

Development of ELT in Nepal: An Overview

Bishnu Kumar Khadka

Abstract

English language teaching (ELT) journey in Nepal needs to be explored from its historical perspective as there is only few literature available in this area. In this respect, there is a need of analysing historical development of ELT from various dimensions in chronological order. Therefore, this paper aims at presenting an overview of the development in terms of the policies and practices of ELT reviewing and analysing the available literature collected from different sources. After analysing the data, the research claims that English language teaching has been an integral part of education system in Nepal from nursery to tertiary level as a subject and/or medium of instruction throughout the history. Furthermore, the trends of development of ELT in Nepal seem to continue both in its quantity and quality in future due to the increasing use of English in multiple sectors.

Keywords: English in Nepal, English in Education, EMI, ELT

Introduction

Nepal is rich in its linguistic diversity having a diverse range of diversified cultural and linguistic richness with more than one hundred and twenty-three living languages along the ecological zones (Bhattarai & Gautam, 2007; Giri, 2009; Yadava, 2013; Phyak, 2013). Hence, in terms of its linguistic and ethnic diversity, Nepal is claimed as a multicultural, multiethnic and multilingual country. Though English is not the language of everyday communication in Nepal, it has been the language of almost all sectors at present, and is being taught and learnt as a non-native and/or foreign language in Nepal. As it is claimed that English has become much more popular and considered the language of being used for various purposes such as in education, media, diplomacy, tourism etc. (Adhikari, 2018; Shrestha, 2016). Regarding the status of English in the Nepal, Shrestha (1983) argues that English is not a second and/or one of the official languages of the country. It is neither an intra-national nor a dominant working language. Rather, it is a foreign language and/or library language, i.e. a language having an access to textbooks, lectures, and journals as it is taught as a subject of study; used to a limited degree as a medium of instruction; used in academic, technical, public affairs etc. in Nepal. It plays the role of a lingua franca across international communication in various policies,

programs, and domains. Moreover, it has been playing a crucial role in increasing the career and economic opportunities among the new generation in Nepal (Malla, 1977; Shrestha, 1983; Bista, 2011; Khatri, 2013; Giri, 2014).

Furthermore, English is being used as the medium of imparting education, evaluation system and the subject matter to be taught and learnt or both for more than one and half centuries with a wide range of coverage from nursery to tertiary education. The increasing demand for English medium education even in the public schools is one of the examples as the trade mark of so-called quality education. In this respect, Poudel and Choi (2021) claim, “English and Nepali are not only used as medium of instruction (MoI), but also taught as compulsory subjects in the curriculum mandated by the macro governmental policy on education”. Hence, in the present context, English is an integral part of the school to university level education system as well as official and media documentation due to the impact of ICT and globalization in Nepal.

Regarding the entry of English in Nepal, Poudel (2021) argues that it has been in Nepal for about two and half-century now, formerly as a contact language between the ruling elites of Kathmandu and the East India Company of British India (p. 4). However, the formal journey of teaching and learning English begins with the visit of the then Prime Minister Junga Bahadur Rana to Britain who for the first time introduced English-language education for educating his children and close relatives which was claimed as the formal starting of English language teaching (ELT) in Nepal (Eagle, 2000). In this context, it is worth exploring the various dimensions of the historical development of ELT in terms of policies, programs and practices with their ups and downs from the past to present.

The Objective of the Study

The main objective of the study is to review the historical development of ELT practices in Nepal chronologically in terms of its policies, programs and practices and past to present status with the purpose of documenting the significant junctures of Nepalese ELT in particular.

Methodology

The methodology of the study was a descriptive survey based on the literature related to ELT development in Nepal from the available secondary sources. They are analysed, interpreted and presented in the chronological order from past to present status. While searching the literature related to ELT in Nepal, I used the web-based online as well as physically published journals and books focusing on the historical development of English in education, media, governmental as well as the academic administrative policy and practice related documents in particular.

Literature Review

The historical development of English language teaching practices in Nepal takes its roots from the 19th century. To review it's about one and half-century journey, the researcher has reviewed the ELT literature related to the Nepalese context. Regarding the ELT development in Nepal, the journal articles were reviewed such as Awasthi (2003), Phyak (2013), Uda and Sharma (2006), Sharma (1990), Bista (2011), Shrestha (1983), Bolton and Kachru (2006), Bhattarai and Gautam (2007), Subba (1980), Giri (2014), Weinberg (2013), Khati (2013) and Adhikari (2020). Similarly, the books and book chapters contributed by Malla (1977, Duwadi (2018), Ojha (2018), Bashyal (2018), Karki (2018), Metsämuuronen and Ilic (2018), Paudel (2019), Phyak (2016), Pandey (2020), Poudel (2021) and Shrestha and Gautam (2022) etc. were reviewed. Furthermore, the policy documents were also reviewed such as Nepal National Education Planning Commission (1956), National Education System Plan, 1971 (2028 BS), the research reports conducted by the Government of Nepal, the Constitution of Nepal (2072 BS), the National Curriculum Framework (2077 BS), Curriculum Development Centre (2021), curricula of different levels and periods published by Curriculum Development Centre (CDC), policy documents of Government of Nepal, universities and other professional organizations such as Nepal English Language Teachers' Association (NELTA). While reviewing the policy related documents, it has been accepted that English is found to be taught and learnt as a language of international lingua franca and therefore it is the need of teaching and learning from class one to bachelor level as the compulsory subjects and medium of teaching too (CDC, 2021; NCF, 2020, NESP, 1971). Moreover, English is being used as the language of disseminating education from its historical origin to till today in Nepal (Malla, 1976; Subba, 1980; Giri, 2014; Weinberg, 2013; Khati, 2013; Adhikari, 2020; Poudel, 2021). English language is gradually becoming a de facto medium of education in both, government funded public and private schools in Nepal (Shrestha & Gautam, 2022; Paudel, 2019; Phyak, 2016).

Analysis, Interpretation and Result Discussion

On the basis of analysis and interpretation of literature reviews related to the ELT policies and practices in Nepal, the findings and discussion is described in the following sub-headings:

ELT in Pre-Rana Period (Before 1850)

If we review the historical documents of ELT in Nepal, the use of English in Nepal, was found before the beginning of formal education system in the seventeenth century. In Nepal, English did not entered as the language of ruling by English speaking people like British or any others like other countries of South Asia such as India and Pakistan. In this regard, Poudel (2021) claims, "Nepal has never been a political colony of the English people. Therefore, English has not been politically imposed on the people of Nepal, as the case was in neighbouring countries of the Indian subcontinent during

British rule" (p. 2). Justifying this fact, Subba (1980) argues, "English was not brought to Nepal as the language of conquerors, as it was in most countries in South Asia" (p. 84). The historical record of Nepal regarding the entry of English is claimed to be used by King Pratap Malla during the Malla Period in Nepal. "The earliest record about the English language in Nepal is about the 17th century; an inscription at Hanuman Dhoka states that King Pratap Malla (1641-44) knew English as one of the fourteen languages he knew" (Uda & Sharma, 2006, p. 60). Further, English was found to be used for providing training to the soldiers by the European military trainers before and during the unification mission of Nepal. In this respect, Giri (2014) claims,

"The early presence of English in Nepal could have been the result of the entry and first settlements of European missionaries, in particular, English missionaries in 1661. They trained Nepalis to assist them with their intrastate as well as interstate activities. A landmark of English education, however, was the commencement of recruitment of Gurkha soldiers as a part of the famous Sugauli Treaty in 1815, the training of which took place in English" (p. 192).

The Education system of Nepal was based on religion, Sanskrit language as the medium of instruction, which was mainly for the Brahmins and Chhetris only. "The religious schooling in Hindu Pathshalas and Buddhist Gombas were using the mediums of Sanskrit and Tibetan respectively" (Eagle, 1999; Phyak, 2011 as cited in Weinberg, 2013, p. 64) before the introduction of the formal English Education system officially by Junga Bahadur Rana. In this respect, Bashyal (2018) claims that the settlement of European missionaries in 1661 and recruitment of Gurkha soldiers after the Nepal-British East India Company Sugauli treaty in 1815 contributed to spread English in Nepal though, it was formally imported into Nepal during the Rana oligarchy (p. 221). Therefore, this period in the history of ELT in Nepal can be said to be the period of importing English and getting exposed to English practices without formal pedagogical system.

ELT in Rana Period (1850-1951)

The formal journey of English Language Teaching (ELT) in Nepal is claimed to be started in the early 19th century. To be more specific, when the then prime minister, Jung Bahadur Rana opened a school in 1954, the English language received a place in mainstream education (NELTA, n.d.). So, it can be said that Rana period is the founding period for ELT in Nepal, though it is blamed as the dark age of education in the history of Nepal. In this regard, Adhikari(2020) claimed that English entered in the formal education system with the visit of Prime Minister Junga Bahadur Rana to Britain, and establishment of school, popularly known as Durbar High School where English was introduced. It is argued that he was impressed by the achievements of England and the English education system when he visited the European countries. As a result, when returning back from England to Nepal, he brought two English teachers (Mr. Rose and Lord Canning) from there and established an English school at Thapathali Palace. In this regard, Sharma (1990) further supports that "after his trip to Europe, Jung Bahadur

realized the importance of English for communication with the outside world and felt that his sons should be given a “western” education” (p. 3).

The first formal government-run school of Nepal, Durbar School was an English medium school. Though it was initially opened only for children from the ruling Rana family, has played an important role in establishing the foundation of English language teaching in Nepal. Supporting this view, Weinberg (2013) further argues that since the Rana rulers wanted their children to learn in English, medium of instruction, the curriculum, teaching-learning materials etc. were in English. Sharma (1990) further claims that English was both the medium of instruction and examination as it was affiliated to Calcutta University (p. 4).

During the Rana period education system, English was taught both as a compulsory subject and medium of teaching and learning. Furthermore, it was the medium of examination too. When the SLC Board of Examination in Nepal was established in 1934, “English was a compulsory subject, medium of instruction and examination whereas Nepali came to be compulsory subject only in 1951. It was the language which was voluntarily opted by the SLC candidates of the forties and fifties” (Malla, 1977, Shrestha, 1983). Furthermore, in the revision of 1953 and 1965, English carries more than 20 % of the total marks allocation for the level whereas Nepali only 5%. In the sixties, the medium of education was both English and Nepali at the secondary level (HMG, 1961, pp. 99-101 as cited in Shrestha, 1983). During this period, Tri-Chandra College established in 1918 as the first higher education institution. It also used English as the medium of education (Weinberg, 2013). Although the educational policy during the Ranas period served to limit education to elites, mostly their Rana family members only, for the limited people, the language of education was English.

From the above discussion, it can be concluded that the Rana Period of Nepal in the history of ELT can be called as the period of formal entry of English in education system of Nepal. In other words, the formal education system of Nepal was started with the English medium school where English was taught and learnt both as the subject and medium of teaching, learning and examinations which continue up to the SLC and higher education level during this period. Therefore, it can be claimed that Rana Period is the foundation period for ELT in Nepal.

ELT in Democratic Period (1951-1960)

Democracy was established in 1951 after demolishing the 104-year long Rana Regime in Nepal. With the establishment of democracy in Nepal education is readily available to the general public, although well-to-do families had been educating their children (mainly boys) in India prior to that (Duwadi, 2018). According to the NNEPC survey (1954) it was revealed that nearly half of Nepal’s population wanted English to remain as the medium of instruction” (Wood, Pandey, & Upraity, 1955; Sonntag, 1980 as cited in Giri, 2014). In this respect, Malla (1977) argues,

"[t]he withdrawal of British power from the Indian subcontinent has been a crucial factor in the changing status of English language in the educational setup of the whole South Asia, including Nepal. Till the 1940s and 1950s even in the secondary schools English language and English curriculum occupied an important place". (p. 21)

The government-formed National Education Commission chaired by Sardar Rudra Raj Pande (1956) officially recommended using Nepali medium education throughout the country with the aim to unite the nation by using a single language (Ojha, 2018, p. 190) for the first time. *"Nepaali bhaasaa nai padhaaiko maadhyam hunuparchha"* [Nepali language should be the language of instruction] (NEPC, 1956, as cited in Rai, 2013). During this period, as per the policy recommendations by NEPC (1956, p. 56 as cited in Yadava, 2013) mentions that the medium of instruction should be the national language in primary, middle, and higher educational institutions, no other languages should be taught, even optionally, in primary school (p. 133). Later, the K. I. Singh government also continued Nepali medium education in 1957 by prescribing Nepali as a medium of teaching and learning.

Tribhuvan University was established in 1959 as the higher education institution for providing tertiary level education in Nepal. Shrestha (1983) claims that the colleges of Nepal were affiliated with the Indian universities before the inception of Tribhuvan University in 1959, therefore, the courses were taught accordingly such as English was a compulsory subject and the medium of instruction and continued to be so even after founding the native university. In respect to the English courses, he further claims that in the intermediate level syllabus of 1975, compulsory English carries 15 hours whereas Nepali carries only 9 hours. At the post-secondary levels the status of English, both as the medium of instruction and examination, remained unquestionable till the 1960s (Malla, 1977). Likewise, Subba (1980) further justifies, "English is the recognized medium of instruction but Nepali is fast becoming the inevitable medium of instruction" (p. 84). In her research findings she argues that English currently remains the medium of instruction within tertiary education in Nepal; but a vast number of students do not have adequate English language skills, which places them at disadvantage. Regarding ELT curriculum and methodology of ELT Shrestha (1983) argues, "the English syllabuses were literature-based and methodology that of grammar-translation. Teaching-learning of English was equated with teaching-learning of the formal grammatical system, reading literature and philosophy, inculcation of classical and humanistic spirit, cultural enrichment etc." (p. 49). So, this period in the history of ELT in Nepal is the "Period of ignorance towards English", however, the use and attraction of English in higher education continued as the subject and medium of instruction and examination with the use of grammar-translation method in ELT.

ELT in Panchayat Period (1961-1990)

English was treated as one of the compulsory subject during the Panchayat period from 1961 to 1990 as Shrestha (2018) claims, "the role of English was changed from

medium of instruction to a subject of study” (p.172), though the then “King Mahendra, during the one-party dictatorial Panchayat Era (1960-1990) adopted a policy to promote the Nepali language (Ojha, 2018). During Panchayat Period, the All Round National Education Commission (2018 B.S.) also recommended Nepali language as the medium of education (p. 20). In this regard, Rai (2013) further argues that it recommended Nepali as the medium of instruction and Sanskrit as a subject in the curriculum. Furthermore, Uda and Sharma (2006) claims, “English, of course, had been a compulsory subject at Durbar School; the compulsory status for English retained till 1971. In this year, a drastic change was carried out: The National Education System Plan was introduced, where English was defined as one of the UN languages” (p. 60). In this regard, Malla (1977) further justifies that the National Education System Plan (1971-1976) deleted English as a compulsory subject from the primary school curriculum (Class I to Class III) and did not make a specific mention of the English language in the secondary curriculum (Class VIII to Class X) either rather it prescribed one of the U. N. languages as a compulsory subject (p. 9).

Regarding the medium of teaching and learning, NESP (1971-76) outlined the policy of medium of instruction clearly that Nepali as the medium of instruction except teaching the language itself. As the NESP (1971, p. 29) mentions,

“The medium of instruction in primary and secondary schools will be Nepali. However, while teaching a language other than Nepali, the medium of instruction may be in the language concerned. The medium of instruction in higher educational institutions will remain as it now” (as cited in Subba, 1980).

Despite of the policy regarding medium of instruction, Dawadi (2018) argues that NESP (1971) mandated English as a subject to be taught in schools in Nepal and increased interest and stress in both teachers and students. Furthermore, Awasthi (2003) claims, “the introduction of ELT in Nepalese education started only in 1971 with the implementation of National Education System Plan (NESP) until then English language teachers were not trained. It started only in 1971 when Institute of Education (IOE) of TU initiated B.Ed. programme in English education” (p. 22). Regarding the medium of instruction at university level, Malla (1977) makes a similar claim that when Tribhuvan University was incorporated by law in 1959, the University Act envisaged that Nepali would be adopted as the medium of instruction and examination by 1974. Likewise, Shrestha (2018) concludes that although English was not medium of instruction throughout the Panchayat era, it was taught as a compulsory subject from grade four onwards (p. 172).

There was a drastic change in the ELT curriculum designing and methodology in tertiary education in Nepal, particularly at Tribhuvan University during this period. Malla (1968) claims, “In 1964, the Board of English Studies was reported to have felt the need to separate the teaching of language from the teaching of literature” (p. 77 as cited in Shrestha, 1983, p. 49) at Tribhuvan University. Moreover, Malla (1977) further clarifies that “the Board of English Studies framed the new English syllabuses- splitting

the old courses into the compulsory English courses and optional literature courses. The new courses were introduced from 1964 for the Intermediate and Degree students taking their finals in 1966 (p. 1). Moreover, he remembers the two-day seminar on objectives and methods of implementing the new courses held in 1964 having made some specific recommendations on teaching methods and techniques of examinations. Another remarkable event during this period to be noted is a National Conference of College Teachers of English that was held in October 1968 and the report was published in 1969 in which David Rathbone (1969, p. 9) pointed out that English must be taught as a foreign language, not as a second language in Nepal (Shrestha, 1983). Moreover, in the early 1980s, Davies' report, after an extensive study of the ELT situation in Nepal, reported that the overall situation of English was quite deplorable and the standard was considered quite low (NELTA, n.d.).

Regarding the teacher training programs in ELT during Panchayat system, Awasthi (2003) claims,

"The National Education System Plan (NESP, 1971-76) brought a new impetus in teacher education and making the teacher training mandatory to obtain tenure in schools...All these institutions such as College of Education, National Vocational Training Centre, and Primary School Teacher Training Centres came under the single umbrella of the Institute of Education (IOE) under Tribhuvan University (TU)" (p. 6).

There was a replacement of teaching methods in ELT from the Grammar-Translation Method to the Audio-lingual Method during the Panchayat period. In this respect, Shrestha (1983) claims that "the grammar-translation method was replaced by pattern practice. The emphasis naturally is on speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. Speaking and listening as units of teaching were introduced for the first time in 1971 (p. 49). The focus of English language teaching shifted to the development of language skills. Therefore, the method of teaching language skills was practised mostly as structural-functional and the functional value of English and school level syllabuses were reshaped accordingly (NELTA, n.d.). Furthermore, at the university level, the syllabus for English for specific purposes was also designed. It was a major departure from the past; the education system was restructured and centralized as a full government undertaking.

From the above discussion, it can be said that during the period, there was a reentry of English indirectly as one of the compulsory subjects in the name of the UN language in school education and as a core and major subject as well as the medium of instruction in higher education. Furthermore, during this period, the ELT trainings and teacher education programs of the universities, governmental and non-governmental agencies were launched and the pedagogy of ELT also transformed from grammar-translation method to audio-lingual method. Therefore, it can be claimed that there was a paradigm shift in ELT not only in curriculum designing but also in pedagogy and can be said as the "Period of Foundational Transformation of ELT" in the history of ELT.

ELT in Restored Democratic Period (1990-2006)

Along with the success of Jana Andolan I [People's Movement I], democracy was restored in 1990 in Nepal. After a year of the restoration of democracy, The Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal 2047 (1990) was declared in which Nepal is identified as the multiethnic and multilingual country (Article 4.1) and all the languages spoken as the mother tongue in various parts of Nepal are national languages of Nepal (Article 6.2). However, nothing was said about the status and position of the English language and its use in the constitutions and other official documents. Regarding the spread of English in Nepal after the restoration of the democracy period, Phyak (2013) claims,

“The English language became the de facto language in education, mass media, and government offices. As the most of the developmental projects are supported by foreign agencies, official proposals and reports are prepared in English. Due to its instrumental value, English is perceived as the most important language (even more important than Nepali) in education, mass media, and other job markets (especially due to technological requirements)” (p. 5).

With the restoration of democracy in 1990, many professional organizations related to ELT in Nepal were founded which are contributing a lot to the access and quality of ELT till today. A number of governmental, non-governmental, and private academic and non-academic institutions opened during this period which has been formally and/or informally contributing to the development of Nepalese ELT. At the governmental level, the National Centre for Educational Development (NCED) was established in 1992 with a view to training manpower involved in the field of school education. “The sole responsibility of imparting teacher education in ELT was given to Faculty of Education (FOE) of Tribhuvan University until other universities started one or the other kind of teacher education programmes in the late 90s (Awasthi, 2003). Likewise, other universities such as Kathmandu University, Nepal Sanskrit University, Purbanchal University, Higher Secondary Education Board (HSEB) of Nepal etc. also started academic programs in ELT which ultimately supported to development of human resources in the field of ELT across the country during this period. In this respect, Awasthi (2003) claims, “the courses offered by the universities responsible for conducting ELT teacher education comprise language/linguistic contents and ELT pedagogy” (p. 24).

At the outset of the restoration of democracy period, “Nepal English Language Teachers' Association (NELTA) was founded in 1992; the Literary Association of Nepal was founded in 1992; the Society of English Writers was formed in 2000 and Asian English Language Teachers Creative Writers Group was founded in 2003” (Giri, 2014). The informal meeting among Ram Ashish Giri, David Pottinger and Jai Raj Awasthi marked the conceptualization of NELTA... Both print and electronic publications from NELTA and their continuity over the years have benefitted its members. Furthermore, its activities in collaboration with various national and international agencies have yielded long-lasting results in ELT (NELTA, n.d.).

NELTA, a professional organisation of English teachers from pre-primary level to tertiary level, runs various ELT programmes throughout the country. More than a thousand English teachers from different parts of the country have received short-term training and it has also been actively involved in the ELT teacher development activities (Awasthi, 2003).

During this period, there was increasing trend of opening the professional organizations, academic institutions, private and government funded schools, campuses and universities, which played a crucial role in the development of ELT in Nepal. Besides, the open policy of the government and the international exposure of ELT practices due to the participation in international conferences, seminars, trainings and workshops, graduation from international universities as well as the researches and publication also contributed to develop the ELT in Nepal. Moreover, there was a drastic change in the practices of teaching methodology from audio-lingual method to communicative method and use of multi-method practices in ELT. Therefore, this period in the history of Nepalese ELT can be regarded as the fertile period for the development of ELT in Nepal.

ELT in Republican Period (2006- onwards)

There was a great political change in Nepal in 2006, and the new identity of new Nepal was established due to the People's Movement – II in Nepal as a secular, multilingual, multiethnic, and multicultural federal democratic republican country. In this regard, Phyak (2013) narrates,

“In 2006, the People's Movement, Janaandolan-II, not only overthrow a long history (about 240 years) of monarchy and ended the 11-year-long , Maoists insurgency, but also paved the way for declaring Nepal a secular, multilingual, multiethnic, and multicultural Federal Democratic Republic (p. 5)”.

Regarding the medium of education in school education, the multi-lingual policy has been adopted during this period especially at the elementary level, mother tongue is prescribed where Nepali or English or both of them are also free to choose as the medium of education at the school level education. In this regard, the National Curriculum Framework for School Education in Nepal (CDC, 2007, p. 24) mentions that:

“Mother tongue will be the medium of elementary education. The medium of school-level education can be in Nepali or English language or both of them. However, in the first stage of elementary education (Grades 1-3), the medium of education will generally be in the mother tongue (Karki, 2018)”.

The School Sector Reform Plan (2009-15) ensured to choice of anyone or a combination of English, Nepali and mother tongue as a medium of instruction (MOE, 2009 as cited in Pradhan, 2018). Although the Government of Nepal ensured the mother tongue-based

multilingual education policy in Nepal, the English medium education is increasing and most of the private schools are practising it (Khatri, 2013). In this respect, Phyak (2016, p. 200 as cited in Karki, 2018) raises the questions of the future of mother tongue education and the cause of increasing EMI as

“Instead of teaching through ethnic-minority language, English is increasingly used as the de-facto medium of instruction from grade one onwards. This raises the important question: despite the official policy promoting the use of local languages, why does English receive more attention in practice?”

English language and/or English language teaching and learning is one of the core components of the Nepalese education system, therefore, English is not only the compulsory subject from primary level to bachelor level but also one of the popular specializations subject in the Nepalese university programs. After the restructuring of the political system as the Federal Republic of Nepal, the Government of Nepal, Ministry of Education and Sport approved the National Curriculum Framework for School Education in Nepal as the restructuring the school education system of Nepal. It restructured the school education system into two levels: basic and secondary in which English is one of the compulsory subjects from grade one to twelve. Likewise, the National Curriculum Framework, 2020 was again designed for the development of school education courses for the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal. Curriculum Development Centre (CDC) has recently developed the National Curriculum Framework (NCF), 2020 to address the changed socio-political condition of the country and the current needs of the learner (CDC, 2020). It has also continued English as the compulsory subject from grade one to twelve with the choice of optional subject in the secondary level. In this respect, Ghimire (2019) writes, “the English subject area of the integrated curriculum is based on the Communicative Approach to Language Teaching (CLT) consisting of language skills, language functions and also themes. Thus, it aims to develop comprehensive communicative competence in the learners”. The National Curriculum Framework (CDC, 2020) has taken English as a basic foundation for their further studies in and through English and aims at developing a comprehensive communicative competence on the part of learners at elementary level.

“The major focus of this curriculum is on language skills viz., listening, speaking, reading and writing. By the end of Grade 3, children will be able to use English effectively in a limited set of situations. This curriculum is based on the principle that children learn English better when they get ample exposure to spoken and written English and sufficient opportunity to use it in a stress-free environment (p. 17)”.

The basic level curriculum of English (grade four-five) has also focused on language skills viz. listening, speaking, reading and writing so that the children will be able to use English effectively in real-life situations. Therefore, it has given equal status to all skills: listening and speaking (50% with 20 weightage) and reading and writing (50% with 16 weightage) while evaluating them (CDC, 2020). Likewise, the basic level curriculum

(grade six-eight) aims to enable the students to exchange their ideas with the people who speak or write English with a focus on language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing to develop communicative competence on the part of students. Similarly, the secondary education curriculum (grade 9-10) aims to enable the students to exchange their ideas in the English language with due consideration on a strong grammatical foundation expecting to enable them to communicate in the English language with confidence. The grade 11-12 English curriculum has focused not only on language and language functions but also on a variety of fiction and non-fiction texts (CDC, 2021).

English has been criticized as one of the major subjects which is taken synonymous to the failure making subject from school to university level. All the universities and higher education institutions have designed their curricula in English and English is the medium of instruction and examination in almost of them except language-related subjects, however, in practice, Nepali language is mostly used as a facilitating and/or alternative language of pedagogy in higher education in Nepal. As Bhattarai and Gautam (2007) claim, "Almost all university education, tertiary educational colleges and privately-run academic institutions use English for all academic purposes - teaching, evaluation and research". Likewise, Duwadi (2018) claims also that universities in Nepal have "given high priority to having its curriculum in English and it is a compulsory subject until the bachelor's level irrespective of students' specialization in their studies" (p. 180). Teaching English as a medium of teaching, learning and examination is popular in universities and colleges in Nepal, which is taught through to degree level at university as a compulsory subject and as a medium of instruction exclusively English in science, engineering, medicine, and technical institutes in the universities of Nepal (Shreshtha, 2008; Bista, 2011; Lama, 2016).

During this period, Mid-West (MU), Far-West (FWU), and Agriculture and Forestry University (AFU) were established in 2010. All the newly established universities including other technical higher education institutions also have been teaching English as the compulsory subject as well as medium of instruction and examination in most of the subject areas. In addition, both MU and FWU have been running English as the major subject both in master and bachelor degree programs under the faculty of education and humanities and social sciences. Both of the universities have been conducting ELT courses in the semester system and updating their courses too.

Almost all the universities of Nepal where English is taught and learnt as a specialized subject at bachelor, master, M Phil and PhD level, are updating their ELT curricula and ELT methods and techniques incorporating new trends and technologies. The focus is found to be in English language, linguistics and pedagogy under the Faculty of Education whereas English language and literature under the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. As Poudel and Sharma (2019) claim, "English under the Faculty of Education (FoE), which fundamentally focuses on linguistics and language teaching, and the Faculty of Humanities (FoH), which primarily emphasizes arts and literature" (p. 2).

Regarding the teaching-learning pedagogy in ELT, most ELT professionals and practitioners are still practising the traditional teacher dominant methods and techniques mostly lecture methods at the university as well as school level. The ELT methodology in the Nepalese higher education classroom, like at schools, is largely dominated by the excessive lecture method, however, in the last three decades, English language teaching has improved greatly in Nepal in terms of the structure of education, pedagogies and institutions of higher learning (Bista, 2011, Poudel & Sharma, 2019). Due to the massive use of internet and web-based resources and exposures, there is a great influence of international practices and globalization in the field of Nepalese ELT. To be more specific, Nepalese ELT is enriched because of the research findings, sharing of best practices of national and international professionals and practitioners, participation and presentation of national and international conferences, seminars, workshops, professional development trainings etc. organized by the governmental, non-governmental and professional organizations related to ELT. Furthermore, during this period, there is a paradigm shift in ELT methods practising the multi-method to post-method pedagogy in ELT. Therefore, the journey of ELT in Nepal is smoothly going on crossing the various bends of challenges and opportunities with the implementation of ELT curriculum from nursery to tertiary level of education English as the compulsory to optional subject as well as the medium of instruction as well as enjoying ICT friendly e-pedagogy using the best ELT methods and techniques during this period.

Conclusion

The chronological development of ELT in Nepal reflects that the entry of English was for the elite class to common people. It is the ground reality that English language teaching in Nepal has been an integral part of the Nepalese education system. English language teaching as a subject and/or medium of instruction is being practised from the early grades to the university level in Nepal. It is the language of providing better opportunities for students and language of better career. Though English is not accepted as the official language in Nepal, it has been used in almost all the governmental official documents and it has been the language of all the sectors informally. Teaching and learning of English in Nepal has been a growing interest in the field of academia and research as well as creating the job opportunity both home and abroad. In this respect, the journey of Nepalese ELT has successfully crossed various ups and downs and has arrived at the juncture of enhancing quality in its various dimensions. So, it is necessary to work on developing inclusive access and quality for quality education in general and ELT in particular in Nepal.

The author: Bishnu Khadka is a PhD scholar in English Education at Tribhuvan University, Nepal and currently in Buan University of Foreign Studies, Busan, South Korea as a 2022GKS scholar. He is an Assistant Professor of English Education at Central Department of English Education at Graduate School of Education, Mid-West University, Surkhet, Nepal. Besides, Mr. Khadka has successfully completed his responsibility as a Central Committee Member, and founding President of Nepal

English Language Teachers' Association (NELTA), Karnali Province Committee. He is also a member of the International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language (IATEFL), UK and TESOL International Association, USA. He has published several books, research articles, and opinion-based papers in the field of ELT.

References

- Adhikari, B. R. (2020). Functional complementarity of different types of English texts: University teachers' voices and experiences. *Globe: A Journal of Language, Culture and Communication*, 11(1), 26-42.
- Adhikari, M. (2018). English in Nepal : Phonology of Nepali English. *NELTA ELT Forum*, 179-190.
- Awasthi, J. R. (2003). Teacher education with special reference to English language teaching in Nepal. *Journal of NELTA*, 8(1-2), 17-28. <https://doi.org/10.3126/nelta.v8i1.3377>
- Bashyal, G. P. (2018). ELT methods and techniques in Nepali secondary schools. In D. Hayes, *English Language Teaching in Nepal: Research, Reflection and Practice (Eds.)* (221-232). British Council Nepal.
- Bhattarai, G. R., & Gautam, G. R. (2007). The purposed ELT survey: Redefining status and role of English in Nepal. *Journal of NELTA*, 12(1-2), 32-35.
- Bista, K. (2011). Teaching English as a foreign/second language in Nepal : Past and present. *English for Specific Purposes World*, 11(32), 1-9. Retrieved July 27, 2021, from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED530898.pdf>
- Bolton, K., & Kachru, B. B. (2006). *Critical concepts in linguistics*. New York: Routledge. Retrieved July 19, 2021, from <http://books.google.co.jp/books?id=mrXGkepvmFYC&printsec=frontcover&hl=ja#onepag e&q&f=false>
- CDC. (2020). *National curriculum framework for school education in Nepal* . Curriculum Development Center, Nepal.
- CDC. (2020). *Basic education curriculum, Grade 4-5*. Curriculum Development Center, Nepal.
- CDC. (2020). *Basic level (class one-three) curriculum*. Curriculum Development Center, Nepal.
- CDC. (2021). *Secondary Education (Grade 11 & 12) Curriculum*. Curriculum Development Center, Nepal.
- Duwadi, E. P. (2018). Historical Developments in the Teaching and Learning of English in Nepal (Eds.). In D. Hayes, *English Language Teaching in Nepal: Research, Reflection and Practice* (178-185). British Council, Nepal. Retrieved July 28, 2021 , from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/325825594_English_Language_Teaching_in_Nepal_Research_Reflection_and_Practice

- Eagle, S. (2000). The language situation in Nepal. In I. B. Richard, J. Baldauf, & B. K. (Eds.), *Language Planning in Nepal, Taiwan and Sweden. Multilingual Matters*.
- Ghimire, R. P. (2019). Place of English in the integrated curriculum for early grades (1-3) in Nepal. *ELT Choutari*. Retrieved August 2, 2021, from <https://eltchoutari.com/2019/10/place-of-english-in-the-integrated-curriculum-for-early-grades-1-3-in-nepal/>
- Giri, R. A. (2009). The politics of 'unplanning of languages in Nepal'. *Journal of NELTA*, 14(1-2), 32-44.
- Giri, R. A. (2014). Changing faces of English: why English is not a foreign language in Nepal. *Journal of World Languages*, 1(3), 192-209. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21698252.2014.989643>
- Gyawali, Y. P., & Khadka, B. K. (2016). Medium of education in Nepal : Mother tongue education or English medium education? *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Perspectives in Education*, 1(1), 11-20.
- Kandel, B. (2019). Linguistic landscapes in multilingual Nepal : Urban context. *Journal of NELTA Gandaki (JoNG)*, 2(1), 12-28.
- Karki, J. (2018). Is English medium instruction working? A case study of nepalese community schools in Mt. Everest region. In D. Hayes, *English language teaching in Nepal: Research, reflection and practice (Eds.)* (203-216). British Council, Nepal.
- Khadka, B. K. (2018). Mother tongue education: A Quest of Quality and Access in Education. *Journal of NELTA Surkhet*, 5(1), 65-74.
- Khati, A. R. (2013). Career gains and identity loss: The effects of English un the Nepali hinterlands. *Journal of NELTA*, 18(1-2), 77-104.
- Khati, A. R., & Karki, M. (2015). Review of language-in-education planning in Nepal. *NETLA Conference Proceedings*, 57-61. (Not found in the main text!)
- Lama, R. K. (2016). An action research on classroom teaching in English medium. *Asian Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences (AJHSS)*, 4(1), 97-106. Retrieved August 3, 2021, from <http://www.ajhss.org/>
- Malla, K. P. (1977). *English in Nepalese Education*. Kathmandu: Ratna Pustak Bhandar.
- Metsämuuronen, J., & Ilic, J. (2018). Why some low resourced community schools in Nepal perform well in English. In D. Hayes, *English Language Teaching in Nepal: Research, Reflection and Practice (Eds.)* (109-130). British Council, Nepal.
- Nepal National Education Planning Commission. (1956). *Education in Nepal*. Kathmandu: The Bureau of Publications
- NELTA. (n.d.). *The history of NELTA: A silver jubilee publication*. Nepal English Language Teachers' Association .

- Ojha, L. P. (2018). Shifting the medium of instruction to English in community schools: Policies, practices and challenges in Nepal. . In D. Hayes, *English Language Teaching in Nepal: Research, Reflection and Practice* (Eds.) (189-198). British Council, Nepal.
- Pandey, G. P. (2020). Uncovering Reading Needs of Non-English Majors of Tribhuvan University. *Nepal Journal of Multidisciplinary Research*, 3(3), 13-26. <https://doi.org/10.3126/njmr.v3i3.34881>
- Paudel, P. (2019). University teachers' attitudes towards English language curriculum of M.Ed. semester system. *Journal of NELTA*, 24(1-2), 107-125.
- Paudel, P. P. (2010). Teaching English in multilingual classrooms of higher education : The present scenario. *Journal of NELTA*, 15(1-2), 121-133.
- Poudel, P. P., & Choi, T. H. (2021). Discourses shaping the language-in-education policy and foreign language education in Nepal: an intersectional perspective. *Current Issues in Language Planning*, 1-19.
- Poudel, T. (2021). *English in Nepal history, development and polcies*. KU : Nepal
- Phyak, P. (2013). Language ideologies and local languages as the medium-of-instruction policy: A critical ethnography of a multilingual school in Nepal. *Current Issues in Language Planning*, 14(1), 127-143.
- Phyak, P. (2013). *Current issues in language planning*, 14(1), 10-17. Retrieved August 1, 2021, from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14664208.2013.775557>
- Phyak, P. (2016). Local-global tension in the ideological construction of English language education policy in Nepal. In *English language education policy in Asia* (199-217). Springer, Cham.
- Poudel, A. P. (2020). Enriching English in school education: Some problems and principles. *Rupantaran : A Multidisciplinary Journal*, 4(1), 1-10. Retrieved July 28, 2021, from <https://doi.org/10.3126/rupantaran.v4i1.34012>
- Poudel, K. K., & Sharma, N. P. (2019). "Who bothers!" A common ailment in higher education ELT classrooms in Nepal. *English Language Teaching*, 12(8), 1-13. Retrieved August 3, 2021, from <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v12n8p1>
- Pradhan, V. (2018). Project NIITE: National initiative to improve teaching in English. In D. Hayes, *English Language Teaching in Nepal: Research, Reflection and Practice* (Eds.) (269-282). British Council, Nepal.
- Rai, I. P. (2013). Issues of language planning in Nepal : Linguistic diversity, conflicts and peace building. *Contributions to Nepalese Studies*, 40(2), 217-238.
- Shah, P. K. (2017). Using first language (L1) as a resource in EFL classrooms: Nepalese university teachers' and students' perspectives. *Journal of NELTA*, 21(1-2), 25-37.

- Sharma, G. N. (1990). The impact of education during the Rana period in Nepal. *Himalaya, the Journal of the Association for Nepal and Himalayan Studies*, 10(2), 3-7. Retrieved July 27, 2021, from <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/46723119.pdf>
- Shrestha, K. N. (2018). *English in Nepal: From guest language to best language*. *NELTA ELT Forum*, 167-178.
- Shrestha, P., & Gautam, G. R. (2022). *English language teaching, learning and assessment in Nepal: Policies and practices in the school education system*: British Council
- Shrestha, R. (1983). English as a second language/English as a foreign language distinction : Its pedagogy & the Nepalese context. *Contribution to Nepalese Studies*, 11(1), 45-59. Retrieved July 27 , 2021, from http://himalaya.socanth.cam.ac.uk/collections/journals/contributions/pdf/CNAS_11_01_03.pdf
- Shrestha, S. (2016). Role and status of English and other languages in Nepal. *Journal of NELTA*, 21(1-2), 105-112.
- Subba, S. (1980). The medium question in Nepalese higher education. *Contributions to Nepalese Studies*, 7(1-2), 71-95. Retrieved July 28, 2021, from <https://lib.icimod.org/record/9676>
- Uda, K., & Sharma, B. (2006). English textbooks in Nepal and in Japan : A comparative study. *J. Saitama Univ; Fac. Educ.(Sci. Educ.)*, 55 (1), 59-69.
- Weinberg, M. (2013). Revisiting history in language policy: The case of medium of instruction in Nepal. *Working Papers in Educational Linguistics*, 28(1), 61-80. Retrieved July 28, 2021, from https://repository.upenn.edu/wpel?utm_source=repository.upenn.edu%2Fwpel%2Fvol28%2Fiss1%2F6&utm_medium=PDF&utm_campaign=PDFCoverPages
- Wood, H. B., Pandey, S. R. R., & Upraity, T. N. (1955). *Education in Nepal*: Report of the Nepal National Education Planning Commission.
- Yadava, Y. P. (2013). Linguistic diversity in Nepal perspectives on language policy. *Contributions to Nepalese Studies*, 40(2), 119-142.