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Journal of English Language Education (JELE) Praxis

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 elepraxis@kusoed.edu.np

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Linguistic Landscape and Language in Education in South Asia: A Critical Appraisal

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Abstract

This article examines the linguistic diversity, language hegemony, and policy initiatives aimed at resisting the dominance of English and other mainstream national languages, while promoting indigenous languages, cultures, and epistemologies in South Asia. The article critically assesses the adverse impact of British Raj and its education policies, which aimed to produce “Brown Englishmen,” as well as the recent multilingual turn taken by South Asian countries through their language education and language-in-education policies. Additionally, the article discusses the prevailing influence of English due to globalization and general public perception of English proficiency that provides linguistic, cultural, and economic capital. Nine authors from various countries in South Asia critically reflect on the language in education policies and practices, sharing the shortcomings and the way forward. The article reports on the policy practice gap, that despite numerous efforts by South Asian countries to promote and revitalize local languages through policy interventions, many private and public schools are shifting towards English-medium instruction, thereby further marginalizing indigenous languages. The article argues for the decolonial reimagination of language policies and practices. It advocates for the thoughtful implementation of language in education policies to promote local languages, cultures, and epistemologies. The article concludes that, although macro-level policies are progressive, celebrating pluralism and linguistic diversity, these policies do not align with the meso-level (institutional) and micro-level classroom practices of teachers, hindering the preservation of linguistic heritage in South Asia.

Keywords: South Asia, diversity, hegemony, language policy, language in education, multilingualism

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Introduction

In this article, we report on the status of languages in educational policy documents and practices of South Asian nation-states particularly Nepal, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, the Maldives, and Bhutan. South Asia is one of the most linguistically diverse regions in the world, with languages belonging to the Indo-Aryan, Indo-Iranian, Dravidian, Tibeto-Burman, Austroasiatic, Tai-Kadai, and Andamanese families, as well as language isolates such as Burushaski and Kusunda. South Asia is home to languages like classical Tamil and Sanskrit, with histories spanning more than 4000 years. This recorded linguistic history of the region provides a fertile area for linguistic research, including historical reconstruction, language convergence, hegemony, linguistic diversity, and cultural amalgamation (Emeneau, 1956).

These nations have shared cultural integration since ancient times due to internal migration and the movement of people to this region from other parts of the world. However, in different historical periods, foreign invasions altered the linguistic landscapes as they imposed the dominant languages of the rulers, erasing or causing the extinction of the languages of minority communities. This linguistic imposition intensified after the arrival of Europeans in around 16th century, causing cultural and linguistic hybridity (Bhabha, 1994).

Macaulay's Minute (1835) discouraged the use of indigenous languages in educational spaces in South Asia. The primary objective of Macaulay was to perpetuate the British *Raj* by instilling British values and creating a social class to bridge the gap between the masses that the British ruled and the rulers (Poudel, 2022). This Minute influenced the subsequent educational policy documents, even after India's independence in 1947. Although Nepal remained a sovereign nation, i.e., it did not come under British colonial rule, Nepal could not remain untouched by colonial educational policies. With the establishment of Durbar High School in 1854 and Tri-Chandra College in 1919 (Poudel, 2021), the British instilled Western values in the minds of young Nepalis. The case of Bhutan differed slightly from that of Nepal and other South Asian nations, as the British did not directly rule Bhutan and had no influence over its education, but rather controlled its foreign affairs (Phuntsho, 2013).

These Western-dominated educational policies played a significant role in erasing the cultural and linguistic diversities of South Asian societies, promoting monolingual ideologies of colonialism (Pennycook, 1998). Studies show that learning is more effective if the learners' home and school languages are the same. On the other hand, if the learners are instructed in an unfamiliar language, they suffer psychological trauma leading to low academic performance (Mohanty, 2009). However, in actual classrooms, most of our students do not enjoy instruction in the mother tongue, despite reforms outlined in policy documents such as Nepal's National Education Policy (2019) and India's National Education Policy (2020). In the following sections, we contextualize our discussion of the linguistic landscape of these individual nations, discussing them in the context of colonization and its impact on the educational policy documents of these nations, as well as their strategies for resisting linguistic imperialism (Poudel, 2019; Poudel & Costley, 2024).

Language in Education in Nepal

Nepal is a diverse nation with 124 languages spoken by less than 30 million people of 145 ethnic communities (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2021). These languages belong to the Indo-Aryan, Tibeto-Burman, Austroasiatic, Dravidian, and a language isolate, Kusunda (Yadava, 2007), resulting in a situation of mutual unintelligibility among speakers of different mother tongues. The 2021 Census reports that, of these 124 languages, only 21 have 100,000 or more speakers. This situation indicates that over 100 languages are on the verge of extinction due to rapid language shift (Gautam, 2018), leading to a form of mass linguicide (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000).

These minority languages have never been represented in the educational policy documents of the Nepali educational space (Poudel, 2019; Poudel, 2021). When Nepal introduced modern education in the 1950s by implementing the Nepal National Education Planning Commission (1956), Nepali gained a greater presence in the education system because the framers of these policies viewed local indigenous languages as a threat to national unity. They aimed to unify the country through a 'one nation, one language' policy. After the 1990 movement, Nepal adopted liberal education and economic policies, and English emerged as a more powerful language under the aegis of globalization, even sidelining Nepali in educational space (Poudel, 2022), despite the Constitution of 1990 declaration, which states that all the languages spoken within the territory of Nepal are national languages. However, the minority languages never got their wider use in political and educational settings. Nepali remained the medium of instruction in public school classrooms, while English gradually replaced Nepali in private schools, at least in urban settings.

The shift from English to Nepali in educational settings, particularly in the medium of instruction and the adoption of textbooks in Nepali or English, led to a challenging situation

regarding home and school language for children who did not speak Nepali at home. To understand the complex issue of the plurilingual and multilingual social construct in Nepal, we need to look back at the socio-historical events of Modern Nepal, during which Nepali educational policies evolved.

Nepali became a language of wider communication after the unification of smaller kingdoms by Prithivi Narayan Shah in 1767, as it was the language of administration adopted by the ruling elites. However, the indigenous communities remained isolated in the hinterlands due to the difficult mountain terrains and malaria-infested, inaccessible plains of the Terai. This isolation preserved linguistic and cultural diversity until recently. The Ranas considered themselves an elite class, distinct from the general public they ruled (Poudel & Baskota, 2025). These feelings of the Rana rulers encouraged them to establish a school in 1854. The establishment of Durbar High School had a lasting impact on the selection of languages in educational settings. The main ideology behind establishing this school was to educate the children of the Ranas in English, instilling Western values in them. Since this school did not enroll children from the general public, it produced a small number of English-educated human resources without a basic understanding of the multilingual and multicultural social construct of Nepali society. This school remained the sole educational institution to produce the required human resources for public administration until 1919, when Tri-Chandra College was established. Tri-Chandra College adopted the curriculum of Patna University, further enhancing the Western style of education. The People's Movement of 1951 overthrew the Rana Regime, and a new educational policy was drafted in 1956, which echoes the elitist values in its section on the selection of languages in the Nepali educational setting:

The study of a non-Nepali local tongue would mitigate against the effective development of Nepali, for the student would make greater use of it than Nepali—at home and in the community – and thus Nepali would remain a “foreign” language. If the younger generation is taught to use Nepali as the basic language, then other languages will gradually disappear, and greater national strength and unity will result (NNEPC - 1956: 97).

The NNEPC report reflects the continuation of an elitist mindset established by the Western model of education at Durbar High School and Tri-Chandra College, as the framers of these documents were graduates of this system. Their priority was to cause to ‘disappear other languages’ as they considered these ‘other’ languages a threat to ‘national strength and unity’. The first seminal educational policy document ignored the multilingual construct of Nepali society by adopting a monolingual ideology. The intention of the Commission's members is indicative of eradicating indigenous languages other than Nepali, as these languages were perceived as a threat to the envisioned monolingual nation-state (Poudel, 2019). NNEPC set the model for educational policies in subsequent decades (Wood, 1987, p. 155). Scholars like Awasthi (2008) view NNEPC as an imported ideology stemming from the monolingual nation-state concept of Macaulay's Minute of 1835, a continuation of the colonial legacy.

Tribhuvan University, established in 1959 under the recommendation of the NNEPC, gave a new direction to language education in Nepal. It adopted English as a medium of instruction and used textbooks in English, except for indigenous language-specific programs, such as Nepali and Nepal Bhasha. The notice in the Nepal Gazette stated that Nepali would replace English as the medium of instruction in universities by 1974 (Malla, 1977). However, in practice, Nepali or other regional languages, such as Maithili, dominated the language of classroom discussions. The textbooks, reference books, and assessment writing language

remained English. The Central Department of English (CDE) at Tribhuvan University attracted a large number of aspirants for English from across the country because CDE continued the elitist legacy of Durbar High School and Tri-Chandra College. The myth of learning English with native speakers prevailed when the British Council and American Embassy made experts like Alan Davis available in 1969 and Hugh D. Purcell in 1971.

The National Education System Plan (NESP) of 1971 continued the monolingual ideology of the NNEPC of 1956 in its language policy within the educational setting. It states, 'Nepali will be the medium of instruction up to the secondary school and will in general be replaced by English in higher education' (Ministry of Education, 1971). English was introduced in class four as one of the official UN languages, with 10% of total school hours from class four to seven and 12% from class eight to ten. In 1984, the British Council at the request of the Ministry of Education and Culture surveyed English Language Teaching in Nepal. The survey led by Alan Davies reported low English proficiency among school children and ineffective textbooks and teaching methods (Davies, 1984). Following the report, no indigenous languages were encouraged in the educational space; English received high priority in the classroom language. Despite all these efforts, English proficiency remained very low among school graduates in Nepal.

Following the People's Movement of 1990, a new constitution was promulgated, which recognized the languages spoken within Nepal's territory as national languages. To achieve the constitutional objectives, the National Education Commission (NEC) encouraged the use of the learners' mother tongue as the medium of instruction in its 1992 report, and also recommended learning local languages to create a multilingual society (Ministry of Education, 1992). The Commission allowed schools to prepare their curricula to encourage learning local languages and culture with the approval of the Ministry of Education. However, these recommendations were not achieved, as the parents and children were reluctant to educate their children in their mother tongues, since these languages lacked social capital and career opportunities. The liberal economic and educational policies of the government lured affluent parents to English because they perceived that these languages can widen the horizon of educational and economic prosperity. This public demand for English-medium instruction led to the establishment of English-medium schools in every corner of the country.

The School Sector Reform Plan (SSRP) (2009) allowed the School Management Committee to determine the medium of instruction in schools in consultation with the local government body. The SSRP intended to ensure that children learn in their mother tongue in the first three grades of their education. However, the authorization changed the medium of instruction from local languages to English in many government-funded schools.

The National Educational Policy 2019, approved by the Council of Ministers on November 4, 2019, is being implemented in Nepal's educational system. Policy 10 concentrates on the issues of languages in the educational space. Policy 10.3.2 encourages mother tongue-based medium of instruction where possible. Policy 10.8 manages Nepali and English as media of instruction, reflecting the country's linguistic diversity. Policy 10.8.1 provisions for the teaching of Mathematics and Science in English. Policy 19.8.2 encourages the development of reading materials, both print and digital, in learners' mother tongues to bring learning within the learners' experience. Policy 19.8.3 encourages the preservation of indigenous languages, folk literature, scripts, and culture by incorporating them into the educational curricula. Policy 10.8.4 promotes Nepali fine arts, culture, and social life by teaching school-level social studies in Nepali and encouraging mother-tongue-based multilingual classrooms. At the secondary level, the medium of instruction will be gradually

extended to Nepali and English to expose learners to broader regional and global communication (Policy 10.9.4).

A closer look at these policies reveals the age-old intricate linguistic power hierarchy of dominant and minority languages in Nepal's educational policies. The inclusion or exclusion of a particular language from the educational system is indicative of perpetual social power dynamics due to the social structures. For example, the frequent mention of Nepali and English as media of instruction, as well as the use of terms such as 'arrangement', 'facilitate', and 'encourage' in mother tongue-based multilingual education, suggests a top-down approach that can give a feeling of imposition to minority communities in decision-making processes. The central authorities formulated these policies without understanding the local-level realities and the local bodies that implement them. As the local authorities were empowered in the federal system, they converted the medium of instruction from indigenous languages to English (Kharel, 2022). This process intensified when COVID-19 forced schools to go online, as digital learning materials were not available in local languages. The policies emphasize the preservation and development of indigenous languages and cultures; however, no provision is made to encourage local communities to participate in scientific studies of their linguistic and cultural patterns. Therefore, it is not a community-driven effort in linguistic and cultural revitalization, but rather an imposition from the central body on the federal units.

These policies aim to cater to learners' interests and needs by aligning with the nation's linguistic and cultural diversity. However, inadvertent emphasis on English and Nepali is certain to marginalize minority communities through a faster language shift. This leads to the extinction of endangered languages much faster (Gautam, 2018). Despite the positive intention of these policies, they perpetuate existing power ideologies inculcated by elites due to the lack of coordination between local bodies and the central one. To achieve these goals, genuine participation of local communities in the implementation, rather than imposition, and ownership is necessary.

Language in Education in India

India truly embodies the slogan "unity in diversity" through its linguistic, cultural, and ethnic diversity. Home to 1,369 languages and "dialects" from five major language families: Indo-European, Dravidian, Tibeto-Burman, Austro-Asiatic, and Semito-Hamitic (Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, 2018), India's linguistic context is multi-layered and multi-ethnic, and its language education policy and practice a complex, multi-dimensional enterprise. Education policy and implementation follow a federal structure, as education is a matter of the "Concurrent" list of the Constitution of India, which means it is governed by both the central (national) government and individual states. The Ministry of Education, Government of India, administers school education through the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), and other boards, while each state has its own SCERT and the state board of education for examinations (65 state boards in 2023; MoE, 2024). Government-run or aided schools, along with a vibrant private school sector, provide education within a complex school ecosystem.

A wide variety of languages are used in both school and higher education. Several national policies guide the implementation of languages in education at school, with the latest three - the National Education Policy (NEP) (2020), the National Curriculum Framework for Foundational Stage (NCFFS) (2022), and the National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCFSE) (2023) laying down a road map for language education in schools. While policy is clear on foundational learning in home languages and the gradual introduction of

other languages in education for a vibrant multilingual society, the interpretation and implementation of policy guidelines is affected by linguistic self-determination, socio-economic diversity and political climate, and hence proves challenging for policy makers as well as other stakeholders such as teachers, learners, school administrators, and guardians. A large body of literature on language education in India and its challenges, as well as education reports from both government (NCERT, for example) and private agencies (ASER, IFC, Macmillan, British Council) etc. suggests that language education, especially foundational literacy and numeracy (FLN), remain key indicators of educational and economic success. In the following sections, we provide a glimpse of the complex Indian multilingual ecosystem and its implications for implementing language education in the diverse range of linguistic and socio-economic contexts in India, including the aspiration for English.

The complexity of Indian multilingualism

The national Census and several other surveys have tried to capture the diversity of languages in India. One of the earliest surveys -the Linguistic Survey of India (1894-1903) listed 179 languages and 544 dialects, the Ethnologue (n.d.) mentions 447 languages, while the Bhasha Research (2010-2012), conducted with inputs from states, reports on 780 languages (including some of which have traditionally been considered dialects). The Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution lists 22 major Indian languages and English; however, many of the scheduled languages are actually umbrella terms that encompass multiple distinct languages. For example, Hindi, India's official language, has varieties such as Bhojpuri, Gondi, Awadhi, Magadhi, and Chattisgarhi, with more than a million speakers each. The distinction between language and dialect is more a political than a linguistic dilemma, and hence it is bitterly contested in terms of linguistic self-determination by minority language groups. These contestations have a significant impact on language education in India, a matter we will revisit in the next section.

The crucial point to note is that Indian multilingualism is a layered and complex phenomenon, and languages in India do not lend themselves to hard classifications. Rather, they exist in a continuum with overlapping etymologies and cultural expressions. In different regions and communities, the contexts of language use typically converge, making it difficult to say which language one has learned first or completely before learning a second. Indian multilingualism is *characterized by simultaneous rather than sequential language acquisition*. In other words, any 'normal' Indian child may hear one language at home, another in the neighbourhood and a third at the marketplace. It would be difficult for the child to distinguish between these languages while growing up, since two or three languages could coexist harmoniously in their environment. For example, a child may hear/learn to speak Bodo at home, Assamese in the larger community and Mising in the marketplace, all from infancy. Without being formally taught any of these languages, the child would learn to speak all three languages (with varying degrees of proficiency) in the appropriate context. At home, the child may also hear Hindi on TV or the ubiquitous mobile phone, and use it while playing with Bodo and Assamese-speaking friends. Quite possibly, the child would use several languages together to express meaning, using words from more than one language in the same sentence. This is more than "code-switching" or "code-mixing", because it is likely that the child has not consciously developed one linguistic "code" representing a particular language, but has begun storing and managing grammatical forms in a unique cognitive system that allows them to retrieve linguistic elements from a common core.

Multilingualism as an Educational Resource

Although Indian education policies since Independence in 1947 have reiterated the need to honor and celebrate the country's unique societal multilingual practices through language education, a gap persists between the goal and the practice. The NEP 2020, for example, provides a compelling argument to promote "multilingualism and the power of language in teaching and learning" (p. 5). It plans to "invest in large numbers of language teachers in all regional languages around the country, and, in particular, for all languages mentioned in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India" (p. 13). These teachers would be "encouraged to use a bilingual approach, including bilingual teaching-learning materials, with those students whose home language may be different from the medium of instruction" (p. 13). Although well-intentioned, these strategies do not reflect the multilingual habitus of Indian citizens, nor the complex ways in which Indians use multiple languages fluently in society.

Another issue that policy struggles to address is accommodating non-dominant languages in education. The NEP (2020) declares that "the three languages [to be learnt within the TLF] will be the choice of States, regions, and students themselves, as long as at least two of the three languages are native to India" (p. 14) and that "wherever possible, the medium of instruction until at least Grade 5, but preferably till Grade 8 and beyond, will be the home language/mother tongue/local language/regional language" (p. 13). This horizontal listing of "home language," "mother tongue," and "local language" as alternatives to regional language obscures the vertical hierarchy of languages, which continues to promote Scheduled languages at the expense of languages spoken by minoritized linguistic groups. Although the new formulation of the NEP does not name English or make it compulsory, aspirations for English have led to its inclusion as one of the languages in the TLF and have also contributed to the proliferation of low-fee, low-resourced private schools with English as the medium of instruction (EMI). The Ministry of Education, Government of India, reports that 58 to 69 languages are used as language subjects and/or media of instruction in India (MoE, n.d.). In Assam alone, nine languages have been adopted as languages of instruction, with several more included in the basket of languages in education. However, Hindi and English continue to be the non-regional languages in the TFL, forcing many children to begin literacy in a language not spoken at home or used in the immediate environment.

Furthermore, in many states, such as Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, Hindi continues to be the medium of education in government schools, despite these states having many languages, including Bhojpuri and Awadhi, with over a million speakers. The same situation prevails in many states, especially in states like Assam and Odisha, which have, in addition to sizable populations speaking other Eighth Schedule languages such as Bengali and Hindi, many indigenous, tribal, and minority (ITM) languages. In a state like Nagaland, the situation is even more complex. Nagaland has 17 major tribes/language groups, as well as several varieties. There is no single tribal language spoken across the state, nor is there any tribal language that is mutually intelligible between communities, forcing the government to adopt English as the medium of instruction. There is also no official recognition of Nagamese, a creole that serves as the language of wider communication (LWC), which has been adopted by indigenous Nagas for inter-tribal communication.

For language education to respond adequately to the goal of education policies for a thriving multilingual country, language teaching in schools will have to follow a similar trajectory to language learning outside school. Educational achievement will have to be premised on strong foundational literacy in languages that children use to make sense of the world around them, as well as in languages that prepare them for higher education and career pathways. If the current poor performance in literacy and numeracy of Indian children (ASER, 2024; IFC, 2022; PISA, 2009) at the foundational stage of learning is to be arrested,

language education curricula and pedagogy will have to be restructured according to the guidelines of the NCFSE (2023), which lays out specific objectives and timelines for introducing three languages in education, named R1, R2 and R3. Keeping this classification in mind and utilising our traditional and historically experience of being multilingual, language education can be planned along the following lines:

- First, focusing on teaching or reading and writing in the familiar language, with the child's oral language proficiency and cognitive wealth as the base. For this, simple stories within the familiar culture should be used to develop reading comprehension of narrative, descriptive and comparative texts;
- Alongside this, oral familiarity with the second school language - which may be the LWC and already familiar to the child, or a language not available in the context - needs to be developed through simple language functions that have real-life use, such as greeting, asking for and giving information, and so on.
- Once the child has reasonable control over text reading and writing mechanics and composition in their most familiar language and have developed confidence in using Language 2 orally, they should be introduced to simple texts in L2, while continuing to develop their reading and writing skills in Language 1.
- During this period, the curriculum should be light, allowing the child to develop basic control over two languages and use them reasonably well for simple literacy and numeracy tasks.
- Gradually academic content in L1 and some content in L2 can be introduced, so that the child has enough language and confidence to learn new concepts/ideas in these languages *reading on their own*.

Only when the child begins to communicate with ease in both school languages (orally and in writing; one at a time or in a mix of both) should the third language be introduced. By this time, the child will have learned to use their cognitive skills to effortlessly sort grammatical and cultural knowledge of the languages in their brain.

Until this happens, the child should not be assessed on their ability to reproduce textbook content, but rather on their use of language to perform real-life tasks, such as recounting their daily life, explaining how they solved a math problem, or describing a familiar plant. Learning content will be much faster and more comprehensible to the child if they have developed adequate linguistic skills to read material without the teacher's translation or paraphrasing, and if the material is aligned with their biological age and cultural experience. If we agree that the key to educational success and societal wellbeing is the ability to communicate one's learning in the most eloquent and economical way, we need to reimagine our language education policy and pedagogy. This means we must work towards moving children away from rote-learning of unfamiliar content to engagement with real life problems and contexts.

Language in Education in Pakistan

Language has been a dominant issue in Pakistan's education policy since its independence in 1947. The country has a multifaceted linguistic background, with Urdu as the national language and the lingua franca. As the official language, English also holds several additional statuses, including a medium of instruction, a language of business, and an educational language, alongside several regional languages spoken across different provinces. Throughout history, Urdu was encouraged as the national language from 1947 to 1973 to unite the country, but English remained mainly in management and higher education. Urdu has been recognized as the national language by the 1973 Constitution, allowing provinces to continue promoting their regional languages. However, during the 1980s and 1990s, the

emphasis on Urdu-medium instruction increased; meanwhile, English-medium schools also grew exponentially, resulting in a linguistic divide. In 2009, the National Education Policy (NEP) was introduced, which emphasized English as the medium of instruction for science and mathematics students from grade four onwards, extending to higher education. The introduction of the 2020 Single National Curriculum (SNC) aimed to ensure consistency in education, with English serving as the medium of instruction for science and mathematics students, and Urdu for all other subjects.

Existing Language in Education Policy

Pakistan's language policy provisions that Urdu or regional languages be used as the medium of instruction in early grades. However, in reality, English is introduced early in the first primary level of education in Pakistan. At the secondary and higher education levels, English has been declared a vital and dominant medium of instruction, particularly for science, technology, and higher studies in the country. It is also important to note that Madrassa Education was generally in Urdu or Arabic, with some addition of English and regional languages (Rahman, 2016). The educational policy has granted provinces autonomy, allowing them to promote their regional languages (e.g., Sindhi in Sindh, Pashto in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa). Overall, three language policies are implemented in Pakistan, with English holding the status of an aspirational language.

In Pakistan, the curriculum includes multiple languages, replicating the country's linguistic diversity. Urdu, the national language, serves as the primary medium of instruction in many public departments, while English is emphasized as a key language for higher education and official communication. Provincial and local languages, such as Punjabi, Sindhi, Pashto, and Balochi, are incorporated into provincial educational programs to preserve cultural heritage. Arabic is taught in religious education in Madrassa (Rahman, 2004) due to its significance in Islam. The various governments of Pakistan have taken steps to encourage bilingual and multilingual education; however, differences exist between urban and rural areas, as well as between public and private institutions, in terms of language instruction, quality, and accessibility.

Since the existence of Pakistan in 1947, language policies have been controversial, and it is one of the reasons that Pakistan was deprived of its eastern arm in 1971. It was a contentious issue between Urdu and Bangla, but later on, this rift shifted from Urdu to English. Pakistan is a multilingual country, with Urdu as its national language and English as its official language, which has also influenced educational policies from time to time.

Not only that, but regional and local languages have also been influencing Pakistani educational policies (Rahman, 2004; Mansoor & Kamran, 2017). Regional languages like Punjabi, Sindhi, Pashto, and Balochi are generally spoken in various parts of the country but are not specified as being of equal importance in education. Linguistic multiplicity is not fully addressed in policy-making, which is crucial to addressing challenges in language instruction.

Challenges of Language in Education Policies

Language divide is being confronted in Pakistan. English-medium educational institutions are often associated with higher socio-economic status, which can lead to disparities. This is why there is no equality in academic institutions. The high-ranked elite class is pursuing their siblings for English-medium educational institutions, while common and middle-class people are forced to continue their siblings' education in generally public-sector colleges and universities. But, on the other hand, religious-minded Pakistanis are studying in Madrassas or religious Maktabas of the country.

Regional languages are often ignored in favor of Urdu and English, which is creating an inferiority complex among the citizens of Pakistan. However, it is also a fact that these people are emphasizing their local languages in protest against Urdu and English. Besides, the frequent changes in language policy create inconsistency in education quality.

Future Directions

A balanced multilingual approach that promotes both Urdu and English, while ensuring regional and local languages are well-maintained, is essential. Though English is implemented as the medium of instruction, many teachers require training to improve their proficiency so that EMI can be implemented effectively. Likewise, there is an urgent need to implement mother-tongue-based education in regional languages to expand the literacy and comprehension ratio among Pakistani students. Pakistan's language-in-education policy remains a subject of debate, with concerns about national identity, socio-economic disparities, and learning outcomes shaping ongoing discussions.

Language in Education in Bangladesh

Bangladesh is a predominantly monolingual country where Bangla is the national language. Approximately 98% of Bangladeshis speak Bangla (Hamid & Earling, 2016), despite the presence of 50 indigenous communities and 42 living languages, including 36 ethnic minority languages. These ethnic languages originated from mostly Indo-European, Tibeto-Burman and Austroasiatic language families ("Languages", 2022). On the other hand, Bangla originated from the Indo-Aryan branch of the Indo-European language family. Bangla has several regional dialects, including Chittagonian, Sylheti, Dhakaiya Kutti, and Noakhailla. Despite their somewhat mutually unintelligible vocabulary and phonological properties, Bangla is the only lingua franca across Bangladesh (Sareen & Rahman, 2005).

The language policy in Bangladesh was inevitably influenced by the country's political and historical background. After gaining Independence from the British Raj in 1947, Bangladesh entered the Pakistani Era, emerging as a new country as East Pakistan, a part of West Pakistan. During the Pakistani period, Urdu and English were predominantly used as official languages in East Pakistan; however, since the majority of people spoke Bangla, Bangla had already become the common language for communication in every sphere of life in this territory (Hamid & Earling, 2016). Later, protesting against the linguistic hegemony of West Pakistan, the Bangladeshi students sacrificed their lives in 1952 with the demand for Bangla as the national language in addition to Urdu.

Language in Education Policy

Bangladesh became an independent nation in 1971, and, with the motto of establishing 'Bangla Everywhere', the Bangla Implementation Acts were passed in 1972 and 1987. Bangla was declared as the medium of instruction at the secondary and higher secondary levels of education. Furthermore, some books were also translated into Bangla from English to align with the curriculum (Rahman, 2009). Due to the widespread use of Bangla, the use of English was further reduced as a medium of communication for official and educational purposes (Banu & Sussex, 2001). The language policies enacted by the Bangladesh government since Independence reflect its attempt to establish cultural and linguistic unity and homogeneity; however, its non-inclusivity of other languages, especially ethnic languages and English, in the education sector has remained adversarial among policymakers and educators. In particular, the necessity to develop proficiency in English as a global medium of communication and higher studies has become a pressing issue to be resolved in the Bangladeshi education system, time and again.

During the British colonial rule in the Indian subcontinent, which included Bangladesh, English remained the second language and the official language in government offices and schools (Ara 2020). Following the enactment of the Bangla Implementation Law, the use of English was limited to official and academic activities (Shurovi, 2014; Rahman et al., 2018). To further complicate the situation, there has been ambiguity regarding the status of English in post-independent Bangladesh, which has recently been agreed upon by educators as a foreign language in Bangladesh (Rahman et al., 2018).

One of the consequences of replacing English with Bangla as a medium of instruction in schools and colleges was the deterioration of the standard of English in education. However, the soaring demand for English as a means to communicate with international communities, pursue higher studies, and access opportunities for better jobs abroad prompted the government to introduce English as a compulsory subject in the 1990s at the secondary and higher secondary levels of education. Furthermore, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) was introduced in 1999 with the aim of upgrading and modernizing the teaching and learning of English at the school and college levels (Nuby et al., 2019). However, CLT was not implemented properly due to a lack of teacher training, a prevalence of exam-oriented classroom practices, excluding speaking and listening activities and a lack of the necessary logistic support, and all these factors resulted in the disappointing outcome of a low proficiency in English among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners in Bangladesh (Ara, 2020; Kirkwood, 2013; Nuby et al., 2019).

When it comes to English at the tertiary level, English is the prevalent medium of instruction at private universities; however, teachers mix Bangla and English in classroom discussions in public universities, indicating incongruities in language policies in higher education in Bangladesh (Hasan, 2022). Overall, the English Language Teaching (ELT) policy in Bangladesh has been termed as “fragmented and inconsistent” (Chowdhury & Kabir, 2014). The National Education Commission (NEC) in 2003 recognized the issue, stating that the lack of proficiency in both English and Bangla languages among the learners could be partly attributed to the absence of a clear and effective language policy in our education sector (Chowdhury & Kabir, 2014; Rahman, 2009). Notably, the overall concern of the policymakers, curriculum developers, and educators evolved around developing learners’ proficiency in Bangla and English as the core languages in education, leaving out the ethnic and indigenous languages.

Ethnic Minority Languages in Education

In Bangladesh, the ethnic minorities, also known as indigenous people, consist mainly of 10 tribal groups, including the Chakma, Marma, and Tripura, which are the largest groups. The other groups include the Mros, Garo, Sadri, Santal, Manipuri, and Jumma, among others. They are considered ethno-linguistic minorities, characterized by distinct social, economic, cultural, and religious lives and languages (Sareen & Rahman, 2005). Immediately after the Independence of Bangladesh, the government declared a new constitution based on Bangali nationalism as the core ideology for its language and education policy, marginalizing the ethnic tribal people and their language in national policymaking (Sareen & Rahman, 2005).

According to the National Education Policy (NEP 2010), the Bangladesh government has committed to ensuring inclusive education to establish social equity and justice (Kabir & Hasnat, 2015). Therefore, the government of Bangladesh launched projects to offer primary education to the ethnic minorities in their mother tongues. According to that education policy, the indigenous children would be educated in their mother tongue from the pre-primary level to class II. From class III onwards, they would learn and study in Bangla, which is the mainstream language. In line with these projects, the government initiated steps in 2017 to

make textbooks available in five major tribal mother tongues: Chakma, Marma, Tripura, Garo, and Sadri. However, reports indicate a shortage of these textbooks written in ethnic languages in Tripura communities, mentioning that some schools in 2021 received only two textbooks as teachers' copies and none for the students. Therefore, many indigenous children in Sreemangal Upazilla were being taught in Bangla ("Indigenous Kids", 2022).

Apart from the scarcity of textbooks, a lack of school teachers versed in indigenous languages and the necessary training for teachers has become a major concern among educators. Apart from the education sector, the tribal and indigenous languages are facing adversity in society due to a lack of interest among young learners, who are more inclined to learn Bangla for academic benefits. Therefore, languages like Rengmitcha and Kharia are now spoken by only a few families. According to Prof Shourav Sikder, "A language dies when the youth refuse to speak it. It gets lost when the new generations don't want to use it, especially because there is no opportunity for primary education in their mother tongue" ("International Mother Language", 2022). However, if a language dies, a culture and history also disappear with it. Therefore, effective measures with policymaking initiatives are in demand at this time to preserve indigenous languages and their heritages.

Language in Education in the Maldives

The official language of the Maldives is Dhivehi, also known as Maldivian, an Indo-Aryan language closely related to the Sinhala language of Sri Lanka. However, language education in the Maldives is historically viewed as a religious activity, where children are expected to perform their religious rituals, such as learning to recite the Holy Quran for prayer. For this, Arabic was taught in Maktabas (religious schools) for Quranic recitation and religious studies. This idea was closely explained by research arguing that education was then informal and community-based, with a focus on Islamic teachings (Zahir et al., 2023). In the 20th century, Dhivehi served as the primary medium of instruction for primary education, with the language also taught as a subject (Mohamed, 2020). However, after the Maldives gained independence in 1965, English became the dominant medium of instruction. While Dhivehi remained a subject, its use as the primary instructional language diminished, particularly at higher levels (Mohamed, 2020). Today, the language education system in the Maldives focuses on three main languages: Dhivehi, English, and Arabic.

However, the poor use of the local language by children may lead to a detrimental impact on the Maldivian identity of future generations, as the foreign language English becomes dominant in the education system. Local researchers have extensively discussed the pressing issue of many Maldivian children struggling to competently communicate in their local language due to the mixing of languages in their everyday use of English. Some of these arguments are linked to the education system, as Dhivehi, the local language, is given less emphasis in the medium of instruction compared to English (Mohamed, 2020). This issue becomes more concerning due to the limited resources available in the local language and regional disparities, both in terms of access to quality language education and resources.

The diminished emphasis on Dhivehi as a medium of instruction has raised concerns about Maldivian identity. Research highlights the struggles of Maldivian children to communicate fluently in Dhivehi due to frequent code-switching with English (Mohamed, 2020). National assessments reveal low Dhivehi proficiency, with Grade 4 students scoring an average of 48%, compared to 63% in Mathematics and 57% in English. Similarly, in GCE O-Level exams, less than 50% of students pass Dhivehi, compared to higher pass rates in English and Mathematics.

The current proficiency level of students in Dhivehi suggests a need for a more balanced language education policy that strengthens Dhivehi while acknowledging the practical importance of English and Arabic in Maldivian society. The poor academic performance in Dhivehi highlights the need for targeted interventions, including improved teacher training, updated teaching materials, and community efforts to emphasize the importance of Dhivehi in maintaining cultural identity. Particularly, students in remote atolls face significant disadvantages in accessing quality language education. Limited resources, outdated teaching methods, and insufficient teacher training exacerbate these challenges.

To counteract the dominance of English, the government should promote Dhivehi-language content across media, entertainment, and digital platforms. Creating engaging materials such as books, games, and films in Dhivehi can appeal to younger generations, making the language more relevant and attractive. Besides, schools must adopt a balanced approach to teaching Dhivehi and English. Incorporating cultural and historical content into the Dhivehi curriculum can also strengthen its perceived value.

Summing up, the Maldives' focus on bilingual education has fostered English proficiency, aligning with global demands. However, the marginalization of Dhivehi threatens cultural identity, while Arabic remains underutilized in broader educational contexts. By prioritizing the preservation of Dhivehi and expanding the role of Arabic, while maintaining the practical benefits of English, the Maldives can create a language education system that reflects its cultural heritage and prepares its citizens for the globalized world.

Language in Education in Bhutan

Bhutan, despite its small size, with a land area of 38,394 square kilometers and a population of less than one million, is remarkably linguistically diverse country. The country is home to 19 languages, the majority of which belong to the Tibeto-Burman language family (van Driem, 1992). These languages exhibit similarities across multiple linguistic aspects, such as vocabulary, phonology, syntax, and semantics, which highlight their shared roots in a common ancestral language referred to as a 'Proto' language (Dorjee, 2014). Lhotshamkha, also known as Nepali, belongs to the Indo-Aryan language family, which shares linguistic affinities with Hindi, Bengali, Urdu, and other related languages commonly spoken in India and Nepal. In contemporary Bhutan, Dzongkha serves as the national language, representing cultural and national identity, while English functions as the primary medium of instruction in education and as the language of technology, business, and international relations. This dual-language approach exemplifies Bhutan's efforts to preserve its linguistic heritage while adapting to the demands of globalization.

Under Bhutan's language policy, Dzongkha is designated as the official language, while English serves as the medium of instruction. However, it has been observed that Bhutanese individuals often demonstrate greater fluency in English than in Dzongkha, indicating an imbalance in bilingual proficiency. Rinchen (1999) found that students generally perform better in English compared to Dzongkha.

The increasing prominence of English and the declining use of Dzongkha can be attributed to several factors, including the introduction of Western-style education, strong Western influences, the limited availability of instructional resources in Dzongkha, and the accessibility of English-language materials. Wangchuk (2019) argues that Dzongkha instruction requires a shift in pedagogical methods, as the current approach, which relies heavily on rote memorization and reprimand, is ill-suited for a liberal education system. He further emphasizes that language instruction must account for the cognitive and linguistic

realities of learners, recognizing that individuals have diverse ways of acquiring and understanding new languages.

Until the 1960s, Bhutan did not have an official language policy, and no spoken language was designated as the national language. This lack of recognition was largely because none of the Tibeto-Burman languages spoken in the region had evolved into a written form (Dorjee, 2014). Despite Dzongkha being regarded as a symbol of national identity and cultural heritage, learners often find it difficult to learn. This challenge arises from the scarcity of educational resources and the extensive use of Choekey (classical Tibetan) in Dzongkha instruction (Tenzin, 2002).

Bhutan's language policy is firmly rooted in its Constitution, which serves as the highest legal authority. Article 1, Section 8, proclaims, "Dzongkha is the national language of Bhutan," and Article 4, Section 1, emphasizes the preservation, protection, and promotion of "language" and "literature" as integral aspects of Bhutan's cultural heritage. This official language policy provides a solid foundation for advancing Dzongkha as the national language while also emphasizing the preservation of the country's rich linguistic diversity.

The country's educational policy further emphasizes multilingualism, promoting proficiency in local minority languages, Dzongkha, and English (Dukpa, 2019). The School Education and Research Unit (2012) describes the gradual shift from home languages to Dzongkha and eventually to English as a "golden balance" that fosters both multicultural identity and multilingual competence (p. 133). However, the curriculum excludes minority languages, leaving their preservation entirely to families, as students are expected to acquire their home languages at home while learning Dzongkha and English at school (School Education and Research Unit, 2012, p. 103). Despite the Dzongkha Development Commission's efforts to promote Dzongkha, many schools have policies that prioritize the use of English within their premises. For instance, students are often penalized for not speaking English on school grounds. This practice reflects the reality that, apart from the Dzongkha subject, all other subjects are taught and assessed in English.

Conclusion

In this article, we explored the scenario of language in education policies and practices in South Asian countries. Analyzing language in educational policies and practices of South Asian nations, we reveal that colonial historical forces and ruling classes significantly influenced the choice of language and its use in education. The hegemonic influence of ruling elites and their ideologies also impacted the preferences of entities at the bottom of the language pyramid. From the country-specific discussions, we have drawn some generic but telling insights and conclusions.

The language demographic data reveal that all South Asian countries are rich in linguistic diversity. Very few people in South Asia grow up with a single language. Whether they undergo simultaneous rather than sequential language acquisition or learning a second language outside home, multilingualism is the everyday reality. However, the diversity appears to be dwindling with the passage of time. Firstly, the British *Raj* introduced English to South Asia; although the British left, their legacy, including the English language, remained not only in the former colonies but also in Bhutan and Nepal, which had adopted the Western model of education through the colonies. English is now treated either as the official language or as an alternative to the national official language, or as an adjacent language, leading to the rise of English.

The language policies in these countries have aimed to cater to learners' interests and needs in recent decades by aligning with the nation's linguistic and cultural diversity. The

policies have also tried to address the voices of minority language speakers, recognizing that the policies should also help preserve these languages. However, inadvertent emphasis by common people on English and the mainstream national language is causing the marginalization of minority communities through a faster language shift and imminent language deaths.

The literature shows a tendency towards dissent regarding the rise of English and national language hegemony, which has led to the decline and death of local languages; ironically, however, the higher the dissent, the stronger the demand for learning English. This has led to the government's explicit policies being appropriated, resulting in EMI practices. EMI not only helped boost the presence of English in education but also the production of school graduates who perform better in English than in the national languages. Bhutan explicitly shows this situation. The literature also highlights concerns about countering the dominance of English and the national dominant language by creating an equitable situation to help preserve the linguistic diversity of the subcontinent.

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Split-up Identity: Reading Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake* Geo-critically

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Abstract

*Jhumpa Lahiri's writings are often marked by the constant tension between domesticity and foreignness, and she has explored this theme through her own multicultural self, which emerges from the crossroads of three different continents. She was born in London to Bengali parents, brought up in New England, USA, and is currently living in Italy, where she writes in the Italian language to forge a deeper connection with it. Her multicultural perspective influences the characters in her fiction and short stories, constantly challenging cultural monopolies and the constraints of identity politics. Her debut fiction, titled *The Namesake*, explores the problem of ambivalence in multicultural situations, which leads its protagonists into a space of identity crisis. Despite being originally Indian diaspora, Gogol, the male protagonist, looks upon himself as an American. At the same time, his mother Ashima Ganguli remains in the cleavage of anxiety and ambivalence. This predicament can be interpreted as a consequence of the conflict between dominance and disavowal. They work in parallel, leading them to a situation where they are thrown into the site located between becoming and non-becoming. This qualitative paper, which appears to inspire subsequent researchers to explore this field further, seeks to demonstrate geocritically how split identities are constructed in the current context of glocalization and transnationalism. The research will draw on the theoretical frameworks of postcolonial diaspora theories and geocriticism.*

Keywords: *Diaspora, anxiety, duality, domesticity, foreignness*

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Introduction

Geocriticism, comparatively a recent framework of interpretation for literary texts, has garnered significant attention from literary critics worldwide as literature assumes a multidisciplinary disposition due to its capacity to encompass diverse issues related to human life. It correlates the philosophical concept of derangement, dislocation, and deterritorialization. Nowadays, diaspora literature is starting to borrow theoretical frameworks from geocriticism for its interpretation, as the space is transgressive and the geographical cartography is ever-changing due to geopolitical crises, natural calamities associated with rising global temperatures, and the frequent shifting of human locations. All

these processes remarkably affect and effect the cultural amalgamation and orientation. Even Homi Bhabha's conception of 'mimicry', Edward Soja's 'third space', gets intertextualized with the theoretical framework of geo-criticism. Due to its delicate connection with issues such as diaspora, derangement, cultural anxiety, and in-betweenness, as underlying themes, Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake* deserves to be explored from a geocritical perspective.

The Namesake deserves an in-depth geo-critical analysis for its spatial and temporal significance. Like her other novels, this fiction, too, bears such a disposition because of the author's own geographical location. Her debut fiction, titled *The Namesake*, explores the issue of ambivalence in a multicultural context closely tied to the geopolitical landscape of the period, characterized by an uncertain shift in geopolitical realities, the pervasive influence of globalization, the corporatization of the economy, cultural imperialism, and the ongoing paradigm shift in ecology. In the face of all these immensely influential power dynamics, all the major characters of *The Namesake* proceed towards the pit of split identity. Despite being originally Indian diaspora, Gogol, one of the protagonists, looks upon himself as an American. At the same time, his mother Ashima Ganguli remains in the cleavage of anxiety and ambivalence. This situation can be interpreted as a consequence of the conflict between dominance and disavowal. They work in parallel, which leads them to a situation where they are thrown into a site located between becoming and unbecoming.

At this point, it may not sound irrelevant if the delineation accommodates Shakespeare's Hamlet's reflection on the multi-dimensionality of humans while tactfully criticizing his friends Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, who are, after being appointed by Claudius, dubiously spying upon him, though superficially they continue pretending to be his friends. In his words:

What piece of work is a man, how noble in reason, how infinite in faculties, in form and moving how express and admirable, in action how like an angel, in apprehension how like a god: the beauty of the world, the paragon of animals— and yet to me, what is this quintessence of dust? (Shakespeare, 1982)

The immensity of man's capacity for adaptability impresses Hamlet, and at the same time, he does not forget to mention the stern reality that, despite all the excellences, man is the quintessence of dust; that is, crudeness and liminality define the 'self' of an individual, however special he claims to be. To Hamlet, man's multifaceted capacity makes him the crown of the creation, and at the same time, it leads him to perennial anxiety. In the same vein, the present era vehemently experiences the undercurrents of the ambiance where regionality is being constantly challenged by globality, and collective consciousness is contested by the alienation and the compartmentalization of the self, and consequently, the paradigm of identity with all its characteristic liquidity keeps transforming, deranging, and dislocating in terms of power relations. That is why Salman Rushdie claims, "*Our identity is at once plural and partial*" (Rushdie, 1992). Identity is not monolithic, and it is highly contextual. Different contexts bring about different experiences, which construct identity—essentially polyphonic — and create the disposition of the contrapuntal and multilayered self, being both homogeneous and heterogeneous. It is tentative, and simultaneously ambivalent, marked by pluralism loosely analogous with multiculturalism, and thus it formulates a condition "*which is used to describe societies in which no single system, based on religion, class or creed, predominates*" (Thiem, 2003). Such an environment accommodates tolerance and cultural diversity. But the multi-voicedness inherent in this environment tends to create anxiety among those who try to maintain connectivity between what they have left behind and what they are presently exposed to. In such an environment, apprehension of losing one's self-identity works powerfully. The apprehension of the fragmented self persuades diaspora

in the present world, which is characterized by “*the rise of new power centers within or in proximity to a region, altered political interactions with countries outside the region, and regional social forces that compete with state-sponsored national and regional identities*” (Acharya, 2015). Falling into such cultural cross-currents, humans now feel that they straddle two cultures and fall between two stools. Jhumpa Lahiri, in terms of her own status as a British-born Indian diaspora, presently dividing her time between Italy and New York, depicts the issue of dual identity through the characters in her debut novel, *The Namesake*.

In the context of postcolonial realities, identity has become a profoundly complex condition, given the nuances and gravity inherent in it. Even the natives encounter ambivalence and anxiety as they constantly face the waves of globalization, neo-colonial situations, and a cosmopolitan environment that consistently negotiates the cross-currents of culture. But the problem of ambivalence and anxiety is acute with the immigrants who live in a foreign country as a diaspora. The feeling of division and displacement causes alienation, which leads the diaspora to a problematic space, and Homi Bhabha defines it as a ‘third space’. A desire to be like the natives, that is, mimicry, and at the same time, a rooted sense of inferiority challenge the issue of authority and frustrate true representation. Homi Bhabha, in this connection, asserts, “*The desire to emerge as ‘authentic’ through mimicry— through a process of writing and repetition- is the final irony of partial representation*” (Bhabha, 1994). However, according to Amitav Ghosh, the modern Indian diaspora, which began in the mid-nineteenth century, is not only “*the most important demographic dislocations of modern times; it now interprets an important force in world culture*” (Ghosh, 2008). Jhumpa Lahiri specifically depicts the problem of representation, mostly caused by dual identities, in her debut novel, *The Namesake*. Her portrayal of the complexities of diaspora identity in the USA is largely autobiographical, as she herself is an Indian diaspora living in Europe and America.

The novel revolves around an Indian couple, Ashoke and Ashima, who are first-generation immigrants, and their second-generation children, Gogol and Sonia. The couple came to the USA in search of better career opportunities, and Ashoke felt proud to find his name on the list of faculty at an American university. On the other hand, Ashima wrestles restlessly to adapt to the new cultural realities. She gives birth to her son in a hospital alone, but her mind, at that crucial moment, is crossed by the recollections of Calcutta, where, during childbirth, a woman is usually surrounded by her kith and kin. Not only that, but the couple also encounters another cultural shock as they prepare to leave the hospital. They must name their newborn before leaving the hospital for the record. Ashoke Ganguli names the child Gogol, after the name of the prominent Russian author Nikolai Gogol, his favorite author, whose collection of short stories he was reading during a train accident, and was able to draw the attention of the rescuers with a page from the book that he discovered in his hand, even while lying helpless on the rubble. In Indian culture, it is usually an elderly person in the family who names the newborn. Ashima waits for a letter from her grandmother living in Calcutta, with a name for her newborn, but the letter never comes. Gogol is unhappy with his pet name at school, and if his fellow students call him Gogol, he gets angry. He succeeds in changing his name at college and introduces himself to his classmates as Nikhil Ganguli, his true name. During his college and university days, he did not visit his parents frequently; he rather dated American girls and lost his virginity with an American girl whom he cannot recollect today. Once, while coming to visit his parents during the summer vacation, Gogol’s train suddenly stopped as a man jumped out of the train. At the station, Ashoke shares with Gogol the story behind naming him after his favorite Russian author, Nikolai Gogol. This revelation creates more depression and restlessness in Gogol. After graduating from Columbia University, he starts living in a very small apartment in New York, where he dates

Maxine, an American girl from a well-to-do family. He even visits his parents with Maxine, whom his mother does not like. Anyway, Gogol breaks up with Maxine and his father's sudden demise by heart attack, Gogol returns to his mother and sister Sonia. Due to her adherence to her heritage, Ashima Ganguli wants her son to marry his childhood acquaintance, Moushumi. However, only after one year does the marriage break up due to the lack of a shared cultural context that both partners fail to address properly. Moushumi chooses to live with her fiancé, Dimitri. Gogol is left alone. Sonia chooses her American-Chinese fiancé, Ben. Thus, despite cultural similarities, the differences in the cultural context lead to a failed relationship. Gogol's mother, Ashima, decides to return to her native land, Calcutta, in apprehension of losing her own self in the cross-currents of cultures. In the final scene, it is revealed that Gogol picks up the storybook by Nikolai Gogol, which was previously gifted to him by his father.

Thus, the long and short of the narrative of *The Namesake* revolves conspicuously around the tension between past heritage and new cultures. All the major characters in the novel are haunted by the anxieties and angst emanating from the dynamics of identity, specifically, dual identities experienced mostly by immigrants who are recklessly trying to reconcile two heterogeneous cultural realities. All the characters encounter the pressures of assimilation in a new situation characterized by new modes of festivals, rituals, and traditions. In fact, "*The clash between cultural traditions and the pressures of assimilation is one of the themes of the novel*" (Parameswari & Raj, 2023). All the major characters desperately wrestle with the cleavage marked by ambivalence, emerging from their desire to assimilate, while simultaneously alienating themselves from the crosscurrents of cultures and heritage. This confusion creates dual identities, characterized by an associative and dissociative disposition.

Literature Review

To explore the issue of dual identities, it is relevant at this point to determine the cultural location of Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake*. The novel belongs to a new category of Indian fiction that emerged in the 1980s. In relation to its form, content, and politics, it may be termed the "transnational Indian novel" in English, a concept that can be traced back to Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*, published in 1981. Prominent postcolonial critic Pramod K. Nayar encapsulates them into a genre named "*global Indian novel in English*" and prefers to use the term 'transnational' to diasporic because the former suggests many homes, not two, as it is found in the concept of diaspora, which is mostly marked for its linearity (Nayar, 2014). Nayar refers to Cohen's definition of diaspora in which the individual finds linkage to both the former home and the present one, "*to a culture left behind and a culture now adopted*" (Nayar, 2014).

On the other hand, transnational suggests many homes, floating conditions of borderlessness, and in this connection, the narrative of *The Namesake* depicts the protagonists, such as, Gogol, Ashima, Moushumi and Sonia who are consistently shifting to many different places, e. g. Massachusetts, Boston, New York and some other locations in search of an objective, that is, peace and stability of mind which they never avail. Gogol grows angry, irritated, and restless, and all these mental proclivities are rooted in profound feelings of displacement, loss of identity, and a fragile 'self'. He always feels de-territorialized and hence restlessly searches for re-territorialization, though in reality, he fails to bring things together. To Ashoke, home constantly shifts; to him, home is more than a site—it is merely a concept, and so he adapts well to his new place in a new country. He enjoys his career as a university faculty member. On the other hand, to Ashima, the USA is a contrast, a binary opposition to her home left behind in Calcutta. She never feels at home in

the USA, and hence she endlessly struggles to remain in touch with her heritage that she left many years ago with her husband. She, as a consequence, wants Gogol should marry Moushumi, not the American girl Maxine, and it is merely a frail attempt to connect her present place with the heritage she has left behind. However, she is frustrated after the breakup of her marriage to Gogol, which occurred within just one year. At last, she intends to return to Calcutta, and thus, she continually finds herself in 'in-betweenness' and encounters the problem of recreating her own self topologically. On the other hand, both Gogol and his sister Sonia represent themselves as transnational individuals, always shifting the paradigm of their adaptability. Gogol's relationship with Maxine fails. His marriage to Moushumi breaks up, but he remains in the USA, with a view to preparing for a new emerging situation that will bring about a coalescence of history, culture, and heritage. Sonia's marriage to an American-Chinese man suggests her capacity to embrace multiple cultural adaptations, an unavoidable reality in the emerging situation of globality and transnationality.

Again, the naming of the protagonist, that is, 'Gogol', contributes to the formation of his complicated identity. Naming, as Kenyan postcolonial theorist and writer Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1993) suggests, is a political act, a strategy of Othering, alienation, and transformation into a new self. Ashoke Ganguli's choice of pet name for his son, from the Russian language, interprets his complicated unconscious, which, according to Jacques Lacan, is structured like language. The sound 'Gogol' is neither Bengali nor American. It is from a third language, that is, the Russian language, which interprets the location of his own self, that is, the 'Third space', a site of ambivalence, anxiety, interruptions, and innovations. True, "*Language is one of the 'medias' through which thoughts, ideas, and feelings are represented in a culture*" (Hall, 2003b). Homi Bhabha interprets the role of this spatiality in the following words:

The borderline work of culture demands an encounter with 'newness' that is not part of the continuum of past and present. It creates a sense of the new as an insurgent act of cultural translation. Such art does not merely recall the past as a social cause or aesthetic precedent; it renews the past, refiguring it as a contingent 'in-between' space that innovates and interrupts the performance of the present. (Bhabha, 1994)

Innovation and interruption form a dialectical unity, and cognitive dialogism usually constructs a new identity. But the construction process is interfered with by the absence or fragility of language, which, according to Ngũgĩ, is "*a carrier of history and culture built into the process of communication over time*" (Thiong'o, 1993). But language, a potent means of representation, is lost with Ashoke Ganguli. In relation to the social and economic status, Ashoke represents the predominant class of the society, and languages, as Ngũgĩ believes, are lost when "*the predominant class in society has no use for them*" (Thiong'o, 1993). As colonialism functions deliberately with a view to fossilizing the victims' cultures, in the same way, the neo-colonial situation with colonial legacy patronized by the First World capitalist countries works for transforming the immigrants or diaspora into a cultural 'Other'. This process is vividly illustrated in the case of Gogol, who is not satisfied with his name, nor can he adhere to his good name, 'Nikhil Ganguli,' which is close to his cultural heritage. He rather sways between these two, just like a see-saw, a typical condition of those living in the 'Third space', in between becoming and unbecoming.

The character of Ashima Ganguli may aptly interpret the concept of 'third space'. She, throughout her stay in the USA, struggles fruitlessly to bring the two different cultures closer to each other. On different occasions, she organizes gatherings of the local people, mostly Indians living in the neighborhood. She prepares Indian recipes with American ingredients. She speaks Bengali at home, performs puja, and calls Brahmins for rituals. She

tells her children Indian mythological tales. But at the same time, she feels compelled to live in the USA. Metaphorically interpreted, it is akin to an attempt to achieve cultural synthesis. However, she fails, and her realization is horrifying. To her, living in a foreign country is like being in a state of perpetual pregnancy. In the narrator's words:

For being a foreigner, Ashima is beginning to realize, is a sort of lifelong pregnancy—a perpetual wait, a constant burden, a continuous feeling out of sorts. It is an ongoing responsibility, a parenthesis in what had once been ordinary life, only to discover that the previous life has vanished, replaced by something more complicated and demanding. Like pregnancy, being a foreigner, Ashima believes, is something that elicits the same curiosity from strangers, the same combination of pity and respect. (Lahiri, 2004)

The duality that readers find in her character is that she spends almost her whole life in the USA, yet experiences a sense of pity and respect, which creates a hyphenated identity. Actually, like Jhumpa Lahiri herself, “[H]er experience arguably possesses elements of the immigrant and the emigrant, oriented in two different directions” (Pireddu, 2021). One is towards the US, and the other is towards India. Her name ironically means ‘limitlessness’, but she cannot cross the border of her own Indian culture. She thoroughly puts on a sari, and when in the hospital, she is asked to put on a knee-length skirt; she feels embarrassed. She does not call her husband by his name, as is typical of a typical Indian wife, and reads the Bengali magazine *Desh*. “*The printed pages of Bengali type, slightly rough to the touch, are perpetual comfort to her*” (Lahiri, 2004). She sticks to her Bengali heritage even though she comes to America only to perform her duty to her husband as a submissive, typical Indian wife, shaped and controlled by the patriarchal social dynamics. Actually, “*She was torn apart between her duty and her unconscious will to retain her Indianness*” (Ghosh, 2020). In fact, cultural identity encompasses both similarities and dissimilarities, and thus, it can be understood in two ways. In this connection, Stuart Hall sounds appropriate when he asserts that cultural identity can be comprehended in two ways:

... firstly, identity understood as a collective, shared history among individuals affiliated by race or ethnicity that is considered to be fixed or stable; and second, identity understood as unstable, metamorphic, and even contradictory- an identity marked by multiple points of similarities as well as differences. (Hall, 2003a)

In the same vein, Ashima's identity is predominantly saturated with elements of nostalgia and struggles with adapting to the host culture. She seeks to discover herself in the ambiance of new cultures, even as she looks back to her homeland with a desire to return there. Even after living in the USA for about thirty-five years and following her husband's death while working at a library, she decides to spend six months of the year in Calcutta and six months in the USA. This desire, to a great extent, is a potent manifestation of her dual identity. Such a disposition is an inherent reality in the era of globalization and transnationalism, which leads to cultural dislocation, a crisis of identity, and psychological ambivalence. True, the nostalgia that is found in Ashima is not available in Gogol and Sonia with the same intensity. It is mostly found in the first generation of immigrants. The second generation tries to adapt to the host culture through the assimilation process. However, the discourses about first-generation immigrants and second-generation immigrants are predominantly fluid, constantly changing their mode. For example, Ashoke Ganguli does not exhibit the same intensity of nostalgia as Ashima Ganguli, despite being a first-generation immigrant himself. This difference is a result of variations in exposure and negotiations. The cultural negotiations that Ashoke can make with the host culture are not possible for Ashima, as, just like a traditional Indian woman, she does not belong to the employed section of

people; that is, she lacks social and economic empowerment. This segregation from the mainstream of economic and social dynamics contributes to the intensification of her nostalgia for her homeland, namely, Calcutta.

On the other hand, Gogol's upbringing tempts him to skip Indian culture and hence, he is *"seen to be in conflict with parents' ideals. While he grows up more open to American ways of living and emulates their culture and approach to life, his mother seems to be trying to "protect" or "preserve" the Indianness of her son"* (Sonowal et al., 2022). But he, too, cannot avoid the duality of identity, and it is conspicuously depicted in the scene when he introduces his American girlfriend, Maxine, to his parents and asks her to conform to the Indian standard of living. Even after his father's death, he attends the funeral rites as per Hindu culture and gets his head shaved. Eventually, to make his mother happy, he marries the Indian girl, Moushumi, following traditional Indian rites. When his marriage breaks up, he appears to be more stable and considerate, a typical Indian living in the midst of American cultural realities. Also, Moushumi, like other second-generation diasporic characters in *The Namesake*, stands for tentativeness and liquidity. She stays in Britain, America, and France, but settles nowhere permanently. She, unlike Ashima, hardly finds any interest in Bengali culture. She is a freewill agent and loves to enjoy a life free from the patriarchal dominance on the part of the husband, usually found among the first-generation diasporic women. She is always on move because of her shifting nationalism or transnational disposition, a very common phenomenon in the present globalized world. Even the character of Sonia marks the experiences of the crossroads of cultural hybridity. She lives with her mother, adapting many Indian ways of living, though she prefers American food to traditional Indian food items. She even feels uneasy in Calcutta and strongly feels that America is her homeland. Ultimately, she marries an American-Chinese man named Ben, which reflects the expansion of the multidisciplinary of cultural dynamics.

As such, both Gogol and Sonia reside in the third space of culture, a platform where heterogeneous cultural ingredients intersect and negotiate power relations, according to Edward Soja. In his words, 'third space' is the location where:

... everything comes together... subjectivity and objectivity, the abstract and the concrete, the real and the imagined, the knowable and the unimaginable, the repetitive and the differential, structure and agency, mind and body, consciousness and the unconscious, the disciplined and the transdisciplinary, everyday life and unending history. (Soja, 1996)

Power and hierarchy, which operate within the process of globalization, result in an uneven integration of human life and contribute to the emergence of diaspora. Due to cultural ambivalence, it occupies a hybrid identity space, or the third space. The strangers constituting a diaspora are simultaneously members of the local community and, at the same time, not members of the same. They are a new identity *"that might emerge by combining two identities that were previously discrete and now overlap. They are not seen as individuals, but as a particular type that is a combination of the stranger's identity and local identity"* (Smith, 2008). In line with this theoretical framework, the characters of Gogol, Sonia, and even their mother Ashima go through the process of continuous interpenetration of the universalization of particularism and the simultaneous particularization of universalism, and thus, an incessant interaction between the local and global creates their hybrid identity marked by anxiety, ambivalence, and doubleness. As hybridity encompasses multiple roles, a plurality of selves, and double consciousness, it perpetuates a non-negotiable restlessness that chronically frustrates every attempt to bridge between two different cultures meaningfully. And that is why, Gogol, Moushumi, and even Gogol's mother Ashima Ganguli fail to interact

effectively with the new situations they are exposed to due to the displacement of the location of their 'self'. They experience a kind of "two-ness", that is, two identities exist in a single entity, and this "two-ness" works potentially as a hindrance to the singularity of consciousness. As such, all the diasporic characters in *The Namesake* find themselves at the site of both challenge and privilege—the challenge of negotiating local cultural dynamics and the privilege of enjoying globalized realities and transnational synthesis.

Challenge and privilege are conceptualized by the notion of ideology, which is not "*a static set of ideas*" (Rivkin & Ryan, 2000). It is a dynamic social practice that constantly impacts and reconstructs the individual's 'self'. That is why the attempt on the part of the diasporic characters to become like the hosts never ends, and the hosts also keep chronically chasing the diaspora. The multiplicity of geographic locations contributes to the formation of anxiety, which persuades both the diaspora and the hosts, ultimately leading to the erosion of identity. The qualitative research paper, utilizing textual data, will explore this research gap—the space of anxiety and angst, which appears to the researcher as less explored.

Methodology

This research is primarily qualitative, based on textual data derived from both primary and secondary sources. For its theoretical framework, it borrows lenses and perspectives from contemporary postcolonial theories by seminal theorists in the relevant field, such as Homi Bhabha and Edward W. Said, among others, who contribute to the research objective of this paper. Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake* draws the attention of its readers to the identity crisis of the Indian diaspora in Europe. Ambivalence pursues the diaspora because the homeland they have already left behind takes hold of their memories, leading to the emergence of shadowy imagination. On the other hand, the host country does not accommodate them wholeheartedly because of the apprehension on its part to be culturally manipulated and thus losing originality, which tells upon its identity. In such a juncture, inevitably, a cultural ambivalence is created, and it leads them to create a space in between these two spaces, theoretically known as 'third space'. This qualitative research focuses on the crisis of the diaspora in the 'third space,' which is marked by angst and anxiety, which, after all, define their identity.

Result and Discussion

To infer, however, it is phenomenal that the problem of identity, which has fermented through geographical shifting encompassing both spatial and temporal landscapes, conspicuously seems to be common among all immigrants, not only in the USA but also in other developed countries, in terms of contemporary global realities. For instance, it is, as it appears to be relevant here, that many immigrants from the Middle Eastern countries to the USA assume different names to prove that they do not belong to extremist Islamic ideology. In the twenty-first century, under the pressure of enormous social, political, economic, and ethical changes, the consensus of the previous century is constantly being proven fragile. Even the concept of home goes through a deconstruction and reconstruction process, and under such circumstances, homeland turns into an imaginary, shadowy entity, not ready to welcome with the warmth and affection the immigrants expect to cherish in their imagination, as these impulses are constantly being challenged by the rampant hegemony of capitalism and its inherent consumerism. In the same vein, the host culture usually does not refer to immigrants as their brothers; at best, they are called half-brothers, not equals. The consciousness of the immigrants about this truth, which is constructed on the discursive and polemical argumentations, leads them to the necessity of rebuilding a new language from the ground up, and it can aptly redefine, relocate, and reunite the immigrants with the situation they intend to embrace in association with the warmth of heart and stability of mind. This

new language will encode justice and equity, ensuring negotiation between the host culture and the immigrants' culture, and bring about a synthesis despite their heterogeneity and differences. It is a mammoth task to overcome these differences, though; on the whole, it is a crying need to build the concept of nationhood or nationality. Actually, nationality is an act of imagining and integrating a large number of people, and "*Nationalism cements individual identity with collective identity, making them inseparable*" (Tharoor, 2020). It involves self-determination with immense power to appeal to humans' tribal instincts, prejudices, and chauvinism, and it stimulates the desire to be relieved from the "*strain of individual responsibility which it attempts to replace by collective or group responsibility*" (Tharoor, 2020). Hence, a sense of nationhood involves the annihilation of binaries or discrimination.

It is true that capitalism does not intend to bring these two parties to the same deck in terms of equal status and equal distribution of amenities. It vehemently tends to create binaries and places these two parties on two opposite poles. Due to geographical dislocation, cultures inherently tend to view themselves as omnipotent, much like gods, who often resent it when humans rival their powers or attempt to steal their magic. Gods always want humans to know their place. But "*liberty is precisely the idea that one need not know one's place but rather for oneself a place that feels right*" (Rushdie, 2021). To an immigrant like Ashima or Gogol, liberty explicates the capacity to experience the same realities that they have left behind in their home country, that is, India. On the other hand, the 'god-like'ⁱ host country, that is, the First World country, reminds them of their 'place', which is, in Salman Rushdie's term, 'imaginary homeland'ⁱⁱ now lying in their memories, not in reality. Thus, a center/margin binaryⁱⁱⁱ is constructed. This crucial and conflicting situation creates a kind of relationship between the center and the margin that "*is intricate and interanimating*" (Spivak, 1996). In such an inter-animating relationship, the immigrants are tolerated by the host culture as long as they behave like them. That is, a deliberate desire and enterprise on the part of the host culture remains active to transform the immigrants into mimetic individuals. However, on the part of the immigrants, the determination to sustain themselves remains intact. These two antagonistic forces create a kind of identity through negotiation and interaction, which can be characterized as a dual identity, and in its construction, mediate the whole fabric of society to varying degrees. It is constructed through coercion and content. If interpreted psychoanalytically, all the major characters of *The Namesake* hold dual identity. Gogol, Ashima Ganguli, Sonia, and all other immigrants can overcome it if they can build a new language, a system of reinterpreting and reconstructing their own selves. They need this language because it "*is the privileged medium in which we 'make sense' of things, in which meaning is produced and exchanged... So, language is central to meaning and culture and has always been regarded as the key repository of cultural values and meanings*" (Hall, 2003b). However, constructing a language alone cannot ensure the juxtaposition of heterogeneity unless it is reciprocated by the host cultures.

Actually, the construction of such connecting language is not possible for all these Indian diasporic characters in fiction because of their ambiguous relationship, in terms of spatial and temporal parameters, with their motherland, even if they also belong to the host countries. The impetus of such a relationship appears to be inherent in the fact that India, due to its omnivorous and generous accommodating nature, has failed to develop a singular national culture. However, Amitav Ghosh, a prominent eco-fiction author, does not call this trait a failure. He rather calls it India's greatness for its omnivorous and generous disposition of synthesizing heterogeneity. In his words:

... it is in itself the form of Indian culture. If there is one pattern in Indian culture, in the broadest sense, it is simply this: that the culture seems to be constructed around the proliferation of differences (albeit within certain parameters). To be different in a world

of differences is irrevocably to belong. Thus, anybody, anywhere who has even the most tenuous links with India is Indian, potentially a player within the culture. The mother country simply does not have the cultural means to cut them off. (Ghosh, 2008)

Such an inevitable and inseparable attachment to the mother country and mother culture leads Jhumpa Lahiri's characters to dual identities, and this is not a problem; rather, it is a site of cultural negotiations and intersections that contribute to the breadth of India's cosmopolitan nature and its generous attitude towards heterogeneity.

Historically, India has enjoyed a shared heritage of colonialism and imperialism, and its consequential social, political, and economic repercussions, thus defying "*the diktat of national boundaries*" (Dasgupta 2007). Due to cultural, linguistic, theological, and social diversity, as well as its significant geographical location, Indian nationalism is characterized by both the notion of nationalism as empowerment and that of homogenization and hegemonization. It is so because of India's past memories of the struggle against colonialism, and even after its independence, consistent riots and political and racial turmoil contribute to the development of patriotism among its people, irrespective of caste and creed. There is a common belief that "*flag independence*", that is, merely political independence, apparently does not guarantee the withdrawal of imperial processes or the end of historical processes. Rather, the process of identity construction continues through the anticolonial enterprises, as decolonization is, of course, not a panacea for political and social instability. And when some people migrate to a foreign country to settle, they face a more critical situation as the host land treats them^{iv} as a segregated community, devoid of their own land. In the face of such behavior, the diaspora hesitates to embrace the host land wholeheartedly and at the same time apprehends returning to their homeland, lest they should fail to experience the warmth of cultural affinity and interaction. In this connection, while depicting the mental condition of the diaspora, Michel S. Laguerre asserts:

They have one foot in as incorporated individuals through citizenship and the other foot out because their ethnic institutions may lag behind, either because these can be ignored without injuring the group (thereby maintaining the privatization of such institutions) or simply because their institutions may not be seen by the mainstream to be compatible with existing institutional structures. (Laguerre, 2006)

Besides, globalization poses a significant challenge to diasporic people due to its immense heterogeneity and the constraints imposed by history, society, and culture. Furthermore, the diaspora's desire to assimilate into the host land is significantly hindered by its constant exposure to global realities characterized by globalization and transnationalism. Thus, the tentacles of diasporic politics of adaptation spread among heterogeneity, marked by the consistent shift in the paradigm of identity. In fact, Jhumpa Lahiri finds her characters in this very shifting space of liquidity and tentativeness.

Conclusion

In fine, due to its involvement with spatio-temporality, transgressivity, and referentiality, deterritorialization emphasizes the re-conceptualization and de-essentialization of the nation-state, as the latter lies on the foundation of integration of the community with the same linguistic and cultural dynamics, while the immigrant diaspora carries with it its own culture and language, though it gradually tends to transform itself through mimicry. If examined through a geocritical lens, Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake* poignantly draws readers' attention to the nuances that contribute to the identity-formation process, which is essentially tentative, fluid, and ambiguous in relation to space and cultural belonging across diasporic and transnational landscapes. Assimilation, integration and incorporation constitute

a process which does not go continuously, and thus, the paradigm of identity always shifts, and keeping the above discussion in mind if the readers give an in-depth perusal of *The Namesake*, they will conspicuously feel that the novel is an essence of the firsthand experience of Jhumpa Lahiri, and she delineates the spatial dimension of identity in its canvass.

ⁱ The term refers to the dominance and hegemony practiced by the host country upon the diaspora.

ⁱⁱ Salman Rushdie's essay "Imaginary Homeland". He has anthologized this essay in his book with the same title.

ⁱⁱⁱ It refers to the dichotomous relationship between the host land and the Diaspora.

^{iv} 'Host land' refers to the country where the immigrants live as a diaspora.

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Dialogues in The Bhagavad Gita and the Pedagogical Implications

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Abstract

The Bhagavad Gita, revered as the essence of Vedic philosophy and a central text within the Mahabharata epic, offers great insights for contemporary educational theory and practice. It offers deep insights that directly apply to modern educational theory and practice. The research uses a hermeneutic analysis of key verses from the Bhagavad Gita, focusing on the layered meanings of the pedagogical dialogues between Shree Krishna and Arjun. On a surface level, these dialogues show a friendly relationship that builds trust. At a deeper level, they create a mentoring dynamic that facilitates the smooth transfer of knowledge. The deepest meaning uncovers a divine conversation that provides transformative wisdom. The findings indicate that the dialogues of the Bhagavad Gita represent a comprehensive framework for understanding the teacher-student bond. These dialogues go beyond time and culture, relevant to both Eastern and Western educational practices. This study adds to educational scholarship by showing how this ancient Vedic text relates to modern teaching methods.

Keywords: *Dialogue, pedagogy, hermeneutics, Karma Yog, teacher-student relationship, Sthita Prajña*

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Introduction

A dialogue is a conversation between two or more people that centers on a specific subject or topic. It is an integral part of many communication forms, including several literary genres, film, and theater. It also plays a vital role in our everyday interactions with other people. Genuine dialogue is not just a series of statements that one person makes to another. It is interactive, with all parties involved listening very closely to what the others are saying

(Bohm, 2004). Dialogue is a vital aspect of communication that encourages the exchange of ideas, fosters a deeper understanding, and strengthens relationships. Modern research shows that genuine dialogue is an interaction that takes place in a kind of social space where the participants listen closely to one another and, as a result, come to some kind of new understanding (Wright, 2017). Etymologically, the word dialogue comes from the Greek *dia* and *logos*, where *dia* means through and *logos* means speech or discourse. Thus, when we say dialogue, we are really talking about a kind of discourse that happens in a safe space where all the participants exchange ideas.

Dialogue in Ancient Traditions

The dialogue has existed since the dawn of Vedic philosophy. The hymns of the Rigveda, reputedly the earliest surviving forms of dialogue (Dharmawiki, 2022), set the stage for a tradition of question and answer, a foundation of Vedic knowledge. Recent research confirms that Vedic philosophy emphasizes the dialogical nature of knowledge transmission and cultural understanding (Pandey, 2024). Dialogues, in the form of questions and answers, have been the foundation of our Vedic knowledge system. The Upanishads are well-known for their dialogic construction. The renowned dialogues between Nachiketa and Yamraj in the Kathopanishad can be a good example. Similarly, the conversations between Shwetaketu and Uddalaka in the Chhandogya Upanishad are well known. Likewise, the dialogues between Pippalada and his disciples in the Prashnopanishad represent another famous example.

The Bhagavatam itself features five important dialogues: between Suta and Saunaka, between Shukadeva and Parikshit, between Jadabharata and Rahugana, between Maitreya and Vidura, and between Shree Krishna and Uddhava (known as the Uddhava Gita). This inquiry-and-response mode of imparting knowledge is also characteristic of Western philosophy. Socrates, for instance, was fond of using it with his students. His most famous student, Plato, took up the same method and even went so far as to use it in the construction of his philosophical system. In modern times, the German philosopher Hegel has often been credited with developing a dialectical method that not only examines the ideas of various historical figures but also takes the time to use it in the construction of his own philosophical system.

Dialogue as Transformation

Contemporary scholars have acknowledged the transformative power of dialogue. Recent educational research indicates that dialogic teaching and learning have gained prominence over the past four decades across various age groups, cultures, and settings, resulting in enhanced critical thinking, social inclusion, and democratic values (García-Carrión, 2020). Freire (1970) asserts that dialogue is essential for personal transformation, as it empowers individuals to engage in respectful and open-ended conversations that challenge their assumptions and deepen their understanding of the world. His concept of "dialogical love" is defined by humility, faith in people, hope, critical thinking, and solidarity (Miller et al., 2011). People may learn from one another and understand how wider social, political, and economic forces form their individual understandings. Modern analysis confirms that Freire's transformative dialogue adheres to five key conditions: equality, humility, self-confidence, hope, and critical thinking (Widodo, 2021).

Similarly, Schein (1993) perceives dialogue as a mechanism for shared learning, through which we come to a more profound recognition of our own identities and the global milieu in which we exist. He counters the notion that dialogue is an ineffective means of achieving anything, instead insisting that it lies "at the root of all effective group action" and that it enables groups to "achieve levels of creative thought that no one would have

accomplished on their own" (Schein, 1993). Recent scholarship has underscored that dialogue does something very special: it opens up a social space and thereby catalyzes organizational transformation. In doing so, it bridges the gap between what is and what could be (Johannessen, 2014).

The Bhagavad Gita as Supreme Dialogue

The Bhagavad Gita is one of the most powerful examples of spiritual conversation. Contemporary psychological research recognizes the Bhagavad Gita as a critical analysis of psychological concepts that remain relevant to modern understanding (Singh, 2024). To and fro, it examines and reexamines the nature of the psyche from the angles that are presumably still relevant to modern understandings (Singh, 2024). With all the principles laid down by dialogue scholars, it converses. Genuine listening occurs. Assumptions are challenged. A more profound understanding is facilitated. It leads somewhere, and that somewhere is personal transformation.

The Bhagavad Gita is the song of God. Divided into 18 chapters, it contains 700 verses and forms part of the Bhishma Parva of the epic Mahabharata (chapters 23-40, Book 6). The dialogue unfolds at the beginning of the battle of Kurukshetra, which brought together the entire Pandava and Kaurava armies. It begins when the mighty warrior Arjun, one of the protagonists, is struck with compassion and despair upon seeing the warriors on both sides, as well as the sins that would arise from battle. So, he turns to Shree Krishna, his charioteer, for guidance. It shows that the Bhagavad Gita adopts the dialogue as a process of unfolding the relational enigmas of truthful action, which leads to goal-directed life.

The Bhagavad Gita represents the essence of all Vedas and Upanishads. In this regard, the Gita Mahatmya presents the metaphor that captures this essence (Prabhupada, 1972, p. 30):

सर्वोपनिषदो गावो, दोग्धा गोपाल नन्दनः|

पार्थो वत्सः सुधीर्भोक्ता, दुग्धं गीतामृतं महत् ||

sarvopanishado gaavo, dogdhaa gopaala nandana:

paartha vatsa: sudheerbhoktaa, dugdham gitaamrutam mahat

(Gita Mahatmya 5)

"All the Upanishads are like cows, and the milker is Shree Krishna, the cowherd boy. Arjun is like the calf, and the wise person is the drinker of the supreme nectar of the Gita." This metaphor illustrates how the Bhagavad Gita distills the wisdom of all Upanishads through the divine dialogue between Shree Krishna and Arjun.

The Four Paths as Dialogue

The Bhagavad Gita primarily focuses on four paths (yogs), each of which involves a form of dialogue—whether with action, knowledge, the divine, or one's inner self. The dialogues relate with action, knowledge, meditateness, and devotion, which are essential pedagogical values in educational practices.

- i. Karma Yog (The path of action): It advocates performing one's duty through selfless action without attachment to results. This very ancient practice has been shown by recent research to enhance mental well-being in the workplace. It enables people to thrive, feel more positive, and be much more motivated in the workplace (Navare & Pandey, 2022).
- ii. Jnana Yog (The path of knowledge): This path is about connecting with the ultimate truth through judgment between the eternal and the temporary, the real

and the unreal. It highlights the use of the mind in examining its own nature and transcending the ego, an important recommendation in today's world, where the ego so often gets in the way of true understanding (Larkin, 2024)

- iii. Raja Yog (The path of meditation): It pertains to the engagement with one's inner consciousness via the mediums of meditation and contemplation of the divine. Contemporary investigations validate its strength in boosting the sharpness of thought, stability of emotion, and wellness in general (Choudhary et al., 2025).
- iv. Bhakti Yog (The path of devotion): It centers on forming a close relationship with the divine through love, surrender, and devotional acts. Recent research underscores its importance in cultivating unconditional love, profound inner peace, and significant spiritual transformation

Through these paths, the Bhagavad Gita shows how truly transformative dialogue works on several levels at once (Bansal & Srivastava, 2024).

Purpose of the Study

This research delves into the dialogues of the Bhagavad Gita from an educational angle. It seeks to uncover how the back-and-forths between Shree Krishna and Arjun in this ancient text can inform our modern understanding of pedagogy. In doing so, this study underscores the relevance of the Bhagavad Gita not just as a spiritual or philosophical document but as a text that holds extremely pertinent insights for contemporary education.

Research Question

This study attempts to answer the following question:

1. What insights do the dialogues of the Bhagavad Gita offer concerning educational values and their implications?

Literature Review

The cross-cultural interpretations of the Bhagavad Gita date back to the 19th century. Its appeal is broad and, importantly, global. The Bhagavad Gita has been taken seriously by German and French philosophers, by British and American intellectuals, and by figures in the world religious movement (Frauwallner, 1973). Its current translators and commentators, like those before them, come from various fields (philosophy, religious studies, literature, psychology, etc.) and reflect many different cultural viewpoints (Malakoff & Singh, 2022).

Tilak (1959) described the Bhagavad Gita as "the brightest and purest diamond among all religious scriptures," noting its crystalline clarity in discussing complex philosophical issues. In much the same way, Shivananda (1999) characterized it as "a wonderful message of hope, consolation, peace, and above all, the divinity of man." To Shivananda, the Gita not only solved all the problems of life but also endowed everyone with a kind of fearlessness that allowed individuals to lift themselves from the depths of misery to the heights of "immortality and eternal bliss." These classic reviews are supported by recent analyses recognizing the Bhagavad Gita's psychosocial and spiritual relevance for personal development and education (Bhogal, 2021).

Philosophically, Bhawuk (2011) stresses that the Bhagavad Gita "defines the purpose of work as it is to be performed for its own sake, not for its outcomes" (p. 148). This principle has influenced contemporary ethical pedagogy that promotes intrinsic motivation and purposeful engagement. Adhikari (2044 B.S.) notes the text's democratic accessibility. He states that the Upanishads are for approved individuals, the Brahma-sutras are for academics (because others might not understand them easily), but the Bhagavad Gita is suitable for all.

It is not for some specific community, caste, creed, sex, or country but is a common asset of all human beings." Recent studies resonate with this comprehensive characterization, highlighting the potential of the Bhagavad Gita as a cross-cultural educational resource (Subedi, 2024).

Basu (2012) presents the Bhagavad Gita from a psychological angle. His interpretation is that the text chronicles the mental journey of the prince Arjun, who was in a state of moral confusion and whose path was made clear by Krishna, who is both mentor and God. The real significance of the Gita lies not in any religious revelations it contains but in the way it maps the mind and shows how to use the mind to reach a state beyond itself (p. 2). This psychological dimension renders the text especially relevant to educational settings focused on mental and emotional transformation, resilience, and ethical decision-making (Chatterjee, 2024).

Methodology

This study uses hermeneutic analysis as its main methodological framework. Hermeneutics, which comes from the Greek verb *hermeneuein*, is "the theory of the operations of understanding in relation to the interpretation of texts" (Young, 2004). When it comes to the philosophy of interpreting meaning, hermeneutics is often referred to as the "art of interpretation," with the understanding that giving meaning to something is tantamount to understanding reality (Thompson, 1990, as cited in Gillio, 2021). This study's hermeneutic approach facilitates the uncovering of several layered meanings embedded within the complex text, like the Bhagavad Gita.

The hermeneutic approach is well-suited to this research because it explores multiple layers of meaning within the dialogues of the Bhagavad Gita. The verses are analyzed in their pedagogical context, focusing on their relevance to contemporary teaching and learning scenarios. Indeed, Shree Krishna's counseling of Arjun presents us with a most profound and challenging dialogue. Thus, hermeneutic textual analysis allows the uncovering of deeper pedagogical principles embedded within (Jiménez & Sánchez, 2023).

Analysis and Interpretation

The following section examines the conversations in the Bhagavad Gita closely and highlights important pedagogical principles found in the dialogues between Shree Krishna and Arjun. It especially brings to light how Shree Krishna adopts different teaching roles and adjusts his approach so that Arjun can learn better. This flexible style of teaching fits well with modern ideas about how teachers should adjust to meet their students' needs.

Effective Teaching and Role Flexibility

Effective teaching requires adaptability and role flexibility. Contemporary educational research emphasizes that teachers must assume multiple roles depending on the subject matter, student demographics, and contextual needs. As Darling-Hammond and Hyler (2017) noted, educators should function as friends, mentors, facilitators, philosophers, assessors, nurturers, disciplinarians, and content experts, among other things.

In the dialogue between Shree Krishna and Arjun, Shree Krishna demonstrates his pedagogical versatility by taking on multiple roles to effectively guide his student. The layered nature of their conversation offers important pedagogical insights relevant to contemporary education (Verma, 2023).

The Layered Structure of Dialogue

The Bhagavad Gita presents a sophisticated narrative through the conversation between Shree Krishna and Arjun. A critical scrutiny of the text reveals three distinct layers of dialogue that serve different pedagogical functions:

Friendly Dialogue (Peer-to-Peer Communication)

The outer layer establishes rapport through friendly interaction. Shree Krishna and Arjun are cousins of similar age, creating a foundation of trust and openness that is essential for effective and proficient learning. This peer-like dynamic is evident throughout the early chapters and contributes to what organizational theorist Edmondson (2018) describes as a "psychologically safe" learning environment. A prime example is verse 4.3, in which Shree Krishna addresses Arjun as both friend and devotee:

स एवायं मया तेऽद्य योगः प्रोक्तः पुरातनः |
भक्तोऽसि मे सखा चेति रहस्यं ह्येतदुत्तमम् || 4:3||

sa evāyaṁ mayā te 'dya yogḥ proktaḥ purātanaḥ
bhakto 'si me sakhā cheti rahasyaṁ hyetad uttamam

"The same ancient knowledge of Yog, which is the supreme secret, I am today revealing unto you, because you are My friend as well as My devotee, who can understand this transcendental wisdom."

This verse demonstrates how Shree Krishna influences friendship (sakhā) to create psychological safety conducive to sharing profound teachings. Contemporary research agrees that students learn best when they feel valued and trusted by their educators.

Mentoring Dialogue (Master-Disciple Relationship)

The second layer transforms the relationship into a formal instructional dynamic. This occurs when Arjun explicitly requests guidance, acknowledging his confusion and surrendering his ego. Verse 2.7 marks this pivotal transition:

कार्पण्यदोषोपहतस्वभावः
पृच्छामि त्वां धर्मसम्मूढचेताः |
यच्छ्रेयः स्यान्निश्चितं ब्रूहि तन्मे
शिष्यस्तेऽहं शाधि मां त्वां प्रपन्नम् || 2:7||

kārpanya-doṣhopahata-svabhāvaḥ
prichchhāmi tvāṁ dharma-sammūḍha-chetāḥ
yach-chhreyaḥ syānniśchitaṁ brūhi tanme
śhiṣhyaste 'haṁ śhādhi mām tvām prapannam

"I am confused about my duty, and am besieged with anxiety and faintheartedness. I am Your disciple, and am surrendered to You. Please instruct me for certain what is best for me."

This verse illustrates central pedagogical principles:

- i. Acknowledgment of confusion: Arjun openly admits his mental state, which aligns with research on the importance of learners' metacognitive awareness (Zimmerman, 1989).
- ii. Active request for guidance: This shows learner agency, an important aspect of effective education.

- iii. Formal submission and role clarity: The declaration "I am your disciple" establishes categorical teacher-student roles, which are the basis of any structured learning experience (Bransford et al., 2000).
- iv. Surrender of ego and openness: Necessary for learning to be receptive and for education to be transformative (Mezirow, 2009).

Much of the Bhagavad Gita's verses are taken up with dialogue between mentor and mentee. This dialogue provides systematic guidance through a diverse array of knowledge domains, illustrating scaffolded instruction (Vygotsky, 1978) and cognitive apprenticeship (Collins et al., 1989).

Divine Dialogue (Transcendent Teacher-Devoted Student)

The third layer arises as Arjun's awareness broadens to encompass Shree Krishna's divine essence. This expansion reaches its peak during the cosmic unveiling (Viśvarūpa-darśana) in chapter 11, after which the conversation takes on an even loftier tone. Arjun acknowledges his past presumption as he states:

सखेति मत्वा प्रसभं यदुक्तं
हे कृष्ण हे यादव हे सखेति |
अज्ञानता महिमानं तवेदं
मया प्रमादात्प्रणयेन वापि || 11:41||

*sakheti matvā prasabham yad uktam
he kṛiṣṇa he yādava he sakheti
ajānatā mahimānam tavedam
mayā pramādāt praṇayena vāpi*

"Thinking of You as my friend, I presumptuously addressed You as, "O Krishna," "O Yadav," "O my dear Friend." I was ignorant of Your majesty, showing negligence and undue affection."

This verse imparts the insight that the learning that happens at the deepest level occurs when the student holds the teacher in the highest regard and when the knowledge that has been transmitted is treated with the utmost reverence (Palmer, 2007). This matches up nicely with what we understand about transformative learning. At that stage, our conscious awareness is expanded, and we now carry a sense of wisdom and an even greater sense of ethical responsibility (Taylor, 2017).

At its core, the Bhagavad Gita's multilayered conversation shows us three kinds of dialogue. The first is friendly dialogue, which builds trust and creates a safe space for learning. The next is mentoring dialogue, which occurs when clear knowledge is shared in a more formal setting and when students are taught to develop the kinds of skills that allow them to function in society (Bransford et al., 2000). Finally, there is divine dialogue, which brings into line with scaffolded learning theories, where responsibility is slowly transferred to the learners (Wood et al., 1976). This is the kind of conversation that goes on among deeply spiritual people and that usually results in the kind of wisdom and ethical understanding that helps societies function better. Still better, it is the kind of conversation that leads to the understanding and better functioning of the self (Mezirow, 2009).

Dialogues and Pedagogical Implications

The next section discusses the ways in which Shree Krishna exemplifies the ideal teacher through the fundamental pedagogical principles that are expounded in the layered dialogue of the Bhagavad Gita. His performance in the roles of mentor, guide, and leader

reflects not only effective teaching but also the professionalism, dedication, and emotional intelligence that constitute the teacher's art and remain highly relevant to modern education.

Shree Krishna as the Archetypal Teacher

The Bhagavad Gita holds profound instructional knowledge that is still highly pertinent to contemporary educational practices. Shree Krishna embodies the qualities of a superb educator, showing professionalism, adaptability, and a deep understanding of human psychology. He presents himself as an astoundingly qualified teacher, embodying the notion that educators are the bedrock of any educational system. As true Karma Yogis, they must withstand both internal and external motivation while supporting composure through the ups and downs of life. They must fulfill their commitments to manage diverse classrooms with full dedication and with the overflowing enthusiasm that makes one a "Teacher" in the true sense of the word. Verse 4.41 is illustrative of this teaching.

योगसंन्यस्तकर्माणं ज्ञानसंछिन्नसंशयम् |
आत्मवन्तं न कर्माणि निबध्नन्ति धनञ्जय ||4:41||

*yog-sannyasta-karmāṇaṁ jñāna-saṅghinna-sanśhayam
ātmavantaṁ na karmāṇi nibadhnanti dhanañjaya*

“O Arjun, actions do not bind those who have renounced karm in the fire of Yog, whose doubts have been dispelled by knowledge, and who are situated in knowledge of the self.”

This verse emphasizes that teachers who know the nature of action, inaction, and the power of knowledge teach without bondage. They can teach with full dedication and commitment, while maintaining both internal and external motivation even in perplexing states (Mukundananda, 2013; Pallathadka & Roy, 2025).

Professional Dedication and Duty-Consciousness

Teachers should consistently focus on their professional duties with the understanding of “duty for duty’s sake.” The principles of Karma Yog inspire educators to accept outcomes gracefully, maintaining faith that all challenges can be met. Shree Krishna’s guidance in verse 2.37 serves as encouragement:

In the Teaching Profession, Educators ought to maintain a focus on their professional responsibilities, always understanding the concept of “duty for duty’s sake.” Karma Yog motivates the educators to strive to teach with faith and accept, as gracefully as possible, whatever outcomes may come. Verse 2.37 motivates us in this regard:

हतो वा प्राप्स्यसि स्वर्गं जित्वा वा भोक्ष्यसे महीम् |
तस्मादुत्तिष्ठ कौन्तेय युद्धाय कृतनिश्चयः || 2:37||

*hato vā prāpsyasi swargaṁ jitvā vā bhokṣhyase mahīm
tasmād uttiṣṭha kaunteya yuddhāya kṛita-niśchayaḥ*

“If you fight, you will either be slain on the battlefield and go to the celestial abodes, or you will gain victory and enjoy the kingdom on earth. Therefore arise with determination, O son of Kunti, and be prepared to fight.”

This verse underscores the struggle we all face in life and the call for steadfast determination (Dasgupta, 2023; García-Carrión, 2020). It pushes us educators and our students to confront the hurdles that life throws in our paths and to do so with brave hearts, knowing we’re upholding the very tenets of righteousness in the classroom and beyond.

Cultivating Equanimity and Patience

Maintaining calm in demanding situations is an essential part of being a good teacher. The Bhagavad Gita offers powerful advice on just how to do this. Here is verse 2.38:

सुखदुःखे समे कृत्वा लाभालाभौ जयाजयौ |
ततो युद्धाय युज्यस्व नैवं पापमवाप्स्यसि ||2:38||

*sukha-duhkhe same kṛtvā lābhālābhau jayājayau
tato yuddhāya yujyasva naivam pāpam avāpsyasi*

“Fight for the sake of duty, treating alike happiness and distress, loss and gain, victory and defeat. Fulfilling your responsibility in this way, you will never incur sin.”

This motivates teachers to rise above personal responses to the ups and downs of the educational world and keep a laser-like focus on what matters most, their students (Freire, 1970; Miller et al., 2011).

The Role of the Mind in Teaching and Learning

The mind plays a crucial role in teaching and learning processes. Modern research indicates that students learn best when they feel psychologically safe and fear-free, when there are no mental roadblocks to the flow of ideas (Freeman, 2000, p. 73; Jarvis et al., 1998, p. 65). Shree Krishna illustrates this in verse 6.5, highlighting personal responsibility for mental growth.

उद्धरेदात्मनात्मानं नात्मानमवसादयेत् |
आत्मैव ह्यात्मनो बन्धुरात्मैव रिपुरात्मनः || 6:5||

*uddhared ātmanātmānam nātmānam avasādayet
ātmaiva hyātmāno bandhur ātmaiva ripur ātmanah*

“Elevate yourself through the power of your mind, and not degrade yourself, for the mind can be the friend and also the enemy of the self.”

This teaching corresponds with the cognitive-behavioral perspective on self-regulation and mental well-being (Singh, 2024). It also resonates with Milton's insight in *Paradise Lost* about the power of the mind to make "a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven." (Milton, 2003).

Mental Wellbeing and Educational Success

Mental afflictions such as anger, greed, envy, and pride damage the brain and impede the learning process just as physical illnesses do. Buddha taught that controlling the mind is essential not only for righteous conduct but also for attaining enlightenment (Kuan, 2007). Mental well-being is a prerequisite for Nishkama Karma, the karma of action without attachment to the fruits of the action. Teachers and students in a learning environment where Nishkama Karma prevails can engage in the smooth interpersonal process that promotes learning (Bhawuk, 2011; Widodo, 2021).

Confronting Academic Anxiety and Performance Pressure

Students face severe academic stress and performance anxiety that can lead to different psychological distress, including depression and suicidal thoughts (Chatterjee, 2024). In these life-threatening situations, the ideologies of Karma Yog can offer a lifesaving standpoint. Verse 2.55 expresses this state of transcendental equanimity:

प्रजहाति यदा कामान्सर्वान्पार्थ मनोगतान् |
आत्मन्येवात्मना तुष्टः स्थितप्रज्ञस्तदोच्यते || 2:55||

*prajahāti yadā kāmān sarvān pārtha mano-gatān
ātmany-evātmanā tuṣṭaḥ sthita-prajñas tadochyate*

“O Parth, when one discards all selfish desires and cravings of the senses that torment the mind, and becomes satisfied in the realization of the self, such a person is said to be transcendently situated.”

Here, the *Sthita Prajña* ideal encourages teachers and students to develop control over the senses and stay calm during the challenges (Subedi, 2024).

Teaching Through Example: The Power of Role Modeling

In his effort to inspire Arjun, Shree Krishna points out that the real essence of freedom and perfection lies in action, not in inaction. As Arjun's charioteer, Shree Krishna incarnates a living illustration of the teacher's duty to model perfect behavior. Verse 3.21 highlights this:

यद्यदाचरति श्रेष्ठस्तत्तदेवेतरो जनः |
स यत्प्रमाणं कुरुते लोकस्तदनुवर्तते || 3:21||

*yad yad ācharati śhreṣṭhas tat tad evetaro janah
sa yat pramāṇam kurute lokas tad anuvartate*

“Whatever actions great persons perform, common people follow. Whatever standards they set, all the world pursues.”

This teaching reminds teachers that self-discipline and embodying virtues are essential components of their professional role (Verma, 2023).

The Art of Skillful Action in Education

Shree Krishna reveals the essence of Yog as the art of working skillfully with proper awareness and detachment. Verse 2.50 conveys this:

बुद्धियुक्तो जहातीह उभे सुकृतदुष्कृते |
तस्माद्योगाय युज्यस्व योगः कर्मसु कौशलम् || 2:50||

*buddhi-yukto jahātiha ubhe sukruta-duṣhkṛite
tasmād yogāya yujyasva yogḥ karmasu kauśhalam*

“One who prudently practices the science of work without attachment can get rid of both good and bad reactions in this life itself. Therefore, strive for Yog, which is the art of working skillfully (in proper consciousness).”

This verse highlights the significance of attentive engagement balanced by detachment from results to attain optimum educational success (Pallathadka & Roy, 2025).

Encouragement and Confidence Building

Throughout the Bhagavad Gita, Shree Krishna encourages Arjun to reinforce his potential and build his confidence, which are key pedagogical techniques. The following verses illustrate this approach:

मयि सर्वाणि कर्माणि संन्यस्याध्यात्मचेतसा |
निराशीर्निर्ममो भूत्वा युध्यस्व विगतज्वरः || 3:30||

*mayi sarvāṇi karmāṇi sannyasyādhyātma-chetasā
nirāśhīr nirmamo bhūtvā yudhyasva vigata-jvaraḥ*

“Performing all works as an offering unto Me, constantly meditate on Me as the Supreme. Become free from desire and selfishness, and with your mental grief departed, fight!”

तस्मादज्ञानसम्भूतं हृत्स्थं ज्ञानासिनात्मनः |

छित्त्वेन संशयं योगमातिष्ठोत्तिष्ठ भारत || 4:42||

*tasmād ajñāna-sambhūtaṁ hṛit-sthaṁ jñānāsinātmanaḥ
chhittvainaṁ sanśhayaṁ yogm ātiṣṭhotttiṣṭha bhārata*

“Therefore, with the sword of knowledge, cut asunder the doubts that have arisen in your heart. O scion of Bharat, establish yourself in karm yog. Arise, stand up, and take action!”

These affirmations foster resilience, single-mindedness, and audacity in students and teachers (Bhagal, 2021).

Inclusivity and Non-Discrimination in Education

The Bhagavad Gita speaks poignantly of social justice and equity, as mentioned in verse 9.32:

मां हि पार्थ व्यपाश्रित्य येऽपि स्युः पापयोनयः |

स्त्रियो वैश्यास्तथा शूद्रास्तेऽपि यान्ति परां गतिम् || 9:32||

*mām hi pārtha vyapāśhritya ye 'pi syuḥ pāpa-yonayaḥ
striyo vaiśhyās tathā śhūdrās te 'pi yānti parām gatim*

“All those who take refuge in Me, whatever their birth, race, gender, or caste, even those whom society scorns, will attain the supreme destination.”

This message particularly emphasizes teachers because they are the ones who must be fair and compassionate in teaching practice. They must ensure that everyone has been given an equal opportunity (Freeman, 2000).

Empowering Student Autonomy

A model educator discerns the inherent possibilities of students, gives them ample freedom, and urges them to assume the responsibility of their learning and choices. Shree Krishna illustrates this by permitting Arjun to determine his own path after bestowing complete counsel.

इति ते ज्ञानमाख्यातं गुह्याद्गुह्यतरं मया |

विमृश्यैतदशेषेण यथेच्छसि तथा कुरु || 18:63||

*iti te jñānam ākhyātaṁ guhyād guhyataram mayā
vimṛśhyaitad aśheṣheṇa yathecchhasi tathā kuru*

“Thus, I have explained to you this knowledge that is more secret than all secrets. Ponder over it deeply, and then do as you wish.”

This verse portrays the highest pedagogical wisdom. The teacher admires the student's autonomy, empowering them with faith, assistance, and self-respect (Santos & Moreira, 2024).

Findings

This study demonstrates that the Bhagavad Gita is a text rich in meaning and teaching. Its dialogues between Shree Krishna and Arjun offer great insights into contemporary pedagogical theory and practice.

First, the Bhagavad Gita's multilayered dialogue structure discloses three critical dimensions of pedagogy that have a close affinity with Shree Krishna's teachings. Initially, it underscores the significance of a well-functioning teacher-student relationship, which serves as the vital underpinning of all learning that occurs within the Bhagavad Gita's framework. Next, the text exhibits a very thoughtful and careful arrangement of knowledge whereby components of very big ideas are delivered in a manner that makes them accessible for meaningful conversation (Darling-Hammond & Hyler, 2017; Verma, 2023), dialogue being the divine habitat in which all forms of life thrive inside the Bhagavad Gita. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the Bhagavad Gita is all about learner empowerment. Teaching occurs in the context of power relationships, and the Bhagavad Gita reveals to us that knowledge is a form of power.

Second, the Bhagavad Gita teaches about the four paths of yog: Karma (the yog of action), Jnana (the yog of knowledge), Raja (the yog of meditation), and Bhakti (the yog of devotion). These paths foster holistic development through ethical action, clear thinking, and mindful awareness (Yoga Easy, 2025). Modern study agrees that these pathways offer emotional and social advantages for well-being, cognitive clarity, and spiritual transformation (Choudhary et al., 2025; Navare & Pandey, 2022).

The Bhagavad Gita teaches about the four paths of yog: Karma (the yog of action), Jnana (the yog of knowledge), Raja (the yog of meditation), and Bhakti (the yog of devotion). All these paths lead to the same place, which is to say they are equally valid.

Third, the Bhagavad Gita emphasizes equanimity, duty-consciousness, mind mastery, and role modeling. These qualities give teachers sustainable motivation and resilience to handle modern educational challenges such as stress, anxiety, and social dynamics (Pallathadka & Roy, 2025). Shree Krishna's encouragement of learner autonomy and inclusive acceptance highlights the ethical values essential for fairness and empowerment in education (Singh, 2024).

Finally, this hermeneutic analysis shows that the Bhagavad Gita, though an ancient spiritual text, remains highly relevant as a model for pedagogical discourse. It values both deep knowledge and human dignity through respectful, dialogic interaction between teacher and student (Jiménez & Sánchez, 2023).

Conclusion

The Bhagavad Gita may have been composed thousands of years ago, but the dialogues that form the core of its text remain alive and relevant to contemporary education. Notions embedded in the Gita can be extracted and used as a framework for transforming both the act and the art of teaching into something that moves, breathes, and builds a living, organic community of learners (Dasgupta, 2023; Santos & Moreira, 2024).

The multilayered pedagogical methodology of Shree Krishna can be called a blend of friendship, mentorship, and spiritual guidance. It exemplifies the adaptable excellence and emotional intelligence that modern education demands to meet the complex realities of classroom life. The Bhagavad Gita's synthesis of responsibility, wisdom, meditation, and dedication gives teachers and students tools for mental and emotional well-being, enabling them to face the pressures of school with strength and composure.

The Bhagavad Gita's message of respect for learner autonomy and inclusiveness aligns with present-day values of equity and learner-centered pedagogy. It encourages us to work skillfully, to act with detachment, and to teach with our whole hearts. This study highlights that the rich pedagogical wisdom of the Bhagavad Gita connects with modern educational theory. Its dialogic pedagogy invites us to see teaching as a transformative conversation, with the acts of knowing and the growth of consciousness, character, and compassion being its most reliable indicators.

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Shirley Jackson's "The Lottery" in the English as a Foreign Language Classroom

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Abstract

There is a symbiotic relationship between language and literature. Language is the medium of literature, and literature exposes learners to language, thereby cultivating critical insight and language competency. As literature serves this dual purpose, this article therefore attempts to use "The Lottery" by Shirley Jackson as teaching material for an EFL Classroom. To achieve that, the qualitative research method has been used to develop the text as an English language teaching material. The content analysis method has been applied to study the text. Necessary linguistic materials that address the four language learning skills: listening, reading, writing, and speaking, have been explored to provide comprehensive teaching material. To improve reading and writing skills, comprehensive questions, phrase identification, filling in blanks, breaking down long sentences, changing sentences, and writing activities such as dialogue, essays, and summaries have been developed. To develop listening and speaking skills, role-play sessions, discussions, pronunciation practices, and vocabulary development processes have been implemented. Overall, the study has shown that "The Lottery" can provide learners with literary and linguistic benefits if used properly. Further studies may explore the contributions of this literary text to learn English as a foreign language.

Keywords: *Short story, EFL classroom, language skills, literature, teaching material*

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Introduction

Literature has the capacity to address the needs of language acquisition. Cultural barriers that naturally occur with a foreign language hinder language acquisition. Littlewood (2000) believed "Literature can overcome this problem because, in literary works, language creates its own context" (p. 179). Literature removes the barrier by providing learners with access to authentic situations that benefit language learners. Additionally, the four basic skills required to learn a language can be focused on intimately through literature. "The use of literature as a technique for teaching both basic language skills (i.e. reading, writing, listening, and speaking) and language areas (i.e. vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation) is very popular within the field of foreign language learning and teaching nowadays" (Pourkalhor & Kohan, 2013, p. 52). That literature can be a valuable tool for language acquisition is a settled dispute; it has led to the wide acceptance of using literary texts, which have demanded newer texts to be exploited in the language classroom as teaching-learning

materials. Roy and Mahmud (2014) observed that a lack of learning materials created difficulties for both teachers and students. Therefore, this paper proposes a literary text as a teaching material comfortable to use in the EFL classroom.

When it comes to the selection of literary texts, it creates a new debate about whether poetry, essay, novel, drama, or short story is more effective than other genres. Moreover, for foreign learners, language acquisition through content that requires deep attention can disrupt comfort and lead to monotony. Arkan (2005) states that “students find the contents of a novel, poetry, and drama more difficult to follow due to the requirements of reading between the lines that these literary genres seek. That is different for the short story. He further argues that students identify short story reading as simpler and less complex than reading other literature courses.” (p. 33). It also motivates students to continue reading so that they can solve the problem, and since it is interesting, they will not get frustrated either (Erkaya, 2005). Moreover, it assists classroom facilitators in teaching the four levels of language proficiency (Küçüköğlu & Sariçoban, 2011).

Therefore, this paper selected “*The Lottery*,” a short story written by Shirley Jackson in 2008, as teaching-learning material in an EFL classroom. The selection was made for various reasons. Firstly, the story creates a suspense that keeps readers to the very conclusion. This will not make the text monotonous. Secondly, the texts discuss common aspects of society, including the market, town, school, bank, post office, and, most commonly, the lottery. This creates a connection to the reader's personal life, making the text more relatable. Thirdly, there are no large paragraphs or any unnecessary narration that extends the attention span on a particular paragraph. The story moves on smoothly. Finally, the selection is quite flexible to use, whether at a stretch, in a single classroom, or in a segment.

Literature Review

For teaching English as a language, literature can be quite useful. Literature possesses linguistic capabilities, including simple sentence structures and a vocabulary that fosters language competency, along with engaging stories that reflect human ambition, fantasy, adventure, and emotions. This offers students the motivation needed to learn the four language skills (Kadel, 2021; Pathan, 2013). In EFL contexts, students are highly influenced by their L1 language, and learning a L2 language becomes quite difficult. Therefore, content and language integrated learning can improve classroom outcomes because literature serves as a motivator for stimulating learners' curiosity, interest, and perception of the language and its culture (Baby, 2022; Erkaya, 2005; Lasagabaster, 2010; Namaziandost et al., 2022; Nazara, 2019).

Advantages of Short Stories in the ELT Classroom

The goal of teaching English is to make the learners feel connected and comfortable with the language. To achieve this, short stories can be incorporated as study materials in EFL classrooms. According to Arkan's research findings, students find the contents of the novel, poetry, and drama courses more difficult to follow because these types require ways of reading that are different from those required for the short story. The results of his study also show that students identify short story reading as simpler and less complex than reading other types of literature courses. (Arkan, 2005). English for foreign language learners can be challenging if taught using literary genres that are lengthy and time-consuming. Kapar and Bhandari (2020) highlighted that short stories are shorter than novels, which helps teachers to easily teach their sessions. As they are shorter than a novel, short stories are effective sources of teaching in classroom situations. Another point that makes short stories efficient tools for ELT classes is that they maintain high interest and attention.

In an EFL classroom, short stories enable instructors to teach the four main language skills to students of all language proficiency levels (Küçükoğlu & Sariçoban, 2011). Short stories provide a framework for integrating four language skills. They offer new ideas, words, phrases, proverbs, discourse markers, social narratives, dialogues, and conversations that facilitate the facilitator in utilizing the reading material to improve language skills. It improves reading skills (Heidarian & Heydon, 2025; Maisarah et al., 2023) because reading stories exposes learners to new words and phrases, allowing them to understand the meaning of these words and effectively learn vocabulary usage, rather than through isolated vocabulary lists (Irhamni et al., 2025). In the classroom, it enhances grammar, pronunciation, as well as fundamental language skills, including speaking, listening, reading, and writing (Ali Mansoor et al., 2022). Moreover, the use of short stories enhances critical thinking, in addition to fundamental language skills (Heidarian & Hedon, 2025).

Literary and Pedagogical Value of “The Lottery”

Cohen (2011) states that, alongside Ambrose Bierce’s “An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge” and Flannery O’Connor’s “A Good Man’s Hard to Find,” Jackson’s “The Lottery” is one of three short stories that are most anthologized in American twentieth-century literary history (p. 44). Jackson has written more than one hundred short stories and six novels. Her noteworthy works for Children are “The Bad Children” and “Nine Magic Wishes”. “The Lottery” is still taught today because it is an instructive launching pad for discussing American and individual social values; multiculturalism appears capable of tempering strong moral responses to the story. (Michelson, 2006, p. iv).

Fujs (2023) highlights that “The Lottery” assists in developing interpersonal skills, intercultural, social, and civic competences, as well as socio-cultural knowledge, which are valuable skills in the EFL context. Moreover, the shocking ending and the sharp criticism of tradition and culture encourage students to think critically and prompt discussion and debates in class, which help learners develop their communicative skills. The text also employs symbolism and lexical items that invite modern readers to misinterpret the author’s intended meaning, thus making the text critical for teaching (Jose, 2025). Therefore, students learn to interrogate texts rigorously, not for their content, but for the ways language has been constructed in the portrayal of social realities, which encourages interpretive rigor and ethical awareness (Wellek & Warren, 1956), making the classroom more engaging and productive.

Although the short story “The Lottery” brought Shirley Jackson to the attention of American readers after it was published in *The New Yorker* in 1948, scholarly studies have largely ignored the potential of the text as a reading material for English language teaching pedagogy. In fact, her short story genre has long been neglected—indeed, almost stigmatized—within literary criticism (Carlstein, 2024). Particularly, this story has not been studied before for teaching purposes. Therefore, the current study aims to establish the analogy that “The Lottery” should be included in the study materials of students learning English as a foreign language.

Method

This research is a qualitative study of the text, which has been thoroughly analyzed using content analysis methods. The main text, “The Lottery,” written by Shirley Jackson, has been used as the primary source for this study, and relevant research papers, journals, and scholarly articles have been reviewed as secondary sources. The study was conducted following preparation, organizing, and reporting methods suggested by Elo and Kyngas (2008).

At the beginning, a holistic reading of the text was taken to achieve contextual and conceptual immersion. Then, parts of the text that addressed EFL-specific strategies were explored with the help of intensive reading and the examination of secondary sources. The exploration of the text yielded different analyses, encompassing narrative segments that featured thematic motifs, lexical elements, and dialogic exchanges. Meanwhile, secondary sources were selectively reviewed to contextualize the author's oeuvre within broader literary and sociocultural discourses. This provided the foundational understanding of developing activities from the text.

The text was then used to develop EFL pedagogical tools. It addressed all four language skills. To improve reading and writing skills, comprehensive questions, phrase identification, filling in blanks, breaking down long sentences, sentence restructuring, and writing activities such as dialogue, essays, and summaries have been developed separately. For building listening and speaking skills, role-play sessions, discussions, pronunciation practices, and vocabulary development processes have been developed, respectively.

The last phase culminated in the synthesis of all the findings as a cohesive pedagogical framework with credible references from studies. The findings present the text as a versatile EFL pedagogical material that enhances receptive skills (reading), productive skills (writing), and interactive skills (speaking and listening).

Results and Discussion

Reading Skill

Reading the text enables EFL readers to understand the context of the story. Reading sharpens recognition and comprehension skills. Rahman (2019) states that, "a good reader can get the meaning of a text by identifying keywords and guessing the meaning of new words." (p. 87). Additionally, comprehension questions can also aid in reading. Readers can be asked to answer the following questions set from the selection. To assess students' reading skills, this activity can be useful.

- a. When does the lottery take place?
- b. Where do the people gather for the lottery?
- c. Who usually assembles first for the draw?
- d. Who had time and energy to devote to civic activities?
- e. What business did Mr. Summers run?
- f. What was the profession of Mr. Graves?
- g. What was the thing that the villagers didn't like to change?
- h. What was the age of the oldest man alive in the village?
- i. What did Mr. Summers use instead of wood clips for the drawer?
- j. Who won the lottery at the end?

Next, guessing the meaning from the text or knowing the meanings of the words from the text contributes to understanding the story and enriches readers' vocabulary. The students can be asked to select the correct meanings of the given words.

- 1) lottery
 - a) a random drawing for a prize
 - b) a type of financial investment

- c) a planned sequence of events
- 2) hush
 - a) silence or stillness
 - b) loud noise
 - c) excitement
- 3) assemble
 - a) to scatter
 - b) to bring together
 - c) to destroy
- 4) boisterous
 - a) noisy
 - b) gentle
 - c) calm
- 5) reprimands
 - a) praises
 - b) scoldings
 - c) suggestions
- 6) menfolk
 - a) young boys
 - b) male members of a group or community
 - c) old men
- 7) jovial
 - a) gloomy
 - b) cheerful
 - c) angry
- 8) paraphernalia
 - a) essential tools or equipment
 - b) unnecessary and excessive decorations
 - c) items related to a specific activity or event
- 9) precede
 - a) to follow after
 - b) to come before
 - c) to ignore
- 10) shabby
 - a) elegant and polished

- b) worn-out and in poor condition
 - c) bright and shining
- 11) chant
- a) a type of dance performed at celebrations
 - b) a repetitive song or phrase, often for
 - c) a ritual, a style of painting with vibrant colors
- 12) perfunctory
- a) showing deep interest and enthusiasm
 - b) done with minimal effort or care
 - c) requiring a lot of thought and planning
- 13) overlarge
- a) extremely small
 - b) excessively large
 - c) average size
- 14) petulant
- a) cheerful and happy
 - b) easily irritated or annoyed
 - c) calm and composed

Another strategy could be the identification of the phrases. The learners can identify the following phrases as noun phrases, adjective phrases, and prepositional phrases, etc. Identification makes it easier for the teacher to assess the condition of the readers' reading skills.

- a. the flowers were blossoming
- b. in the morning
- c. of liberty
- d. to gather
- e. faded house dresses
- f. boisterous play
- g. the black wooden box
- h. the oldest man
- i. a great deal
- j. on a shelf
- k. heads of households
- l. a ritual salute
- m. the official of the lottery
- n. good-humoredly

Students can be asked to fill in the blanks by choosing appropriate words from the table. Students may need to add -s to a plural word or to a third person singular of a verb in the present tense, -ed to the past tense of regular verbs, -ing for the present participle, etc.

has	go	conduct	had	blossom
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- a. The lottery _____ by Mr. Summers who had time and energy for civic activities.
- b. The official of the lottery _____ had to use it in addressing each person who came up to draw from the box.
- c. There _____ always been a lottery, he added petulantly.
- d. Bill Hutchinson _____ over to his wife.
- e. The flowers _____ profusely and the grass was richly green.

Writing Skill

A good mastery of English writing skills plays an important role in effective communication (Rahman, 2019). Writing skills are equally beneficial in acquiring reading and speaking skills. However, such mastery cannot be easily achieved because writing is the most challenging of the integral skills for teaching English in an EFL context (Ananda et al., 2014). Rahman (2019) suggests that “breaking up long sentences into short ones is a good way to make the readers understand the expressions because long sentences become a problem when they contain difficult concepts, and when there are several of them in sequence” (p. 89). Complex sentences make text incomprehensible. Students can be asked to break down complex and compound sentences and make them simpler.

- a. The morning of June 27th was clear and sunny, with the fresh warmth of a full-summer day; the flowers were blossoming profusely and the grass was richly green.
- b. The girls stood aside, talking among themselves, looking over their shoulders as they rolled in the dust or clung to the hands of their older brothers or sisters.
- c. Soon the men began to gather, surveying their own children, speaking of planting and rain, tractors and taxes.
- d. The women, wearing faded house dresses and sweaters, came shortly after their menfolk.
- e. He was a round-faced, jovial man who ran the coal business. People were sorry for him because he had no children, and his wife was often scolded.
- f. The original paraphernalia for the lottery had been lost long ago, and the black box now resting on the stool had been put into use even before Old Man Warner, the oldest man in the town, was born.
- g. Every year, after the lottery, Mr. Summers began talking again about a new box, but every year the subject was allowed to fade off without anything being done.
- h. There had also been a ritual salute, which the lottery official had to use in addressing each person who came up to draw from the box. However, this had changed over time, and now it was felt necessary only for the official to speak to each person approaching.

- i. Just as Mr. Summers finally left off talking and turned to the assembled villagers, Mrs. Hutchinson came hurriedly along the path to the square, her sweater thrown over her shoulders, and slid into place in the back of the crowd.

Students can be assigned to change the following sentences as directed, because practicing sentence transformation implicitly integrates with broader language learning. It enhances writing features, sentence-making abilities, and internalizes learners with the syntactic patterns and grammatical structures of the target language (Rao, 2008, as cited in Kadel, 2021).

- a. The lottery took not more than two hours to complete. (Positive)
- b. Mr. Summers and Mr. Graves put the slips of paper in the box. (Interrogative)
- c. Holding her hands desperately as the villagers moved in on her, Tessie Hutchinson was in the center of the crowd. (Compound)
- d. Mrs. Hutchinson craned her neck to see through the crowd and found her husband and her children standing near the front. (Complex)
- e. No one liked to upset the tradition represented by the box. (Affirmative)
- f. The people of the village began to gather in the square. (Negative)

The learners can be instructed to write simple, complex, and compound sentences based on the text. Initially, the students will identify sentences from the text and write down a number of sentences that have similar sentence structures. This will help students develop their writing skills as they will be exposed to a variety of sentence structures, grammatical structures, and vocabulary from the text (Kadel, 2021; Maisarah et al., 2023). It will also improve their ability to identify different sentence structures correctly.

Writing activities are crucial for their emphasis on promoting creativity and imagination in students. It provides ideas and linguistic elements for creative writing (Heidarian & Heydon, 2025; Maisarah et al., 2023).

1. Students can write a review of the story.
2. Students can summarize the story in a few sentences or a few words.
3. Students can paraphrase any two paragraphs of the text.
4. Students can write the themes of the text.
5. Students can write an essay regarding the context of the text.
6. Students can write a short fiction similar to the text.

Activities 1 and 2 can be assigned to middle-intermediate level students, activities 3 and 4 are suitable for intermediate level students, and advanced level students can be instructed to work on activities 5 and 6.

Listening and Speaking Skills

Short stories provide learners with opportunities to improve their interactive skills. Reading the text in the classroom can arouse students' interest in the text, which will eventually lead to interaction between the teacher and the students. Pardede (2011) asserts that, "Short stories can also be a powerful and motivating source for teaching both speaking and listening. Oral reading, dramatization, improvisation, role-playing, reenactment, and discussion are some effective learning activities that center on a short story. EFL classes can be used for enhancing these two skills." (p. 22). Speaking and listening skills are something

that are based on interaction. However, teacher-student interaction is compulsory to be competent in these two skills while learning a foreign language.

Story-telling is an effective tool for developing language skills in both L1 and L2 languages and is considered more effective than traditional materials for language teaching. It enhances communicative competence and facilitates effective language acquisition (Lucarevski, 2016). It is also an effective instrument to boost learners’ motivation and increase their active participation in language acquisition (Wajnryb, 2003; Wright, 1995). In this activity, students can share stories they have heard from their families or have learned about legends from their culture. In the EFL classroom, teachers can start with this activity to create a more interactive and inclusive classroom environment.

For advanced-level students, teachers can lead a discussion on the story and the author. Discussion is one of the effective teaching methods for teaching learning and speaking skills (Maulana et al., 2020). In the classroom, the students can express their opinions on contemporary issues that symbolize the main theme of the story. Moreover, criticisms can also be made of the text to reveal what changes and modifications are needed. Criticisms require analysis and thorough study of the literary text, which enhances a student’s creative skills and communicative competence (Khatib & Mehrgan, 2012).

Second language learners mostly mispronounce British and American words due to a lack of knowledge and practice. “So, the students should have a balanced idea about the sound systems of both the first language and the foreign language. In fact, knowledge of the sound systems of the mother tongue or the first language is a crucial factor that determines one’s ability to pronounce foreign language words correctly,” contends Rahman (2019, p. 92). The following pronunciations are frequently mispronounced. Pronunciation practice of these words can improve their speaking skills. Groupwork can be effective in this case, where individuals can correct themselves and learn together. Teachers should be careful and attentive in this activity because Hoque (2010, p. 215) reveals that “the sound of consonant clusters is also problematic for Bengali speakers. They put a short vowel within or before the consonant cluster.”

Table 1
Words and their IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet) transcriptions

Words	British pronunciation (in IPA)	American pronunciation (in IPA)
sunny	/ˈsʌni/	/ˈsʌn.i/
gather	/ˈgæðə(r)/	/ˈgæð.ə/
began	/bɪˈgæn	/bɪˈgæən/
flowers	/ˈflaʊə(r)/	/ˈflaʊ.ə/
profuse	/prəˈfjuːs/	/prəˈfjuːs/
square	/skweə(r)/	/skwer/
lottery	/ˈlɒtəri/	/ˈlɑː.t̬ə.i/
morning	/ˈmɔːnɪŋ/	/ˈmɔːr.nɪŋ/
through	/θruː/	/θruː/
assemble	/əˈseɪmbl/	/əˈsem.bəl/
boisterous	/ˈbɔɪstərəs/	/ˈbɔɪ.stə.əs/

stuffed	/stʌft/	/stʌft/
liberty	/ˈlɪbəti/	/ˈlɪb.ə.ti/
over	/ˈəʊvə(r)/	/ˈoʊ.və/
summer	/ˈsʌmə(r)/	/ˈsʌm.ə/
reprimands	/ˈreprɪmə.nd/	/ˈrep.rə.mænd/
example	/ɪɡˈzɑːmpl/	/ɪɡˈzæm.pəl/
follow	/ˈfɒləʊ/	/ˈfɑː.lou/
clung	/klʌŋ/	/klʌŋ/
taxes	/tæks/	/tæks/
corner	/ˈkɔːnə(r)/	/ˈkɔːr.nə/
fade	/feɪd/	/feɪd/
precede	/prɪˈsiːd/	/priːˈsiːd/
husband	/ˈhʌzbənd/	/ˈhʌz.bənd/
menfolk	/ˈmenfəʊk/	/ˈmen.fouk/
town	/taʊn/	/taʊn/
jovial	/ˈdʒəʊviəl/	/ˈdʒoʊ.vi.əl/
reluctant	/rɪˈlʌktənt/	/rɪˈlʌk.tənt/
grasp	/ɡrɑːsp/	/ɡræsp/

Source: The IPA transcriptions have been retrieved from the online edition of the Cambridge Dictionary (2021)

Students fail in reading and writing tasks because of having an inadequate or underdeveloped vocabulary. The text will expose learners to new words within a rich context. Learners can learn to use these words appropriately and effectively. Learning vocabulary will increase their ability to use different synonyms and antonyms. It is also important for language learning because vocabulary is seen as the kernel for all language skills, without which language acquisition cannot be achieved (Ali Mansoor et al., 2022). This improves students' writing skills as well.

Table 2

Words collected from the text to enrich the learners' vocabulary pool

paraphernalia	splintered	grinned	menfolk
boisterous	perfunctory	hush	overlarge
reprimand	stack	petulant	daintily
reluctant	interminable	breathless	warmth
profuse	soberly	defiant	shabby

Role-play Session

Role-play is “pretending to be someone else, especially as part of learning a new skill” (McIntosh, 2015, p. 1336). The students can play roles from the text and act to enhance

their speaking and listening skills. This will also help them concentrate on accent, pronunciation, expressions, intonation, stress, and speaker-listener rapport, similar to that of native speakers.

Conclusion

A literary text is the symbiosis of language and literature that makes it an effective instrument for English language pedagogy. For L2 learners, literary texts can help them break the cultural barrier in language acquisition and improve their language skills. For EFL classroom facilitators, literary teaching materials help them enhance student motivation, foster classroom interaction, and promote learner-centered teaching. However, facilitators and learners face difficulties due to the insufficient availability of literary materials that address the multidisciplinary aspects of the English language. This study, therefore, is an attempt to address the scarcity of teaching materials required for English language acquisition. The renowned short story “*The Lottery*,” penned by Shirley Jackson, has been selected for use as teaching material in an EFL classroom in this study. Prior studies on this short story focused mostly on its literary contributions. Scholars have long ignored the potential of this literary text in language pedagogy, which addresses four basic skills of language acquisition. Therefore, the present study contributes to filling this research gap and provides activities such as comprehension questions, guessing meaning from the text, identifying phrases, and filling blanks with appropriate words, which address learners' reading skills. Breaking down long sentences, changing sentences, writing sentences in different sentence structures, and other writing activities that develop their writing skills. Moreover, storytelling, debates and discussions, pronunciation practices, role-play sessions, and vocabulary development exercises address the listening and speaking skills of the learner, helping them build communicative abilities. Overall, the short story proves to be a competent teaching material in an EFL classroom, with future studies examining the impact of this material on the four language skills.

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Living and Evolving as Women English Language Teachers

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Abstract

This paper explores how women English Language teachers evolve, navigating personal and professional struggles in their teaching careers through their lived experiences. We adopted narrative inquiry as a research method and conducted in-depth interviews with the participants, which allowed us to delve into their stories. We highlight the hindrances they encountered and the motivation and resilience that enabled them to remain committed to the profession. The analysis of their lived experiences, informed by the post-structural feminist perspective, reveals how sociocultural responsibilities, institutional expectations, and personal initiatives shape the identity of women teachers. They are pursuing higher studies to keep up with the evolving demands of the time and prove themselves; they are no less than males. Despite the obstacles posed by family responsibilities, the women teachers demonstrated their strengths in navigating challenges through determination and hard work. This research paper contributes to understanding the lived experiences of women teachers and how they grow, implying the supportive environment they require to foster their professional development.

Keywords: *Identity, women teacher, narrative inquiry, post-structural feminist theory*

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Introduction

I often feel like I am unheard of major decision-making matters.

When a male teacher offers support and helps me with teaching methods and any other kind of assistance, other male teachers often link his name with mine, relating a

connection between us, and at times gossip about our illicit relationship, which saddens me.

These anecdotes represent the predicaments of women English language teachers in Nepal, particularly how women teachers are systematically targeted, cornered, marginalized and silenced. Historically, girls lacked access to formal education, and their roles were primarily confined to household responsibilities. Their senior family members encouraged them to learn domestic skills rather than pursue an academic degree. At this pretext, the dream of becoming a woman English language teacher was beyond imagination. Furthermore, as Poudel and Shrestha (2024) argue, English education was initially confined to a privileged few, rather than being designed for wider public access. Elitism and social prestige were closely tied to the English language. Additionally, traditional Nepali society did not envision a future for women outside of their household boundaries. Poudel and Shrestha (2024) argue that Jung Bahadur Rana, the first Rana Prime Minister of Nepal, who is considered to have introduced English in formal education, used to say, "Ladka [boys in colloquial Nepali language], you use the English language because you are unique from others." Patriarchal ideology that was pervasive in social psychology influenced his English language preference for male over female. Only male members from the Rana family were allowed to go to Durbar High School (the first publicly funded school in Nepal that taught modern education), and the Rana families did not allow girls to attend school. This context defines a deeply rooted gender discrimination where males occupied professional careers.

Girls, who envisioned professional lives, had to overcome challenges first within their families and then in society. However, people have gradually recognized the value of education for women over time, resulting in a significant paradigm shift. Dhakal (2022) examines how societal perceptions of women, their roles, and their significance in social activities have evolved. It is undeniably a truth that the condition for women in society has somehow improved in comparison to the past; however, discriminatory practices in terms of gender still exist. The increasing trend of girls' enrollment in education and their participation in career growth is crucial to women's empowerment. Awareness among women regarding their self-recognition and professional identity empowers them to be independent in rural areas. Dhakal (2022) points out that patriarchal norms are particularly widespread in rural regions and among marginalized groups, where male dominance in household decision-making is common, especially in communities with lower literacy levels. Similarly, Shrestha and Gartoulla (2015) emphasize that ensuring women's participation in local governance decision-making processes remains challenging. Similar to local governance, the field of education remains untouched by efforts to address gendered hierarchies, where women teachers often face limited opportunities for professional growth and leadership roles.

To our knowledge, males occupy the majority of the prominent positions in many sectors, which shows that women face biased or unfair treatment in terms of knowledge and skills. Gender bias is rooted in social structure. Connell (2002) argued that gender should be viewed as a social structure rather than something rooted in biology or a simple binary. It reflects patterns found in societal organization and the daily behaviors shaped by those structures (p. 9). In fact, gender is a socially conceptualized system rather than a biological creation. In addition, gender does not refer to biological differences between males and females, but rather to a concept created by cultural norms and social practices that directly and indirectly influence our behaviors, roles, and identities. Gender and identity are evolving concepts. According to Simon-Maeda (2004), teachers' professional identities are shaped through an integration of wider sociocultural factors and continuous personal and social interactions that occur both inside the classroom and in the broader community.

It's crucial to comprehend the concept of identity before delving into how women teachers from Nepal evolve and grow. Gee (2000) suggests that identity serves as a valuable lens for understanding teachers. According to Norton (2000), identity refers to "being recognized as a certain kind of person" (p. 11). She also asserted that identity explores a person's understanding of their relationship to the sphere, encompassing the construction of relationships among past, present, and future possibilities. Pennington (2015) presents teacher identity as a mental image or construct, representing the conception of a teacher that directs teachers' practices and actions in specific instances of teacher identity. Similarly, Block (2015) presents the idea that identity development is viewed through the lens of how teachers perceive themselves in their job and how their coworkers position them. This also depends on one's connectivity to surrounding communities. Similarly, Barkhuizen (2016) notes that experiences are transformed into narratives when shared with others, and these narratives become part of narrative inquiry when studied for academic purposes or used to convey research findings. Therefore, narrative inquiry is crucial for investigating the identity construction of women teachers.

There has been a growing interest in the field of educational research on how gender, family roles, and social responsibilities intersect to shape the experience of women teachers. Hardy-Witherspoon (2020), for instance, reveals the complexities faced by African American female educators, highlighting how women educators experience discrimination, underrepresentation, and financial illiteracy. Likewise, Sun et al. (2022) found that burnout is prevalent among Chinese female school-level teachers, primarily due to overwork, family conflict, insufficient societal support, and classroom management complexities, compared to their college-level counterparts. Xing et al. (2024) discuss the challenges faced by women English language teachers in the context of China and conclude that the identity of women teachers is shaped by both professional and personal components, including multiple responsibilities as mothers, wives, and daughters-in-law. Simon-Maeda (2004) examined the identities of the nine women teachers in Japan and found that their identities were constructed by various factors, such as their personal roles, lives, and gendered inequalities. Similarly, Xiong and Li (2020) found that a woman teacher's identity tends to be constantly evolving, contradictory, and fragmented, and is heavily influenced by gender.

A few studies concerning "female teachers' identity" can be seen; however, trends in this area are increasing in the context of Nepal. Pokharel's (2021) research, entitled "Being and Becoming a Female English Language Teacher," from a phenomenological perspective, suggests that female English language teachers experience their world in a way that reflects their being female and becoming English language teachers, which involves different phenomena. In a similar vein, Neupane and Bhatt (2023) suggest that the interplay of micro, meso, and macro environments, along with agency, influences teachers' identity construction. The research highlights the intricate relationship between personal agency, institutional pressures, and systemic structures in shaping professional identities.

While discussing macro policies, the Nepal School Sector Development Plan (SSDP) (2016–2023) explicitly emphasizes gender equity and the promotion of inclusive education (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2016). However, we have noticed an inconsistency between policy formulation and actual practice. In many cases, the practice of equality is not reflected in the lived realities of women educators, who continue to face subtle biases, limited leadership opportunities, and societal expectations that hinder their professional growth. The gap between the written policy and its implementation suggests a need for monitoring and supporting gender responsive practices in schools. This study contributes to policymakers and practitioners in designing more effective and actionable policies to ensure proper implementation. In addition, the article contributes to the existing

literature on how women English language teachers navigate these struggles, remain in the profession, and advance professionally. This paper fills this gap by highlighting their personal journeys to better understand their challenges and what can assist them in achieving success in their careers within the context of Nepal. The paper primarily aims to explore the personal and professional experiences of women professionals in English language education. The following research question guided this study:

- How do women English language teachers experience and navigate their personal and professional lives within the teaching profession?

Life History Approach as a Research Method

We adopted life history approach of narrative inquiry as a research method. This research method allows us to examine and understand the experiences of women teachers through their stories, listening to their personal narratives provides a deep understanding of the broader social and cultural contexts they encounter. Narrative inquiry is based on the idea that people understand random experiences by turning them into stories. We achieve this by selecting specific aspects of the experience to focus on and then arranging them in a story-like manner (Bell, 2002, p. 207). Teachers' identity is understood as a unique picture of each teacher's stories to live by, which are "multiple, fluid, and shifting, continuously composed and recomposed in the moment-to-moment living alongside children, families, administrators, and others" (Clandinin et al., 2006, p. 9). Narrative inquiry is a valuable approach for exploring teachers' professional lives and careers (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Webster & Mertova, 2007). Similarly, postmodern feminist scholars (e.g., Davies, 1991; Simon-Maeda, 2004) have demonstrated its effectiveness in revealing how female teachers negotiate their identities within the dominant discourses of gender and education.

Participants

We interviewed three women of various castes, ages, cultural backgrounds, and family backgrounds who teach English language in different geographical areas of Nepal. Manita represents the Madhesi community, currently serving as a principal in a government school, who has contributed over 17 years of service as an English language professional in both non-governmental and government academic institutions. Sadhana has over twenty years of teaching experience at a public university and currently holds a senior role. Both research participants are currently pursuing higher education. Jasuda works at a private secondary school with over a decade of teaching experience. She also has two years of part-time experience as a pre-primary English language teacher in China. She belongs to one of the hilly regions in Nepal.

Table 1

A Brief Overview of the Participants

S.N.	Participants	Teaching Experience	Contextual Background
1	Manita	Seventeen years	Born and raised in the Yadav ethnic group from the Tarai region of Nepal
2	Sadhana	Twenty-one years	Belongs to the inner Madhesh of Nepal
3	Jasuda	Thirteen years	Represents the rural and hilly region of Nepal

Story Generation and Data Collection

As an in-depth interview would be beneficial for a deep understanding of the narratives shared by participants, we employed interviews (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009) and informal conversations to generate stories. Semi-structured data collection tools enabled us to remain flexible, allowing us to ask further details and probing questions, thereby adapting to the circumstances. Throughout these conversations, we made a conscious effort to maintain the natural flow of their storytelling, ensuring they felt comfortable and uninterrupted. In doing so, the participants and we collaboratively co-constructed their narratives of learning and teaching as English language teachers (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Before the interview, we engaged in informal conversations with them to build rapport. We recorded the interview and informal conversations, obtaining consent from the participants, which were later transcribed and translated into English for further processing of meaning-making.

Constructing Meaning from Data

The stories collected from participants through interviews and informal conversations were analyzed thematically, adhering to the thematic analysis approach developed by Brown and Clarke (2006). The story interpretation approach included familiarization, initial coding, identifying themes, reviewing themes, defining themes, and writing the report. First, we read and re-read the transcripts to familiarize ourselves with the data. Then, we began coding, which represented recurring ideas, events, and sentiments expressed by the participants. During the coding process we conducted block coding not to split the stories into the fragments. After that, we organized these codes under the different categories and themes during which we tried to repair the fractured stories. Finally, we developed the narrative report and restored the stories of our participants.

Insights from the Life History Narratives

A rigorous analysis of the life histories of women English language teachers revealed that participants faced multiple struggles, challenges, sociocultural influences, and motivations that drove their personal initiatives and development. In this article, we highlight four themes that appear particularly salient in constructing the identities of women teachers. We emphasize that gender was just one factor among many, though a powerful one, that played a crucial role in shaping their lives and professions. Gender and other contextual elements influenced how female teachers experienced their journeys of becoming and working as English teachers in a challenging traditional environment. We observed a clear pattern of past and present experiences, as well as their influences on career trajectories, across the interviews.

Imagined Identity Turns into Reality

Participants' stories revealed that their imagined identity played a crucial role in shaping who they are now. According to Norton (2013), imagined identity refers to the future self that individuals aspire to become within an imagined community they wish to join. It is our vision of what we might be and what we might achieve, shaped by our desires, beliefs, and access to opportunities. Our childhood dreams show the path to our passions and potential. Our passions reveal our pure desire, free from social boundaries, and dreams, indeed, are free from any societal expectations or pressure. Intrinsic motivation is a common aspect of human behavior, particularly evident in children's play, where they eagerly participate in activities without needing external incentives or encouragement (Deci et al., 2017). This concept resonates with the childhood aspiration to become an English language teacher. All the research participants were driven to pursue a career in English language teaching because they perceived English as a means of empowerment, social status, and

financial gain. Manita revealed that she was influenced by the spoken skills of her school principal during her childhood, which motivated her to become an English language teacher. She further expressed that whenever she played *bhadakuti* (a traditional Nepali children's role-playing game) with her childhood friends, she would always take on the role of the teacher, while her friends would play other roles. Later, she married a man from the teaching profession. He inspired her to pursue a degree in the education stream, which led her to become an English teacher. We relate this to Wenger (2010), who maintains that during engagement in communities of practice — such as schooling and teacher education programs — participants construct their images, locate and orient themselves from different perspectives, and explore new possibilities for the future. In a similar vein, another participant, Jasuda, shared her childhood experience:

I grew up in a village surrounded by teachers. My father was also a teacher in a government school. As I became more conscious, I began to hear that if I were to become a secondary-level English language teacher at a government school in the future, I would gain greater respect, financial rewards, and recognition.

She explained that she witnessed her mother's struggles with handling the household chores. She felt that she did not wish to endure the same hardships in her life. Therefore, she was determined to create her own space and achieve financial independence in society after becoming an English teacher. Witnessing every male member of her own family in the teaching field as a teacher during her formative years, she also had a good learning environment. The sociocultural background of Jasuda's upbringing, grounded in a dominant ideology, guided her and her parents in making choices they viewed as natural and typical (Darvin & Norton, 2015). Jasuda benefited from a sociocultural environment that valued and prioritized education. Likewise, Sadhana, being a member of Brahmin family, her father prioritized education. She also received a good educational environment and parental support. Her father had a good social network in the community, and his regular supervision further enhanced her learning. She noted:

When I was a young girl, the study of the English language was considered a technical subject because it was the language of technical fields, such as engineering and medicine. I had a desire to enroll in technical fields, believing they offered a promising future in the job market.

Sadhana joined the teaching profession immediately after completing her higher secondary education to support her family, as they were facing financial constraints. She was also known as a “*helmet teacher*” (a colloquial term in the Nepali language referring to a part-time teacher who moves from one school/college to several others for earning) and was in high demand among several tuition centers, which is why she was approached for coaching classes. As time passed, she found greater satisfaction in her profession and realized that teaching was the field where she could grow and enhance both personally and professionally. The narratives of our research participants demonstrated that motivation and childhood learning environment were crucial in developing who they are. Their childhood dreams and imagination of becoming financially independent motivate them to pursue a career in teaching English. Furthermore, the role of motivation and the environment they received was indeed crucial in overcoming hindrance factors, advancing their professional careers, and enhancing their skills. The inspiration the research participants received from their childhood teachers, who had a good command of the English language, great respect for people who majored in English, and a childhood dream of becoming a professional, influenced their development. Manita imagined her identity in terms of someone she met during her childhood (Wenger, 1999, 2010), which further inspired her to work hard and become the person she

aspired to be. Her imagined identity as a fluent English language teacher motivated her to challenge traditional gender roles and work hard toward becoming the person she aspired to be. In this sense, her identity construction emerged through both personal agency and the influence of social structures that often define what women can be or cannot be. Post-structural feminist views identity formation as a process of resisting dominant gendered discourses and creating spaces where women can redefine themselves beyond prescribed social boundaries.

Financial Contribution to the Family

Financial independence is crucial for women, as it enables them to make significant contributions to the financial stability and overall well-being of their families. When women are financially self-reliant, they can contribute to a higher standard of living for themselves and their families. In this context, education plays a pivotal role as a transformative tool for empowering women with knowledge, skills, and opportunities that can lead to sustainable livelihoods. In our research context, participants took the teaching profession as a safe route for achieving economic independence. According to Tamboukou (2000), women viewed teaching as a socially acceptable means to redefine themselves beyond the roles of wives and mothers, or as a way to escape poverty and advance to a higher social class. Reflecting on the journey of our research participants, Jasuda, Sunita, and Sadhana, we found that the teaching profession empowered them to take on multiple responsibilities and overcome the challenges life threw at them. For instance, Jasuda stated:

I was the second-oldest daughter in my family. My father was the only person who had a regular income. However, his income was insufficient to meet our needs. My mother, a homemaker and farmer, had to work tirelessly. Witnessing her struggles inspired me to pursue a professional career.

Due to economic hardships, she began working at one of the private schools as an English language teacher immediately after passing the S.L.C. in 2015. She continued both her profession and her education. At that time, teaching English was considered the safest and prestigious profession for women. McKinney (2007) describes English as the language of power, where learners bring up status and prestige. Similarly, Sadhana shared:

In 2000, I started working to offer financial support to my family immediately after completing grades 11 and 12, as my father was unemployed. I recall an incident when I received a salary from my school. My father used it right after to buy my brother a bicycle. That was a moment that made me feel like I was the backbone of the family.

Women English language teachers contribute to the financial well-being of their families, which in turn developed their confidence and further empowered them. Another research participant, Manita, also has a similar experience. She stated:

I was the second-born daughter among four siblings in my family. I worked as an English language teacher and took pride in supporting the education of my younger brothers. Because of this, my father told me, “You are my son, not my daughter.” This made me feel proud and happy.

Manita’s experience aligns with Grumet’s (1988) view that women teachers’ experiences can be empowering and creative, influencing both their teaching practices and their professional development. In many cases, professional growth can be directly linked to economic growth, enabling women English language teachers to support their families financially. Therefore, their evolving roles not only help with professional development but also contribute to the economic sustainability of their families. Our research participants — Manita, Sadhana, and Jasuda — reconstructed their identities as caregivers. From a post-

structural feminist perspective, women's engagement in economic activities challenges the dominant discourse that positions men as primary earners and women as caregivers (Butler, 1990; Weedon, 1987). Through their financial independence, they negotiate new subject positions, receiving recognition both within their families and society. Their economic contribution to the family empowers them to redefine their sense of self, asserting agency and resistance against traditional gender expectations.

Juggling with Space and Time Restrictions

Women teachers often juggle multiple responsibilities. They have to manage multiple duties, including caring for their children and preparing them for school each day, and allocating time for their own lesson preparations. Steedman (1992), referring to her participant's stories, highlights the challenges women teachers face in balancing their professional and personal lives, describing how the demands of school work can dominate their existence and make it difficult to separate work from home life: "I loved my children and worked hard for them, lay awake at night worrying about them, spent my Sundays making work cards ... My back ached as I pinned their paintings..." Steedman, 1992, p. 53). Balancing these overlapping roles, as both caregivers at home and professionals in the workplace, and managing time for their own higher education, is tough for them. Despite these challenges, they consistently embrace their multiple roles as providers, learners, teachers, and housemakers with resilience and determination to sustain their personal and professional identities. Our research participants also shared similar stories regarding time management and not receiving recognition for their hard work. Manita reflected:

It has been a year since I was promoted to principal of a government school. I worked from early morning until late at night to prove myself as a capable female leader. I hardly had time to prepare the kind of food my family wished for, which left me feeling both guilty and exhausted.

When she became the principal, she joined a university for her MPhil program. At that time, the school had only 250 students. Determined to bring about change and leave her family life behind, she encouraged teamwork among staff and went to the community to convince parents that their school would surpass the private school. In the same year, the school committee, under her leadership, adopted English Medium Instruction (EMI), making every effort to increase the number of students. An English-medium education is discursively viewed as quality education (Phyak et al., 2022). Sah and Li (2018) argue that an increasing number of public schools in Nepal are adopting EMI starting from lower grades. Fortunately, the number of students increased surprisingly and reached 650. However, she received no motivational words about her efforts to increase the number of students from the management community, and it saddened her. Sometimes, inspirational words are like medicine to fuel our energy. Our society usually does not acknowledge or entertain women in leadership positions; instead, they are often viewed as enablers (Jones, 2017). Hard work and the social structuring of a world that recognizes them only as belonging subjects, usually wives, mothers, daughters, or sisters, confined to enclosed spaces, such as those of their families (Tamboukou, 2000). Regarding the struggle for having time and space, Jasuda claimed, "*It has been tough for her to balance professional life and family responsibilities.*" Her stories indicated that women English language teachers are regarded as time-poor due to the abundance of responsibilities they face. She added:

My husband went to abroad to pursue his higher education. I live with my four years old daughter and father-in-law, who is 65 years old and cannot look after him. I have admitted my daughter to a Montessori school to handle things.

Jasuda is a dedicated mother and teacher who carries heavy responsibilities every day. Jasuda sometimes has to bring her daughter along. Even a short delay in the morning can make her entire day stressful. Though she thinks of quitting her job, she needs to support her family financially. When schools assign extra tasks for her, she must rely on others for help in caring for her daughter. She further expressed that the situation frequently occurs when there are holidays at her school but not on her own, and sometimes she keeps her daughter in the reception hall at her school. The situation becomes even more critical when her father-in-law falls ill and needs to be hospitalized. If she quits her job, there will be a financial crisis. Her story reflects the emotional and physical challenges of balancing work and family life. It illustrates how working mothers must juggle multiple roles, often feeling pressured and exhausted from trying to do everything for everyone. Another participant, Sadhana, has also been through the same situation. Her family, including three children, her husband, and two in-laws who are almost 75 years old, depends on her care and support, which adds to her daily responsibilities and emotional pressure as she tries to balance work and home life. She also holds important positions at her college and is pursuing further education for professional growth, which shows that she has very little time left for her family.

Manita's narratives demonstrate that, despite having limited time due to family responsibilities, she was able to increase the number of students at her school, thereby allocating more time and effort to her professional work. On the other hand, Jasuda's contributions to handling the whole family and her professional career demonstrate her resilience and perseverance. In addition, Sadhana's distinct responsibilities make her life more complicated and harder to manage, both socially and professionally, due to the assigned roles. In a magical way, they can combine housework, child-care, and a senior position in adult education. Within the confines of a workday, they continually shift between personal and public boundaries. Women have been described as 'time-poor' (Edwards, 1993, p. 64). It highlights the temporal pressure they encounter in their daily experiences and roles. From a post-structural feminist perspective, the challenges women teachers face in balancing their home and work lives are shaped by social and cultural discourses that define what is considered "appropriate" for women. These time and space restrictions are not just personal struggles, but also a result of power relations that expect women to take care of the family while working. Yet, women teachers try to resist and reshape these expectations by managing both spaces and creating new meanings of being an English language teacher and a woman.

Caught in Gendered Constraints But Moving Forward

The lived experiences of these women teachers demonstrate that their sense of self develops through continuous interaction with social, cultural, and institutional structures. Their identities evolve as they engage with these contexts and respond to gendered expectations. Wenger (1998) views identity as socially formed through mutual relations, and Menard-Warwick (2004) emphasizes that gender negotiation plays a key role in this process. Our identities are shaped by gender, which, in turn, is influenced by sociocultural norms and expectations. However, drawing on Butler's (1990) theory of performativity, gender is not an inherent or biologically determined trait but rather a set of behaviors, actions, and performances that are socially constructed and repeatedly enacted within specific cultural contexts. Tamboukou (2000) states that "women's identities follow a different trajectory than men's to gender issues, especially in contests like education, language teaching, migration, or professional development. Gender discrimination was once widely accepted as a social norm in Nepal. Although there have been gradual improvements in how male colleagues perceive women, the change has not been significant. The field of teaching has not remained untouched by such gendered attitudes. Women teachers are often preferred for lower grades, as these classes demand emotional qualities such as care, love, and sympathy more than

subject knowledge. Additionally, women teachers are often persuaded to work for lower pay. Our research participants are secondary-level English language teachers and university-level teachers, also holding leadership positions. The narratives of Jasoda, Manita, and Sadhana reflect the strength and determination of women educators navigating gendered challenges in their professional lives. Each of them, in their own way, has demonstrated resilience in environments shaped by a male-dominated society. Regarding gender discrimination in the workplace, our research participant, Manita, shared her experience when she was engaged solely as a secondary-level English language teacher.

I was ready to take on all the complex tasks, even working extra hours at my workplace. However, my principal did not select me for the professional development opportunities. Only the Vice Principal, sir, was prioritized because he is his own brother.

Manita was also excluded from important decision-making with regard to organizational welfare. Mutiso (2012) suggests that despite having graduate degrees, women still face discrimination and limited opportunities for employment, promotion, and upward mobility due to societal expectations of their roles as housewives. She added that a particularly painful moment occurred when she was denied the examination allowance by the coordinator, who blamed her for not contributing, although she had equally contributed. The Vice Principal publicly insulted her, saying, “*Tero aukat k chha?*” [“What’s your worth?”]. She felt that if she were a man, he would not have dared to say that. Additionally, she belonged to the Madhesi community, a marginalized group, and as a result, she felt that she faced ethnic discrimination. Similarly, Sadhana shared her experience:

I currently hold a leadership position among a group of lecturers throughout my district. However, many of the male members in the committee do not listen to me or take my decisions seriously. They make it even more difficult for me to carry out my responsibilities because they clearly prefer men in leadership roles.

Sadhana was deeply hurt when she heard that one of the male members had said, “*Pothi baseko ramro hudaina*” (It is not good when a hen crows). It has a contextual meaning, which means that it is not appropriate for a woman to take the lead. This phrase reflects patriarchal attitudes and often undermines women’s authority or discourages their leadership. She further shared, “*I have to work twice as hard to prove myself that I am equally competent to males*”. As a woman, we admire Sadhana’s determination to take on a leadership role. Her efforts to challenge the constraints of a male-dominated society and her perseverance in overcoming struggles to establish herself as a woman in the field of English language teaching were praiseworthy. Jasoda also shared a similar predicament regarding the gender issue. She shared: “*In my school, there is a kind of culture where male teachers’ voices are prioritized, being female, I often feel invisible*”. Even though she proposed good ideas, they were either ignored or later taken by male colleagues as their own. Whenever she had ideas for the betterment of the organization, she was discouraged by her male coworkers underestimating her thoughts. However, she put her thoughts in louder voices. Davis and Skilton-Sylvester (2004) argued that examining gender discrimination also means refusing to tolerate inequitable practices operating within educational institutions and professional organizations. A post-structural perspective highlights that identity is not seen as fixed or biologically determined, but rather as constructed through discourse, power relations, and social practices (Weedon, 1997; Butler, 1990). Women English language teachers’ experiences of being excluded from leadership, treated as mere listeners, or judged as overspoken when expressing their views reflect how gendered power structures shape discourse in educational institutions.

Consequently, these narratives highlight how gendered challenges persist in education settings. Despite the challenges they face, such as insults, exclusion from decision-making, and less value in leadership roles, Manita, Sadhana, and Jasuda continue to demonstrate their resilience and establish themselves as women leaders and educators, challenging traditionally held social expectations of women.

Conclusion and Implication

This study explored how women English language teachers experience and navigate their personal and professional lives within the teaching profession. From these lived experiences of distinguished women scholars, we can conclude that the identities of women teachers are influenced by multiple elements, such as gender roles and social inequalities. After examining their stories, we realize that we should challenge outdated ideas and create empowering, inclusive situations for women teachers. This study focuses on the stories of three women teachers who have resisted an unfair system and prepared themselves for the upcoming challenge. For example, Manita not only faced gender discrimination but also ethnic discrimination and nepotism at her workplace. Even though the school management community did not appreciate her hard work and contributions, she remains determined to improve the educational institution.

Similarly, other research participants, Sadhana and Jasuda, challenged the patriarchal system supporting their families to overall growth and development before marriage and after marriage. Jasuda's determination to become an English language teacher dates back to her childhood, when she dreamed of securing a job, inspired by her mother's difficulties with household work. She challenged our traditionally assigned role of women as housekeepers, creating a path for herself in a professional career. She also fulfilled her parents' desire for a son by handling the challenging responsibilities thrust upon the family. At the same time, the stories of these participants reveal that they sought help from the teaching profession to break free from the confines of their families and prove themselves as independent individuals.

Manita redefined traditional perceptions by demonstrating that women can not only possess the nurturing and caring qualities associated with teaching but also exhibit decision-making capabilities in a leadership position, such as principal, proving their all-rounder capabilities. Both Manita and Sadhana continued their further education to remain updated and adapt to the demands of the teaching profession, proving themselves to be equally competent as their male counterparts. Women teachers faced multiple challenges and hindrances while evolving and growing as women teachers in their careers. Despite their difficulties, they continue to challenge the social belief that women belong in the private sphere and men in the public sphere.

This study contributes to a small but growing body of TESOL research projects that use narrative inquiry to "present experience holistically in all complexity and richness" (Bell, 2002, p. 209). Our research paper not only advocates for gender equity but also empowers women teachers to enhance their professional development. The stories collected from women English language teachers focus on the resilience and coping strategies adopted by women teachers as they evolve in both their personal lives and the professional field. If we talk about the scenario of our country, women teachers remain in a marginalized category who request help in providing women-friendly policies from the government. We believe it will contribute to inspiring further research and bring meaningful change in the teaching field regarding women teachers' issues.

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English Language Teachers' Experience of Implementing Flipped Classroom

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Abstract

The study explores the experiences of four English language teachers in integrating the flipped classroom in a resource-limited context. Within the interpretive paradigm and adopting a narrative research method, the study presents the challenges faced by teachers in preparing educational materials, accessing technology, and dealing with inadequate infrastructure. It also discusses obstacles faced by teachers due to technology and training. The study's findings suggest that more teacher training and development programs focusing on access to technology are needed for the better implementation of the flipped classroom in Nepal. Despite limited access to knowledge, skills, and resources, the study concluded that educators have successfully adapted a flipped classroom model that meets the needs of the local education system, thereby promoting student engagement and active learning.

Keywords: *Flipped classroom, student engagement, active learning, language teaching*

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Introduction

Technological advancements have brought about changes in the educational context. As new technologies evolve, they are utilized for educational innovations to enhance traditional teaching methods (Jensen et al., 2015). With the help of various technological tools, it provides students with the opportunity to engage in and explore distant learning at different times and places. Hence, the digital age requires teachers and learners to work both independently and together using diverse technology tools. Emerging instructional methods are positively impacting education by fostering independent learning, requiring both students and instructors to stay connected with new educational technologies (Zainuddin & Halili, 2016). The “flipped classroom” is a recently developed and widely favored learning model that integrates technology into the educational process (Jensen et al., 2015).

Flipped classroom is an “active, student-centered approach” that was developed to improve the quality of time spent in the classroom (Ozdamli & Asiksoy, 2016, p. 98). In a flipped classroom, activities that are traditionally done in class are completed at home, and those that are typically done as homework are done in class (Bergmann & Sams, 2012). When applying a flipped classroom approach, teachers create videos of the chapter or lesson content and send them to the students. The students watch the videos and understand the

lesson. In class, teachers assign work based on the video, and students are required to complete their assignments. The works are done in groups or with their peers. This approach was first practiced by two chemistry teachers, Jonathan Bergmann and Aaron Sams. It was made for the students who have missed their lessons. This approach aims to prepare students for the subject before and during the course by engaging in activities that promote the quality of face-to-face education. Flipped learning encourages students to take the initiative to read independently.

The flipped classroom shifts homework and other activities into the classroom, while lecture sessions are converted into video content for students to watch at home, reversing the traditional learning structure (Ozdamli & Asiksoy, 2016). It is a “student-centered approach to learning”, where students take a more “active role than the instructor” during classroom activities (Zainuddin & Halili, 2016, p. 315). It is a type of blended learning, where students view lectures and materials, usually in video form, at home. They also participate in interactive activities in the classroom to practice what they’ve learned (Lamsal, 2022a).

Flipped learning is an approach where direct instruction shifts from group learning to individual learning, resulting in a dynamic, interactive learning environment guided by instructors (Flipped Learning Network, 2014). Flipped Classroom and Flipped Learning are not the same. A flipped class involves providing reading materials or videos, but a true Flipped Learning requires incorporating four key pillars known as F-L-I-P. Here, “F” means Flexible Environment, where educators support group or individual learning with flexibility in learning activities and assessment showcasing mastery. L stands for Learning Culture, where teachers act as guides while students explore topics, build understanding, and create meaningful learning experiences. “I” stands for Intentional Content, where educators focus on content. They provide materials to help students develop a deeper understanding. Lastly, “P” refers to Professional Educator, where educators analyze and provide feedback. They conduct critical analysis, focusing on student-centered activities to make the interaction meaningful.

The unpredictable eruption of COVID-19 had an unavoidable impact on Nepal's education system. The changed context caused by COVID-19 necessitated the use of ICT as the primary resource for delivering online education, either synchronously or asynchronously (Latorre-Coscolluela et al., 2020). Some institutions, such as Kathmandu University School of Education (KUSOED), were already using the flipped model. However, after the COVID-19 pandemic, many educational institutions in Nepal began adopting this approach (Dahal et al., 2023). The education system in Nepal has traditionally been teacher-centered, and the adoption of modern pedagogical models, such as the flipped classroom, has faced various challenges. An effective education system should expand learning opportunities and evolve from traditional frameworks to modern ones, integrating technological advancements (Bas, 2010). But the integration of technology in Nepalese classrooms remains inconsistent. It has created a digital divide between rural and urban schools (Dawadi et al., 2020). The article focuses on digital learning during the pandemic, which created a digital divide among privileged and underprivileged students. The article is based on the analysis of education during and after COVID-19. It briefly describes its impact on school education and also points out some challenges.

The existing educational policies, such as the National ICT Policy (2015) and the Digital Nepal Framework (2019), emphasize the integration of technology in education. However, the actual practice in schools often fails to maintain expectations, as these policies do not fully address the technological, infrastructural, and training challenges that teachers

face. The gap between policy and practice has led to inconsistent delivery of the approach, particularly in areas with limited access to technology. This study aims to fill the gap in understanding how the flipped classroom model is practiced in Nepal, particularly in light of the technological and infrastructural challenges. The study's findings will help shape policies that better align with the education system's practice in Nepal, ensuring the better implementation of the flipped classroom in Nepal.

In my MPhil study at Kathmandu University School of Education, I experienced the flipped classroom model through Google Meet during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Professors used their slides and related videos to teach us. However, teachers struggled to integrate technology and the flipped model during that time. The tricky part was to make parents and teachers understand and get used to technology, though it was ultimately very rewarding. Our learning using technology was very fruitful and engaging during the pandemic. However, although there was limited use of flipped learning in Nepal, research in this area is scarce.

An extensive body of research exists on the flipped classroom in Western contexts. Zainuddin and Halili (2016) present the flipped classroom as contributing to the positive impact on students' learning. It includes topics on their achievements, inspiration, involvement, and interaction. Galindo-Dominguez (2021) notes that the flipped classroom is more effective than traditional methodologies in terms of academic achievement. However, studies focusing on its execution in developing countries, such as Nepal, remain inadequate. Schools in Nepal face various problems, including limited access to technology, inadequate teacher training, and diverse student needs, which affect the adoption of the flipped classroom model (Lamsal, 2022b). With the onset of the pandemic, many educational institutions in Nepal were compelled to transition their education online without adequate teacher training (Lamsal, 2022b). The shift to online teaching during the pandemic brought its own challenges, especially in terms of accessing and utilizing materials. Hamad (2022) in his studies revealed that developing countries faced a higher risk during the COVID-19 pandemic compared to developed nations, most importantly due to limited technological advancements.

The flipped approach is well-documented in Western pedagogy, but little is known about how Nepali teachers adapt this model to suit local educational practices. The COVID-19 pandemic led to an increase in the use of technology in education in Nepal; however, its impact on teaching strategies, particularly in English language classrooms, remains unexplored. The study addresses the research question:

- How do English language teachers transform their classroom to make teaching and learning engaging and student-centered by integrating the flipped method?

Narrative Inquiry as a Research Method

I employed narrative inquiry to explore the experiences of integrating the flipped classroom. Narrative inquiry enables researchers to explore participants' lived experiences in the form of stories (Clandinin & Huber, 2002). This approach focuses on understanding the lived experiences of individuals by collecting and analyzing their stories. Participants share and live out stories that reflect and give meaning to their lived experience (Clandinin & Caine, 2008). This inquiry facilitates a comprehensive examination of how teachers experience and interpret the flipped classroom model within their specific context. By capturing their personal narratives, this research offers rich qualitative insights into the practical challenges and adaptations that teachers face when implementing this teaching strategy. The study acknowledges that individual histories, social contexts, and cultural

influences shape these experiences, making narrative inquiry a suitable approach for exploring the complexities of flipped classroom practice in Nepal.

Participants

This study involved four purposively selected secondary-level English language teachers from private schools in the Kathmandu Valley, Nepal. I selected research participants who have employed the flipped classroom approach in English language teaching and have integrated technology. All the participants had at least five years of teaching experience, with a mix of male and female teachers to ensure diverse perspectives. Three male participants had more than ten years of teaching experience, and one female participant had over five years of teaching experience. The selection criteria aimed to include teachers who had some level of familiarity with the flipped classroom model or had made some efforts to incorporate technology into their teaching. I have used pseudonyms to ensure their safety, privacy, and confidentiality, and have excluded details that could identify them.

Table 1

A Brief Overview of the Participants

S.N	Participants	Teaching Experience	Gender	Contextual Background
1	Shyam	10 years	Male	Experience of using slides, pen drive, and laptop for teaching. Uses Viber for sharing materials and communicating with students.
2	Ram	10 years	Male	Adapted to online teaching in pandemic through self learning. Uses Google and You Tube for materials. Focuses on active engagement, peer reviewed assignment and feedback.
3	Hari	10 years	Male	Uses multimedia for teaching. Shares pre-class and post-class materials through Viber and messenger. Emphasizes on students' presentation and discussions.
4	Gita	7 years	Female	Uses smart board, Google and You Tube to enhance student engagement. Self learned technology during the pandemic. Shares materials post-class and emphasizes visual learning for better understanding.

Data Collection

I collected data using in-depth interviews and informal conversation methods, which are well-suited for narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Caine, 2008). I conducted semi-structured interviews twice, each lasting 90-120 minutes. Interviews were conducted in Nepali so that they could express their thoughts comfortably in detail. Later, I translated the responses into English. I carried out the process, preserving the originality to maintain accuracy. This allowed participants to share their personal stories about their experiences with the flipped classroom model. I asked open-ended questions focusing on themes such as teachers' use of technology in classrooms, challenges in implementing the flipped classroom, adapting to the flipped classroom model, student engagement, and learning outcomes. I recorded the

interviews with the participants' consent and transcribed them for analysis, ensuring their accuracy (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using narrative analysis, following Barkhuizen et al.'s (2014) framework, which drew on Clandinin and Caine's (2008) approach to narrative inquiry. Firstly, I recorded audio interviews. Then, I transcribed and translated it into English. I then read the transcripts multiple times to identify codes, such as the use of technology, student engagement, and teaching challenges etc. Later, I categorized it into broader concepts, such as teacher adaptation and barriers to using technology. Ultimately, I constructed individual narratives that captured the essence of each participant's experience, which were later compared to identify differences and commonalities. This process enabled a deeper understanding of participants' lived experiences with flipped classroom practices in Nepal within a local context.

Findings and Discussion

The findings illustrate how the teachers have transformed their pedagogical practices by integrating technology into the flipped classroom model. This section examines the transition from traditional teacher-centered teaching to a student-centered learning approach, highlighting teachers' ability to adapt and innovate within their teaching environments. I generated the key themes, aligning with the existing literature. I have categorized the discussion section into two primary themes, each following two sub-themes. These themes focus on the dynamic interplay between teachers' pedagogy and technology, highlighting how technology has influenced material preparation and effective classroom delivery, while addressing its challenges. The section also examines the role of teachers in facilitating active student learning and their engagement within the flipped classroom model. Here, I combine participants' stories with relevant theories to provide a detailed interpretation of how teachers adapt to this pedagogical shift.

In-class Preparation and Technology Integration

With the emergence of educational technologies, the education system has changed in-class preparation and teaching methods. Teachers have transformed various teaching tools and strategies to promote student engagement in class and enhance content delivery. Using technology in class provides many opportunities, such as encouraging students, enhancing their engagement, facilitating individual learning, promoting group work, and providing access to materials. It makes technology an important tool that can help both educators and students to develop a learning experience (Reach & Teach, 2024). The use of laptops, multimedia presentations, and smartboards shows teachers' preparation of materials for the class. Shyam, in an interview conducted on November 21, 2024, explained his current teaching style. He says the recent teaching style that he is using is much easier. He normally doesn't send videos, but instead presents his points using slides. If he feels the need to add videos or content, he puts the link in the slide and shares it with the students. He also noted that the use of a laptop and a pen drive has made it easier for him to carry materials from place to place. He mentions that even if he forgets any of his points, he can simply look back at his slides and explain them.

The above narrative showed how technology has evolved his teaching methods. Here, technology played a part in supporting him in material preparation and its delivery. The use of slides to prepare lesson plans made my participants' work easier. Moreover, it also made it

easier to carry the materials from place to place. His story revealed that integrating multimedia in teaching helps us to organize and deliver content effectively. It became convenient for teachers to add or delete information and necessary links in the slides. This clearly shows how technology has provided flexibility in teaching, making it easier for teachers to prepare lesson plans and incorporate missing content. The study aligns with Neupane (2025), whose findings indicate that students who have access to technology in the classroom perform better academically than those who do not. He also mentioned that the use of multimedia presentations and interactive lessons has improved student comprehension.

My next participant, Hari, also revealed that he personally uses multimedia a lot. He shares links and videos through Messenger and Viber. He claims sometimes he sends it prior to the class and sometimes after the class. He also says that he makes the students do presentations on the topic. He says he normally starts the class by playing an audio related to the course to make the students more attentive.

This revealed that the teachers have used these technological tools during in-class sessions to maintain student engagement and make their learning easier. He shares how his use of technology has made the classroom activities more dynamic. It also states that his use of technology at the beginning of the class has helped him make students more attentive. His practice of sharing materials before class aligns with the flipped classroom model, where students actively participate in their learning, gaining a better understanding of the topic before entering the class. However, sharing the materials post-class shows a flexible teaching that combines traditional and modern teaching methods. This idea corroborates with Zhen's (2016) findings, which discuss the benefits and challenges of using multimedia in English language education. The findings highlight how multimedia can improve teaching by providing more information, stimulating students' imagination and creativity, and saving teaching time. It also highlights its role in bridging traditional methods and modern educational approaches. A similar study was conducted by Acharya (2014), which found that the use of ICT tools, such as mobile phones, laptops, multimedia projectors, and Web tools like YouTube, Wikipedia, and Facebook, was very useful in teaching and learning contexts. These tools helped to carry out effective classroom activities.

Adapting Modern Tools

The use of modern tools not only supports the organization of teaching materials but also allows teachers to adapt their methods quickly. It also ensures flexibility in their classroom. The use of modern tools by teachers simplifies the teaching process and fosters better student engagement. From Shyam's narrative, it is evident that he is open to incorporating technology into his teaching. He noted, *"I use slides for the teaching, and if I remember any points during the lecture, I add them to the slide. It makes it easier. I can just see my points from the slide and present them in the class."* Here, he utilizes slides as an effective tool for lesson planning and content delivery. Besides that, he also adds links or videos to his slides to make the students more engaged and better understand the material. His use of multimedia shows how teachers are easily adapting to modern educational practices. He further says, *"I have made a separate Viber group for English students to share the materials and answer their questions."* His saying states that with the use of technological tools like Viber, he can easily share the materials with his students and even answer their queries. This has made teaching and learning easier for both students and teachers. Whenever students have any problems regarding the subject, they can easily communicate with their teacher or friends by using the created group. They can even share their queries and get the answers quickly using Viber. This quick response to their answers helps the students in teaching and learning as well. With this, it is revealed that teachers adapt

these modern tools in their teaching because they make their teaching easier and more organized. Ali (2022) also highlighted the ability of these tools to encourage collaboration and social presence in blended learning, bridging the gap between traditional and online education approaches.

Teacher Gita, during an interview on 23rd November 2024, highlighted how the use of smart boards has transformed learning in schools, stating:

After the pandemic, our school started teaching through the smartboard. It's very easy to use. We can obtain all the materials from YouTube and Google. Students also pay more attention since we can change the font colours. The notice and required materials can be sent through Viber after the class.

Based on the narrative of my participant, Gita, it is concluded that with the use of a smartboard, teachers can easily access YouTube and Google for educational materials. They can enrich their lessons with diverse materials that are available on the Internet. Additionally, her use of different colors added visual appeal, making the students more attentive. The use of Viber also helped her to share the materials with the students. This shows that integrating digital tools in teaching makes the students more attentive and focused. It also makes teaching and learning easier for both teachers and students by providing a flexible environment suitable for the classroom. This improves the students' engagement and concentration in class. In contrast, a study by Shrestha and Khadka (2022) stated that using technology in the learning experience can increase both teachers' and students' ability to create an active educational process. Teacher Hari revealed that he was trained for a fused classroom before taking online classes, which was similar to a Google Meet but easier to use. So, he didn't have such a problem. Whenever he had an IT-related problem, an allocated IT personnel would fix it.

Through his narration, it became clear that the importance of providing teacher training to teachers before introducing new technologies in education was highlighted. When teachers receive proper training, they can easily incorporate it into their teaching methods, making the learning process easier. The teaching and learning become more effective and fruitful without any difficulty. My participant's prior training made it easy for him to take classes, as he was able to integrate technology into his teaching. Hence, it enhances overall teaching and learning when teachers get proper training and assistance. A similar study by Subedi (2015) showed that teacher training programs have the potential to enhance educational quality. The study also emphasized the need for well-developed teacher training programs to effectively develop Nepal's education system.

Challenges in Accessing and Using Materials

The change in the education system has enhanced student engagement and contributed to improving the overall quality of education in Nepal. Every challenge brings with it an opportunity. Amidst the challenges, the teachers looked for the opportunity and transformed the education system. Ram shared his experience, noting that running an online class for him was very new. It was like a ghost at the start. During the pandemic, he was compelled to return to his home village and run online classes under those circumstances. He further mentioned that teaching at that time was entirely a self-learning experience, where he learned many things. He mentioned he also took help from students to learn the things. Later, he searched for videos on Google and YouTube for materials. He added that this led to a habit of exploring the internet for materials.

From the above narratives, it is revealed that teachers face difficulties while adapting to a new teaching environment. Ram mentioned his earlier struggle with online teaching as a

“ghost” due to unfamiliarity. He also mentioned that he had to run classes from his village in those challenging circumstances. Due to his limited knowledge in this area, he also had to seek technical assistance from his students. Over time, he learned about things by searching on Google and YouTube. This self-learning helped him broaden his knowledge. My participant's experience highlights the challenges that many educators face when transitioning from traditional teaching methods to technology-based teaching without prior teacher training. He initially struggled with teaching, referring to it as a “ghost,” but his continuous effort and learning new things made him confident in using modern tools over time. It shows how continuous learning can help educators to effectively integrate technology into their teaching practices. It also highlights the need for professional development programs to integrate online resources into their teaching practices. Hamad (2022), in his article, also revealed that educators have insufficient skills and training, inadequate internet connectivity and infrastructure, a lack of resources, and difficulties in engaging students and providing effective online feedback as challenges to online teaching and learning during the pandemic. Lamsal (2022b), in his article, also focuses on the practice of the flipped learning approach by secondary English teachers, highlighting its challenges and recommendations in the Nepalese context.

Teacher Ram further mentioned that after returning to physical class, the teaching has undergone a complete change. Not only teachers, but also students, learned to get easy access to the materials. He noted that there is easy access to the Internet in the class. So, whenever he had to show any videos or materials related to the topic, he would open Google or YouTube and show them to the students. With this narration, it's revealed that the availability of internet access in the classroom has simplified access to resources and made learning easier for students. Internet access in the classrooms has made teaching and learning more convenient, but it has also led to a growing reliance on the Internet for materials. This can be a challenge when there is less connectivity. When they heavily rely on the Internet for digital resources, it may create difficulty for both teachers and students. A study by Rana and Rana (2020) was carried out, and the findings showed that certain factors, such as the country's poor economic condition, limited ICT resources, and teachers' lack of ICT knowledge and skills, prevent developing countries from benefiting from ICT.

My participant, Shyam, also highlighted the teacher's reliance on slides, laptops, and pen drives to make their teaching more organized. According to my participant, when teachers use technology, they often rely on digital tools like slides, laptops, and pen drives to deliver and manage lessons effectively. However, this dependency can be a challenge when technical errors arise, such as device failure or lost files. This can also set the limit of teaching, making it harder for teachers to deliver lessons on the spot.

Gita stated, *“Students now are using ChatGPT more in their academics. They are depending more on technology, and of course, they act passively with no creativity. Most of their assignments are copied from Google.”* Her narration revealed that students were relying more on technology for their assignments. This impacts the creativity of students and their critical thinking skills. The saying also concluded that students are more passive and copy their assignments from Google. It also shows their lack of interest in the assignment. Relying more on digital tools in academics makes students more dependent, losing their creativity. This highlights the need for proper guidance and responsibility when using digital tools as a kit rather than a replacement for active learning. Hamid and Fadila (2024) presented the negative impact of relying on ChatGPT in their article. It shows that the use of ChatGPT lowers the students' ability to think critically and their desire to study. Additionally, it also discusses students relying heavily on this application as their primary source of information.

Another participant, Gita, also shares her experience of teaching an online class through self-learning. She further states that she was aware of the technology while she was at college. She was taught using Zoom. She noted, *"I also didn't get any training from my school, but it wasn't that much difficult for me. But... the case wasn't same for my colleagues. They were less familiar with technology. But, it was really motivating and inspiring to look after them....each day struggling and learning with the techniques."*

Her narrative suggests that teachers struggle to adapt new technology in their teaching without prior training. It also highlights teachers' less familiarity with the technology, which made them face difficulty in adapting to new learning methods. It shows the need for teacher training before adapting new teaching methods to deliver the content in the class effectively. It also connects us with the reality that a lack of teacher training can lead teachers to learn through trial and error phase. It makes the change more challenging for the teachers. However, she also mentioned that it was more inspiring and motivating for her to watch them learn and adapt new teaching methods. This also demonstrates that teachers can easily adapt to new teaching methods if they receive proper teacher training. It also shows that active learning motivates and inspires educators. The study aligns with Laudari et al. (2021), who suggest that personal efforts are as important as institutional support in digital preparation. This also aligns with Voogt and Roblin (2012), who state that teachers in the 21st century must adapt to the rapid growth of technology to tackle the educational challenges of the modern era.

Active Learning and Classroom Engagement

Active learning helps in cognitive development. Here, the learner actively participates in learning activities, such as discussing, reviewing, evaluating, and cooperating in group activities and projects, to develop their higher-order thinking skills. Learners actively construct meaning with their prior knowledge and experience, playing a significant role in acquiring new information (Wilson & Peterson, 2006). My participant, Ram, noted that the start of physical classes after the pandemic made both teachers and students more active in using multimedia for teaching and learning. Both teachers and students began using sites like YouTube and Google to search for materials and Viber to communicate. Teachers started sending notices and materials to the students, using Zoom for conducting meetings and utilizing Google Drive for data entry. Not only teachers, but also students, started exploring the Internet for their problems, finding meanings, and communicating with teachers after school.

The narrative of my participant showed that the resumption of physical classes after the COVID-19 pandemic increased the use of multimedia tools among both teachers and students. Both actively use digital devices in the teaching and learning process. This shift encouraged them to use these tools. Teachers began to use this to send notices, explore teaching materials, conduct meetings, and enter and organize data. This shift was not only limited to teachers, but students also used this to find solutions related to their academics and communicate with teachers after school. This change highlights how the pandemic created a reliance on technology and also continued to shape the teaching and learning process, providing a more technology-based and resourceful learning environment. Gogus (2012) defines active learning as a technique that helps learners in teaching and learning processes accept their responsibility for self-learning and develop ideas by analyzing, combining, and evaluating these ideas.

My participant Hari states,

I always start my class with audio of the chapter. Then, I show slides using projector and explain the chapter. But it's actually really hard to reach all forty-five students in a class. But I have to make them active. So, I do discussion session on a topic for five minutes. Everyone has to participate. If anyone becomes absent to avoid the discussion, they must present on the other day. That's my rule haha...

This narration shows the positive use of technology. The participant begins the class by using technology to play the audio of the chapter. He then explains the chapter using digital tools like slides and a projector. And, in order to actively engage all forty-five students, a short discussion session is organized where each student has to participate. This story revealed how integrating technology in education builds student engagement and active participation. It also helps students to generate their thoughts and interact with their peers. My participant's idea also develops leadership skills and confidence among students. The discussion session makes the student active during the class, providing them with an opportunity to clear their doubts, express their thoughts, and interact with their peers, making the learning process more dynamic. This also makes the student more accountable and encourages them to actively and seriously be involved in the discussion session. It provides a more interactive and participatory classroom environment. The story also highlights the importance of striking a proper balance between the use of technology and interactive methods to foster students' active engagement. It also reveals teachers' difficulty in involving all students in large group discussions. The idea aligns with Neupane (2025), whose findings revealed that digital tools play an effective role in student engagement. Venton and Pompano (2021) conducted a similar study on student active learning. Their study discusses active learning in remote teaching using technology that promotes interaction and maintains flexibility. They further mentioned that it increases student engagement and also improves learning outcomes by encouraging students in the learning process.

My next participant, Ram, states,

I teach in points. My primary focus is on supporting students who are struggling academically. In my opinion, talented students just need a guide, but for weak students, we need to focus more. I make them read all the chapter, underline the difficult words, and extract the meaning of it using either dictionary or Google.

The story demonstrates how the teacher ensures the full participation of all students, leaving no one behind. He believed in supporting weaker students rather than the talented ones. He further says that he teaches in points to ensure all students understand the lesson. He also focused on a step-by-step reading procedure to engage students. Through this, it not only improves the vocabulary of the students but also enhances their reading habits and encourages them to actively participate in each classroom discussion. This also encourages students to develop a habit of exploring the Internet, surfing for queries, and the meaning of unfamiliar content. This method focuses more on students and their engagement rather than the teaching being more teacher-centered. This teaching focuses on encouraging and guiding weak students by covering lessons in points, which is one of the easiest methods to remember. The study also aligns with the studies of Kasumi and Xhemaili (2023), who mentioned that collaborative learning activities, such as group discussions and peer interactions, promote motivation and student engagement among English language learners. It also mentioned how fewer opportunities for such activities have negatively impacted students' learning outcomes.

Teacher as a Facilitator: Shifting Roles

Teachers in a Flipped Classroom give up their role as the center and focus on student-centered learning. This approach fosters greater student involvement in learning. Teacher Ram mentioned that the students' projects and assignments were peer-reviewed first, where they had to sign and evaluate work, including positive and negative points, recommendations, etc. He also mentioned that a separate Classroom Representative is kept who keeps all the records of the assignment. Then, the notes were checked by the teachers. It improved their grades and engagement.

Teacher Ram explained that before submitting the work to the teachers, students have to check each other's work and list out positive and negative points. They also have to recommend ways for their peers to further improve their assignments. This way of learning helps students to stay active in learning. When they review the works done by their friends, they can also develop their own learning and writing styles. This type of learning encourages students to engage in active learning in the class and makes the learning more student-centered, with the teacher becoming a facilitator. This peer review system also motivates students to develop their critical thinking skills, encouraging them to learn and reflect on their work by examining others' approaches. When the teacher allows students to review each other's work, the learning environment shifts from direct teacher instruction to peer collaboration, creating an environment for facilitation in guiding rather than dictating the learning process. The appointment of a Classroom Representative by a teacher encourages them to take leadership and accountability among the students. It creates an environment of autonomous learning, where students take responsibility for their own academic growth. This structured learning process resulted in individual attention to students, which directly reflected their academic growth.

My participant, Shyam, stated regarding the assignment that the college maintains a separate record file for projects and presentations. Students are required to present slides that have helped them build their leadership skills and confidence. My participant's story revealed that students actively get involved in the learning process through presentations and creating slides, rather than gaining knowledge through passive learning. This encourages students to structure their presentations, select a relevant topic, and improve their delivery skills. It also gives students an opportunity to improve their leadership skills and confidence in presenting their perspectives in front of their peers, which is important for both academic and professional development. It provides a flexible environment for learners, promoting self-directed learning where the teacher supports and mentors the students. The idea aligns with Abu Bakar et al. (2018), whose findings showed that students had more time to practice grammar during speaking activities. In his study, D'Angelo (2018) also revealed that technology, whether used during class or after school, provides opportunities for students to connect with instructors, work collaboratively with peers, and grow themselves in the learning process.

A Pathway to Students' Deeper Learning

With this change in the education system, students have developed a deeper understanding of the content through the use of different technologies. Both the teachers and students have developed different teaching methods. Before COVID-19, the education system in Nepal was largely traditional, where teachers were the center of attraction (Dawadi et al., 2020). However, there was a drastic change in Nepal's education system after the COVID-19 pandemic. Gita articulated,

students notice the things when they see visually. While explaining the story elements or explaining a movie, students understand more when they see it visually. After understanding about the chapter, they try to think and answer creatively. I will tell

you one story.... during the discussion session in the class, one of my weak student started arguing with his friends giving proper reasons for his different perspective which actually surprised me.

Her story revealed how the use of online media helped to develop creative thinking among one of her students. When students see the content visually, it develops a strong mental connection that makes it easier for them to remember the information. When students form a deeper understanding of the concept, they attempt to analyze and interpret the content, which helps develop critical thinking among them. Her example of a previously weak student trying to debate with his peers, who interpret his perspective, shows the occurrence of a deeper understanding among the students. The ability to reason and argue on a point indicates that students are developing their higher-order thinking skills. It also encourages them to explore new viewpoints and express their perspective. Teacher Gita's approach of integrating visual learning and discussion in the class shifts the teacher's one-way delivery into student-centered learning, where students gain a deeper understanding of the content. Students should have opportunities to learn through various methods, and teachers must possess a broad pedagogical repertoire that incorporates insights from a diverse range of learning theorists (Wilson & Peterson, 2006). Teachers must explore new theories that align with their classroom practices, which is equally beneficial for students to be given opportunities to learn through various approaches. My next participant, Ram, states,

I send them materials and videos of the next day's lesson. They review it and come up with certain questions for discussion. Yes...of course, there were some students who wouldn't do that, but the ones who actually practiced it really entertained the whole class with their discussion and creative questions.

This story revealed that when students are pre-informed about their topics, most of them show interest and actually look at them. They also analyze it and come up with creative questions for class discussion. Their interest in asking questions shows that they are not only absorbing the information but also thinking creatively about it. These discussions in the class allow them to share different perspectives, clear doubts, and understand the topic deeply. It allows students to take ownership of their own learning, creating an environment for more insightful learning. This kind of practice will surely result in a deeper and meaningful learning experience (Dede, 2014).

Conclusion

After analyzing the narratives of my research participants, my study came up with certain insights. Firstly, the study shows that teachers are increasing their engagement with technology. Teachers integrate technology into their teaching practices by using slides, YouTube, multimedia presentations, and Viber to enhance lesson delivery, making their content more engaging and improving student academics. This change in teaching practice highlights a positive change in teachers' adaptability and willingness to embrace technology for a new learning experience. Secondly, the use of technology has resulted in active learning among students. Teachers show audio, video, and slides to engage students in the discussion. It helped students generate meaning from prior understanding, allowing them to engage in critical thinking. Thirdly, it highlighted the flexibility in teaching methods, where teachers can adapt new content and provide additional resources to students. Additionally, the use of technology has also transformed the teacher-centered classroom into a more student-centered classroom. Teachers are guiding students using digital tools, encouraging them to be independent and active learners. It creates a more dynamic and supportive learning environment for students as they develop their leadership and confidence. It provides students

with opportunities for peer learning and discussion on different perspectives, analyzing them critically.

Hence, the study underscores the growing importance of technology in education, emphasizing the need for professional development and support from institutions for its effective implementation in education. Generally, in the flipped classroom model, materials are provided before the class. Students have to read and analyze at home, and the problems will be discussed later in class. However, in the context of Nepal, teachers first teach the students and then send them videos and materials after the explanation to make their studies easier. Discussions are also held in class. The study shows that Nepal practiced the flipped classroom model, which is based on its local needs and circumstances.

Besides this, the study also discusses the challenges teachers faced during the class due to a lack of teacher training and infrastructure. It also talks about the dependency of teachers and students on technology for teaching and learning. Technology has made teaching more organized and resourceful, but at the same time, it has also highlighted the challenges of technological failure, like: lost files, device malfunctions, and low internet access. So, the study also highlights the need for proper plans to ensure uninterrupted learning.

These findings indicate the potential of flipped classrooms to transform education in Nepal, especially by fostering active learning and collaboration. However, it also highlights the need for structured teacher training programs, improved access to technology and infrastructure, and awareness programs to strike a balance between the use of digital tools and fostering creativity and originality.

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A Book Review

**School-Based EFL Teacher Professional Development for Task-Based Language Teaching:
An Ethnographically Informed Case Study of Rural China**

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Book Title:	School-Based EFL Teacher Professional Development for Task-Based Language Teaching: An Ethnographically Informed Case Study of Rural China	
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Abstract

This book review analyzes School-Based EFL Teacher Professional Development for Task-Based Language Teaching: An Ethnographically Informed Case Study of Rural China by Jing Yixuan. This book presents the author's immersive engagement with English language teachers to collaboratively enhance their pedagogical skills in successfully implementing task-based instruction in rural Chinese contexts. The book contributes to the field of English language teaching under TBLT frameworks.

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Task-based language teaching (TBLT) has drawn the attention of English language teachers and researchers since Prabhu proposed his Bangalore Project (1979-1984). However, the implementation of task-based language teaching (TBLT) in many under-resourced contexts remains limited and under-researched. In this regard, Jing Yixuan's work addresses this gap in her recent volume, *School-Based EFL Teacher Professional Development for Task-Based*

Language Teaching An Ethnographically Informed Case Study of Rural China (Yixuan, 2024). This volume addresses the gap through her 12-week immersive ethnographic case study in rural Northwestern China. The book demonstrates how collaboration between a teacher educator and rural EFL teachers enhances the teachers' skills in designing and implementing language tasks, as well as implementing TBLT in challenging rural contexts.

The book consists of three major parts, relating to the author's understanding of TBLT in general and in the Chinese context, her ethnographic engagement with rural Chinese EFL teachers, and finally reporting, evaluating, and reflecting upon her study in educational contexts (Pole & Morrison, 2003). The first part of the book consists of five closely connected chapters. This section sets the scene for the research on TBLT in rural China. In Chapter 1, the author provides a general review of the literature, defining TBLT and its principles, and draws on her personal experience as an English language teacher in China. In Chapters 2 and 3, by embedding the author's own stories of understanding and experiencing TBLT, the book presents a review of the related literature on teacher development programs and TBLT training. With her real-world experiences with teachers in Chapter 4, she discusses teacher development programs in China and the curriculum guidelines for English education prescribed by the Chinese Ministry of Education. Chapter 5 discusses how modernization in urban China has created a division between urban and rural descriptions for all Chinese citizens. Based on this description, the chapter explains the significance of this division of pedagogical practices in the context of English education in modern China.

The second part of the book, comprising four chapters, explores the main storyline: the author's personal experiences with site selection for the study. While selecting a suitable research site and participants, the author details the education system in rural China, the nature of secondary schools, and stakeholders' perceptions of outsiders in Chapter 6. Chapter 7 presents EFL teachers' honest admission of their inability to keep up with shifts in the ELT paradigm, while Chapters 8 and 9 describe the author's collaboration with teachers and students through seminars and workshops aimed at enhancing their pedagogical practices. This section discusses the teachers' realization of the significance of task-based lessons and students' satisfaction with their learning through TBLT instruction.

The third part of the book comprises five chapters that provide a theoretical perspective on collaborative teaching and teacher development within TBLT frameworks, thereby contributing to the ELT community. Chapter 10 presents how the school leadership plays an inseparable role in enhancing English language teaching and learning practices in rural Chinese contexts. Chapters 10 and 11, respectively, examine the role of school leadership in enhancing EFL teaching and learning, and provide a comprehensive evaluation of the degree of human agency in the context of teacher development. Chapter 12 critically examines the role of a teacher educator in teacher professional development, addressing the gap between the participant teachers' classroom practices and the Ministry of Education's directives for language teaching in China. Similarly, Chapter 13 reconnoitres the effectiveness of teacher educators in reforming the national curriculum, and Chapter 14 recommends strategies to address teacher development under TBLT frameworks in South-Western China.

Thus, the book contributes to the field of ESL/EFL teacher development in general and TBLT practices in particular. The author spent time in the field, building strong relationships with the stakeholders by engaging in their everyday teaching and learning activities at the school (Jing et al., 2022). The author's exploration of TBLT in rural and under-resourced Chinese

contexts has captured the attention of ESL/EFL practitioners and experts worldwide. The author establishes her research rigour through her prolonged ethnographic engagement with rural ESL/EFL teachers and triangulates multiple data sources through interviews, observations, and text analysis. This has established rich contextual descriptions and credibility for the research findings. Considering that TBLT has essentially been transformed from the traditional cognitive-interactionist and psycholinguistic viewpoints (Qin & Lei, 2022), this ethnographic field study contributes to enhancing English language teachers' pedagogical skills to boost student motivation and engagement in language learning under TBLT frameworks. One of the contributions of this book is that it presents a more socio-cultural perspective on TBLT.

Finally, the author concludes that while TBLT in modern China offers potential to enhance student-centred English language teaching, its implementation is constrained by insufficient teacher professional development, a top-down curriculum structure and national examination system, and limited resources. Hence, the author emphasizes the importance of sustainable teacher development within the TBLT framework and the need for localized adaptations to support effective ESL/EFL practices. The major takeaway for readers is that TBLT must be a context-sensitive rather than top-down, expert-laden approach to language teaching and learning. The book's strength lies in its in-depth exploration of teacher transformation through TBLT practices in rural China and in its offering of future directions for global EFL/ESL prospects.

In addition to shedding light on the realities of EFL/ESL practices in rural China, this book seeks answers that resonate across its borders. Today, when TBLT is often accepted as a well-established approach, this book emphasizes that socio-cultural and institutional contexts determine its effectiveness. By highlighting the gaps between EFL/ESL policies, classroom practices, and teachers' lived experiences, the book offers insights for policymakers, curriculum and syllabus designers, textbook writers, and teacher educators worldwide who face similar challenges of applying TBLT in local settings. The author's immersive ethnographic fieldwork makes this book especially pertinent to researchers and teacher educators seeking to explore how language-teaching frameworks expand across contexts for pedagogical transformation.

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