

Pedagogical Strategies and ICT Practices of English Language Teachers in Nepali Schools

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ABSTRACT

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This study explores the perceptions and classroom practices of English language teachers in Nepali schools, focusing on their pedagogical approaches, use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), and the challenges they face. Despite the critical role of English in Nepal's education and social mobility, teachers often struggle to align their positive attitudes toward modern, student-centered methods with actual classroom practices due to systemic constraints. The research highlights a shift toward communicative and task-based teaching, yet traditional methods persist due to large class sizes, exam-driven curricula, and limited resources. ICT integration, though viewed favorably, is hindered by infrastructural issues like poor internet access and insufficient training. The study also examines the impact of Nepal's multilingual context on teaching practices and the emerging trend of reflective teaching and participatory action research.

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Findings underscore the need for targeted professional development, equitable resource distribution, and policy reforms to bridge the gap between teachers' aspirations and classroom realities, fostering more effective English language education in Nepal.

Keywords: teacher perception, English language teaching (ELT), pedagogical practice, ICT Integration, and Nepali Education context

Introduction

In Nepal, English holds a critical place in education, employment, and social mobility, yet the understanding, attitudes, and classroom approaches of English language teachers remain under-explored (Paudel et al., 2024; Yonjan, 2024). This study addresses this gap by examining how English teachers across various Nepalese schools perceive their roles and what classroom practices they implement. The research considers pedagogical choices, resource usage, and the barriers they face in fostering effective English language learning environments. Globally, non-native English-speaking teachers (NNESTs) are often perceived differently than native speakers, with their strengths and limitations both acknowledged and scrutinized (Braine, 1999; Medgyes, 1994; Phillipson, 1992). In contexts such as Nepal, where English is learned as a foreign or second language, identifying how teachers' identities influence their teaching is essential (Manandhar et al., 2024). This study foregrounds how national language ideologies and teacher self-perception intersect with pedagogy and practice.

Contemporary research suggests that Nepalese English teachers are moving away from the traditional, teacher-centered model toward more communicative and student-centered pedagogies (Bhatt, 2024), including task-based language teaching (Neupane, 2024), participatory action research (Mahara, 2024), and critical pedagogy (Kadel, 2020).

Nevertheless, these emerging approaches coexist with challenges like large class sizes, limited training, and outdated assessment systems (Bhandari, 2023; Bhandari, 2023; Bhandari, 2023). Analyzing perceptions thus provides insight into both teachers' aspirations and the tensions within their professional identities. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is increasingly integrated into Nepalese classrooms, with local initiatives like OLE Nepal supplying training and digital resources (Yonjan, 2024; Bhandari, 2023; Manandhar et al., 2024). Nevertheless, practices vary significantly; many teachers express positive views toward ICT but struggle with unreliable connectivity, frequent power cuts, and insufficient training (Bhandari, 2023; Yonjan, 2024; Paudel et al., 2024). Clearly, technological access and competence influence teachers' classroom experiences and instructional choices.

Nepal's multilingual environment requires teachers to balance English teaching with local languages and cultural contexts (Parajuli, 2024; Manandhar et al., 2024; Paudel et al., 2024). Studies show that embracing mother tongue use fosters inclusion and engagement, though policy and curriculum often promote English-only instruction (Manandhar et al., 2024). Teachers' attitudes toward multilingual pedagogy are thus shaped by personal values, local demands, and systemic pressures. Among English skills, speaking poses significant challenges due to low proficiency, lack of practice, and heavy reliance on rote learning (Bhandari, 2023). Despite their awareness of speaking's importance, teachers cite curriculum constraints and limited exposure to communicative methods as major obstacles (Bhandari, 2023; Bhatt, 2024). Furthermore, while autonomy-oriented instruction is encouraged globally, its implementation in Nepalese classrooms remains limited. Teachers still struggle to create environments that support learner independence, often due to

entrenched cultural norms and exam-focused pedagogy (Panta, 2019).

A growing number of Nepalese teachers engage in reflective practices such as participatory action research (Mahara, 2024) and critical reflection on their professional roles (Parajuli, 2024). These efforts illustrate a shift in teacher identity—from knowledge transmitters to facilitators and reflective practitioners. However, continuing professional development opportunities are sporadic, varying widely by region and institutional support (Yonjan, 2024; Mahara, 2024).

Despite English being a crucial medium for education, employment, and upward social mobility in Nepal, there remains a significant gap in understanding how English language teachers perceive their roles and implement classroom practices across diverse school settings. While several studies have explored aspects of English Language Teaching (ELT), few have holistically examined the alignment or misalignment between teachers' pedagogical beliefs and their actual teaching strategies in Nepalese classrooms. This research aims to address that gap by investigating teachers' perceptions, classroom practices, and the contextual factors that influence their pedagogical choices.

Objectives of the Study

This study contributes to the broader discourse on teacher cognition and professional identity by situating Nepalese teachers' experiences within global ELT trends and local educational realities. The main objectives of the study are;

1. To explore how English language teachers in Nepal conceptualize their professional roles and responsibilities.
2. To identify the pedagogical methods and technological tools they employ in their classrooms.
3. To examine the challenges they encounter in aligning their perceptions

with practice, especially regarding ICT integration and learner-centered approaches.

4. To assess how socio-cultural, infrastructural, and institutional factors shape their teaching behaviors.

Literature Review

Recent studies have explored various dimensions of English Language Teaching (ELT) in Nepal, focusing on how teacher perceptions influence instructional practices. Bhatt (2024) highlights a gradual pedagogical shift from traditional grammar-translation methods to communicative and student-centered approaches, although classroom realities often hinder full implementation. Paudel et al. (2024) examine teachers' understanding of integrated language teaching approaches, noting discrepancies between theoretical knowledge and practical application. Similarly, Yonjan (2024) finds that while teachers hold positive views toward ICT integration in ELT, infrastructural limitations and inadequate training restrict its effective use. These studies collectively reveal a gap between what teachers aspire to do and what they can achieve, shaped by institutional, technological, and socio-cultural constraints. However, limited comprehensive analyses exist that link perceptions and practices across diverse school settings in the context of Nepal.

Integration of Technology in ELT

The integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in English Language Teaching (ELT) in Nepal has gained prominence, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the need for digital readiness in education. While educators widely recognize the potential of ICT tools to enhance student engagement and access to authentic language materials, actual classroom implementation remains inconsistent due to

several contextual challenges. Studies indicate that many teachers adopt platforms like YouTube, Zoom, and Google Classroom to promote interactive and student-centered learning. These tools align with modern pedagogical trends such as communicative and multimodal instruction. However, enthusiasm for ICT is often hindered by infrastructural disparities. In particular, rural and public schools face challenges such as poor internet connectivity and limited access to digital devices. Dhakal (2023) highlights a widening digital divide, as urban private schools are more likely to implement ICT-supported learning than their public counterparts.

Another significant factor affecting ICT use is teacher preparedness. Yonjan (2024) reveals that although secondary-level English teachers have a positive attitude toward technology, many feel underprepared due to insufficient training and technical support. Teachers express a strong need for continuous professional development to use ICT tools effectively in classrooms. Blended learning models, which combine traditional instruction with digital methods, have gained traction among educators as a practical solution in the Nepalese context. These models allow flexibility and cater to diverse infrastructural realities. In conclusion, while there is a growing appreciation for ICT in ELT across Nepal, systemic issues such as unequal access, limited teacher training, and institutional resistance continue to impede widespread adoption. Addressing these challenges through inclusive policies, resource allocation, and ongoing professional development is critical for meaningful and sustainable ICT integration in Nepalese ELT classrooms.

Pedagogical Practices in the Nepalese ELT Context

The literature highlights significant pedagogical implications for English Language Teaching (ELT) in Nepal, particularly in light

of evolving instructional paradigms and contextual constraints. Despite increasing awareness of communicative and learner-centered approaches among Nepalese English teachers, implementation remains limited due to systemic barriers such as large class sizes, exam-oriented curricula, and inadequate resources (Bhatt, 2024). One major implication is the need to bridge the gap between teacher perception and classroom practice. Bhatt (2024) and Parajuli (2024) note that while many teachers endorse communicative and task-based methods theoretically, they often revert to traditional grammar-translation approaches in practice. This suggests the importance of developing pedagogical models that are both context-sensitive and feasible within local constraints. For example, adapting communicative strategies for large classes or low-resource settings could help align practice with modern ELT philosophies.

Furthermore, teacher beliefs and identity play a vital role in shaping instructional behavior. Studies by Mahara (2024) and Paudel et al. (2024) emphasize that teachers' evolving roles—from authoritative instructors to facilitators require corresponding professional development that supports critical reflection and participatory learning. Mahara's (2024) advocacy for participatory action research provides a model for empowering teachers to refine their practices through continuous self-evaluation and contextual inquiry. The underutilization of oral language skills, especially speaking, presents another pedagogical challenge. Bhandari (2023) reports that speaking is often neglected despite its recognized importance, pointing to a misalignment between curriculum objectives and teaching methods. Addressing this gap may involve designing activities that promote communicative competence even within time-bound or exam-driven environments.

Technological integration also carries significant pedagogical implications. While many teachers support ICT use to enhance

learner engagement, actual implementation is hindered by a lack of training and infrastructure (Yonjan, 2024; Basnet & Basnet, 2024). Therefore, integrating blended learning models and providing targeted ICT training can foster a more interactive and modern ELT experience. In sum, the Nepalese ELT context demands pedagogical innovation that is adaptable, reflective, and resource-aware. Emphasizing localized strategies, enhancing teacher agency through professional development, and aligning instructional practices with learner-centered methodologies can collectively improve the quality and effectiveness of English teaching in Nepal.

Teacher Perceptions in ELT

Mahara (2024) emphasizes the value of participatory action research in helping teachers critically reflect on their classroom practices, which in turn strengthens their self-efficacy and awareness. Paudel et al. (2024) also suggest that perceptions about content-integrated language learning are generally positive, but teachers struggle with practical application due to insufficient training and lack of institutional support. Furthermore, Yonjan (2024) shows that while teachers are optimistic about using ICT tools in ELT, their perceptions are shaped by technological accessibility and prior exposure, with many expressing a desire for more hands-on training. These findings indicate that teachers' perceptions are dynamic, context-sensitive, and closely linked to both professional identity and systemic factors.

Context and Research Design

In Nepal, English Language Teaching (ELT) plays a pivotal role in shaping educational outcomes and career prospects, especially as English is increasingly regarded as a global lingua franca. English is introduced from early grades in both public and private schools and is often viewed as a gateway to academic success,

social mobility, and global citizenship (Bhatt, 2024). Despite this, ELT practices across Nepal remain diverse and are deeply influenced by factors such as school location, infrastructure, teacher education, language policy, and socio-economic contexts. The ELT landscape in Nepal is marked by a dichotomy between private and public schools. While private schools generally adopt English as the medium of instruction and have access to better resources and trained personnel, public schools often struggle with resource constraints, larger class sizes, and limited teacher training (Dhakal, 2023). This gap is particularly pronounced in rural areas, where the integration of modern pedagogical methods and technological tools is hindered by infrastructural and economic limitations (Yonjan, 2024). Despite policy directives promoting communicative and learner-centered approaches, implementation remains inconsistent (Neupane, 2024).

Given this context, the current study aims to explore the perceptions and actual classroom practices of English language teachers in Nepalese schools. Specifically, it investigates how teachers conceptualize their roles and responsibilities, what pedagogical strategies they employ, and how they navigate contextual challenges. The study seeks to contribute to the understanding of how teacher beliefs align or misalign with instructional practices across varied educational settings in Nepal. The study adopts a qualitative research design, utilizing a multiple case study approach to generate in-depth insights. Qualitative methodology is suitable for this research as it allows for the exploration of subjective experiences, personal beliefs, and contextual factors that influence teaching practices (Khanal, 2024). Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis involving English language teachers from both urban and rural schools, including both public and private institutions.

The study employed a purposive sampling technique ensuring diversity in teaching experience, school types, and geographical locations to select English language teachers from diverse Nepalese schools, ensuring representation across urban and rural settings, public and private institutions, and varying levels of teaching experience. This non-probability sampling method was chosen to target participants who could provide rich, context-specific insights aligned with the research objectives. Interviews focused on eliciting teachers' perceptions of ELT, their teaching philosophies, and their reflections on professional challenges and successes. Classroom observations were used to validate and contrast reported perceptions with actual teaching practices. Regarding the use of this technique to select the experience of the participants can be discussed as below; The study aimed to explore the interplay between teachers' perceptions and practices in varied educational environments. Purposive sampling allowed the researcher to deliberately include participants from contrasting settings such as resource-rich urban private schools vs. under-resourced rural public schools and capturing how systemic disparities influence ELT practices. Qualitative research prioritizes depth of understanding over statistical representativeness. By selecting information-rich cases (e.g., teachers engaged in reflective practices or ICT integration), the study uncovered nuanced perspectives on pedagogical challenges and innovations, which random sampling might overlook. Nepal's diverse geography and uneven resource distribution make random sampling logistically challenging. Purposive sampling ensured feasible access to participants while maintaining focus on key variables (e.g., school type, location). The study's qualitative design sought to compare and contrast experiences across subgroups (e.g., novice vs. experienced teachers). Purposive sampling

facilitated this by allowing the researcher to select participants based on predefined criteria (e.g., years of service, ICT use), ensuring diverse viewpoints were included.

Findings

The findings of this study reveal several significant insights into how English language teachers in Nepalese schools perceive and practice language instruction, especially in the context of integrating Information and Communication Technology (ICT). The study, based on semi-structured interviews with fifty students and classroom observations of ten teachers, underscores that teachers generally possess positive attitudes toward the use of ICT in English Language Teaching (ELT), though their actual classroom practices are often constrained by contextual realities. The major findings of the study can be presented in different themes.

ICT integration

The study reveals that English language teachers in Nepal generally hold positive perceptions toward ICT integration, recognizing its potential to enhance student engagement, interactive learning, and individualized instruction. Tools such as interactive whiteboards, language learning software (e.g., Google Classroom, Zoom), and online platforms are valued for improving vocabulary acquisition, pronunciation, and access to authentic materials. However, significant disparities exist between these optimistic attitudes and actual classroom practices due to systemic barriers. A key finding is the urban-rural digital divide. Teachers in urban private schools reported relatively better ICT utilization, while those in rural public schools faced infrastructural challenges like unreliable internet, frequent power outages, and inadequate hardware maintenance. For instance, some rural teachers

described ICT tools as "theoretical luxuries" due to inconsistent electricity and lack of technical support.

Another critical barrier is limited training and professional development. Although teachers expressed enthusiasm for ICT, many lacked confidence in using ICT tools effectively, citing insufficient hands-on training and contextualized guidance. Participants emphasized the need for workshops focused on locally adaptable resources rather than generic training modules. The study also highlights pedagogical inertia. Despite awareness of ICT's benefits, traditional methods (e.g., grammar-translation) dominated due to exam-centric curricula, large class sizes, and institutional resistance. Some teachers attempted blended approaches but struggled with time constraints and rigid syllabi. Emerging trends include reflective practices among proactive teachers, who used participatory action research to tailor ICT integration to their contexts. These educators demonstrated flexibility in lesson planning and formative assessments, though such practices were not widespread.

Pedagogical Practice

The study reveals a persistent gap between Nepalese English teachers' awareness of modern pedagogical approaches and their actual classroom practices. While teachers recognize the value of communicative, student-centered methods like Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) and critical pedagogy, traditional teacher-fronted instruction particularly grammar-translation and rote memorization remains dominant. This disparity is attributed to systemic challenges, including large class sizes, exam-driven curricula, and limited resources. Teachers in urban private schools more frequently attempted innovative practices, such as interactive tasks and formative assessments, whereas those in rural public schools faced

greater constraints due to infrastructural and institutional limitations. Notably, some educators engaged in reflective practices like participatory action research, adapting their methods to contextual needs, though such cases were exceptions rather than norms.

The study also highlights a tension between policy directives promoting communicative language teaching and classroom realities. Despite positive perceptions of learner-centered approaches, implementation was inconsistent, often hindered by insufficient training and administrative support. Teachers emphasized the need for professional development to bridge this gap. Overall, while pedagogical shifts are emerging, structural barriers and cultural inertia continue to shape a predominantly traditional ELT landscape in Nepal.

Reflective Thinking

The study reveals that reflective thinking is emerging as a transformative practice among Nepalese English teachers, though its adoption remains limited. Teachers engaged in participatory action research (Mahara, 2024) and critical self-reflection demonstrated greater adaptability in their pedagogical approaches, tailoring lessons to students' needs and contextual realities. These educators transitioned from traditional knowledge-transmission roles to becoming facilitators and reflective practitioners, aligning with global shifts in teacher identity (Parajuli, 2024). However, reflective practices were predominantly observed among experienced teachers in urban or resource-rich schools, where institutional support and professional development opportunities were more accessible. In contrast, rural and public-school teachers faced systemic barriers—such as heavy workloads, exam pressures, and lack of training that hindered consistent reflective engagement.

The study highlights a growing recognition of reflective thinking's value in improving teaching efficacy and student outcomes. Teachers who embraced these practices reported increased autonomy, pedagogical creativity, and responsiveness to multilingual classroom dynamics. Yet, the broader implementation of reflective approaches remains constrained by sporadic professional development and cultural-institutional resistance to change. To foster wider adoption, the study underscores the need for structured reflective training programs, mentorship networks, and policy reforms that prioritize teacher autonomy and continuous learning.

Discussion

This study highlights the gap between English language teachers' positive perceptions of communicative methods and ICT integration and their actual classroom practices in Nepal. While many teachers recognize the value of ICT tools for enhancing engagement and learning, practical challenges especially in rural areas hinder effective use. Issues such as poor internet access, inadequate hardware, and limited training restrict consistent ICT implementation. Traditional methods like grammar-translation persist due to systemic constraints, including overcrowded classrooms, rigid curricula, and exam-driven teaching. Despite understanding learner-centered approaches like Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), many teachers lack the support and training to apply them. Some teachers are beginning to adopt reflective practices, indicating a shift toward more autonomous and context-sensitive teaching. The growing demand for professional development, particularly in ICT, reflects teachers' readiness to adapt, but the absence of structured support continues to limit innovation. Addressing these barriers requires systemic reforms in teacher training, infrastructure, and educational policy to align

practice with pedagogical ideals. The findings of the study are implemented in different sectors.

Implications

Implication for Policymakers

The findings underscore the urgent need for policymakers to address systemic barriers hindering effective ICT integration and pedagogical innovation in Nepal's education system. To bridge the urban-rural digital divide, targeted investments in infrastructure such as reliable electricity, internet access, and hardware maintenance are critical. Policymakers should revise national curricula and assessment frameworks to reduce reliance on rote memorization and encourage communicative teaching methods. Additionally, mandating reflective practice in teacher training programs and providing grants for participatory action research can foster professional growth. Equitable resource distribution, especially for rural schools, and partnerships with NGOs for localized ICT solutions must be prioritized to ensure inclusive progress.

Implication for Educators

Educators must proactively seek professional development opportunities to overcome challenges in ICT use and pedagogical innovation. Teachers can start by integrating simple ICT tools into lessons and gradually adopting blended learning approaches. Collaboration through peer networks or platforms like NELTA can help share best practices and reflective strategies. Educators should advocate for institutional support, such as training workshops tailored to local contexts, and experiment with small-scale changes—like incorporating formative assessments or student-centered activities—to shift away from traditional methods.

Embracing reflective practices, even informally through teaching journals, can enhance adaptability and improve student outcomes.

Implication for Institutions

Educational institutions play a pivotal role in creating environments conducive to change. Schools should allocate resources for ICT maintenance and provide ongoing technical support to teachers. Establishing mentorship programs pairing rural and urban educators can help disseminate innovative practices. Institutions must also prioritize professional development by organizing workshops on communicative pedagogies and reflective teaching, while allowing flexible schedules for experimentation. Recognizing and rewarding teachers who adopt progressive methods can motivate wider participation. Lastly, fostering a culture of collaboration through communities of practice and resource-sharing platforms can bridge gaps between policy aspirations and classroom realities.

Conclusion

This study highlights that while English language teachers in Nepal generally possess positive perceptions toward communicative pedagogy and ICT integration, their actual classroom practices are often shaped by contextual limitations such as inadequate infrastructure, limited training, large class sizes, and exam-oriented curricula. Although there is a growing awareness of student-centered approaches and the pedagogical value of ICT tools, these are not uniformly implemented due to systemic constraints. However, the emergence of reflective teaching practices and increased interest in professional development particularly in ICT indicates a promising shift in the ELT landscape. Bridging the gap between perception and practice will require targeted interventions in teacher

training, equitable resource distribution, and supportive policy frameworks. Ultimately, empowering teachers with the necessary tools, knowledge, and institutional backing can transform English language education in Nepal into a more effective and context-responsive endeavor.

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