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**Transforming ELT with ICT: Empowerment
or Encumbrance****Krishna Prasad Katel**

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Abstract

This study, "Transforming ELT with ICT: Empowerment or Encumbrance," investigates the impact of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) on English Language Teaching (ELT) in Nepalese secondary schools. The research integrates qualitative research design and semi-structured interviews to evaluate the practical integration of ICT. Participants include 3 secondary level English teachers from public schools in urban, semi-urban and rural areas of Nepal. The findings reveal that ICT significantly enhances student engagement and language proficiency through interactive tools and multimedia resources, contributing to more personalized learning experiences. However, challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, inconsistent internet access, and insufficient teacher training persist, creating disparities in technology access and impacting equitable benefits. Addressing these issues through improved infrastructure, targeted training, and equitable access strategies is crucial for optimizing ICT's potential in ELT. The implication of the research highlights ICT's potential to enhance student engagement and language proficiency in ELT but emphasizes the need for better infrastructure, consistent access, and teacher training to ensure equitable benefits for all learners.

Keywords: ICT Integration, English Language Teaching (ELT), Empowerment, Digital Divide

Introduction

The integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in English Language Teaching (ELT) has emerged as a significant global trend, reshaping traditional

pedagogical practices. ICT tools, ranging from interactive software to online platforms, offer dynamic resources that can enhance language acquisition, foster student engagement, and facilitate individualized learning ([Klimova, 2021](#)). The global shift towards digitalization in education has particularly accelerated in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, underscoring the necessity of ICT in maintaining continuity in teaching and learning ([Dhawan, 2020](#)). However, the incorporation of ICT in ELT is a double-edged sword, presenting both opportunities and challenges. While it holds the potential to revolutionize language education, there are concerns about its efficacy, accessibility, and the digital divide that may hinder its equitable implementation. Internationally, the use of ICT in ELT has been embraced in various forms. Developed countries have largely benefited from advanced infrastructure and access to cutting-edge technology, which supports the effective integration of ICT in classrooms ([Pun, 2014](#)). Research has shown that the use of ICT can significantly enhance learners' motivation, promote autonomous learning, and facilitate the development of critical thinking skills ([Balta, 2018](#)). For instance, in countries like South Korea and Finland, where ICT infrastructure is robust, students have access to a wide range of digital tools that supplement traditional language instruction ([Kim, 2022](#)). These tools include language learning apps, virtual reality environments, and online collaborative platforms, which provide students with immersive and interactive learning experiences.

However, the successful implementation of ICT in ELT is not uniform across the globe. In developing countries, particularly in rural and underprivileged areas, the lack of infrastructure, training, and resources poses significant challenges ([Tadesse, 2021](#)). In such contexts, the digital divide exacerbates educational inequalities, with students in low-resource settings being left behind in the digital transformation of education. Moreover, teachers' lack of digital literacy and pedagogical training in the effective use of ICT tools can further hinder the successful integration of technology in language teaching ([Ghavifekr & Rosdy, 2015](#)).

In the Nepalese context, the adoption of ICT in ELT has been gradual, with varying degrees of success and challenges. Nepal, like many other developing countries, faces significant barriers to the widespread use of ICT in education. The country's diverse topography, coupled with socio-economic disparities, contributes to unequal access to technology, particularly in rural and remote areas ([Paudel, 2021](#)). Despite government initiatives to promote ICT in education, such as the "ICT in Education Master Plan 2013-2017," the implementation has been inconsistent, with many schools lacking the necessary infrastructure and trained personnel to effectively integrate ICT into their teaching practices ([Thapa & Mahat, 2022](#)).

Nevertheless, there is a growing recognition of the potential of ICT to transform ELT in Nepal. Teachers and students in urban and semi-urban areas, where access to technology is relatively better, have started to embrace digital tools for language learning ([Baral & Poudel, 2022](#)). The use of online platforms, educational apps, and multimedia resources has introduced new possibilities for interactive and student-centered learning in these areas.

However, the disparity in access and the uneven quality of ICT integration across the country highlights the need for a more comprehensive and equitable approach to utilizing technology in language education. The integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in English Language Teaching (ELT) in Nepal has been promoted as a tool for enhancing educational outcomes and modernizing teaching methods. However, the practical challenges faced by educators, particularly in resource-constrained environments, raise concerns about its effectiveness. This research aims to critically examine whether the use of ICT truly empowers teachers and students or introduces additional complexities that hinder the learning process. I chose this area because ICT has the potential to transform English Language Teaching (ELT) in Nepal by enhancing student engagement and personalized learning. However, disparities in access and infrastructure highlight the need for equitable solutions. Studying ICT's role in ELT is essential to identify effective strategies that empower teachers and students, ensuring technology benefits all learners, especially in resource-limited settings. This study aims to analyze the impact of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) integration on the effectiveness of English Language Teaching (ELT) and to examine the challenges and opportunities presented by ICT tools in enhancing or hindering English language acquisition among students in Nepalese secondary schools. This analysis will provide insights by evaluating both the positive and negative impacts of ICT integration in Nepal's ELT context. It will assess how ICT tools enhance student engagement, language proficiency, and personalized learning, while also examining the challenges such as limited infrastructure, unequal access, and inadequate teacher training. By highlighting these factors, the study will reveal whether ICT serves as a catalyst for educational transformation or exacerbates existing inequalities and complexities.

Literature Review

Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory emphasizes that learning occurs through observation, imitation, and modeling, highlighting the significant role of social interactions in the learning process. In the context of English Language Teaching (ELT) and the integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), this theory provides a compelling framework to examine how digital tools and platforms may empower or encumber language learners and educators. Bandura's Social Learning Theory provides a valuable lens to understand the potential of ICT to transform ELT through observation, imitation, and modeling. However, the theory also highlights critical barriers that must be addressed for ICT to serve as an empowering tool in language education. While ICT can enhance learners' access to expert models and peer interactions, infrastructure, access disparities, and teacher readiness are crucial factors that determine whether ICT will empower or encumber the learning process. Therefore, thoughtful implementation and policy support are essential for realizing the full potential of ICT in transforming ELT (Bandura, 1977). Blended Learning Theory advocates for the integration of online and face-to-face instruction to create a more flexible and effective learning environment. This approach combines the benefits of traditional classroom settings with the advantages of digital technology, aiming to provide a richer and

more adaptable educational experience (Garrison & Vaughan, 2008). Blended Learning Theory offers a promising framework for integrating ICT into ELT by combining the advantages of online and face-to-face instruction. The potential for empowerment is significant, as ICT tools can enhance flexibility, personalization, and the development of critical skills. However, challenges related to access, teacher training, and technical support must be addressed to prevent ICT from becoming an encumbrance. To fully realize the benefits of blended learning, it is essential to ensure equitable access to technology and provide comprehensive support for educators in leveraging ICT effectively. Furthermore, blended learning supports the development of essential 21st-century skills, such as digital literacy and self-directed learning. By using ICT to integrate online tools with traditional teaching methods, students are better prepared for the demands of modern communication and collaboration, which are crucial for language acquisition and overall academic success (Means, et al., 2013). Additionally, the success of blended learning depends heavily on teachers' ability to effectively integrate ICT into their teaching practices. Without adequate training and support, educators may find it challenging to balance online and face-to-face instruction effectively. They may also face difficulties in designing and managing digital content that complements traditional lessons, leading to suboptimal learning experiences (Garrison & Vaughan, 2008). Moreover, the additional time required to prepare and manage digital resources can place a burden on teachers, detracting from their ability to focus on in-class instruction and student engagement.

Mayer's Multimedia Learning Theory supports the use of ICT in ELT by highlighting the advantages of combining multiple forms of media to facilitate learning. Multimedia tools such as videos, animations, interactive diagrams, and audio recordings align with Mayer's principles by providing diverse and engaging ways to present language content. For example, videos that include both visual and auditory elements can help students understand complex language structures and contexts that text alone may not convey effectively (Mayer, 2009). Interactive diagrams and animations can illustrate grammar rules or vocabulary in ways that are more dynamic and memorable than static textbook explanations. Audio recordings, particularly those featuring native speakers, enhance pronunciation practice and listening skills by providing authentic examples of language use. By leveraging multimedia, educators can cater to various learning styles and preferences, making language instruction more accessible and engaging for a broader range of students (Mayer, 2014).

John Sweller's Cognitive Load Theory (CLT) emphasizes that effective learning occurs when cognitive load—the mental effort required to process information—is managed efficiently (Sweller, 1988). This theory is particularly relevant to the integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in English Language Teaching (ELT), where ICT tools are used to present information in ways that may either alleviate or exacerbate cognitive load. This review explores how CLT intersects with ICT in ELT, evaluating whether ICT functions as an empowering resource or an encumbrance. ICT supports interactive learning through quizzes, games, and simulations, which can engage

students actively while reducing cognitive overload. Interactive activities that offer immediate feedback help learners correct mistakes and reinforce understanding without overwhelming them with extraneous information (Sweller, 2011). This interactive approach allows students to practice language skills in a dynamic environment, which can facilitate more effective learning compared to traditional methods. Despite policy intentions, many schools in Nepal, particularly in rural areas, face significant challenges with ICT infrastructure. Issues such as unreliable internet connectivity, lack of electricity, and outdated technology hinder the effective use of ICT in ELT (Sharma & Koirala, 2019). The disparity in access to technology between urban and rural schools exacerbates inequalities in learning opportunities. Students from less privileged backgrounds may not have access to the same ICT resources, which can create disparities in their language learning experiences (Adhikari & Koirala, 2021). Inadequate training for teachers on integrating ICT into ELT practices remains a significant barrier. Many educators struggle with using digital tools effectively, which can limit the potential benefits of ICT in the classroom (Joshi & Sharma, 2020). The Digital Nepal Framework aims to create a digital economy and society, with a strong emphasis on digital literacy and inclusion. It includes components for enhancing digital infrastructure in education. This research supports the expansion of ICT resources and training, potentially benefiting ELT by providing more digital tools and resources. However, the effectiveness of this framework in transforming ELT is contingent on addressing issues related to digital divide and ensuring equitable access (Nepal Government, 2020).

Methodology

The research methodology for the study titled "Transforming ELT with ICT: Empowerment or Encumbrance" adopts a qualitative methods to explore the impact of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) on English Language Teaching (ELT) in Nepal. Data collection tools include semi-structured interviews for in-depth qualitative insights from key stakeholders, and classroom observations to assess the practical integration of ICT in ELT settings. The participants consist of 3 secondary level English language teachers from public schools in urban, semi-urban and rural areas of Nepal. A purposive sampling procedure is employed to select participants who are actively engaged in using ICT tools in their teaching and learning processes, ensuring a diverse and representative sample that reflects the different contexts within Nepal's educational landscape.

Results and Discussion

The integration of ICT in ELT has shown both promising results and significant challenges in Nepal. While ICT tools have empowered teachers and students by enhancing engagement, interactivity, and language proficiency, the lack of infrastructure, training, and access in rural areas presents notable barriers. The responses from participants were analyzed descriptively, revealing both empowering benefits and notable challenges in integrating ICT into English Language Teaching (ELT).

The Power of ICT in ELT Success

In recent years, the integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in education has gained significant momentum in Nepal, particularly in English Language Teaching (ELT) at the secondary level. With the growing availability of digital tools such as computers, projectors, interactive whiteboards, and mobile applications, schools across Nepal are gradually incorporating ICT into their teaching practices. This shift is seen as an essential strategy for enhancing the effectiveness of language instruction, making lessons more interactive, and increasing students' engagement in learning English. The integration of ICT in English teaching has revolutionized classroom dynamics, making lessons more interactive and engaging through multimedia tools and apps. The use of ICT tools in English language lessons has proven to be an effective strategy for enhancing students' proficiency, especially through language learning software and mobile apps. In this regard a teacher from a semi-urban school states that *"Incorporating ICT into our lessons has been very effective in helping students improve their English proficiency. Tools like language learning software and mobile apps allow them to practice real-life English conversations and access authentic materials. For students who struggle, these resources help fill the gaps in their learning and give them the confidence to use English more freely."* By providing access to authentic materials and opportunities for real-life conversation practice, these ICT resources not only bridge learning gaps but also boost students' confidence in using English more comfortably. Despite the known benefits of ICT in enhancing English proficiency, rural schools, such as those in the Terai region, face significant challenges in its implementation due to a lack of infrastructure and resources. A teacher from a rural school states that *"In rural schools like ours, ICT integration is still a dream. We do not have the infrastructure – no reliable electricity, no internet, and outdated technology. I know how beneficial ICT can be from my training in the city, but without the basic resources, it is hard to implement it here. The students are at a disadvantage compared to those in urban areas, and it is frustrating because we know the potential of ICT to improve their English skills."* As a teacher from a rural school points out, the absence of reliable electricity, internet, and updated technology leaves students at a disadvantage compared to their urban counterparts, highlighting the urgent need for improved access to ICT to unlock its full potential in rural education.

While some ICT tools are available in semi-urban government schools, a lack of adequate training and confidence in using these resources prevents teachers from fully leveraging technology in their lessons. *"Even though we have some ICT tools available, I still feel like I'm not using them to their full potential because of a lack of training. We have had a few workshops, but I still struggle with incorporating technology effectively into my lessons. Many teachers like me don't feel confident using digital tools, and that limits how much we can integrate ICT into our teaching."* As expressed by a teacher from a semi-urban area, limited training and confidence in digital tools hinder the effective integration of ICT in classrooms, underscoring the need for more comprehensive professional development to enhance teaching through technology. The introduction of ICT has shifted English lessons

from traditional lecture-based methods to interactive, student-centered activities, significantly enhancing student engagement, as described by an English teacher. *"Before we had access to ICT, my lessons were mostly lecture-based. Now, I can design lessons around interactive activities that engage students more. They collaborate in groups using online tools, and it has helped make the classroom more student-centered. They're more motivated to learn English because they can explore different materials and practice language skills in creative ways."* With access to ICT tools, students can collaborate and explore diverse learning materials, making the classroom more dynamic and motivating, ultimately fostering more creative and effective language skill development.

While urban schools benefit from access to technology, there is a growing disparity in learning opportunities, as rural schools in Nepal lack the same resources, as noted by a teacher urban school. *"In urban areas, we are fortunate to have access to technology, but I know many schools in rural parts of Nepal are not as lucky. It creates an inequality in learning opportunities, where students in rural areas are not benefiting from the same tools that are helping improve English proficiency in the cities. We need better policies to make ICT accessible for all schools, not just the well-resourced ones."* To bridge this gap and ensure all students can benefit from ICT's potential to improve English proficiency, better policies are needed to make technology accessible to schools across both urban and rural areas. The integration of ICT in urban schools has transformed the traditional teacher-centered approach into a more student-driven learning environment, empowering students to become independent learners. *"ICT has shifted the focus from me as the teacher to the students themselves. With the use of educational apps and online platforms, students can learn at their own pace, and it has made them more independent learners. I provide guidance, but they explore materials on their own and collaborate with each other more. It's definitely a game changer in how we approach language teaching."* By using educational apps and online platforms, students can explore materials at their own pace and collaborate more effectively, making ICT a game changer in modern language teaching practices. However, the implementation of ICT in Nepalese schools faces both opportunities and challenges. In well-resourced urban schools, teachers are increasingly leveraging multimedia presentations, online resources, and language learning software to create dynamic and interactive English lessons. These tools allow students to access a wide range of authentic materials, improving their listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills through real-world language exposure.

ICT Integration in ELT Practices

The integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) into English Language Teaching (ELT) practices has significantly transformed pedagogical approaches, shifting from traditional methods to more interactive and technology-driven techniques. This shift has enabled teachers to employ multimedia resources, online platforms, and educational apps to create engaging learning environments that foster greater student interaction and personalized learning experiences. The integration of ICT in ELT classes has significantly

transformed teaching methods, shifting from traditional lectures and textbooks to dynamic, interactive approaches.

The introduction of ICT tools in the classroom has significantly improved student participation, encouraging even the more reserved students to engage actively, as observed by a teacher from a semi-urban school with moderate ICT integration. *"ICT tools have made a big difference in how students interact in class. Previously, students were hesitant to participate, but now, with apps and online quizzes, they are more excited to get involved. Even the shy ones participate more actively because the technology makes it fun and less intimidating for them to speak up or share their answers."* With the use of apps and online quizzes, ICT has made learning more enjoyable and less intimidating, fostering greater involvement from all students and transforming the classroom into a more inclusive and interactive environment. The use of ICT in the classroom has greatly enhanced the ability to offer personalized learning experiences, allowing for tailored instruction that meets each student's individual needs, as highlighted by a teacher from a community school *"One of the biggest advantages of using ICT is that I can now offer personalized learning experiences. With tools like language learning apps, each student can work on areas where they need the most help. The advanced students can move ahead, while others can focus on basics. It's much easier to cater to individual needs than when we used the same materials for everyone."* By utilizing language learning apps, teachers can accommodate varying levels of proficiency, enabling advanced students to progress at their own pace while supporting others in mastering foundational skills, thus improving overall educational effectiveness.

The success of ICT integration in the classroom heavily relies on the quality of teacher training, as emphasized by a teacher from a rural government school who experienced initial difficulties before receiving adequate support. *"The effectiveness of ICT in the classroom depends a lot on how well we teachers are trained. At first, I struggled because I did not know how to use the tools properly. After receiving some training, I feel more confident incorporating ICT into my lessons, but many teachers in rural areas still lack the necessary skills. If we don't get enough training, the potential of ICT can't be fully realized."* Without sufficient training, the potential benefits of ICT cannot be fully harnessed, particularly in rural areas where many teachers still struggle with incorporating technology into their teaching practices. Although ICT holds the promise of transforming English language teaching, its impact is limited by inadequate infrastructure, particularly in rural schools where resources like computers and reliable internet are scarce. *"While ICT has the potential to revolutionize ELT, the reality is that many schools, especially in rural areas, don't have the infrastructure. In our school, we have limited computers, and the internet is unreliable. Without the proper hardware and connectivity, it's hard to integrate ICT into our daily teaching practices, and the students miss out on the benefits."* Without the necessary hardware and connectivity, integrating ICT into daily teaching remains challenging, resulting in students missing out on the potential benefits of technological advancements in education.

While ICT has significantly enhanced teaching quality by making difficult concepts more accessible through videos and online tools, inconsistent internet access and outdated software pose challenges, as experienced by an English teacher from a semi-urban community school. *"ICT has improved my teaching quality in many ways. It is easier to explain difficult concepts with the help of videos or online tools. The students understand better, when they can see examples or hear native English speakers. However, without access to a stable internet connection or updated software, it is hard to maintain that level of teaching quality. Inconsistent access means that we can't rely on ICT for every lesson."* The lack of stable connectivity and up-to-date technology limits the ability to consistently use ICT in every lesson, affecting the overall effectiveness and reliability of these teaching tools. The incorporation of ICT in the classroom has led to noticeable improvements in students' listening and speaking skills, thanks to interactive tools that enhance pronunciation and comprehension, as noted by a teacher from a government school in the Kathmandu Valley. *"Since we started using ICT in the classroom, I've seen an improvement in student learning outcomes, especially in listening and speaking skills. The interactive tools help them practice pronunciation and listening comprehension in a way that traditional methods could not. However, the benefits are uneven because not all students have access to technology at home, which affects their overall progress."* Despite these advancements, uneven access to technology at home creates disparities in student progress, highlighting the need for more equitable access to ensure all students can fully benefit from ICT-enhanced learning.

Effectiveness of ICT in Enhancing English Language Acquisition

The introduction of ICT tools in English classes has significantly increased student engagement, with interactive games and videos making lessons more enjoyable and less burdensome. As described by a secondary school English teacher from an urban area, *"Since we started using ICT in our English classes, the students seem more engaged. Tools like interactive games and videos have made lessons more fun and less of a burden for them. They enjoy working with technology, and it is encouraging them to participate more actively. Before, I had to work hard to get them interested, but now the multimedia resources do a lot of that work for me."* The use of multimedia resources has transformed student participation, reducing the need for teacher-driven motivation and allowing technology to foster a more active and enthusiastic learning environment. The ability to customize lessons with ICT tools has greatly enhanced classroom management and effectiveness, allowing teachers to address varying student proficiency levels with adaptive learning platforms, as observed by a teacher from a semi-urban community school. *"One of the best things about using ICT is that I can customize lessons based on students' needs. I have students at different proficiency levels, and now, with adaptive learning platforms, I can give each student exercises that match their level. The advanced learners can push ahead, while the struggling ones can get more practice without feeling left behind. It's made managing the classroom easier and more effective."* By tailoring exercises to match individual student needs, ICT not only supports advanced learners

in progressing further but also provides additional practice for those who are struggling, leading to a more balanced and effective learning environment.

The adaptive software not only helps students understand and correct their mistakes more efficiently but also builds their confidence in English skills, offering a level of personalized support that traditional methods could not provide. The integration of ICT tools has significantly increased students' interest in English by making learning more interactive and enjoyable, as noted by a teacher from a community school. *"Students who used to struggle with English are now showing more interest in the subject because ICT tools make learning more interactive. When they use apps or play language games, they forget that they are studying – it feels more like fun to them. Their attitude towards English has become more positive, and they no longer see it as a difficult subject. This has had a big impact on their motivation."* By transforming English lessons into engaging activities through apps and language games, students now view the subject more positively and are more motivated, leading to a notable improvement in their attitude and enthusiasm towards learning.

The use of multimedia resources in the classroom has led to a noticeable improvement in students' language proficiency, as highlighted by a secondary-level English teacher. *"I've noticed a real improvement in my students' overall language proficiency. Using multimedia resources, they are exposed to a variety of accents, pronunciations, and vocabulary that we could not provide before. Their listening skills have improved, and they seem more comfortable speaking English in class. Their overall academic performance has also gone up, as ICT tools allow them to practice more effectively."* Exposure to diverse accents, pronunciations, and vocabulary through ICT tools has enhanced students' listening and speaking skills, resulting in increased comfort with English and a rise in overall academic performance. ICT has facilitated the creation of a more inclusive learning environment by providing interactive tools and visual aids that support students with learning difficulties, as observed by a teacher from a government school with limited ICT resources. *"ICT has made it easier to create an inclusive learning environment. Some students, especially those with learning difficulties, benefit from interactive tools and visual aids that help them understand concepts better. It's made the classroom more inclusive because these students can now participate at the same level as others and receive the support they need."* By enabling these students to engage at the same level as their peers and receive the necessary support, ICT has helped make the classroom more equitable and accessible for all learners.

Despite the significant benefits of ICT in the classroom, unequal access to technology remains a major challenge, particularly for students from less privileged backgrounds, as noted by a teacher from a rural community school. *"While I've seen great benefits from using ICT in the classroom, the biggest challenge remains access. Not all students have the same level of access to technology, especially those from less privileged backgrounds. They miss the advantages of personalized learning, which leaves them behind. To fully harness the potential of ICT, we need to ensure that all students have access to the necessary resources."* To fully

realize the potential of ICT and ensure that all students benefit from personalized learning opportunities, it is crucial to address the disparities in technology access and provide the necessary resources for every student. ICT tools, such as interactive software, multimedia resources, and online platforms, often make learning more engaging by presenting content in dynamic and interactive ways, thus capturing students' interest and fostering active participation. This increased engagement can lead to improved motivation and a more positive attitude towards learning English. Additionally, ICT facilitates differentiated learning by allowing teachers to tailor educational experiences to individual students' proficiency levels, thereby addressing diverse learning needs more effectively. For instance, adaptive learning technologies can offer personalized exercises and feedback, enabling students to progress at their own pace and receive targeted support. As a result, students' language proficiency and overall academic performance may improve, as ICT tools provide various avenues for understanding English concepts and practicing language skills, contributing to a more inclusive and effective learning environment.

ICT's Role as a Catalyst

Despite the challenges, ICT remains a powerful enabler of English proficiency when integrated properly into the classroom. It allows students to engage with authentic English language materials that would otherwise be out of reach in a traditional learning environment. By using ICT, students can practice at their own pace, access-varied forms of content, and build confidence in their English language skills. In schools that have successfully adopted ICT, teachers report significant improvements in students' language acquisition, especially in terms of pronunciation, vocabulary development, and comprehension. By allowing students to practice with native speakers and receive immediate feedback, these technological resources have made a substantial impact on their speaking skills, providing an improvement that was previously unattainable without such tools. The availability of ICT tools has transformed English language teaching by replacing outdated textbooks with current articles, videos, and podcasts, as noted by a teacher from a semi-urban school. *"Before we had access to the internet and digital resources, we relied on outdated textbooks and materials that didn't reflect modern English usage. Now, with ICT, we can access articles, videos, and podcasts that expose students to real-life English, which has greatly improved their comprehension and vocabulary. This is something I could never offer them without these tools."* This shift to digital resources has significantly enhanced students' comprehension and vocabulary by providing exposure to real-life English, offering a level of authenticity and relevance that traditional materials could not achieve.

The use of ICT tools in the classroom, such as language learning apps, allows students to learn at their own pace, fostering engagement across varying levels of English proficiency, as observed by a teacher from a community school with moderate ICT integration. *"One of the best things about using ICT in the classroom is that students can learn at their own pace. We use language-learning apps, and I can see that the students who are more advanced push*

themselves further, while those who need more time can practice without feeling left behind. It's helping to engage all students, no matter their level of English proficiency." This personalized approach enables advanced students to advance further while providing additional practice for those who need more time, ensuring that all students remain engaged and supported in their learning journey. The integration of videos and interactive exercises has revitalized lessons, significantly boosting student motivation and enhancing vocabulary and comprehension skills, as noted by a secondary-level English teacher. *"Using videos and interactive exercises has really brought the lessons to life. The students are more motivated because they enjoy learning through videos and games. Their vocabulary and comprehension skills have improved dramatically because they can see words in context, hear how they are used, and immediately apply what they have learned. It's a much richer learning experience than just reading from a textbook."* By providing contextual learning through multimedia resources, students can see and hear words in action, leading to a richer and more effective learning experience compared to traditional textbook methods.

The use of ICT tools in the classroom has significantly increased student motivation and confidence, making participation in speaking and writing activities more comfortable and engaging, as observed by a teacher from an urban school with advanced ICT infrastructure. *"When students use ICT tools, they feel more motivated to participate in class. They are less shy when practicing speaking or writing because the digital platforms allow them to engage more comfortably. They are also more confident when interacting in English, both in class and outside. The technology makes learning more fun and interactive, and I can see a real boost in their overall confidence."* By making learning more enjoyable and interactive, technology has not only enhanced students' confidence in using English but also positively impacted their overall participation and self-assurance both in class and beyond. While ICT has revolutionized English teaching, unequal access to technology outside of school remains a significant challenge, as highlighted by a teacher from a rural school facing resource constraints. *"ICT has transformed how we teach English, but the main problem is that not all students have access to it outside of school. Some students are really benefiting from online resources, while others fall behind because they do not have the same access to computers or the internet at home. Until we can ensure that every student has equal access to technology, it's hard to make the impact as wide-reaching as it could be."* The disparity in access to computers and the internet at home means that not all students benefit equally from online resources, underscoring the need to address this gap to maximize the potential impact of ICT in education.

The integration of ICT has been beneficial, but additional training is essential for effectively incorporating technology into targeted language skill activities, as noted by a teacher from a community school in the Terai region. *"The introduction of ICT has been great, but we need more training to maximize its use in the classroom. While I can use basic multimedia tools, I still need guidance on how to integrate ICT into activities that target specific language skills, like writing or grammar. If we get the right support, I believe we can*

see even greater improvements in students' English language proficiency." With the right support and guidance, teachers can better utilize ICT to enhance specific language skills like writing and grammar, leading to even greater improvements in students' English language proficiency. By integrating multimedia resources into lessons, these schools are creating immersive language environments that foster both student engagement and motivation. In conclusion, while ICT has the potential to be a true catalyst for English proficiency in Nepal, realizing its full impact requires overcoming infrastructural and training barriers. Policymakers, educators, and stakeholders must work together to ensure equitable access to technology and adequate teacher training, particularly in under-resourced areas. When these challenges are addressed, ICT will undoubtedly continue to transform the way English is taught and learned in Nepal, creating new pathways to language mastery.

Challenges of ICT Integration in ELT

The integration of ICT in English Language Teaching (ELT) faces several challenges that can impact its effectiveness. The integration of ICT in the classroom is severely hampered by frequent internet outages, unreliable power supply, and inadequate technical support, as shared by a secondary English teacher from a rural community school. *"In our school, we face frequent issues with the internet and power supply, which makes it very difficult to integrate ICT effectively. The computers often break down, and we do not have the resources or the technical support to maintain them regularly. Even when I try to use ICT tools in my lessons, these disruptions make it challenging to provide a consistent learning experience for the students."* – Secondary English Teacher from a rural community school" These challenges often result in disruptions and reduced opportunities for students to benefit from technology-enhanced learning experiences. Additionally, teacher resistance and adaptation difficulties pose significant barriers. Many educators may struggle with adopting new technologies due to a lack of training, skills, or a preference for traditional teaching methods, which can lead to underutilization of ICT resources.

Despite the potential benefits of ICT in the classroom, a lack of proper training and familiarity with digital tools leaves some experienced teachers feeling overwhelmed and unprepared to effectively incorporate them into their teaching methods. *"I'm not very comfortable using computers and ICT tools. We have not received proper training on how to incorporate them into our teaching methods. It is overwhelming at times because we are so used to the traditional chalk-and-board methods. Sometimes, I feel like I'm losing valuable time trying to figure out how to use these tools, and the students aren't benefitting as much as they could."* – Experienced teacher with over 20 years of teaching experience." The shift from traditional methods to technology-enhanced teaching can be challenging, and without sufficient training and support, valuable classroom time is lost, limiting the potential benefits for students. Varying levels of access to technology based on students' economic backgrounds create an imbalance in learning opportunities, as observed by a teacher from a semi-urban area. *"The students come from different backgrounds, and not all of them have access to the*

internet or computers at home. When I assign tasks that require technology, some students can complete them easily, while others struggle. It is frustrating because those without access are left behind, and it feels unfair to them. We need to find a balance so that all students get equal opportunities, regardless of their socio-economic status." The disparity in access to digital resources leaves some students at a disadvantage, highlighting the need for equitable solutions to ensure that all students, regardless of their socio-economic status, have equal opportunities to succeed.

Despite the increasing integration of ICT in education, some experienced teachers believe traditional methods, such as textbooks and discussions, offer more effective personal interaction in the classroom. *"Personally, I don't see the need to use ICT in every lesson. I have been teaching English successfully for years using textbooks and discussions. I feel like the students still need personal interaction more than technology. They can use gadgets at home, but in school, it is better to focus on teaching them with the methods we have always used. Technology can be a distraction rather than a tool for learning."* While technology has its place, there are concerns that it may act more as a distraction than a learning tool, suggesting that a balance between traditional teaching methods and ICT could better serve students' educational needs. Despite the promise of ICT in education, the lack of reliable infrastructure, such as functioning computers, internet, and projectors, makes it difficult to integrate technology effectively, as described by a teacher from a government school in a mountainous region. *"While the idea of using ICT sounds good, the reality is that the infrastructure isn't there yet. We need reliable computers, internet, and projectors, but in our school, only a few classrooms are equipped. Even when we have these, they break down often, and there is no one available to fix them quickly. Without proper infrastructure, it's impossible to make ICT an integral part of our teaching."* The frequent breakdowns and limited access to ICT tools highlight the critical need for better infrastructure and technical support to ensure that technology can become a consistent and integral part of the teaching process.

Although ICT has the potential to enhance English teaching, many teachers feel that their basic training is insufficient for integrating technology into daily lessons, especially for developing key language skills like listening, speaking, and writing, as expressed by an English teacher from government school. *"I believe ICT could really improve how we teach English, but many of us don't know where to start. We have only received basic training, and it is not enough to integrate technology into our daily lessons. We need in-depth training, especially on how to use technology to teach language skills like listening, speaking, and writing. Right now, most of us use ICT only for showing videos or presentations, which isn't enough to make a real impact on students' language development."* To make a meaningful impact on students' language development, teachers need in-depth, targeted training that goes beyond using ICT for simple tasks like videos or presentations, enabling them to fully harness technology's capabilities in language education.

Opportunities Presented by ICT in ELT

The integration of ICT in English Language Teaching (ELT) offers a range of opportunities that can significantly enrich the learning experience. One key advantage is the vast availability of digital resources, such as online dictionaries, grammar tools, interactive exercises, and multimedia content. These resources provide students with diverse and engaging ways to practice and reinforce their language skills, enhancing their understanding of English concepts and supporting their learning journey. *As an English language teacher, I have observed firsthand the transformative impact that ICT integration can have on the learning experience in my classroom. The availability of digital resources has been particularly advantageous. Tools such as online dictionaries and grammar apps allow students to access and reinforce their language skills in diverse and engaging ways. Interactive exercises and multimedia content have enriched my lessons, making complex English concepts more accessible and easier to grasp for students. The visual and auditory elements provided by these resources capture students' attention and cater to various learning styles, which has significantly enhanced their understanding and retention of the material.* Additionally, ICT facilitates collaborative learning by enabling students to participate in joint projects, discussions, and language exchanges through various online platforms. This collaborative approach fosters communication skills, teamwork, and peer learning, which are crucial for language acquisition. Furthermore, ICT provides global exposure by connecting students with native English speakers and international learning communities. This exposure helps students practice their language skills in authentic contexts, gain cultural insights, and broaden their understanding of different perspectives.

Findings

The integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) into English Language Teaching (ELT) in Nepal has demonstrated significant enhancements in student engagement and language proficiency through interactive tools and multimedia resources. ICT's capacity to make lessons more interactive and tailored to individual needs has contributed to improved student participation and personalized learning experiences. However, several challenges persist, including inadequate infrastructure in rural areas, inconsistent internet access, and insufficient teacher training. These issues create disparities in technology access, affecting students from less privileged backgrounds and leading to uneven benefits across different educational contexts.

Specifically, the integration of ICT has led to noticeable improvements in student engagement, confidence, and language proficiency by providing authentic and interactive materials. Despite these advancements, the effectiveness of ICT in ELT is hindered by challenges such as unreliable infrastructure, lack of technical support, and resistance from educators accustomed to traditional teaching methods. Furthermore, the unequal access to technology remains a significant obstacle, impacting the equitable distribution of ICT benefits among students. To fully realize the potential of ICT in enhancing English language teaching,

it is crucial to address these challenges include improving infrastructure, providing targeted teacher training, and developing strategies to ensure equitable access to technology. Effective implementation of ICT requires a comprehensive approach to overcome existing barriers and optimize the benefits of technology for all students.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The exploration of ICT integration in ELT within Nepalese secondary schools has offered personal insights by highlighting both its benefits and challenges. It has shown how technology can enhance student engagement, foster interactive learning, and improve language proficiency. At the same time, it has underscored the need to address issues like unequal access, limited infrastructure, and inadequate teacher training. This understanding emphasizes ICT's transformative potential while acknowledging the complexities of equitable implementation in diverse educational settings. One key realization is that while ICT holds remarkable promise for enhancing English language acquisition, its effectiveness is highly contingent upon the alignment of technological resources with pedagogical practices and infrastructural support. This study underscores that ICT can indeed be a game changer, fostering more engaging, interactive, and personalized learning experiences. However, the realization of its full potential requires overcoming persistent challenges related to infrastructure, teacher training, and equitable access. The study contributes to the field by highlighting both the opportunities and barriers associated with ICT integration in ELT. It provides a nuanced perspective on how technology can be leveraged to improve language proficiency, offering practical insights into the conditions under which ICT can most effectively enhance teaching and learning. The findings contribute to the broader discourse on technology in education by illustrating the specific ways in which ICT can influence language acquisition in diverse educational settings.

Theoretical insights drawn from this study align with constructivist theories of learning, which emphasize the importance of interactive and student-centered approaches to education. By incorporating ICT tools that facilitate active engagement, personalized learning, and access to authentic language use, the study supports the idea that technology can significantly enhance the learning experience and facilitate deeper understanding. Looking to the future, the implications of this study are substantial. It suggests that for ICT to be a truly effective catalyst for English proficiency, stakeholders—including policymakers, educational administrators, and teachers—must address the existing challenges through targeted investments in infrastructure, comprehensive teacher training, and strategies to ensure equitable access. The study's findings can guide future educational policies and practices, particularly in designing and implementing technology-enhanced learning environments that cater to the diverse needs of students.

Based on the discussion, several recommendations emerge. First, there is a critical need for enhanced infrastructure, including reliable internet access and updated technological resources, particularly in rural and under-resourced areas. Second, professional development

programs for teachers should be prioritized to build confidence and competence in using ICT tools effectively. Third, efforts should be made to address equity issues by providing access to technology for all students, regardless of their socio-economic background. Finally, continuous evaluation and adaptation of ICT tools and strategies should be implemented to ensure that they meet the evolving needs of learners and align with educational goals. In summary, while ICT integration presents significant opportunities for improving English language teaching and learning in Nepal, realizing its full potential requires concerted efforts to overcome existing barriers and leverage technology in ways that enhance educational outcomes for all students.

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