

17th International Conference of NELTA

Phase I Highlights

Theme: Beyond Binaries: Sharing ELT Practices and Creating the Future



Conference Report prepared by
Kamal Poudel, General Secretary

Inauguration

The 17th International Conference of Nepal English Language Teachers' Association (NELTA) was inaugurated on 18 February 2012 at St. Xavier School, Jawalakhel, Lalitpur, Kathmandu.

Kamal Poudel, General Secretary, welcomed all the guests representing the Ministry of Education, US Embassy, British Council and Indian Embassy, media, and all the participants and the presenters. Mr. Hemanta Raj Dahal, President of NELTA chaired the opening ceremony and Prof. Dr. Jai Raj Awasthi, the Vice Chancellor of Far Western University, was the Chief Guest. Mr Jaideep Majumdar, the Charge d'Affaires from the Indian Embassy, Prof. Dr. Tirth Raj Khaniya, Founding President of



NELTA and former Member of National Planning Commission, Mr. Janardan Nepal, Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Education, Dr. Robert Monro, Director, British Council, Mr. Fife MacDuff, Regional English Language Officer (RELO), US Embassy, Mr. Anil Kedia, Chairman, DAV Sushil Kedia Vishwa Bharati Higher Secondary School, Dr. Barbara Law, English Language Fellow, Key Speakers Prof Rod Ellis from University of Auckland, New Zealand, Prof. Fredricka L. Stoller, Northern Arizona University, USA, Prof Angi Malderez, University of Leeds, UK, Mr.

Ganga Gautam, Immediate Past President, NELTA, Dr. Anjana Bhattarai, Associate Professor of Tribhuvan University, Ms. Joelle Uzarski, RELO, New Delhi and Ms Bhuwaneshwori Rao, Principal of DAV Sushil Kedia Vishwa Bharati Higher Secondary School were the guests on the dais. The hall was swarmed with nearly 800 ELT professionals. Ms. Hemangu Rai, teacher from St. Xavier's School, cordially welcomed the all guests and participants in the conference.

Prof Jai Raj Awasthi, the Chief Guest, inaugurated the conference lighting candles followed by the other distinguished guests. Padam Chauhan, Treasurer, NELTA and Sajan Karn, the co-editor of Journal of NELTA handed over the NELTA bags and the copies of journal to the dignitaries. In his inaugural speech, Prof. Awasthi said that he was thrilled and highly honoured to speak in the ceremony. He recalled his association with NELTA in the past and thanked David Pottinger, who was together with him to begin the journey of NELTA. He thanked Professor Tirth Raj Khaniya, Meera Shrestha, Ganga Ram Gautam who gave time and energy to establish and survive NELTA. He thanked Bal Krishna Sharma, Sajan Kumar Karn, Prem Phyak and Shyam Sharma for their assistance in the publication of NELTA journal. He also shared his gratefulness to the Indian Embassy for its support to NELTA and expected to have a



partnership with NELTA for enhancing quality education through English. He also reiterated that in the global changing perspective of teaching English, failing students in English in the examinations especially in public schools is alarming. The change in the teaching of English could bring change, he added.



Prof. Tirth Raj Khaniya expressed his joy seeing the number of participants, praised NELTA for its contribution in ELT, and working rigorously from its inception. NELTA has useful technical human resources to work in this field of ELT. And this type of gathering and conference will give opportunity to all the members to promote their professional development. Further, he raised a very crucial issue of the need for promoting NELTA in a more institutionalized manner.

Similarly, **Dr. Robert Monro**, Director of British Council said that they have decided to focus on English education exam in Nepal and they have been working in partnership with other organizations including NELTA and the Ministry of Education. He expressed his pleasure that Prof. Angi Malderez, Honorary Senior Fellow at the School of the Education, University of Leeds and other colleagues like Ewan Davis and Jovan Ilic are going to present in the conference to promote this area. He also shared that British Council has a policy to work at different levels with different media.



Highlighting the role of English, **Mr. Fife MacDuff** stressed that English is a lingua franca for communication between people of different countries and until now, there is no other better way. Further, he said that those who communicate in English would have better access, and better job prospects. He added that English teachers are the bearer of the certification of English to promote new generation. He is very much touched by their work and responsibilities delivering to the Nepalese people and gave his best

wishes for the success of the conference.

Mr. Janardan Nepal, Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Education, said that the Ministry is happy to collaborate with NELTA and also appreciated NELTA's role to improve English language teaching in Nepal. He said that there is a gap between ELT situation of the remote and the urban schools and added the importance of the conference to help teachers from remote places.



Mr. Jaideep Majumdar, the Charge d' Affaires of the Indian Embassy thanked NELTA for providing him opportunity to speak



few words. He said that

Indian Embassy is has working with the government of Nepal and supported 200 schools previously and now planning to support 200 more schools in the near future.

Though they are supporting to build infrastructures to those schools, they are equally responsible for quality education, for which NELTA is working. He praised NELTA's works and promised to support

even in future. This is the first time that Indian Embassy collaborated with NELTA.

Mr Hemanta Raj Dahal, President of NELTA delivered his presidential speech.

The Chief Guest, Professor Dr Jai Raj Awasthi, Vice Chancellor of Far Western University

Prof Rod Ellis, Key Speaker

Prof Fedricka Stoller, Key Speaker

Prof Angi Malderez, Key Speaker

Professor Tirth Raj Khaniya, Founder President of NELTA

Mr Janardan Nepal, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Education

Mr Jaideep Majumdar, Charge d' Affaires, Indian Embassy

Mr Fife MacDuff, Regional English Language Officer, US Embassy

Dr Robert Monro, Director, British Council

Dr Laurie Vassiley, Director, Fulbright Commission

Ms Joelle Uzarski, RELO, New Delhi

All the guests

Delegates and participants

NELTA colleagues

Media

I am very much delighted to welcome you in this august gathering of the 17th international conference of Nepal English Language Teachers' Association (NELTA). This is one of the most momentous occasions for us.



I want our fellow colleagues to recognize how much our predecessors did to carry on the ELT tradition and how much you all have contributed

to keep it intact. In the eyes of many teaching professionals of English language, every year the ceremony we accept, as ritual is nothing less than a miracle.

By your gracious cooperation in the growth and development process of NELTA, you have supported the Association tremendously with your pledge for promoting quality education through English. I thank you all for your help in maintaining the continuity of our mission.

The mission of NELTA goes forward. To continue this long trend is to guarantee our commitment to enhancing quality education through English language. For decades, we have attempted to focus on developing pedagogical skills of our fellow teachers, which has yet to garner positive results. We have therefore shifted to the new paradigm of helping develop English language proficiency of the English teachers. Our longing is to ensure full productivity of the input whether it is in the public or in the private sector.

What is extremely important now is to be forward looking. We therefore need to excel from today. We should fully understand, in this political transition, government alone cannot address the challenges of our vocation. NELTA therefore has tremendous responsibility to address the complex challenges in the ELT.

It is my intention to institutionalize NELTA to the greater degree and to collaborate with Ministry of Education, Nepal and the other key stakeholders. We expect Ministry of Education to work with us and to stand by our side. We can help the Ministry to prepare the critical mass in the country.

We have witnessed rapid growth of NELTA with more than 5000 members and 34 branches that cover almost 50 districts in the country ranging from far eastern part Sankhuwashava-bordering to China and to far western part Baitadi-bordering to India.

The theme of this year's conference is 'Beyond Binaries: Sharing ELT Practices and Creating the Future'. In Kathmandu, there are 3 key and 6 plenary speeches, and 191 papers from more than 20 countries covering Bangladesh, Nepal, India, Singapore, USA, Pakistan, UK, Sri Lanka, South Africa, Oman, Indonesia, New Zealand, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakasthan, Thailand, Morocco, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Malaysia, Japan, and Kazakhstan. In Chitwan, there are 2 key and plenary speeches each, and 80 papers. These deliberations address various issues of teaching English through sharing experiences and presenting findings from research projects.

The highlights of this conference are the three globally recognized key speakers. Professor Rod Ellis, University of Auckland, New Zealand, the leading figure of the task-based language teaching and second language acquisition, is talking about general principles for language pedagogy drawing on studies from second language acquisition. Similarly, Angi Malderez, an Honorary Senior Fellow of the School of Education, the University of Leeds, UK and the leading figure in teacher mentoring, is presenting how teachers can be mentored for their professional development. Professor Fredricka L. Stoller, Northern Arizona University, USA, is highlighting 'Looking into the Future: Project-based Learning in EFL Classrooms.'

The other ELT areas which will be covered in this conference include Task-based language teaching, Dictionary activities, Storytelling, Mentoring and teacher learning, Vocabulary learning and reading strategies, Content integrated language teaching, Methods of teaching, Teacher professional development, Developing reading and writing skills, Technology enhanced language teaching, Critical and creative pedagogy, Language assessment and testing, Action research in the classroom, Professional development from bottom, Cultural influences in teaching English, Teaching English in large and under-resourced contexts, Theory and practice interface, Teacher and learner autonomy etc. In addition to the papers, there are poster presentations and book exhibitions from publishers like

Cambridge University Press, Oxford University Press, Routledge, EKTA Books, Bhrikuti Pustak and many others.

For last couple of years, NELTA has been focusing to support the mission of Ministry of Education to enhance quality education in Nepal. In this regard, we have launched English Access Microscholarship Programme in collaboration with the US State Department/the US Embassy, Kathmandu. There are 280 students under this programme in Kathmandu, Gorkha, Bhairahawa, Butwal and Birganj. All of them are from the public schools. Moreover, we have been allocating 6 US citizens to the public schools who work for 9 months every year in collaboration with Fulbright Commission, Nepal and the number of such volunteers is going to be 9 from August 2012. We are looking for the opportunity to allocate the new batch of English Teaching Assistants (ETAs) outside the Kathmandu valley.

I hope this conference will provide a fruitful avenue to the teachers of English in Nepal to learn through sharing and to establish professional networks.

At the end of the second day of the conference, we have Annual General Assembly (AGM), which I believe will look into the possibility to have a regional set up of NELTA, update its constitution and adopt the future direction.

Thank you!'

At the end of the opening ceremony, **Ms Meera Shrestha**, the Senior Vice President conveyed vote of thanks to the partners and the sponsors. She said that our key allies are British Council, American Embassy and Ministry of Education. We have been receiving tremendous support from the British Council for human resource development under Hornby Trust, international and regional conferences including IATEFL conference in the UK. Moreover, a number of trainings are supported locally. A number of our members have been able to compete and win many awards of SUSI, IVLP and TEA sponsored by the US State Department. Our members are also supported to participate and present papers in the TESOL International Convention in the US. We are very pleased to share that the Indian Embassy has been generous to support our 17th international conference.



On this occasion, NELTA would like to express its sincere gratitude to British Council Nepal, the US Embassy and Oxford University Press for sponsoring the leading professors as the key speakers of the conference. Similarly, we would also like to thank Cambridge University Press and Routledge Publications for their support with the publication of NELTA Journal and conference proceedings respectively. We extend our thanks to the Indian Embassy for helping us with the cost

of the publication of the conference newsletter and program booklet and the speakers from India.

Thanks are due to all other sponsors such as EKTA Books, CG Chaudhary Group, People's Campus, Janamaitri Multiple Campus, Kathmandu Sihhkhya Campus, Asian Public School, Mt Everest Real Vision Pvt Ltd, Synergy Travels, Sunlight Publications and Students' Bookshop, Kanjirowa School, Universal Language Institute BhrikutiPustak, Nabil Bank, Zenith Finance Limited, Premier International School, Xavier's Academy, Bhanubhakta Memorial Higher Secondary School, Pathshala Foundation, Opal International School and Sarita Rai for their generous support.

St. Xavier's School, Jawalakhel, Lalitpur and Small Heaven School, Kalyanpur, Chitwan also deserve our special thanks for hosting this mega ELT event. Without their support this conference would not have been possible.

Key Speeches

Prof. Fredricka L. Stoller presented her paper 'Looking into the Future: Project-based Learning in EFL Classrooms.' She shared that it is teachers' responsibility to think about ideas they could adopt to enhance students' language skills. She gave some examples of sample project works in different countries she had experienced. She stated that project work helps the students gain both content and linguistic knowledge.



The tangible outcomes of the project works include written outcomes e.g. summary, synthesis, position paper, argumentative paper, poster, newsletter, wall newspaper, webpage, string and pin bulletin, board display and scrapbook. The oral outcome includes oral presentation, debate, role-play, simulation and poster question and answer. The project based learning in EFL classroom is adaptable to students with different proficiency levels, preparedness, interests, and curricular and language emphases.



Prof. Angi Malderez, first, gave examples of binaries in language teaching. She deliberated that this is the era of relativism and, therefore, we have gone beyond binaries. She quoted Alan Maley: "You don't get at the essence of a rose by pulling off its petals." She implied that not all these binaries are the essence of the art of teaching and communicating. It is useful that people have used labels for parts of the rose, there are words for colors, for the thorns, for petals so that she can talk about what the rose means to her. These are thinking tools for teachers to explain and use to thinking in teaching.

She talked about beyond binaries in supporting teacher learning. Teachers need to support their own learning too to support their students learning. She commented that knowing about the curriculum, learning to talk by listening and learning how to do things by lots of practice is not enough because they have gone beyond this. She added that only someone, maybe a mentor, with a close, on-going, collegial relationship with the teacher can promote teacher learning. There is a need to develop



teacher identity and go beyond the binaries of teacher education or teacher training. She said that there must be a supportive environment for mentoring; there must be provision of opportunities for mentors preparation and development. She concluded that being a good English teacher is not enough to be a good mentor because it requires time for preparation.

Prof. Rod Ellis, in his presentation ‘Principles of Instructed Language Learning’, explained following eleven principles of instructed language learning.

Principle 1: Instruction needs to ensure that learners develop a rich repertoire of formulaic expressions and a rule-based competence.

Principle 2: Instruction needs to ensure that learners focus predominantly on meaning.

Principle 3: Instruction needs to ensure that learners also focus on form.

Principle 4: Instruction needs to be predominantly directed at developing implicit knowledge of the L2 while not neglecting explicit knowledge.

Principle 5: Instruction needs to take into account the learner’s ‘built-in-syllabus’.

Principle 6: Successful instructed language learning requires extensive L2 input.

Principle 7: Successful instructed language learning also requires opportunities for output.

Principle 8: The opportunity to interact in the L2 is central to developing L2 proficiency.

Principle 9: Instruction needs to take account of individual differences in learners.

Principle 10: Instruction needs to take account of the fact that there is a subjective aspect to language learning

Principle 11: In assessing learners’ L2 proficiency it is important to examine free as well as controlled production.

He concluded that although the principles are only provisional specifications, they provide a basis for evaluating different approaches to language teaching and designing teacher education/ training programmes.



In the evening of the first day, the participants were thrilled to watch the cultural program organized by the Kathmandu-based students of English Access Microscholarship Program implemented by NELTA sponsored by the US State Department/U.S. Embassy,



Kathmandu to develop English language proficiency and cultural understanding for the needy children in Nepal. The Access students performed their dances diverse culture representing Rai, Sherpa, Newari and Tamang communities of Nepal. This is the first time NELTA has been able to organize a cultural show to give a flavour of Nepalese culture to

attendees from abroad and to give some sort of recreation to the Nepalese attendees.

Closing in Kathmandu

Mr Hemanta Raj Dahal, NELTA President, chaired the closing ceremony.

Speaking in the closing ceremony of 17th NELTA International Conference, **Ms Huma Khan** from Bangladesh stated that NELTA has brought people together under one roof. Likewise, **Md. Saif Akhtar** from Society of Pakistan English Language Teachers (SPELT) expressed that they learnt a lot from this conference and it was like a rainbow exhibiting different colours from around the world. Similarly, **Ms Ganga Basnet**, one of the participants, stated that teachers benefited from this conference. She further added that attending this conference became eye opener for all of us. **Mr Fife MacDuff**, Regional English Language Officer (RELO), Embassy of the United States of America expressed that NELTA is a strong partner and they are happy to collaborate more programmes with NELTA. The conference key speaker **Prof Angi Malderez** stated that she came here to meet NELTA people hoping to learn more. She further expressed that she was impressed by observing NELTA activities. Likewise, another key speaker **Prof Fredricka L. Stoller** expressed that this was a wonderful experience to be in the conference of NELTA. She added that Students from Nepal are lucky because they are getting teachers trained by NELTA.

Prof. Abhi Subedi shared how English has become global language where people around the world speak this language as “*natively*” as the people from English speaking countries. NELTA president, **Mr Hemanta Raj Dahal** was delighted to experience the active participation of the delegates. He stated that NELTA is happy in developing partnership with different organizations in training and other activities. He congratulated the branch colleagues for bringing up the journals. He added that NELTA was successful in bringing the third key speaker with the support of Oxford University Press.

Finally, he stated that NELTA is a forum to everyone who would like to work together in the field of ELT and declared that the Conference Phase I over.

