

Impact of E-Pedagogy in English E-Class in Higher Education of Nepal

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Though the use of e-pedagogy in education has been advocated, it had not been well-practiced before the COVID-19 pandemic period in Nepalese education context. In this connection, this study aims to reflect the context and explore the use and impact of e-pedagogy in terms of access and quality with the practices of it by the university English teachers and students of Nepal during pandemic and post pandemic contexts. The mixed-method research design was used collecting data from an online survey questionnaire and internet based semi-structured interviews among the participants from the teachers (N=20) and students (N=80) of five universities for quantitative data and for qualitative data from two students and two teachers of two the universities of Nepal. The findings of the study revealed that on average, 23.6% of university teachers and students have a positive impact of e-pedagogy where KU followed by MU, TU, PU and FWU teachers and students were found to be using more often it in terms of joining e-class and using resources (30%), interaction (33%), regularity (31%), techno-based learning (average 21.2%:MU-28%), searching internet-based resources (TU-28%), attending online examinations (average 17.4%:KU-21%), participating online training/workshop/ conference (average 23.8%:KU-26%), and learner autonomy (average 15.4%:PU-19%) supported by the qualitative data. Furthermore, the use of e-pedagogy in ELT was found to be no longer being used regularly pandemic period onwards and suggested to be practiced as the regular part of

teaching and learning in a blended way. Overall, e-pedagogy has had a positive impact on teaching-learning in English e-class during the pandemic period.

Keywords: e-pedagogy, access, impact, online teaching-learning, ELT

Context of the Study

Online education has been adopted widely to address the educational chaos created by the Covid-19 pandemic (Shrestha, Haque, Dawadi, & Giri, 2022, p. 245). In the discourse of online based e-pedagogy, there are two basic online teaching modes: ‘asynchronous’ also called ‘recorded’ in which faculty prepares recorded contents in advance and students watch them online; and ‘synchronous’ also called ‘live broadcasting’ through which faculty teach as real-time interaction and communicate with students (Gautam & Gautam, 2021). In this regard, the teaching learning communities were found to be using both types of modes while using e-pedagogy in Nepal.

The education system faced a crisis with the spread of the coronavirus, with over 190 countries having gone through some form of school closures that has impacted more than 7 billion students (World Bank, 2020 as cited in Shrestha, Haque, Dawadi, & Giri, 2022). According to the UNESCO (2020b), the number of students affected by school and university closures in 138 countries has nearly quadrupled to 1.37 billion, representing more than three out of four children and youth worldwide. In addition, nearly 60.2 million teachers were no longer in the classroom and more than 290 million students did not have access to education in physical classroom environments. Moreover, more than 220 million post-secondary students – 13 percent of the total number of students affected globally – had their studies ended or significantly disrupted due to COVID-19 (World Bank, 2020a).

In the context of Nepal, it was the education sector which suffered a lot by the pandemic, although almost all the sectors suffered during and after the pandemic. In the academic institutions, the conventional physical face to face classes were disrupted, exams were on hold and the teaching learning process became stand still due to the influx of the unprecedented virus (Gautam, 2020) in Nepal during the pandemic period. The on-class teaching-learning process was suspended from 23 March, 2020 by recommendation of the high-level COVID-19 prevention and control committee of the government of Nepal as the Ministry of Education in Nepal endorsed a guideline on 31st May 2020 to facilitate student learning through the alternative system (Ministry of Education, 2020). The conventional face-to-face mode of teaching learning was greatly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic (Saud, 2021) with increasing lockdown tenure, academia through formal and informal forums, started a discussion to change the mode of classes and made few arrangement policies to cope with the crisis (Gautam, & Gautam, 2021, Khanal, 2020). Because of the sudden and unexpected situation, Nepal faced a considerable struggle to face the challenges to carry on online education in terms of infrastructure, resources, and pedagogical perspective (Kunwar et al., 2020 as cited in Kunwar, Shrestha, & Phuyal, 2022) which has been proved as the opportunity to think and move with the alternative way to regulate academia, teaching-learning activities ahead.

Moving from school education to distance learning (digital and non-digital) is a new and challenging experience. The extended period of school closures has accentuated the digital divide in schools and made it an educational divide. Families with better digital literacy can help their children, while children of digitally illiterate families are at risk of falling behind (Baiza 2020). In Nepalese higher education contexts, Nepal Open University (NOU) which used to have an online mode of teaching and learning from

its establishment has significantly promoted its technological competencies and running its regular program. Tribhuvan University (TU) and Kathmandu University (KU) had already established their own ODL programs and offered a few programs for Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Education and Social Sciences (Pangeni, 2016 as cited in Kunwar, Shrestha, & Phuyal, 2022, p. 13).

All Nepalese universities took initiatives to provide their students with learning opportunities through online teaching. In doing so, they prepared appropriate operational guidelines and manuals so that they could make transition to online teaching from face to face teaching (Kathmandu University, 2020; Mid-Western University, 2020; Tribhuvan University, 2020 as cited in Thapaliya, Adhikari, & Rana, 2023, p. 2). During the pandemic period to regulate the teaching learning activities, Mid-West University (MU) also prepared the guideline for regulating the online mode of teaching-learning and alternative mode of operating system and visualized the complete cycle of e-pedagogy with e-Admission, e-Class, e-Assessment, e-Examination, and e-Certification (Khadka, Rokaya, Roka, & Bhatta, 2020). In this connection, Paudel (2021) further justifies Nepal Open University which used online mode of teaching and learning even before the pandemic. Other universities like TU, KU, PU, MU, and FWU and almost all the schools and colleges practiced online teaching and learning. These universities did not have their own online learning 'platform' generally called 'learning management system' (LMS) because they were built for on-class practices, having no infrastructure and preparedness for online classes. Faculties and students were not mentally and technically prepared for online mode of teaching (Gautam & Gautam, 2021).

During the pandemic period, the academic community advocated and used e-pedagogy as the alternative approach of deregulating the forcefully postponed conventional face-to-face physical classes. The university and school level teachers started

to empower themselves by searching the alternative way. In fact it is easier to advocate in favor of using e-pedagogy rather than using it in a real situation. Therefore, most of the teaching-learning community members started to empower each other by organizing online workshops, seminars, conferences etc. via synchronous and asynchronous mode of dissemination. It was a kind of fun and compulsion among the teaching-learning community to learn and implement e-pedagogy related soft-skills and strategies of using them while teaching. Both the teachers and students including the educational administrative staff, guardians, and other stakeholders were directly and indirectly benefited by the use of e-pedagogy in terms of developing ICT literacy and use for teaching learning purposes. Although the conventional face-to-face mode of teaching and learning restarted after the lockdown over, the use of e-pedagogy is no longer found to be used as the regular routine; however, to extend it has been being used in academic contexts. In this context, it's worth exploring the use of e-pedagogy during and post pandemic situations especially among the ELT professionals and practitioners in higher education institutions of Nepal.

Literature Review

The use of e-Pedagogy in education is the most advocated discourse in academia. In the pedagogical practice, e-pedagogy is an e-learning pedagogy (Mehanna, 2004) and understood as a branch of pedagogy (Baldiņš, 2016) which utilize the digital information and communication technologies (Wee Hin, & Subramaniam, 2009) for teaching and learning strategies via the use of internet (Swartz, Cole, & Shelley, 2009) developed specifically for online and/or blended environments (Salmons & Wilson, 2009). It accommodates methods, forms and resources of learning in relation to distance learning technologies (Syed, 2009; Tomei, 2013) adapting pedagogical and andragogical approaches to learning process (Wang, Farmer, Parker,

& Golubski, 2012) and assessing learning performance in e-learning (McKay, 2013). However, it has not been used so massively before the worldwide COVID-19 Pandemic as all the educational institutions were closed and the conventional physical face-to face mode of pedagogy was almost useless, as a result, the online and alternative mode of pedagogy emerged in practice as a regular part of teaching, learning and evaluation in education.

In the context of Nepalese university teachers' practices of e-pedagogy, Adhikari and Rana (2022) argued that the COVID-19 pandemic has become an opportunity for lecturers and higher education institutions to shift from traditional pedagogies to ICT-integrated learning. Moreover, the findings suggest that if invested in infrastructure development and lecturers' professional development, the universities can gradually adopt online learning as an alternative mode of learning to provide equal access to quality education for all (ibid). Critically arguing the practices of use of e-pedagogy, Thapaliya, Adhikari, and Rana (2023) claimed that the implementations of online teaching and learning to manage students' learning loss during the COVID-19 were marred by paradoxical policy, insufficient resources, teachers' attitudes, socio-psychological issues, the lack of trained teachers and connection among technology, curriculum, pedagogy and assessment. Interestingly, they further supported the use of e-pedagogy that the teachers have taken the COVID-19 crisis as an opportunity for learning to use technologies in their teaching and learning activities.

Online education was found to be beneficial primarily for promoting online research, connecting the practitioners to the global community and getting huge and authentic resource of knowledge (Paudel, 2021), however, the time-management skills, more freedom to the teachers and learners, and reliable internet at workplace as the extreme challenges the school and university closures had a negative impact on students' knowledge and skills development in

Nepal (Dawadi, Giri, & Simkhada, 2020), however, pedagogical change during the crisis of COVID-19 made the students' learning meaningful, interactive and productive (Adhikari, 2021). In this context, Dawadi, Giri, and Simkhada (2020) claimed that the pandemic has had serious impacts on students' learning and well-being, and that it potentially widens the gaps between advantaged and disadvantaged children in their equitable access to quality education (p. 1).

In relation to the factors affecting access of e-pedagogy during pandemic period, Gautam and Gautam (2021) explored the triplet factors: infrastructure, student and teacher as antecedents of effectiveness of online classes during a pandemic. Technological support, infrastructure availability, faculty and students' perception have a significant relationship for the effectiveness of the online mode of the teaching-learning process. Students faced anxiety during the COVID-19 pandemic, but a higher willingness to learn reduces the level of anxiety. Regarding the impacts of online and alternative modes of teaching and learning in higher education in Nepal, Kunwar, Shrestha, and Phuyal (2022) found that the major impacts due to force paradigm shift to online mode are access to quality education, social inequalities, technology adoption, and emotional wellbeing; accelerate change, high dropout, and laboratory work and assessment. Likewise, it has been argued that despite a number of challenges and crises, teachers, however, learn to deal with the technological challenges and manage to run the class through virtual mode. Nevertheless, they assess that online delivery is not effective due to the various constraints (Khanal, 2020).

Reflecting the university teachers' practices and impact of online teaching learning process, Adhikari and Rana (2022) claim that after creating an "online group forums and engaged students in collaborative learning activities, ... [it] resulted in students' off-class communications and increased their learning autonomy

in online classes” (p. 141). The major challenges and constraints they experience in transitioning to online education include poor network, lack of digital skills, and lack of technological support from institutions among others (Shrestha, Haque, Dawadi, & Giri, 2022, p. 245). The study regarding school level English teachers’ perception towards online teaching readiness by Saud (2021) found that the majority of the school level English teachers had prepared themselves for online instruction with necessary technological skills. Likewise, Adhikari (2021) found that the students struggle with limited access to digital technology to manage their online learning.

Regarding the perception and practices of online and alternative mode of examination, Khadka, Rokaya, Roka, and Bhatta (2020) claimed that teachers and students were highly motivated and interested to participate in the online and alternative examination system. They used messenger and email for sending and receiving the questions and answer copies via the online and alternative mode of examination. However, they faced the challenges of internet access, electricity problems, and lack of training and skills to handle the technology. Likewise, Neupane (2021) found that the majority of the students found online learning supportive during the pandemic and they preferred the continuity of online learning even after the Covid-19 pandemic related to technology, pedagogical skills, and the socio-economic status of the students. Regarding the use of online platforms while using e-pedagogy it has been found that because of having no institutional LMS, almost all academic institutes are using commercial platforms like Google, Microsoft, Zoom, Teams, Google Meet, YouTube, Skype, Messenger, Viber, WhatsApp, etc. to continue the teaching and learning process instead of face-to-face conventional pedagogical practices (Kunwar, Shrestha, and Phuyal, 2022; Adhikari & Rana, 2022; -, Adhikari, 2021; Khadka, Rokaya, Roka, & Bhatta, 2020) during pandemic period as the medium of e-pedagogy. In this regard, from the review of the related literature,

it is found that many researches being conducted in uni-institutional setting, uni-nature participants and uni-dimensional themes in nature; in contrast, this study tries to explore the practices and perceptions of both the English teachers and students representing from five universities of Nepal regarding the access and quality of using e-pedagogy during and after the pandemic period in Nepalese ELT contexts.

Objective of the Study

The study aims to reflect and explore the overall situation of access, quality and impacts of using e-pedagogy in ELT e-class in terms of joining e-class and using resources, interaction among the teachers and students, regularity in e-class, techno-based learning opportunity, searching internet-based resources, attending online examinations, participating online training / workshop / conference, and developing learner autonomy in the context of higher education of Nepal.

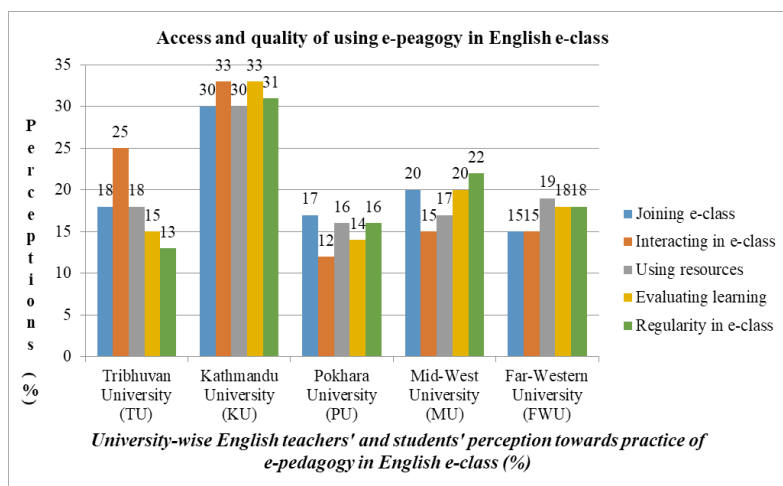
Methodology of the study

The mix-method research design was used collecting the data from internet based quantitative data from questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The total participants were 100 (20 – university teachers and 80 –university students) from five universities of Nepal (Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu University, Mid-West University, Pokhara University and Far-Western University) using purposive sampling strategies based on the principle of accessibility and availability of the participants. Furthermore, the quantitative data were analyzed and interpreted by using descriptive statistical tools (percentage) and the qualitative data using narrative description to find the objectives of the research.

Result Analysis and Interpretation

The quantitative data analysis reveals differences in the perception and practice of university teachers and students regarding

e-pedagogy in English classes across various universities in Nepal. The data highlights five key aspects: joining online classes, interacting between teachers and students, using online and offline resource materials, evaluating learning, and regularity in attending e-classes during the COVID-19 pandemic. Regarding the access and quality of using e-pedagogy in English e-class, the responses of the respondents are presented, analyzed and interpreted as follows:



Based on the quantitative data analysis, it can be observed that there are differences in the perception and practice of university teachers and students towards e-pedagogy in English class across different universities in Nepal. Regarding joining the online class, Kathmandu University (KU) has the highest percentage (30%) of teachers and students who perceive that they can access the online class effectively, followed by Tribhuvan University (TU) at 18%. The lowest percentage is reported by Far-Western University (FWU) at 15%. In terms of interacting between teachers and students in the online class, KU also has the highest percentage (33%) of teachers and students who perceive that they can effectively interact with each other, followed by TU at 25%. The lowest percentage is reported by PU at 12%.

Regarding the use of online resource materials, KU has the highest percentage (30%) of teachers and students who perceive that they can effectively utilize these resources, followed by TU and PU at 18% and 16% respectively. The lowest percentage is reported by FWU at 19%. In terms of evaluating learning in the online class, KU has the highest percentage (33%) of teachers and students who perceive that they can effectively evaluate their learning, followed by MU at 20%. The lowest percentage is reported by TU and FWU at 15% and 18% respectively.

Regarding the regularity of attending e-classes, KU has the highest percentage (31%) of teachers and students who perceive that they attend e-classes regularly, followed by MU at 22%. The lowest percentage is reported by TU at 13%. Overall, the data suggest that KU generally has the highest perception and practice towards e-pedagogy in English class, while FWU has the lowest. However, it is important to note that all universities have room for improvement in certain areas.

Regarding the impacts in terms of access and quality of e-pedagogy in ELT e-class, one of the graduate level major English students of MU shared his experience related to joining the online class, using reading materials and classroom interaction with the teachers and students as,

“...I really enjoyed the online class during COVID-19 period when our campus was closed. I learnt how to use zoom to join the class where we hardly get connected due to poor internet connectivity and frequent power-cut. Our teachers used to present power-point slides and shared the photos of his notes in the Facebook messenger group. He used to ask us to search the reading materials in Google. Sometimes he used to divide the breakout rooms and asked us to discuss and that was a new experience for me.”

Regarding the access and quality of e-pedagogy in ELT e-class, one of the English professors of Tribhuvan University shared his experience of teaching English via online class as,

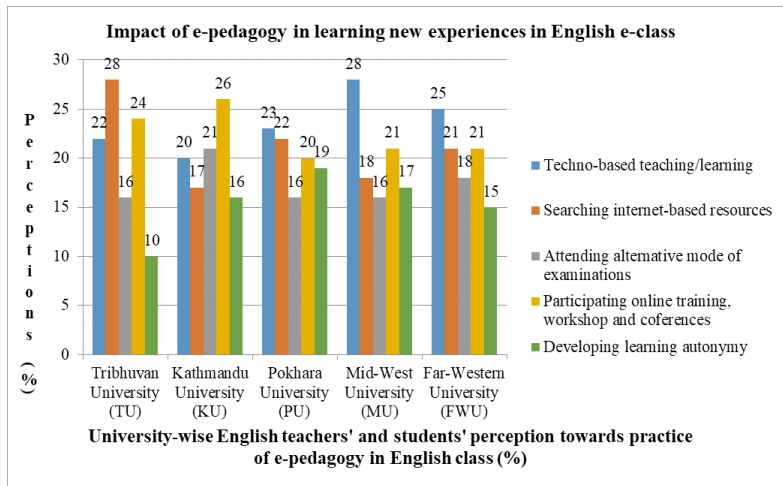
“...My notes became useless for the first time. I used to teach by providing the notes to the students but due to COVID-19, the physical class was postponed as a result we were unsure what to do ahead. Later we were trained to teach online class using ‘Microsoft Teams’. At first it was so difficult to join in the training in ‘Teams’ later learnt to teach via ‘Teams’ that the campus administration supported. Making familiar with the technology, connecting the students in ‘Teams’, being disconnected time and again due to connectivity problems were the challenges, however, it changed my entire teaching methodology from notes to preparing power-point slides and providing internet-based reference materials to read.”

Regarding the impact of e-pedagogy in ELT e-class, an English major graduate student from MU shared his experience during the COVID-19 period when the campus was closed. Despite facing challenges with poor internet connectivity and frequent power cuts, he enjoyed the online classes and learned to use Zoom to join the sessions. The teachers presented PowerPoint slides and shared notes’ photos on the Facebook messenger group. The student appreciated the new experience of breakout room discussions and being asked to search for reading materials online.

On the other hand, an English professor from Tribhuvan University shared his experience of shifting to online teaching during the pandemic. Initially, he faced difficulties with technology, but with training in using ‘Microsoft Teams’, he adapted his teaching methodology from providing physical notes to preparing PowerPoint slides and offering internet-based reference materials for students to read.

The qualitative data analysis highlighted that despite challenges faced by both teachers and students in e-pedagogy during the pandemic, they gained valuable learning experiences in terms of teaching, interacting, resourcing, and evaluating. The MU student enjoyed the online classes and improved his technological skills, while the Tribhuvan University professor adapted his teaching methods to suit the online environment.

The result of the quantitative data analysis towards the perceptions and practice of university teachers and students regarding the impact of e-pedagogy in learning new experiences in e-class during COVID-19 pandemic are discussed as follows:



Based on the quantitative data analysis, the impact of e-pedagogy in learning new experiences in the e-class during COVID-19 pandemic is relatively positive for university teachers and students. On average, 23.6% of university teachers and students from the five universities reported that they have experienced a positive impact of e-pedagogy in learning new experiences than the conventional face-to-face physical class. This suggests that

e-pedagogy has provided a viable alternative for university education during the pandemic.

When it comes to techno-based learning, Mid-West University had the highest percentage of respondents reporting this impact (28%), followed by Far-Western University (25%) and Pokhara University (23%). Kathmandu University had the lowest percentage of respondents reporting this impact (20%). The data also shows that a significant proportion of university teachers and students (on average 21.2%) reported that they have been able to search internet-based resources to enhance their learning experiences during the pandemic. In terms of searching internet-based resources, TU had the highest percentage of respondents reporting this impact (28%), followed by PU (22%) and FWU (21%). MU had the lowest percentage of respondents reporting this impact (18%). This highlights the importance of digital literacy skills in today's education landscape.

Another positive impact of e-pedagogy is that it has enabled university teachers and students to attend online and alternative modes of examinations (on average 17.4%). To be more specific, KU had the highest percentage of respondents reporting this impact (21%), followed by FWU (18%) and TU (16%). PU and MU had the lowest percentage of respondents reporting this impact (16%). This has helped to ensure academic continuity during the pandemic while adhering to social distancing guidelines. E-pedagogy has also provided university teachers and students with the opportunity to participate in online training, workshops, and conferences (on average 23.8%). With regards to participating in online training, workshop, and conference, KU had the highest percentage of respondents reporting this impact (26%), followed by TU (24%) and PU (20%). FWU had the lowest percentage of respondents reporting this impact (15%). This has enabled them to expand their knowledge and skills beyond the traditional classroom setting.

Finally, e-pedagogy has contributed to the development of learning autonomy among university teachers and students (on average 15.4%). TU had the lowest percentage of respondents reporting this impact (10%), followed by KU (16%) and MU (17%). PU had the highest percentage of respondents reporting this impact (19%). This means that they have been able to take more control over their learning processes and pace.

The quantitative data analysis reveals several positive impacts of e-pedagogy on university teachers and students during the COVID-19 pandemic. The findings show that a substantial proportion of respondents experienced positive outcomes in terms of techno-based learning, accessing internet-based resources, participating in online examinations, attending virtual training and conferences, and developing learning autonomy. Overall, the results suggest that e-pedagogy has been instrumental in ensuring academic continuity and providing new learning experiences for both teachers and students during challenging times like the COVID-19 pandemic. It highlights the importance of digital literacy skills and the potential for online education to complement traditional classroom teaching, providing additional learning opportunities and flexibility.

Regarding participation in both internal and external e-examinations for the first time, another undergraduate student of MU shared as,

“...I submitted internal evaluation assignments and mid-term exam questions by writing at home to the email of the teachers. Even the final examination was held online. For the first time I wrote the answers of the questions where we used to receive the questions in our email just before the exam time started and we had to solve them, scan them via android mobile and send to the same email which was a very new experience during COVID period. Now, there are no online classes; just physical classes.”

Reflecting the experience of organizing and participating virtual trainings, workshops and conferences, another English professor said,

“...I am a life member of Nepal English Language Teachers’ Association. NELTA center, provincial and branch committee organized many virtual trainings, workshops, and conferences and I participated and presented my experience of teaching e-pedagogy. I encouraged my students to participate in such programs and I found them very useful for professionalism in terms of content and pedagogy in ELT. The ODL division of TU has also provided us with skill and strategy-based ICT and pedagogy-related training which was very useful while teaching online class.”

Based on the quantitative data and experiences shared, it is clear that e-pedagogy has had a positive impact on online based e-pedagogy in ELT e-class during the COVID-19 pandemic. The use of internet-based resources, alternative modes of examinations, and online training, workshops, and conferences have enabled university teachers and students to continue learning and developing their knowledge and skills.

Additionally, e-pedagogy has contributed to the development of learning autonomy among university teachers and students, allowing them to take more control over their learning processes and pace. The experiences shared by the undergraduate student from MU and the English professor highlight the practical benefits of e-pedagogy. The ability to submit assignments and exams electronically, attend virtual conferences and training sessions, and access online resources has expanded the opportunities for learning and professional development beyond the traditional classroom setting. It is clear that e-pedagogy has become an important component of modern education and will continue to play a significant role in the future.

Findings

The teaching-learning and evaluation system in education and in ELT in particular has been continuously being updated due to the impact of the increasing use of ICT and globalization (Khadka, Rokaya, Roka & Bhatta, 2020). The trend and techniques of using technology in teaching, learning and evaluation procedures transformed the conventional pedagogy into the new paradigm shift towards practicing e-pedagogy. Although the practice of e-pedagogy in ELT is not new concept, it was not fully practiced as the regular part of their pedagogy before the COVID-19 pandemic period in the context of higher education; from the research it was found almost all the universities of Nepal mandatorily implemented as their regular part of teaching, learning, and evaluating in almost all the academic programs.

Among the English teachers and students of five universities, Kathmandu University (KU) English teachers and students were found to be using effective e-pedagogy in terms of access and quality such as joining e-class and using online resources (30%), interaction among teachers and students and (33%) regularity of attending e-classes (31%) followed by MU, TU, PU and FWU respectively. Likewise, regarding the impact of e-pedagogy in ELT, on average, 23.6% of university teachers and students from the five universities reported that they have experienced a positive impact of e-pedagogy in learning new experiences than the conventional face-to-face physical class.

From the quantitative data results it was found that the impact of e-pedagogy in terms of techno-based learning (average 21.2%: MU – 28%); searching internet-based resources (TU – 28%); attend online and alternative modes of examinations (on average 17.4%: KU-21%); opportunity to participate in online training, workshop, and conference (on average 23.8%: KU – 26%); and development of learning autonomy among university teachers and students (on average 15.4%: PU-19%) which were also supported

by the qualitative data analysis as well. Furthermore, it was also found that all of the university teachers and students are no more using online e-pedagogy at graduate and undergraduate levels after the pandemic is over; however, it has been frequently being used at M.Phil./PhD. level teaching-learning procedures. It is worth recommending to continue using e-pedagogy along with the physical face-to-face classes as the blended mode of pedagogy in ELT.

The findings suggest that Kathmandu University (KU) was the most effective in using e-pedagogy, with its English teachers and students demonstrating high levels of access and quality, interaction, and regularity of attendance in e-classes. Additionally, there were reported positive impacts of e-pedagogy in learning new experiences, techno-based learning, searching internet-based resources, attending online and alternative modes of examinations, opportunity to participate in online training, workshop, and conference, and development of learning autonomy among university teachers and students. It's worth noting that after the pandemic is over, all university teachers and students are no longer using online e-pedagogy at graduate and undergraduate levels, but it's being frequently used at M.Phil./PhD. level teaching-learning procedures. However, it's recommended to continue using e-pedagogy along with the physical face-to-face classes as a blended mode of pedagogy in ELT.

The study also suggests that e-pedagogy has had a positive impact on the learning experiences of university teachers and students during the pandemic. It's worth noting that while there are differences in the percentages across the universities, the overall pattern suggests that university teachers and students have found e-pedagogy to be beneficial for learning new experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Overall, these findings highlight the potential benefits of incorporating e-pedagogy in ELT, and it's important to continue

exploring and implementing technology-enhanced teaching and learning practices to improve educational outcomes in general and ELT in particular.

Discussion

Using e-Pedagogy during pandemic situation was a compulsion rather than a choice and interest for the teaching-learning community. Since the pedagogical processes are for achieving the goals of teaching and learning, the teachers and learners are the real actors to make it happen. In this context, the main issues to be discussed are whether the goals of using e-pedagogical practices were accessible and useful for target community or not and how effectively and efficiently they worked in its true spirit of using them. Regarding the situation, opportunities and challenges of online-based e-class, the previous studies identified as poor network, lack of digital skills, lack of technological support from institutions among others (Shrestha, Haque, Dawadi, & Giri, 2022, p. 245); the lack of electricity, no access to the internet, and poor connectivity as well as the lack of training and skills to use the technology etc. (Khadka, Rokaya, Roka, & Bhatta, 2020). However, both the teachers and students were found to have taken as the opportunity to practice e-pedagogy in e-classes. In this regard, Thapaliya, Adhikari and Rana (2023) further support from their research findings that the teachers have taken the COVID-19 crisis as an opportunity for learning to use technologies in their teaching and learning activities, though they were marred by paradoxical policy, insufficient resources, teachers' attitudes, socio-psychological issues, the lack of trained teachers and connection among technology, curriculum, pedagogy and assessment. In the same vain, Khanal (2020) also suggests for ensuring the access of ICT resources and facilities to both teachers and students, sufficient training to the both groups and digitalize curricular materials for the effective implementation of

virtual learning (p. 89). The findings of situation, access, quality of practicing e-pedagogy in English e-class were also found to be the similar in nature.

It is the ground reality that the teachers and students were forced to shift the conventional teaching-learning pedagogies to the techno-based e-pedagogy as the new practice. During the pandemic period, the students were found to be searching the reading materials in the internet based websites which reduced the students' dependency on teachers' notes and handouts. Moreover, it has enhanced the online based research and use of online based resources. As Paudel (2021) claimed that the participants experienced online education beneficial primarily for promoting online research, connecting the practitioners to the global community and getting a huge and authentic resource of knowledge. Furthermore, the teachers and students were found to be discussing group work and pair work activities even in the e-class creating break-out rooms. In this regard, Adhikari and Rana (2022) claim that lecturers' practice of online learning has changed their traditional beliefs about face-to-face teaching practices. It reflects that it is possible to make e-class more interactive and student centered e-pedagogy in EFL e-class.

It was a quite new and surprising experience for both the students and teachers to attend the online examination not only for the internal evaluation but also for the external evaluation purpose as well. Based on the research regarding perceptions and practices of online and alternative mode of examinations of MU, Khadka, Rokaya, Roka and Bhatta (2020) found that teachers and students were found to be highly motivated and interested to participate in the online and alternative examination system. Majority of them had access to messenger and email for sending and receiving the questions and answer copies via the online and alternative mode of examinations (p. 113).

Moreover, the majority of the teachers and students from

all the universities were found to be attending online training, workshops, seminars, and conferences for their professional development and to learn new skills and strategies related to use of e-pedagogy. In this connection, Khanal (2020) claimed that despite a number of challenges and crises, teachers, however, learn to deal with the technological challenges and manage to run the class through virtual mode. Moreover, Adhikari and Rana (2022) support the research findings that online workshops and webinars enabled them to identify and use information and communication technologies (ICTs) for online teaching in pandemic lockdowns. To be more specific, English teachers in Nepal attended three kinds of events that include training programs to learn technology, events to learn about the online resources for English language teaching and professional development events to enhance their professional skills (Gautam, 2020). Nevertheless, the practice of e-pedagogy has found to be no longer continued after the COVID-19 pandemic ended as the physical classes restarted as usual.

Overall, the shift towards e-pedagogy during the pandemic was a necessary and compelling change for both teachers and students, who had to adapt to new methods of teaching and learning. Despite the challenges faced, including issues with technology, connectivity, and training, many teachers and students were able to see the benefits of e-pedagogy, including increased access to online resources, greater opportunities for collaboration, and the ability to participate in online training and professional development opportunities. However, it remains to be seen whether these changes will be sustained once the pandemic is over and physical classes resume. Regardless, the experience of e-pedagogy during the pandemic has provided valuable insights into the potential of technology to support teaching and learning, and may serve as a catalyst for future innovations in education.

Conclusion

The paradigm shift in teaching-learning and evaluation system from the conventional face-to-face physical class into online based e-class with practicing e-pedagogy is key achievement of COVID-19 pandemic lockdown period. Although use of e-pedagogy in ELT is not a new concept, it has not been fully used before. The teaching-learning community fully enjoyed using it during this period globally and locally as there was no option remaining. In this context, this study reflects the scenario of using e-pedagogy with the opportunities and challenges that the English teachers and students faced in ELT e-class. It also depicts university-wise perceptions and practices of English teachers and students towards using e-pedagogy in terms of access and impacts in various dimensions perspectives such as joining e-class, interaction among the teachers and students, using and searching online resources, technology-based teaching and learning experiences, regularity in e-class, attending in e-examinations, e-trainings, e-workshops and e-conferences as a part of e-pedagogy.

Among the five universities, Kathmandu university English teachers and students were found to be using e-pedagogy more often followed by TU, MU, FWU, and PU. Moreover, they had amazing experiences in terms of teaching and learning procedures in e-class during the lockdown period. In addition, after the lockdown was over, they restarted their physical face-to-face mode of teaching-learning activities as usual and no online-based e-pedagogy is in practice in almost all the universities of Nepal in case of teaching English at graduate and undergraduate levels except M.Phil./PhD. classes. This indicates that the online based e-pedagogy has not still received its identity as the regular part of teaching, learning and evaluation in Nepal, although both the teachers and students are interested to continue it. In the post-pandemic period in a new normal context, the conventional face-to-face physical classes are renewing their lost identity during the

pandemic period and teaching learning communities are enjoying it. So, it is worth recommending continuing the blended mode of pedagogy with the fusion of face-to-face mode of conventional pedagogy and online-based e-pedagogy in education in general and ELT in particular in the contexts of higher education of Nepal.

Overall, this study highlights the practices and impacts of e-pedagogy in English Language Teaching (ELT) in Nepal's higher education system during the pandemic period and onwards. The study found that e-pedagogy has transformed the conventional pedagogy into a new paradigm shift towards practicing e-pedagogy. It also found that almost all universities in Nepal have mandatorily implemented e-pedagogy as their regular part of teaching, learning, and evaluation in almost all academic programs due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The study shows that Kathmandu University (KU) English teachers and students were found to be using effective e-pedagogy in terms of access and quality. They reported that they have experienced a positive impact of e-pedagogy in learning new experiences than the conventional face-to-face physical class. The impact of e-pedagogy was also found in terms of techno-based learning, searching internet-based resources, attending online and alternative modes of examinations, opportunity to participate in online training, workshop, and conference, and development of learning autonomy among university teachers and students.

The study recommends that e-pedagogy should be continued along with physical face-to-face classes as a blended mode of pedagogy in ELT. The overall pattern suggests that university teachers and students have found e-pedagogy to be beneficial for learning new experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. It's worth noting that while there are differences in the percentages across the universities, the study suggests that e-pedagogy has had a positive impact on the learning experiences of university teachers and students during the pandemic.

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