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Teachers and Students' Perceptions towards Using ICT in ELT in Model Schools

Dammar Singh Saud

Department of English Education, Darchula Multiple Campus
Far Western University, Nepal
Email: dammarsaud68gmail.com

Abstract

In this digital age, new technologies help us overcome geographical and cost barriers in teaching and learning. This study employs a mixed-methods research design to explore the perspectives of English Language Teaching (ELT) teachers and students towards the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in English language classrooms in two model secondary schools located in the Darchula district. The sample comprised four teachers and 60 students, who were selected through purposive selection and simple random sampling respectively. The study utilized a set of questionnaires for the students and a semi-structured interview for the teachers to collect data. The thematic analysis was used to analyze the collected data to derive insights into the teachers' and students' perceptions and experiences of using digital technologies in English language classrooms. The findings suggest that while the participants have positive attitudes towards integrating ICT in English language classrooms, they also face significant challenges, such as a lack of adequate training and technical support, which hinder the effective use of digital technologies in teaching and learning. The study underscores the need for policymakers and educational institutions to provide adequate resources and support to facilitate the effective integration of ICT in English language teaching.

Keywords: ICT, ELT, model school, secondary level, perspectives

Introduction

The use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has gained increasing popularity in the field of education, including English Language Teaching (ELT), at the international level. UNESCO (2010) defines ICT as the forms of

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technology that are used to transmit, process, store, create, display, share or exchange information by electronic means. The definition reflects the dynamic nature of ICT, as new technologies continue to emerge, and highlights the importance of electronic means in the modern world. According to Poudel (2022), the integration of ICT in ELT has the potential to enhance students' language learning experiences and improve their proficiency in English. However, the effective use of ICT in ELT depends on several factors, including teachers' attitudes and perceptions towards technology, the availability of resources, and the level of technical support provided by educational institutions. In Nepal, where English is taught as a foreign language (Shrestha, 2015), the integration of ICT in ELT has the potential to enhance students' language learning experiences and improve their proficiency in English. As Saud (2021) mentions, proper knowledge about computer and its application enables English teachers for technology enhanced language teaching and learning.

The English language has become a ubiquitous means of communication worldwide, and its use varies from country to country, with varying purposes and contexts. Nepal is a country where English is taught as a foreign language (Sharma, 2010). However, Saud (2020) argues English in Nepal to be taken as an international language. English Language Teaching (ELT) refers to English as a foreign language that is taught as a subject and a language in Nepal. The integration of ICT in ELT has become a crucial aspect of teaching and learning the English language in Nepal. Model schools are well-resourced institutions in Nepal that provide technical support, professional development, and administrative assistance to nearby schools (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2016). These schools are in a unique position to implement and effectively use ICT in their ELT programs. Therefore, this study aims to explore the perspectives of ELT teachers and students towards the use of ICT in teaching English in two model secondary schools located in the Darchula district of Nepal.

The issue of integrating information and communication technology (ICT) effectively in English language teaching (ELT) has become increasingly important, especially in developing countries like Nepal where education and training budgets are often insufficient. While numerous studies have highlighted the benefits of technology on student learning in ELT (Panagiotidis et al., 2023; Gao, 2021; Paudel, 2021), unfortunately, only a few studies have investigated the use of technology in English language education in the Nepali context, and none in the context of the secondary-level model school of Darchula. Therefore, the main purpose of this study is to explore the perspectives of ELT teachers and students towards the use of ICT in teaching English in model schools in Nepal, with a focus on the Darchula district. The study aims to answer the following research question: How do the teachers and

students perceive the use of ICT in ELT at the secondary level of model schools? By exploring the perceptions of both teachers and students, this study aims to contribute to the understanding of the effective integration of technology in ELT in Nepal, which may inform policies and practices in the country's education system.

Literature Review

Technology is essential for effective language teaching and learning, especially in English language education where students often struggle. Previous research has shown that education is crucial for development, and technology can improve its accessibility and quality. Integrating technology in language teaching can help teachers use innovative methods that engage students and enhance their language skills. Cakici (2016) and Hidayati (2016) have conducted studies on the use of ICT in English language teaching. Cakici's study provides a comprehensive review of the advantages and disadvantages of using ICT as an instructional tool in EFL classrooms. The study highlights how ICT can contribute to the English learning process and identifies factors that influence its successful implementation. Meanwhile, Hidayati's article emphasizes that the integration of ICT can improve the effectiveness of Indonesian ELT when carried out in line with effective language teaching and learning principles. The integration of ICT allows for varied teaching and learning activities, more student-centred teaching styles, and access to authentic learning materials. Overall, these studies suggest that the integration of technology in language teaching can bring about positive outcomes if implemented effectively.

Bashyal (2022) contends that the availability of ICT has democratized access to a diverse range of knowledge across disciplines, enabling effective support for teaching the English language at all levels of education. However, Acharya (2014) highlights that the digital divide in Nepal persists due to financial constraints and the commercialization of education, hindering equal access to digital devices and resources in educational institutions. The COVID-19 pandemic has necessitated the development of infrastructure to facilitate the adoption of online education, but this shift has posed significant challenges in terms of limited digital skills, slow internet connectivity, and inadequate institutional support for integrating ICT into teaching (Shrestha et al., 2021). To address these challenges, context-specific support and professional development programs tailored to help teachers effectively integrate technology into their teaching practices are necessary (Caena & Redecker, 2019; Monteiro & Leite, 2021; Zhao et al., 2020). Such programs would provide teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively use technology to support English language learning.

The studies by Laudari (2019), Paudel (2021), and Rana (2018) provide insights into the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in language

education in Nepal. The studies suggest that teachers generally have a favourable outlook on the integration of ICT in language teaching despite encountering some difficulties in employing new ICT tools and applications. The incorporation of ICT in language education offers students opportunities to access authentic learning materials and enhances their active participation in learning. However, Rana's (2018) research highlights the gap between ICT policy objectives in education and the challenges that constrain its implementation in rural primary schools. The synthesis of the reviewed studies suggests that there is a need to overcome challenges to realize the potential benefits of ICT integration in language teaching and learning in Nepal.

Gnawali's (2020) research examined the impact of incorporating ICTs in language classrooms at Kathmandu University, finding that students not only enhance their digital competencies but also pass on these skills to their future students after graduating. The study highlights the potential of digital literacies to transform English language teaching practices in Nepal. Similarly, Jha (2020) underscores the value of integrating ICT in higher-level online and distance education in Nepal, reporting that such efforts not only enhance learner capacity but also contribute to improved quality of life. Pageni's (2017) work further supports the potential of online education in Nepalese institutions, which has flourished because of positive initiatives to incorporate ICTs in education. Together, these studies highlight the importance of digital literacy and ICT integration in promoting educational quality and access in Nepal.

Ramorola's (2010) study highlights several crucial challenges in the integration of information and communication technology (ICT) in South African schools, including a shortage of specialist ICT teachers, inadequate experience with ICTs, insufficient support from education authorities, and a lack of technology resources. Similarly, Muslem et al. (2018) found that English teachers in Indonesia faced several barriers to ICT integration, including limited time, poor internet connectivity, and inadequate training and experience. Wright (2014) further emphasizes the need to address critical factors such as infrastructure, teacher training, motivation, and sustainability to effectively leverage the potential of ICTs in education. These studies highlight the significance of contextual considerations and addressing obstacles to maximize the benefits of ICTs in education. Thus, policymakers and stakeholders must recognize and tackle these challenges for successful ICT integration in educational contexts.

The advance of computer technology enables us to get a variety of Information and Communication Tools (ICT) increasingly being used in English language teaching. The Internet, Web 2.0, mobile phones and tablets, just to name a few, have a great impact on the English language teaching and learning process. It can expand equal access to learning, facilitate personalized learning, provide immediate feedback and assessment, enable anytime, anywhere learning, and improve communication and administration

(UNESCO, 2013). Many studies have also shown that digital technologies can improve the outcome of education and enhance students' engagement in learning (Barak et al., 2016; Wang et al., 2015; Barrs 2012; Blattner & Fiori, 2009). ICTs have indeed been gradually integrated into language classrooms in developed as well as developing countries.

However, it is found that technology is used widely in teaching the English language at different academic levels. The teachers find a computer, multimedia projector, laptop, mobile phone, pen drive, apps, and web resources very useful in teaching the English language. It is also found that teachers and students face various problems in using modern technology. But very few studies have been conducted in the Nepali context and none in the context of the secondary-level model school of Darchula regarding using technology in teaching English. This study intends to explore the perspectives of ELT teachers and students towards the use of ICT in teaching English and how effectively the teachers deal with these in their classrooms at the secondary level.

Methods and Procedures

The research paradigm and design of this study were multiparadigmatic and mixed methods, respectively. A mix of qualitative and quantitative data collection methods was utilized to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the research question. Qualitative data were obtained through semi-structured interviews with teachers and analysis of previous studies related to the topic. Quantitative data, on the other hand, were obtained through a questionnaire survey that utilized the 5-point Likert Scale (1932) and was administered to the students. Similarly, the research site consisted of two model secondary schools located in the Darchula district. The participants in this study were 4 teachers and 60 students, who were selected using a purposive selection and a simple random sampling method respectively for data collection. The teachers selected for interviews had at least a graduate degree in English and a minimum of five years of experience teaching English subjects. The selected students were from different classes in the academic year 2022.

To collect the data, questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were used as research instruments. The questionnaire consisted of ten statements with five response options ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. The teachers were interviewed in a formal setting, and the interviews were recorded using a mobile phone with the permission of the interviewees. The qualitative data obtained through interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis, while the quantitative data obtained from the questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Overall, this mixed-method approach allowed for a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the research question.

Results and Discussion

The following section presents the results and discussions of the study on the use of technology in English language teaching and the challenges associated with it. The study utilized both quantitative and qualitative data collected from students' questionnaires and teachers' interviews. The major themes that emerged from the data analysis were the perceptions of both teachers and students towards the use of ICT in ELT and the challenges of using ICT in ELT classrooms. This section will discuss these themes in detail and critically analyze the findings to provide insights into the effectiveness of ICT in English language teaching and the ways to address the challenges associated with its use.

Results from Students' Questionnaires

In this study, the researcher used a structured questionnaire to collect data from the students regarding their views on the use of ICT in learning English. The questionnaire consisted of ten statements, and students were asked to rate each statement on a 5-Point Likert scale, ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The statements focused on different aspects of ICT use in English language learning, such as its effectiveness in learning, its impact on class interest and attention, its promotion of communication skills development, and the relevance and motivation of teachers in using ICT. The students were also asked about their comfort level in an ICT-affiliated ELT classroom. The questionnaire aimed to gather insights into the students' perceptions of the role of ICT in English language learning.

Table 1

Students' Responses to the Questionnaires

Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. Technologies help in learning English.	12	36	12		
2. Technologies make the language class more interesting.	12	42	6		
3. I pay more attention when teachers use technology in class.	6	48	6		
4. Technologies promote the development of communication skills.	12	48			

5. Technologies have had a good impact on my learning the English language.	30	18	12		
6. Using a projector in English class is effective.	36	18	6		
7. I feel comfortable in a technology-affiliated classroom.	18	24	14		
8. Teachers use relevant technologies for teaching English.	12	36	12		
9. Teachers motivate me to use technologies for learning English.	6	42	12		
10. Teachers often engage me in using technologies for learning English.	6	36	18		

Table 1 shows that the students expressed their feelings and perceptions toward the technologies used in their class. They showed mixed perceptions. Most of the students (i.e., 60% and 70%) agreed “technologies help in learning the English language.” and “technologies make the language class more interesting.” Most of the students (i.e., 70% and 80%) said that they paid more attention when teachers used technologies in the class and technologies promoted the development of communication skills.

Similarly, 50% and 60% of the students strongly agreed that technology had a good impact on my learning the English language and that using the projector in a language class is effective respectively. The students felt comfortable in a technology-affiliated classroom, thought that teachers used relevant technologies for teaching language, and teachers motivated them to use technologies for learning the English language. Most of the students (60%) agreed the teachers often engaged them in using technologies for learning the English language.

However, they acknowledged that technologies make the learning environment easy and enjoyable. The findings showed that all the teachers used different types of technology according to the topic and content. In a technology-affiliated class, most of the students felt comfortable. They enjoyed the course with a laptop, smartphone, and projector. However, some of the students felt bored in the class.

Use of ICT in ELT

The data presented in Table 1 shows that the use of technology in English language teaching is generally perceived positively by students. Most students agreed

that technology helps in learning the English language and makes the language class more interesting. This suggests that incorporating technology in English language teaching can have a positive impact on students' learning experiences and motivation. Moreover, most students agreed that the use of technology in the class helped in developing communication skills, which is an important aspect of language learning. Students also felt comfortable in technology-affiliated classrooms, suggesting that the use of technology can create a positive and engaging learning environment. Additionally, the data suggests that teachers effectively utilized technology in their teaching, engaging students with various types of technology such as laptops, smartphones, and projectors. Teachers also motivated students to use technology for learning English. This highlights the importance of the effective integration of technology into language teaching and the role of teachers in encouraging and facilitating its use.

Challenges in Using ICT in ELT

Despite the positive attitudes towards the use of technology in English language teaching, the data shows that there are still challenges that need to be addressed. Some students felt bored in the class, indicating that technology should not be relied on solely as a means of engagement. Moreover, the data suggest that teachers may lack the necessary skills and training to effectively integrate technology into their teaching. This highlights the need for ongoing professional development and training for teachers to effectively use technology in the classroom. Overall, the data highlights both the potential benefits and challenges of using technology in English language teaching. Effective integration of technology requires proper training and support for teachers and should be used in conjunction with other teaching methods to create a varied and engaging learning experience for students.

Results from Teachers' Interviews

All teachers said that they used different technologies in their English subject classes. All of them used a computer or laptop, smart board, and multimedia projector. In addition, some of them used a mobile phone, the internet, websites and apps, tape recorder, and camera as well. Two of them did not know about a specific website for language teaching. Another two said they never think of using blogs, WhatsApp, Messenger, or Facebook for education. All the teachers stated that technologies help them to make language classes interesting and to prepare the class content.

As one of the teachers said, "Technology, especially the Internet, is great support for me to make my teaching interesting and effective." The teachers get new ideas about teaching English through the Internet which shows them various new ways of teaching English in the classroom, and it brings a new dimension to their tasks. It was found that in technology-affiliated classes most of the students feel comfortable.

However, in some cases, technologies have reduced students' opportunities of speaking and writing and students become less interested in using technology. In the beginning, they felt uncomfortable in class. They take time to adjust themselves in technology-affiliated classes. So, teachers had to face some problems in using technology in the classroom. Teachers have said that technology has a mixed impact. In most cases, the impact was positive as the teachers got help from technology. By using technology, they could make the class environment friendly and attractive for the students, but sometimes it had a slightly negative impact on teaching when some students cannot cope or concentrate on the class, and thus sometimes technology fails to achieve its goal.

One of the teachers remarked, "Technology has a negative impact on time management. It needs time to take a class with the help of technology." Teachers mentioned that they faced some problems in using technology in their classes. The teaching-learning system was not fully compatible with the use of technology. Students were not interested in doing any activities that would not appear in the examination. "Most of the students want to get good marks rather than learn something new," a teacher said. Sufficient resources were not available in all cases. Repairing a damaged machine was not easy when technicians were not available. Many teachers were not well-trained to use modern technology properly. They need others' assistance. Teachers are paid less.

Therefore, they usually cannot buy technological machines with their own money. The teachers suggested some solutions to the problems they usually face. They think motivation and support from higher authority, proper funding, and more teacher training are essential. Finally, the teachers have said that teacher training is very important for every teacher. Training on a workshop basis should be given at the beginning of the career of a teacher. A teacher strongly suggested, "There are no alternative ways except practical training to solve the problems."

Use of Technology in English Language Teaching

All the teachers interviewed reported using different technologies in their English subject classes, including computers or laptops, smart boards, multimedia projectors, mobile phones, the internet, websites, apps, tape recorders, and cameras. They all agreed that technology helps them to make language classes interesting and to prepare class content. Furthermore, they stated that technology supports them in getting new ideas and techniques for teaching English. However, some teachers reported that technology sometimes reduces students' opportunities to speak and write, leading to less student interest. They also noted that some students initially felt uncomfortable in technology-integrated classes and took time to adjust. Overall, the impact of

technology was mixed, with mostly positive impacts when teachers used technology to make the class environment friendly and attractive for students. However, some negative impacts were observed when technology failed to achieve its goal or when students cannot cope or concentrate on the class due to technological distractions.

Challenges in Using Technology in English Language Teaching

The teachers also mentioned several challenges they face when using technology in their classes. These challenges included problems related to time management, insufficient resources, and lack of training and technical support. They suggested solutions such as motivation and support from higher authorities, proper funding, and more teacher training to address these challenges. The teachers emphasized that teacher training is essential for every teacher and suggested practical training on a workshop basis to solve the problems. They also recommended that authorities should think about the development of teaching and support teachers both financially and technically to encourage them to use technology.

The results indicate that technology is an essential part of teaching English at the secondary level. Teachers largely depend on technology to update themselves and make their classes more interesting and effective. However, to keep pace with the rest of the world, teachers believe that technology should be made more user-friendly in their country. The authorities should come forward and support teachers both financially and technically and provide training and workshops to make them more active and help them understand how to use modern technology. The findings suggest that teacher training is critical to using technology effectively in language teaching, and practical training can help solve the problems faced by teachers. Overall, the use of technology in language teaching is a double-edged sword that requires careful consideration of its potential benefits and drawbacks.

Triangulation is a research method that involves using multiple data sources or methods to validate and strengthen the findings of a study. In the case of the current study, triangulation can be done by comparing the results from the students' questionnaire and the results from the teachers' interviews. The students' questionnaire provided quantitative data on the students' attitudes towards using technology in English language classes. The questionnaire showed that most students felt comfortable using technology in their classes, and they believed that technology made their classes more interesting and effective. However, a significant number of students also felt that technology reduced their opportunities to speak and write in English, and it made them less interested in using technology. The questionnaire also revealed that some students had difficulty adjusting to technology-affiliated classes, and they felt uncomfortable in the beginning. Furthermore, the students' questionnaire showed that students were more interested in activities that appeared in the examination, and they focused more on getting good marks than on learning something new.

The teachers' interviews, on the other hand, provided qualitative data on the teachers' experiences of using technology in English language classes. The interviews showed that all teachers used different technologies in their classes, such as computers, smart boards, multimedia projectors, mobile phones, the internet, websites, apps, tape recorders, and cameras. The teachers believed that technology helped them to make their classes more interesting and effective, and it gave them new ideas about teaching English in the classroom. However, some teachers also mentioned that technology harmed time management, and it was sometimes difficult to use in the teaching-learning system. The teachers also faced problems with repairing damaged machines and lacked proper training in using modern technology. They suggested that teacher training and support from higher authorities were essential for the effective use of technology in the classroom.

By triangulating the qualitative and quantitative data, it can be seen that there is some overlap between the students' and teachers' perceptions of technology in English language classes. Both groups agree that technology can make classes more interesting and effective, but there are also concerns about its negative impact on speaking and writing opportunities, concentration, and time management. The quantitative data from the students' questionnaire provides more specific details about these concerns, while the qualitative data from the teachers' interviews offer insights into the broader challenges of using technology in the teaching-learning system.

Overall, the triangulation of data in this study shows that while technology can enhance English language teaching, significant challenges also need to be addressed. Both students and teachers believe that proper training, support from higher authorities, and sufficient resources are essential for the effective use of technology in the classroom. By considering these factors, policymakers and educators can work together to develop strategies that make technology more friendly and useful for English language teaching in the country.

Conclusion

In personal insight, this study has allowed me to gain a better understanding of the challenges and opportunities that arise when integrating technology into language teaching. The findings have highlighted the importance of teacher training and digital literacy and the need for adequate infrastructure and support for technology integration. It has also provided insight into the perspectives of both teachers and students on the use of technology in the classroom, which can inform future research and policy decisions.

This study contributes to the literature on technology integration in language teaching by providing insights from a relatively understudied context. The study draws from the multiparadigmatic research paradigm and mixed research methods, contributing to understanding the complexities and nuances of technology use in language teaching. The study highlights the importance of considering the specific context when designing technology integration programs and provides a framework for future research in similar contexts.

The implications of this study are significant for English language teachers, school administrators, policymakers, and researchers interested in technology integration in education. The findings suggest that teacher training and digital literacy programs are essential for effective technology integration. School administrators and policymakers need to provide adequate technological infrastructure and support to enable teachers to integrate technology into their teaching practices. Researchers can use the study's framework and findings to explore other aspects of technology use in ELT, such as the impact on student motivation and language learning outcomes. Overall, this study provides valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities of using technology in language teaching in a specific context and has implications for future research and practice.

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations can be made for the successful implementation of technology in English language teaching:

- Teachers should use relevant technological tools to teach different language skills or topics.
- Topics and objectives should be clarified before using technology so that students can easily understand the various uses of technology.
- Modern technical ways should be followed in entertaining manners for effective learning and teaching of the English language.
- English teachers should encourage their students to use technologies in developing language skills.
- Reconsideration of the current textbook, national curriculum, and testing system for technology should be introduced.

- Training for one-to-one or small group tutoring is necessary so that teachers can develop computer literacy skills and be competent in different modern technologies in their context.
- Educational institutions should modernize their technical instruction capabilities by using new technologies and laboratories to support the teaching and learning process.

These recommendations can be useful for English language teachers, school administrators, and policymakers interested in the integration of ICT in ELT in the Darchula district and other similar contexts. By following these suggestions, English language teaching can be made more effective, engaging, and beneficial for students.

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