

*Full Length Research*

# English Teachers' perceptions and practices of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in Kathmandu District, Nepal

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**This study investigated teachers' perceptions and practices of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in teaching English in public schools in Nepal. It examined teachers' perceptions, the challenges that they faced in using ICTs in teaching English language. It aimed to discover what kind of ICTs they used in the classroom. The findings suggested that the most widely used ICT tools were audio tape, mobile phone, computer, television, radio, video tape and email. Questionnaire was developed by the researcher and administered to 47 secondary level English teachers to collect data. It was also found that secondary level English teachers hold positive attitudes towards the use of ICTs for educational purposes. The responses indicated that insufficient class time and inadequate training opportunities were the major obstacles in the process of ICTs' integration.**

**Keywords:** Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), Secondary, English Teachers, Classroom, Perceptions, Practices

## INTRODUCTION

Information and communication technologies use computers, internet, video, and other technology at school to teach students. ICTs merge the audio-visual, building management and telephone network with the computer network system using a single unified system of cabling, signal distribution and management.

ICTs have become an essential part of everyday life of people, and have rapidly transformed important aspects of people's lives. Most countries around the world are focusing on approaches to integrate ICT in learning and teaching to improve the quality of education.

From the above views regarding ICTs, we can say that ICTs do not only affect teaching and learning activities, they have impacted everywhere. Blogging is a helpful technique supporting the professional development of

English language teachers largely through collaborative learning and helps in building networks among English language teachers (Yadav, 2011). ICTs help to share professional ideas and views among English Language Teachers (ELT) through the internet.

Many technologies that most people had not imagined a few years ago are available now. People who suspect the usefulness of new technologies are enjoying them well. According to the Rwanda Development Gateway (2009) the world is experiencing a real-revolution in the dissemination of knowledge and the enhancement of instruction. ICTs made both the content of learning and the interactions of high-quality instruction affordable and available anytime.

Types of ICT implemented in teaching and learning

include tele-conferencing; video conferencing; and e-learning tools (Awasthi, Bhattarai and Khaniya, 2008). These products can be used in education for different purposes, and facilitate interaction between instructors and students. Distance learners can benefit through interaction with instruction. These platforms support multiple intelligence and students can get rich experience by text, graphics, audio and visual (Awasthi et al., 2008).

The integration of ICT can revolutionize an outmoded educational system (Albrini, 2006). In the last 20 years, initiatives and projects related to ICT use in education have motivated teachers to gain necessary knowledge and skills in using ICT in their instruction. ICT is "not only the backbone of the information age, but also an important catalyst and tool for inducing educational reforms that change our students into productive knowledge workers" (Pelgrum, 2001, p. 2).

### **Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in Nepal**

The interim Constitution of Nepal (2007) considers education as a fundamental right of the people. Current national plans on education also emphasize the importance of ICT. For example, the School Sector Reform Plan (SSRP) (2009-2015) has identified some of the strategies to ensure equitable access to education. The Ministry of Education (MoE) has introduced various interventions in order to achieve the national goal of compulsory education in Nepal. The MoE has considered the use of ICTs in education as one of the strategies to achieve the broader goals of education (ICT in the education Master Plan of Nepal 2013).

The SSRP has envisioned implementing and expanding the ICT assisted teaching and learning process in all schools. The SSRP further argues that ICTs in education are an innovative and effective teaching and learning tool. ICTs do not only help the urban area students, they also help to remote area students through digital devices. The Government of Nepal, through the National Curriculum Framework (NCF), has introduced ICT as a subject as well as ICT as a tool for instruction throughout education.

However, the School Leaving Certificate (SLC) results showed that only 47 percent passed in 2011. The MoE formed a commission, led by Dr. Mathema, to find out the main reason for this poor result. A lack of subject teachers, teaching and learning strategies, and teaching material seemed to be the main cause. The Commission reported that more than 70 percent of students failed in English, and reported to do something to upgrade Nepal's SLC educational outcomes. Similarly, the Department of Education [DoE], (2011) conducted a study with public school class 10 students which reported 60 percent of students had very poor performance. Thus,

it is necessary to conduct research in the teaching and learning strategies to identify areas for improvements. This present study investigates teachers' perceptions and practices of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in teaching English in public schools in Nepal and suggests some implication of ICTs for ELT Classroom.

### **Historical background of ICT in Nepal**

Nepal has been starting the ICT to process census data since 1992. The Nepal government purchased the machine for further data processing in the Bureau of Statistics and established a separate organization called Electronic Data Processing Centre (EDPC) in 1995. After six years, the EDPC converted into National Computer Centre (NCC).

Email and internet service were introduced in 1994 and 1995 respectively. Nepal's first Information Technology (IT) policy was announced in 2000 (NPC, 2000). Recently, the Government of Nepal has formed a new body, High Level Commission for Information Technology (HLCIT), which is playing the role of facilitator between the private and public sector in the development of ICT in Nepal. IT Policy 2000 and its proposed amendment, Electronic Transaction ACT (ETA), establishment of IT Park etc. are some of the encouraging developments (HLCIT, 2004).

The MoE has implemented the programs related to ICT in Education such as the one Laptop per Child (OLPC) pilot project in selected 26 schools of six districts (MoE, 2013). Similarly, Central Level Agencies under the MoE, five Regional Directorates (REDs) and 75 District Education Offices (DEO) have launched web sites. The DoE, with the involvement of some NGOs, has developed interactive digital learning materials for the students of grades 2 to 6 in Nepali, Mathematics, English and Science subjects.

Under the matching grant schemes (2010), the DoE provided 2 computers and one printer to 3038 schools (DoE, 2010). Similarly, the DoE provided internet connectivity to 85 secondary schools conducting distance education programmes (DoE, 2012). NGOs, trusts and individuals have provided computers and other accessories to some schools and basic computers training to teachers (ICT in Education Master Plan of Nepal, 2013).

During the fiscal year 2066/67 and 2067/68, the GoN has offered support for ICT related infrastructure and internet connectivity to 785 schools. Similarly, to improve educational management and delivery system, the MoE has provided some additional ICT related equipment to all District Education Offices and launched website by each DEO.

### **The Importance of ICT in the language classroom**

ICTs are generally accepted as a modern instrumental

tool that enables the educators to modify the teaching methods and techniques in order to increase the students' interest. Cavas et al. (2009) investigated Turkish science teachers' attitude towards ICT in education and found that Turkish science teachers showed positive attitudes toward ICTs in education because ICTs help them to teach any content more easily and effectively. They also noticed teachers with previous training and prior experiences had more positive attitudes towards ICTs in classroom learning. Similarly, Brordbar (2010) investigated the Iranian English teachers' attitude towards computer assisted language learning in Iran. He found that majority of the Iranian English teachers have positive attitudes toward ICT in Iranian School.

The ICTs ensure greater access to and participation in the means of communication for all cultures and social groups. Thirdly, the ICTs base on student-centre learning which helps to make students more critical, analytical, creative and productive. Cahyani and Cahyono (2012) investigated ICT practices and their attitudes towards ICT among 37 Indonesian teachers teaching English as foreign language in different level. They believed that use of ICTs in the class help students to learn English better. They argued that teachers did not use ICTs in the class because of lack availability, exposure and training to devise appropriate pedagogical model. Similarly, Kandasamy and Shah (2013) investigated knowledge, attitudes and use of ICT among English as Second Language (ESL) teachers in Malaysia. They concluded that ICTs as valuable learning tool, they believed that ICTs helped students to understand concepts in more effective ways.

This present study investigates the use of the ICTs in the English language classroom and suggests some implication of ICTs for English Language Teaching (ELT) classroom in Nepal. The following research questions guided this study:

- a. What types of ICTs are used in the secondary level English Teachers in classroom?
- b. How do English teachers use ICTs in their classroom?
- c. What are the advantages of ICTs in the classroom?

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objective of the present study is to explore secondary level English teachers' perceptions and practices of different ICTs in English language classroom.

## METHOD

This study is based on descriptive qualitative design which involved 47 Secondary level English teachers from

Kathmandu district. The populations of the study were 30 male teachers and 17 female teachers from the ten secondary and higher secondary public schools. The respondents' age categorized into three categories namely, 20-30 years, 30-40 years and 40-50 years old. It was reported around 60 percent of respondents' age belonged to 30-40 years old. Thus, average age of the respondents' was 30-40 years old. The author divided the respondents' experience into two categories 1-10 years and 10- 20 years. 60 percent respondents were experienced from 1 to 10 years.

Random sampling was used to select the ten schools. Table 1 shows the population of the study.

A range of methods has been used to gain more insight into the perceptions and practices of ICTs in ELT classroom in Kathmandu district for this research. Primarily, it is focused on the secondary level English teachers' perceptions and practices of ICTs in teaching English language at secondary level. Thus, the theoretical basis of the study depended upon the literatures from the library study; secondary sources whereas the practical basis would stand with the carefully carry out field survey and close analysis of data gathered from primary sources.

Both primary and secondary source of data were used to carry out this study. The author developed a questionnaire to collect data from secondary level English language teachers (see the Appendix). The data were collected through questionnaire and elicited from the questionnaire were descriptively analyzed and presented in terms of simple statistics such as average and mean. More specifically, the data were presented in terms of what types of ICTs used, how the ICTs were used and why they used ICTs in ELT classroom.

The present study is a small sample and based solely on one method – the questionnaire. The study was delimited to only in Kathmandu district and focused on only 47 secondary level English teachers' perceptions and practices of ICTs.

## RESULTS

The result of the study described into three sections: what types of ICTs used in ELT classroom, how the ICTs used and why the language teachers used ICTs.

### What types of ICTs used in ELT Classroom

The below Table 2 showed that 20 percent of respondent used mobile phone and radio whereas 15 percent of respondent often used television and computer while teaching English. Similarly, 5 percent of respondent used self made audio tape. Only 4 percent of respondent used commercially produced video tapes. It was interesting

**Table 1..** Description of the populations

Age			1-10 years' experience		10-20 years' experience	
20-30 Y	30-40 Y	40-50 Y	Male	Female	Male	Female
7	30	10	20	10	10	7

**Table 2.** How the ICTs used

Types of ICTs	Number of Participants
Commercially produced videotapes (VCD, DVD, VCR, CD ROM, MP4 Audio tape/ cassette player/MP3)	4
Self-made audiotapes (tape recorder, CD, MP3)	5
Overhead projection (OHP)	-
LCD (multimedia projection)	-
Computer	8
Mobile	10
Google talk	-
Skype	-
E-mail	2
Website	-
Radio	10
Web quest	-
Web blog	-
Web chat	-
Television	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>47</b>

only very few teachers used e-mail. LCD, OHP, Google talk, Skype, Website, Web quest, Web blog and Web chat were not used by respondents in the ELT classroom.

#### How the ICTs used

Respondents said that they used audio tape, Compact Disk (CD) players while teaching listening skill. Respondent no. 22 described the process of teaching listening skill. As he said that the students, listened to text (passage/ conversation/ story etc) from the tape and then students answered the questions based on the text. Similarly, respondent no. 10 warmed by asking some brain storming questions about the video text. After their guess, she played the video and asked them whether their guess was correct or not. In the middle of the video, she muted and paused the video and asked them what would come next.

15 percent respondent used computer while teaching listening and speaking text. While using computer, they told students about the nature of the text and took them into the computer laboratory. Respondent no. 5, for

example, used computer for teaching English sound system. As he believed that students should practice English sound through the authentic voice of the native speaker whereas respondent no 45 used computer for showing power point slide.

Respondent no 27 used email for checking and giving home work. It is no doubt ICTs are used as a means for teaching and learning processes. Different ICTs are used to support English language teaching and learning activities. ICTs make students more independent, creative, active, capable and critical. If ICTs are used in the classroom, it will create learning environment as well as provide authentic materials for students. Thus, ICTs are really useful for students and teachers if it is positively used.

#### Why the language teachers used ICTs

From survey, the result of the analysis showed that teachers used various types of ICTs for arousing students' motivation towards the text- provide the models of the target language; ease the teaching and learning

activities; gain understanding and analytical skills; including improvements in reading comprehension; help to develop writing skill, develop higher level learning styles; build self-confidence and self-esteem; and provide reliable and authentic materials.

Respondent no. 20 used ICTs to make language learning more practical and enjoyable whereas respondent no. 23 used ICTs to provide the students with the models of authentic materials. Participant no.7 said if ICTs used in the classroom, it made students more creative, analytical, and constructive which promoted the learner centered teaching and learning activities.

50 percent respondent believed that application of ICTs was needed for preparing the students to face challenges of their future. Respondent no. 31 believed that ICTs made the student more analytical, critical and active which helped to increase their confidence level.

In spite of having access and positive perceptions towards implementing ICTs into their classroom, secondary level English teachers often find this difficult and require on-going support - not only technical but also pedagogical. Furthermore, secondary level English teachers faced challenges while using ICTs in their ELT classroom. They reported that it was due to insufficient ICTs teaching materials such as computers, video tapes etc, classroom size, large number of students, and inadequate knowledge of ICTs. They suggested the concerned authorities should provide the sufficient ICTs teaching materials, teacher trainings, and appropriate infrastructure.

## CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The present study has shown that ICTs are inseparable from the teaching and learning activities because it facilitates the teaching and learning process. More specifically, it shows that ICTs can help to motivate the students towards the lesson, make students more creative, analytical, and constructive. Thus, the secondary level English teachers integrate ICTs tool in their classroom.

There are some challenges while implementing ICTs in the secondary level English classroom in Nepal. However, these challenges should be customized by taking into account new development in learning theories, current teaching trends, and available types of technology in contemporary settings (Cahyani & Cahyono, 2012). Using ICTs in English classroom have many advantages such as eases the teaching and learning activities, arouses students' motivation, provides the authentic materials, minimizes the cultural gap between the first language and the second language, and makes the teaching and learning activities more funny and enjoyable. However, concerned authorities such as Ministry of Education (MOE), Department of Education

(DOE), Curriculum Development Centre (CDC), should give technical and pedagogical training of ICTs for secondary level English teachers.

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## Appendix

### Questionnaire on the Use of ICTs in ELT Classrooms

This Questionnaire aims to examine the use ICTs in the teaching of English language.

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am conducting a research entitled **“Secondary Level English Teachers’ Perceptions and Practices of ICTs in Classroom: A case of Kathmandu District”**. I need to collect data from your organization; your cooperation will be highly appreciated.

Thank you.

**Mukti Prakash Thapaliya**

**Part 1: Population Information Sheet**

Name: _____ Age: _____ Gender: _____ School Name: _____ Year of Experience _____ 0-10 < _____ <20 years
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1 (Please tick)

- Commercially-produced audiotapes (tape recorder, CD, MP3)
- Commercially-produced videotapes (VCD, DVD, VCR, CD ROM, MP4)
- Self-made audiotapes (tape recorder, CD, MP3)
- Self-made videotapes (VCD, DVD, VCR, CD ROM, MP4)
- Overhead projection (OHP)
- LCD (multimedia projection)
- Computer
- Mobile
- Nicenet
- Google talk
- Skype
- E-mail
- Website
- Web quest
- Web blog
- Web chat
- Others (please mention): \_\_\_\_\_

**2. How do you use ICTs in your ELT classroom? Briefly explain.**

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**3. Why do you use ICTs in your ELT classroom?**

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**4. Do you feel any difference in your teaching with the application of ICTs? Briefly explain.**

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**5. How was the performance of students after the use of ICTs in your ELT classroom?**

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**6. Do you think English language teacher should employ ICTs in their classroom while teaching language skills (i.e. Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing)?**

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**7. What are the challenges you have faced while implementing ICTs in your classroom? What are the suggestions to solve these problems?**

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Thank you.