Digital Literacy and Communicative Competence in the New Normal Education

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Abstract

The COVID -19 pandemic has pushed the education to alternative mode. The New Normal characterized by heavy reliance on technology has been experienced and widely advocated in education. This paper draws on an autoethnographic records which the author collected after the mass initiation of online education in June 2020 until May 2021 to reveal the importance of digital literacy and communicative competence in alternative mode of education in Nepal. The results of study indicate that digital literacy which involves the ability to locate and consume digital content, creating digital content, and communicating digital content needs to be developed further by the primary stakeholders of education. In addition, the study also reveals that the scope of communicative competence increases in alternative mode of education.

Keywords: alternative mode of education, communicative competence, digital literacy, new normal, media

Introduction

Along with the way we live, the pandemic of COVID-19 has influenced the manner in which we foster ourselves academically. The schools and universities across the globe have moved to alternative mode of instruction to guarantee the delivery of curriculum even when students and teachers stay at home hoping that things will get ordinary (Pacheco, 2020). Before this pandemic, this mode of education was hardly viewed as the customary strategy for instructing in the context of many countries. Since the outbreak of COVID-19, however, things have been changed. It can be said that it is the only method left to confer instruction in the period which requires social distancing.

The Government of Nepal has forced lockdown and the possibility of returning to ordinary life is uncertain. As a result, schools and campuses of Nepal have been handling their affairs including teaching and learning through alternative platforms. It is important for educational institutions to follow directives issued by the government and concerned bodies so that the objectives of the curriculum are not

compromised. However, it is the common responsibility of all stakeholders to address the issues and to continue educational activities.

The alternative mode of education as an alternative to traditional face-to-face mode incorporates various modalities of distance education. Different technologies and systems alone or with their combination can provide distance education. Whereas the oldest form of distance learning is the correspondence course, it has come to be realized with various forms at present. The Government of Nepal, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, and University Grants Commission, Nepal offer the common understanding on alternative system of education in Nepal (GoN, 2020; UGC, 2020). By alternative system / mode of education, they mean the method and process of continuing the study and teaching through radio, FM radio, television, online, offline, project work, self-study, distance, and open learning, in the occasions when regular reading becomes difficult due to Covid-19 or similar epidemics or disasters and geographical remoteness (GoN, 2020; UGC, 2020). In the context of Nepal, following the directives of the concerned authority, educational institutions are practicing alternation mode of education in their own capacity. Now, schools and campuses are no longer buildings, they are websites; classrooms are no longer rooms, they are icons; meetings are no longer actual, they are virtual. In other words "technologization" (Pacheco, 2020) epitomizes the New Normal in education in this COVID-19 pandemic.

Communication is an act of exchange, between or among the participants, of the message formed by systematic organization of specific forms of particular substance to mean something in the world with the open possibility to mean more. The majority of communication in the New Normal education is electronic in nature. Electronic communication is the communication which uses electronic media to transmit information. In other words, electronic communication is mediated which can be synchronous or asynchronous and involve one-to-one, one-to-many, or many-to-many exchanges of text, audio, and/or video messages. The effective electronically mediated communication in professional communities of practice, business, society, and online education requires a high degree of digital literacy and increased communicative competence (Dunlap, et al., 2016). To focus on education, technologized New Normal education invites the primary stakeholders of education to be equipped with digital literacy and communicative competence more than that required in face-to-face mode of education.

The American Library Association (ALA) defines digital literacy as "the ability to use information and communication technologies to find, evaluate, create, and communicate information, requiring both cognitive and technical skills" (Renaissance, n.d., fourth para.) Following this definition, the people who simply operate smartphones or computers and post to social media are not considered digitally literate. In education, digital literacy means even more. Being able to organize and join online meetings, browsing resources, and downloading an eBook do not make teachers and students of the New Normal digitally literate either. To be digitally literate, nevertheless, requires various cognitive and social processes involving related to digital content (Spires & Bartlett, 2012, p. 9) not just the basic ability to handle the digital gadgets and applications.

Closely linked to the digital literacy, communicative competence is another ingredient for effective communication in the New Normal education. The term *communicative competence* refers to both the

implicit knowledge of a language and the ability to use it in situationally effective way (Hymes, 1972), and now it is viewed as hypernym to linguistic competence introduced by Noam Chomsky. Canale and Swain (1980) propose four components of communicative competence: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence. Communicative competence is, thus, not limited to grammar and lexis rules but also covers socio-cultural rules of appropriate language use.

Context of the Study

I was born in a remote village of western Nepal, and at present I am a university level English language teacher residing and working in metropolitan city area of the same part of the country. I had been enjoying information and communication technologies such as television, computer, smartphones, and internet since long. Despite this, I had no idea of online education until I was enrolled as a student in a degree of online programme of a university of Nepal a couple of years before COVID-19 pandemic. The programme not only equipped me with some fundamentals of digital literacy but also triggered me to examine and be aware of my communicative competence in different occasions. In addition, whether it is realized in performance or not, I hold critical outlook in the issues of language use.

With this background, I had to experience the New Normal in education. Since then, the campus website used as an informative and promotional tool took the form of virtual campus itself. Social media, apps and platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp, Viber, Messenger, and Clubhouse turned to be information disseminating tools. Educational productivity web services such Google Classroom practically became educational forum. Besides, the use of cloud meeting apps such as Skype for Business, BigBlueButton, Microsoft Teams, Google Meet, and Zoom boomed. The genuine use of many of them was still new to me, my colleagues, and my students.

As a teacher, I along with my colleagues and students had used and had access to many of these tools and platforms to continue pedagogic activities since last one year. During this period, besides regular teaching learning activities, administrative communication are being taken place via these media. Some of these communications are public, and some others are limited to group members only. As a consumer of public information and the member of organizational communication via electronic tools and platforms, I had the opportunity of observing not only my own digital literacy and communicative competence but also that of several colleagues and students. In the mediated communication done with these tools and platforms, I found many occasions in which communication was not successful and effective because of either inadequate digital literacy or language issues. Besides communication breakdown, I observed several instances of miscommunication, demotivation, personal rivalry, personality clash and so on. These occasions, then, led me to ponder on the significance of digital literacy and communicative competence together matter a lot in New Normal education in which communication is mediated with technology and some implicit features of face-to-face communication are absent.

Statement of the Problem

Though there are debates on if education should continue during the hardship of pandemic (Chaturvedi, Vishwakarma & Singh, 2021) education has already entered the New Normal. In such context, either educational stakeholders should compromise the quality of education and accept the new educational norms of the New Normal education or education should be delivered in its truest sense. The ideal situation is undoubtedly the latter one because deteriorated educational norms can never be the goals of educational stakeholders.

To realize good education and academic culture in the present context, administrators, teachers and students must be equipped with adequate digital literacy and strong communicative competence in addition to routine attributes. In the context of Nepal, the available literature shows that digital literacy of educational stakeholders in general is in question. In addition, since long it has also been pointed out by various scholars (e.g. Canale and Swain, 1980) that good communicative competence plays seminal role in the academic communication and, in turn, in the quality of education. My personal anecdotal records reveal several of such incidents in which digital literacy and/or communicative competence have/has affected communication. Thus, the purpose this study is to explicate the role of digital literacy and communicative competence in alternative mode of education. In particular, it highlights how inadequate digital literacy and insufficient communicative competence affect the New Normal education leading to deteriorated academic communication at present. With this, the study triggers the stakeholders for better practices.

Review of Literature

The internet facility is the foremost vital innovation of information, communication, and technology (ICT) age. It has already been the foundation of educational process and offers both challenges and opportunity among teachers and students. Heavy reliance on the web-based facilities has created a shift in the definition of literacy itself in modern global knowledge-based society. Learners and educators today must know how to encode, decode, locate, comprehend, evaluate, and synthesize information for a desired learning outcome (Goldman, 2004). The ability to understand nonlinear, multimodal information, and decide authenticity of it also come under the definition of literacy in this digital age (Dalton & Proctor, 2008). Digital literacy not only requires consumption skills but also production skills. Jenkins (2011) states that just as we wouldn't consider people literate if they could read but not write, we shouldn't consider people literate if they can consume but not produce in digital media.

Cognitive and social processes involved in digital literacy are subsumed into three categories: (a) locating and consuming digital content, (b) creating digital content, and (c) communicating digital content (Spires & Bartlett, 2012, p. 9). Knowledge about domain, search engine, search techniques, authenticity check of the content, knowledge about ethical use and so on help users locate and consume digital content effectively (Moraveji et al., 2011). Consumption of digital content should logically follow creation of digital content. To be digitally literate, teachers and students should be able to create digital content through multiple media and a variety of web tools. The creation of digital contents such as blog entries, web articles, photo / video, infographics, memes, slide shares, quizzes, PDFs, screen shoots, forms and

docs, social media posts and conversations and so on enhances students' learning and help teachers focus on students' learning beyond mere lecture in the class. As a result, 21st century skills namely communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity are likely to develop which, in turn, enhance teaching and learning of digital age (Bakkenes et al., 2010). Genuine digital contents produced by teachers and students must be communicated effectively in educational context. Various digital tools and web-based platforms such as blogs, Facebook, Google Classroom, Messenger, Viber, WhatsApp, emails can be effective for communicating digital content (Merchant, 2003). In addition, the use of mobile devices such as cellphones can be further convenient to the communication process for teachers and students. Thus, it is important for teachers and students to develop adequate digital literacy not only because current situation demands, but also because educational systems require it for teacher and students to be prepared for 21st century work and scholarship (Trilling, & Fadel, 2009). In particular, the current pandemic has already invited this need.

Fully digitally literate teachers and students too additionally require appropriate communicative competence to succeed in their respective capacities. Among the four components of communicative competence, first, grammatical competence includes knowledge of phonology, orthography, vocabulary, word formation and sentence formation. Second, sociolinguistic competence includes knowledge of sociocultural rules of using language with appropriate grammatical forms according to settings, topics, and communicative functions in different sociolinguistic contexts. Third, discourse competence concerns the ability of understanding and producing cohesion and coherence while practicing listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills of language. Finally, strategic competence covers all possible strategies to be employed when grammatical or sociolinguistic or discourse difficulties are realized by the user (Canale & Swain, 1980). A communicatively competent individual is thus grammatically competent, sociolinguistically aware, skillful in discourse, and strategically equipped.

Though the idea of digital literacy with reference to teacher and students has received attention of stakeholders (MOE, 2013; Neupane, 2019; Maharjan, 2020), the notion of communicative competence on the part of teacher and students in digital education has rarely been addressed. The issues like are like likely to arise severely after the minimization of digital divide in the context of Nepal. Even if wherever the situation is, it is consonant to correct the leading course of action to reinforce later development. Now the major question to answer, thus, is if communication in New Normal education satisfies the requirements of digital literacy and communicative competence. This study peeps the situation from author's autoethnographic records.

Methodology

The purpose of this study is to explicate the role of digital literacy and communicative competence in alternative mode of education. To accomplish this aim, I have adopted auto-ethnography design of research. In the study, I have used my auto-ethnographic records collected in one year's time from June 2020 to May 2021 and stored electronically. The records were multimodal in nature and mainly included texts, audio, and video. The textual records were screenshot and audio / video records were transliterated when found in other than the English language and transcribed. The collected evidence is, then, presented,

described, and explained in the parameters of digital literacy and communicative competence. Ethical standard in the research is maintained by ensuring complete anonymity of the participants. In addition, the participants are given pseudonyms.

Results and Discussion

Following COVID-19 pandemic, as per institutional provision, I involved in alternative mode of education since June 2020. The significant commonality was observed in conception and practice of the alternative mood of education in both school and campus by that time resembles one another. First, the general staff meeting was held to decide on running online classes and their modality. As per the decision of the meeting, the official call was made to the students via notice on the website and telephone calls for joining Messenger Groups of respective classes where subject teachers had already got access. When students joined the Messenger Group, the campus administration repeatedly informed them to be familiar with the cloud meeting app called Zoom. By the mid-June 2020, it was managed to commence the class. Teachers shared the Zoom meeting link in the concerned Messenger group, and the classes would run. At the same time, all the announcement of teachers was made in the same forum, and the notices from the administration appeared in both Messenger group and campus website. The practice of alternative mode of education or commonly known as online class made use of many other tools and platforms such as Google Meet, Google Classroom, and Microsoft Teams also along with the elapse of time. The campus conducted series of training for both teachers and students for helping them use these media. With increased interest, I, along with my students and other colleagues, have been using these tools as per the convenience. From the beginning of this mode, I have been taking multiple classes of university level involving the students of diverse background.

Locating and Consuming Digital Content

Locating and consuming digital content are basic requirements to teaching, scholarship, and study in digital age. Digital technology makes it easier to locate and consume those contents and makes teaching and learning in digital age possible. The prerequisite for this, however, is the adequate digital literacy which begins from a user's ability to locate and consume digital content. I remember my struggle in the market to find reference books of a new course assigned to me in the campus three years before COVID 19 pandemic. I was assigned the course with the printed syllabus by the head of the department. There was the list of sixteen reference books at the end of the syllabus. My priority then was to collect those books from the market and preview all those before entering my class for the first time. First, I googled those books by entering title and/or author. The results were some reviews in some cases and paid access in some other cases. The reviews would not help me, and digital pay was beyond my practical circumstances. Then, I visited every book store in the local market but with this attempt I just got two related books not listed in the syllabus. With my previous knowledge and those two books, I managed about two weeks in the class. I was losing my confidence and could not have delivered as I had expected to deliver. I asked my seniors and colleagues but could not get immediate solution. "*I will inform you if I found*" or "*These [books] may be available in Central Library*" were their responses to my problem. Following the latter suggestion, in unpaid leave of three days, I headed to Tribhuvan University Central Library, 124 miles away from my hometown. On the way to the library, in university premise, there were book shops with huge billboards. My encroaching concern led me to enter those shops before visiting the library located in a stone throw away. I enquired about the availability of my book list in one of the shops. The gentleman in the shop

hurriedly replied, "*We don't have these books now. Will arrive soon. Do you have pen drive? If you manage with their PDFs, I can transfer them to YOU. But you should pay, sir* (with smile). Then, he checked my list the second time and added, "I have all except one, sir. What do you do?" I was much excited to listen to him. Nevertheless, I got all those books in my pocket within a minute. To my surprise, he charged very less than I had expected to pay for. Upon my return, I resumed my classes with much confidence.

After few months of this incident, I got familiar with web-based platforms like Library Genesis, SciHub, PDF Drive, and Internet Archive Books along with some advance search techniques like Boolean Search in course of my degree in online programme. Though the ethical aspect of using these platforms invites separate discussion, since then I have not faced similar incidents in my scholarship. In particular, this knowledge of locating and consuming digital content turned to be a boon in alternative mode of education in this COVID – 19 pandemic. I do not mean I have been a competent digital content locater and consumer, but this simple knowledge has opened up the whole new array of my journey to professionalism. While collaborating with my colleagues, I have been asked for favor regarding resources. I remember Birat *ji* and Dev *ji* (pseudonyms*),* my colleagues of the same department, wondering for the syllabus and references of their courses which were just a click away in the university website. Chaudhari *baini* (sister) was one of such students who was highly demotivated because of not having resources at hand. In a social media chat, she wrote, "*Book chaina. Lockdown ma bazzar sabai banda chha. Online class liyera matrai kasrai ho khai? Exam kasri dineho, sathi ho? Ma ta...*" ([I] don't have book. Market is closed because of lockdown. How to manage study only by joining online classes? Friends, how to appear in examination? Rather I …*)*. Her remark implies that neither her teachers have helped her to be resourceful while involving in alternative mode of education nor she herself was capable of locating and consuming digital contents of her courses.

Creating Digital Content

Limited or no knowledge of locating digital contents reduces the chance of creating them. Locating and consumption being the receptive skills affect the quantity and quality of creating digital content, the productive skill. The evidence comes from the turn in ratio to my assignment. Two of my important assignments given to the students in the English course of bachelor level were preparing three minutes long broadcast story and creating personal blog with at least two entries. In both assignments, among 63 students, only 7 students managed to turn in. Not only in assignment, the students' contribution to group chat concerning, for example, class schedule were limited to single word or phrase, emoji and memes readily available in the internet. The contribution, no doubt, indicated digital content creation potentiality of students but it was less helpful for immediate educational purpose. Though I employed blogging and teaching with multimodal PowerPoint slides, majority of our delivery was via PowerPoint Slides and lecture. This made me realize that we are reluctant to create diverse digital content to support education in alternative mode of education. From the informal talks with my colleagues, I came to know that the reluctance was the result of inadequate literacy to create the content of multiple types.
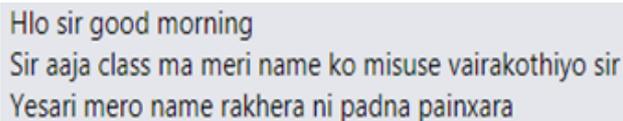
Communicating Digital Content

In order to communicate digital content, both teachers and students first should be able to locate and consume them and in turn createtheir own content. During this same time of online education, the campus issued an online class protocol in which, among several points, one of the points goes like this:

Maukhik prastutikaran matra nagarnuhos. Bidhyarthiharule online class ma herna ra sunna ko lagi kehi samagri ko satha kakshya sanchalan garnuhos. Ahile bidhyarthiharu sanga kitabharu nahuna sakcha.ra sahajai upalabdha hune watabaran pani navayekole upalabdha eBooks wa tapaisanga vayeko kitabbata padne samagriko photo khichi PDF file tayar gari share garnuhola. Udhaharankolagi campusko website hernasaknuhunechha. (Auto-ethnographic note)

(Do not use lecture method only. Conduct class with some reading and listening materials for the students in the online class. Since the students may not have textbooks and it is not easy to find them at present, share the available eBooks or PDF of photos for compulsory readings from the textbook at your hand. To see an example, please check the campus website.)

In response to this notice, I could see just single book shared in the platforms. Besides, I observed the students' hope and determination when I shared eBook of 'Patterns for College Writing: A Rhetorical Reader and Guide' by Laurie G. Kirszner and Stephen R. Mandell in the forum. Pradip (pseudonym) reacted with excitement, "*Sir, yo padhe huncha ni hai?*" (Sir, is it sufficient for the course if I read it thoroughly?). I could then realize the value of communicating digital content in alternative mode of education.

Besides these three components of digital literacy, some other practical issues related to inadequate digital literacy of the members were commonly observed. One of my female students from bachelor level reported to me about the misuse of her name by someone else in the class. She informed me about the incident via personal message. Below is the screenshot of her message:

Hlo sir good morning
Sir aaja class ma meri name ko misuse vairakothiyo sir
Yesari mero name rakhera ni padna painxara

(Hello Sir, Good Morning.
Sir, someone had been misusing my name in the class today.
Can somebody join the class with my name?)

The fault lies not in her but in the one who joined the class with her name. She was sure on the fact that it was misuse because there were not any other students with the same name. The incidents, however, invited some severe consequences, and had to be addressed administratively.

In addition to digital literacy, I observed several instances which invited us to revisit the notion of communicative competence of online education. Communication in alternative mode of education is mediated with technology resulting in multimodal and nonlinear communication. In addition, the crucial features of face-to-face communication such as immediate feedback and accompanying nonverbal messages

such as appearance, body language, proximity, haptics, and physical environment are rarely available in electronic communication which characterizes the alternative mode of education. The languages used by both teachers and students should therefore be correct and appropriate. The observation, however, raises question on the communicative competence of the users.

Grammatical Competence

Grammatical competence of a language user is the ability to communicate 'correctly'. Rules of phonology, orthography, vocabulary, word formation, sentence formation, writing mechanics and so on are to be followed for grammatical competence. Though it is possible to treat online chats as separate genre of language use, to compromise language issue in an academic setting involving teachers and students talking about their class and related issues is likely to be counterproductive. It can cause miscommunication, and in particular, impair language learning. Following cropped screenshots are the contributions of teachers in communication with students in Messenger group of the class:

> Line has gone with the starting of our class.I am trying to reconnect you by using data.

> Please join now.

> What happened? Is there also electric problem?

> This is report of this weak

> I am waiting you by using data.

> This much for today.

> Yes u were there.But in the list it was mist.

> Students unable to take class today due to in hospital for neighbors treatment

> I think today discussion is fruitful to you all. We can continue it tomorrow see you

> If any let me know

> Students Kati wait garnu we will continue tomorrow hai

These utterances require several grammatical explanations. Choice of words ('*line*' for 'power / electricity'; '*weak*' for 'week'; '*mist*' for 'missed'), vague utterance ('*I am waiting you by using data.*'; '*I think today discussion is fruitful to you all.*'), punctuation and subject-verb ellipsis ('*Students unable*'), use of connective ('*due to in hospital*'), and Romanization ('*Kati wait garnu*') are, for example a few to mention. These evidences logically create the ground to question the users' grammatical competence while communicating in digital platforms.

Sociolinguistic Competence

Sociolinguistic competence concerns the knowledge of sociocultural rules of using language correctly and appropriately according to settings, topics and communicative functions in different sociolinguistic contexts. Issues related to sociolinguistic competence were also commonly observed in variety of occasions in multiple platforms. The campus had a Messenger group used for quick dissemination of official information with clearly stated rules by the admin. One of the rules was like this: '*Self-promotion, spam, irrelevant links and files, and interpersonal chats aren't allowed*'. On one occasion, when irrelevant chats were going on among some members, there appeared a notice in the campus letter head stating two problems regarding teaching learning in online mode and their proposed solutions. The stated problems in the notice were:

i)   *Kehi visayaharuma sikai sahajataka lagi sikkshekharubata sikai samagri prapta huna nasakeko tatha sikkshen karya kora maukhik vyakhyanma matrai simit raheko (*In some subjects, learning materials have not been received from teachers to facilitate learning, and teaching has been limited to mere verbal explanations)

ii)   *Pradhyapanka lagi katipaya aadaraniya sikkshekharubata nirmit sikai samagriharu campusko website tatha sandeshvahak samuha (messenger group)ma prapta nabhayekale bishesh karanle online classma upasthit janauna nasakne vidhyarthiharuko sikaile parokshya rupama pani punarbal prapta garna nasakeko*

(As the learning materials created by some respected teachers for teaching were not available on the campus website and messenger group, the learning of the students who could not attend the online class due to special reasons could not be indirectly reinforced)

The notice expects some more contribution from the faculty members to enhance students' learning in online mode. However, right below the notice, the ongoing conversation was wrapped up in the following way:

Member 1: Bho yehan dherai kura nagaram pheri arko suchana aaula
          (Let's not chat further than this here)

  Member 2: *Huncha huncha*
              (Ok, ok)

As the notice appeared in the professional and administrative setting with academic context intending

to make the teachers do something more for students, I found this conversation awkward according to the setting, context, and intended communicative function.

Discourse Competence

Discourse competence which concerns the ability of understanding and producing cohesion and coherence while listening, speaking, reading and writing matters a lot in mediated communication. Sometimes, technology related issues become barrier to maintain discourse competence in the communication. Among several instances, here is an excerpt of a conversation of my class:

Teacher: Err..writing is both a process and product. As a process, it has four steps. As I said earlier, the first one is invention, the second one is … WHAT?

Student 1: Product

Teacher: I mean…

Student 2: Ha ha! Sir is asking the second step of writing.

Student 1: Oh, just now here was no sound sir.

Here in this conversation, there was short sound interruption in the students' gadget he missed my contribution '*As a process, it has four steps. As I said earlier, the first one is invention…*' and he implied the meaning of the question in the conversation: If '*process*' is the first one, the second one is *'product'*.

Strategic Competence

When interlocutors experience grammatical or sociolinguistic or discourse difficulties, they employ s**trategic competence which a**ll possible strategies to be employed to compensate those difficulties. Among many other, pause, fillers, clichés are some of the strategic tools of natural communication. In mediated communication, however, new strategic tools are observed. Leaving online meetings, muting device, turning video off were the commonest strategies used by the students in online classes. In face-to-face communication, when a question is asked or turn is given it is not natural to stay unresponsive. In mediated communication, in contrast, I observed participants getting the question or turn but not responding. Not to respond is, thus, also counts as strategic competence used in mediated communication. Nevertheless, ethical aspect and productivity of these strategies from the perspective of micro-level digital literacy is in question.

Since the New Normal education is dominated by technology, digital literacy and communicative competence are to be viewed in an integrated way. Digital literacy or communicative competence alone is insufficient to achieve curricular objectives set in accordance with the true meaning of education. The results indicate that the teachers and the students both need to develop digital literacy and communicative competence, and need to integrate them to fit in the New Normal education. Unlike other studies, digital literacy and communicative competence should not be taken in isolation. If digital communicative competence is understood and practiced in current educational practices, it will help to achieve educational goals in the changing scenario.

Conclusion and Implications

Alternative mode of education has been the sole alternative in the present time of pandemic. Teachers and students are at distance and their meeting is either synchronous or asynchronous via communication media. Alternative

mode mood of education has been formalized and institutionalized in the context of Nepal too. To ensure that the academic activities are fulfilling the curricular objectives, it has been necessary to evaluate the ongoing process from multiple perspectives. On the one hand, the issue of digital divide is yet to be addressed by the concerned authority, digital literacy of the primary stakeholders, on the other hand, has naturally developed as a challenge in the education of the New Normal. In addition, the scope of communicative competence has broadened in mediated communication of education.

From the study it is found that teachers and students are struggling to locate the required and available digital content resulting in limited creation of digital content and reluctant to communicate. Similarly, the study shows that teachers and students pay less attention to linguistic aspect of their contribution in the digital media. Further, it is also observed that sociolinguistic, discourse and strategic competence have been compromised in alternative mode of education. It is, thus, concluded from the study that digital literacy and communicative competence play crucial role in the effective delivery of education in the New Normal. The study also invites further research to recognize the domain of Digital Communicative Competence (DCM) to support education in the digital age.

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