



Email:editorijless@gmail.com

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ATTITUDES OF ENGLISH TEACHERS TOWARDS SHADOWING IN ELT IN NEPAL

Dr. ARUN KUMAR KSHETREE

Lecturer, TU, FOE

Butwal Multiple Campus, Butwal, Nepal

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ABSTRACT

This article is based on the case study research conducted in Rupandehi District, Sainamaina Municipality with the objective of finding out the attitudes of English teachers towards shadowing in English language teaching (ELT). The study was conducted with two types of participants; five teachers involved in shadowing activities and five more who were not involved in shadowing. The study will be significant in designing the policy regarding the shadowing in education. The results found that the teachers' attitudes vary according to whether they were involved in shadowing activities but most of the teachers were found to be positive towards the benefits of shadowing activities in ELT. The study also revealed that the attitudes of teachers towards shadowing activities were linked with their religious beliefs as well. The teachers were found to believe that the shadowing activities were great opportunity for the development of language skills in students as there is chance to the students to practise more.

Keywords: Shadowing, Selling knowledge, Tuition classes, Home Tuition, Coaching classes etc.

Introduction

The teaching of English in the schools in Nepal is especially much criticized as the students have to take tuition or get admitted in the coaching centres for the preparation of the decisive final examinations of English. Though, English language teaching (ELT) does not have a long history in Nepal, the society believes that the English language teaching and learning in Nepal is not successful in the real sense. Taking tuition has almost been a culture even in the good boarding schools although they are called English medium schools. Private tutoring has become widely known in the literature as shadow education. Different forms of imparting education to the students out of the formal school or college situations are termed as shadow education. Bray (2010) describes that the label 'shadow education' is appropriate for several reasons. First, private supplementary tutoring only exists with the mainstream education system; second, as the size and shape of the mainstream system change, so do the size and shape of supplementary tutoring; third, in almost all societies much more attention focuses on the mainstream than on its shadow; and fourth, the features of the shadow system are much less distinct than those of the mainstream system. Shadow education takes different forms in different cultures.

The private tuition can be defined as fee-paying supplementary education that students take with the motivation to acquire subject knowledge to increase their educational chances in the formal system of education. Particularly high numbers of secondary level school students use it in order to succeed in the final board examinations that determine successful completion of schooling, as well as university entrance and ultimately chances of gaining government employment. Private tuition, referred to by Bray (1999) as the 'shadow education' system, is a fee-based educational service, and can be provided by different types of service providers. The services are closely linked to the formal education system, aimed at helping students to meet its curriculum requirements. Private tuition is often provided by individuals, from secondary school pupils, university students, graduates and qualified teachers, to organized businesses and even chain businesses. It has gone from being seen as just a source of supplemental income for an educated (often young) person, to being a business in its own right, part of what is now a large-scale industry (Bray 1999). Increasing supply and demand each seem to be feeding growth in the other, and there is supply to meet all types of demand from the relatively poor who can still pay something, to the very wealthy. In addition, while tuition traditionally has consisted of a tutor and anywhere from one pupil to many, the internet has enabled distance (online) tutoring, where a reliable internet connection is available.

Bray (2013) further points out that the history of private supplementary tutoring is probably as old as the history of formal schooling. The notion of seeking extra help for children and youths to help them to keep up with peers and/or to stretch their learning further is thus longstanding. However, in earlier decades and centuries supplementary tutoring was modest in scale, chiefly confined to relatively prosperous households. In the contemporary era, shadow education reaches a much wider spectrum of income groups and has become a major phenomenon around the world. Likewise, Stevenson and Baker (1992) defined shadow education as a set of educational activities outside formal schooling that are designed to improve a student's chances of successfully moving through the allocation process. In the past, the extensive use of shadow education was only observed in a few countries, especially in several East Asian countries. However, recent research shows that the expansion and prevalence of shadow education is a worldwide phenomenon, and shadow education is one of the fastest growing industries in many countries around the world.

This is because in most cases, shadow education accompanies significant private capital investment on the part of certain families and, at the same time, it is less feasible for many families with limited economic capital (Baker and Le Tendre, 2005). In the same way, Grodsky (2010) points out that shadow education is different from other mechanisms that contribute to educational inequality such as school segregation and tracking or ability grouping within schools that fall under the control of educational organizations. That is, it is more difficult to control the pervasiveness and repercussions of shadow education compared to other factors since it takes place outside of formal schooling. Bray (2006) mentions that some countries such as South Korea, Uganda and Mauritius have tried to ban shadow education, but the ban was ineffective. Along these lines, if shadow education does make a difference in academic achievement, it carries important implications concerning educational opportunity and stratification in society. It is obviously a mechanism for maintaining and increasing social stratification by conferring educational advantages on students who are already advantaged in terms of their rich economic, social and cultural capital.

In case of Nepal, the private tutoring was very common phenomenon. The education system in the traditional Nepal was simply home based teaching which was inspired by Hindu philosophy that they called *Gurukul Shikshya*. Thus before formal school education system was started there was the culture of getting education from some educated well-known Gurus. This shows that the shadow education started in Nepal very long ago. During the Rana regime as well the common people were educated by home based tutoring and even Rana's children also used to be taught in their palaces not in the schools. Later on only the establishment of Durbar School opened the chances to go to school

specially for the children of Ranas. As the Rana regime was over, the schools were in various places and common people's children started to go to schools. However, as some of the courses were difficult for the students they started to get private tutoring, joining coaching classes or even hiring a home based tutor for their support in the subjects they feel difficulty. This system is going on until now. When the students feel that they are close to the School Leaving Certificate SLC (now SEE) examination, they start taking tuition, joining coaching classes in their schools and other institutions. It has become a fashion like activity to get tuition classes from beginning of the school especially to complete the homework of the students. Thus, the system of shadow education has been a fashion among the students and parents. The parents who do not have time to help their children's study and those who cannot help their children in their studies and those who cannot help them in completing their homework are compelled to send their children to take tuition or hire a home tutor. Such phenomenon has been proved fruitful to them as their problem is solved. They do not have to bother solving problems in their children's homework.

The point here is that English used to be supposed to be very difficult in the rural Nepal and the parents used to be compelled to manage private tutoring to their children so that they could easily pass the SLC exam in the past and SEE exam now a days. All the children became very happy to have tuition or coaching classes apart from their regular school classes. It became a fashion among the children in Nepal. Many parents and children think that it certainly increases their marks in the exam results and the more important thing to study is that whether the shadow education activities is very much helpful in increasing the English achievement of the children. In this backdrop, a study was planned to analyse the effect of shadowing in the achievement of students in English. The main objective of the present study is to analyse the role of shadow education in the English language learning in Nepal. I thought that the study will be significant for the policy makers and general practitioners to systematize the shadow activities in education. It will also be helpful for the teachers and students as it will try to show the impact of shadow activities in ELT.

Many researches were completed in this area in Nepal and other parts of the world which try to analyse the shadowing in education and its various aspects. A research was conducted by Sujatha (2007) for UNESCO and reported that a strong presence of private coaching classes was observed in Kerala and a low presence in Andhra Pradesh in India. The relationship between school and the shadow institution of education has manifested the tensions between form and function in a distinct and interesting way. This report concludes that though there is tension between the schools and the shadowing institutions, the schools were also accepting the roles of such institutions. The shadowing in education is blended in the formal education from the establishment of education bodies and schools.

A research in Sri Lanka conducted by Pallegedara (2011) showed that expenditures there were rising over time. Referring to national household surveys, the researcher noted that in 1995/96, 23.3% of households with school-aged children spent money on private tutoring, and 14.8% of households allocated 1%-5% of total household expenditure for tutoring. In 2006/07, 64.0% of households spent money on private tutoring, and 24.0% allocated 1%-5% of total household expenditure for tutoring. Moreover, some households spent even more. In 2006/07, 2.7% of households allocated between 5% and 10% of their total expenditures for private tutoring, and 0.9% allocated more than 10%. This reflects that even in Sri Lanka, the shadowing activities of education are forcing the parents to invest more in the education of their children. This has increased the total household expenditure there and the investment in education.

Examining correlations between receipt of tutoring and scores of 22,500 students on the grade 10 School Leaving Certificate examination, Thapa (2011) found that students in public schools who had received tutoring had higher scores by 1.74 percentage points. However, no significant difference was found for students in private schools. This study shows the increment of students' scores after their

involvement in the shadowing activities like joining the tuition. Likewise, in the case of Malaysia, Jelani and Tan (2012) looked at patterns of private tutoring received by primary school students in Penang, which concluded that students of Chinese ethnicity were more likely to receive tutoring, observing that such students formed 38% of the population but 46% of students in their sample. By contrast, Malays formed 51% of the population but only 44% of their sample. This means that the private tutoring like shadowing activities are common not only in developed and under developed countries but also common everywhere around the world, even in the people's republic of China, a communist governing country. Although there are many research works accomplished in various aspects of shadow education, there is no any evidence of researches conducted in Nepal related to the present study. There are some studies conducted related to privatization of education with shadow education and like this.

There are a lot of students taking varieties of shadowing activities in learning English in Nepal and the shadowing is still not in the control of any government authorities. There is no any government body or authority that can officially say anything about shadowing activities. As there is no sufficient studies conducted in Nepal and abroad in the attitudes of the teachers towards shadowing in ELT in particular, this study was conducted with the objective of finding out and analyzing the attitudes of the teachers towards shadowing in ELT.

Methodology

This study is a case study research. I have purposively selected 10 English teachers teaching in government and private secondary level schools. I developed and used a set of questionnaire and a set of interview guidelines to gather information from the teachers. With the tools, I visited the selected teachers and requested them to fill in the questionnaire and planned for the interview. I also assured them that the information they provided would not be misused anywhere except in the article.

Analysis of the Data

The acquired data from the in-depth interview was systematized and the information gathered from the questionnaire was tabulated for the analysis and interpretation of the data. The acquired data were analysed using simple statistical tools like average, percentile etc. Some of the information which is important for this article is presented here in this part.

There were some questions asked to find out the teachers' views towards the shadowing activities and the English scores of students which are presented here in table no 1.

Table 1: Teachers' views regarding shadowing and English scores

S. N.	Particulars	Agree	Disagree	Remarks
1	Taking tuition and coaching is good for students	8	2	
2	Shadowing helps students' English better	6	4	
3	Shadowing activities help increasing students' English scores	5	5	
4	Involving yourself in any kind of shadowing activities	5	5	
5	Teaching tuition for the students whom you teach in the school is good for the teachers	3	7	
6	Teaching tuition to the students is good for teachers	6	4	
7	School teachers involving in shadowing activities is good from social viewpoint	4	6	
8	Society takes teaching tuition positive	6	4	

9	Parents are positive towards the teachers who teach tuition and coaching to their own students	5	5	
10	Teachers encourage students for involving in shadowing activities	7	3	

The table no 1 above shows much about the attitudes of the teachers towards the shadowing activities for ELT learners. Though the teachers who were involving themselves in the shadowing activities and those who were not involved in tuition and other shadowing activities were different in many ways regarding their attitudes towards shadowing activities, their viewpoints in many aspects were similar. The first issue raised was about the usefulness of shadowing activities (specially tuition and coaching) for the students and 80 percent of the teachers agreed that taking tuition and joining coaching classes was good for the students. Likewise 60 percent of the teachers believed that the shadowing activities were really helpful to the students to improve their English as they get chance to practice more during the shadowing activities whereas the rest 40 percent said that the regular school classes were sufficient for the students to develop their English. The teachers who were in this view were those who did not involve themselves in shadowing activities.

In another issue regarding the increment of the English scores because of the shadowing activities and the involvement of teachers in those activities the data showed that the teachers selected were divided into two groups equally as the selection was purposeful. This means that the five teachers, who said that they were involved in shadowing activities, were in the view that the tuition, coaching like shadowing activities could increase the English scores of the students. On the other hand, another group of five teachers who were not involved in the shadowing activities were in the view that the regular classes were sufficient for the students to secure their grades and they were in the view that shadowing activities were not the reason of students' better scores. In the same way three teachers in the sample said that they were teaching tuition to the students whom they themselves teach in the regular classes whereas seven teachers were in the view that the shadowing activities for the students in their regular classes was not a good idea.

In a question asked to know their views towards the tuition, coaching like shadowing activities, sixty percent of the teachers were found to be in the view that the shadowing activities were beneficial for the teachers in many ways like economic benefit and proper time utilization with financial benefits. Forty percent of the teachers were found to be in the view that the shadowing activities were not good for the teachers as the creativity of the teachers would get killed due to the involvement of the teachers in the same activities and teaching contents. In the same way, four teachers were found to be in the view that the society liked the teachers teaching in the school involving in the shadowing activities whereas six of the teachers said that they realized that the society did not like the school teachers teaching coaching and tuition to their students or others. Likewise, sixty percent of the teachers were found to be in the view that the society was positive towards tuition like activities in the learning of English whereas forty percent of the teachers said the society was really not positive towards tuition like shadowing activities.

The sample teachers were also asked about the attitude of the parents of the students whom they were teaching tuition or coaching classes. In this, the teacher who were teaching tuition or coaching classes said that the parents were positive towards them whereas the same numbers of teachers were in the view that the parents were not positive towards the teachers who teach tuition and coaching classes specially to the students whom they teach in regular classes in the school. In the same way, seventy percent of the teachers said they encouraged their students to take tuition or coaching like shadowing activities thinking that the students would be unable to develop with only the regular classes. Whereas the other three teachers said that they did not encourage their students to take tuition

or coaching like activities thinking that the students should develop struggling with the help of regular classes.

The interview guidelines to be used to gather information also included the similar questions to get elaborated answers from the teachers. The teachers who were involving themselves in the shadowing activities were philosophically different from those who were against involving in those activities. Those who were not involving in shadowing activities were found to be linking their views with religious belief that education or should not be the item to be commercialized or sold in the market in the name of tuition, coaching or such activities. The teachers who were teaching coaching and tuition classes said that the job as the teacher is itself selling the knowledge and it is not much different from taking tuition and coaching. Not only this, the teachers who were in the side of involving in the shadowing activities were in the view that the salary of teachers was not enough for their daily basic requirements and the income from the shadowing would be a great financial support as well as academic support to the students and their parents. But the other group of teachers was in the view that they should learn to live with what the government officially provided them in their job. Thus, the teachers were found to be of two categories in their fundamental philosophy.

Findings and Discussion

As the shadowing in education is an inevitable part of our formal education, it seems almost impossible to think about the ways of eliminating it rather the policymakers need to think about systematizing the shadowing activities like many developed countries in the world. This study was carried out with the objectives of finding out the attitudes of the teachers towards shadowing activities in ELT. The teachers were found to be positive towards the shadowing activities in ELT as it can help students getting better marks. Eighty percent of the teachers were found to be in the view that the shadowing activities were good for the students and these help developing students' English better. The private tutoring and coaching classes like shadowing activities were found to increase the English scores of the students as the teachers who involve themselves in such activities reported. It is as Thapa (2011) found that public schools' students who had received private tutoring had added to their score by 1.74 percentage points in SLC exam. Similarly, it goes in harmony with the Poisson's (2007) views as cited in Bray (2009, p. 46) in which students' better results were found to be the outcomes of shadowing activities and these improved students' learning as well as competitiveness in the educational market.

As the sample teachers in this study were the English teachers teaching in government and private secondary schools, the five of them were involved in shadowing activities and five were not. Among them I found three teachers teaching tuition and coaching to the students they used to teach in school in day time. This is a moral issue to some extent for the teachers to teach privately better at home to the students whom they cannot teach well at school. Politically also this issue was raised by different students' unions in Nepal that the teachers involving in shadowing activities was not ethical specially teaching tuition or coaching classes to the students whom they teach in schools in day time. The tuition and coaching like activities are the only sources of extra income to the teachers as the salary of teachers in Nepal is not enough for a good living. In such situation the income from shadowing activities will be of great help for the teachers and thus the teachers thought that shadowing was good for the teachers specially from economic and social viewpoint.

In the same way, the teachers were found to be positive in the matter that the society is positive towards the tuition and coaching like shadowing activities and the parents were positive towards the teachers who were teaching tuition to their children at home with extra fees and in the schools with school tuition fees. The teachers were in the view that many parents were not happy to pay much for their children's tuition fees as they thought that they were paying sufficient in the school. It goes with Subedi (2018) where he found that most of the parents used to view negatively to those teachers who were engaged in private tutoring. In addition, they thought that the teachers were exploiting their

children by poor teaching in regular classroom. In some situations in Nepal, the parents blamed the teachers and school authorities that they were encouraging their children to take tuition and earn money from them. This also seems unethical from one angle and a good support to the weaker students from another angle.

In this way, the shadowing activities were found to be helpful to the students and teachers both. The teachers were found to be positive towards the benefits of shadowing in ELT though some teachers' attitudes were found to be a bit different towards shadowing activities as they thought that it was only the sale of knowledge.

Conclusions

In this way in Nepal, the shadow education is very common. Various activities related to shadow education are commonly used by the students to increase their marks and to develop their English language competency. Thus the role of shadowing in education is really helpful in achieving better scores in the decisive examinations like SEE and 12th grade final examinations. The teachers were found to be positive towards the shadowing activities for developing the English skills specially English scores in decisive examinations of the students. Though teaching tuition and coaching to the students whom the teachers teach in the regular classes in the schools was not positively viewed by the parents, students' unions and the teachers themselves who were not involved in shadowing activities, it was viewed positively by the teachers who were teaching tuition and coaching classes. They thought that they were helping many students and parents by teaching tuition and coaching classes as their performance was better after the shadowing activities. Thus, the governmental control in shadowing activities to regulate the activities and support such activities emphasizing the benefits of shadowing activities is important in Nepal as well.

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