Empirical Article

# Information and Communication Technology in English Language Teaching: Some Opportunities and Challenges

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## ABSTRACT

*The integration of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in education has brought dramatic modifications in the paradigms and methods practiced in the developed countries. In recent years, the exploitation of ICTs in teaching and learning has been expanded in developing countries too. This study has made an attempt to explore the opportunities and challenges of using ICTs in English language teaching (ELT) in higher education in Nepal, a developing country in Asia. The English language teachers and students from two different colleges were the informants in this study, and interview and focus group discussion were used as the research methods. The study concluded that ICTs were useful for the participants in their teaching and learning activities mainly for accessing learning resources, preparing and presenting their lessons, and for conducting collaborative learning activities. However, it was found that the informants were not satisfied with their utilization of ICTs in teaching and learning of English. Access to ICT tools, and the skills needed to use ICTs were the main problems for them in the integration of ICTs in ELT. Therefore, these constraints need to be minimized to improve the integration of ICTs in ELT in higher education in Nepal.*

**Keywords**: integration, infrastructures, language skills, learner-centered approach, pedagogical skills

## INTRODUCTION

ICTs, the modern technologies for storage, manipulation, and dissemination of information, include both hardware tools such as laptops, smart phones, projectors, and software tools such as email, Skype, Facebook, and YouTube. These technological tools have brought a revolutionary movement in the field of education and information communication. Education, which makes wide use of information communication, has been highly influenced by the use of ICTs. In recent years, ICTs have been exploited in the teaching and learning of all subjects including Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and English.

### ICTs in English Language Teaching and Learning

Teaching and learning of the English language is one of the main concerns of many educational institutions because English is not only an international language and a lingua-franca of the world's citizens, but it is also the storehouse of knowledge (Bhattarai, 1995; Harmer, 2007). Therefore, attempts have been made to enhance English language teaching (ELT) and make it more advanced. Many research scholars (Acevedo, 2016; Ince 2014; Liu, 2012) in their research studies have concluded that English language teaching and learning (ELTAL) is effective and more successful with the integration of ICTs. According to Adams and Brindley (2007), "English is a subject ready to think about new ways of constructing reading and writing, and about the pedagogical value of collective work and the possibilities afforded by the renaissance of learning made possible through ICT" (p. vii). Likewise, Rank et al. (2011) discuss that the web 2.0 applications can be exploited to the advantages of the students learning English language and literature, which create several possibilities of learning opportunities such as exploring and investigating, composing and creating, reflecting and evaluating, presenting and performing; and communicating and collaborating.

ICTs, the digital technologies, are powerful educational tools; and their use has a significant role in the transfiguration of the pedagogy of teaching and learning (Ludvigsen & Morch, 2010; Sutherland et al., 2009). Angeli et al. (2015) view that a good combination of technology and pedagogy is very important to ensure that the learners are able to take advantage of technology inclusion for the opportunities of learning integrated skills of language. According to Davis (2007), the incorporation of the technologies into English classroom can help achieve: (i) cognitive gain by providing visual images, (ii) motivational gain providing fun, and (iii) interactional gain by providing convenience sharing. ICTs provide opportunities for exploring the communicative power of the English learner by engaging them in exploring literary texts and several other interactive activities in exciting ways (Richards, 2007). Likewise, computer-based activities enhance interaction and collaboration and provide unique opportunities for the development of the learners' spoken and written language capabilities (Andrew, 2007). A variety of technology-enhanced gadgets can create an interactive learning environment to develop learners' autonomy and meaningful learning, which provides a huge amount of exposure to language (Acevedo, 2016).

The spreading innovations in ICTs such as personal computers, Internet, mobile phones, and many other ICT tools, have caused a 'paradigm shift' in teaching and learning of all subjects; and the traditional model of teaching and learning has been replaced by transformed pedagogy (Juceviciene, 2008; Somekh, 2007). A paradigm shift in education is a change in the concept and procedures of teaching and learning. For example, the activity of encouraging learners for creative learning instead of rote learning is a good example of transformed pedagogy. Likewise, different types of paradigm shifts such as (i) a shift from behaviorism/habit formation-based teaching to rationalism/cognitive-based teaching, (ii) a shift from

teacher-centered approach to learner-centered approach, and (iii) a shift from psychometric-structuralist testing to psycholinguistic-sociolinguistic testing, are being practiced in the field of education. (Li et al., 2012). Consequently, various language learning online/offline software, language learning platforms; and the methodological innovations like computer-assisted language learning (CALL) have made language learning easier and more effective (Dina & Ciornai, 2013). All these advancements that improve the quality of education make wide exploitation of ICTs.

English is taught and learned as a foreign language in Nepal. It is one of the core subjects both in the college level curriculum (up to bachelor level) and school level curriculum; and as equal weightage as other compulsory subjects has been given to English (CDC, 2007). However, the analysis of the results shows that the quality of English education is relatively less satisfactory; and teaching-learning of English is one of the more difficult jobs in both secondary school education and higher education in Nepal (Bista, 2011; Budhathoki et al., 2014; Mathema &Bista, 2006). Budhathoki et al. (2014, p. 17) point out that students are very weak especially in English, Maths and Science and that the overall fail percentage in English in SLC (school leaving certificate) is increasing (it was respectively 26.28, 32.23 and 35.21 percent in the academic years 2009, 2010, and 2011).Therefore, it is essential to find out the ways to enhance the educational quality of such subjects in both school and higher education in Nepal. As several research studies (Acevedo, 2016; Davis, 2007; Dina & Ciornai, 2013; Somekh, 2007) have concluded that ICTs are useful educational tools, and they contribute a lot in ELTAL; the government of Nepal has considered the need for ICT integration for the improvement of quality of education of all subjects recently. However, the integration of ICTs in education in the developing countries is rather slow; and particularly, ICT integration in higher education in Nepal in teaching and learning of different subjects including English is at its initial stage. Therefore, it is essential to explore the opportunities and challenges in ICT integration in teaching and learning of English, based on the context of higher education in Nepal because the knowledge gained from research studies is very important for tailoring the teaching-learning activities. Moreover, though multimedia and/or ICTs have been perceived as effective tools, ICT integration has 'a long way to go and attain to maturity' (Liu, 2012, p. 2334). Therefore, research and investigation on integration and use of ICTs in education and in ELT are becoming worthwhile day-by-day in order to achieve the full advantages of such technologies.

## METHODS AND MATERIALS

The study was guided by constructivism as the research paradigm and was based on the qualitative research design. Constructivism is a research paradigm that gives emphasis on the learners' central role in learning process for the construction of knowledge. According to Kanuka and Anderson (1999), the constructivists give priority to the methods such as problem solving, critical thinking, and collaborative learning, which can be well facilitated through the use of ICTs. Guba and Lincoln (2005) write that constructivists prefer qualitative methods because these methods can help gain a detail and in-depth understanding of the experiences of the participants. I believe, constructivism and qualitative design are appropriate and useful to explore the integration of ICTs in ELT.

For the collection of information, two ICT resourced colleges, which had adopted ICT-integration as their teaching-learning strategy, were selected purposefully. Guided by Saunders, Kitzinger, and Kitzinger, (2015), those colleges were given pseudonyms 'college A' and 'college B' for establishing research confidentiality and ethical morality. Likewise, the principals of the colleges were requested to

allow to collect data and information regarding the use of ICTs and problems of integrating ICTs in teaching and learning of English. The English language teachers and the students involved in Bachelor of Education (B. Ed.) compulsory English classes from both the colleges were the informants. As the source of information two English language teachers (one from each college) were chosen purposefully; and altogether 12 students (six from each college) were selected using random sampling methods. Permissions were received from both the teachers and students to collect information required.

As the research methods, semi-structured interviews with the teachers, and focus group discussions (FGDs) with the students were conducted. Semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions are very common in qualitative research design in which the participants can share their experiences and describe details of their information (Creswell, 2012). Likewise, FGD, which is an interaction and discussion among the members of a group, allows the participants interact with each other and elicits the participants' opinions and ideas. In this study, two different questionnaires for interviews and FGDs were prepared carefully in order to obtain the information required. Attempts were made to study the usefulness of the ICT tools to the teachers and the students in teaching and learning English language skills through the questionnaire. Likewise, the problems and challenges that the teachers and students encountered while integrating the tools in their teaching and learning were also given main priority. The information collected through the interviews and FGDs were transcribed, read and re-read, segmented, categorized and themes were generated. In this way, the information, ideas, and opinions were analyzed and interpreted using thematic analysis methods following Bogdan and Biklen (1992).

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In the process of studying the use of ICTs in learning English language skills, and the problem and challenges of integrating ICTs in teaching and learning, I interviewed teachers and conducted FGDs with the students to learn about their experiences in this study. This section presents the findings and a discussion related to use of ICTs in English language learning.

### Findings

In this study, attempts were made to develop a rapport with the teachers and students to understand their use of ICTs in ELT, and the problems and challenges they encountered in their ELTAL process. Their experiences as they shared in the interviews and FGDs have been presented in the sub-headings below.

### *Use of ICTs in Teaching and Learning of English*

The teachers and the students in both colleges found ICTs beneficial in ELTAL. The class teacher in college A shared their experiences that ICTs have significant importance for increasing the amount of exposure to English to practice all language skills–listening, speaking, reading, writing, and grammar(L-S-R-W-G). They can provide the students with language skills, learning resources, and activities anywhere and anytime they liked. The teacher from college A shared their experiences:

> *English language skills learning has been anytime possible through ICTs. The students can find language learning materials such as e-books, journals, articles for enhancing their reading and writing skills; and videos, conversations, and discussions for improving listening and speaking skills. Likewise, the students can find different reference materials such as dictionaries, and grammar books; and language skills related exercises, apps, or online/offline programs to practice English language skills.*

In the discussion, the students in college A shared their experiences that ICTs have made English language learning easier and faster. They could download the English language learning materials such as videos, conversations, books, articles, and many more English language learning apps and programs. ICTs help them exchange their ideas and information; and discuss their queries with their teachers and friends anytime they like.

The class teacher in the college B agreed that ICTs could be used to facilitate the students to develop their English language skills. The advantage was that ICTs helped them to provide several types of learning materials that could increase the amount of exposure to English. Similarly, ICTs were useful to make updates of their current knowledge, information, and to understand recent pedagogical trends. The teacher from college B opined:

*The advantages of ICTs are that they provide the students with ample exposure to the English language to promote their language skills. The students can use several browsers for searching and downloading several language skills improving exercises and programs. ICTs help me to motivate the students in the class and make their learning long-lasting as they can engage both visual and auditory sensory organs of the students through texts, images, sounds, and motions.*

Similarly, in the discussion, the students in college B expressed that ICT-based education and ICTs were quite beneficial to them in learning English language skills. The tools help them search and collect English language skills learning materials and practice all types of language skills. The learning resources such as English language dictionaries, English grammar related reference materials, language learning apps which are available through ICTs were very useful them to enhance English language skills. Moreover, the tools such as laptops, smart phones, projectors, email, Skype, Facebook groups, and discussion forums help them share their resources, ideas, and information in easier and less effortful ways.

### Problems and Challenges in ICT Integration in ELT

The students in college A shared their experiences that they tackled the technological skills related problems in the beginning. They lacked many skills required to be adjusted with the ICT-based learning environment of the college. One of the informants in the FGD gave his response:

*"In the beginning, I was lost. I had no idea what were computer information system (CIS), management information system (MIS), information resource center (IRC) and G-Suite. Even I had no idea about how to create email ID, how to download the resources, and how to use the projector."*

Many of the students were not used to the technology-enhanced learning in their previous lower level. Knowledge of the basic technological skills was one of the problems to the students in the starting of the academic year.

The students opined that one of their main problems was poor management of ICT infrastructures. Lack of regular electric supply, and slow Internet speed were some of the main problems they encountered. One of the students expressed, *"We mostly face the technological problems like slow Internet, expensive data pack, and that we sometimes need to wait for our turn in the e-library and ICT-lab."* The students also encountered technology-inherent problems. *"There are sometimes problems in the Internet networking system. The computer says 'loading' and takes long. Sometimes the projector does not work"* opined another student.

In the interview with the teacher in college A, they shared that there were many problems for the teachers and the students. The problems were mainly technological and pedagogical skills related, and

administration related. They explained that the students generally did not have basic technological knowledge at the beginning of the session. Some of them were completely unaware of the CIS and MIS system of the college. They needed to train them for some weeks or months. He said that sometimes they needed to tackle technical problems such as laptop was not supported by the projector, laptop hanged by overuse or viruses, and large file opening time on the computer. Lack of training for the teacher was another main problem. The teacher pointed out that they had not received any formal training about the pedagogical and productive uses of the ICTs. Such training was rarely organized by the college administration. He said,

> The college invites IT consultants and organizes the training programs occasionally. The IT department and the IT consultants train about the systems of networking, mainly the MIS. They do not train about how to integrate the ICTs in teaching-learning from pedagogical points of view.

Lack of technological skills for using ICTs in learning English was one of the main problems for the students in college B too. While taking part in the discussion, the students shared their experiences that they had lack of required technological knowledge in the beginning of the academic year. The technology-based teaching-learning was a new experience for many of them and they had to do much labor for some weeks. One of the students said:

> Most of us were unknown about the e-learning environment in the starting of the session. We did not have an idea about the things like Moodle, flipped classes, power points and projector. Many of us were unable even to create our email identity.

Discussing their problems, the students shared their difficulty that some of them had problems in the availability of the Internet at home. To some of them, ICT tools were expensive to buy and that their parents were not positive towards the use of ICTs. In response to the open-ended question, the students expressed that infrastructural management was one of the main difficulties for them. They needed to tackle the problems like the interruption of power supply and slow speed Internet. One of the students expressed, *"We face the problems like lack of mentors, slow internet, difficulty to access to e-library and ICT lab"*. Another student raised the 'selection problem' or the vagueness of the resources that he finds through ICTs, *"While searching, we get many, but some are inappropriate and not to the point"*.

The class teacher gave his opinion that they needed to tackle many types of problems while integrating the ICTs in English language teaching. Among many, technology-related problem was one of them. Their computer would freeze and be unresponsive sometimes, the projector would take a long time to start, while sometimes the laptop would take long time to open the large file. Similarly, the Internet fluctuation, service failure, and power disruptions were some of the generally occurring problems. Likewise, the size of the class was not easily manageable.

The teacher said that even the newly admitted students were the problems for the teacher for some weeks. The students needed training for some weeks about the e-learning system of the college. They also experienced that plagiarism was a problem of the e-learning environment. The students would do 'copy and paste' instead of using their brain for the assignments given. The teacher also shared that all resources that were available through the ICTs might not have been authentic and accurate. It could be a problem for the students to be able to select the right ones. He also shared his experience that the textbooks and the exercises there did not encourage the students to use ICTs.

*Opportunities Created by the Integration of ICTs in ELT*

Many research studies have concluded that ICTs are beneficial to language teaching and learning. According to Kumar and Tammelin (2008), ICTs provide three main benefits for foreign language learning and teaching: (i) providing authentic language learning resources and contexts, (ii) creating co-operative and collaborative environment, and (iii) providing opportunities for effective teaching and learning. Likewise, Rabah (2015) finds better students' engagement and enhancement of their learning process as the benefits of ICT integration in teaching and learning. The findings in this study show that the teachers and the students took some advantages with the integration of ICTs in their ELTAL process in spite of different challenges they encountered. Based on the experiences shared, some of the important benefits of ICTs integration for the teachers have been discussed below:

(i) **Preparation:** One of the main advantages of ICTs for the teachers is that the tools can be useful for them for their preparation of the classroom presentation. They can use different web browsers for the teaching materials they need such as reference books, articles, videos, audios, conversation models, grammar references and so on. They can download those learning resources and save in their computer file for their future use. Similarly, the Internet is helpful for finding out several recent research studies on their subject matter to update themselves for current trends and methods.

(ii) **Presentation**: The teachers can exploit ICTs for their presentation of their lessons in the classroom and delivering the contents. The tools such as laptops, projectors, and several websites can be used by the teachers for making their presentation attractive and effective to facilitate students' learning.

(iii) **Motivation:** The teachers can attract the students' attention towards their presentation through the use of ICTs. The combination of sound, text, image, color, and motion through a multimedia projector can help motivate the students and to increase the students' concentration towards the lesson. Moreover, the use of technology increased the students' engaged learning involving both visual and auditory sensory organs.

(iv)**Interaction:** ICTs can help create a student-centered learning environment where lots of opportunities for both synchronous and asynchronous communication take place. The tools such as email, Facebook, Messenger, Skype, and Viber all make interaction between the teacher and students, and among the students more frequent. Sharing their ideas and information is possible whenever and wherever they stay.

(v) **Providing the students with learning resources and feedback**: With the integration of ICTs, the teachers can provide the students with lots of learning materials to increase the students' amount of exposure to the English language. Using their learning management system (LMS) or email the teachers can send the students the learning resources that are more content-specific and useful for them in the form of reading texts, videos, audios, hyperlinks, or websites. Likewise, ICTs are helpful for the teachers for providing the students with written comments and feedback to the whole class, group-wise, or individually.

Pun (2013) discusses several advantages of multimedia technology in English language teaching and learning as such that they provide opportunities for ELTAL, and they enhance interaction among the teachers and students. Likewise, they develop students' communicative competence, they motivate students to learn, and that they widen the students' knowledge about the English language. Similar to Pun (2013),

the students were found to take some advantages through the integration of ICTs in ELTAL process in this study too. Based on the FGDs conducted, some of the important benefits to the students found in this study have been discussed in the following points:

(i) **Amount of learning resources**: One of the important benefits of the integration of ICTs for the students is that they can use these tools for accessing information and learning resources. Among many others, LMS (i. e., CIS and MOODLE) is very useful with which the students can find course-specific resources. Besides, they can use web browsers and websites through which they can search and download learning materials such as e-books, e-journals, e-articles, e-newspaper, videos, audios, slides, and more for practicing their listening, speaking, reading, writing, and grammar-related skills. They can also use different mobile apps designed for learning the English language.

(ii) **Interaction:** ICTs can enable the students for easier and faster communication with their friends and teachers. They can easily interact about their problems or queries through the tools such as email, SMS, Skype and so on. Both synchronous and asynchronous communication through ICTs help them exchange their ideas and opinions.

(iii)**Collaboration**: Collaboration with their friends is another important benefit of integrating ICTs for the students. They can work together in peer or in groups to solve problems or given tasks. Through ICTs it is easier for the students to be involved in talking and discussing, sharing, evaluating, and constructing their knowledge. ICTs help them to create such an environment for collaborative activities. In such activities, the students can feel more relaxed and comfortable to share, discuss, and debate than in teacher dominated classroom. The tools such as email, Facebook, blogs, Skype, google docs are more useful for the students while carrying out collaborative activities.

(iv)**Exposure to English language skills**: ICTs help the students to find several English language skills specific online or offline learning resources. The students can be involved in practicing listening and speaking skills through the resources such as audios, videos, conversations songs, Skype, Viber, or online talking. Likewise, they can improve their reading and writing skills through several reading materials such as e-books, e-journals, or e-papers. They can also use several web-browsers and online or offline mobile apps for practicing the skills such as listening, speaking, reading, writing, and grammar.

(v) **Developing learning autonomy:** Another important benefit of using ICTs is that these tools help in accessing various learning resources, which encourage reading and analyzing the contents. Likewise, ICTs help to share the information and learning materials with their friends and to give comments on them. This environment created by ICT integration is helpful for developing students' habit of independent and autonomous learning, and to develop their learning autonomy.

*Difficulties in ICT Integration*

The factors impeding the integration of ICTs have been categorized in various ways by different researchers. Balanskat et al. (2006) classify the barriers of ICT integration into micro-level (related to the teacher's attitudes and approaches to ICT), meso-level (related to institutional context), and macro-level (related to wider educational framework). Likewise, according to Ertmer (1999), the barriers of ICT integration can be of first-order type (external factors) and second-order type (internal factors). Based on the findings in this study, the challenges that the teachers and the students encountered in their integration

of ICTs in ELTAL have been classified into five categories as: (i) infrastructures, (ii) technological skills, (iii) pedagogical skills, (iv) textbook/curriculum, and (v) attitudes.

(i)    **Infrastructures:** Infrastructure development is the basic prerequisite for ICT integrated teaching and learning. However, as Traxler and Kukulska-Hulme (2005) discuss the challenges of technology integration in the developing countries, the findings in this study too reveal that the infrastructural development and management was one of the main challenges for ICT-based teaching and learning. All the teachers and students shared their experiences that slow internet and fluctuations in the Internet speed were common problems for them. Likewise, irregular electric power supply was another impeding factor that created obstacles in their teaching and learning process. Next, most of the students reported that they were not satisfied with the size of the computer lab and the number of computers in the lab and in the e-library. They had also their complaints about the maintenance of the equipment such as the keyboard, mouse, UPS backup in the lab, and e-library.

(ii) **Technological skills:** Lack of adequate technological knowledge with the students and the teachers was another challenge in their integration of ICTs in ELTAL. Many of the students in the starting of the session did not have basic technological knowledge required for the ICT-based education system. Likewise, they did not have good ideas of English language learning specific software and websites to practice English language skills. The teachers also did not have adequate knowledge of newly developed language learning software and applications for engaging the students in collaborative activities for learning English. Some of the teachers were not so confident in using the LMS they had in the college.

(iii) **Pedagogical skills**: The teachers had not got any opportunities to take part in the training or workshops and they were less confident about using ICTs in ELTAL process. They did not have a good pedagogical skill of utilizing ICTs blending face-to-face and ICT-based teaching to engage the students both inside and outside the classroom. They did not have adequate ideas about various software and English language learning websites useful for improving the students' English language skills and knowledge construction. Many of the students were at the basic level of ICT use in English language learning. They had little idea about utilizing ICTs for collaborative activities and improving English language skills. As Van Dijk (2005), and Mishra and Koehler (2006) discussed, lack of adequate technological and pedagogical skills was one of the important factors affecting proper utilization of ICTs in ELTAL in this study as well.

(iv)**Textbook/curriculum**: The teachers shared their experiences that the textbook and curriculum had not been revised and updated to meet the need of society. Likewise, the textbook did not incorporate the contents or exercises that encouraged the students using ICTs for construction of their knowledge. This finding goes in the line with Ozdemir (2017).  According to the teachers, the textbooks prescribed were unnecessarily long; and due to inadequate time to involve the students in discussion, and in interactive and collaborative activities as needed. Moreover, the evaluation system in the curriculum had given no value for the technological knowledge and skills in examinations. Using ICTs in learning English was completely an optional matter of an individual student.

(v) **Attitudes:** Attitude towards ICTs is also a challenge in integrating ICTs in ELTAL. Some of the students reported that their parents did not have a positive attitude towards using ICTs. In their opinion, ICTs were just a fashion and they taught bad things to the children. Those parents did not become ready easily to make investment on ICTs and it was not easy for the students to have ICT

tools they required. Unlike Chen (2008), the teachers in this study were motivated towards ICT integration; some parents, however, did not have positive attitudes towards ICTs.

## DISCUSSION

Several key points can be learned from this research study. The discussion of the key points has been presented in the sub-headings to come.

### Benefits of ICT Integration in ELT

ICTs are found to provide several opportunities and possibilities in language teaching. According to Pica (1994), ICTs offer opportunities of both intrapersonal and interpersonal communication to the language learners. The opportunities of intrapersonal interaction provide them psycholinguistic benefits by directing their attention towards language, and also help in accomplishing meaning-making through constant internal dialogues and cognitive processing (Lantolf & Appel, 1994). According to Chapelle (2003), the technology-mediated tasks are the means of benefits for the language learners for getting better input, for receiving assistance in knowledge and understanding, and for activating deep processing of input. Likewise, the synchronous and asynchronous interpersonal interaction between the teachers and the students, and between or among the students can be beneficial for negotiation of meaning and co-construction of meaning.

Similar to constructivists, as discussed in Kanuka and Anderson (1999), ICTs have been found to create many different opportunities for the teachers and the students in their English language teaching and learning in this study too. ICT tools have been found to be helpful for the teachers in the activities such as preparing and presenting their lessons, searching and collecting teaching-learning resources, motivating their students, and updating themselves. Likewise, ICTs have been useful for the students mainly for increasing their exposure to English, collecting and sharing learning resources, and making frequent interaction between or among their peers and teachers. These benefits of ICTs, however, as Van Dijk (2013) discussed, depend upon the extent of availability and appropriation of the ICTs. The teachers and the students with better access to ICTs and better ICT skills are able to take more advantages of ICT integration in ELT.

### Challenges and Difficulties in ICT Integration in ELT

Research studies have found that there are several challenges in the integration of ICTs in education. Rabah (2015) highlights the challenges of integrating ICTs in English schools as: lack of supporting school leadership, inconsistent investments in ICT equipment, infrastructure and resources, inflexibility of funding, lack of professional development and support and incorporation of technology in evaluations and curricular plans. According to Alkahtani (2017), lack of training and a lack of working equipment are the main challenges in ICT integration. He further elaborates that lack of a basic understanding among both students and teachers of how the equipment functions, lack of mastery of ICT teaching techniques, and lack of mastery of electronic equipment are some of the main problems. Likewise, Laronde et al. (2017) found lack of professional development and resources, off-task behavior, and improper referencing as the main challenges in ICT integration. In the same way, Ozdemir (2017) highlights the inadequacy of technology infrastructure, ICT inadequacy of the teacher and students, inadequacy and unsuitable course materials as the challenges of ICT integration. To Chen (2008), and Christensen (2002),

teacher's belief, attitude, and motivation toward ICT and their use are some of the main factors of impeding the integration of ICTs. Most of the challenges as discussed in Rabah (2015), Alkhatani (2017), Ozdemir (2017) above were also found in this study. However, unlike Chen (2008), the attitude of the teachers, students, and administrators towards ICTs was found to be positive.

Research scholars (Traxler & Kukulska-Hulme, 2005; van Dijk, 2005) concluded that ICT integration into the teaching and learning process, particularly in a developing country is influenced by many problems and challenges. Particularly in the developing countries, the management of the infrastructures and availability of ICT-related resources are some of the main challenges (Traxler & Kukulska-Hulme, 2005; van Dijk, 2005). Besides, the effective utilization of the ICTs is also affected by the technological skills of the teacher and students, and by the pedagogical skills of the teachers (Mishra & Koehler, 2006). The findings in this study too, are in the line with these scholars. For example, the teachers and the students were tackling the problems related to infrastructural management; and that they were not satisfied with their technological and pedagogical skills needed for the proper utilization of ICTs.

As it was discussed in the theory of ICT adoption and diffusion of resources and appropriation theory (van Dijk, 2005), and TPCK model (Mishra & Koehler, 2006), the effective use of ICTs is affected by two main causes: the distribution of the resources, and lack of technological pedagogical knowledge. These two were some of the main problems and challenges in integrating ICTs in ELTAL in this study too. The use of ICTs in the teaching and learning activities of the teachers and students was frequently hampered by the inefficiency of the infrastructural resources such as low Internet speed, irregular power supply, and inadequate number of computers in e-library and ICT lab. Likewise, the students did not have a good technological knowledge to handle the ICT tools to be able to use their productive benefits. More importantly, the teachers did not have adequate pedagogical skills to engage the students quite a lot in using ICTs for accessing information, collaborative learning, and English language skills learning.

**CONCLUSION**

ICTs are found to contribute several benefits to ELTAL in higher education in Nepal. The technologies are useful for the teachers for collecting teaching-learning resources, preparing and presenting the lessons, motivating the students, making more frequent interactions, and providing the students with feedback. Likewise, ICTs are helpful for the students for collecting learning resources, making interactions and collaborations, increasing exposure to English, and developing their learning autonomy. However, there are many problems and challenges in the integration of ICTs in ELT in higher education institutions in Nepal. The teachers and students encounter problems related to infrastructure management, technological skills, pedagogical skills, curriculum and textbooks, and attitudes of the parents. For effective integration of ICTs in ELT, more attention is needed to minimize such challenges.

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