

English Teachers Attitudes Towards Application of Continuous Assessment System

✍ Milan Dhakal

(Assistant Lecturer, UMC)

Abstract

The article entitled "English Teachers Attitudes Towards Application of Continuous Assessment System" aims to find out English teachers attitudes towards application of Continuous Assessment System (CAS) and to discover the obstacles in using it. For these purposes the data are collected through the questionnaire selecting thirty English teachers from the ten schools of Chulachuli Rural Municipality of Ilam district in eastern part of Nepal. The selected teachers are trained and untrained, male and females and teaching in different levels. Both types of teachers are found having positive and negative attitudes towards CAS. The teachers who are untrained and new have negative attitudes. But most of the teachers are found having positive attitudes towards CAS. It is also found that the CAS is very effective tool of evaluation and it is very necessary to integrate it with teaching learning activities.

Keywords: Application, Assessment System, Attitudes, Evaluation, Questionnaire,

Introduction

As we know language is a means of communication through which human being express their thoughts, emotions, feelings and desires in their daily lives.

Language helps to expose the basic needs of human beings. It helps to transfer knowledge from person to person.

The fundamental medium of language is sound and it is sound for all languages, no matter how well developed is their writing systems. The primary purpose of writing is to lend some kind of performance to the spoken language and not to prescribe that spoken language is any way.

Hall (1968, p.158) defines language is "the institution where by human communicate and interact with each other by means of habitually used oral - auditory arbitrary symbols" (as cited in Lyons (2008), P.4). Oxford Advanced

Learners' Dictionary (2005, p.862) defines language as "the system of communication in speech and writing that is used by people." Richard et al. (1985, p.153), define it as "the system of human communication by means of a structural arrangement of sound (or their written presentation) into larger units, e.g. morpheme, words, sentences, utterances." Chomsky (2002, p.2) gives his view about language as: "The topic of language is particular state of human brains which seeks to unearth the nature and properties of linguistic states, and their development and a variety and their basis in innate biological endowment. This endowment helps to determine the close proximity among human over a broad range." Wardhaugh (1986, p.1) says language is "what the members of a particular society speak."

These definitions indicate language is a complex phenomenon especially used as a means of communication. Pokhrel (2009, p.1) 'there are innumerable languages in the world and no language is superior or inferior in terms of communicating ideas. However, some languages, such as English, play a dominant role in the society. It is one of the official languages of the United Nation (UN). So, it is thought that the English language is one of the major languages of the world and coming with increasing number of users in various field and sectors such as education, mass media, science and technology and so on. Many books have been published in this language. We can get hottest information of various fields by using the internet services which are expressed mainly in the English language. It means the importance of the English language can be hardly exaggerated.'

People speak several languages in the world. Among all the languages in the world, today English has been regarded as a world's language. It has been the link language between the people of different nations. The world has entertained the taste of speaking English for many decades. Nepal is no exception. In Nepal, English has been used as a means of interaction and medium of writing by the people from educated and elite circle since Rana Regime. In the context of Nepal, English has been officials taught with the establishment of Durbar High School.

Nowadays it is taught as a foreign language in Nepal and campuses as its importance has been realized. So it has become an integral part of the formal education system in Nepal. It is not easy task to teach any languages. Similarly, it is not also easy task to evaluate / test language of the students. Without evaluation

of language of the students, it is fully difficult to tell how much knowledge the learner possesses. So, there must be Continuous Assessment System in measuring language to evaluate the students. Continuous Assessment System is the process of evaluating the learners regularly while learning / teaching languages.

The main objective of CAS is to get determined learning objectives of the learners through the effective teaching learning process. This is the evaluation process while conducting teaching learning activities. CAS doesn't focus on the written forms of exams. It focuses on the learners' level of understanding, means that it focuses how to co-operate well to the learners and subject matters. Similarly it emphasizes how to attract the learners towards subject matters and make them regular in the teaching learning activities, According to CAS there are specially five disciplines to measures students' achievement, they are

- a. Class work / classroom participation
- b. Project work
- c. Behavior change
- d. Creative work
- e. Attendance

Historical Background of Continuous Assessment System (CAS) in Nepal

Evaluation is the process of analyzing certain goals and determined objectives of specific subject at specific level. According to Gronlund and Linn (1990) evaluation is to determine students' qualitative behavior and numerical details as well as determined behavior (Cited in Parajuli.et.al, 2007). Evaluation is important part of teaching learning process. Without evaluation, it is fully difficult to remove students' weaknesses to certain level. Whatever we do means, formative, summative and diagnostic evaluation, the inner part is students' achievements.

In the context of Nepal, the very first policy to give importance of Continuous Assessment System in Nepal is education policy of 1996 B.S. (Khanal 2064). Similarly, National Education Plan 2028 B.S. includes the following things about Continuous Assessment System. The evaluation tools are given in curriculum as well as teacher guides of primary, lower secondary and secondary level whether, the students understand the subject matter or not, this is exam to evaluate students' progress in every 3 months. (Sharma 2066 B.S.).

If we want to know about systematic development of CAS in Nepal we have to analyze the reports of various commissions. There is the emphasis to upgrade the students in higher classes according to the concept of CAS the higher level national education plan which was established in 2054 B.S. in its report presented in 2055 B.S. (Sharma, 2066 B.S.) It is adopted that CAS is the system to refined educational achievement by the Basic and Primary Education Implementation Level II, which was started from 2056 B.S. At the beginning, the process of CAS was implemented in various five districts, Ilam, Chitwan, Syanga, Surkhet, and Kanchanpur, from class 1 to 3 from 2056/57 economic year. This program had specially three objectives.

- i) To quality change in students' learning.
- ii) To increase students' appearances.
- iii) To decrease dropout rate.

If focus is only given on written exam, the students and teacher will be exam oriented. It means that students do not get real learning; only students are driven to the concept of obtaining good numbers/number. Through this system there is not proper development of students' affective and psychomotor domain. It is expected to develop students' capacity on the skill of interaction the capacity of solving problems, leadership, daily attendances. According to the Primary education curriculum (2055 B.S) the concept of primary education curriculum is changed from class 1 to 3 in 2062 B.S and changed curriculum is gradually implemented in national-level from 2062 B.S.

Factures in Attitudes Change

Attitude is a hidden aspect of people. It means that people at first think and make attitudes. In the beginning attitude is hidden form of the persons. Attitudes are formed by what we feel. Generally, learners initiate to their teachers, parents and well - wishers to form attitudes.

Swami Vivekananda said, "The main difference between men and animals is the difference in their power of concentration. All success in any line of work is the result of this. Everybody knows something about concentration. We see its result every day. High achievements in art, music, etc., are the result of concentration. An animal has very little power of concentration. Those who have trained animals find much difficulty in the fact that the animal is constantly forgetting what is told him. He can't concentrate his mind long upon anything at a time. Herein is the difference between man and animals – man has greater power of concentration. The difference in their power of concentration also constitutes the difference

between man and man. Compare the lowest with the highest man. The difference is in the degree of concentration. This is only the difference.

The great trouble with such concentration is that we do not control the mind; it controls us. Something outside of ourselves, as it were, draws the mind into it and holds it as long as it chooses.” (As cited in Podder(2011, p.114).

About factors in attitude change Pandey and Sha (2067 BS, p.9) define as, "To make positive attitude the PARTHA is responsible". PARTHA helps to build positive attitude and positive thinking. They are:

P= Positive Thinking

A= Aim

R= Restraint

T= Training

H= Hard-Work

A= Abiding Interest.”

Hopkins (2003, p.21) defines the factors in changing attitude as, ‘cultivating an attitude of compassion and developing wisdom are slow process. As you gradually internalize techniques for developing morality, concentration of mind, and wisdom, untamed states of mind become less and less frequent. You will need to practice these techniques day by day, year by year. As you transfer your mind, you will transform your surroundings. Others will see the benefits of your practice of tolerance and love, and will work at bringing these practices into their own lives.’

In conclusion from the above definitions, concentration, attention, behavior, responsibility, aim, positive thinking, interest, training, techniques of perception etc. are the factors in attitude change. The role of the above mentioned factors in forming attitudes is absolutely remarkable.

Significance of the Study

This study was fully concerned on the periphery of attitude of English teachers towards CAS. CAS is a process and tool of evaluation. To use any process of evaluation, attitude plays very vital role in using it. So, this study aimed at revealing the attitudes of English teachers towards CAS. So, the findings of this study are helpful for curriculum designers, policy makers, syllabus designers, language teachers, text book writers, evaluators, parents and finally to all concerned directly and indirectly to teaching and learning activities and Evaluation System.

Especially this study will be very important to the English teachers who are using CAS in their teaching learning activities and the learners who are studying in different levels.

Similarly, there are lots of personalities wondering about CAS. So, this study will be very helpful for them as well.

This study had the following significances in teaching and learning English language and evaluating the learners.

1. It would help the English teachers who were using CAS as the evaluating system.
2. This study was significant for the teachers who were applying CAS unknowingly and differently.
3. It would help the curriculum planners and text book writers to organize the experience in the appropriate manners.
4. This study would be helpful to the learners of English language.
5. This study would provide information for all concerned agencies and
6. Delimitation of the person related to teaching learning English and other languages.

Population

The population of the study was the English teachers, teaching in government school in Ilam district. There were thirty English teachers from ten different schools of Chulachuli VDC from southern part of Ilam. They were teaching in primary, lower secondary and secondary level.

Sample and Sampling Strategy

The researcher had selected ten government schools of Chulachuli VDC purposively where the CAS is using as the tool of evaluation. Three English teachers were selected from each school. The sample was taken considering the geographical area and population of the school and much consideration was given to the schools where English teachers were applying CAS while selecting the informants. Altogether, thirty English teachers were selected from ten different schools.

Data Collection Procedures

The researcher followed the following procedures to collect data for the study. Data are the nucleus things for any kind of research.

- a. First of all, the researcher selected thirty English teachers from the sample schools in Ilam district.
- b. Then, the researcher visited the selected schools and described purposes and processes to the authority and took permission to carry out the research work.
- c. The researcher fixed the time for data collection.
- d. After this, the researcher distributed both objectives and subjective questionnaire to the selected teachers.
- e. Then, the researcher again visited the same schools to collect the given questionnaire.
- f. Finally, the researcher thanked the informants and the school administration for their kind patience, cooperation and constructive support and suggestions.

At last, the researcher analyzed their responses and interpreted data. And able to gather the following conclusions:

Analysis of Objective Questions

Under this title, item wise analyses of all the responses of ten objective questions taken from thirty teachers have been analyzed.

- Q. No.1. Which one of the following is the best objective of CAS?
- a. To make learners regular in class.
 - b. To make students able to analyze target language.
 - c. To make learners competent in language.
 - d. To avoid fear of exam.

As regards Q.No.1 the responses provided by the informants have been analyzed below:

Table No. 1
Opinions towards CAS

Options							
To make learners regular in class		To make students able to analyze target language		To make learners competent in language		To avoid fear of exam.	
No.	percent	No.	percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent
10	33.33	9	30	7	23.33	4	13.33

The above table shows that, among 30 English teachers, only 10 (33.33%) teachers viewed that the objective of CAS is to make learners regular in class. Similarly, 9 (30%) English teachers viewed that the objective of CAS is to make students to analyze target language. As well as, 7 (23.33%) English teachers viewed that the objective of CAS is to make learners competent in language. And only 4 (13.33%) English teachers viewed that the objective of CAS is to avoid fear of exam.

- Q. No. 2: The role of a student in your class should be
- A follower of the teacher
 - An active participant
 - A passive listener
 - A disciplined learner

Analysis of Q. No. 2. According to the responses provided by the informants has been given below:

Table No. 2
Opinions towards CAS

Options							
A follower of the teacher		An active participant		A passive listener		A disciplined learner	
No.	percent	No.	percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent
5	16.66	20	66.66	x	x	5	16.66

This table shows that only 5 (16.66%) English teachers viewed that the role of a student in their class is a follower of the teacher. Similarly, 20 (66.66%) English teachers viewed that the role of a student is an active listener. It seems that the majority is to this view. As well as only 5 (16.66%) English teachers viewed that the role of a student is a disciplined learner.

Q. No. 3: Do you think CAS is being used in English in Nepal?

- a. Strongly agree b. Agree
- c. Disagree d. Strongly disagree

Analysis of Q. No. 3, according to the responses provided by the informants has been given below:

Table No. 3
Opinions towards CAS

Options							
Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
No.	percent	No.	percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent
10	33.33	15	50	2	6.66	3	10

The above table shows that, among 30 English teachers, only 10 (33.33%) strongly agreed that the CAS is being used in English in Nepal. And then, 15 (50%) English teachers agreed that the CAS is being used in English in Nepal. Similarly, only 2 (6.66%) disagreed and 3 (10%) of them strongly disagreed.

Q. No. 4: Should the teacher always correct the errors of the learner?

- a. Strongly agree b. Agree
- c. Disagree d. Strongly disagree

Analysis of Q. No. 4, according to the responses provided by the informants has been given below:

Table No. 4
Opinions towards CAS

Options							
Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
No.	percent	No.	percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent
4	13.33	3	10	9	30	14	46.66

The table shows that only 4 (13.33%) of English teachers strongly disagreed with that the teachers should always correct the errors of the learners. 3 (10%) agreed with that the teacher should always correct the errors of the learners. Similarly, 9 (30%) disagreed and 14 (46.66) strongly disagreed.

Q. No. 5: Can we use CAS in all classes of English?

- a. Strongly Yes
- b. Yes
- c. No
- d. Strongly No

Analysis of Q. No. 5, according to the responses provided by the informants has been given below:

Table No. 5
Opinions towards CAS

Options							
Strongly Yes		Yes		No		Strongly No	
No.	percent	No.	percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent
18	60	9	30	3	10	x	x

This table shows that the majority of English teachers, among 30, 18 (60%) of them strongly supported with that they can use CAS in all classes of English. And, only 9 (30%) supported. Similarly 3 (10%) of them did not support with that we can use CAS in all classes of English.

Q. No. 6: Is Punishment necessary in your class?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Sometimes
- d. Never

Analysis of Q. No. 6, according to the responses provided by the informants has been given below:

Table No. 6
Opinions towards CAS

Options							
Yes		No		Sometimes		Never	
No.	percent	No.	percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent
x	x	18	60	5	16.66	7	22.33

From the above table, 18 (60%) English teachers responded as ‘**No**’ to the question, ‘Is punishment necessary in your class?’ It means that majority is towards No. Similarly, 5 (16.66) of them viewed with that punishment is

sometimes necessary. And 7 (22.33%) English teachers strongly opposed about punishment in class.

Q. No. 7: Why is CAS difficult to use in English class?

- a. No regularity of the students.
- b. Lack of ideas
- c. Lack of trainings
- d. Because of course – books

Analysis of Q. No. 7, according to the responses provided by the informants has been given below:

Table No. 7
Opinions towards CAS

Options							
No regularity of the students		Lack of ideas		Lack of trainings		Because of course – books	
No.	percent	No.	percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent
4	13.33	11	36.66	11	36.66	4	13.33

The above table displays that the data why CAS is difficult to use in English class. Among 30 English teachers, only 4 (13.33%) viewed that the CAS is difficult because of students' irregularity. Similarly, 11 (36.66%) viewed that the CAS is difficult because teachers don't have ideas. 11 (36.66%) viewed that the CAS is difficult because English teachers don't get trainings. And other 4 (13.33%) viewed that the CAS is difficult because of course books.

Q. No. 8: Should present curriculum be changed?

- a. Strongly yes
- b. Yes
- c. Strongly No
- d. No

Analysis of Q. No. 8, according to the responses provided by the informants has been given below:

Table No. 8
Opinions towards CAS

Options							
Strongly yes		Yes		Strongly No		No	
No.	percent	No.	percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent
18	60	9	30	x	x	3	10

The above table shows that the English teachers' view about the present curriculum. Among 30, 18 (60%) English teachers strongly agreed to change present curriculum. Similarly, 9 (30%) agreed to change. On the other hand, only 3 (10%) disagreed to change the present curriculum.

- Q. No. 9: Language class should be
- | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| a. Attractive | b. Teacher centre |
| c. Student Centre | d. Friendly |

Analysis of Q. No. 9, according to the responses provided by the informants has been given below:

Table No. 9
Opinions towards CAS

Options							
Attractive		Teacher centre		Student Centre		Friendly	
No.	percent	No.	percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent
3	10	x	x	19	63.33	8	26.66

The above table shows that the English teachers views about language class. Among 30 English teachers, 3 (10%) viewed that language class should be attractive. The other 19 (63.33%) viewed that language class should be student centre. It is majority. Similarly, rest of 8 (26.66%) viewed that language class should be friendly.

- Q. No. 10: Can we achieve the goals of CAS in the present context of Nepal?
- | | |
|--------|-----------------|
| a. Yes | b. Strongly Yes |
| c. No | d. Strongly No |

Analysis of Q. No. 10, according to the responses provided by the informants has been given below:

Table No. 10
Opinions towards CAS

Options							
Yes		Strongly Yes		No		Strongly No	
No.	percent	No.	percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent
11	36.66	x	x	2	6.66	17	56.66

The above table displays the views of English teachers if we can achieve the goals of CAS in the present context of Nepal. Among 30, 11 (36.66%) English teachers strongly agreed about this view. As well as, only 2 (6.66%) disagreed. And the other 17 (56.66%) English teachers strongly disagreed about this.

2. Analysis of Subjective Type of Questions

All the responses taken from ten subjective questions have been analyzed on the basis of individual items.

Q.No. 1: What according to you is Continuous Assessment System (CAS)?

Regarding the question No. 1, all most all the teachers belong to define Continuous Assessment System (CAS) satisfactorily. All the teachers viewed that CAS is the student-centered technique to evaluate the real achievement of the students. Similarly, it helps to know the difficulty of the learners. They also viewed that it is integrated and attractive way of evaluation. Similarly, CAS evaluates the correct level of the learners and gradually motivates the learners towards English learning environment.

Q. No. 2: Do you want to use CAS in your class? Why? Why not?

Regarding the question No. 2, almost all the teachers want to use CAS in their classes. Because according to them CAS helps the learners to learn the language gradually. Again they viewed that students can unknowingly learn target language. Similarly, they viewed that CAS helps to know the weakness of the students while teaching because it is practice based evaluation, and then teacher can make their students able in target language.

Q. No. 3: Mention some of the obstacles or difficulties you have faced in the use of CAS in your classroom. How they can be solved?

Regarding the question No. 3, most of the teachers mentioned the following obstacles or difficulties they've faced in the use of CAS in their classroom.

- Lack of ideas to the teachers.
- Negative attitudes of the teachers.
- No regularity of the students.
- Overload of periods.
- No proper feedback by the authority.
- Old curriculum.
- Lack of teaching materials.

- Weak background of students in English.
- Weak implementation of CAS.
- Lack of sound knowledge of CAS.

To solve these problems, the teachers have given the following ideas.

- The related authorities should address the teachers' problems that they don't have proper knowledge how to use CAS in their daily classes.
- School should make the students regular in class.
- Materials should be prepared and collected. So, they must not have overload of periods.
- The curriculum should be favorable.
- Proper management of classroom is necessary.
- Constructive feedback should be given by the related authority.

Q. No. 4: How do you use CAS in your classroom?

Regarding the question No. 4, most of the teachers wanted to prepare portfolio of the students. And they fixed their evaluation into five principles of CAS. They're as follow:

- Class-work/ Class-room participation
- Project work
- Behavior change
- Creative work and
- Attendance

Q. No. 5: Is it possible to use CAS in your all classes? Why?

Regarding the question No. 5, majority of the teachers viewed that CAS is suitable to the primary level because of its nature. And some of the other viewed that it is possible to use in their all classes because it helps the students to make regular. Similarly, it is practical way of evaluation.

Q. No. 6: Do you think CAS should be applicable in English class?

Regarding the question No. 6, all most all the teachers have agreed that CAS should be applied in English class.

Q. No. 7: Mention some of the advantages that you've achieved while using CAS. Regarding the question No. 7, the majority of the teachers have mentioned the following advantages:

- Students are well motivated and interested in classroom activities.
- Students never afraid of exams and never fail.
- Drop-out rate is low.
- Evaluation is perfect.

- CAS makes evaluation system easier and complete.

Q. No. 8: Do you really find that learning English is interesting with CAS?

Regarding the question No. 8, most of the teachers' answer is 'yes'.

The majority of the teachers have mentioned the following ideas about learning English with class:

- Students want to be regular in school to be the best one.
- The five principles of CAS makes English subject interesting in their classes.
- Students take part actively in English.
- CAS is easy tool of evaluation to record the students' achievement.

Q. No. 9: Why is the CAS important?

Regarding the question No. 9, all most all the teachers viewed that CAS is important. They have mentioned the following reasons:

- To rescue from the fear of exams.
- To make participated all the students in teaching learning activities.
- To reduce drop-out rate.
- CAS is easy to observe students' achievement with five principles.
- To increase regularity of the students and teachers.
- It is activity based approach of evaluation.
- It is student centered.

Q. No. 10: Do you think CAS is important in the context of Nepal?

Regarding the question No. 10, all most all the teachers think that CAS is important in the context of Nepal. Because all round development of the learners should be in English. Only CAS focuses all round development of the students. They also viewed that the written exams should be replaced by the CAS.

Conclusions

Conclusion is a judgment end of the research. It refers to something that we decide when we have thought about all the information connected with the situations. Conclusion is the concise and meaningful form of the data's findings. This study was set to find out the English teachers' attitudes towards CAS and its obstacles at different ten government schools in Chulachuli VDC in Ilam district. The conclusions can be made based on the findings of the research in the very concise form and structure.

English Teachers Attitudes Towards Application of Continuous Assessment System)

- a. CAS takes a major part of evaluation in primary and lower secondary level.
- b. The using of CAS is varied from teacher to teacher due to lack of proper ideas and terminologies used in CAS.
- c. The teachers who didn't have proper ideas or who were new and untrained felt difficult to implement CAS and had negative attitudes towards CAS.
- d. All most all the teachers wanted to use CAS because it is believed that it is effective tool of evaluation.
- e. All most all the teachers involved in CAS in English teaching. It can be seen that the CAS is pretty effective and student centered testing technique.
- f. CAS has many positive impacts in English classes and other classes as well. It measures all the skills of the students and it is more practical tool of evaluation.
- g. There were many obstacles in using CAS due to lack of ideas, materials and physical conditions of the schools.
- h. It was concluded that the availability of the facilities at school were not sufficient.
- i. The English teachers viewed that CAS makes students regular in teaching learning activities because the students feel comfortable to upgrade in the higher classes.

References

- Hall, J. (1986). Using literature in language teaching. New York: Longman
- Khanal, UR. (2064 BS). A study on the attitudes of secondary level students towards learning English. An unpublished thesis of M.Ed. TU, Kritipur.
- Lyons, J. (2008). language and linguistics and introduction. Cambridge: CUP
- Parajuli, (2007). Measurement and evaluation in education. Kathmandu: Sunlight Publication.
- Poddar, T. (2011). Smart Memory. NewDelhi: Pustak Mahal.
- Pokhrel, K. (2009). Effectiveness of marking scheme in testing. An unpublished thesis of M.Ed. Sukuna Multiple Campus, Morang.
- Sharma, C. and Sharma, N. (1997). Curriculum and Evaluation. Kathmandu: MK publisher and distributor.