

A Look into the Inquiry-Based Pedagogy of an English Language Classroom in Nepal: An Ethnographic Study

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Abstract

Inquiry-based teaching and learning is a new concept and has been warmly welcomed in most of the schools, especially in urban areas in the context of Nepal. English language teaching (ELT) needs to be explored in the wider social context. Researchers have indicated the need to explore the local practices in ELT pedagogy these days. This study describes how an English teacher in Nepal practices his local pedagogy in a community school using ethnographic observations and interviews. The study indicates that the local practices are idiosyncratic and connected to wider social and classroom contexts. The study reveals that inquiry-based strategies include question-answer technique, storytelling, presentations, discussions, fieldworks, lab visits, etc., in the context of Nepal. The study will be helpful to ELT practitioners to highlight their teaching pedagogy, focusing on the local practices. The outcomes of the study are expected to contribute to the policymaking and review of the curriculum to bring change in teaching and learning pedagogy. Besides, they may contribute to the way teachers, students, and authorities work in mutual collaboration to develop different strategies of student-centred pedagogy.

Keywords: Interactive Practice, interpersonal skills, Inquiry Technique, Pedagogy.

Introduction

Teaching-learning activity is an important part of education that shapes what and how students learn. Several methods are in practice, and one recent approach that actively engages learners in sharing and collaborating on ideas to generate specific questions and answers is inquiry-based teaching and learning (Lee, 2014). Any knowledge that doesn't lead to new questions quickly dies out (Friesen, 2013). Buranapatana (2006) states that questioning yields fresh viewpoints; the level of thinking depends on the difficulty of the tasks or inquiries (cited in Wale & Bishaw, 2020). Tighes and Wiggins (2013) explore eight elements that teachers can control to support a classroom culture of inquiry: the nature of the learning goal, the role of questions, protocols and codes of conduct, a supportive environment, the use of space and physical resources, the use of time, the use of texts and other resources, and assessment practices. Similarly, Wells (1999) states, "teaching language through inquiry is also viewed as pursuing significant

questions through using questions and ways of researching from a range of knowledge systems” (p.264).

Spronken and Smith (2012) point out that in inquiry courses, teachers begin the class with a general theme to trigger learning. They then raise good researchable questions and provide students with training in developing valuable research and communication skills. They focus on asking questions that stimulate students’ thinking, and asking researchable questions occupies an important place in inquiry-based teaching and learning. Questions lead to deep thinking, and profound thinking is inspired by questions. Questioning strategy assists the judgment and assessment of learning outcomes (Lee, 2014). Kidman and Casinader (2017) state that when students raise questions, it shows their engagement in the lesson and active thinking. Chin and Osborne (2010) claim that asking questions enables students to articulate their understanding of the topic, make connections with other ideas, become aware of what they do not know but need to know, and finally reflect on why certain explanations are better than others (as cited in Kidman & Casinader, 2017). Students ask questions, look into things, or conduct investigations, showing the ability to do so critically, logically, and analytically in order to form their own opinions in inquiry-based teaching (Andrini, 2016).

Literature Review

Inquiry-Based Pedagogy and English Language Teaching

Inquiry-based teaching and learning is one of the emerging student-centred methods in the field of language teaching methodology. Rejeki (2017) maintains that inquiry-based teaching and learning is a method which encourages the students to raise questions, explore the questions and construct knowledge. Learners generate knowledge from the underlying assumptions or rules based on the practical examples and apply their knowledge in their everyday situations to solve problems (Lee, 2014). Inquiry-based pedagogy demands that students take the leading role in knowledge construction and application, and effective instructional scaffolding interventions by the teacher and/or the digital learning environment are crucial (Chu et.al., 2017). This idea is supported by Levy et al. (2013), who claim that inquiry-based learning focuses on generating solutions through meaningful discussions and interactions. This concept is supported by Friesen (2009), who claims, “Students need to be able to work creatively with concepts to generate new ideas, new theories, new products, and new knowledge” (p.7). This view focuses on generating new ideas through group discussions and interactions while solving problems.

Inquiry-based teaching has become increasingly widespread not only in science and social studies but also in language classrooms. AL-Wadi (2018) focuses on the fact that questioning strategies in the EFL/ESL classroom develop linguistic competence through the improvement of certain skills and enables to develop their language accuracy, reducing linguistic errors. In this regard, Myers (2001) states that teaching language through inquiry has become more common as it facilitates the learners’ ability to acquire the new language. Similarly, Beach and Myers (2001) mention that utilising the framework of IBL in the language classroom facilitates learners’ acquisition of a new

language. This idea focuses on learning new things in a language classroom utilising the IBL framework. Language supports and enhances critical thinking, which can be developed using inquiry- based teaching in the classroom. Sadler (1989) illustrates that the teacher encourages the students to construct knowledge either in groups or individually when using inquiry in a language classroom. It is also argued that learners' language needs and expectations are introduced in the IBL framework in three different types of communication: oral communication, written communication and visual communication (Pinker, 1996). The use of inquiry-based teaching in the language classroom is also highlighted in the work of Lee (2014), who argues that applying inquiry-based techniques in teaching EFL/ESL can be classified as one type of questioning strategy. This idea focuses more on creating quality questions for the construction of knowledge in the language classroom. The use of inquiry pedagogy thus seems to be appropriate and effective in language classrooms.

Types of Inquiry

Inquiry-based teaching and learning can have different forms or types on the basis of the nature of teachers' help and students' involvement. Smith and Walker (2010) have identified three different modes of inquiry- structured inquiry, guided inquiry and open inquiry - which are classified according to the level of guidance and support provided by teachers (as cited in Preston et al.,2015). In structured inquiry, both problems and the procedure to solve the problem are teacher-driven, and in guided inquiry, the problem is teacher-driven, but the procedure to carry out is student-driven, and finally, in open inquiry, both problems and the procedure to develop a solution are student-driven. Similarly, Levy and Petrulis (2012) differentiate inquiry as either discovery-oriented (building new knowledge) or information-oriented (exploring existing knowledge). Discovery-oriented inquiry is more like open inquiry, and information-oriented inquiry is more like guided inquiry.

Staver and Bay (2087) differentiate between guided inquiry and open inquiry. Guided inquiry requires students to determine the solution method, while open inquiry requires students to create the problem on their own. They further claim that structured inquiry involves giving students a problem and a plan for how to solve it. Similarly, Smith (1996) makes a similar distinction between teacher inquiry, in which the teacher poses questions, and learner inquiry, in which questions are posed by the students. Lee (2004) describes process-oriented guided inquiry learning that involves students in small groups in a classroom or lab to complete instructional modules that provide them with facts before prompting them with questions that help them come to conclusions. She further mentions that in such an inquiry, the teacher acts as a facilitator, assisting student groups as needed and dealing with issues that affect the entire class as needed.

Social Constructivism as a Theory of Learning

Inquiry method refers to constructivist theory; learning is an active process in which learners construct new ideas or concepts based on previous experience and knowledge (Andrini, 2016). Different theories like constructivism, social constructivism, ZPD, Socio-cognitive theory, experiential theory, etc., can be linked for exploring perceptions and ways of inquiry- based teaching. Research shows that social constructivism can

lead to effective teaching methods because it allows students to work in collaboration to construct knowledge and understand it through a critical lens, with the support of peers (Powell & Kalina, 2009). Social constructivist theorists John Dewey, Vygotsky, and Paulo Freire played a vital role in the development of inquiry (Powell & Kalina, 2009). Freire (1970) suggested that educators reject the banking concept of education and replace it with problem-posing education, which is very much reflective of the inquiry-based learning model (cited in Durakoglu, 2013). In this inquiry model, both the teachers and students have equal power; the teacher does not have “absolute knowledge”, and they both engage in dialogue to construct knowledge together (Durakoglu, 2013).

A learning approach based on inquiry emphasises using the methods of scientists to construct knowledge (Green et al., 2004). In this approach, learners create their own hypotheses and test them carefully (Keselman, 2003). Vygotsky further expanded this thinking by suggesting that effective learning in the classroom occurs in a socio-cultural context, through social interaction and cooperation with peers and teachers (Powell & Kalina, 2009). Vygotsky emphasised the role of the zone of proximal development, the more knowledgeable other and language development, which is a cultural artefact to discuss its significance in the classroom. He suggested that with the support of an experienced teacher or with qualified peers, through a dialogic process, students’ ability to comprehend knowledge increases (Lantolf & Appel, 1994).

Method of the Study

Ethnography is a method I adopted that requires observation in the uncontrolled natural environment, and also because doing ethnography is like an adventure, where the ethnographers cannot forecast who they will meet or the results that they may find (Li & Wang, 2018). Ethnography as a research method is a type of qualitative research that focuses on exploring accounts of different social phenomena in social and cultural contexts. This research study was based on one of the secondary schools in Rupandehi district. In order to be able to observe my participants’ behaviours over an extended period of time at any time of day without interfering with their normal activities, I purposively selected this particular school. The participants were an English teacher and students from the same class. Mr Ravi was the pseudonym given to the teacher. The teacher is one of the senior English teachers of the school who has been teaching in this school for 9 years, but he has got about 20 years’ experience of teaching English at different levels. He mostly practices student-centred pedagogy and often starts the class with questions related to the topic. He believes that unless we activate students in the class, effective learning is not possible. Mr Ravi is also famous for using ICT skills in teaching English to develop soft skills among the students. There were about 48 students (28 males and 20 females) in this class. In terms of ethnicity, the majority were Hindus (about 80%) and Brahmans (about 60%). I used observation, field notes and interviews as methods of data collection in my research. Observation, along with field notes, interviews with participants, photographs, audio-video recordings, documents, realia or relevant sources was used for data collection purposes.

After deciding on secondary school as my research field, I went there to get to know the environment and got permission for my study. I visited the school and went to the principal's room to ask permission. I told him clearly that I would observe the class for at least three months, and I also informed him that I had already discussed with the subject teacher informally about my observation. After the generation of data through prolonged observation, interview, field notes and school documents available, as a qualitative researcher, I selected the relevant information from observation and interview, going through it over and over. Then I transcribed the interview scripts, observation records, and field notes into English. I then arranged the information under different headings and sub-headings without modifying it, as Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) state that qualitative data analysis involves organising, explaining and making sense of the data in terms of the participants' definition of the situation, while noting different patterns, themes, groups, and regularities of meaning.

Findings and Discussions

Group Work Oriented Interactive Practice and Presentations

The first day I walked into class, I observed the students patting, gossiping and discussing with one another using the Nepali language. Since these were the students I had encountered for the first time, I stood in the left corner of the room and just watched them, trying to understand how they typically behaved in class. Mr Ravi began the class simply by discussing the topic and introducing brief context and background of lesson five, entitled "Ethics, Norms and Values" After motivating them, the teacher continued the class by questioning the topic. The teacher began the class with some questions, such as what ethics is. What do you mean by Norms? What is value? etc... One of the students replied: *Moral standards that direct a person's behaviour are called ethics. The teacher noted it on the board.* Another one replied: *The principle of moral behaviour used to direct, control, or regulate an activity is called a norm.* Then the teacher briefly summarised the meaning of the terms norms, ethics and values and divided the class into seven groups to discuss and present the themes of seven different paragraphs given in the textbook on page fifty-seven.

Moreover, the teacher also asked them to focus on the meaning of the words discussed in the motivation section, which are highlighted in red in the text. Each group was engaged in the reading comprehension, and the teacher facilitated them by showing some pictures of a doctor, a pilot, a teacher, and a singer, and made them discuss what people belonging to these professions value, develop ethics and norms. The teacher also pointed out some differences between values, ethics and norms. The students discussed in the group for 10 minutes. They asked each other questions. They were involved in discussions on ethics, values and norms as explained in the text. After discussing in the group, each group leader presented the report of the group. They wrote answer in cardboard papers which were provided to the students. Every member of the group went in front of the class and participated in the presentation, and the group leader summarised the conclusion.

Ram (pseudo name), the leader of group A, presented his report. He explained *the ethics of different American and Japanese companies and concluded that Japanese people and companies are more conscious about ethics than American ones*. Similarly, Gita (pseudonym), leader of the second group, reported: *ethics and values are different from one country to another. She gave an example of apologising for the mistakes in different countries*. She further explained: *a polite system of one country common to all may be impolite to others*. She gave very specific examples of how managers of different companies ask for an apology. Ramesh (pseudonym), Group C leader, presented in his words: *asking for an apology is a matter of convention, and the Japanese are very much habituated to this*. Group four was led by Hari (pseudonym), and he thanked the teacher for providing the opportunity and moved further to present his findings. The teacher commented after every presentation. Everyone was so happy and excited, and no one was hopeless in their presentations. What was more interesting in the class was that students listening to the presentation also brought questions, and presenters answered the questions quite confidently. This kind of group work-oriented interactive practice and presentation encourages creativity, critical thinking and discovery skills of the students. This idea is supported by Canalita et al. (2019), who maintained that a learning strategy and a pedagogical approach are both included in inquiry-based teaching. The central idea of inquiry-based pedagogy focuses on discovery learning as well as the growth of students' cognitive abilities and metacognitive strategies through the use of questions. Inquiry makes students involved in making observations, asking questions, reading books and other sources of information that help them to solve the tasks. (Avsec & Kocijancic, 2014). It shows that inquiry-based pedagogy helps students to know or discover the learning process. This classroom observation obviously tells us that the teacher has led the students to explore the problems or issues, and students are involved in solving the problems, interacting with the open questions. Chu et al. (2021) state that inquiry -based teaching is related to problem-based and project-based learning in which learners develop an inquiry mindset and address different issues with an open set of answers. Similarly, Friesen (2009) states, "Students need to be able to work creatively with concepts to generate new ideas, new theories, new products, and new knowledge" (p.7). This kind of generating questions helps in the construction of ideas. Chu et al. (2021) further point out that inquiry-based tasks share a theoretical underpinning in social constructivism, presuming that learners are active and involved in the process of construction of knowledge and give their own meaning, being creative and critical.

Classroom Dynamics with Questioning

One day, when I entered the school building, very few students were roaming outside, and I thought the bell had already rung for the class which I was going to observe. Hurriedly, I looked at my mobile as I forgot to wear a wristwatch to know the time, and I realised that I was only one minute late. I ran away to the class, which was on the fourth floor of the northern building of the school and found that the English teacher had just entered the class and was writing the date and the topic on the board. As I entered the class, all students stood up with good afternoon. It seemed that the class was

crowded and noisy as some students were gossiping, and 5 ceiling fans were in the class to produce noise. The teacher used a microphone to make his voice audible and control the students.

The teacher briefly informed the students that they would discuss the lesson “Surprising Culture” on page 72, which is a reading section. The teacher began the lesson by summarising and contextualising the lesson, asking some questions about surprising culture in their own contexts, deriving some examples from different cultures. For example, to greet people we say good morning, good afternoon and good evening in English, and we say Namaste in Nepali. Similarly, Magar people say ‘Jhorle’, and Tibetan people take their lip outside their mouth and towards their nose. The class was funny as all students took interest in the examples and asked the teacher to give even more examples of the surprising culture. Then, the teacher further explained that in some cultures of South Asian countries, to get blessings from the god, they hit a coconut on their head and in Thailand, to protect biodiversity and to protect monkeys, they organise a buffet party for monkeys, and in Mexican culture, they rub their face all over the cake to celebrate their birthday, and they start eating the cake. The class environment was so interesting that everyone was showing so much interest in the class. Then the teacher made four groups of students, and in each group there were three students, and the teacher asked them to engage in group discussions about four different cultures, namely pointing with lips (group A), tipping customs (group B), slurping (group C) and kneeling or lying prostrate as a greeting (group D). The teacher asked other students to engage in reading these four different groups in order to develop quality questions to ask the groups. After they were engaged in the tasks for 15 minutes, the teacher asked four different groups to move to the front of the class, and the teacher asked all other students to ask questions to the four groups about the four different surprising cultures given in the textbook. For the first group, two questions were raised by the students, and the group members answered the questions.

Similarly, one of the students suddenly stood up and asked the question to the second group members what the positive aspect of tipping is. The members of the second group were puzzled, but the group leader intuitively replied that the tipping system is the western culture and it is a symbol of love to the labor. It encourages the employees to work harder and harder. Similarly, the second group was asked questions like Who are the people to give tips to? " Is tipping always positive? In the same way, the third and fourth groups were also asked the questions, and they confidently replied, which made the environment very lively and positive. But this system is not very common in Nepal. After the bell, some students came outside the class and wanted to talk to me about such a strange culture (I guess), but couldn't speak to me directly. One of the students asked: " Sir, do you give such tips in your culture? (Such as to the waiter/waitress or to the rickshaw rider or taxi driver) And I replied: *for the waiter and waitress, I have also followed the tipping system, but for the taxi driver and the rickshaw rider, I haven't offered them a tip yet. I really found that the students were so interested in knowing about the surprising culture due to the interesting technique used by the teacher.* The classroom environment was so conducive that everyone was active enough to listen to who was asking what type of questions. The teacher was playing the role of facilitator.

Really, the questions raised by the students were contextual, and the questions by the students and the answers of the group members made the class lively. I felt that it is a question-answer technique often used in the inquiry-based teaching classrooms that really activates the students. Kidman and Casinader (2017) mention that the act of posing a question is a crucial skill as the students are engaged in critical thinking and the development of inquiry literacy, and that questions, in fact, show that they are interested in the lesson. Questions also help them to connect their prior knowledge with the present knowledge. They further explain that asking questions enables students to articulate their understanding of the topic, to make connections with other ideas and so on. It means questioning strategy is one of the important inquiry techniques that connects the known knowledge with the unknown knowledge. Spronken (2012) states that students can be strongly motivated by complex and personally relevant questions.

Storying Game as an Inquiry Technique

I entered the class holding a bag along with a mobile, a diary, and a course book. Then, I found the teacher dividing the class into six groups and asked the group leaders to choose the topic of the stories shared by their seniors. Then the teacher asked them to engage in discussions in the group to form similar stories. All the students were enthusiastically involved in the discussions. The first group was led by Ram and the title was 'An old man lived in the village'. The moral lesson of the story they highlighted was that we should not go on changing our goals, and we should be happy with what we have. The second group was led by Shyam, and the title was Four Girls. Similarly, the third group leader was Mahesh, and the title of the story was lazy donkey and Its Awfulness. Likewise, the fourth group had discussions and interactions on the dream of every parent, and the group leader's responsibility was given to Bishnu. Similarly, the fifth group responsibility was given to Gita, and the group members worked hard on Hungry Mice. It was noticed that all the leaders and group members worked so hard to make their stories complete, clear and fruitful. It was also found that they had serious discussions to make their stories logical and well-organised.

The teacher was moving around the class, helping the students and observing to see if they were interrupted in the process of forming stories. The teacher frequently suggested to the students that their stories should be creative, logical and well-organised. He advised them to use conjunctions and different types of connectors to make each paragraph coherent and cohesive. He further made them aware of the fact that the use of correct tense becomes quite serious in the story. As the time given to the class was over, the subject teacher suggested that they prepare the stories in their group, and they would write the story in their exercise books and present the next day. The group leader of group A presented a story entitled "Thakur's Well". This group presented the story in about 150 words and, according to the presenters, the moral lesson of the story was "no one should be discriminated against based on caste; everybody should be judged based on his/her ability". Similarly, the second group presented the story, and the title was **Four Girls**. The members of the second group presented the story confidently. They explained that the moral lesson of the story is that

we should fulfil our responsibility, shouldn't cheat, and that preparation for the exam is never over. They were asked some questions, like why the girls didn't fulfil their responsibilities. Why did they not attend the exam? Why did the girls say when the teacher asked why they were late? What is the value of an exam? and so on. The group members confidently answered all these questions, and the group got a big applause from all the students.

The third and fourth groups presented the story in the same way in the title lazy donkey and Its Awfulness and " Dream of every parents' respectfully. They said the moral lesson of the third story was that luck does not favour everyone, and the moral lesson of the fourth story was that every pupil should respect parents' responsibility. Similarly, the fifth group presented the story in the title Hungry Mice. The moral lesson of this story, they said, was extreme is harmful, i.e. too much of something is fatal for us. This presentation was a bit more spontaneous than the presentations of other groups. This group was asked some questions, like how their appetite was fulfilled. Why was the mouse foolish? Why did the mouse become happy? These were some of the questions raised by the group members confidently without any hesitation or confusion.

Similarly, group six wrote and presented a story on the title "Thakur's Well, " and there were six members in the group. All the members enthusiastically took part in the discussions and interactions, and engaged very carefully in the process of forming the story. It shows that story writing can be one of the good ways of inquiry, which keeps students active in the classroom. Students asked many quality questions after the presentation and engaged a lot during the time they prepared their stories. Gatt and Theuma (2012) state that the role of the story is to set the scene and introduce the research question. Thus, each of the activities created is based on the narrative that ends with a problem-solving-related question. It shows that stories are important for enhancing students' comprehension and providing authentic context. Similarly, Schirmacher (2006) mentions that teaching and learning through stories lay the foundation for the development of reading and writing skills and foster children's imagination, curiosity, and creativity. These opinions obviously tell us that using stories in the classroom helps the students to be more creative and reflective in the classroom.

Task-based Inquiry Technique

When we entered the class, everybody stood up, greeting us with good morning, and the teacher began the class, informing them that they were doing a reading section of unit seven that day. He started motivating the students by asking questions about how animals spend the winter. One of the students, named Ram (pseudonym), answered, raising his hand. Animals have the natural habit of assimilating into the climate. The teacher thanked the students for participating in the classroom interaction and asked another question to the whole class. Have you ever thought of any animals that live in the winter season differently? All the students remained silent, serious, and confused, and they gossiped in pairs or groups. Then the teacher briefly set the background, giving them some information about Jagadishpur Tal of Kapilbastu district. He explained that in the winter season, different birds from Siberia, Russia, stay there for one or two

months, and later they return to their own habitat. As the teacher was conveying this information, everyone listened to the teacher carefully and gave him so much interest. Then the teacher informed them that some of the schools from Mustang and Manang move to Pokhara in the winter season and study there with the help of camping, and return later to their own district after the temperature increases. Such schools are called mobile schools. The teacher asked the students if they knew such information, but all students replied that they knew nothing about those mobile schools. So, the teacher divided the students into four groups and provided them with two different tasks to be done in the four groups (One task for two groups). He developed the tasks as follows:

Task 1: Find out some of the schools from different Mountainous districts of Nepal that move their students to other warm areas to take classes in the winter season, and explore in a group why they take them there. How long do they stay there? What problems do they face? How do they manage their movement? And so on. Visit the lab and Google the information, use the book and prepare PowerPoint slides for presenting the task the next day in class. (For groups A and B)

Task 2: Find out any three birds and animals not mentioned in the book which migrate from one place to another in different seasons. The teacher asked them to visit the lab and asked them to see the video, images of such birds, and to prepare presentation including these names of birds, explaining why they move there and what time they move and when they return to their own natural habitat. (For group C & D)

Then the teacher further advised that all the students in groups would visit the lab and try to find out the information required by the question. They would specially care about the names of the mobile birds, animals, schools, the time or season they move to, places where they move, what they do there, how they move, what problems they face, how they manage and adjust in the new place. The teacher further asked them to work in a group. Then the teacher helped all the students to visit the lab in groups and I also followed them. On the way, one of the students asked me to teach *what you taught in the mobile school, sir*. I nodded my head and responded no and further said *I heard about such mobile schools just from your teacher, like you* and at the same time another student said, *Sir, will you be present in the class tomorrow?* I answered him yes, I will be there, and I thought he asked me that question because I only observed their class three days a week. Then he said to me that we would work hard and would try our best to make the presentation better. After all the groups visited the lab, they started giggling. The teacher and the lab assistant were assisting them with technical problems as some computers were not working. In the lab, they worked for around twenty minutes. They actively noted down the information in their exercise book and highlighted the important information. They left the lab after the bell rang for the next period. I also followed them and left the school at half past one.

No English Lectures

Although no methods and approaches are perfect, it is quite natural that teaching and learning activities undergo several modifications over time. In order to have effective teaching and learning, an appropriate method or approach is chosen on the basis of context, topic and situation. On the basis of my class observation and interview with the participant, I found that teachers have been transformed into student-centred pedagogy from teacher-centred pedagogy. I observed one of the classes of grade nine in one of the schools of Rupandehi district for more than three months. I did not find the teacher's pedagogy based on the lecture method. I had the expectation that teachers still use more lectures than other techniques because it is easier to deliver lectures, and it is a common technique. I requested the subject teacher to give me time for a short discussion, and we headed to the computer lab. I began the discussion by asking his opinion about what technique he basically follows in the class to teach English, and he stated: *I mostly start my class with questions or problems. . I focus on activating the students by creating tasks and problems in an appropriate context. I sometimes take them to the lab or field to get or collect information with the help of which they discuss, collaborate and prepare their presentations.*

This participant's perspective implies that inquiry-based teaching generally begins with a question, a problem, or tasks or projects, and there is no domination by lecture. IBL is a very useful instructional practice where students are at the centre of the learning experience and take ownership of their own learning by posing, investigating, and answering questions (Caswell & LaBrie, 2017). This concept is in harmony with what Ismail and Alias (2006) state: "Inquiry - based learning regards a process of personal discovery by the learners. The learners or the student inquirers are guided to inquire or generate relevant questions and to come up with the appropriate answers through critical thinking (p.14). From these statements, we come to know that concept of inquiry denotes a questioning strategy, and when students become able to question critically and creatively, they become more active and learn in meaningful situations. In inquiry - based teaching, teachers do not deliver lectures, as lectures in the class make students passive. Regarding my question about the transformation in teaching pedagogy, the teacher further added:

Actually, I began my teaching career delivering lectures and being more active about 20 years ago, before I came to this school. I worked hard myself, doing every activity and exercise line by line. In doing so, I was more active, and my students became passive. Later I realised that learning can't be effective until I activate the students in the class. I also found that some of the students were so interested in carrying out actions themselves. So, I slowly changed my pedagogy and started introducing problems and tasks that made students active in the class. Nowadays, I ask them different questions, and students start working in groups, being active in the class. I adopt the question-answer technique, and students also start asking questions to me and in their groups. This has become very fruitful now.

This insightful idea of the teacher focuses on the fact that students should remain active and should be engaged in solving tasks, as Caswell and Labrie (2017) claim learning is

an active process, not a passive one. Caswell and Labrie (2017) further explore “Students need to take responsibility for their learning. They should construct meaning that is “powerful, memorable and effective” (p.162). It means that when they take responsibility, they become active and will be able to construct meaning effectively. Similarly, when asked about the frequency of the lecture technique used in the classroom, Ravi further explained *I hardly use the lecture technique in the classroom. Students do not expect lectures from me, but they expect problems, questions and tasks to explore. Therefore, no lectures in the classroom, as it makes students passive.* It reveals the fact that delivering lectures in an English classroom makes students passive, and the need for meaningful learning is to activate students in the class, and this is possible when the teacher leads the students to do some tasks, questions or problems in the class. In response to other questions regarding the use of inquiry strategies or techniques, Ravi responded: I often use field trips, games, story writing, projects, presentations, classroom debates, group work, question-answer technique etc., to engage students in the interactions for meaningful learning. In my class observation as well, I saw that the teacher almost always began the class with the issue or question.

Conclusion

Based on the classroom observation, discussions and insights, the study explores how inquiry-based pedagogy has been used in the context of Nepal. This study clearly indicates that there must be a transformation in teaching pedagogy, and the focus of teaching should go towards activating students in the classroom through tasks or questions. Observation in the class indicates that students need to remain active in the classroom for meaningful learning. Activating the students, assigning them tasks, and asking them quality questions makes students creative, reflective and critical. Moreover, it leads them to be independent and develop interpersonal skills. So, learning becomes autonomous and lifelong. The observed data also reveal that fieldwork, story-writing, group work, pair work, and question-answer techniques are the strategies used in inquiry-based teaching and learning. The study concludes that lectures of the teachers are replaced by discussions, interactions, and presentations in an English classroom.

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