan for editorial matters, bring a wealth of expertise to this educational endeavour. For the revised edition (2014), writers including Goutam Roy, Md. Ali Rezwan Talukder, SM Jakaria Bulbul, and Samiul Bashir, with ANM Hamidur Rahman and Goutam Roy overseeing editorial aspects, contribute excellence to this academic project. Additionally, the evaluation process is conducted diligently by reviewers like Samiul Basir, Md. Ali Rezwan Talukder, Nafisa Begum, Sakina Akter, and Nasrin Anjuman Runi. The book has been organised into ten units: *A Glimpse of Our Culture, Food and Nutrition, Health and Hygiene, Check Your Reference, Bangabandhu and Bangladesh, Going on a Foreign Trip, Different People, Different Occupations, News! News! News!, Things That Changed Our Life, and The Truthful Dove*. These thematic units consecutively based on culture, healthy diet, hygiene, how to use a dictionary, history, foreign trip experience, ancient and nomadic jobs, traditional media, history of wheels, and noble story, are thoughtfully structured to harmoniously incorporate written passages, glossaries of vocabulary, elucidations of grammatical constructs, and practical exercises. The components synergistically contribute to refining the target students' linguistic aptitude and cognitive level. At the end, two sample English questions are introduced to the learners to become familiar with the Junior School Certificate exams.

Summary

The *English for Today (Class Eight)* textbook stands out for its innovative approach to teaching English in Bangladesh. The authors strongly emphasise collaborative learning, enhancing students' reading, writing, and presentation skills. Unit 1, "A Glimpse of Our Culture" explores Bengali culture, traditions, and folk songs, showcasing crafts and delving into cuisine. Unit 2 focuses on nutritious food, Unit 3 promotes hygiene, and Unit 4 introduces unique content on effective dictionary usage. On the other hand, Unit 5 highlights Bangabandhu's (The Father of the Nation Sheikh Mujibur Rahman) life, Unit 6 covers airport activities, and Unit 7 identifies employment types. Unit 8 demonstrates the earliest newspaper and Polan Sarkar's (Social activist and Ekushey Padak Winner 2011) life. Unit 9 covers the history of wheels, trains, and aeroplanes, and includes a poem. Unit 10 covers a traditional moral story with demonstration questions for analysis and grammar application. The book uniquely integrates historical insights, broadening the learning experience beyond linguistic skills. For example, Unit 1 lessons centre around offering historical perspectives on Bangladesh and its cultural heritage. These lessons cover a wide range of topics, such as folk music, traditional embroidered quilts called Nakshi Kantha, ethnic communities in Bangladesh, and the historical and cultural significance of Bangladeshi food. It follows the

traditional exam pattern, incorporating practical tasks like dialogues and recipes, promoting conversational skills. The textbook is tailored for eighth-grade students, providing accessible vocabulary and explicit language which perfectly balances English learning materials and captivating historical content. With its ten units, the book predominantly comprises textual content, with only five poems gracing its pages. Its strengths lie in informative texts, combining English learning with real-life activities, making it a comprehensive and engaging resource for students.

Critique

The textbook prominently emphasises the importance of collaborative learning, promoting an environment of teamwork where students work together to tackle assignments and share their viewpoints. Collaborative learning in teaching and learning English at the secondary level helps to improve reading skills, writing proficiency, and presentation performance (Galappaththy & Karunarathne, 2022; Bhandari, 2021; Normawati et al., 2023). For instance, in lesson three of unit three, there is an activity called: "Make a list of five things you do daily to maintain personal hygiene. Share with other groups, make a poster, and display it to the class. " What sets this book apart is its exceptional inclusion of captivating historical insights, turning the pages into a voyage through time and knowledge. Remarkably, on page 87, Lesson 2, the book embarks on a fascinating exploration of the earliest instance of a newspaper in human history. This historical tangent, usually beyond the scope of a standard English textbook, diversifies the learning experience, breaking free from the conventional focus on linguistic skills. On page 102, Lesson 1, the book unravels the intricate history of the wheel, underscoring its seminal role as the catalyst for numerous ground-breaking innovations, e.g., there are two pictures of a suitcase, one a rolling suitcase and the other a briefcase. The task is 'Look at the pictures and say which is easier to move and why.' To facilitate examination preparation, the text concludes with two sets of illustrative queries, including questions tailored for another textbook, ''*English Grammar and Composition*, offering students a distinct advantage.

This strategic choice aligns perfectly with the language learning and assessment system. However, the traditional exam pattern of Bangladesh, which heavily emphasises text-based questions, ignores poems. The content within the book is structured for simplicity, aligning with the capabilities of eighth-grade students. Tasks are typically presented as multiple-choice questions, fill-in-the-blanks, short questions, and tables. However, the book introduces innovative tasks, such as the paired task in Unit 1, Lesson 4, Page 7. This task prompts students to dialogue between two characters, a departure in 1996 (Mazumder, 2011) from the traditional question format in the Bangladesh education system. Here, the passages connect with class eight's exam comprehension-based question pattern. Moreover, the National Curriculum and Textbook Board [NCTB] has also been selective and appropriate with the font. The correct text font for a book can complement the author's message, and font choice is just another aspect of typesetting that can improve readability (Wilson & Read, 2016). Some unique tasks, such as pair tasks, such as task-D from unit-1, lesson-4, and page-7, have also made it unique. In this task, students are asked to converse between two of them.

On the other hand, the poems are here, introducing students to the different forms of literature. This flexible mixture of different forms will allow students to explore the diversified genres of literature. These activities are vital (Greving & Richter, 2022) in enhancing students' conversational skills, an invaluable asset in language learning.

In addition to the *English for Today (Class Eight)* textbook's focus on English language instruction, the book seamlessly integrates practical life skills, an approach to teaching English in schools that has been shown to influence students' interest in learning the

language and recommended curriculum elements (Said & Yusof, 2015). For instance, it features a custard recipe on pages 17 and 18 of Unit 2, Lesson 4. Furthermore, Unit 3 and Unit 4 delve into hygiene-related content, while Unit 6 provides travel-related instructions. These demonstrate the book's remarkable versatility in catering to the needs of eighth-grade learners. *English for Today (Class Eight)* is a crucial component of the educational system in Bangladesh. This collaborative learning approach accelerates language acquisition and nurtures an appreciation for literature, exposing students to an array of literary genres, including narratives, verses, cultural insights, and historical perspectives.

One of the strengths of this textbook is that it has informative texts which provide more than the purpose of academic learning. For example, students will know how to complete formalities at the airport while attending the first flight by reading Unit 6. Furthermore, Unit 8 has information about the first newspaper, types of newspaper articles, and how to respond to a job advertisement. The textbook has unique texts that do not hold students only in English learning but also allow them to learn the history and real-life activities such as learning about Bangabandhu and Bangladesh (from pages 47 and 48, lesson 1, Unit-5), knowing about hygiene from Unit-3 and searching for words in a dictionary from Unit 4, and getting acquainted with travel-related instructions from Unit 6. On page 85, passage B, the text starts by describing some regular tasks: make students read the text and answer the given questions, and ask students if those tasks are worthy of being printed in the newspaper.

Besides that, the accurate use of punctuation marks in every text emphasises its necessity. While areas for improvement exist, the textbook's unique qualities set it apart from conventional English textbooks, equipping students with knowledge and skills far beyond the classroom's four walls. A "language-supportive" textbook comprises two essential components: firstly, the written language suits the learner. Secondly, they include features – activities, visuals, clear signposting and vocabulary support – that enable learners to practice and develop their language proficiency after learning the key elements of the curriculum (Mardiyana et al., 2023).

Although there are no oral questions or viva exams in the exam pattern, these tasks are included here to develop students' speaking skills. The given exercises and vocabulary used in the textbook are accessible for English-language students compared to their level but are inconvenient for Bengali medium students. On the other hand, thinking about their further grade, this book has less advanced vocabulary and exercises. While it aligns with Bangladesh's examination format, there is room for enhancing advanced vocabulary and complex tasks. Hence, further exploration of the textbook's capacity to prepare students for advanced vocabulary (Sheng, 2022) and complex tasks in their future studies is required. *English for Today (Class Eight)* is easily written and has a pretty basic vocabulary that any non-English medium student will easily understand.

Recommendation

English for Today (Class Eight) is written to improve four essential skills by utilising various informative and authentic texts where students can acquire language skills and actively participate in discussions, thereby making valuable contributions to their development of communicative competence. Nevertheless, some revisions are needed to address the shortcomings in parallel with understanding the exam question patterns. The book's vocabulary should be enriched, consisting of word lists and flashcards, vocabulary games, and regular vocabulary quizzes. The exercises should be more creative and varied, such as role-playing, simulation, and interactive multimedia. Students are frequently immersed in the realms of literary analysis, imaginative writing, and delivering presentations.

Educators need to employ diverse materials, ranging from captivating novels to thought-provoking poems and insightful essays. Collaborative discussions and engaging projects are often the norm in this vibrant collaborative learning environment.

Conclusion

According to the Bangladeshi Ministry of Education, a new English textbook for class eight will be published which may cover the shortcomings. However, the critics have already pointed out some irrelevancy in contextualization, for example, less multimedia content and irrelevancy in content planning. It is to be noted that class eight will also be in the system next academic year of 2024, and it will be different from rote education, aiming to introduce students to the international education system. Realising the flaws and gaps, I can effectively improve the English textbook for class eight so that it can be implemented better in Bangladeshi education. Undoubtedly, Bangladeshi students are inquisitive to learn English as English is an international language, and language education has a long-lasting legacy in this country.

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An Evaluation of Master of Education in English Language Teaching (M.Ed. in ELT) of Kathmandu University, School of Education Using CIPP Model

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Abstract

This paper evaluates the M.Ed. program in English Language Teaching offered by Kathmandu University, School of Education, using the program evaluation model of CIPP developed by Daniel Stuffelbeam in the 1960s. The study was carried out using the qualitative research design. The information was collected via several interviews with four participants who were selected using the purposive sampling method at the researcher's and the participant's convenience. Out of four, two were faculty members teaching any courses in the program, and two were students who had already completed the program. The questions were asked on the context, input, process, and product, the four elements of the CIPP model. The study found that the program has successfully addressed the needs of the stakeholders, the curriculum and contents are directly connected to the predetermined objectives, and the emphasis on student-centered teaching and learning methodologies with an excessive amalgamation of ITCs are the major findings.

Keywords: *Program evaluation, M.Ed., ELT, CIPP model, KUSOED*

Introduction

Evaluation is one of the integral and inevitable components of any program to scrutinize the effectiveness, appropriateness, process of implementation, and future directions. Aziz et al. (2018) describe evaluation as the extent to which the preset goals are attained. Evaluation is a basis for the decision-making process. The American Evaluation Association (2014) defines evaluation as "the systematic process to determine merit, worth, value, or significance". Therefore, it is an organized process of discovering strengths, significance, and directions for the improvement of any program. However, evaluations can be of multiple types depending upon the purpose of the evaluation.

This study is a program evaluation of a two-year Master of Education in English Language Teaching (M.Ed. in ELT) program offered by Kathmandu University, School of Education. It primarily aimed to evaluate the program's significance, effectiveness, and success using the framework of the CIPP (Context-Input-Process-Product) model developed by Stufflebeam in the 1960s that projected to facilitate educational improvement via a proactive approach to evaluation (Stufflebeam, 1971). So, I tried to evaluate the program based on those key elements of CIPP.

Methodology

The study was conducted employing the interpretive paradigm of qualitative research. The information was gathered through semi-structured interviews with four informants: two teachers teaching any courses of the program and two graduates who have already completed the program. The faculty members are indicated as T1 and T2, whereas the students are named S1 and S2. The participants were selected purposefully for the convenience and feasibility of the researcher as well as the participants. The physical and virtual interviews were conducted due to the unavailability of the physical presence of the participants. The

participants were informed before the interview about the purpose of the study, and the interview was recorded with their consent.

The results and discussion are the outcomes of a rigorous interpretation of the information gathered from the participants and the literature that the researcher accessed.

Master of Education in English Language Teaching (M.Ed. in ELT)

M.Ed. in ELT was launched in 2004, aiming to prepare proficient English language teachers, teacher educators, material developers, and researchers to contribute to the field of English Language Education in Nepal. The primary goal of the program is to graduate students who are proficient in modern teaching principles and methods, conduct targeted research in ELT and their own professional development, create and deliver teacher training courses and activities for ELT instructors, train both pre-service and in-service teachers to effectively teach English, and develop ELT materials to adapt to changing needs.

The program consists of four semesters, embedding 54 credits in total. The courses contain 42 credits, whereas three credits are allocated for internships and 9 for research work. One credit equals a minimum of 16 contact hours in a semester. The courses are categorized into five major categories: core courses, specialization courses, professional courses, electives, and practical courses. Furthermore, the university ensures the timely revisions of the curriculum, contents, and the process of delivery based on the experience gained.

The Framework of the CIPP Model

Daniel Stufflebeam developed the concept of the CIPP model in the 1960s. It stands for context, input, process, and product evaluation, which are the key constituents of the model. The CIPP framework is one of the pertinent approaches for evaluating any programs, products, or conducts, though widely used in the assessment of educational programs (Donald, 1971; Lippe & Carter, 2017; Mirzazadeh et al., 2016; Shi, 2018; Singh, 2004 as cited in Burke, 2020). Many program administrators and officials employ this model to evaluate their programs or projects. According to Stufflebeam (1971), this model's flexibility and adaptability help it become applicable in various kinds of programs or projects. This model of evaluation offers not merely the final decision of the success or failure of a program but also provides feedback for the improvement in the areas needed for the future. Mathison (2005, as cited in Sopha & Nanni, 2019) regards it as a comprehensive model of supervising formative and summative evaluations of programs, organizations, systems, or products.

The following sections discuss the four major elements of the CIPP model in detail and present the program analysis.

Context Evaluation of the Program

Context evaluation bestows information about the contextual appropriateness of the program. It assists in assessing the needs and opportunities within a demarcated context or setting (Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 2007). The primary goals of this evaluation are to outline and recognize the needs of the target population and define if the program addresses the desired needs. Correspondingly, Warju (2016) also agrees that context evaluation provides the rationale of a program concerning its objectives and policies that support the mission and vision of the institution. Surveys, document reviews, data analysis, and interviews are some of the various methods of context evaluation (Stufflebeam, 2003). The evaluators look for the answers to the questions regarding the aims, beneficiaries, initial needs and expectations, and the significance of the evaluated program.

From an intensive analysis of the information collected from the participants, the study found that the program is very contextual in the contemporary context of Nepal. All the

respondents agreed that the two-year M.Ed. program in ELT offered by KUSOED has been able to address the needs and expectations of the program attendees and the other concerned personalities. One of the participants, S1, responded to the questions regarding contextual adherence to the program as follows:

> *I found it very contextual. The present-day teacher needs to be aware of various teaching and learning methods, techniques or strategies, curriculum design, material development, and training session design for teacher educators, and this program has involved us in all of these activities.*

Flexibility is one of the notable characteristics of the program that benefits the students. One faculty member, T1, emphasized that the nature of the program and its alternatives have helped it become felicitous in the present context. He indicated:

> *The alternatives of going for a teaching practice or designing training sessions and conducting training as an internship provide students with opportunities to become acquainted with the problems, issues, and needs of the contextual teaching and learning environment, which helps them enrich their understanding of the field that they are likely to commence their career.*

Likewise, the intensive integration of ICT tools in teaching and learning activities has proved an advancement and necessity of the program. At present, educators and scholars globally and nationally emphasize the immersion of various technologies in education for effective and successful teaching and learning. KUSOED stands at the frontier in this aspect, as the integration of ICTs is inevitable in any program. The institution currently runs several programs online (blended mode); thus, it is impossible to run those programs without ICTs. Although the usage of ICTs has become an integral part of the teaching and learning process, particularly in language education, many teachers teaching in many public schools in Nepal may lack competence in using technologies in their everyday pedagogy. However, once they complete any programs from KUSOED, they develop themselves as a confident user of different technologies as the programs require them to use Moodle, email, online portals, and resources excessively, inspiring them to transfer those learned skills of using ICTs in the everyday classrooms of their workplaces (Gnawali, 2020).

In addition, the students enrolled in the program claimed that intensive research projects has supported it to become a leading alternative in their selection of several programs available. The graduates of this program can quickly discover solutions for the problems they face in their workplaces. They develop competence and confidence in conducting small classroom research to make their teaching and learning procedures effective and successful. Stufflebeam and Zhang (2007) state that context evaluation measures the needs, challenges, and relevant contextual conditions. As a result, the study found the program relevant in the present context, where many educators emphasize the need for change in our teaching and learning.

Input Evaluation of the Program

Input evaluation aims to gather information to determine the resources used to attain the objectives of the program (Khawaja, 2001). The resources comprise not solely the human resources and the infrastructures but also the time allocated, the curriculum designed, and the content selected for the program. The design of the curriculum and instructional materials to meet the objectives, the selection of the contents, and the availability of the resources: human, physical, material, and the overall work plan are the chief concerns of this evaluation (Stuffblebeam, 2000; Stuffblebeam, 2003; Stufflebeam and Zhang, 2007).

The study has found that the contents and the curriculum are appropriate, flexible, and straightly connected to the objectives of the program. The program designers and the teachers

who select content as well as deliver it in the classrooms have maintained a great balance between theory and practice. Regarding the questions related to the input evaluation, T2 claimed:

Contents are directly linked to the objectives. They are selected based on the program's purposes and the curriculum, and the teachers have the autonomy to choose the content they wish. For instance, if I make my students read an article for a specific purpose this year, I can choose any others next year.

Furthermore, the teachers are ready to make changes in the content based on the needs and demands of the learners or from a discussion between the students and teacher, resulting in a notion of collaborative learning (Johnson & Johnson, 2019). All the facets of the program contribute significantly to establishing the program as a great success. Not only are the professors and faculty members highly qualified and compassionate, but the other human resources are also exceptionally dedicated and supportive. Every person is ready to help the students overcome problems they encounter. In this regard, S2 asserted, "*The professors, teachers, and non-teaching staff all were amiable and supportive. When we had any issues, they were always available for their assistance and guidance".* Stufflebeam and Zhang (2007) consider input evaluation as the assessment of a program's scheme or action plan, staff arrangement and other implications to meet the goals. M.Ed. in ELT is found appropriate in the input evaluation.

Process Evaluation of the Program

Process evaluation concentrates on implementing the teaching and learning processes, as Sopha and Nanni (2019) consider it as the plan execution phase. It mentions how the program is run to achieve its objectives and identifies the problems or challenges faced by any sides during the course. It gauges the delivery process and tries to identify the issues in the implementation and the corrections needed in the work plan for the future (Stuffblebeam, 2000).

The research found that the M.Ed. in ELT at KUSOED is running with ample inspiring methodologies. The teaching and learning pedagogies are extremely learner-centred and interactive. The faculties are aware of using different teaching methods to address contextual needs and create countless opportunities for students to take responsibility for their learning, making them autonomous learners, which is also one of the program's objectives. The teachers deliver their content using various technologies and methodologies, helping the learners develop skills and competencies to help them grow independently in their learning process. Moreover, the teachers also pay attention to inculcating the virtue of collaborating with the students. For this, the students are highly required to work in pairs and groups. Regarding this, the participants, S1 and S2, stated:

S2: *At first, we had to present, sometimes individually, in pairs, or groups. Then, there used to be comments from students and discussion sessions, and finally, the professor would wrap up.*

S1: *I wasn't very familiar with the technologies then. And you know, the use of Moodle, PPT, emails, I had to struggle a lot, but I now can handle them very well.*

The program has developed basic digital literacy among the students. They are motivated to increase their acquaintance with technology as the pedagogy is technology-based. However, one of the participants suggested that the university should focus on updating the faculty members' ICT competencies, as most teachers have basic ICT skills, but some still need updated skills. Concerning this, S2 shared his experience as:

Yes, all the faculties have basic knowledge of ICTs. However, I think the university must conduct sessions to upgrade their skills. I remember a teacher saying, I do not

know much about it when some issues appeared while we were having classes online. I used to help him solve those issues because I had a computer diploma course.

Product Evaluation of the Program

The final component of this framework is product evaluation, which evaluates the program's outcomes or products. According to Stufflebeam (2003), product evaluation identifies and assesses the consequences, intended and unintended, as well as short-term and long-term.

The products of the M.Ed. provide an explicit foundation for the claim of success. The students completing the program have become successful in bringing changes in the field of ELT in Nepal. They have been able to implement the competence and skills learned from the program in their workplaces as a teacher or a teacher educator (Gnawali, 2020). The program has become successful in producing dynamic, competent teachers, teacher educators, and researchers, which is the program's key objective. One of the participants, S2, expressed his thoughts after the completion of the program:

> *I am an in-service government teacher. We have to submit action research in our evaluation of work assets, and I did not know the format of it. I had read action research in my bachelor's, though I never did it before. However, after completing my third semester, I can plan and conduct myself whenever I face any problems in my school.*

In addition, a participant from the faculty also highlighted that the program has been able to supply the teacher educators that the contemporary job market requires. He further said that the students might not be aware of various teaching and learning techniques and methodologies when they get enrolled in the program, but after their graduation, they will be very competent and confident about the methods. He answered the questions on product evaluation as:

> *We aim to produce highly competent teachers and teacher educators, and our products have proven the success of the program. Our teacher students might not have adequate knowledge about different teaching methods and techniques even if they were practicing them in the classroom, but after they complete the program, I am happy that they can adapt various teaching strategies for one single classroom as per the need of the context.*

Many graduates of this program are not merely engaged in the teaching profession but also in helping teachers develop professionally designed teacher training. The program makes students engage and participate in several national or international conferences, fostering their exploration and involvement in global practices, expanding their horizons of knowledge, and creating a broader network in their community. In regards to this statement, S1 contended:

> *KU helps create a broader horizon for teachers and educators, providing ample exposers. I have participated in several trainings run by national and international figures. I am a NELTA life member, and I have participated in different conferences and presented a paper. It has connected me to a more incredible network of our ELT community.*

As Stuffelebeam (2000) argues, product evaluation is finding out the outcomes of a program, either positive or negative. This study found the M.Ed. in ELT successful in achieving the preset goals of producing conscious and updated educators and teacher educators. The program supports the notion of learner autonomy and critical thinking. The

graduates are capable of taking the lead for their further learning and professional development. They imply the knowledge and skills learned from the program in their workplaces explore the issues they face and possible solutions.

Conclusion

To conclude, concerning the findings and discussion, it can be concluded that the two-year M.Ed. in ELT of KUSOED is an indisputably successful program. The changes that the graduates brought in the teaching pedagogy in their workplaces and the value added to the existing knowledge by the scholars with their various studies and research advocate the pertinence and contextual relevance of the program. The provision of judicious and regular revision of the curriculum ensures the contextual adaptation to address the needs of the program trailers, the integration of innovative technologies and the upgraded methodologies, and the humility of the human resources aid the program becoming one of the most demanding and successful programs in Nepal in the field of English Language Education.

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English Language Teachers' Perceptions and Understanding of Content and Language Integrated Learning

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Abstract

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) focuses on content and language objectives in teaching and learning activities. The study has explored the English language teachers' perceptions of the Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) approach in the context of English language classrooms conducted in urban secondary schools in Kaski, Nepal. The study utilizes the narrative inquiry research design, remaining under the interpretive paradigm of the research. Four English teachers from different schools participated in this exploration, providing valuable insights that followed a systematic process to collect and analyze data. In-depth interviews using open-ended questions allowed for a comprehensive exploration of their perceptions. The study uncovered a multifaceted picture of English language teachers' perceptions of implementing CLIL. Teachers expressed varying awareness of the CLIL approach, highlighting the importance of training and continuing support for professional development. Challenges identified include a lack of training, insufficient CLIL materials, and low English language proficiency among students, hindering effective CLIL instruction. The study suggests that strengthening teacher training, resource allocation, and classroom management strategies can create a more conducive learning environment, fostering the successful integration of the CLIL approach in English language classes. The findings suggest the active involvement of educational authorities in addressing these challenges and promoting the effective use of CLIL for improved language instruction and classroom engagement.

Keywords: *Hard CLIL, soft CLIL, English language teachers, narrative inquiry, teacher development, Nepal*

Introduction

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is an instructional method where students learn a subject or content through a foreign language. CLIL is about learning two things simultaneously: a language and the content. Coyle et al. (2010) noted that "Content

and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is a dual-focused educational approach in which an additional language is used for the learning and teaching of both content and language" (p. 1). So, language teachers using the CLIL approach have a significant and crucial task to know both the language and the content simultaneously. In a CLIL classroom, students use an additional language, like English, to learn about the subject content that may be directly unrelated to the language (Eslami & Geng, 2021). To understand how CLIL works, we must look at how different subjects use language differently, the kinds of writing used in those subjects, and how students interact in the classroom. Llinares (2015) highlighted that for successful CLIL, teachers and students need to understand the different ways that academic subjects use language and how to use language effectively to learn, evaluate information, and participate in classroom discussions.

CLIL focuses on the intricate fusion of content and language instruction, forming the core principle of its application (Llinares & Morton, 2017; Nikula et al., 2016; Ruiz de Zarobe & Jiménez Catalán, 2009). However, achieving a harmonious balance between these elements remains a persistent challenge, with educational programs often leaning more heavily toward content or language acquisition (Dalton-Puffer, 2007; Cammarata & Tedick, 2012). This imbalance can affect both content and language teachers. Teaching programs may carelessly prioritize one aspect over the other, fostering a dichotomy rather than the intended integrated approach envisioned by CLIL (Met, 1998). Research emphasizes that within CLIL classes, content teachers often prioritize delivering subject matter, potentially neglecting language instruction (Dalton-Puffer, 2011; Lo, 2019). Studies reveal that many teachers perceive themselves primarily as content instructors rather than language educators, emphasizing subject proficiency over language development (Tan, 2011; Hüttner et al., 2013). This perception is prevalent across diverse contexts, leading to a lack of explicit language elements and objectives in CLIL programs (Skinnari & Bovellan, 2016). Furthermore, teachers' insufficient understanding of the relationship between language and content might hinder realizing CLIL's fundamental objectives (Lazarević, 2019).

CLIL classrooms often prioritize active language use within the content context but may neglect explicit instruction. This is due to the division between content and language teachers, leading to inconsistent language integration approaches. Researchers support a balanced approach incorporating proactive and reactive language strategies within the subject matter (Lyster, 2007; Lo, 2019). The challenge lies in the tendency of content teachers to prioritize their subject matter over explicit language teaching, hindering language integration. To effectively implement CLIL, a balanced approach considering both language structures and content delivery is crucial (Barr et al., 2019; Lin, 2016). This emphasizes the importance of teaching both the subject and the language, not just focusing on content delivery.

CLIL has gained widespread acceptance in foreign language teaching contexts, with a primary focus on its pedagogical framework (Coyle, 1999). Numerous studies emphasize the interactive nature of CLIL, promoting meaningful communication among learners and facilitating the integration of values through shared understanding (e.g., Romanowski, 2018). This interactive environment encourages presenters to employ diverse strategies that assist learners in overcoming communication hurdles (Mariotti, 2006, 2007; Foster & Ohta, 2005). These strategies often center on negotiating meaning within the L2 classroom (Foster & Ohta, 2005; Musumeci, 1996). Research on the negotiation of meaning and the interactive aspects of CLIL suggests that this approach offers learners more opportunities to discuss content and language simultaneously. This creates a more prosperous and favorable learning environment for L2 learners than in traditional ESL classroom settings (Lochtman, 2021). While research underscores the theoretical underpinnings and potential of CLIL as an interactive pedagogical tool, there is a scarcity of empirical research within the Nepali context to determine its

effectiveness in equipping English teachers with strategies to create interactive learning environments for ESL learners.

CLIL models can be broadly categorized into "hard" and "soft" approaches, with the latter focusing primarily on language development. Effective CLIL classrooms require challenging content, clear explanations, and consistent language support (Mahan et al., 2018). However, successful implementation also necessitates teacher training, resources, and well-defined language learning goals (Dalton-Puffer, 2007). Soft CLIL encompasses various models, including Language Showers (Mehisto et al., 2008), which emphasize short, intensive language exposure, and Weak/Soft CLIL (Ball, 2009; Bentley, 2010), which balances language and content. Language-Led Soft CLIL (Bentley, 2010) specifically focuses on developing foreign language competence through content-based learning. While these models may have distinct characteristics, they can be combined depending on learners' needs and teachers' goals.

Soft CLIL offers several advantages, including improved student attitudes toward learning in English (Nakanishi & Nakanishi, 2016) and the development of both language and subject knowledge (Ball, 2009; Bentley, 2010). However, successful implementation requires teachers with solid language skills and effective teaching methods (Ikeda, 2021). Soft CLIL is gaining popularity in educational settings worldwide, particularly in regions where English is a foreign language (Aiba & Izumi, 2024). However, Soft CLIL is particularly prevalent in areas where English is a foreign language and differs significantly from native English-speaking cultures (Kachru, 2006). These regions are often referred to as the "outer circle" or "periphery" of English use, with their unique English varieties (Kirkpatrick, 2010). English is essential in countries like Nepal, but it is often taught as a separate subject with limited real-world use, and it can benefit significantly from Soft CLIL.

The new Nepali curriculum includes guidelines for integrating language and content, suggesting a growing awareness of CLIL principles (SEC, 2021). The English textbooks of Grades IX and X incorporate Soft CLIL activities to align with this curriculum. So, English language teachers' perceptions and understanding about how teachers used the CLIL approach or not, how they used the CLIL approach to teach the English language in the classroom to the learners, and what sorts of changes were moving from the traditional ways of teaching to the CLIL approach. The existing literature offers insights into CLIL's potential and challenges. Studies conducted in Spain by Campillo et al. (2019) and Czura & Anklewicz (2018) highlight the potential of CLIL to motivate students and develop language skills. However, they also reveal the challenges of maintaining the balance between content and language, such as the need for adequate resources and support.

In Nepal, the English language curriculum (2021) for grades IX and X introduces CLIL as a learning facilitation method. However, due to limited teachers' professional development support (Neupane, 2023; Neupane & Bhatt, 2023; Neupane & Joshi, 2022), many teachers are unaware of the CLIL approach. In Nepal, Many studies are conducted on teacher professional development and identity construction in general (Neupane, 2023, 2024; Neupane et al., 2022; Neupane & Gnawali, 2023), a lack of empirical research exploring the experiences and perspectives regarding CLIL implementation is evident. This lack of information hinders the development of effective CLIL practices in the country. Content Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) presents a promising approach to address the challenges faced in English language teaching and learning in Nepal. While numerous studies have explored CLIL's benefits in foreign contexts, research within the Nepalese context remains limited. This research investigates the perceptions of secondary-level English teachers regarding CLIL implementation. By delving into teachers' perceptions, this study

seeks to uncover the potential of CLIL in enhancing language proficiency, fostering motivation, and improving classroom dynamics. As Coyle (2006) highlights, CLIL offers opportunities for problem-solving, risk-taking, and communication skill development, which are vital for effective language learning. The following research question guides this study.

- What does Content and Language Integrated Learning mean to English language teachers regarding their understanding and interpretation in Nepal?

Theoretical Framework: Constructivism and Holism

Constructivism, with its roots in Piaget's theory of cognitive development and Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, has emerged as a transformative force in educational practices since the mid-1990s, impacting both classroom-level (micro) and broader educational system (macro) advancements (Jia, 2010). This learning theory emphasizes the active role of learners in constructing knowledge through independent exploration and social interaction, aligning with the philosophies of Dewey, Piaget, and Vygotsky (Jia, 2010). In contrast to passive knowledge reception, constructivism speculates learning as an active process where individuals construct meaning through their experiences (Amineh & Davatgari, 2015). This philosophy underscores the importance of continuous adaptation and reconstruction of cognitive structures to accommodate the ever-changing demands of the environment (Amineh & Davatgari, 2015). This engagement has been intertwined with the principles of constructivist ideology. So, as a researcher, I implemented constructivism theory in this study. CLIL helps teachers and learners to learn language through content and learn content with the help of language where teachers' and learners' prior knowledge also plays an important role. So, I use constructivism as a learning theory in my research.

Holism is a prevalent concept in contemporary linguistics and challenges the notion of isolated definitions. As Descombes (2013) argued, holism proposes that the meaning of any word or phrase cannot be fully grasped in isolation but emerges from its dynamic relationship with the entire linguistic structure it inhabits. Central to this understanding is the concept of "constitutive relationships," as Lormand (1996) explored. Meaning holism asserts that certain specific semantic connections, often those based on inferential relationships between expressions, are not mere ornaments but rather essential building blocks of meaning. These connections are not simply adjuncts to pre-existing meanings; they are the foundation upon which those meanings are constructed. In other words, understanding a single word necessitates grasping its place within the broader area of the language, its threads woven through inferential pathways to other expressions (Becker, 1998). While the focus on inferential connections is prevalent, holists like Putnam (1975) acknowledge the flexibility of this concept. This theory emphasizes the interconnectedness of words in language.

Understanding a single word becomes a journey through this intricate network, where each word contributes to the overall tapestry of meaning. By embracing holism, CLIL excels in traditional boundaries and cultivates a learning environment where language and content become inseparable partners. CLIL teachers and students acquire linguistic skills and develop a deep understanding of content, critical thinking, and the ability to apply knowledge in real-world contexts. CLIL, through its holistic approach, empowers teachers and learners to become confident communicators and engaged global citizens.

Narrative Inquiry as a Research Method

Narrative inquiry is a qualitative research methodology that investigates human experiences through storytelling, recognizing the value of lived experiences as a source of knowledge and understanding. Rooted in the idea that narratives offer valuable insights into culture, identity, and lived experiences (Clandinin & Caine, 2013), narrative inquiry involves

collecting stories through open-ended questions and analyzing them to gain an in-depth understanding of individuals' perspectives. To elicit detailed thoughts and perceptions from participants during in-depth interviews, I employed the stimulated recall method (Gass & Mackey, 2016) in conjunction with narrative inquiry. This combined approach allowed a comprehensive exploration of participants' experiences and perspectives.

Participants

Participants	Dil	Prakash	Asim	Adhyayan
Brief Description	Born in urban, 17 years of teaching at public school, came to know about CLIL after the new English curriculum was launched in Nepal, no CLIL training experience from the authorities.	Born in rural area, 15 years of teaching at private school, came to know about CLIL from his friend. Self-paced learner, but no CLIL training experience from the authorities.	Born in rural area, 17 years of teaching at public school, came to hear the term CLIL from TPD training on CBI, learnt CLIL from his fellow, a self-paced learner, but no detailed CLIL training experience from the authorities.	Born in rural area, 14 years of teaching at private school, came to learn CLIL from the friends, online sources and compared his teaching practices with CLIL activities but no CLIL trainings.

Four English language teachers teaching at the secondary level in Pokhara Metropolitan City were the participants in this study. I employed a purpose-driven method to select participants carefully to conduct a narrative inquiry study offering comprehensive depictions of phenomena within a specific setting (Chase, 2008). This method guaranteed that participants could recount a range of experiences concerning the use of CLIL in English language classrooms. A purposive sampling strategy (Patton, 2002) was used to select the participants in the best position to share their views and experiences (Cohen et al., 2017). The key criterion for participant selection was their location within Pokhara Valley. This geographic proximity facilitated multiple in-depth interviews, fostering a richer understanding of their lived experiences. Initially, I deliberately selected four schools in Pokhara Valley as my research site. They were situated in Kaski district in the Gandaki Province of Nepal. I selected this study site as I have had a long experience teaching English as an ELT professional in this region.

Data Collection Techniques and Processes

Qualitative interviews were employed to gather participants' data, following the guidance of Kvale (2009). These interviews were designed as open-ended conversations to delve into participants' perceptions and narratives. Then, I conducted these interviews in person, building rapport with school administrators and English teachers before scheduling interviews with the latter. A pre-developed interview guide with open-ended questions guided the conversations.

To ensure data accuracy and capture the original meaning, I recorded the audio of the interviews and took notes during the process. The interviews were later transcribed, and the transcripts were reviewed for recurring themes. Saldana (2018) and Creswell (2013) suggest that marginal notes can facilitate data analysis and pattern recognition. Finally, the

participants reviewed the transcripts to verify the accuracy of the data, ensuring a thorough and participant-centered data collection process.

Meaning Making

Riessman's (2008) data analysis process for qualitative narrative inquiry involves a multi-step framework that focuses on understanding and interpreting the narratives collected. The process began with immersion, where I read and reread the data transcripts multiple times. Then, I described five key themes and patterns that emerge from the narratives after summarizing the data. Then I interpreted the themes and analyzed their deeper meanings and significance, connecting them to broader theoretical frameworks and contextualizing them within the participants' lived experiences. In the final step, I verified the validity of the findings by comparing them to the original data and seeking external validation. This process allowed me to examine the narratives to explore their perceptions of CLIL practicing in English language classrooms.

Findings and Discussion

The findings and discussion section organizes five major themes that emerged from the teachers' perceptions of CLIL. These themes include teachers' awareness and understanding of the CLIL approach, CLIL training and support for professional development, teachers' knowledge of CLIL and English curriculum, benefits of CLIL in English language classrooms on learners, and challenges related to CLIL in the ELT context. The study provides valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities for CLIL integration in Nepal's educational system by analyzing these themes.

Teachers' Awareness and Understanding of the CLIL Approach

Introducing CLIL as an instructional approach is a novel concept within the Nepali ESL context. This is likely due to the prevalence of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) among educators, with many teachers holding qualifications in this more established methodology. A key finding of this study was the concern expressed by participants regarding the limited availability of professional development opportunities within their workplaces. Additionally, they highlighted a lack of time, resources, and adequate training as potential barriers to successful CLIL implementation within the Nepalese EFL context. These findings resonate with previous research that underscores the importance of professional development, time allocation, resources, and appropriate training for effective CLIL integration (Conn, 2010; Hillyard, 2011; Lasagabaster & Ruiz de Zarobe, 2010; Pistorio, 2009; Banegas, 2012; Dalton-Puffer, 2011; McDougald, 2015).

English language teachers often express concerns about two main limitations: the strict stepping guide and a predetermined curriculum. The participants' statements highlight their awareness and understanding of the CLIL approach. One of the research participants, Adhyayan, shared :

> *In my class, CLIL is not widely used. I primarily focus on Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and rarely discuss CLIL. My emphasis is primarily on language rather than content. Even though I am aware of the benefits of CLIL, I cannot implement it in my classrooms due to a lack of proper knowledge.*

Adhyayan's story highlights that many language classrooms heavily rely on Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), with little emphasis on integrating CLIL. Even though Adhyayan identifies the advantages of CLIL, his focus remains on language teaching, indicating a separation between language and content. The main issue is the lack of proper

knowledge, preventing Adhyayan from using CLIL in his classes. This reflects a broader challenge in education, showing the need for teachers to be trained in innovative methods.

As a researcher, Adhyayan's experience makes us question the support systems for CLIL in schools. We must look at the policies and resources in place and find ways to link the gap between theory and practice. This requires specific teacher training and a commitment from the education system to include CLIL in language curricula. His perception can be linked with Wood's (2012) view that constructivism has the potential to be a compelling approach to reimagining educational practices. According to Adhyayan, rethinking the need for teachers to be trained is an immediate need. Addressing these challenges can create a more well-rounded language learning method where students can learn language skills and content knowledge seamlessly.

Similarly, Asim shared his experience regarding awareness and understanding. *If our top management promotes CLIL, I would be motivated to learn more and incorporate it into my daily lesson plans*. Asim's statement emphasizes the decisive role of top management in encouraging teachers to embrace CLIL. His view suggests that when school leaders actively support CLIL, teachers like Asim are likelier to show interest and incorporate it into their daily lessons. This highlights the importance of exploring how leadership influences teachers' motivation and successful implementation of CLIL. His view aligns with the social constructivist theories of situated and collaborative learning (Vygotsky, 1978; Lave & Wenger, 1991). Likewise, Miao, Pinkwart, and Hoppe (2006) highlighted the social dimension of learning by proposing that knowledge is embedded within communities of practice, mirroring the holistic frameworks of situated and collaborative learning. These theories suggest that learning is best supported when embedded in a supportive social context and when learners can interact with others. In this context, top management's promotion of CLIL would create a supportive environment for learning about and implementing CLIL, motivating educators to acquire more about it and integrate it into their teaching practices. Researching the link between management support, teacher attitudes, and actual classroom practices can provide valuable insights, helping to develop effective strategies for promoting CLIL in schools. Understanding these dynamics can guide the creation of policies that foster a supportive environment for innovative language teaching methods.

Likewise, Prakash also stated his story of understanding CLIL critically, saying: *Trainers in our context have not emphasized CLIL in workshops. They mainly concentrate on the communicative aspects of language learning and teaching, overlooking the significance of content and culture*. Prakash's observations of CLIL workshops revealed a lack of focus on the CLIL approach itself, with teachers prioritizing communicative language teaching. This suggests a need for increased awareness and training on CLIL's benefits. The social constructivist perspective of CLIL emphasizes the integration of content, language, and culture within a meaningful context (Coyle, 2007). By neglecting CLIL, trainers miss the opportunity to use content and language as mutually reinforcing tools (Gibbons, 2002). Social constructivism highlights the social nature of learning, emphasizing knowledge construction through interactions with others and the environment (Vygotsky, 1978). In CLIL, this interaction occurs through meaningful engagement with content and language, fostering linguistic and conceptual development (Coyle et al., 2010). The lack of CLIL emphasis in workshops suggests a traditional CLT approach, which focuses on communicative competence at the expense of content and cultural understanding (Kumaravadivelu, 2003). CLIL offers a framework for integrating language learning with meaningful content and cultural exploration, fostering more profound understanding, motivation, and cross-cultural competence (Coyle, 2007; Gibbons, 2002). Reaffirming the other participants' perception, Dil shared:

> *I am unfamiliar with CLIL, but I heard about it and searched for materials to read about it myself. I am teaching content integrated with language in the English language classroom, but I know I am using the CLIL unknowingly without any plan.*

Dil's statement reflects her awareness of employing CLIL in her English language classroom despite her unfamiliarity with the concept. Dil indicates that she learned about CLIL through self-directed means, such as hearing about it and conducting personal research, expressing a proactive approach. Despite lacking formal training in CLIL, she acknowledges its implicit incorporation into her teaching practices, emphasizing a practical understanding gained through experience rather than structured instruction.

Dil's statement that she has been teaching content integrated with language in the English language classroom "unknowingly" without any plan reflects the notion of emergent CLIL. This concept suggests that CLIL can arise organically from well-designed content-based language teaching (CBLT) practices, even if the teacher does not explicitly set out to implement CLIL (Coyle, 2007; Gibbons, 2002). Social constructivism theory aligns with the concept of emergent CLIL as it focuses on the significance of learners' active engagement in constructing knowledge (Vygotsky, 1978). In language learning, learners should be allowed to use language in significant and authentic contexts to make sense of new information and concepts (Gibbons, 2002). Dil's statement suggests that she has created these opportunities for her learners by integrating language with content in her teaching. While she may not have explicitly set out to implement CLIL, her practices likely foster linguistic and conceptual development in her learners (Coyle et al., 2010). Regarding the awareness of the policy of CLIL, almost all the participants explained that the secondary-level English Curriculum had mentioned CLIL as an essential principle of learning.

CLIL Training and Support for Professional Development

Teachers need professional development to stay up-to-date and meet the needs of their students. CLIL training can help educators integrate language learning with subject matter, making lessons more engaging and effective (Coyle, 2007). In today's globalized world, where students come from diverse language backgrounds, CLIL equips teachers with the skills to address these differences. CLIL training focuses on strategies to improve language skills and understand specific subject contents. By participating in CLIL sessions, teachers can enhance their ability to provide a more immersive and well-rounded learning experience. This approach fosters language proficiency and develops essential critical thinking and communication skills. CLIL training is a crucial element in preparing educators to address the issues and challenges of the world, where effective communication and cultural understanding are more important than ever (Kumaravadivelu, 2003).

In this study, all the participants stated their experiences regarding CLIL training and support differently. However, their ultimate case was the same: they were not provided with any training or support from the government or administration. For this, one of the participants, Asim, highlighted that *in the case of grade 10, the recently launched textbook is also based on the CLIL approach. Many exercises are designed in an integrated way with another subject based on CLIL, but we are not provided with any training in CLIL.* Asim's statement regarding the lack of CLIL training aligns with the social constructivist perspective, emphasizing the importance of teacher knowledge and professional development for effective CLIL implementation (Coyle et al., 2010). Social constructivism suggests that teachers facilitate social collaborations and provide scaffolding (Vygotsky, 1978). Patel's (2003) holistic framework underscores the importance of teacher guidance in learning and teaching interactions. In CLIL, this scaffolding includes providing clear objectives, language tasks, and opportunities for interaction. Teachers may lack the knowledge and skills to implement

CLIL successfully without proper training. Asim's statement highlights the potential gap between introducing a new curriculum and providing adequate support for teachers, leading to confusion, frustration, and ineffective implementation.

Similarly, Dil further stated*: "… I learned about the CLIL approach by myself and there wan no any discussion regarding CLIL in the trainings I attended. So, nobody helped me".* Dil's narrative aligns with the theory of Constructivism which focuses on the dynamic role of the individual in building knowledge, emphasizing that learning occurs through personal experiences and interactions with the environment (Bruner, 1966; Piaget, 2013). Dil's experience of independently learning about CLIL, demonstrating their active engagement in the knowledge construction process. Social constructivism, a branch of constructivism, further focuses on the importance of social interactions and collaboration in learning (Vygotsky & Cole, 1978). While Dil's learning of CLIL occurred independently, it still falls within the social constructivist framework as she gained knowledge through interactions with various resources and materials.

Dil's statement reflects self-directed learning, where individuals take ownership of their learning journey, seeking information and resources to expand their understanding (Knowles, 1975). This approach aligns with constructivism, emphasizing the learner's active role in constructing knowledge. In the context of CLIL, Dil's self-directed learning demonstrates self-motivation to acquire knowledge about the approach despite the lack of formal training. This intrinsic motivation is essential for effective learning, as it drives individuals to seek out information and engage with the material (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Likewise, another participant, Prakash, regarding the topic, stated this way: *Regarding CLIL, I have not taken any training. However, last year, I attended one training provided by the metropolitan education office. At that time, the training was curriculum-oriented, and the trainer introduced the term CLIL, but it was not explained in detail.* Asim mentioned that the CLIL approach was pronounced during the training. However, the focus was given to the nature of the curriculum but not to the detailed procedural use of this approach in the class. The previously mentioned excerpts also highlight that CLIL is not adequately recognized as an essential element of English language teaching within the Nepalese context. Teacher development programs often neglect to prioritize integrating CLIL principles in their curriculum and training initiatives. Given the emphasis on fostering linguistic, communicative, and cultural competence in language learners, policymakers and educational authorities should consider the potential of CLIL to address the needs of English language learners and equip them with proficiency in the language.

Teachers' Knowledge of CLIL and English Curriculum

The purpose of the study was to uncover views of English teachers' understanding and perception of CLIL practices in their teaching and learning activities. After data analysis, the findings can be explored from the participants' quotes. One of the participants, Asim, shared his experience in the following lines:

> *I have found so many texts where content and language are integrated. In the case of grade 10, the recently launched textbook is also based on the CLIL approach. Many exercises are designed in an integrated way with another subject based on CLIL.*

Asim's story highlights a prevalent educational paradigm, particularly in grade 10, where the CLIL approach takes center stage. The recently launched grade 10 textbook's adoption of the CLIL approach signals a departure from traditional classified teaching methods, emphasizing an integrated approach. Asim's familiarity with this approach attests to

its growing recognition as an effective pedagogical strategy for creating a cohesive and immersive learning experience.

Asim's experience links with the constructivism theory proposed by Vygotsky. Vygotsky posited that learning is a social process, and the CLIL approach aligns with this ideology. Through integrating language and content in a meaningful context, students participate in collaborative learning experiences. This fosters an environment where they can build upon their existing knowledge, construct new understanding through interaction, and jointly navigate the complexities of various subjects. Asim's familiarity with CLIL provides a concrete example of how educational practices can be aligned with constructivist principles, emphasizing the importance of social interaction and shared experiences in the learning process.

Similarly, another participant, Prakash, stated his familiarity with CLIL: *Regarding teaching content, I have been teaching content in my English classes, but I have been using the CLIL approach unknowingly.* Prakash demonstrates an inherent understanding of CLIL in his teaching practices despite not consciously adopting the approach. His acknowledgement of teaching content within English classes suggests an intuitive integration of language and subject matter, aligning with CLIL principles. His pedagogical approach combines language acquisition with content learning. Another participant, Adhyayan, supported Prakash's views regarding his familiarity with CLIL. For this, Adhayayan stated: *I unknowingly use CLIL in my classroom.* It shows that the participants knew CLIL but were unfamiliar with the classroom implication procedures in CLIL.

Likewise, Dil, another research participant, explained her familiarity with CLIL, saying: *So far, I realized there is content integrated into the English curriculum, but we are using the content unknowingly without any plan and procedures.* Her story also supports other participants' explanations regarding their unfamiliarity with CLIL implications in their classrooms. Dil accepted that she was unknowingly implementing CLIL in her English language classrooms. It shows that she was familiar with the term CLIL but unaware of the proper procedure for implication, and the other participants also had the same problem. All the participants justified it as a lack of appropriate training.

From the participants' understanding, I came to the idea that the teachers heard the term CLIL, got the idea of the approach themselves, and even knew that CLIL was mentioned as a principle of learning in the secondary-level curriculum. As McDougald (2015) explored, teachers actively seek informal and formal guidance on CLIL. From the participants' stories, I conclude that the participants have heard the term or come across the term CLIL. Some got the idea but did not go through all CLIL procedures in their classroom teaching. The participants understand that CLIL is a practical approach to teaching the English language through content and content through the English language. They have a positive perception of CLIL. However, they require effective training on implementing the CLIL approach in EFL classrooms.

Benefits of CLIL in English Language Classrooms on Learners

Marsh (2000) stated that CLIL can generate positive attitudes and inspiration towards a second language. So, the proper implication of the CLIL approach in English language classrooms has many benefits for the learners. This approach is beneficial because it does not just focus on language skills; it helps students learn the content better. The good thing about CLIL is that it improves language abilities and makes students think more critically and understand different subjects. It is like hitting two birds with one stone: improving English and becoming more competent in other subjects. This way of learning prepares students for

the global world, making CLIL an excellent choice for teachers who want their students to be good at both language and thinking skills. Regarding the benefits of CLIL for students, one of the participants, Adhyayan narrated:

> *...different activities happen in the classroom. I remember students being active in the class. They support one another. They cooperate and collaborate in class. I think this helps them develop their language and content also together. They develop their speaking skill and can speak fluently. They can learn many things from their friends.*

Adhyayan shared that in the classroom, students work together and support each other, making the environment lively. This collaboration and cooperation help them improve their language skills and understanding of the content. Students enhance their speaking abilities and become more fluent by interacting with their friends. This aligns with the advantages of CLIL, where students learn not just the content but also improve their language skills through working together in class.

The next participant, Asim, reported his experiences with the benefits of the CLIL approach in English language class: *Students discuss with their friends and participate in group discussions. All students participate actively in the classroom activities. Most of the students feel comfortable to answer the questions. I find students developing both their language and content together.* As per Asim's story about the benefits of CLIL, students actively engaged in discussions and group activities in the classroom. All students were found to participate actively, and a majority felt comfortable when responding to questions. So, active participation contributes to the students' simultaneous language and content development. This aligns with the advantages of CLIL, where students, through active involvement and discussions with their peers, not only enhance their language proficiency but also grasp the subject matter more effectively.

Similarly, another participant, Prakash, stated: *I was involving students in group work, and inactive students shared group work in English. I felt proud to see a student sharing group work for the first time. He was using the English language. He was confident but had some pronunciation problems.* Prakash experienced a proud moment when a less privileged student actively participated in group work, sharing their thoughts in English. A student who had not previously contributed to English, taking the initiative was a pleasing experience for Prakash. Despite facing some pronunciation challenges, the student displayed confidence in using English. Prakash's account appeals to the positive impact of CLIL, where students, irrespective of their background, gain the courage to express themselves in a second language. This not only helps language development but also boosts their overall confidence and communication skills.

Dil also supported the advantages of CLIL in English language classrooms. She narrated *a lesson that using different activities in the class can help grow students' confidence and learning.* Dil's narrative also highlighted the development of confidence among the students as they develop good language skills and content together. The findings of the texts align with the theory of constructivism and holism. Constructivism suggests that learners actively create knowledge through their exchanges with the world around them (Brooks & Brooks, 1999). Similarly, within the framework of holism, Gordon (2009) posits that knowledge construction is an active process driven by learners' engagement with the world. This notion resonates with Yang's (2006) emphasis on the integrative framework of the holistic learning theory, which underscores the complex interplay of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions in knowledge acquisition. On the other hand, CLIL integrates language learning with content learning, providing learners with chances to use language in meaningful contexts (Coyle, 2007).

The participants' narratives suggest that CLIL can foster a constructive and helpful learning setting where learners feel happy taking risks and collaborating with their peers (Adhyayan & Asim). This collaborative learning environment is conducive to constructivist learning, allowing students to share their ideas, build on each other's knowledge, and improve their understanding of the content (Vygotsky & Cole, 1982). In addition, the participants' observations highlight the role of CLIL in developing students' language proficiency. Prakash's experience with a student who was initially hesitant to speak English but eventually gained confidence demonstrates that CLIL can offer students the chance to use language in real-world situations, which is essential for language development (Krashen, 1982).

Overall, the findings of the texts support the notion that CLIL is an effective approach to teaching English to students of diverse backgrounds. CLIL can help learners develop their language skills, content knowledge, and confidence by providing a supportive learning environment and opportunities for meaningful language use.

Challenges Related to CLIL in ELT Context

While previous studies have identified challenges associated with CLIL implementation, such as time constraints and limited teacher preparedness (e.g., Conn, 2010), this study explores deeper into the specific context of Nepal. This investigation acknowledges the potential effectiveness of CLIL in English language instruction; however, it emphasizes the need for contextualization. The emphasis is not on blind cultural adoption but on using CLIL's core principles to achieve language learning objectives within the Nepali ESL context. This study identified a significant concern: the lack of CLIL awareness among policymakers, curriculum developers, and syllabus designers. Despite attempts to integrate CLIL into the English language secondary-level curriculum, a critical gap exists in formal training for educators. The participants strongly advocate for relevant authorities to acknowledge the importance of CLIL, not just by integrating it into the curriculum but also by providing teachers with the necessary training and support. This would empower educators to effectively incorporate CLIL components into their lesson plans and ultimately enhance students' learning experiences.

Regarding the challenges of CLIL use in EFL classrooms Dil explained:

We are not getting any training from the concerned authorities, such as the school administration, district education training office, etc. I know CLIL is used in the English curriculum. So I learned CLIL from other sources. Anything the authority introduces and makes mandatory will become part of the day-to-day practice. If we consider CLIL a success story in different parts of the world, it should also be introduced in this part of the world.

Dil expressed her frustration with the lack of training and support from educational authorities, including the school administration and district education training office. Despite CLIL being integrated into the English curriculum, she highlighted the need for and the absence of formal training. Dil emphasized that for CLIL to be successfully implemented, it should be introduced and made mandatory by the relevant authorities. Drawing a parallel with the perceived success of CLIL in other parts of the world, Dil encouraged its adaption in their local context, stressing the potential benefits of integrating CLIL into day-to-day teaching practices.

Similarly, another participant of this study, Prakash, regarding the challenges of CLIL use, mentioned:

Importantly, the current curriculum and syllabi do not strongly focus on CLIL; however, if teachers push for it, there is every chance it will be initiated soon. I have

read some articles related to CLIL. And with the knowledge I gained from those materials, I have been using CLIL in my classroom. That's why I have many problems using CLIL in my class.

In this sentence, Prakash wanted to say that though the English Curriculum mentioned CLIL as one of the principles used for teaching English, the curriculum has not focused on CLIL strategies in the English Curriculum. He focused that if all the teachers start implementing the CLIL method in English language teaching and demand training, the authority will bring due strategies for its proper implication. He further complained that he was getting the ideas of CLIL approach himself through different means. To support Prakash's views, another participant, Asim stated:

I find it difficult to balance teaching content and language at a time. This is due to a lack of knowledge regarding the CLIL implications in the class. We expect th provide detailed training on using CLIL in English classrooms.

Asim experienced difficulty teaching both content and language together. He thought it was because he did not know enough about using CLIL. He believed that authorities should give detailed training on how to use CLIL in English classrooms. This showed that Asim saw the importance of CLIL for students to understand the subject and improve their language skills. He asked for specific training from education authorities to help teachers like him use CLIL better. This story highlights the need for teachers to get the proper training to teach content and language well simultaneously. Another participant, Adhyayan, also had the same problems: *I face difficulties, especially in balancing teaching the subject and developing the English language. This is due to the lack of knowledge on CLIL implementation in classrooms.* The excerpt above supported the challenges faced by other participants.

This study investigated the challenges of implementing Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) in English language classrooms in Nepal. Findings align with constructivist and CLIL theories, particularly highlighting the need for adequate teacher preparation and curriculum development. Participants consistently emphasized the lack of training and support for teachers, hindering their ability to effectively balance content and language instruction (Dil, Prakash, Asim, Adhyayan).

Constructivism emphasizes the teacher's role as a guide in learners' knowledge construction (Brooks & Brooks, 1999). Holistic theory outlines the importance of a supportive and open learning atmosphere (Uhlig, 2018). CLIL requires teachers to understand both subject matter and language (Coyle, 2007). Without proper training, teachers may struggle to implement CLIL effectively.

Furthermore, participants expressed concerns about the lack of emphasis on CLIL in the curriculum and syllabi, suggesting a disconnect between theory and practice (Prakash). Constructivism advocates for student-centred learning with authentic and meaningful contexts (Brooks & Brooks, 1999). CLIL provides opportunities for real-world language use (Coyle, 2007). However, the absence of clear guidelines and strategies hinders teachers' ability to translate theory into practice, potentially undermining the benefits of CLIL.

The findings of this study suggest that overcoming these challenges requires a concerted effort from educational authorities to provide comprehensive training for teachers and to revise the curriculum and syllabi to reflect the principles of CLIL better. By addressing these challenges, teachers can generate a more supportive and active environment for implementing CLIL, allowing students to reap the full benefits of this approach.

Conclusion and Implications

The conclusion of this research marks a significant milestone in exploring the perceptions and understanding of CLIL in English language teaching practices in Kaski, Nepal. It proceeded into a narrative inquiry as a study focused on uncovering English language teachers' l perceptions in the region. This study illuminated the complicated setting of CLIL integration in ELT through rigorous interviews and careful thematic analysis. The analysis of participant narratives aligns with existing theories of constructivism and holism, highlighting the positive impact of CLIL on fostering a collaborative and supportive learning environment. The participants reported students' increased confidence, active participation, and improved language skills through interaction and group work. These findings resonate with the constructivist notion of knowledge construction through learner engagement and the holistic emphasis on integrating learning's cognitive, emotional, and behavioral aspects.

This study investigated Nepali ESL teachers' perceptions of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL). While some teachers demonstrated clear understanding, others expressed confusion. Barriers to CLIL implementation included lack of training, time constraints, resources, and a predetermined curriculum. Despite challenges, lack of support from concerned authorities, and focus on CLT, some teachers unknowingly used elements of CLIL, suggesting a gradual and supportive approach to implementation. The study highlights the need for increased professional development, concerned authorities' support, and a focus on content and culture integration in teacher training programs.

By addressing these challenges, the Nepali ESL context can create a more conducive environment for the successful implementation of CLIL. This study explored English teachers' perceptions of CLIL practices in their teaching and learning activities. The findings revealed an inconsistency between the increasing integration of CLIL principles in the curriculum and the lack of adequate training and support for teachers. While many teachers demonstrated positive perceptions of CLIL and were unknowingly implementing aspects of the approach, they expressed a need for more comprehensive training on its implementation strategies.

This study investigated the factors influencing English language teachers' awareness and understanding of CLIL in Nepal. To ensure successful CLIL implementation, educational policymakers and administrators must prioritize teacher professional development. Targeted training programs addressing the specific needs of teachers in integrating language and content learning are crucial. Additionally, authorities should consider the potential of CLIL in addressing the needs of English language learners and fostering linguistic, communicative, and cultural competence. By investing in CLIL training and support, policymakers can empower teachers to create more engaging and effective learning experiences for their students.

In conclusion, the findings of this study suggest that CLIL has the potential to be a valuable approach to English language teaching in Nepal. To fully realize this potential, educational authorities must address the identified challenges. Providing comprehensive teacher training and revising the curriculum and syllabi to reflect CLIL principles better are crucial steps. By developing a more supportive environment for CLIL implementation, teachers can empower students to reap the full benefits of this approach, developing their language skills, content knowledge, and overall confidence as learners.

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