

## Technology Supported Classroom for Collaborative Learning

Sunil Prasad Chauhan

chauhan.sunil750@gmail.com

Central Department of Education, T.U., Kirtipur

### Abstract

*Technology has been one of the basic needs of the modern society. Technology can empower both teachers and students and can create a space for collaboration. Considering the role of technology in collaborative learning, this study envisaged to explore how teachers perceive about technology supported ELT classroom for collaborative learning and to discover the strategies adopted by the language teachers to enhance technology supported classroom for collaborative learning. To meet the objectives of the study, ten higher secondary level (+2) level language teachers who were teaching collaboratively by using technological tools in the different colleges of Kirtipur were selected purposively and were interviewed in-depth based on certain open-ended questions related to the study. Their interviews were recorded for data. The data were carefully documented and the collected data were analyzed and interpreted descriptively having certain themes. The findings of the study revealed that the teachers have positive perception about technology supported ELT classroom for collaborative learning and the teachers mainly followed student-centered technique as their strategies in order to enhance technology supported ELT classroom for collaborative learning.*

**Keywords:** *Technology, ELT, collaborative learning, content, ritual*

### Introduction

Technology has been applied as a new innovation in the field of ELT. It has been one of the precious gift in the field of ELT. Technology in reference to classroom means the use of electronic devices in classroom such as mobile phones, OHPs, computers. According to Alavi (1994), "Technology defines learning as personal and meaningful experience that meets learners' needs as opposed to traditional teacher- centered and text- based education system."The term "technology- supported classroom in ELT" basically signifies for the term "computer assisted language learning (CALL)". Collaboration is the heart of collaborative learning. Collaborative learning is based on social learning theory such as; Lev Vygotsky. Collaborative learning creates a feeling of team work or group work out of collaboration. It has been as a means of synergy. Synergy in a sense; it provides energy out of collaboration among the group members. Technology supported classrooms really collaborate the learning throughout the active participation and interaction.

The term “content” or “ritual” means “may be reality” or “just showy without reality”. Linking those terms with technology supported classroom for collaborative learning, it means “are we really making the use of technology in classroom for learning collaboratively?” or “are we just trying to show that we are using it and doing nothing?” In another way, it means "technology for learning" or "technology for the sake of technology." Defining the both terms in reference to technology supported ELT, the term “content” means technology-supported modern education system where there is maximum use of technology while teaching learning procedure. The term “ritual” means content focus traditional education system where there is the less use of technology in teaching learning procedure.

During this pandemic outbreak, the use of technology is massive for facilitating the ELT. The teachers are teaching collaboratively by sitting from their home and the learners are also learning collaboratively by sitting at their home via using the means of technology. Different technological tools are massively being used for teaching and learning collaboratively i.e. mobile phones, laptops, computers, OHPs, and other different electronic applications are being used i.e. Facebook, Twitter, Imo, Whats App, Zoom Platform, Microsoft Teams, and Adobe Connect.

Technology supported collaborative learning (TSCL) is one of the most influencing research paradigms dedicated to improve teaching and learning with the help of modern information and communication technology. Collaborating in small group may constitute a powerful means for promoting and enhancing learning, work and social interaction. Involving the learners in collaborative learning activities could positively contribute to extending and deepening their learning experiences, test out new ideas, improve learning outcomes and increase learner satisfaction at the same time decreasing the isolation that can occur in an e-learning setting (Daradoumis et. al., 2011).

The use of multimedia in classroom will provide the learners with opportunity for interacting with diverse texts that give students a solid background in the tasks and content English language courses designed to improve their proficiency in English and interaction with learning texts. Furthermore, since ICTs are now technology integral part of the curriculum, students learning English Language must become proficient in accessing and using electronic resources (Sharndama, 2013).

Collaborative learning is an educational method where a group of learners collaborate to learn and improve themselves. Collaborative learning draws away from the teacher centered education, where the teacher is the authority and broadcasts the knowledge to the learners. It emphasizes the interaction among all participants in the learning experience. Teachers and learners actively participate in the learning experience. The teachers design the learning activities and guide the group. They may support the learners and/or individually. For example; they may help “weak” learners (Economides, 2014).

Collaboration in language learning creates opportunities for practicing language skills and building new knowledge and relationship inside and outside the classroom, as well as in settings where there are no classrooms but there may be other meeting spaces or joint activities. Mobile

collaboration comprises physical co-location as well as collaborators being separated in time and place (Kukulka-Hulme and Viberg, 2018).

Technology assists students in the learning process modifying the way learning is delivered. Now, learning has become a personalized and meaningful experience that meets learners' needs as opposed to traditional teacher-centered and text-based education that places primary emphasis on "conveying fixed bodies of information and viewing students as passive recipients of knowledge" (Alavi, 1994).

The advantages of mobile technology brings a new facet to the theory of computer-supported collaborative learning (CSCL) by making collaborative learning activities more dynamic, personal and flexible (Botiski, Wong and Looi, 2013).

Kim (2002) concluded that the teachers' perceptions and attitudes are the affecting factors associated with the successful integration of technology into the classroom. In his study, all the participants had positive attitude toward the use of technology however they faced some unexpected difficulties due to the lack of insufficient knowledge and computer skills, lack of experience, insufficient time, computer anxiety and lack of confidence.

Moreover, Liu and Lee (2011) carried out a study to investigate the use of Wikis in an English learning process among 18 tertiary students in Taiwan and found that learners benefitted from each other in their writing practice when they worked in pairs on Wiki-based tasks collaboratively. The participants stated that collaboration with peers is more effective than individual work on Wikis.

Similarly, Kukulka-Hulme and Shield (2008) examined the extent to which mobile devices can support collaborative listening and speaking, with a focus on the needs of online and distance learners. They found that there was little research related to collaboration in Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) but existing examples (2002-07) showed that collaborative speaking and listening learning practices could be successfully supported.

Moreover, the findings of the study done by Park and Son (2009) also showed that the teachers have positive and favorable attitudes toward the use of computers. They also considered computer technology as a useful teaching tool that can enhance ways of teaching by offering students a variety of language inputs and expanding students' learning experiences in real and authentic contexts.

Most of these research studies are concerned with the context of the countries other than Nepal, mostly in the developed countries other than Nepal, mostly in the developed countries; and few studies have been conducted in Nepal on "Technology- supported ELT classroom." Therefore, the researcher selected the title to explore how teachers perceive about technology supported ELT classroom for collaborative learning and to discover the strategies adopted by the language teachers to enhance technology supported classroom for collaborative learning.

## **Research objectives**

The objectives of this study were:

- i. To explore how teachers perceive about technology supported ELT classroom for collaborative learning.
- ii. To discover the strategies adopted by the language teachers to enhance technology supported classroom for collaborative learning.

## **Research Methodology**

To carry out this research, narrative inquiry was conducted to explore how teachers perceive about technology supported ELT classroom for collaborative learning and to discover the strategies adopted by the language teachers to enhance technology supported classroom for collaborative learning. Ten higher secondary (+2) level language teachers who were teaching collaboratively by using various technologies in the different colleges of Kirtipur were selected purposively. They were informed about the objective of the study. Interview guideline themes were developed as the major tool of the study. The interview guidelines were developed based on the certain open-ended questionnaire. The researcher emailed them the questionnaire of interview as per their request. Then, the researcher asked for their timing to take their interview. As per their convenience, the researcher called them via mobile phone and took their interview. Their interviews were recorded for data. The interview notes and record of each participant were transcribed carefully and were analyzed by developing certain codes out of those transcriptions and interpreted carefully by developing certain descriptive themes out of those codes.

## **Results and Discussion**

Based on the data analysis, major findings are presented below thematically. They are:

### **Technology Supported ELT for Collaborative Learning**

The perception of teachers on the technology supported ELT classroom for collaborative learning differs from teachers to teachers. Some teachers might have positive attitudes toward the technology supported classroom for collaborative learning but some teachers might have positive as well as negative attitudes toward the technology supported ELT classroom for collaborative learning. So, we can say that the perception of teachers toward the technology supported ELT classroom for collaborative learning differs from teachers to teachers. Here are some perceptions of the participants given that had been to the interviewers. All the participants have somehow similar perception on technology supported ELT for collaborative learning however some statements by some teachers are presented below. They are;

The teacher 'A' from Sunrise College (pseudonym) said, "Technological devices are helpful for teaching the learners collaboratively. We always teach and learn collaboratively via technological devices. During this pandemic, we are using the technological devices for teaching our learners for the last 9 months. Collaborative learning is also possible via technological devices."

According to the teacher 'B' from Galaxy Secondary School (pseudonym), "The use of power point for teaching is easy where the use of power point in teaching

mathematics is difficult. The teachers are more active in online classes and they have to prepare a lot than the students so, they feel tired. But, the students seem quite passive in online mode of learning.”

Technology has become one of the significant demands for ELT classroom; it has done potential support in education across the curriculum for effective communication between teachers and students. ICTs have motivated the teachers by providing different sorts of information for effective teaching. Similarly, technology based ELT classroom has made the teachers more active because they have to present their classes through power point and it has also provided various materials to the students in their learning process. Conclusively speaking, all teachers have positive view about the technology supported ELT classroom despite having some ups and down in the use of technology supported classroom.

### **Role of Technology in ELT Classroom for Collaborative Learning**

The role of technology in ELT is very crucial. In this post-modern era, almost all sectors have been IT friendly and they are taking the full pleasure of ICT. Talking about its usage in education sector, there is the massive use of technology. While talking about its usage in ELTAL classrooms, it is massively being used either by teachers or learners. It has made learning easier than the previous time. We are getting different sorts of information in each and every seconds our lives citing the blessings of technologies. The modern pedagogy in this 21<sup>st</sup> century is the integration of the technologies in teaching and learning activities. Several research studies have concluded that modern technologies are very much effective for providing a platform for teaching and learning process and successful education system is incorporated by the technologies/ technological devices so as to enhance the students' learning. The use of technology in ELT classroom really provides a good platform for collaboration and collaborative learning. Different teachers have opined their views on the role of technology in ELT classrooms for collaborative learning in different ways. All the participants have quite similar views regarding the role of technology in ELT classroom for collaborative learning. Some statements from the respondents' interview are given below. They are;

According to the teacher 'D' from Everest College (pseudonym), "Technological devices have removed the gapping between the teachers and the students during this pandemic condition as well. Technology helps the teachers as well the students in being updated about the subject matter. It has also provided some insights to the teachers for presenting the content in a well manner. It provides the clear concept about the subject matter to the learners."

Moreover, the teacher 'A' from Sunrise College (pseudonym) stated the role as, "We can get access materials on internet which are necessary for teaching learning process. ICT based classroom makes the teacher familiar that how to teach/ do presentation by using technological devices. It makes the teacher more active in online mode that the offline mode of learning."

In this pandemic situation, ICT has been helping the teachers to communicate with the students; it has played the role of bridge to remove the gapping between teachers and students. It has improved the teaching skills of teachers; it helps teacher as well as students to be updated about the subject matters, it has also developed skills in teachers to present their subject matter in an effective way in any sorts of educational environment. Similarly, ICT has removed the traditional mode of teaching by preparing the teachers to apply modern method of teaching and learning. Based on the teachers' response, it can be concluded that the role of technology in ELT classroom for collaborative learning is really remarkable and crucial for meaningful teaching learning procedure either in synchronous and asynchronous mode of learning.

### **Strategies for Enhancing Technology Supported Classroom**

The strategies used by the English teachers in ELT classroom plays a vital role in enhancing the technology supported ELT classroom for collaborative learning. The term 'strategies' signifies for 'ways.' Here, the term 'strategies for enhancing technology supported classroom for collaborative learning' means what are the ways that the teacher uses/ follows in order to promote the technology supported ELT classroom and collaborative learning. Strategies in reference to the technology supported ELT classroom and collaborative learning differ from teacher to teacher. So, it is difficult to follow the same strategies by the all ELT practitioners. Here are some statements given by the teachers that have been excerpted from the recordings. They are;

The teacher 'E' of Kriti Secondary School (pseudonym) said, "We send them materials, power point. Sometime, we make them discussion on messenger. They also chat on facebook, individual inbox. Sometime, they ask voice recorded question and we also send them voice recorded answer."

The teacher 'B' from Galaxy Secondary School (pseudonym) expressed her views about her strategies as "We go through the text for teaching learning process but it is not enough for the students to go through the book. So, sometime, we provide them something extra. We go to language lab and provide them power point and also teach them by using power point. Whatever we teach them in book, we show them and explain them visually in language lab. We are also teaching our learners through zoom during this pandemic condition."

The use of electronic devices has become a gateway in teaching and learning of language in ELT classroom. The teachers are using various e-devices for collaborative teaching such as zoom, adobe connect, Microsoft teams, Google meet, messenger, Facebook chat, e-mail etc. Mostly, the teachers are using zoom for their classroom's presentation in this critical situation, they use to present their subject matter, make group discussion and provide feedback through various devices for collaborative teaching and learning.

### **Technology Supported Classroom as Content or Ritual**

It is one of the debatable issue of study. Here, the terms "content or ritual" in reference to ELT classroom means "technology for delivering knowledge or technology for the sake of technology." Content deals with the modern concept and way of teaching where, ritual deals

with the traditional way of teaching with no/ little use of technology. Previously, technology was being used as ritual either by the teachers or by the students and so, it was being used traditionally and very few had access to it and so, those few were only using it. But; in the post-modern era, technology is mainly being used in ELTAL by the teachers and the students as content. So, the both teachers as well as students are learning collaboratively via technology. Here are some excerpts given that have been said by the participants. All the participants assume it as content however some statements by some teachers are presented below They are;

The teacher 'C' from Kriti Secondary School (pseudonym) said, "It is not taken as ritual, we have to take it as content. We do not use it for the sake of technology. We should use it for facilitating our teaching and learning not for that we can say showing others."

According to the teacher 'D' from Everest College (pseudonym) "It is used as content nowadays because every second day, I use language lab and ask them to do their presentation so, it is used as content. As in the second day, the students have to go to language lab and do something as their own so, something teacher teaches through the internet and sit in front of the classroom, in front of the teacher and this how, the class runs and how we have got routine. We sit them to language classroom, language lab. That way it is very easy for us to go through technology. So, it is used as content, not as ritual."

Teachers in this 21st century must have to integrate technologies to teach language effectively in the classroom. They make the use of various e-devices such as multi-media projector, language lab in their classroom instruction. Similarly, different technologies help the teachers to get access with the different materials which make the teaching learning more comprehensive. Based on the transcription of the recorded interview, all of the participants use technology in the field of ELT as content. They are not using technology in their classrooms for the sake of technology.

## **Conclusion**

The result of this study implies that technology has positive role in ELT. The respondents have positive attitude toward the use of technology in the classroom. All the teachers opined that technology can provide the students with high motivated learning environment and opportunities to engage in meaningful and authentic learning. They also pointed out that internet seems as useful educational tool for motivating the student and providing target amount of information, teaching resources & material, experiencing different contents and communicating with other people in the target language.

Almost all teachers opined that they use technology as content while teaching. They also said that they are easily collaborating their learners via using the means of technology. Technology has brought drastic changes in the field of teaching and learning English. It has really provided an opportunity to the teachers to teach collaboratively via using technological devices. It has become indispensable part of every teachers and students. So, most of the teachers started using technologies in English language teaching and learning (ELTAL) for meaningful and collaborative

teaching and learning. The findings of the study also showed that most of the teachers have positive perception toward the technology supported ELT for collaborative learning and they are mainly following student-centered teaching for enhancing the technology supported ELT and collaborative learning.

### References

- Alavi, M. (1994). 'Computer-mediated collaborative learning: An empirical evaluation.' *MIS Quarterly*, vol.18, pp. 159-174.
- Botiski, I., Wong, L.H., & Looi, C. (2013). Designing technology for content-independent collaborative mobile learning. *IEEE Transactions on Learning Technologies*, 6(1), p.14.
- Daradoumis, T., Caballe, S., Juan, A. A., & Xhafa, F. (2011). *Technology-enhanced systems and tools for collaborative learning scaffolding (Eds.)*. India: Springer.
- Economides, A. A. (2014). *Culture-aware collaborative leaning*. Greece: Research Gate.
- Kim, H. (2002). Teachers as a barrier to technology-integrated language teaching. *English Teaching*, 57(2), 35-64.
- Kukulska-Hulme, A., & Shield, L. (2008). An overview of mobile assisted language learning: From content delivery to supported collaboration and interaction. *ReCALL*, 20, 271-289.
- Kukulska-Hulme, A., & Viberg, O. (2018). Mobile collaborative learning: State of the art. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 49(2), pp.207-218.
- Liu, H., & Lee, S. (2011). How Wiki-based writing influences college students' collaborative and individual composing products, processes, and learners' perceptions. *International Journal of Computer-Assisted Language Learning and Teaching*, 1(1), 45-61.
- Park, N. M., and Son, J. B. (2009). Implementing computer-assisted language learning in the EFL classroom: Teachers' perceptions and perspectives. *International Journal of Pedagogies and Learning*, 5(2).
- Sharndama, E. C. (2013). Application of ICTs in teaching and learning English (ELT) in large classes. *Journal of Arts and Humanities (JAH)*, 2(6).