

# Trends of English Language Teacher Education in Nepal

Bhumi Raj Pandit

## Abstract

*This paper envisages the history and the trend of English language teacher education in Nepal. It reflects the outcome of the content analysis available on teacher education in the context of Nepal in printed materials and through online archives chosen purposively. For this, themes like teacher education in the past, teacher education in the ICT era and opportunities of continuous professional development in the context of Nepal were developed and authentic materials and documents relevant to the English language teacher education were analyzed, organized and reflection was written based on subjective interpretation. Analysis led to the conclusion that English language teacher education has a short history with remarkable achievements through continuous improvement. The provision of teacher education made by government and other organizations are found to have helped to maintain equalities and uniformities among teachers and professionals developing their career and imparting knowledge living in sophisticated area of the city center and the remote and rural areas of the multi-topographies of the country Nepal. However, the exposure the professionals have received in the comfortable zone has boosted the potentiality of them more in comparison to the ones who have been imparting knowledge, educating poor and marginalized people and earning livelihood in the remote areas.*

**Keywords:** English language, equalities, socio-cultural perspective, teacher education

## Background

English language teacher education and second language teacher education may be viewed synonymously in the countries where English language is treated as the second language. It is said that language teaching till the mid 19th century was like one-way traffic based on teachers' competence on delivering the content to the learners as the preachers did to the audience. It is argued that the Grammar Translation Method initiated teaching trend has come across Connectivism experiencing several methods and approaches. Likewise, the expectations of the contemporary learners are also changed in course of time. In the observation of linguists, the shifts are clearly seen across behaviorists to cognitivists to situated and social and distributed views of human cognition (Burns, & Richards, 2009). It is indicated that the way of thinking and the perception of truth regarding teaching has also been changed.

It is argued that teachers play crucial role in making the learners educated and civilized. It is also the truth that until the teachers are educated, they cannot impart quality education to others. Teacher education is viewed with emphasis for long throughout the world. Burns & Richards (2009) and Richards (2008) stated that English language

teacher education is supposed to have been shifted to the present condition because of internally initiated change of the teacher and external pressure. Further, they added that the origin of specific approaches to teacher training, applied linguistics, practical teaching skills and academic knowledge, etc. seem to have contributed to this field and teachers' professional development is possible through the development of personal practical knowledge, peer and self-monitoring, mentoring, action research, teacher collaboration and support group. Teachers have been equipped with the knowledge about language: phonology, discourse analysis, language functions and so on. Teachers are provided with the pedagogical, content and practical knowledge to cope with the problem of the 21st century which has been supportive to challenge the modern world. With the help of knowledge accumulated from diverse source, teachers have developed professional skills. Implicit and explicit knowledge of the subject matter has helped them to adopt the modern world.

In the past, teachers who could recite the religious hymns of the holy books and those who could explain knowledge from various perspectives were supposed to be great scholars. Teachers used to deposit knowledge like the Banking Model of Freire (1996) in the head of the disciples. Teachers were only the source of knowledge. But now, the concept has been changed. Education, these days, is supposed to be collaborative in the sense that only the teacher is not the source of knowledge. Many heads may consist of greater coverage of the subject matter and when they are shared in the classroom, the teacher also get new information and the students also get exposure to the knowledge of friends. Vygotsky's term to refer to the collaborative approach of language learning is socio cultural perspective of language learning which believes that language learning is situational, contextual, and collaborative (Jaramillo,1996). Only the effort of teacher or the learner will not be sufficient in the achievement of set goals. Kumaravadivelu (1999) argued that learning is possible not by following any of the classical or modern methods but by addressing the particularity regarding language pedagogy, teachers of particular place, learners having particular goals and an institution having particular context aiming to generate human resources needed for the particular socio-cultural setting. Further, practicality is the relationship between theory (what it says) and practice what it does in the classroom. It is assisted by distance education program and wide use of technology these days. Whether a teacher is just a teacher or a professional teacher, whether he just teaches or he has the capacity of socialization, functions as social worker/ writer, etc., they determine learning and teaching in effective way. Since the assumptions of English language teacher education keep on changing and it refers to the dynamism of the teacher and his knowledge, it is not easy to pinpoint the characteristics of ELTE. Substance, engagement and outcome/ influence are three pillars to understand the scope of SLTE (Burns, & Richards, 2009). In the same vein, Johnsons (2009) mentioned that the content, the pedagogies and the institutional form of delivery play vital role in L2

teacher education. Furthermore, the trends of re-examination, re-conceptualization and re-design helped in teacher education (Burns, & Richards, 2009). There are various practices regarding the measurement of teachers' quality in various parts of the world. Before that Richards (2008) stated that it was in 1990s the practice versus theory distinction that is to say the concept of teacher training versus teacher development emerged along with the foundation of CELTA and TESOL. He added second language teacher education was influenced by perspectives drawn from socio-cultural theory and the field of teacher cognition. So, in course of time, the concept of teacher education has been spread in such a way that there is no field that is untouched by teacher education. Despite its importance, teacher education in Nepal is not paid much emphasis and only a few researches are done to find out the history and trend of it. It led the researcher to dig deeper to investigate and let the concerned people be informed about it and take initiation to cope with the problems related to teacher education.

### **Literature review**

Language policy studies is believed to have emerged after World War II (McCarty et al., 2011). Along with the English language teacher education, transformation in the society were thought to have taken place. For example, there were three types of schools in Pakistan on the basis of medium of instruction targeted to three social classes of people: English medium schools for middle, upper middle and upper class, Urdu medium schools for lower middle and working class, and Deeni Madrasses for people in poor and religious community (Ahmed, 2011). It is argued that the English language education has created inequality in Pakistan and those who have taught in the Madrasses and Urdu medium schools must have felt inferiority. However, the aim of English language education might not be to create inequalities in the society. McCarty et al. (2011) argued that teacher education should be viewed as social practice not as an official pronouncement. They argued that teacher education need to be taken as social responsibility. On the other hand, Richards (2008) commented that SLTE program at graduate level should incorporate language analysis, discourse analysis, phonology, curriculum development and methodology and many more so that they can provide appropriate input to the learners. Moreover, teachers need to be techno-friendly in the modern practice of teaching.

The history of teacher education in Nepal goes back to 1948 when the government established Basic Education Teacher Training Centre and started training primary teachers (Awasthi, 2010). In course of time, as Awasthi (ibid) stated the government launched training for women in 1971 under the support of UNESCO and UNICEF to bring women in the field of teaching. Moreover, he stated that Faculty of Education replaced IOE in 1980 when there were a few trained teachers. Inline, he stated that NCED provided in-service Teacher Training in 1982 to more than 30,000 teachers and

with the similar goal, SEDC in 1983 offered 10 months training to science, math and English teachers. He reported that Faculty of Education took responsibility of teacher management afterwards and the government made the provision of license to teach in secondary level and exam is given every year. The discussion above lead to the thought that there were many initiations taken by the government and donor agencies for the teacher education. However, teachers should be intrinsically motivated for the professionalism which seemed lacking in the context of Nepal. It is reported that though teachers are provided with the trainings, they are not found adapting the techniques and knowledge. Pradhan (2016) also stated that National Center for Educational Development (NCED) in collaboration with British Council trained more than 7500 English teachers in 2014 under the School Sector Reform Project (2009-2016) and other many teachers are being trained under the School Sector Development Plan (2016-2023) which is going on. She further claimed that these projects would help English teachers groom professionally. However, such type of training are beyond the access of teachers teaching in the remote areas.

In case of Nepal, the teachers without teacher education also are believed to teach in many government and private schools and they are assumed to lack such technical knowledge. However, in policy, they need to go through a long term training to be eligible for teaching. Devkota (2018) claimed that the teachers in urban areas are over trained but the one who works in rural areas get less chance to get trained because of which one enjoys the opportunities but the other is deprived of it. However, at present, the teachers in the rural areas are also connected to the center through internet and virtual trainings have helped them to get updated information. Likewise, Mathema (1984) reported that because of heterogeneity in terms of social class, gender, caste, mother tongue and geographical background, learners are treated with discrimination. However, within a country all the children need to have education in the same medium and the teachers having similar capability. The constitution of Nepal (2015) ensured the equalities among people in terms of caste, religion, gender and region by offering incentives and opportunities in government jobs and politics. But the discriminatory behavior to MTI products is conspicuously seen in various places. On the other hand, Devkota (2018) argued that the English language has created equality among the people in the sense that the lower middle class and poor children who managed to get English education have been able to get good jobs and raised their status. Likewise, the teachers have been able to face the interview to go abroad for career development and earn their livelihood. Because of English they have got chance to know the world and learned to live decent life. Learners have scored good in TOEFL, IELTS, GRE, GMAT, SAT and other tests and have got admission in foreign universities. They have got foreign degrees.

However, it should not be forgotten that English has created the gap between elite and poor people. The English illiterate people feel inferior to the English speaking people. There is inequality in terms of the availability of facilities like internet (not all the teachers and students have access to internet), e-library (most of the schools have no good library), digital devices (not all teachers/learners can afford good mobile, laptop/desktop), no specification as English manpower (in rural areas mathematics/ science teachers are found teaching English) and the most striking point to put forward is the aged and un-updated human resource (the manpower of two years B.Ed.) are some of the causes of creating inequalities (Devkota, 2018). However, the transfer of knowledge from the experienced teachers to the novice one helps groom professionally.

### **Methodology**

This is a study based on content analysis of available literature on teacher education in Nepal. The purpose of the study was to explore the history and trend of English language teacher education in Nepal including the development and practice being done for the enhancement of teacher professionals and to suggest ways forward for professional development of teachers. To explore in-depth information, the secondary sources of data chosen purposively were analyzed and interpreted thematically. Hermeneutics of faith (Josselson, 2004) was the guiding principle of this study. Themes like English language teacher education in the past, government initiatives on teacher education, equalities created by teacher education, inequalities resulted by teacher education and scope of teacher education were developed. The available information was organized, analyzed and interpreted. Finally, the findings were taken out and conclusion was drawn.

### **Results and discussions**

Tribhuvan University has made a provision of Faculty of Education specifically to produce manpower to supply in various teaching positions. Before joining university, Grade 12 students of education stream go for teaching practice where they get practical knowledge of teaching. Likewise, in the 4th year of B.Ed., they acquire theoretical as well as practical knowledge by taking intensive class and by teaching in secondary schools. Not only that in M.Ed. 4th semester, they go for teaching practice. In the same way, Kathmandu University, Purbanchal University, Nepal Open University, etc. have Faculty of Education to make the prospective teachers equipped with the knowledge and skills of teaching. All of these initiations are to produce professional manpower. There are the Teacher Service Commission and the University Service Commission to recruit required number of qualified teachers in school and university level. They have made certain provision for the application of such posts. The pre-service and in-service trainings with the objectives of empowering English teachers are offered

making law by the government. Universities have allocated good marks while they compete for the enrolment based on their achievement. Likewise, they get maximum marks for the academic publications. These all are for the development of teacher education and professionalism.

Wallace (1995) identifies three models of teacher education: the craft model, the applied science model and the reflective model. It has remained only in theory; in practice no such practice is done in the countries like Nepal. First of all, the English teachers have to get rid of the blame of creating inequalities in the society and nation in the name of teaching English. Secondly, they have to make the people aware that English language teaching is to create equality in terms of qualification and if the economic factor plays the role of barrier, they have to remind the government the education act 2002 and the local governance act 2015 which assured the free school education. On the other hand, the English teachers themselves are the victims of inequalities in terms of the services they get in urban and rural areas. The one who works in so called better schools equipped with modern facilities like interactive white board, projector, internet, e-library, etc., are enjoying the privilege of modernity but the ones who live in the village, without such facilities, cannot develop career and the condition of the learners. We can practice peer coaching, conduct action research and publish journals including our experience. Freeman (2002) states that teacher education must serve two functions: skills of reflexivity and the provision of the discourse and vocabulary to rename their experience.

The economical, sociological and psychological inequalities are there which the teachers have to encounter frequently. The financial strength of the teachers and learners should be raised so that they can afford and maintain the basic requirements. The perspectives of the society towards the English teachers and learners need to be positive. Only then the teachers can work with high morality. The psychology of the teacher needs to be free from any anxiety, terror, threats and so on. In the horrible situation caused by any disease like COVID-19 or the security threat, the teacher might not give his/her full potential. There is no uniformity of the English language courses among the universities so the products as English teachers are not uniform in terms of knowledge (Devkota, 2018). Fundamentally, they have to maintain some sort of tie among them. It revealed that emotional security, availability of physical assets and anxiety free teacher can only think of career development and through which quality education can be expected.

Development of internationally recognized qualifications for language teachers might help to maintain standard and uniformity among teacher practices (Richards, 2008). Further, Richards (2008) claimed that proportionate distribution and teacher

exchange program, exposure visit program, etc. might help teachers to be updated with the new trends and practices in the world. As a teacher of government school, we can offer English medium instruction to the economically and racially back-warded and marginalized children who are deprived of English medium education even if they prefer it. One who is equipped with the modern skills, trainings, and resources, they can transfer it to their friends by means of social media. Teachers who have access of vast source of knowledge can share it to other colleagues. On the other hand, some organizations like NELTA, Linguistic Society of Nepal, British Council, US Embassy, TESOL, etc. have tried to address the inequality and maintain uniformity providing trainings, resources, exposure and so on. However, the endeavor does not seem to be sufficient to bring all the teachers in the mainstream of teacher development.

Since English language is an international language, it is assumed to be a medium of social transformation. By using it, knowledge of the world, trend in the field of education, politics, science and technology, ICT and so on are reported to have been transferred. If English teachers are equipped with resources, if they are provided with the incentives, they are supposed to educate children and teach them to adjust in the modern world by pursuing happy life. It is argued that the use of modern technology can be a boon to impart equal and qualitative education at the present time. By means of Teams, Zoom, Messenger like software or any other digital devices the teachers are found sharing their knowledge to the learners. Distance mode of education either audio or video has been beneficial to the children residing in the rural areas. Only by organizing training the government and non-government organizations cannot skip, they need to equip the needy teachers with necessary digital devices and the e-sources.

### **Conclusion**

The history of English language teacher education is not much long in Nepal. Still, the progress it has done is remarkable. The policy implemented by the government of Nepal for the English language teacher education cannot be viewed satisfactory. It could have done many things for the professional development of them. English language teaching has helped maintain equality among people in the society. It is the responsibility of English teachers to remove the misconceptions regarding English language teaching. For that, the investment the NGOs, INGOs, and the government have for the enhancement of ELT professionals must be transparent. The program should run in inclusive basis. The programs of NELTA, British Council, US Embassy, need to be decentralized. The teachers teaching at rural villages should be brought in the mainline. They should be equipped with the technological, professional and content knowledge so that the products they bring in the market can compete with the rest of the world. Like other developed countries, teachers need to be treated as the first grade human resources. While doing enrollment in faculty of education, a

provision of entrance need to be maintained and a certain number/quota need to be fixed. Like the transfer of other staff of the government, there should be the provision of transfer of teachers, lecturers from one place to another so that there is possibility of proximal development of the marginalized and deprived teachers from opportunities.

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