Socio-cultural practices affecting marginalised girls’ experiences of using technology for learning in low-income countries

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Socio-cultural practices affecting marginalised girls’ experiences of using technology for learning in low-income countries

Agnes Kukulska-Hulme & Saraswati Dawadi
Institute of Educational Technology

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# Project 2021-22

**Reaching out to marginalised young people aged 13-15 in under-resourced countries in Africa and Asia**

**Partners:**
- Universities
- Schools
- Field researchers

**Participants:**
- Children
- Teachers
- Parents

**Focus on:**
- mobile technologies & English language learning and use
- lived experience, inside and outside of school
- barriers and opportunities, including role of gender

Supported by:
- British Council
- The Open University

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<th>Country</th>
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<td>Sudan</td>
<td>Africa</td>
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<td>Senegal</td>
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The Research Team

- **The Open University**  Agnes Kukulska-Hulme (Lead), Saraswati Dawadi, Mark Gaved
- **Tribhuvan University, Nepal**: Kamal Raj Devkota
- **University of Dhaka, Bangladesh**: Rubina Khan
- **Ahfad University for Women, Sudan**: Amna Bedri
- **Regional Centre of Teacher Training, Diourbel, Senegal**: Abdou Niane
- **Monash College, Australia**  Ram Ashish Giri

Each national partner in the 4 fieldwork countries also has their own research team.
Understanding educational marginalisation

- Processes that place certain people and communities on the margins of society, preventing them from accessing resources, opportunities and services, and from developing their capabilities (von Braun & Gatzweiler, 2014)

- Children’s inability to access, participate in, benefit from, and/or complete their education due to:
  - poverty, gender, geographic location, disability, cultural practices, being in an ethnic minority, or having a mother tongue that is different from the languages used at school
Gender in marginalisation across country contexts

- Focus on girls’ access to technology and opportunity to learn English and how to reduce marginalisation and empower girls in low-resource contexts.

- Exposed to different forms of social equality issues, gender-based violence, biases, gender stereotypes, and discriminatory gender norms which create a barrier to girls’ education or career development.

- Of all the girls deprived of primary education, some sectors are even more disadvantaged; those are girls of poor families, of internally displaced families, girls with special needs, girls who live in remote villages or are victims of different kind of violence.

- “Girls are disadvantaged when it comes to digital adoption, have lower levels of access to and use of digital technology than boys, and often they are not benefitting from digital technology in the same way as boys” (UNICEF, 2021).
Data collection: Schools and participants

In Each Country

4 schools

2 rural
- School A
  - 10 students
  - 4 parents
  - 2 teachers
- School B
  - 10 students
  - 4 parents
  - 2 teachers

2 urban
- School A
  - 10 students
  - 4 parents
  - 2 teachers
- School B
  - 10 students
  - 4 parents
  - 2 teachers
School settings in marginalised communities

**Bangladesh**- slum children (urban area) and Bandearban- remote part of the country where the literacy rate is 34.0%.

**Senegal**- Taïba Moutoupha and Ndindy, where the GER for girls is the lowest, and the dropout rate for both girls and boys the highest.

**Sudan**- Suburbs of Omdurman (inhabited mostly by war-displaced people) and white Nile (tribes such as nomads and Hausa)

**Nepal**- Squatter Community (urban setting), and Tharu community- marginalized ethnic community (rural location).
ACCESS AND ATTITUDES

❖ RQ1: What access do marginalised students, teachers and parents have to technology that may be used for educational purposes?

❖ RQ2 What are marginalised students’, teachers’ and parents’ attitudes towards the role of technology and the English language?

EXPERIENCES

❖ RQ3 What are the experiences of students, teachers, and parents in using technology for student learning?

❖ RQ 4 What are the experiences of students, teachers, and parents in using English for student learning? What factors affect girls’ experiences of technology in support of their education?

❖ RQ4 What factors affect girls’ opportunity and motivation to learn English in the target countries? Is there gender equity and equality in English language learning?
Methodology

- **Guided by activity theory** (Engstrom, 1999)

- **Qualitative design** to collect lived experiences of marginalised students, teachers and parents in using technology for student learning

- Looking at issues from marginalised students’ and their parents’ and teachers perspectives, *giving them a voice* rather than making assumptions about them (Missou, 2012)
Data collection

Methods of data collection

Research methods and participants

Research Participants

In Each Country

4 schools

2 rural

School A
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School A
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- 4 parents
- 2 teachers

School B
- 10 students
- 4 parents
- 2 teachers
Research findings
Experiences of using technology at home

**Students:**

**Home assignments:** He [brother] allows me to use mobile phone for preparing assignments (BD).

**Learning improvement:** I use google search. To improve the English language I search for ‘how to learn the English language’ on YouTube. For solving maths I downloaded apps (NP).

**Group work:** They work together. Students, for example, have WhatsApp groups through which they carry out work together. I noticed that (P-SN).

**Online classes from home:** I use it in an online class (NP).

**Other uses:** listening to English songs/music, social media (Facebook, TikTok, YouTube)

**Challenges:** sharing technology, connectivity
Experiences of using technology in schools

Access to devices and networks varied, with some children having their own devices, others borrowing from family members, and some drawing on extended social networks for internet connections.

Where schools have a small computer lab with desktop computers, use of the lab was often infrequent, and students shared computers.

Students:
We have a computer lab but we did not use it during the time of pandemic. Before the pandemic, our teachers would take us to the lab. He used to demonstrate us different things in the Computer subject (Student in Nepal).
Use of English for student learning

**Home Language:** No use of English (mostly local/national languages)

**Languages in schools:** Mostly national/local languages

**Students:**

*In an English class, sometimes we speak English, sometimes we speak French or Wolof* (Student in Senegal).

*Although I also like English, there is none at home who can teach me English* (Student in Bangladesh).

*They use Bangla more while teaching English in classroom* (Student in Nepal)

*Teacher explains in Arabic in all lessons and sometimes speaks in English* (Student in Sudan)

**Teachers:**

*I use multiple languages, English, Nepali and sometimes Tharu* (Teacher in Nepal).

**Parents:**

*Nowadays, everyone prefers children to be taught in their local languages at school. Maybe it would be much easier for them, as in some countries we know and which have demonstrated it. In any case, I would have liked my children to learn their local language at school* (Parent in Senegal).
Gender equality in using technology and learning English

● Due to cultural mindsets, some female students have fewer opportunities to use mobile phones at home than male students: girls have certain duties at home and may not be allowed to go to internet cafes.

“Girls should not use a smartphone. It’s only for my son.” (Parent in Bangladesh)

“I do not think girls and boys have the same opportunity to use technology at home” (Parent in Sudan)

● Parents are more concerned about how their daughters use technology than their sons. So, they put more restrictions on the use of mobile phones for daughters than sons.

“Parents are also strict to provide mobile phones and internet to their daughters. But they are careless to their sons” (Teacher in Nepal).

“Boys and girls are the same, but you have to be cautious about at what the girl is studying” (Parent in Bangladesh).
Gender equality in using technology and learning English

- Girls and boys use technology for different purposes. *Girls use technology to make videos and post them on social networks. Boys use it by creating a group, chatting with friends, and playing games*” (Teacher in Nepal)

- The findings related to gender equality in terms of students’ opportunities to learn English are inconclusive though a few examples suggest that male students get better opportunities to learn English than female students.

- Female students are perceived to be usually more active and motivated to learn English than boys. Furthermore, female students appear to have higher aspirations for their future, and therefore, they are keener in learning than male students.

“Before, in English clubs, there were more boys than girls. But now it is the girls who show more determination and motivation in learning English” (Teacher in Senegal). “Girls are more active in the classroom and they use the English language most” (Teacher in Nepal).
Impact related work

First research partner in each country is working with 2-4 other organisations

Other partners (representatives): British Council, Ministry of Education and Education Training Centre

- Policy briefs
- Policy briefs dissemination and workshops for Key stakeholders
- Training of Trainers/ Teacher training
- Press release
- Blog post/boosting in SNS sites
- Radio programs/interviews
Thank you very much

**Emails:** agnes.kukulska-hulme@open.ac.uk; Saraswati.Dawadi@open.ac.uk

**Blog link:**
http://www.open.ac.uk/blogs/REMALIC/index.php/team/