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English Language Teachers' Experience of Virtual Class during COVID-19 Lockdown in Bhojpur: A Narrative Inquiry

Uttam Sing Rai

Abstract

This research aimed at exploring English teachers' experience of virtual class in the time of COVID-19 lockdown period in Bhojpur, Nepal. Using narrative inquiry as methodological lens, I collected four secondary level English language teachers' stories during the first lockdown phase. In-depth interview was conducted to enable the participants to reveal their individual experiences of virtual teaching. The findings revealed negative experiences such as technology related anxiety and mental stress being the absent of basic mastery of ICT in English teachers. The narrations further showed unstable electricity and low speed internet issue, low rate of students' absence, unavailability of ICT devices as the obstacles fronted by English teachers in the district. The result also displayed positive experiences such as the increase of knowledge and skills in ICT use, and students' autonomous and mobile learning.

Keywords: *Virtual Class, Narrative Inquiry, Teacher's Experience, Pedagogical Practices, Challenges*

Introduction

An outbreak of coronavirus in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China, took place in December 2019 and expanded over and away from China. The WHO formally termed the sickness brought out by the peculiar coronavirus as Coronavirus Sickness 2019 (COVID-19) on February 12, 2020 (Zu, et al., 2020) as quoted in (Suryana, et al., 2021).

The initial instance of COVID-19 was officially spotted on January 25, 2020 when a 32-year Nepali student coming back from the city of Wuhan, China was checked positive. Following outcry of the media about the challenges of COVID-19 for its inactivity, the government of Nepal after a few weeks, declared legal measure and barriers on the open movability (Dawadi, et al., 2020). The lockdown and social distance gave rise to the urgent closing of academic institutions (Figueiredo et al., 2020). It is guessed that approximately nine million (8,796, 624) students in Nepal is impacted by virtue of school/university closing in response to the pandemic (UNESCO, 2020) as cited

in (Dawadi et al., 2020). The outbreak of COVID-19 has compelled a lot of schools to conversion from classical classroom teaching to distance teaching, evident notify that both teachers' and students' experience will be impacted (Ried,2017). The COVID-19 pandemic imposed the closure of the schools over the nation.

Thus, traditional form of teaching shifted to virtual teaching which impacted both teachers' and students' experiences. Trust & Whalen (2020) carried out research exploring how easy it was for teachers to alter their method of operations from classroom to distance teaching in the time of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Virtual teaching is a soaring teaching learning activity where the teachers and students meet over information and communication technology. The teachers and students may collaborate with each other in actual time adopting teleconferencing (audio or desktop video-conferencing) or internet (Dede, 1996, p.11). We tend to use both terms 'online' and 'virtual' for common purpose. However, online class differs from virtual class in their nature. In online class, the learners master at their own speed and at their convenience without engagement of the instructor in real-time. In this sense, online teaching is more personal, adjustable, competency based interactive paradigm for learning with in learning groups (Bates, 1995). Moreover, online content includes course materials in the form of Power Point slides, pre-recorded video lectures, additional reading materials, assignments that may be effortlessly approached by the learners enrolled on the course any time whereas virtual class is live session with the teacher. It does not make available materials as online does. It ensures smooth running of the program and full engagement of the students during the program. Current study is based on virtual mode but not online mode because the teachers were found to have used virtual mode.

Few studies have been conducted based on teacher's experience. Dawadi et al., (2020) explored the influence of COVID-19 on the school schooling arrangement of Nepal on the basis of secondary sources of data. Their findings revealed that COVID-19 has critical effects on pupils' mastering, social, emotional, and mental prosperity. Thapaliya (2021) discovered the application of Information, Communication and Technology (ICTs) attitude and knowledge of government officers, school principals and teachers to maintain learning damage in school by reason of the COVID-19 at Nepali secondary schools. The result reveals that using digital devices in school is crippled by a range of factors.

Studies have shown that virtual learning -teaching builds social disconnection and it is previous accepted rules that social distancing decelerate virus transmission in the time of influenza pandemic (Uscher- Pines et al., 2018). Majority of the schools seemed to have adopted virtual mode to pursue teaching learning process during pandemic. Therefore, virtual teaching is becoming famous in the time of pandemic phase. However, social distancing creates fear of confusion, physical pain, aloneness, anxiety,

stress and tension (Xiang et al., 2020) that unfavourably affects instructional activities at schools. The extended social distancing brings aloneness, anxiety, misery, sorrow and even mental illness (Leite et al., 2020). Thus, the life style of teachers and students is impressed by the reason of COVID-19 pandemic and Nepalese masters and learners are not exception.

Researches have also reflected that teachers' impact on learners' learning may exceed the classroom barriers, even beyond the years of schooling adulthood (Hatie, 2012). As evident in Reid's (Reid, 2017), teachers' experience and the teaching environments have a relation or link where they work.

Furthermore, in a research undertaken in Australia, the investigator researched the experiences of teachers teaching by means of virtual mode. They explored that the teachers did not have positive experiences due to the new mode of teaching by reason of the following matters: isolation feeling, negative attitudes of staff and inadequate technical skills; as well as teachers' little knowledge in the use of technologies (Owens et al., 2009).

In case of Bhojpur, when COVID-19 hit across the country, local authorities imposed the lockdown in the areas where pandemic spread in rapid motion. As a result, the schools remained closed which impacted whole educational activities bitterly. So, the authorities of the school managed to run the classes through virtual mode. English language teachers along with other teachers were compelled to run the class through virtual mode. They shifted their teaching pedagogy from physical class to virtual class.

So, the students and teachers might have benefitted from virtual education with unique experiences during the lockdown imposed by local authorities. These unique experiences are yet unexplored for others. These kinds of experiences need to be explored and shared with teachers in order to widen the scope of English language teaching. Therefore, this research aimed at exploring English language teacher's experience of virtual class during the COVID-19 lockdown phase in Bhojpur, Nepal.

Research Questions

This research endeavours to answer five research questions which are as follows:

- a. How did English language teachers experience while teaching English language through virtual mode in the time of the COVID-19 lockdown phase?
- b. What digital tools did they use while teaching English language through virtual mode?
- c. What differences and similarities did they find between virtual class and physical class?

- d. What pedagogical activities did they adopt in the virtual class?
- e. What challenges did they encounter while teaching English language through virtual mode in the time of the COVID-19 lockdown phase?

Theoretical Framework

From an understanding of how English teachers situate themselves in virtual environment is a crucial part of spotting the ways that virtual involvement may enhance understanding of teaching and foster professional development. To gain insight into these teachers' experience, I adopted narrative theory and extracted the stories English teachers told in a sequence of formal interview. My decision to gather the narrative from them is depending on the notion that stories organise human experience. One role of narrative is that it performs in arranging human experience (Bruner, 1986). Polkinghorne (1988) says "it is through the growth of narrative that individual makes bridge among episode to generate cohesive understanding of their experiences (p.18)".

Narrative theory can be introduced as the study of "how stories help people make sense of the world, while also studying how people make sense of stories" (The Ohio State University, 2020). At the centre of this explanation is the notion that story telling is a rational and psychological tool for forming the comprehending and meaning given to incidents and experience (Egan, 1999). Martin et al., (2000) adopted the narrative theory as an educational strategy in a high school literature class. The author wanted to transport ideal concepts through physical experience (Yang & Hsu, 2017). Authors applied narrative theory as the strategy to convey abstract idea through experiences.

In the process of shaping narratives, participants confer a hierarchy of experience that reveals the crucial meaning. In this regard, Laslett (1999) states:

We reasoned that in the process of narrativising their virtual experiences, participating teachers would provide insight into what they valued and what they found troubling in the virtual contexts and provide us with an opportunity to access motivation, emotion, imagination, subjectivity and action (p.329).

Thus, narratives allowed for the close study of personal experience and provided an opportunity to understand that experience (Riessman, 2003).

Methodology

This research set out on a qualitative approach and existed on the aspect of narrative as an interpretive method. Since English teachers' stories are subjective, a narrative inquiry was used to explore English teacher's experience of virtual class during COVID-19 lockdown. A narrative inquiry matches for this research as it explores human experiences through life-story interviews, oral history, biography or other narrative

approach of humane experiences (Ford, 2020). A narrative inquiry is needed to give in-depth information about experience of English teacher in virtual class.

The participants were selected using non-random purposive sampling. The narrative data were collected from four secondary English teachers involved in teaching English language through virtual mode during COVID-19 lockdown first phase. The research area of the study included community secondary schools of Bhojpur municipality of Bhojpur district. Life story interview was adopted as a narrative method for gathering stories in the process of data collection.

Research Design

Research design indicates a strategy for answering research questions. Research design determines how researchers collect and analyze their data. This study adopted narrative inquiry strategy in which individual interview was used for gathering the four stories as the data. The researcher visited four teachers and built rapport with them in their respective schools. The teachers were requested to tell their stories based on their narrative schema that reflects their personal knowledge and experiences about virtual class in the time of COVID-19 lockdown phase. Open-ended questions were developed for conducting interview with the participants.

Participants

This study attempts to explore English language teachers' experiences of virtual class. They were engaged in teaching English language to their students in Community Secondary Schools of Bhojpur municipality through virtual mode since COVID-19 outbreak. The schools included two community schools located in Bhojpur municipality of Bhojpur district. English teachers were requested to participate in the study, and four of them agreed to take part. Participants were given the options of choosing pseudonyms, and they chose pseudonyms as they preferred. Thus, all four participants, Rohan, Rabin, Mohan and Sanjib are pseudonyms in this study. Both schools and participants were selected by adopting purposively. The decision was made of choosing four English teachers considering that they had lived experience of virtual teaching.

Instruments of Narration Collection

In this study, semi structured interview was adopted as the method of collecting stories from the participants. Some questions were developed as interview guides and interview was taken of the participants in an informal conversational way. Interview is suitable for gathering stories because interview is a means of collecting teachers' own stories about their experiences of virtual class. Moreover, interview can help researchers to better understand teachers' experiences and behaviors (Anderson & Kirkpatrick, 2016). Here, the researcher needed to do was how to bracket narratives within interview data.

Narrative is extensively considered as the representation of data as a series of actions that are momentarily and spatially arranged (Herman, 2009). Each narrative includes a representation of an obstacle that was included at least two linked and spatially ordered sequential events; a reaction and relevance to teachers' virtual participation associated to the exploration of teaching experiences. These characterize differentiated narratives from other interview data, exemplified that participants were narrativising their experiences. Thus, interview was used as means of gathering narratives from the teachers for exploring their virtual experiences that had happened in a sequence of events.

Procedures of Data Collection

The narrative inquiry method was adopted to collect, analyze and interpret the data in this study. The reason of adopting narrative inquiry in this study is that narrative inquiry includes retelling the life stories of the participants. Initially, participants were chosen and rapport building was established with the participants. Then, semi-structured interview was conducted with the participants in the conversational way.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

A thematic approach was adopted for data analysis and interpretation in the study. A thematic approach matches for narratives that develop in the environment of interviews, and this was the case for all of the narratives in the data set (Riessman, 2008). Moreover, it is generally used to a set of texts such interview transcript. Analysis of data involves familiarization, coding, generating themes, and reviewing themes, defining and naming themes. After gathering data from interview, each recorded interview was transcribed into script. While transcribing data into script, the researcher listened to the whole recording and wrote down any words the researcher needed to familiarize with the technical jargon or slang. Then, the researcher transcribed an initial rough draft. At last, the researcher revisited transcript and edited it. And then, each transcript was coded in order to generate themes. Themes are defined and named. Individual narratives were built on the basis of various themes.

Findings and Discussion

In this section, findings yielded from the data have been presented under the findings and they have been discussed under the discussion.

Findings

The stories have been organized based on themes so as to answer the research questions. The narratives of the participants have been managed under four common themes. Pseudo names of the participants have been used in order to maintain anonymity and integrity.

Theme (1): Virtual class and its' psychological effect

In the narrative, one of the participants, Rohan opined with an abstract summarizing what he experienced while running the virtual class during COVID-19 lockdown phase. He felt scared at first but later, it was exciting for him. Rohan stated:

"I felt somehow scary feelings at beginning. But later, I found that teaching through virtual class was an exciting task. I felt that virtual class was effective and useful during COVID-19 Lockdown."

The narration presented by Rohan reveals that the virtual class scared him at the beginning. However, it was exciting for him later and he believes that it was effective mode during pandemic period.

Similarly, another participant, Rabin expressed his narrative offered during interview. He also experienced as Rohan did about the virtual class. He felt excited at first. However, he got tension and stress as he lacked inadequate skill and knowledge of operating ICTs usage. He summarized:

"To say honestly, it was my first experience for me. So, I got excited at the beginning. But I felt tension and stress later during the class because of my insufficient knowledge and skill in ICT usage. Now, I feel comfort with virtual class. In my experience, virtual class through MS Team can be effective during pandemic."

The narration narrated by Rabin exposes that he was excited. However, it created tension and stressed him too as he lacked sufficient knowledge and skills of operating ICTs. In the narration presented by next participant (Mohan) in his story shared the same experience with Rohan and Rabin about virtual class. He felt uneasy at the beginning of the class because he lacked adequate knowledge and skill. Mohan could not download student's attendance, set up time and deliver content. Mohan learnt later. So, he felt comfortable. He improved ICT related skill as well. He mentioned:

"I felt to some extent uneasy at first because I did not have enough knowledge and skill at first. I got confused of using MS Team. I could not download student's attendance. I could not set up time. I could not deliver content. Now I feel comfortable using it. In my view, virtual mode is suitable for pandemic. I have improved my computer skill."

The experience shared by Mohan reveals the fact that virtual class made difficult to him some extent. However, it provided an ample opportunity for improving ICTs skills during the pandemic.

Next participant Sanjib along with his students heard many new terms such as corona virus, COVID, lockdown, isolation, contract tress, social distancing, PPE, mask, face

seal, holding centre. He was much afraid of hearing about the virus. He felt that the virus snatched his freedom of wandering outside the home. He was locked inside the home like in the prison. It made him little depressed. He stated:

“Including me and my students heard many new terms such as corona virus, COVID, lockdown, isolation, contract tress, social distancing, PPE, mask, face seal, holding centre during COVID-19 lockdown phase. I was much afraid of hearing about the virus. Sadly speaking, this virus snatched our freedom of wandering outside the home. We were locked inside the home like in the prison. It made me little depressed.”

In the narration shared by Sanjib reveals that he as well as his students became familiar with new terms related to the pandemic. They experienced frustration and depression during COVID-19 lockdown phase as it compelled them to lock at home for long time like in the prison by snatching their freedom of moving outside home.

Theme (2): Virtual vs. Physical Class

One of the participants Mohan shared his experience regarding difference between virtual and physical class. He could not engage his students in classroom discussion in virtual class. He failed to divide the class into groups and pairs which he did in the physical class. Due to this fact, interaction and discussion decreased in virtual class. As a result, the students could not improve their speaking skill in virtual class. He shared:

“I could not engage the students in classroom discussion in virtual class. I was not able to divide the class into groups and pairs which I did in the physical class. Due to this fact, interaction and discussion decreased in virtual class. As the result, my students could not improve their speaking skill in virtual class. I meant to say virtual class was less interactive and innovative.”

The narration shared by Mohan displays that virtual class was less interactive than physical class. As a result, the students were unable to improve their speaking ability in English language.

Rohan in his narrative shared similar story. He expressed that the virtual class was less interactive, collaborative and co-operative than the physical class. His students turned off camera and muted microphone in virtual class. He could not keep direct eye contact with his students which happened in physical class. However, teaching pronunciation was more effective in virtual class. He told:

“The main difference between two classes is that the virtual class was less interactive, collaborative and co-operative than the physical class. Because, there is no direct eye and face contact with the teacher. The students turn off camera and mute microphone so that I cannot make sure whether they are paying attention or not. However, I found that

teaching pronunciation is more effective because students make less noise. So, the students paid more attention which helped them to enhance their pronunciation."

Sanjib saw that there was less communication among students and the teachers in the virtual class. He found that the physical class could be more effective than virtual class. He explained:

"I feel less communication between teachers and students in virtual class than in physical class. I can communicate with everybody through eye-contact in the physical. In this sense, the physical class could be more effective than virtual class."

Rabin summarized his narration on virtual vs physical class that the teachers must require basic knowledge and skill of integrating ICTs in virtual class. They did not integrate ICTs in their traditional physical class. Integrating ICT might lead to paradigm shift in English language teaching and learning. The teachers used lecture method in both classes which was the main similarity between two classes. He said:

"The main difference between two classes is that basic knowledge and skill of integrating ICTs is required in virtual class which might need in the physical class. The teachers can run the classes without ICT in their physical class whereas virtual class is impossible without ICTs. One similarity between them is that lecture method can be used in both classes. In my view, integrating ICT might lead to paradigm shift in English language teaching and learning."

The narration narrated by Rabin reveals that integrating ICT is must in virtual class which is not necessary in the physical class. Integrating ICTs might lead to paradigm shift in English language teaching and learning.

Theme (3): Pedagogical Practices

A participant Rohan in his narrative summarized that he prepared the lesson plan and implemented in virtual class. Though there was not hard and fast rule for teaching English through virtual mode, setting device, presentation, feedback and checking assignment were some pedagogical activities. Questioning was the main tool for assessing the students. He mentioned:

"I have designed teaching activities which include device setting - 5 minutes, presentation and feedback -15 minutes, checking assigned task-10 minutes and feedback -10 minutes. The students display their task on the screen and they send their homework into my messenger by taking image of the task. I assess the students regularly after the class. I ask questions for evaluating the students."

Next participant (Rabin) often used lecture method in virtual classes. Rabin developed and gave assignment to the students individually. He set up a small white board on the wall of the room and he fixed his device pointing to the board, so that, the students could see on it through camera of their own device. He stated:

“Normally, I use lecture method for teaching in virtual class. I have set up a small white board on the wall of the room and fixed my laptop pointing to the board, so that, my students can see on it through their camera. I use white board as I do it in physical class because I don’t have basic knowledge of using ICT. I don’t use power point and video as other teachers do.”

Since Rabin lacked ICTs skills and knowledge during virtual class, he was forced to employ lecture method as in physical class.

On the same issue, Mohan first had to struggle to develop PowerPoint slides, visit YouTube video, and use Word and Excel. Later, he learnt and used these ICT tools. He visited Websites and gathered information from internet. Mohan constantly used questioning technique to evaluate his students. He shared:

“In the initial state of the class, I had to struggle to develop Power Point, visit and download YouTube video. Later, I came to know to chat, and to share files in Word and Excel. I visit websites and collect information from internet. I always evaluate the students by asking the question during and after the class. I give assignment. Now, they seem more curious than before.”

In the initial stage, he struggled much to acquire ICT skills as he did not have basic skills for running virtual class. However, he used his self-exploratory approach to executing virtual teaching through searching educational website, YouTube video and internet.

Sanjib usually shared screen as the practice. Lesson plan was designed based on the lecture method. The students were assessed by asking the questions at the end of class. He said:

“ I often share screen by capturing during the class. I sometimes down load video and display it to the class. I design lesson plan based on lecture method. I evaluate at the end of the class by asking questions. The progress of the students is found to be poor.”

For Sanjib, although it was virtual class that he ran during the pandemic, his strategies adopted for seemed to be as in physical class which were mainly based on lecture method. In fact, he could not handle apps and other ICT devices. As a result, students’ progress was found to be unsatisfactory.

Theme (4): Virtual class and its' challenges

Unstable internet, electricity and shortage of devices were the common challenges faced by Rohan and his students. Another challenge was the students' low participation. He shared:

"When I began the class, I encountered the problems such as irregular supply of electricity, unstable internet and shortage of devices (laptop, mobile phone). Some students remain silent during the class. I have inquired the reason of remaining silence. They replied that they are imposed to stay long time in the room in the name of social distancing. So, they are not interested to talk to anybody. The students leave the class instead of replying answers. They also lacked devices because they could not afford for the devices. They depend on mobile and data pack."

Due to the lack of physical amenities such as poor internet connection, unstable electricity, lack of ICT devices, Rohan faced virtual teaching much challenging. Consequently, students' participants and interest were found to be less participatory and encouraging during the class.

Rabin was disturbed by unstable electricity which was his main challenge. Rabin lacked basic knowledge and skill of integrating ICT in the virtual class. So, it was a big obstacle for him that he was unable to integrate ICT in the virtual class. He mentioned:

"The main challenges that I faced while conducting virtual class are that virtual class is disturbed by unstable electricity and internet. The next challenge for me is that I am unable to use ICT in virtual class."

Mohan faced rather distinct challenges in the virtual class. One of the main obstacles was the natural disaster. Thundering and lightening disconnected him from the students in Jun, July and August. The next challenge was the mindset. He did not get used to with virtual class. He shared:

"I have suffered from rather distinct challenges in the virtual class. One of my main obstacles was the nature. Thundering and lightening often disconnected me from my students in Jun, July and August. The next challenge was the mindset. I do not believe in virtual class because I did not get used to with virtual class."

When it came to challenge, Mohans' experience was found to be different from others. He faced natural thundering, lightening and his traditional mindset as major problems.

Sanjib quoted the challenges that some of the students could not purchase devices and mobile data due to poverty. Few of them did not have Wi-Fi access at home. So, most of the students could not enrol the virtual class. As a result, some students were deprived

of taking virtual class. Economically advanced students benefited from the virtual class. Poverty is an obstacle of virtual class. He claimed:

“Many of my students failed to purchase devices, data or Wi-Fi due to their poverty. I could not bring all of them into the classroom. Some of my students could not enroll in the class. I knew that only economically advanced students can benefit from the virtual class. So, poverty is one of the main challenges of running virtual class.”

The main challenge Sanjib faced while adopting virtual class made was less financial as a majority of the students could not afford for ICT devices purchase such as laptops, Wi-Fi, internet services. As a result, only economically sound students got benefit from virtual class.

It can be concluded that virtual platforms such as Zoom, Google meet and MS Team software has become common tools of interaction for the teachers and students during COVID-19 lockdown phase. However, the teachers had no basic idea of virtual teaching. Some of them had little experience about virtual class during the first outbreak of COVID-19. But, some of them were quite novice for virtual English teaching.

So, they were going to have new experience of virtual environment for the first time. They had to struggle to manage the challenges occurred during process. They might have had unique experience of virtual teaching. They might have felt anxiety, loss and stress because they did not have enough knowledge and skills of using technology. They might have suffered from various socio-economic, mental stresses related problems.

On the other hand, some teachers might have enjoyed virtual class. Virtual education is considered to be the best option for continuing educational activities during the pandemic time.

Discussion

In this section, the narratives of the participants have been analyzed and discussed by adopting interpretive approach. Four themes from the stories of the participants have emerged.

The result revealed that English language teachers were scared at the beginning. However, they felt excited later. Thus, virtual class created both fear and excitement on the students. It was explored that the virtual education created anxiety, stress, and tension. In this connection, Irawan et al., (2020) claims that virtual class can boost the stress level of the learners and teachers. The social distancing leads to fear of uncertainty, physical discomfort, loneliness, anxiety and stress that negatively affect teaching-learning activities at schools (Xiang et al., 2020). Social distancing, scarcity of knowledge and skills in technology are common reasons that create stress, anxiety and tension.

It was also identified that the COVID-19 brought new terms in to common use such as corona virus, COVID, lockdown, isolation, contract tress, social distancing, PPE, mask, face seal, holding centre. This virus snatched fundamental freedom of the people. Because, people were locked inside their home like in the prison. It made them little depressed. In this regard, Leite et al., (2020) argue that the extended social distancing increases aloneness, anxiety, depression and even mental illness.

It can be argued that virtual class not only creates tension and mental stress but also it makes learning autonomous. The teachers as well the students developed their ICT skills. They could visit various web tools and get information and learn language in their own pace. Thus, virtual class enhances learners and teacher's linguistic and communicative skill of English language.

We can argue that the virtual class seems to be less interactive, collaborative and cooperative in comparison with the physical class. Moreover, there is less communication between the students and the teachers in the virtual class. Azmuddin, (2020), states that there will be interpersonal barriers of virtual class by the reason of less interpersonal relationship between learners and teachers, impersonal teaching context and less interaction amid the students. The reason is that the majority of the teachers fail to divide the class into group and pair in virtual class which they do in the physical class. The next reason is that the students turn off camera and unmute microphone in virtual class. In this condition, there won't be direct eye contact between the teachers and the students in physical class.

However, virtual class might lead to paradigm shift in English language teaching and learning by replacing traditional chalk and duster with ICT tools. The teachers must have basic knowledge and skill of integrating ICTs in virtual class. The teachers do not require knowledge and skill of using ICTs in physical class. Thus, integrating ICT might lead to paradigm shift in English language teaching and learning.

The findings reveal that the majority of the teachers use lecture method as a main pedagogical practice in the virtual class. It is also identified that the teachers lack basic knowledge and skill in ICT. So they adopt teacher centred -method in the virtual class. Due to lack of knowledge in ICT, the teachers feel jealous and inferior. The use of virtual lecture has been identified as virtual teaching strategy which engages the students (Rapp-McCall & Anyikwa, 2016). It was explored that Power Point presentation is implemented as the main pedagogical activity in virtual class. Visiting internet resources and downloading pictures, YouTube and presenting them and giving assignment are found to be other pedagogical practices of virtual class.

It is explored that the poverty can be considered to be the main challenge in virtual class. The participants claim that the students could not purchase devices and mobile data due to poverty. Consequently, the students are deprived of enrolling the virtual class. The result indicates that only economically advanced students could benefit from

the virtual class. The natural disaster can be considered as the next challenge of the virtual class. Thundering and lightening disconnected the students in Jun, July and August. Finally, unstable internet, electricity, shortage of devices and lack of technical literacy has been discovered as the common challenges in the virtual class. In this regard, Mahaye, N.E. (2020) argues that the instructor also encountered ICT tools challenges because of a lack of technical literacy, network bandwidth, poor network quality and lack of technical skills for communication .

Conclusion

The COVID-19 has remarkably affected schools including English language teaching in Bhojpur. Virtual class has become a solution in this condition across Nepal including Bhojpur municipality. Based on the stories of the participants, it can be concluded that virtual class seems an alternative solution rather than effective solution to continue teaching process during pandemic. English teachers have both positive and negative experiences of virtual class. Some positive experiences include virtual class enhances learners' autonomous; promotes teacher's knowledge and skills of using ICT.

Negative experiences are: virtual education creates anxiety, tension and stress to the teachers at the beginning of the class. Virtual class lacks sufficient interaction between teachers and the students. There is less communication between the teachers and the students because they do not have direct facial and eye contact.

Unstable electricity and internet are the main challenges of virtual class here in Bhojpur. Poverty is the next challenge of the virtual class. Majority of the students cannot buy mobile and purchase data. They are deprived of virtual education during pandemic lockdown.

Implications

The findings of the study might be utilized by teachers who will face similar condition in the future and run their class through virtual mode. This study might contribute to the authorities to view virtual class from English language teachers' experience and empower them for running virtual class. Accordingly, this study provides practitioners information about what challenges English language teachers face and what strategies they employ while running virtual class during COVID-19 lockdown phase. This study also gives reliable information to the educational institutions which should give intensive attention to their infrastructure by upgrading their ICT system. This study can bridge the gap in the literature by exploring teachers' experience about virtual class. This study also might be taken as a base for opening door for the similar studies in days to come. Therefore, this study can contribute to the further research about virtual class.

The Author: Uttam Sing Rai is a Lecturer (Assistant Professor) in Bhojpur Multiple Campus, Bhojpur at Tribhuvan University, Nepal. He is currently pursuing MPhil in English Language Education from School of Education of Kathmandu University, Nepal. His research interest includes English as medium of instruction (EMI), Virtual class and use of ICT in ELTL.

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