

ELT and Entrepreneurship: Motivating Learners to Create Their Own Opportunities

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Abstract

This article began as a conversation and experience-sharing session with students. It aims to motivate students toward entrepreneurship and leadership in the 21st century. English is commonly used in business, education, diplomatic communication, and bilateral exchanges between organizations such as universities and public affairs. At the same time, it functions as a 'global lingua franca' for people traveling all over the world. In non-native countries like Nepal, English enjoys its superiority through scholarships, high prestige, and good incomes. In recent days, when ELT learners in universities in Nepal feel as if they do not get better jobs after receiving their degree certificates, this article can support them in finding their own path. Instead of hunting for jobs in the market, this article motivates young ELT learners to create their own business using the English language and ELT skills. Using an experiential and self-expressive style as a methodology, this article suggests that ELT learners have passion, a dream, and dedication in their learning and performance. The more they create zeal within themselves, the better opportunities they can get in the markets because of the English language and ELT skills.

Keywords: *ELT, Entrepreneurship, Leadership, Opportunity, Passion, Zeal*

Introduction

"Should English language learners be the leaders or job seekers?" I (Principal Author) asked this question to my students of M.Ed. III semester who were pursuing degree in English Language Teaching in Nepal. Pressing their lips they answered – *"We don't know. It depends upon the situation, needs and capacity."*

After listening their answers, again I asked, *"Who makes the situation? Who creates need and which level of capacity is required?"*

Out of twelve students, three students opined, ELT learners should create situations, needs and develop their capacities themselves. Four students argued, it was the government's

responsibility to create jobs and make the placement for youths in suitable positions. However, three of them blamed for national circumstances and two others remained silent.

I wonder!

I said, *"It is the ELT learners and teachers who should know themselves and create their space on their own. If they identify themselves, they can create their space and become entrepreneurs and leaders. Otherwise, they just become job hunters in the global markets and live as others in the community."*

"This is just a philosophy. Giving lectures and living a real life are two different things. Except teaching what can we do? We must seek the jobs, either for public service or in teaching profession or in any other fields of their interest. So, entrepreneurship after learning English language teaching is not possible." One of the students openly objected to the concept. Others laughed at my idea.

I remained silent for a while. And, addressing the class, I said, *"We can do. For this, we must have a zeal. We must recognize ourselves. It is like a story of an eagle."*

"What is the story, sir?" Even though they were the students of Master's level, they became excited to listen to the story.

Addressing their curiosity, I started the story as;

There was a farmer. His only hen was incubating her eggs for hatching. One day, the farmer was going to the field. There on the road, he found an egg similar to his hen's egg. He brought the egg home and put that egg in the nest under the hen for grooming. After some days, the chickens came out of the nest. They were very beautiful. Among them, one of them was a little different; unlike chicken, its mobility was very weak, it did not have feathers and short beak.

Gradually, they grew together. The mother hen was taking care of them all equally. The different one learned to eat the worms and grains together with other chicken. One day, he saw the birds were flying in the sky. The eagle was soaring in the sky calmly and gliding effortlessly. The chicken saw its wings, colour, and beak, and found similar to the eagle. He liked to fly like the eagle and went to the boundary corner of the courtyard and tried to leap up but to save from injury, the mother hen shouted at its chicken and stopped to do.

After that, he never tried it again. Instead of gliding in the sky, he limited himself into the coop and enjoyed his company with the chicken. Shortening his expected age thirty to fifty years, the king of the sky lived for one and half year and died for a roast! (Source: Social Media, Facebook)

After listening the story, the students inhale long. Robbing their two palms with relish and excitement, one of them spoke, *"We understood, sir! How have you applied this in your life? Would you mind sharing your experiences?"*

This last statement led me to discuss this issue with my colleague/corresponding-author, who supported me to search the literature and prepare the framework of this article. Finally, we decided to develop this article here.

Those who do not see a future in ELT can find opportunities everywhere. In today's global context, competent and passionate ELT learners do not need to chase money- rather, money will follow them. To achieve success, they must first be able to dream. Pursuing their dreams requires

them to change their attitude, aptitude, and actions. This article aims to serve as a stepping stone to help them advance in their careers. While it may not provide a '*guru mantra*' or a '*Rambana*' (complete solution), we believe it can function as a valuable supporting tool.

Statement of Problem

We think this text has significance in encouraging students to be self-directed. People in society may be of two types: one group shows ignorance and sleep, while another group pretends to be sleeping and tries to prove that they are willfully ignorant. We cannot wake up the people who are willfully pretending to be sleeping, but we can do it for the really ignorant people. In the 21st century, English is the language of the economy, research, media, politics, and social communication (Hosni, 2015, p. 299). Thus, learning English has top priority for job seekers, academic degree holders, institutional leaders, and international business leaders.

After receiving Bachelor's and Master's degrees, many students like to join the public service commission. Some students join teaching jobs. Some are found unemployed and are running here and there in search of employment. And, some students go abroad for better job opportunities. Rarely do English language learners think about ELT and entrepreneurship. That is why, here, our problem statement focuses on empowering English language graduates by bridging the unemployment gap through entrepreneurship and specialized career options. Their dynamic and innovative ideas would support the economy and the education sector simultaneously.

Purpose of the Study

Despite holding Bachelor's and Master's degrees in English language teaching, many young people are still eager to go abroad for better income opportunities. They perceive limited career prospects in Nepal, often blaming the country, criticizing its leaders, and condemning the public service system. In this context, as educators and ELT leaders, we believe it is our responsibility to inspire young ELT learners, practitioners, and teachers to explore a wider and more viable field of entrepreneurship, rather than restricting themselves to a narrow range of career paths. Therefore, the purpose of this article is to encourage English language graduates to pursue innovation and entrepreneurship.

Research Question

To address this issue, a central question was designed as; 'How English language can be used for entrepreneurial ventures and make students self-dependent, creating innovative educational businesses?'

Methodology

This is a type of self-expressive and motivational article in which the issue is raised from a classroom discussion. The phenomenon is presented like a self-narration. More than primary data, secondary sources of information are used as literature. Studying a lot of literature, the principal author's lived experience is used in the final section preceding the conclusion. To maintain the reliability and trustworthiness, very recent events are focused on. This is a qualitative type of writing, so, replacing the topic result and discussion, the phenomenon is discussed directly under the title, 'Lived Experience in ELT and Entrepreneurship'.

Findings and Discussion

English Language in Nepal

In countries like Nepal, where the English language is taught as a foreign language-whose scope is very wide and the ELT learners have lots of opportunities. According to Kandel (2019), "The status of English in Nepal has changed in the last seven decades. Adopted first as a 'foreign' language, English, in recent years, has become an indispensable part of life for the Nepalese people" (p.2). These days, this language is used as an additional language in many educational and economic areas in Nepal. Citing (Bhatrai, 2006; Khadka, 2022) pens, "English occupies a significant position in the total education system in Nepal" (p. 24).

In teaching, from Montessori teachers to university professors, except in Nepali and some other mother tongues led subjects, English language is mandatory. It is used in business, advertising, banking, industries, diplomacy, and international relations too. Many of the scholarships are available at home and abroad, for English language learners. The studies have shown, even the earnings of the ELT learners and leaders have higher than others. In this regard, Khadka (2022) writes, people having better English proficiency have better job opportunities in Nepal (pp. 21-22).

Its attraction is also increasing day by day. In most of the private schools, the medium of instruction is English. Many parents feel proud of teaching their children in English medium schools. Rather the parents do not wear good clothes and eat sweet things, they are willing to send their children in the English medium private schools. In an article Khadka (2022) states, "Nepali parents are induced with the English language, even if there are government-funded schools nearby them that deliver free education at the school level, they prefer private schools. It shows the power and popularity of English in Nepali schools" (p. 23). Addressing education system of Nepal, he further adds, English language in higher education in Nepal has become an obligatory phenomenon. And, Nepali educational and social system has given the uttermost prestige for English language in most of the academic institutions in Nepal (p. 24).

Similarly, in a study conducted in three districts—Kathmandu, Bhaktapur, and Lalitpur, out of 100 head teachers of public and private schools, Khatri (2016) found, the students and the parents in the private schools in Nepal expect their head teachers to speak English language and look smarter than other teachers. This shows the expectations of the English language in parents and students.

Addressing the current issue and demand of the English language in Nepal, Khadka (2022) mentions, "Besides, all local universities, and many international universities' affiliated colleges have been established in Nepal for bachelor and master levels that demand exclusive use of the English language" (p. 27). This also shows the scope of the English language for ELT learners in Nepal. For this, first they must know themselves and broaden their knowledge in the English language and its four skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

English Language and Economy in the Global Context

EU Business news (13 May 2025) writes, English is the language of leadership and global opportunity. In the world educational market, English language is practiced in the classroom. Because of the command over the English language, the university graduates having specialization in English can get better jobs and earn better than their non-English counterparts (Khadka, 2022).

EU Business news (13 May 2025) quotes, "If you want to succeed on the global stage, you need to know English. It is the language that connects world leaders, fuels international business, and unlocks global career opportunities." Similarly, quoting Bangladesh, Cameroon, and Rwanda, Pinon and Haydon (2010) assert that the average salary gap between English language professionals and non-English language professionals is twenty percent, where English-speaking professionals are very few. Use of English language is growing day by day. So, recognizing the value of the English language, the government of Bangladesh and Cameroon have increased the investment in English language learning.

According to Kandel (2019), the English language spread all over the world because of the dominant growth of the United States in the economy and military power in the twentieth century. It was the colonial language in the past. Now, it has become a popular lingua franca. In his understanding, English has acquired a narcotic power in many parts of the world. In the post-colonial situation, this language has replaced the colonial representations. The people of the colonized countries take it as a language of prestige and power.

"It has given a new identity, local values, hybrid representation, multiple norms of literary styles, different linguistic and sociolinguistic strategies" (Kandel, 2019, p. 4). Furthermore, highlighting the importance of the English language in the global context, Rao (2019) asserts, "English, being the first world language, is said to be the first global lingua franca and it is the most widely used language in the world in international trade, diplomacy, mass entertainment, international telecommunications and scientific publications as well as publishing newspapers and other books (p. 66)." Highlighting the English language and its global market Rao further writes, more than fifty-four countries use the English language as an official language and the language of instruction in higher education. In order to meet the needs of the people across the world, this language is serving as a global lingua franca.

In the global context, the English language learners are also growing day by day. Many research studies have shown that the number of English language learners are drastically increasing in Canadian, Australian, and the United Kingdom's urban areas. In a study, conducted by McGee et al. (2015), it was found that from 1994 to 2010, the total number of all students grew by 4.4 percent, but the English language learners increased by 64 percent.

In research on English language skills and global entrepreneurship in Saudi Arabia, Ahmad and Khan (2023) found that students who feel a lack of skills to express their ideas smoothly in English language, they would not be able to succeed in business deals. From the students' opinion collection, further, they found that 98.5 percent of students showed strong agreement for English oral communication skills for effective business and entrepreneurship. "The respondents are aware of the importance of having the ability to say clearly what is on their minds and participate in business dealings as English opens wider opportunities for them to become successful entrepreneurs" (Ahmad & Khan, 2023, p. 201). In this regard, studying the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2014-15), Khadka (2022) also writes, "Due to the English language expansion, the employment of interpreters and translators are expected to grow 29 percent from 2014 to 2024 as compared to other occupations" (p. 24). Relating this to the Nepalese context, Khadka further adds, after Nepal's membership of the World Trade Organization (WTO), various organizations like the World Bank, the United Nations Organizations, the USAID, and many more multinational companies. Those companies are using the Nepalese people who are competent in the English language. Along with the English language, their additional skills to perform the job are given after the job placement. Their job is prestigious, and the salary is attractive.

English for Entrepreneurship Purpose

The English language is a global lingua franca in the 21st century. "It is the master key for all the knowledge being disseminated in most parts of the world" (Khadka, 2022, p. 24). From education to business, hospitals, industries, sports, research, and diplomatic communication, it is used very commonly. From a research study in ELT and leadership, Khatri (2023) found that for all the international and inter-university correspondence, the university leaders use the English language for communication. While attending the international conferences, the English language teachers join the conferences under the leadership of political leaders, public officers, or the NGO's and INGO's leaders, but after reaching there, while presenting the reports, opinions, and national issues, leadership automatically shifts to the English language teachers (ELT leaders). Jenkins (2013) and Khadka (2022) argue that English language is not only an educational tool but also a requirement for excellent jobs in most parts of the world. Also, it is the medium of communication and sharing for international programs. It shows the importance of the English language and the scope of English language learners.

Plenty of opportunities are there for ELT learners in the global market. With the rapid growth of globalization and expansion of the English language, hundreds and thousands of opportunities are emerging. In this situation, the globalized economy requires employees who have English language proficiency. Along with statistics and technology, the English language is occupying a vast area of the economy in the 21st century.

Global research, tutorial facilities, cross-cultural business and diplomatic communication, English language is necessary. It has become an imperial language. According to Kachru (1990), the English language provides its speakers the 'linguistic power' (p.1). Because of its global use, many of the languages are on the verge of extinction. In Al Hosni's words, "This can be interpreted as a new form of colonialism in which cultural and economic imperialism takes place through exploiting the unprecedented linguistic power of the English language" (Al Hosni, 2015, p. 301). In this competitive world, "English is both 'replacing' as well as 'displacing' other languages...it is also the instrument for social upward mobility and power" (Basu, 2013, p.186).

In this sense, if the ELT learners make them unemployed or low-paid employees in the market, it is their own fault. If they do not attempt, they will never get better opportunities. Opportunities are not like *prasad* (holy meal) that is offered in beautiful and expensive plates. To grab the opportunities, the ELT learners should first change their mindset. They must have self-awareness and the willingness to jump from one position to another. Giving the example of Bangladesh, Cameroon, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Rwanda, Pinon and Haydon (2010) state, in forty-two companies of those countries, they found the employees were hired only those who were competent in the English language.

A comfort zone does not allow anyone to take risks and move ahead. Time and again, the leader should fall and get up again. The English language itself is a product (object) for English language learners, which they are to be able to sell in the market and make a profit to enjoy their lives. Developing innovative ideas, they must venture into a new business of communication through the English language. Otherwise, they will become a punctured truck full of tires; having hundreds of tires on its cargo area, if a truck is punctured on the way, it cannot run or move. Those hundreds of tires become useless for that truck. None of the tires can replace a single.

The same can be the situation for English language learners. Having an English subject in their university degree and receiving a certificate of graduation and post-graduation, if they

become unemployed or low-paid workers in the market, they become shameless people. They become useless citizens in the global market. So, the English language learners should know themselves first and move ahead in the global market. Hundreds of opportunities are available in countries like Nepal, where English is used as a foreign language. Similarly, thousands of opportunities are available in countries like India, Singapore, Malaysia, and Pakistan, where English is used as an official language. And, millions of opportunities are there in countries like the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand, where it is used as a native as well as official language. Therefore, English can be used in various contexts depending on our choice. We can reshape the language and use it for our purposes and challenge the dominant discourse of English. Pinon and Haydon (2010) concede, "English is also the language of opposition and protest" (p. 193).

Thus, English language learners become leaders in the global market. They can be smart people in the world and remain busy in the knowledge economy. EU Business news (13 May 2025) focuses on and writes, the English language is a leader's language. It creates leaders for global business, communication, and entrepreneurship.

Giving very interesting examples from Mexico, Francis and Ryan (1998) write that, in non-native countries, speaking the English language is taken as a prestige. While having conversations, if the young professionals switch the code from their native language to the English language, that is taken as the prestige (P??). People give value and appreciate the way of speaking. And, Chauhan (2008) quotes, speaking the English language is taken as a source of prestige and power in countries like India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, and Bhutan, especially the countries which were colonized for a long time before World War II.

Lived Experience in ELT and Entrepreneurship

Once I (Principal author) passed school level, though I was very weak in English, my father motivated me to join a major in English Education. For two years, I could not understand what I was studying. English was too tough for me to pass. But once I passed 10+2, I joined the teaching job. From here, my entrepreneurship began.

While studying Bachelor, I was teaching in a school. At the same time, I was taking some tuition classes for school-level children as well as 10+2 failed students. To study the Master's level, I came to Kirtipur. It was a completely new experience for me. Everyone was new there in the university. But luckily, I got a part-time job for translation. I had to translate English texts into Nepali and vice-a-versa.

After Master's Degree, I again joined a teaching job. Along with a teaching job, I joined the M.Phil. in Education Leadership. Twenty-five friends were there in my class. Except me, all the friends were matured and from different fields. I was earning five thousand per month. One day, I asked one of my friends how much he earned a month. He answered, one lakh! I got shocked!

I had never thought that people earned more than twenty thousand rupees at that time. That time, a secondary teacher's salary was around twelve thousand. Then I asked to other friends. Some of the friends were earning three-four lakhs that time. That friends' group changed my paradigm. And, I thought I could also earn some more money than a general salary man. Instead of public schools' job, I started searching a private job. I got a friends' group who were running a private school. I joined the group and started running the school.

Once I started leading the private school, I earned almost three times better money than a common salary man i.e. a teacher. Along with teaching and leading a school, I worked as a field researcher in different organizations. I started interpreting the qualitative data as well.

When I got succeeded in TU service commission, I almost quit my private job. Morally and legally, I could not lead a private school any longer being a leader. I handed over my post to others. It made my financially weak. When my income was growing, my expenditure was also increasing simultaneously. But, when my income became less, my expenditure could not decrease. So, I started facing the same problem of financing the life.

I thought about an ELT and entrepreneurship! I made contact to Nepali guardians who were living abroad with their siblings. I started taking online ELT classes to the children who were living in Japan. I have been doing this job till date. It has easily recovered my expenses.

Personally, I have been enjoying my life because of ELT. Day by day, its scope is increasing. I hope it will never decline. I remember Khadka (2022) who states, the horizon of the English language in Nepal is expanding day by day. Similarly, Pinon and Haydon (2010) believe, people having English language skills are progressing more quickly in the companies. And, English language is beneficial for companies' growth in the 21st century.

For further understanding, interested students can read the biography of Jack Ma, a Chinese English language teacher and entrepreneur. He is also an English and international business lecturer. Similarly, students can read the life story of the author of Harry Potter, J. K. Rowling. He was also an English language teacher in Portugal. And, Philip Pound is the founder of EFL magazine in Japan. For in depth study, students can find hundreds of ELT entrepreneurs in this global context.

Conclusion

English itself is a valuable asset for ELT learners of English. They can also sell their language proficiency in the market for survival. It is a source of prestige and power in the 21st century. It is the strongest global lingua franca for human communication, business, and diplomatic dealings. Every year, English language learners are growing not only in non-native countries but also in native countries like the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia. It is also known as the language of leadership. Because of the English language and its proficiency, leadership can shift from others to English language teachers at any time. And the income ratio of English language experts is also not lower than anyone else in the companies. For this, thinking positively, growing progressively, and investing their passion consistently, the ELT learners should recognize themselves. Until and unless they recognize themselves, they cannot progress in their lives. Instead of seeking mercy from others, EL learners should lead themselves into the global job market and stand confidently. Those EFL students who are confident in the English language can enjoy their lives wherever they go in the world.

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