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TEACHERS' REFLECTIONS ON THE USE OF TECHNOLOGY IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE  
TEACHING AND LEARNING AT THE PREPARATORY STAGE OF SCHOOLS EDUCATION  
IN ARUNACHAL PRADESH

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ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the integration of technology into English language teaching/learning among teachers at the preparatory stage (School education 3) in government schools in Arunachal Pradesh, India. The population of the study comprised teachers from the 11 districts of Arunachal Pradesh, specifically those teaching at the preparatory stage in government schools. Data were collected from 117 preparatory stage teachers in 42 government schools affiliated with the District Institutes of Education and Training (DIET), selected through random sampling from one cluster in each district. Purposive sampling was employed to ensure the inclusion of English teachers, both current and former, due to the absence of a specific cadre of English teachers recruited for the foundation and preparatory stages in Arunachal Pradesh. The study reveals widespread support among teachers for integrating technology into English language teaching/learning, with teachers utilizing various technological tools to enhance their teaching methods. However, a significant gap in training is observed, resulting in a lack of confidence and proficiency in utilizing technology effectively. The findings emphasize the need for comprehensive and practical training programs to equip teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge to use technology effectively in the classroom.

Keywords: Technology Integration, English Language Instruction, Preparatory Stage, Government Schools, Teacher Training.

1. Introduction

According to Aggarwal (2007) "the term educational technology was unknown in India before the sixties and was used as a synonym to audio-visual teaching aids" (p. 368). The National Policy of Education (NPE) 1986, which was revised in 1992, emphasized the importance of technology in teaching and learning in order to improve education quality in India. As a result of the policy, two government schemes emerge: educational technology (ET) and computer literacy studies in schools (CLASS). Today, ET is used and accepted in all phases of teaching and learning, in both formal and informal settings. The Digital India Campaign was launched on Wednesday July 1st 2015 by the Government of India in an effort to transform India into a digitally empowered society. The success of this campaign is evident in the use of COW-WIN, Unified Payment Interface (UPI), Dig

lockers, and other government schemes. With this approach, the National Educational Policy (NEP) focused on integrating technology into the teaching and learning process in a holistic way. The NEP 2020 states that “New circumstances and realities require new initiatives” (p. 57). It suggests that in light of the evolving circumstances and realities, the integration of artificial intelligence, machine learning, block chain technology, smart boards, handheld computing devices, adaptive computer testing, and other innovative educational software and hardware solutions is poised to revolutionize the landscape of teaching and learning.

Technology provides a variety of tools and resources that can improve languages learning and allow learners to develop their skills more effectively. The goal of English language teaching and learning is always to attain language skills in Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing (LSRW). According to Sherawat & Jha (2016), “learning a language means learning its skills very much like the skills of swimming and cycling” (p. 28). Therefore, learners must consistently dedicate themselves to putting in effort and engaging in regular practice. Technology when properly integrated plays an important role in teaching and learning English language skills by providing access to authentic materials, creating interactive and personalized learning experiences, facilitating communication and collaboration, extending learning beyond the classroom, and supporting teachers.

The term DALI, which stands for Digital Age Language Instruction, was coined by Scholnik (2009) to emphasize the need for language teaching to adapt to the digital age by incorporating digital tools and skills. According to Scholnik (2009), “digital age language teachers have four important responsibilities” (p. 106).

- i. Firstly, teachers need to be aware of the online resources available that can effectively support the teaching and learning of English (Scholnik, 2009). The internet offers a wealth of materials, including videos, audio recordings, interactive exercises, and authentic texts, which can enhance language learning and provide learners with exposure to real-world language use.
- ii. Secondly, teachers should identify the materials that are most beneficial to learners based on their individual needs and goals (Scholnik, 2009). It is essential to select appropriate resources that align with the learners' proficiency level, learning styles, and interests. Furthermore, teachers should develop activities that utilize these materials effectively, making the process of learning English challenging and interesting for learners.
- iii. Thirdly, learners themselves should acquire the necessary digital skills to operate in the digital age, which will enable them to improve their English language skills more easily (Scholnik, 2009). These skills include navigating online platforms, using digital tools for language practice, conducting research, critically evaluating online information, and collaborating with others in virtual environments. Developing digital literacy skills empowers learners to leverage technology as a tool for language learning and communication.
- iv. Fourthly, an individual's personal inclination and willingness to employ technology in language learning become determining factors (Scholnik, 2009). Some learners may naturally gravitate towards using technology and readily explore various digital resources to enhance their language skills. Others may require guidance and support from teachers to develop their comfort and confidence in using technology effectively.

#### **K-Yan: Transforming Education and Challenges in Arunachal Pradesh**

In recent times, the digital initiative in Arunachal Pradesh has gained significant attention. The government has been actively working towards equipping classrooms with digital tools and improving technological infrastructure in the state. One such initiative, known as Adhunik Siksha Yojana or the Smart Classroom program, was launched in 2017 with the aim of enhancing the quality of education in upper primary schools, with K-Yan sets. K-Yan, also known as Knowledge Yan, is a teaching tool that offers a compact and comprehensive solution for educators. It combines a projector, PC, and DVD player into a single box, facilitating seamless connectivity to the internet. K-Yan's course content is based on the curriculum set by the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) and the National Council for Education and Research Training (NCERT), ensuring alignment with educational standards.

However, it is important to note that the introduction of K-Yan sets through this initiative has not brought about a significant transformation in terms of digital instruction within the classrooms. There are a few key reasons for this. Firstly, the training provided for K-Yan usage has been limited to only a select group of teachers who serve as representatives from their respective schools. Ideally, these trained teachers should have been able to retrain their colleagues, but this aspect seems to have been overlooked. Secondly, there is a lack of proper infrastructure or dedicated buildings to accommodate the K-Yan sets. This lack of suitable physical spaces hampers the effective utilization of the digital tools. Additionally, the absence of readily available technicians to address any issues or damages further exacerbates the problem. Once a K-Yan set becomes damaged, it remains non-functional as there is no immediate technical support to rectify the issues.

Despite these challenges, some teachers have still managed to utilize the K-Yan sets as they come preloaded with the digital format of the syllabus provided by the National Council for Education and Research Training. This feature enables teachers to access the prescribed curriculum in a digital format. However, the overall impact of the K-Yan sets on enhancing digital instruction in the classrooms has been limited due to the aforementioned issues

## 2. Methodological Approach

In order to comprehensively explore and gain deeper insights into the phenomena being investigated, the current study has adopted a mixed method approach to data collection. This approach combines the use of quantitative data, which involves numerical measurements and descriptive analysis, with qualitative data that encompasses non-numerical information and subjective experiences.

### Survey Population

In the study, the population consists of teachers from the 11 districts of Arunachal Pradesh, specifically those teaching at the preparatory stage in government schools. The researcher gathered information from 42 government schools affiliated with the District Institutes of Education and Training (DIET). These schools were selected using random sampling from one cluster in each district.

To ensure the inclusion of English teachers of the preparatory stage, a purposive sampling method was employed. This means that teachers who were currently teaching English, as well as those who had previously taught English, were included in the study. In Arunachal Pradesh, there is no specific cadre of English teachers recruited for the foundation and preparatory stages of school education. A total of 117 preparatory stage teachers from different primary and middle government schools participated in the study.

A list of selected districts, selected cluster, number of govt. Primary school (PS), Middle school (MS), and preparatory stage teachers participated in the study.

Sl. No	District Name with DIETs	Selected Cluster	No. of govt. PS/MS	No. of schools visited	Preparatory stage teachers respondents
1	West Kameng	Dirang	17	3	13
2	East Kameng	Seppa	14	5	14
3	Papum Pare	Naharlagun	15	5	9
4	East Siang	Pasighat	17	4	9
5	Lower Dibang Valley	Roing	7	6	27
6	Changlang	Changlang	17	3	7
7	Upper Subansiri	Daporijo	13	3	6
8	West Siang	Kamki	24	3	8
9	Tirap	Khonsa	19	3	7

10	Lower Subansiri	Yachuli	28	4	6
11	Anjaw	Khupa	6	3	11
<b>Total</b>		<b>11</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>117</b>

### Aims and Objectives of the Study

- I. To investigate how preparatory stage teachers use different forms of technology available in schools to teach and learn English.
- II. To find out what technological gadgets teachers use to teach and learn English.

### Research Question

In this study, two research questions have been taken into consideration:

- I. What are the technological tools available in the school utilize by teachers?
- II. What are the technological tools uses by Preparatory Stage in teaching and learning English?

### 3. Data analysis

The data is first recorded in Microsoft Excel spreadsheet; the raw data was then analyzed comprehensively based on the basis of respondents' responses than it was analyzed descriptively. Non-numerical data that is collected through using interviews as semi-structured interview in the form of open ended. The consent where taken to record the interview in the mobile phone then, the recorded interview was transcribed and analyzed.

Respondents' use of technology for teaching and learning English

	Item	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	Use technology to enhance my English language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) to teach effectively.	0	2	8	91	16
2	Download internet-based materials and resources to teach English.	0	5	13	94	5
3	Use my mobile phone to teach English.	2	35	11	65	14
4	Use K-Yan to teach English.	0	13	4	92	18
5	Allow students to use available technology in the classroom in learning English.	0	16	18	73	10
6	Ensure that the technology used in the classroom in teaching and learning English meet the expectation of the learners.	0	2	5	92	18
7	Regularly self-evaluate before using technology in the classroom to teach English.	0	6	11	78	22
8	Attend workshops, seminars, and conferences to improve my technological competency for the teaching-learning English.	0	9	24	72	12
9	Use technology in my classroom to make it engaging and exciting, in teaching and learning English.	3	17	14	84	8

10	Encourage English language learners to use technology to learn English from websites, mobile applications, social media, YouTube, and other sources.	7	14	5	88	3
11	In the absence of face-to-face teaching, I teach English using technology.	0	6	20	77	14
12	Encourage learners to communicate through technology with the community of English language learners to gain authentic language learning experiences.	0	14	11	81	11
13	Use videos on YouTube and films/animations to make learning English more lively and interesting.	1	3	11	90	12

The data suggests that teachers generally support the use of technology in teaching and learning the English language. They utilize technology to download English materials from various websites and conduct online classes when face-to-face interaction is not possible. Teachers also encourage students to use technology in the classroom. However, it is evident from the interviews that many teachers feel they lack adequate training in utilizing technology effectively.

According to the respondents, the lack of training hampers their ability to use technology creatively. One teacher mentioned that "if they had received training on specific technologies like K-Yan, they would have been able to utilize them more innovatively" (Semi-Structured interview). This highlights the importance of providing practical training to teachers to enhance their skills in using technology effectively for English language instruction.

The study found that the technology-related training programs in Arunachal Pradesh, organized by the SCERT, did not provide comprehensive practical training to all teachers. This indicates a gap in the training programs, where theoretical knowledge might be imparted, but practical application and hands-on experience are lacking. As a result, teachers are relying on their personal technological gadgets such as mobile phones, pen drives, and speakers to augment the quality of English teaching and learning. Teachers recognize the potential benefits of technology in English language they face obstacles due to insufficient training. To fully harness the advantages of technology, it is crucial to provide teachers with comprehensive and practical training, allowing them to explore innovative ways of integrating technology into their teaching methods. Addressing this training gap would enable teachers to make the most effective use of available technology, thereby enhancing the quality of English teaching and learning experiences for both teachers and students.

#### 4 Conclusion

The study highlights the widespread support among teachers for integrating technology into English language instruction. Teachers utilize various technological tools, such as downloading materials and conducting online classes, to enhance their teaching methods. However, the research reveals a significant gap in the training provided to teachers, resulting in a lack of confidence and proficiency in utilizing technology effectively. The study emphasizes the need for comprehensive and practical training programs that equip teachers with the skills and knowledge to leverage technology creatively in the classroom. By addressing this training gap, teachers can fully harness the potential benefits of technology, leading to enhanced English teaching and learning experiences. It is essential for educational institutions and authorities to prioritize teacher training and ensure that teachers are equipped with the necessary skills to utilize technology in innovative ways, thereby transforming the English language learning landscape.

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