

Editorial

Journey ahead

We are pleased to bring out this volume of the Journal of NELTA in your hands. We present this as the last volume for the present editorial team. During these four years, we learned a lot from the authors and reviewers whose contribution was only one source of our energy to publish the journal every year. During our tenure, we have established and enhanced a blind peer review process that has not only added to the quality of the work in the journal but also given editors, reviewers, and authors alike the opportunity for practice and professionalism in academic writing scholarship. We are also proud of the many other achievements of the journal including its indexing in major international scholarly databases including Nepjol, Journalseek, Linguistlist, Google Scholar, and ERIC database (under consideration).

As print journals around the world face increasing challenges against sustainability, the commitment of our organization, NELTA, toward keeping this journal strong must be appreciated; however, we also urge colleagues in and outside of official positions to engage in serious discussions about building our scholarship from the ground up. Take for instance an article about “homework” in this issue: it is one thing to study, discuss, and write about globally popular ELT theories, latest pedagogical approaches, and new methods/strategies of teaching English but quite another to accept realities on the ground, realities of assigning and assessing homework by our teachers and that of completing them by their students in extremely adverse economic situations. Thus, we urge you as readers to think about the challenges that you and this community at large face on a daily basis, at the basic level of day-to-day teaching. We also urge scholars and policy makers to seriously consider how our scholarship

can be developed from the ground up. We certainly should draw on and take advantage of the world of ideas from all places and times; but we are ultimately teaching real people in real time and expecting the knowledge that our students acquire from us to help them solve real challenges of their lives, right now and for years to come. We hope that this journal helps this wonderful community address these larger and serious challenges of what knowledge can and should do in an emerging democracy and society like ours.

As the journal moves forward with a new team of editors, we look forward to providing any support toward building on our success and institutionalize our achievements. We are also pleased about the fact that in spite of the great distance among us as editors, as well as with our reviewers and authors, that the publication process of the journal has been smooth. We are sure that NELTA will continue to take the journal forward in the years to come.

Like in previous years, this volume includes articles that deal with a wide range of issues concerning teaching English in Nepal and beyond. Focusing on the importance of reflective practices in professional development, Shiva Ram Pandey claims that teacher training and knowledge of teaching method are not sufficient for teachers to address students' needs and complexity of classroom dynamics. He argues that it is through engaging themselves in enduring reflective practices of their own teaching teachers can understand what, how and why aspects of teaching. Phan Thi Tuyet Van, based on an experimental research, shows how 'reflective writing paper' helps students become an autonomous learner. Van's study shows that through the reflective writing process students can be engaged in self-learning, self-monitoring and self-researching processes. This process will help teachers identify students' language ability and provide them with required instructions. Similarly, Ashok Sapkota's study shows that peer correction is a useful way to promote students' collaborative learning practices in the classroom and beyond. Sapkota's paper provides teachers with ideas on how to help students learn from their own peers. In another article, Ichchha Purna Rai compares tense and aspect systems in Chulung, one of the minority languages in Nepal, and English. Rai's study indicates that teachers should know the languages students speak that help them develop students' critical language awareness skills.

Highlighting some of the obvious benefits of homework, Jagadish Paudel in his article points out the lack of discourse and scholarship about the situation in which homework is given and accomplished in

Nepalese public school. Using survey data from grade eight in schools in Dadeldhura District, he explores the motivations and challenges as well as material conditions that affect students' abilities to do homework at home; he also looks at homework on the side of the teachers. He suggests some strategies for increasing homework completion rates and making homework meaningful for the students.

In a different kind of article based on research in Kenyan schools, which however is highly relevant to ELT in Nepal, Logamurthie Athiemoolam and Agnes Kibui assess grade ten Kenyan learners' proficiency in English by examining their performance in comprehension and vocabulary on the basis of three tests incorporating multiple choice and interpretative questions. Using data from 422 tenth grade learners representing sixteen schools in four provinces of Kenya, they show that a large percentage of Kenyan learners encounter challenges with comprehension and vocabulary which impacted on their English language proficiency, even though English is the first additional language as well as the medium of instruction in the country. The authors suggest that there is a need for reading skills development programmes incorporating word analysis, recognition of the purpose of the text and tone, and the enhancement of inferential as well as predictive and interpretive skills.

Sajan Karn's article presents arguments that the study of creative writings in English by Nepalese literary authors exhibit typical Nepaleseness in such an amplitude that a distinctive English literature can be inferred to be in the making. Sajan examines nativization in various genres of literature written in English in Nepal and also contends with the evidences that we have leapt towards Nepalese English literature considered from World Englishes literature perspective. Similarly, Pratiti Shirin's article focuses on exploring the efficacy of applying the communicative approach to teaching German at the Goethe Institute in Bangladesh. Since emphasis was given on testing reading and writing rather than on evaluation of all four skills, applying CLT was tailored to teaching reading and writing rather than speaking and listening with the effect that students at the end of the course had elementary knowledge of reading and writing but poor knowledge of speaking and listening. Pratiti notes limitations of applying CLT to the German language class and the dilemma that comes with it as to which approach is the best approach to teach a foreign language.

Nkechi M. Christopher's article investigates the level of teacher motivation, the association between teacher motivation and language learning and teaching, as well as the factors that could impact on them in two states in the Nigeria federation. One major finding that Nkechi notes is that

teachers' lack of motivation to teach is supported by negative assessment of several variables in the teaching/learning environment that are critical in raising and maintaining teacher motivation, teaching efficiency and effective language learning. Likewise, drawing on his experience of exploiting critical thinking strategies while teaching short stories, Mukti Prasad Thapaliya, shares his observations on how teaching literature in general and short stories in particular can be made more participatory, enjoyable and effective while promoting active learning. He offers a number of critical thinking strategies that can successfully be practiced in EFL/ESL classrooms to bring about the changes in Nepalese classrooms where conventional teacher dominated practices like dictation, paraphrasing, lecture etc. have long been in practice.

Together the articles in this volume promote teacher and student agency and criticality building on situated practices of English language teaching. This volume goes beyond Nepal and provides a transnational perspective on various issues of teaching English. We believe that such transnational academic works should be furthered to understand how ELT is influenced by context-specific reality.

We are extremely grateful to our authors and reviewers, who were very cooperative and supportive. We also thank NELTA Central Committee for providing us with timely support. As always, we are thankful to Chandra Khaki for elegant design work.

We hope you find the articles in this volume useful.

Jai Raj Awasthi
Sajan Kumar Karn
Prem Phyak
Bal Krishna Sharma
Ghanashyam Sharma