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Artificial Intelligence and Education: A Study on Secondary-Level Community Schools of Waling Municipality, Nepal

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Abstract

The rapid advancement of artificial intelligence (AI) has transformed educational practices worldwide, particularly in teaching and learning processes. This study investigates the integration of AI in pedagogical practices in secondary-level community schools in Waling Municipality, Nepal. In this study, sequential mixed-method research design was employed to explore a comprehensive understanding of AI use in classroom practices. Quantitative data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered to 115 teachers, while qualitative data were gathered through classroom observations of three teachers. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentages, whereas qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis. Teachers reported that AI significantly supports lesson planning, enhances student engagement, reduces workload, and improves instructional strategies. Qualitative observations further indicate that AI integration fosters motivation, creativity, collaboration, and student-centered learning when blended with traditional teaching approaches. However, several challenges persist, including insufficient training, limited digital infrastructure, ethical concerns, plagiarism, and potential dependence on AI tools. The study concludes that AI holds strong potential to transform pedagogical practices in community schools if supported by systematic teacher training, reliable infrastructure, and ethical policy frameworks. The findings have important implications for teachers, school administrators, policymakers, and future research in AI-driven education in resource-constrained contexts.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Pedagogical Practices, Community Schools, Teacher Perception, Student Engagement

Introduction

With the rapid advancement of science and technology, artificial intelligence (AI) has emerged as a transformative force in education worldwide. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, the adoption of AI tools in pedagogy has accelerated, offering innovative solutions to enhance teaching efficiency, student engagement, and learning outcomes. Well-resourced schools worldwide have increasingly used AI to create personalized, interactive, and student-centered learning environments (Adhikari, 2024). Within this global wave of technological innovation, Nepali scholars such as Bhusal (2025) have also begun exploring the potential of AI to improve the quality of education, particularly in community schools. Community schools hold a pivotal role in Nepal's education system, accommodating the majority of students, especially in semi-urban and urban areas. It is a crucial topic because "As Nepal transitioned to a federal democratic republic and promulgated its new constitution in 2015, there have been many efforts to restructure and reform the education system corresponding to socio-political and cultural diversity (Bhusal & Baral, 2025, p. 2). However, despite those government-level aspirations, many of these schools face persistent challenges, including inadequate technological infrastructure, limited digital resources, and insufficient teacher training. In such contexts, AI-based pedagogical practices offer a promising avenue to bridge educational gaps. AI can support teachers in lesson planning, provide immediate feedback to students, and address diverse learning needs by tailoring instruction to individual learners.

Globally, AI-driven educational applications such as Grammarly, ChatGPT, and Duolingo have already demonstrated their capacity to support English language learning by providing real-time feedback, enhancing writing skills, and gamifying learning experiences (Khadka *et al.*, 2022). Similarly, AI-enabled systems such as chatbots, adaptive learning platforms, and virtual tutors extend learning opportunities beyond the classroom, enabling learners to access knowledge at their own pace and convenience. These innovations highlight the potential of AI to transform teaching and learning in Nepali community schools if appropriately adapted to local contexts. In this context, some research on AI integration in pedagogical practices has been conducted at the national level, as exemplified by Bhusal (2025). However, no research has been conducted to investigate the effectiveness of AI in teaching and learning in the Waling

region. Therefore, this study focuses on integrating AI into pedagogical practices in community schools in the Waling region, with particular emphasis on secondary-level education by aiming to answer the following two research questions:

1. How is AI being used in pedagogical practices in secondary-level community schools of Waling Municipality?
2. What are the challenges influencing the use of AI in pedagogical practices in schools?

Literature Review

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has emerged as a transformative technology in education, reshaping teaching, learning, and assessment practices worldwide. AI-based tools provide opportunities for personalized learning, automated feedback, adaptive assessment, and enhanced instructional design, thereby improving teaching efficiency and student learning outcomes (Fitria, 2021). Much research has been conducted both nationally and internationally about the challenges and risks brought about by AI tools in academia. Pandey *et al.* (2025) have already conducted the influence and challenges of AI, large language models in the context of the United States, finding that first-year composition instructors are in a state of dilemma about the use and misuse of ChatGPT in classrooms, though they try to address the challenges through digital multimodal composition. Researchers argue that AI has the potential to support teachers in managing instructional workload and promoting student-centered learning environments. Several studies have explored the role of AI in enhancing pedagogical practices. For example, Panday and Bhusal (2024) argue that prompting literacy in using ChatGPT enhances the teaching of English. Their study offers valuable pedagogical insights for English language teachers in Nepal. Fahimirad and Kotamjani (2018) reported that AI technologies such as intelligent tutoring systems, chatbots, and adaptive learning platforms contribute to individualized instruction and improved learner engagement. Similarly, Hooda *et al.* (2022) highlighted the effectiveness of AI-supported assessment systems in providing timely feedback and improving academic performance in higher education contexts. These findings demonstrate AI's growing significance in modern educational settings.

In the Nepalese context, Khadka *et al.* (2022) investigated the use of AI tools in English

language classrooms and found that AI-supported tools enhanced students' writing skills and teacher instructional practices. Adhikari and Pandey (2025) further emphasized that AI integration can transform teachers' roles from knowledge transmitters to facilitators of student agency and autonomy. Likewise, in reviewing the existing dilemma regarding the use of ChatGPT worldwide, Bhusal (2025) proposes a decolonial and critical use of AI tools in Nepal. His study proposes an immediate pedagogical and ethical solution to the AI hype in English-language classrooms. Even though scholars have discussed AI and education extensively, their proposals require adequate digital infrastructure, teacher training, and supportive institutional policies. Despite its benefits, AI integration in education poses several challenges. UNESCO (Miao & Holmes, 2021) emphasized ethical concerns, data privacy issues, digital divides, and lack of teacher preparedness as key barriers to AI adoption in schools. Aler Tubella *et al.* (2024) also argued that responsible AI literacy is essential to mitigate risks such as plagiarism, over-reliance on AI, and reduced critical thinking skills among students.

Overall, previous research indicates that AI holds significant potential to enhance pedagogical practices; however, its effective integration depends on infrastructural readiness, teacher competence, ethical governance, and institutional support systems. While several studies have examined AI integration in higher education contexts, empirical research on AI use in community schools in Nepal remains limited. Therefore, this study aims to fill this research gap by investigating AI integration in pedagogical practices in secondary-level community schools of Waling Municipality, Syangja, Nepal.

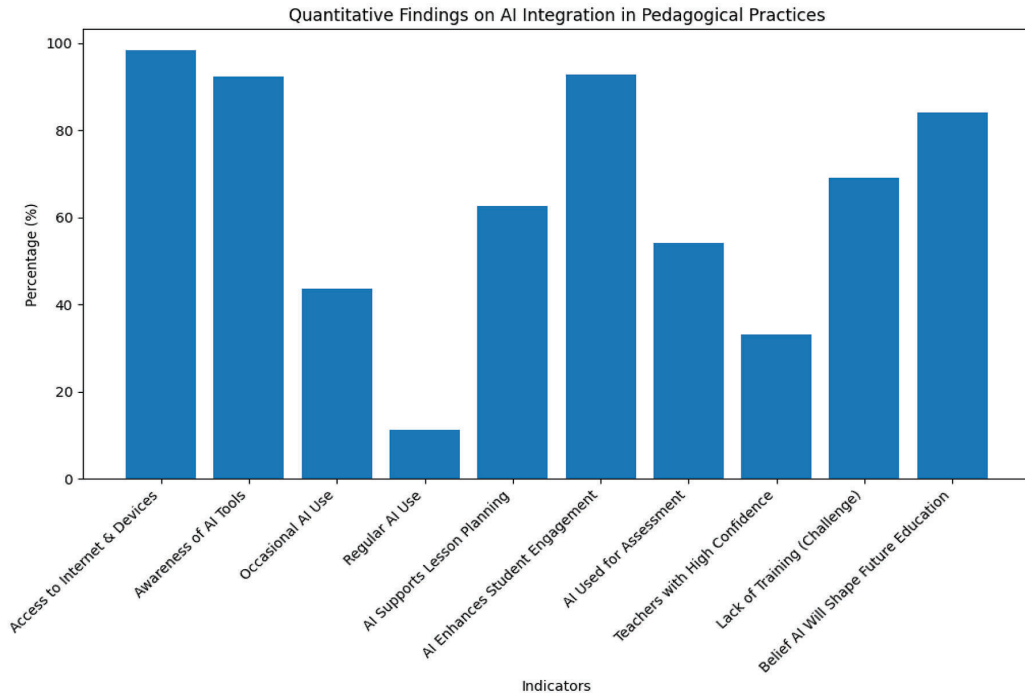
Methods and Materials

This is a sequential mixed-methods study. Quantitative part adopted a survey research design to explore the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in pedagogical practices in secondary-level community schools in Waling Municipality, Nepal. The survey research allows researchers to observe educational practices in natural classroom settings and to understand how teachers and students interact with technologies in authentic learning environments. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were employed to provide a comprehensive understanding of AI integration in pedagogical practices (Lakshman *et al.*, 2000). A total of 115 secondary-level teachers from community schools in Waling Municipality were selected as participants, based on their teaching experience,

geographic representation, and level of AI awareness. A structured questionnaire comprising 13 items was administered via Google Forms to collect quantitative data. The forms were accessible via social media platforms. The forms provided reliable data on teachers' access to digital resources, awareness of AI tools, frequency of AI use, pedagogical impacts, challenges, confidence levels, and perceptions of AI's future role in education.

To complement the quantitative data, qualitative data were collected through non-participant classroom observations. The classroom practices of three teachers—Teacher 'A', Teacher 'B', and Teacher 'C'—were observed for six days in natural classroom settings. Video recordings and reflective field notes were used to document teaching strategies, student engagement, assessment practices, and ethical considerations regarding the use of AI in classrooms. The collected data were analyzed thematically, organized into major categories, to explore how teachers used AI technology in their pedagogical practices.

Quantitative Results



The findings have been discussed in subtopics.

This section presents the quantitative findings obtained from 115 secondary-level teachers from community schools in Waling Municipality. The data were duly analyzed using SPSS software and AI, including descriptive statistics, frequencies, and percentages, to examine teachers' access to digital resources, awareness of AI, and use of AI tools, pedagogical impacts, challenges, and perceptions of AI in teaching and learning. The given bar graph summarizes respondents' responses on AI integration in pedagogical practices in community schools of the Waling region, across the above-mentioned indicators.

Access to Digital Devices and Internet Connectivity

The findings indicate that 98.3% of teachers had access to the internet and digital devices, with 56.5% reporting regular access and 34.8% reporting situational access. Only 1.7% reported minimal access. These results show that teachers had considerable access to digital devices and internet connectivity, which is a prerequisite for integrating AI into pedagogical practices. Most teachers reported owning smartphones and laptops, while some also had access to desktop computers and tablets. This suggests that digital readiness among teachers in Waling Municipality is gradually improving. However, disparities in access and connectivity quality indicate that infrastructural challenges still persist, which may affect the consistent use of AI tools in classrooms.

Awareness of Artificial Intelligence Tools

Regarding awareness, 92.2% of teachers reported being fully or somewhat aware of AI tools, while only 7.8% reported low awareness. ChatGPT was reported as the most widely used AI tool by 85.2% of teachers, followed by Grammarly (10.4%), while other platforms such as Moodle were minimally used. This suggests that teachers rely more on general-purpose AI tools than specialized educational platforms. Teachers reported learning about AI tools through social media, professional networks, training workshops, and peer discussions.

Frequency of AI Use in Teaching

Teachers reported varying levels of AI use in classroom practices. About 43.5% of teachers reported occasional use, 37.4% reported sometimes using AI, 11.3% reported regular use, and 7.8% reported rare use. This indicates that although teachers are aware

of AI and have access to digital resources, systematic integration into daily teaching practices remains limited. This finding aligns with studies suggesting that emerging technologies are gradually adopted before becoming embedded in pedagogical routines.

AI Use in Lesson Planning

A majority of teachers perceived AI as supportive in lesson planning. About 62.6% reported that AI supports lesson planning to a great or very great extent, while 30.4% reported moderate support. Only 4.3% perceived very little support. These findings demonstrate that AI is considered a valuable tool for instructional design, content generation, and resource development, contributing to structured and creative teaching practices.

AI Use for Student Engagement

Teachers strongly perceived AI as enhancing student engagement. About 92.7% agreed or strongly agreed that AI enhances engagement, while only 5.3% disagreed. Teachers reported using AI tools to generate quizzes, interactive exercises, and discussion prompts, which encouraged student participation. Students showed curiosity and motivation when AI tools were incorporated into teaching. These findings suggest that AI has the potential to promote active learning and student-centered pedagogy.

AI for Assessment and Feedback

The findings indicate that 54% of teachers used AI tools for assessment-related purposes, such as generating test questions and checking student writing, whereas 46% did not use AI for assessment. Teachers reported using AI for grammar checking, evaluating student writing, generating test questions, and providing feedback. AI was perceived as a useful tool for formative assessment, although concerns about academic integrity and authenticity of student work were noted.

AI in Supporting Diverse Learners

Teachers reported that AI tools help address diverse learning needs by providing personalized explanations, translations, and additional learning materials. About 47% of teachers used AI tools to support diverse learners, while 53% did not use AI for differentiated instruction. These findings indicate that AI has the potential to promote

inclusive education, although effective personalized use requires adequate digital literacy among students.

Teachers' Confidence in Using AI

Teachers' confidence levels varied: 33% reported high confidence, 44% reported moderate confidence, and 23% reported low confidence in using AI tools. Teachers who had received training or had frequent exposure to digital tools reported higher confidence levels. This highlights the importance of professional development in enhancing teachers' capacity to integrate AI in pedagogy.

Challenges in Using AI

Teachers identified several challenges in integrating AI into pedagogical practices. About 69% reported lack of training, 58% reported inadequate technological infrastructure, 52% reported unreliable internet connectivity, 49% reported ethical concerns such as plagiarism, and 37% reported student over-dependence on AI tools. These findings indicate that systemic and pedagogical barriers constrain AI integration and require institutional and policy-level interventions.

Institutional Support for AI Integration

The results indicate limited institutional support for AI integration. Only 26% of teachers reported receiving institutional training or guidelines on AI use, while 74% reported no formal institutional support. Teachers reported that schools had not provided systematic training, guidelines, or policies for AI use, indicating the need for institutional leadership and policy frameworks.

Teachers' Perceptions of AI Benefits

Teachers perceived several benefits of AI in teaching and learning. About 81% reported that AI reduces workload, and enhanced teaching creativity, and 59% reported support for personalized learning. These perceptions reflect teachers' positive attitudes toward AI as a pedagogical tool.

Ethical Concerns and Learning Outcomes

Teachers reported that AI contributes to better student engagement and participation

(46%) and improved academic performance (21%). However, 24% reported concerns about reduced critical thinking, and 9% expressed concerns about plagiarism. Teachers emphasized the importance of ethical guidelines and responsible AI use to mitigate these concerns.

Teachers' Views on the Future of AI in Education

The findings show that 84% of teachers believed AI would play a significant role in the future of education, while 16% were uncertain or skeptical. Teachers emphasized the need for training, infrastructure, and policy frameworks to support AI integration.

In sum, the quantitative findings show that teachers in secondary-level community schools in Waling Municipality have moderate access to digital devices and awareness of AI tools. AI is primarily used for lesson planning, student engagement, and assessment, but systematic integration into pedagogical practices remains limited. Teachers hold positive perceptions of AI and recognize its potential benefits; however, significant challenges persist, including a lack of training, inadequate infrastructure, ethical concerns, and limited institutional support. These findings indicate that AI integration is at an early stage and requires systematic interventions to ensure sustainable implementation.

Qualitative Results

This section presents the qualitative findings derived from classroom observations conducted in secondary-level community schools in Waling Municipality. The classroom practices of three teachers-Teacher 'A', Teacher 'B', and Teacher 'C'-were observed for six days in natural classroom settings as a non participant observer. The data were analyzed thematically to explore teachers' use of AI in pedagogical practices, classroom interactions, student responses, and implementation challenges.

Classroom Environment

The observed classrooms were equipped with varying levels of digital infrastructure, including computers, projectors, smartboards, and mobile devices. Internet connectivity was available in all observed classrooms, although the quality varied. AI-based tools such as ChatGPT, AI tutors, and educational applications were accessible, and students

had access to personal or shared devices such as smartphones, laptops, and tablets. These findings indicate that the classroom environment was moderately conducive to AI-supported pedagogy.

Teachers' Use of AI in Pedagogical Practices

All observed teachers—Teacher 'A', Teacher 'B', and Teacher 'C'—used AI tools for lesson planning, content creation, and summarizing instructional materials. AI was used to explain complex concepts through simulations and visualizations and to provide real-time feedback during classroom activities. Teachers critically adapted AI outputs rather than relying entirely on them and guided students on ethical and responsible AI use.

Student Engagement with AI

Students interacted with AI tools during classroom activities for brainstorming, problem-solving, and collaborative learning tasks. Students asked questions to clarify AI-generated content and demonstrated increased motivation and curiosity when AI tools were integrated into lessons. Group collaboration using AI-assisted platforms was also observed, indicating that AI contributed to interactive and participatory learning environments.

Teaching–Learning Practices

AI was integrated with traditional teaching methods, forming a blended learning approach. Teachers encouraged students to compare AI-generated responses with textbooks and teacher explanations. Classroom discussions included critical reflection on AI outputs, and AI tools were used to support differentiated instruction. These practices suggest that AI fostered creativity, innovation, and student-centered pedagogy when appropriately integrated.

Assessment Practices

AI tools were used for formative assessment through quizzes, polls, and instant feedback mechanisms. Teachers monitored student progress using AI-generated analytics and manually verified AI-based assessments. Students also used AI tools for self-assessment and practice, indicating AI's supportive role in assessment and learning monitoring.

Ethical and Practical Considerations

Teachers addressed ethical issues such as plagiarism, over-reliance on AI, and data privacy during classroom instruction. Students were guided on safe and responsible AI use, and teachers discussed the limitations of AI tools. Concerns about loss of creativity and dependency on AI were also noted.

Observer's Reflections on AI Integration

The qualitative findings indicate that teachers perceive AI as a supportive and innovative pedagogical tool that enhances teaching efficiency and student engagement. Classroom observations revealed that AI tools were primarily used for lesson planning, content generation, and interactive classroom activities. Students showed increased motivation and participation when AI-assisted materials were used. However, teachers expressed concerns about ethical issues, plagiarism, student dependency, and infrastructural limitations. The findings suggest that while AI has significant potential to transform pedagogical practices, effective implementation requires institutional support, ethical guidelines, infrastructure development, and continuous teacher professional development.

Discussion

The findings of the study indicate that AI integration is emerging in classroom practices but has not yet been systematically institutionalized. Teachers demonstrated considerable awareness of AI tools and moderate confidence in their use, suggesting a growing readiness to adopt AI-supported pedagogical practices. The findings revealed that teachers primarily use AI for lesson planning, content generation, student engagement, and assessment-related tasks. This aligns with previous studies that highlight AI's potential to enhance instructional design, feedback mechanisms, and teaching efficiency (Hooda *et al.*, 2022). Teachers' positive perceptions of AI in reducing workload, enhancing creativity, and promoting student engagement are consistent with global research emphasizing AI as a supportive tool for improving teaching and learning processes (Adhikari & Pandey, 2025). However, the study also identified significant challenges, including lack of professional training, inadequate technological infrastructure, unreliable internet connectivity, and limited institutional support.

These findings reinforce UNESCO's (2021) assertion that effective AI integration requires systemic policy frameworks, institutional leadership, and continuous teacher professional development. Without such support, AI adoption remains dependent on individual teachers' initiatives, which may lead to inconsistent and inequitable implementation.

Qualitative findings further revealed that teachers used AI in blended learning environments, combining traditional instructional methods with AI-supported tools. This supports the argument that AI should complement rather than replace human teaching (Miao & Holmes, 2021). Teachers encouraged students to critically evaluate AI-generated content, which contributed to student-centered and inquiry-based learning practices. Ethical concerns, including plagiarism, student dependency on AI, data privacy, and potential reduction in critical thinking, were also reported by teachers. These concerns reflect global debates on ethical AI use in education (Aler Tubella *et al.*, 2024). Teachers' concerns about creativity loss highlight the importance of pedagogical frameworks that promote ethical AI literacy, critical thinking, and responsible technology use. Therefore, systematic teacher training, institutional guidelines, and ethical policies are essential to ensure sustainable and responsible AI integration in education.

Hence, the findings suggest that while AI holds strong potential to transform pedagogical practices in Nepalese community schools, its effective implementation depends on infrastructural readiness, teacher competence, institutional support, and ethical governance frameworks. However, one challenge of using AI tools in English-language classrooms in Nepal is that AI may not always produce culturally relevant ideas and content that promotes local knowledge systems. However, to address these challenges, as proposed by Bhusal (2025), a decolonial use of AI tools is essential. As Bhusal (2025) writes:

In a decolonial English language classroom, an instructor's responsibility is to connect the English language with diverse Nepali students. However, it is unlikely that an ESL/EFL teacher can be proficient in students' L1 and familiar with the local ethnic diversity. In such exigencies, ESL/EFL teachers can utilize AI tools like ChatGPT to familiarize themselves with the culture that every ESL/EFL student brings into the classroom. (p. 1842)

Bhusal's pedagogical proposal, supported by ample classroom examples, offers invaluable insights for all instructors teaching English in bilingual or multilingual classrooms.

Conclusion

This study explored the integration of Artificial Intelligence in pedagogical practices in secondary-level community schools in Waling Municipality, Nepal, using a sequential mixed-method research design. The findings indicate that teachers have moderate access to digital devices and internet connectivity and are increasingly aware of AI tools. Teachers have begun integrating AI into lesson planning, student engagement activities, and assessment practices, although the frequency of classroom use remains moderate. Quantitative results demonstrated that teachers perceive AI as beneficial for reducing workload, enhancing teaching creativity, and supporting personalized learning. Qualitative findings further revealed that AI-supported instruction increased student motivation, participation, and collaborative learning opportunities. However, several challenges were identified, including insufficient teacher training, inadequate technological infrastructure, ethical concerns, plagiarism issues, and limited institutional support.

The study concludes that effective AI integration requires systematic teacher professional development, reliable digital infrastructure, institutional policies, and ethical guidelines. AI should be used as a pedagogical aid rather than a substitute for teachers, as human creativity, imagination, and critical pedagogical judgment remain essential in education (Fahimirad & Kotamjani, 2018). When used responsibly, AI has the potential to enhance student-centered learning and improve the quality of education in community schools. Overall, AI integration in Nepalese community schools is at an emerging stage. Teachers show positive attitudes and willingness to adopt AI, but sustainable implementation depends on institutional readiness, teacher competence, and responsible use strategies. This study contributes to the growing literature on AI in education in resource-constrained contexts and provides evidence-based insights for policymakers and educational stakeholders.

Implications and Suggested Further Research

The findings of this study have several important implications for educational practice, policy, and teacher education. First, teacher professional development programs can prioritize AI literacy, pedagogical integration strategies, and ethical awareness. Continuous training can enhance teachers' competence and confidence in using AI tools effectively in classroom practices. Second, school administrations and policymakers should formulate institutional and national policies to guide AI integration in education. Such policies should address ethical concerns, plagiarism, data privacy, and responsible AI use in schools. Third, infrastructural development is essential for effective AI integration. Schools require reliable internet connectivity, adequate digital devices, and technical support systems to ensure equitable access to AI-based teaching and learning resources. Fourth, AI tools offer opportunities for inclusive and personalized learning. Teachers and schools can leverage AI to support diverse learners, including slow learners and advanced learners, by providing differentiated instruction and individualized learning resources. Finally, curriculum developers and teacher education institutions should integrate AI literacy and digital pedagogy into school curricula and teacher training programs. This will prepare both teachers and students for the demands of the AI-driven educational landscape and promote responsible and critical use of AI technologies.

Future research can explore the long-term impact of AI-supported pedagogy on students' academic achievement, learning autonomy, and critical thinking skills. Subject-specific studies may provide deeper insights into how AI influences teaching and learning across different disciplines. Longitudinal studies can examine the sustained effects of AI integration on student outcomes and teacher professional development. Experimental studies may investigate the effectiveness of specific AI tools in enhancing student engagement and academic performance. The collaborative autoethnographic reflections, such as those of Khanal and Bhusal (2025), a representative study that traces the trajectory of the English learning journey of almost all Nepali scholars from the 1990s to the present, need to be extended and examined through the lens of AI in future work. Additionally, future research should explore students' perceptions of AI use in education and examine ethical implications from multiple stakeholder perspectives, including parents, administrators, and policymakers.

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