

ENGLISH TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES ON TEACHING READING
COMPREHENSION: A NARRATIVE INQUIRY

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This dissertation entitled *English Teachers’ Experiences on Teaching Reading Comprehension: A Narrative Inquiry* presented by Khem Raj Bhatt in January 2023.

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation entitled *English Teachers' Experiences on Teaching Reading Comprehension: A Narrative Inquiry* has not been submitted for candidature for any degree.

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my Parents, my school and university teachers, and my research participants.

AN ABSTRACT

This dissertation of *Khem Raj Bhatt* entitled *English Teachers' Experiences in Teaching Reading Comprehension: A Narrative Inquiry* for the degree of Master of Philosophy in English Language Education has been approved on 8 January 2023

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Teaching reading comprehension involves more than simply explaining the reading passages using grammar-translation or lecture methods. In the changing scenario, there is the emergence of several methods and techniques that can be more effective and student-centered so that the students can achieve more in reading comprehension.

This research reflects the views of English language teachers about their experiences of teaching reading comprehension at the secondary level in public schools. The main purpose of this study is to explore the English language teachers' experiences teaching reading comprehension, what problems the students face in reading comprehension, and what strategies the teachers use to solve those problems.

I used the interpretative paradigm of research, in which the four teachers from four different schools were asked to share their personal experiences using a narrative inquiry method. The main tool utilized in this study was a set of interview guidelines for teachers, under which they were asked to narrate their real-life experiences to expose

their perceptions and experiences of teaching reading comprehension at the secondary level in public schools.

Because every reading act is a transaction involving a certain reader and a specific text, I applied the transactional theory of reading comprehension. The reader and the text interact to create meaning, which does not already exist in the text or the reader. Reading, therefore, entails giving text meaning to derive meaning from it.

This study explored teachers' experiences with the problems that the students faced in reading comprehension text in their day-to-day classroom and how these teachers addressed those problems. In other words, the primary focus of this research study was on the reading-related issues that the students encountered and the instructional methods that the teachers employed. The findings show that the students had problems with vocabulary, lack of background knowledge of the text in the readers, problems with inference, difficulty in understanding the technical texts, and so on. The teachers addressed these problems by teaching vocabulary through questioning, applying peer-assisted learning strategy, and explaining the text in simple language. The results from this study can be applied to provide insights for the teachers and teacher educators to improve teaching reading comprehension. At the same time, the results of this study seem to be useful for the book writers in the sense that they can get insights to some extent regarding the types and suitability of the reading text that can be included in the course.

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ABBREVIATION

AD	Anno Domini
B.A.	Bachelors of Arts
B.Ed.	Bachelors if Education
CDC	Curriculum Development Centre
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ELT	English Language Teaching
HOD	Head of Department
KU	Kathmandu University
KUSOED	Kathmandu University School of Education
M.A.	Masters of Arts
M.Ed.	Masters of Education
M.Phil.	Masters of Philosophy
Ph.D.	Doctor of Philosophy
pm	post meridian
SLC	School Leaving Certificate
SLC	School Leaving Certificate
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION	v
AN ABSTRACT	vi
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	i
ABBREVIATION	iii
CHAPTER-I.....	1
INTRODUCTION.....	1
Scene Setting for my Research Study	1
My Research Issue	3
The Rationale of the Study	4
Problem Statement	5
Purpose of the Research	8
Research Questions	8
Delimitations of the study	8
Structure of the Study.....	9
Chapter Summary	9
CHAPTER II.....	10
LITERATURE REVIEW	10
Understanding Reading	10

Reading and Reading Comprehension	10
Different Types of Reading	14
Factors that Make Reading Comprehension Complicated	16
Difficulties in Reading Comprehension	17
Effective Techniques for Reading Comprehension	19
Graphic Organizers.....	21
Story Charting	21
Peer Learning	22
Reading Comprehension Models	24
Bottom-Up Approach	24
The Top-Down Approach.....	25
Interactive Approach	25
Policy Review	26
Recent Studies on Reading	27
Transactional Theory of Reading	29
Research Gap	33
Conceptual Framework	34
CHAPTER III.....	35
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	35
Philosophical Considerations	35
Ontology	35

Epistemology	36
Axiology	
37	
Interpretive Research Paradigm.....	37
Narrative Inquiry.....	39
Selection of Research Site and Participants	42
Data Generation Techniques	45
Meaning Making Process	47
Quality Standards.....	48
Reflexivity.....	48
Truthfulness	49
Authenticity.....	49
Ethical Standards	50
Informed Consent	50
No Harm and Risk.....	50
Privacy, Confidentiality, and Anonymity	50
Chapter Summary	51
CHAPTER IV	52
DIFFICULTIES FACED BY STUDENTS IN READING COMPREHENSION	52
Absence of Prior Knowledge.....	53

Problem with Vocabulary.....	58
Problems with Inference.....	63
Problem with Decoding and Pronunciation.....	67
Problem with Technical/Expository Text	71
Problems in English Textbook in Grade IX and X Related to Reading Comprehension	76
Chapter Summary	77
CHAPTER V.....	78
ENGLISH TEACHERS' TEACHING STRATEGIES FOR READING	
COMPREHENSION	78
Teaching Vocabulary	79
Questioning.....	83
The strategy of Peer-assisted Learning	86
Co-operative Reading Strategy.....	90
Explanation of the Text.....	94
Teaching Punctuation Marks.....	96
Multiple Readings.....	97
Chapter Summary	100
CHAPTER VI.....	102
INSIGHTS, CONCLUSION, AND REFLECTIONS	102

Key Insights.....	102
Pedagogical Implication.....	109
Space for Future Research.....	109
Reflections.....	110
REFERENCES.....	113
APPENDIX I.....	129
APPENDIX II	132

CHAPTER-I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter begins with my reflection on my research issue. I highlight the problems I faced as a student in reading comprehension that led me to carry out this research. Following that, I justify the study and then explain the problem. I then decide on a purpose and create research questions following the purpose. Before I wrap off this chapter by going over the study's framework, I also clarify how the study is being limited.

Scene Setting for my Research Study

When I was a student at the school level in a public school, English was comparatively difficult, more difficult than math and science. We, students, used to follow rote learning to memorize answers to the questions that could be asked in the examination. The teacher used to translate English reading texts into Nepali. We could understand the meaning of the text only when it was translated into the Nepali language. However, we could not answer the questions asked in English. *I vividly remember one day the teacher asked one of my friends the meaning of handsome when we were in Grade Seven and the friend replied that the meaning was kehi haat (some hand) in Nepali.* Similarly, we did not understand the reading texts when we read the same at home. Moreover, the teacher rarely told us to read the text and rarely asked us to do the exercise in the classroom. Instead, we had to listen to the teacher very carefully when he translated the reading texts into Nepali equivalent.

The teacher generally used to read the texts for us. We listened to whatever he told us in the classroom. He would write the answers to the questions given in the

exercise. In the past, we would copy the answers without comprehending what they meant. When reading text aloud, the teacher would interpret the meaning in Nepali. I believe most teachers followed the same grammar translation method in school to teach English. Thus, we did not learn how to develop reading comprehension skills during our school-level studies. We did just rote learning of the word meaning and question answers. Furthermore, we did not know what reading skills development meant at that time. This is how we passed the School Leaving Certificate (SLC) examination.

In 2012, I was in my M.Ed. second year and we were required to complete the practice teaching in a month with thirty lesson plans. I chose one of the public schools in Bhaktapur for my teaching practice. I taught there for a month. During a month of teaching practice, I observed that students felt difficulty in reading comprehension exercises. They could not find the correct answers properly. They had many difficulties in finding synonyms and antonyms of the given words in the exercise. However, the good aspect that I experienced was that they could memorize the word list of synonyms and antonyms provided by the teacher. This phenomenon made me think about the issue. And my sole purpose in this study is to understand how English language teachers in public schools teach reading comprehension to secondary-level students.

According to Snow (2003), teachers must be aware of their pupils' understanding of difficulty patterns to analyze the data and identify the specific problems that each student is having. Teachers should look for patterns of distinct strengths and weaknesses in important language and reading skills. Because each pattern may (or may not) be accompanied by reading fluency problems, they should also examine the dynamics underlying children's reading fluency and comprehension deficits. Moreover, Grabe

(2004) opines that reading can be an adaptive approach in some cases, such as when a child reads slowly to understand a difficult book better. In this regard, Pressley (1998) recommends some ways to overcome reading comprehension problems. Some children with specific word reading difficulty may be able to understand with sight word familiarity, the capability to use situation cues, as well as linguistic strengths to score at average levels for reading comprehension. However, comprehension gets harder and harder when kids get past the early grades. Not all learners can understand challenging vocabulary and comprehension standards just as well as regular learners, especially when they are given accommodations or are reading aloud the literacy grade-level literature. But they need assistance fulfilling common core foundational criteria. I agree with Pressley (1998) and believe that if teachers use appropriate teaching strategies in reading comprehension, the learners can boost their performance level in reading comprehension exercises.

My Research Issue

Reading understanding remains indispensable in place of learners' academic and personal success. However, it appears that children' reading comprehension skills are being neglected. I realize that students are facing problems in reading comprehension. Observing this phenomenon, I feel that teachers' instruction strategies that they use in the classroom have a direct impact on the learning outcome of the learners. My research issue here is what kind of instruction strategies instructors use while instructing reading comprehension to support the learners and how these learners get the maximum benefit from those teaching strategies applied to them.

The Rationale of the Study

Reading is an ability that allows us to comprehend the content of a text. Reading allows readers to obtain any message or information, increasing their knowledge. According to Pang (2013), reading is the practice of creating the logic of words, expressions, and associated discourse, while comprehension is the process of understanding written texts. Perception and thought are both intricate in reading comprehension. For Nepali learners, English is a foreign language. Beginners find it problematic to deduce the meaning or concept from a written text. To comprehend the reading material, pupils must understand the gist of words, sentences, contents, and, most significantly, the author's concepts. There are increased numbers of learners who are not capable of reading comprehension.

Teaching reading is a major area in ELT worldwide and a widely accepted and keenly desired area for teachers and researchers. As a result, much research has been carried out in teaching reading comprehension. However, in the milieu of Nepal, there are few studies and teaching reading has been done for ages, knowingly or unknowingly the teaching reading strategies. To specify the practice of teaching reading in the Nepalese context, it is significant to reveal the reality from the bird's eye view to the worm's eye view. Therefore, the first rationale of this research work is to understand the ontological premises of teaching reading comprehension strategies.

I expect that this study may remind more ongoing issues and agendas along with knowledge for teachers, students, researchers, and pedagogues. Whenever the readers interact with this study, it may be advantageous for all to develop insights and employing

them in teaching, learning, and researching. Hence, as a researcher, I see a sound rationale for this research study.

Furthermore, teaching is more about how we teach and what our students learn rather than what we teach. How we teach represents strategies for teaching the students and what the students learn denotes outcomes. To qualify this fact in further detail, teachers' understanding of student's difficulties in reading comprehension and effective teaching reading strategies is crucial. I believe this study will be important for English language teachers to become innovative in teaching reading comprehension.

Likewise, Walker (2002) asserted that teachers should be familiar with the possible areas of the problems that the students may face in reading comprehension; this study is expected to bring practical ideas on the ways to bring the balance between the students' problems in reading and teachers' teaching strategies in teaching reading. To make it more practicable and contextual, I plan to bring ideas from the related literature and the experiences and narratives of my research participants.

Problem Statement

Reading comprehension plays a vital role in students' personal and academic lives. In the previous section (scene setting for my research study), I mentioned how I was taught reading comprehension skills in my secondary school and what I experienced during my pre-service teaching in a public school. This personal experience of being a learner and working as a pre-service teacher made me realize that teachers must be conscious of the students' difficulties that they face in reading comprehension. They also need to apply effective teaching procedures and plans in teaching reading to uplift the students' learning outcomes.

According to the present syllabus of basic (lower secondary) and secondary (grade nine and ten) levels of the English curriculum, more weightage (40%) is given to reading skills in comparison to other language skills (writing 35%, speaking 15%, listening 10%). However, students seem to be less confident in the reading comprehension exercises. Subedi (2016) shared his experiences as a teacher that students obtained less score in reading comprehension in the examination and were unable to understand the reading text. He concluded that students get less score in reading comprehension exercises, but the reasons behind getting fewer scores need to be explored. In this sense, too, I felt the need to carry out this study.

In answer to why students have difficulty reading comprehension exercises, Gaire (2011) argues that the teaching methodology used by most teachers is still traditional. He goes on to say that teaching reading text is similar to a lesson on other subjects like social studies, moral studies, environmental education, etc. It is uncommon for teachers to use cognitive processes to support students in developing their reading command. Even in English-medium schools, students are taught to read texts to acquire different material or facts about a certain topic linked to the book. Students are not urged to read texts independently anymore. That is what the students go through because no effective reading skills are taught in the classroom.

I believe that students should comprehend the meaning of the text they are reading for themselves as they read. They need to apply various language functions themselves through the practice of reading text in the classroom. They need to analyze, evaluate or create some more ideas from the reading text to get the actual meaning of it.

Such reading comprehension development can be increased through proper teaching strategies.

There are some research studies on teaching reading-related topics. For example, Bhusal (2011) researched independent extensive reading development in EFL classrooms to explore what strategies the English language teachers would adopt to motivate their learners towards extensive independent reading. Another study on reading comprehension was carried out by Pokhrel (2013) on teachers' beliefs and perspectives on teaching reading skills. His objective was to explore the teachers' belief in teaching reading strategies.

After analyzing the above-mentioned previous research, I concluded that this study is necessary because very little research has been done on the teaching strategies for reading comprehension in English language teaching in Nepal. Moreover, this issue is not addressed well by the ELT discourse in Nepal. Some students have problems with reading comprehension skills (Subedi, 2016). They are weak in reading comprehension exercises and consequently demotivated towards learning English. Here are some unanswered questions on this issue: "What teaching strategies do the teachers use to teach reading comprehension? "What sort of problems do the learners face in reading comprehension text in English classroom?", "What factors can be considered to teach demotivated learners?" and so on. This problem led some students to quit school as well. Hence, I feel it is a genuine issue to help the teachers with possible learning and teaching/instructional strategies, which they can use to overcome the problems in reading comprehension in English classrooms.

I follow the principles of narrative inquiry in my research method, which refers to the unfolding of live experiences by telling and retelling the stories of a particular discipline of thoughts of human life (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). On the other hand, storytelling has been an effective pedagogical technique, and this investigation uses field texts, stories, autobiographies, journals, field notes, dialogues, and interviews, for the data. Leipzig (2014) claims that this investigation elicits and records the narratives to examine the participants' beliefs, presumptions, and behaviors. As a result, it has gained recognition as a useful instrument for comprehending human perceptions, routines, and behavior.

Purpose of the Research

This research aims to explore the experiences of English language teachers in teaching reading comprehension.

Research Questions

The following are the research questions for this study:

1. How do English language teachers narrate the problems faced by students in Reading comprehension?
2. How do English language teachers share their stories of teaching strategies for reading comprehension?

Delimitations of the study

This study entirely engrossed the English teachers' strategies for teaching reading comprehension to secondary-level students in public schools in Kathmandu valley.

Therefore, this study is delimited to the public schools and delimited to the teachers'

teaching strategies in reading comprehension skills. Similarly, this study is also delimited to learners at the secondary level.

Structure of the Study

This research study contains six chapters. The first chapter introduces the background of this research study whereas the second chapter reviews the related literature of the study. The third chapter deals with the research methodology and the procedures for conducting this entire study. Similarly, chapter four is about the problems that the students faced in reading comprehension as narrated by the participants. Chapter five discusses the teachers' teaching strategies in reading comprehension. Finally, the last chapter, chapter six, presents my research study's insights, conclusion, and overall reflection.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I first discuss my struggles with reading comprehension and how my teachers supported me in overcoming those challenges. I then established the purpose of the study, research problem, research questions, and delimitation of the study and tied it to my pertinent literature.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter offers a brief review of the literature pertinent to the study. It begins with a thematic review of reading comprehension difficulties, teaching strategies, and reading comprehension models. Then it discusses the policy review followed by previous studies on teaching reading. This review further proceeds to Rosenblatt's Transactional theory, which I connected with my research. Finally, this chapter is closed with the research gap and the study's conceptual framework.

Understanding Reading

In this section, I briefly introduce reading and reading comprehension skills separately followed by the concept of read to learn and learn to read, thinking that the very concept of read to learn and vice versa could give more clarity to the term reading.

Reading and Reading Comprehension

In general, reading refers to comprehending or making sense of a text. Reading aids students in their academic lives by enhancing and broadening their knowledge. It is one of the most significant tools people use to stay current on global events. Reading also provides our minds with a diversity of ideas. The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English defines reading as the act of looking at printed words or symbols and understanding their meaning. Reading requires the ability to comprehend the author's ideas, recognize words and their meanings, choose a feeling and mood, evaluate the ideas' accuracy, and use or apply them. The process of separating three levels is what is referred to as reading comprehension. These three levels are the lexical, structural or

grammatical, and sociocultural levels. In this regard, Varghese (1990, p. 105) asserts that understanding the meaning of the graphic symbols and the sounds they stand for is necessary for reading to have meaning. To put it another way, a competent reader should be able to decipher the meaning of each word as they read any piece. Klinger et al. (2014) claim that reading is the process of learning through a language's graphical representation. It is the most popular and simple way to get information that has been printed or written with the proper speed and understanding.

According to the Cambridge International Dictionary of English, comprehension is the capacity to fully understand and be aware of a situation, fact, or other information. A comprehension exercise is a set of questions about a text that students have read or have read to them and assesses their understanding of spoken or written language.

Reading is crucial in our academic, professional, leisure, and social lives. The development of society and the economy depends on having strong reading skills. The ability to read is the most important of the four language skills since it can help us develop our total language proficiency. According to Nuttal (1982), if someone has trouble reading in their mother tongue, reading in a second language can be much more difficult because kids may be falling behind in a number of reading skills, such as accuracy, comprehension, and speed. The cognitive issue of falling behind is related to reading in a foreign language.

According to Nuttal (1982), students are expected to read more challenging, informational, and illustrative books as they move up the educational ladder. A student's academic achievement is based on their capacity to understand and apply the information in these sources. Numerous tactics are available to successful students, and they can use

them effectively in a variety of circumstances. Struggling students need intensive teaching in these strategies if they want to enhance their reading abilities. Reading texts that follow any language curriculum in an EFL setting aims to improve students' reading abilities. As a crucial language ability in language learning, the secondary English curriculum (2015) encourages teachers to teach reading using a variety of methods. However, EFL learners could experience difficulties with reading comprehension (Bhusal, 2011). Students may not have understood the text after reading it. After reading the book, people might not learn what they need to know. Therefore, developing reading skills has been a crucial component of language learning.

The act of actively understanding written or graphic texts is called reading. Reading is a way to think. Reading comprehension experts are aware that their reading should make sense to them. They maintain track of their knowledge, and if they become disoriented when reading, they can use this knowledge to get back on track and understand the meaning of the text. Reading strategies and techniques can be explicitly taught while students are gaining subject-specific information through real-world reading difficulties. Wardhaugh (1969) proposes three efficient strategies—strategies before, during, and after reading—that successful learners employ for greater understanding. These reading strategies are elaborated on in the following paragraphs.

Readers think about the topic in light of past knowledge before reading, make predictions about the text's most likely interpretation, and skim and scan the content to get a sense of its overall meaning. By studying, arguing, and replicating the concepts and information in the book, readers can evaluate their understanding as they go along. After finishing a book, readers should: reflect on the ideas and information presented, draw

connections between what they have read and their own experiences and knowledge, and continue to develop a critical and original understanding of the material. Students can learn effective reading strategies and competency. Reading proficiency is demonstrated while the subject matter is presented, which is advantageous for struggling readers. A limited number of the techniques educators use to help students develop their capacity to read strategically and effectively in a range of situations include direct teaching, thinking aloud, modeling, discussion, and small-group support.

Additionally, after finishing the work, to better understand the subject, the students reflect on its ideas and information, relate it to their own lives and prior learning, ask themselves questions and deepen it in innovative and critical ways. In addition to these strategies, students can be taught to read strategically and effectively. Struggling readers take advantage of a variety of teaching methods that highlight reading skills as the subject matter is given. Teachers use a range of techniques, including direct teaching, thinking aloud, modeling, discussion, and small-group support, to help students become more tactical and active readers in varied contexts. Hoeh (2015) makes the following observations on how well teaching methods work: since 1970, many studies have been done on the efficacy of teaching strategies and approaches. According to several analyses of teaching effectiveness research, in courses where students make greater learning gains, a particular set of fundamental teaching metrics is used more frequently than in courses where students make smaller learning gains.

Different Types of Reading

We read for different purposes. There are different kinds of reading to serve different purposes. According to Harmer (2008), the different types of reading can be summarized in the following sub-sections.

Intensive and Extensive Reading

Students need to be involved in both intensive and extensive reading to get the maximum benefit from their reading. Intensive reading is often teacher chosen and directed. It is designed to enable students to develop specific receptive skills such as predicting, reading for general understanding or gist (often called ‘skimming’), reading for specific information (often called ‘scanning’), reading for detailed information, or reading for inference and attitude. But extensive reading encourages students to choose for themselves what they read and to do so for pleasure and general language improvement.

Silent Reading and Reading Aloud.

Silent reading is a way of reading without producing sounds. It helps the readers to get complete mastery of the language. It consolidates different skills and aspects of language. It is a profitable skill that gives us pleasure as well. Silent reading is more or less intensive reading. It is done for reading comprehension. It also encourages the immediate use of a dictionary.

Reading aloud is a way of reading with producing sound. It is also called oral reading. This can be done with or without understanding the contents of a written text. We read aloud to recognize and practice stress, intonation, pronunciation, etc. Reading aloud helps to improve the skill of recognizing punctuation and meaning. The main

purpose of this reading is to improve eye span. By reading aloud, the students must be able to find the connection between the sound and its written symbols.

Rapid reading

Rapid reading, also called speed reading, is to read more quickly and better understand the reading texts. Readers use more effective eye movements while reading and use better ways of understanding words and meanings in written texts. Rapid reading is for a broad understanding of the main points. Rapid reading is again divided into two types: skimming and scanning.

Skimming means quickly running one's eyes over a text to get the gist. So skimming is to read a text to get the general meaning or gist. Skimming is used when the reader wants to get a text's general theme or main/central idea. For example, a reader may skim a text to find out if the writer approves or disapproves of something. So, when skimming, we go through a text to get the gist of it, to know how it is organized, or to get an idea of the writer's intention. Skimming is, therefore, a more thorough activity that requires an overall view of the text and implies definite reading comprehension.

Scanning means quickly going through a text to find particular information. So to scan is to look over a text and find some specific information. It is a type of rapid reading used when the reader wants to locate a particular piece of information without necessarily understanding the rest of a text or passage. For example, the reader may read through a book chapter as quickly as possible to find out information about a particular date, such as when somebody was born. When he finds the required date, he stops reading.

Factors that Make Reading Comprehension Complicated

We have noticed that there are various types of learners. They differ in their interests, learning ability, capacity, subject preferences, etc. They are called fast learners and slow learners based on learning achievements and outcomes. These slow learners face problems in several areas. In this regard, Leipzig (2015) states that there is no single area in which a learner may have difficulty reading. A learner could struggle with phonemic awareness, letter/sound knowledge, vocabulary, fluency, and expressing phrases in their oral reading comprehension and motivation. Walker (2002) also noted four elements that can make reading comprehension challenging and contribute to the emergence of slow learners in the classroom. These four elements are briefly described in the following paragraphs.

Striving Linking Information: the first reason by Walker (2002) is “Difficulty Linking Sources of Information,” which means the learners show difficulties in reading comprehension skills. The inability to mix sounds and recognize sight words are just two examples of the reasons for the difficulty. Beginning students, in her opinion, appear to depend on one specific source of information rather than integrating all pertinent clues. For slow learners, connecting information is tough. To understand a piece of material, slow learners sometimes rely only on what they already know.

Trouble in Elaborating the Content: Walker’s second factor is “Difficulty Elaborating Content and Strategy Knowledge.” Texts that are difficult to read and comprehend are frequently offered to learners. A slow learner will attempt to determine the text using just words that he or she is familiar with. When this happens, the disconnect between what students already know and what they are supposed to read

prevents them from coordinating their reading or explaining their knowledge. The learners will not be able to comprehend the material using the knowledge they already possess fully.

Struggle on Monitoring Meaning: Walker's third factor is "Difficulty Monitoring Meaning." It means the situation in which a slow learner does not understand the text and has no idea how to obtain understanding. I do not know is the most common response from the learners is. These readers passively read without actively questioning their knowledge because they have little experience building meaning. Slow learners rarely rectify their errors and have difficulty refining their text predictions.

Understanding the Context: "Difficulty Interpreting the Situational Context" is Walker's fourth factor. When students cannot deduce the text's meaning or accept receiving incorrect responses, they develop a failure mentality. They tell themselves, "I won't even try because if I do, I will just admit I'm stupid." Then, to maintain their sense of value, they give up, removing the chance that they are stupid (Walker, 2002). When students perform well, they erroneously believe that the teacher made the tests easy for them or that the teacher is unhappy with them. When pupils acquire this mindset, they become less motivated to read.

Difficulties in Reading Comprehension

All pupils need to learn the critical ability of reading comprehension. Success in both our personal and academic lives is ensured by reading ability. However, the majority of pupils have a lot of trouble understanding the passage. Numerous problems related to understanding the text are covered in this section.

Graham and Bellert (2005) reported that lack of appropriate use of previous information has remained a complication that prevents children from correctly understanding printed content. To put it another way, a reader must make connections between first-hand literal facts and all prior information, outside knowledge, and individual involvements with the subject of the understanding to better comprehend a written piece (McNamara & Kintsch, 1996). Establishing connections between the reader's past knowledge and the text's content is essential to facilitate reading comprehension.

Another problem with reading comprehension is the lack of sufficient vocabulary among the students. Sacks and Jacobson (2004) asserted that although vocabulary knowledge is crucial for helping pupils understand what they read, some readers struggle to understand a reading passage thoroughly because of their insufficient vocabulary knowledge. According to several academics, students' understanding of a paragraph is influenced by their familiarity with the text's terms (Anderson & Pearson, 1984). Another problem that negatively impacts communication is a lack of terminology that affects pupils' ability to grasp a text and the incorrect application of prior information (Graham & Bellert, 2005). Students find reading passages that utilize challenging academic language and expressions. As a result, they frequently make reading mistakes because they cannot connect the texts to what they already know.

Another factor that makes reading comprehension difficult for students is their lack of familiarity with textual conventions. Text structures refer to how a writer organizes text to make a point to a reader. (Weaver & Kintsch, 1991). By assisting

students in connecting textual information and differentiating between key ideas and supporting details, understanding text organization is crucial for improving knowledge. (Saenz & Fuchs, 2002). Inspiring learners to enquire pertinent questions about the text as they read also helps them learn from the written contents (Gersten et al., 2001). If the learners ask questions about the text, help them reach an understanding. I believe that questioning can be an effective self-strategy for learning and engaging in comprehending the text.

Additionally, detecting various textual constructions helps children perform better when reading. Reading written materials exposes students to information that improves and structures their reciting skills. Graham and Bellert (2005) highlighted the importance of familiarity with text structures. They added that students should be familiar with text structures since they will encounter diverse natures of text structures as they learn and progress in their academic careers.

Effective Techniques for Reading Comprehension

Understanding how to decipher written material is a crucial skill that all pupils must possess to be successful in school. However, students vary according to their capacity for reading comprehension. For instance, unlike untrained readers, capable readers typically employ one or more reasoning techniques and reading methods to deduce the gist of a text. Moreover, readers who are skilled read more deliberately than readers who are struggling. Active learners and strategic readers can develop their strategic reading abilities independently, without instruction. According to Swanson and De La Paz (1998), pupils can grasp a text by identifying and remembering important

details, verifying their comprehension, merging their past knowledge with the new material, and other strategies, summarizing and planning their learning.

Unskilled readers, particularly those with learning difficulties, rarely succeed in developing their strategic reading talents. They are unable to read strategically because they are unable to keep track of their comprehension. Bos and Vaughn (1994) differentiate between different types of questions, effectively apply a particular reading strategy to understand a text, integrate prior knowledge with new information, or connect the ideas in a passage to make sense of it (Oakhill & Patel, 1991). Additionally, Garner and Reis (1981) argued that unsuccessful readers could not apply a correction strategy, such as returning to a text's specific portion to grasp it.

Mahdavi and Tensfeldt (2013) argued that reading comprehension is a challenging skill that not all students are born with. Therefore, teachers can help their pupils by implementing a variety of reading comprehension based on studies. To increase students' comprehension of what they are reading, it is crucial to explicitly educate them on how to employ various comprehension tactics before, during, and after reading. Teachers can considerably increase their pupils' reading comprehension by introducing many efficient reading comprehension techniques.

In-depth explanations of some of the reading techniques that have been shown in studies to develop pupils' reading comprehension are included in the sections after. The subsequent techniques have been chosen, for scholars have consistently mentioned them as successful techniques to raise the students' reading levels.

Graphic Organizers

The saying "a picture is worth a thousand words" makes graphic organizers useful (Sam & Rajan, 2013). It has been used as a graphical model to categorize, arrange, and relocate text in such a way that is modest and unpretentious to remember (Kim et al., 2004). This business can be achieved using lines, arrows, and a spatial arrangement representing text content, structure, and significant conceptual relationship" (Darch & Eaves, 1999). Semantic maps, concept maps, flowcharts, Venn diagrams, webs, framed outlines, and story mapping are just a few ways for presenting information using a visual organizer. Although graphic organizers come in a variety of forms, they all seek to assist students in better understanding content by having them visualize it.

Story Charting

Story diagramming is an alternative tested reading approach that has frequently been employed to help children improve their understanding. To comprehend, arrange, and evaluate text from a tale, pupils must complete a pre-structured outline with headings for the story and grammar. When students read and write the story and grammar components, the provided template acts as a framework to focus their attention (Fuchs et.al., 1997) The fundamental elements of story grammar, including the title, characters, time, setting, conflict, significant events, resolution, conclusion, and lesson of the story, should always be included in story mapping, even though it can be done in several ways, including as a figure or graphic organizer (Kim et.al., 2004). Making connections between the significant occasions in the tale is another excellent reading technique that is essential to assist students in correctly identifying all of these story components and can help them acquire a deeper understanding of the book.

One reading technique that can be applied before, during, and after reading for a variety of goals to help students better understand a text is story mapping. As an illustration, implementing the method before reading helps students to draw upon their prior knowledge of the subject, plan their arguments, and compose some aspects of the book. While story-mapping can aid students in focusing their attention while reading, it can also assist them to keep finding and documenting pertinent evidence about the text. Lastly, this method can assist students in reviewing and confirming their comprehension of the content after reading (Kirylo & Millet, 2000). Even though story mapping can be utilized as a reading interference at any step of the reading process, it must be employed successfully. Teaching pupils how to properly use story-mapping to improve their reading requires teachers to take into account a number of factors.

Peer Learning

Another practice that has been proven effective for improving reading comprehension for all schoolchildren, is peer-assisted learning. It is a well-known instructional strategy that involves having students participate in a peer-tutoring exercise to improve their reading comprehension. With this strategy, teachers place a proficient reader with a non-proficient reader in a group and let them work together on a variety of reading exercises aimed at enhancing comprehension. While involved in pre-structured reading responsibilities and activities, teachers who use this technique allocate each student a precise role to show, such as teacher or student. Each group of students has the chance to switch positions as they complete the reading assignment. By letting students switch roles, tutors and tutees can practice the same responsibilities that their partners will acquire and develop the necessary abilities to do so.

There are three reading activities in the peer-assisted learning strategy—partner reading with brief recounting, paragraph downsizing, and prediction—to improve students' reading comprehension (Fuchs et.al.,1997). Each student in the group must read loudly for around five minutes during the partner appraisal activity in the first phase before switching roles. Each couple begins the reading by having the more experienced reader read to the less experienced reader. The unskilled reader must read the same chapter again after the proficient reader is done. The other students carefully listen while the reader reads, try to identify any errors, and, if any are found, offer constructive critique. The untrained reader can grow accustomed to the content and sense more ease before reading it later by having the excellent reader read it first. The retelling phase, which takes place after each student has had a turn reading aloud, lasts for around two minutes. The inexperienced reader begins by sharing with the experienced reader what they took away from the reading. The capable reader acts as a teacher, giving the untrained reader comments when they do not remember the material from the text. The primary objective of the recounting stage is to offer the learners the chance to talk about and validate their comprehension of the reading material.

The expert reader serves as a tutor during the second phase, a paragraph-by-paragraph reading exercise. The competent reader pauses after reading each paragraph to assess the untrained reader's comprehension by posing questions that call for summarizing and identifying the paragraph's main themes. The untrained reader must summarize each paragraph in this exercise in no more than 10 words. The competent reader will ask the untrained reader to shorten the paragraph if they use a summary of more than ten words. However, the competent reader should reread the text and

summarize it if the untrained reader does not correctly offer a decent summary or delivers unrelated evidence. The learners switch roles after about five minutes of this practice.

The final reading exercise that students complete while utilizing the peer-assisted learning technique is prediction delay. A prediction is first made about the textual content in this step, followed by reading the text aloud, confirmation or denial of the prediction, and a summary of the text. The inexperienced reader keeps track of the reading process while the adept reader reads to see any potential errors, assess whether the reader is creating a plausible expectation, and ensure that the summary of the text is accurate. According to Fuchs et al. (2001), the students switch roles after five minutes.

Reading Comprehension Models

According to Grabe (2004), there are three main models of reading comprehension. These are essential for controlling and maintaining the comprehension process, helping pupils understand written texts more fully, and overcoming reading activities that present reading comprehension difficulties. The interactive model, the top-down model, and the bottom-up model are the three models. In terms of how they instruct pupils to comprehend a written passage, these three methodologies are different from one another. The brief summaries of these reading comprehension models are provided below:

Bottom-Up Approach

According to the bottom-up approach, children should gradually start reading by deciphering each letter, terminology, and other symbols and phrase to understand what is written down (Pressley, 1998). The entire reading process is considered in terms of letters

and language, particularly under this paradigm. As a result, to interpret the text's meaning, students must comprehend and recognize language as they read.

The Top-Down Approach

According to the top-down reading comprehension paradigm, which Goodman created in 1967, readers' past knowledge, experience, and expectations about a subject are used to help them understand the material that is presented. According to the top-down paradigm, understanding what is being read is a process that starts in mind and ends with the text. as a result, according to Eskey (2005), using this technique, students should start the reading comprehension process by developing clear expectations for the subject matter. These assumptions have to be based on the reader's prior knowledge of the topic. In contrast to the top-down paradigm, which considers itself to be meaningless, the reader creates meaning from the text by integrating it into their past knowledge.

Interactive Approach

The interactive model is predicated on the notion that neither the top-down nor the bottom-up models can adequately describe each step in the isolation of the reading comprehension process. Ahmadi (2012) argues that the interaction between these two models led to the creation of this model. Grabe (2004) asserts that The interactive reading comprehension approach encourages the use of both basic processing abilities, like word recognition, and more sophisticated inference and reasoning abilities, like text explanation. Thus, the interactive model sees reading comprehension as a function of readers' actions rather than only as the result of the brain processing text and information and written passages cooperating to produce meaning.

Policy Review

For the preparation of the human resources who are capable of competing at the international level (Three-year Interim Plan- 2007/8-2009/10, p. 261), I believe that competency in the English language, particularly reading skills, is more important. Students need proficiency in English to progress in technical education development (Three Year Interim Plan-2007/8-2009/10). Thus, In Nepal, English is taught as a required subject beginning at the elementary level.

A research-based study is an integral tool for developing curriculum, curricular materials, and their effective implementation (National Curriculum Framework, 2015). Research-based teaching also helps to develop basic knowledge and skills of the English language for personal expression and communication (National Curriculum Framework, 2015). Not only that, teachers have to search the strategies for improvement in teaching and implement them in the classroom.

To meet the objectives of education, we support that children should be able to bring out their internal qualities (National Objective of Education, 2015). We can help the children to bring out their internal qualities if we teach them reading comprehension skills right from the basic level. We can create such circumstances in the classroom that help the pupils to participate in natural conversation and develop their thinking skills while reading the text.

I believe that we need to encourage children in the classroom to guess the meaning and to predict the content of the text (Secondary English Curriculum, 2015) while learning to read. Even when the students do not guess correctly, they should be encouraged to read and think about the possible answers based on the reading text

(Secondary English Curriculum, 2015). For this, we teachers need to find different reading techniques to develop the reading skills of students. Not only that, the students should think critically and creatively while learning English to solve various problems in their real life (Secondary Level Curriculum, 2015). When the students learn to think creatively, it helps them to maintain inclusiveness and Harmony (Basic Level Curriculum of English). They need to retrieve specific “information from the reading texts to analyze and synthesize” by employing a variety of reading techniques (Secondary Education Curriculum, 2015). The teachers should engage students in predicting, guessing, role-playing, pair work, and creative activities (Basic Level Curriculum, 2012) as various techniques for teaching reading skills.

Recent Studies on Reading

Pokhrel (2013) researched teachers’ beliefs and perspectives on teaching reading skills. His objective was to explore the teachers’ belief in teaching reading strategies. He wanted to explore the extent to which teachers’ beliefs were reflected in their reading of actual classroom practices. He also collected the required data through in-depth interviews and observation. He used schema theory, which described how the background knowledge or the notion of experiences of the learner interacts with the reading task. He found that teaching reading strategies to the students were of great importance for them to develop their reading skills. Moreover, effective classroom practices by applying appropriate teaching reading strategies enhanced and supported the development of learners’ reading proficiency. He concluded that the teachers focused on the development of skills rather than making a particular text familiar to them. This indicated that the teachers were well aware of the concept of teaching reading.

This study helped me in making a clear idea of teaching strategies for reading comprehension. It also made me clarify my concept of the possible areas of inquiry with the research participants.

Bhusal (2011) researched independent extensive reading development in EFL classrooms. His objective was to investigate to what extent the English language teachers would understand the purpose of teaching intensive reading and explore what strategies they would adopt to motivate their learners towards extensive kinds of independent reading. He wanted to find the teachers' practice of teaching reading in the classroom in the EFL context in Nepal. He observed and interviewed teachers to collect the relevant data for the study. He used schema theory that enables readers to predict events and meaning as well as to infer meaning from a wider context.

Bhusal (2011) found that the teachers were clear concerning the purpose of teaching reading skills. His participants made a common understanding that teaching reading was an attempt to train the learners with all the required sub-skills and techniques they needed to understand the complete message of the text. The participant had a good understanding of the purpose of teaching reading.

Bhetwal (2015) conducted a research study on the use of critical thinking in Nepalese ELT classrooms. His purpose was to explore the teachers' beliefs regarding the critical thinking of the students, and the pedagogical practices they were implementing inside the ELT classroom to foster their critical thinking. His focus was to explore how English language teachers perceive critical thinking approaches in classroom teaching and how were students being encouraged to think critically. He had six participants to conduct the research. He used Bloom's revised taxonomy and activity theory in the

research. Using observation and interview tools, he collected the information and concluded that the participants seemed to be familiar with the dynamic characteristics of the teaching profession. Making students think critically was part of the teaching-learning process, but the part for making them think critically was still not up to the level in most of the participants' cases, but they were trying their best.

Acosta and Ferri (2010) carried out action research on reading methods to improve reading comprehension and thinking abilities. Their action research project looked at how well eighth graders in a public school could read in a foreign language in Columbia. They intervened in the action after exploring the problems of the students. The students lacked the strategies like prediction, prior knowledge, graphic organizer, questions, etc. They analyzed the students' perception and practicality of the strategies and students' work on a graphic organizer and reading worksheet.

The study revealed that when students employed reading strategies like activating background information, making predictions, and responding to questions using interactive materials, they were more motivated to read, learn more, and understand more. According to the study, students' reading comprehension was enhanced by strategies and engaging reading assignments. They concluded that the majority of the students had a positive attitude toward reading.

Transactional Theory of Reading

Rosenblatt's (1994) transactional theory serves as the basis for this investigation's theoretical framework. The research of Rosenblatt has had a significant impact on the field of reading comprehension. Her transactional theory has contested the idea that the only place to look for objective meaning is in the text itself (Sanders, 2012). According to

Rosenblatt's (1994) theory, the reader cannot invent meaning on their own. Reading, in Rosenblatt's view, is a transaction that takes place between a reader and a text at a certain moment in time under particular conditions.

Her description of reading makes sense in terms of reading comprehension, which seems as a procedure readers engage in to derive meaning through specific engagement with a text (Snow, 2002). Both statements underline how crucial it is for the reader and the text to work together to understand a particular passage. As a result, according to the transactional theory, to understand the reading materials, readers must actively engage in a transaction with the text at a given time and in a certain place. "A novel, poem, or play stays only ink dots on paper until a reader changes them into a collection of meaningful symbols," wrote Rosenblatt, emphasizing the significance of the reader's involvement with the text (Rosenblatt, 1983, p. 24). To put it another way, to grasp a paragraph, readers must bring their prior experiences and knowledge to bear on it (Rosenblatt, 1982). Rosenblatt's (1994) theory strengthens the idea that meaning is formed as a result of a specific interaction between the reader and text rather than existing only in the text or in the reader (Rosenblatt, 2005). That interaction demonstrates the interaction between the reader and the text to produce sense (Rosenblatt, 2005). Thus, the reader's own prior information and perspective have an impact on that meaning. According to Rosenblatt (1938, p. 33), "the reader must have the experience, must 'live through' what is being formed throughout the reading" to fully understand that influence.

Rosenblatt developed a unique classroom teaching strategy that improves the interaction by extending the connection between the reader and the text in the transactional theory. It gives pupils the ability to read a text on their own, allowing them

to create their meaning rather than having the teacher direct their interpretation of a text. Regarding the contribution of transactional theory, Snow (2002) acknowledged as with this new strategy, Rosenblatt made a fundamental contribution to the philosophical shift away from viewing reading as a teacher-evaluated learning process and toward viewing reading comprehension as an engaged, fruitful, as well as a thorough process that readers go through when reading.

According to Rosenblatt's opinion, Teachers should urge their pupils to interact with texts more fluidly and help them with teaching while they try to understand it. When students interpret a text on their own, they merely draw connections between the text and their existing knowledge and experience during the transactional process, which is independent of their teachers. Teachers can still give pupils a positive learning experience even though they are not a part of that transactional process. They can give a variety of interpretations of the passage to help them understand it, observe how each student responds to the passage, and engage in dialogue and thought-sharing with the students about the passages to aid in their comprehension. (Rosenblatt, 1982; 1983). The teachers can use this theory in their classroom practices, as mentioned in the above-mentioned lines.

According to transactional theory, each student's transactional process for deriving meaning from a passage is unique and depends on what they bring to the text (Rosenblatt, 1994). It follows that each student would understand the same passage differently even though they had all read it. That holds even if a student reads the same material only once and then reads it again later (Rosenblatt, 1983). When a student reads the same paragraph a second time, they frequently understand it in a different way the

student's involvement and knowledge after reading it the first time led to alternative interpretations, which had a substantial impact on his or her comprehension when reading it again.

According to Rosenblatt's (1994) transactional theory, reading comprehension happens when pupils combine the text with their previous understanding. This combination is denoted as the aesthetic attitude, in which the students' experiences contribute to improving their understanding, but the text also makes their understanding richer.

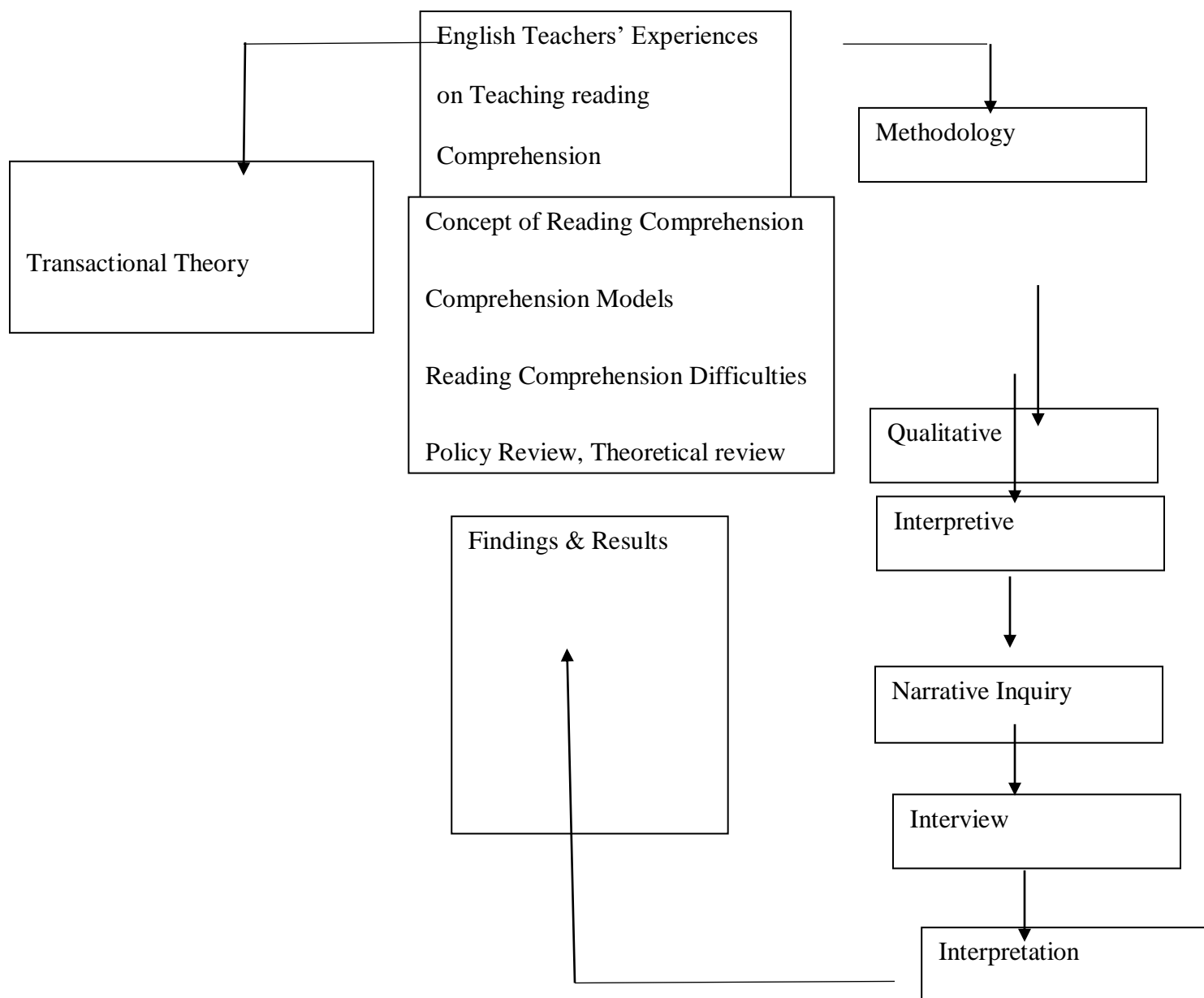
I decided to base my research on Rosenblatt's transactional theory. That is because I have revealed that her perspective on reading comprehension aligns with my own beliefs. We both agree that for children to comprehend the text being read, they must engage with it. Additionally, meaning cannot be understood solely from a book; as a result, during that engagement, students must add their prior learning and involvement to the text. Additionally, I believe that teachers may greatly enhance their students' connection with the text by using a multiplicity of reading comprehension approaches to support them in connecting the text to their prior knowledge. These strategies all help students' reading comprehension.

I questioned whether English teachers who teach reading comprehension exercises would view making connections between the text and their past knowledge is necessary for students to understand and comprehend the text when conducting this study. I further questioned if these teachers would explicitly or implicitly teach Rosenblatt's transactional theory-based technique.

Research Gap

The literature reviewed above reflects that the development of reading comprehension skills among students is very crucial for their language development. However, there have been a few qualitative studies exploring teachers' experiences in teaching reading comprehension in Nepali classrooms in the context of Nepal. This research is, therefore, an attempt to fill the gap between students' problems in reading comprehension and teachers' teaching strategies in reading comprehension texts in the ELT scenario in Nepal. Narrative inquiry as a method, Rosenblatt's transactional theory as a theoretical guideline for this study, Nepali ELT context, and English language teachers and students of public schools are important choices for this research to claim its fresh approach, contexts, and participants.

Conceptual Framework



This conceptual framework diagrammatically presents the methodological choices as well as the exploration and interpretation of English language teachers' experiences in teaching reading comprehension.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses the methodological underpinnings appropriate for this research. It begins with the philosophical considerations and research paradigm. Then it discusses narrative inquiry as a research method within the qualitative research design. Then it includes information about research sites, participants, and data collection techniques. The chapter also presents the data analysis process. It concludes with sections on quality standards used to authenticate my research and ethical considerations to be considered in my research.

Philosophical Considerations

I discuss philosophical issues in this section to present the presumptions, I as a researcher, am making regarding my research. My decisions on the research's objective, design, technique, and methodologies, as well as its data analysis and interpretation, will be influenced by these factors. Ontology, epistemology, and axiology are taken into account when considering philosophical issues.

Ontology

Ontology is a discipline of philosophy that compacts with the assumptions we make to believe that something makes sense or is real, or the basic nature of the social phenomenon we are looking into. As a researcher, ontology allows me to analyze my fundamental beliefs and philosophical assumptions about the nature of being, existence, and reality. Ontology refers to the ways of being and becoming. It deals with the nature of being or what exists (Neuman, 2016). It tells us that there exist multiple, socially

constructed realities (Patton, 2002). Ontologically, I believe that reality and truth are not fixed entities but open new meanings and experiences in context. In my research process and data analysis, I maintain the ontology that there are multiple realities about teachers' experiences and understanding in terms of teaching reading comprehension in the classroom in public schools in the context of Nepal.

Epistemology

Epistemology is a term used in research to describe how we come to know something, such as truth or reality. The nature of knowledge and how it is formed are discussed in epistemology. It answers the question of how we know something. Schwandt (1997) defines it as the investigation of the nature of knowledge and its justification. Epistemologically, I generate knowledge about the phenomena of how English language teachers teach reading comprehension to learners and how they experience using their teaching strategies. To explore this phenomenon, I used in-depth interviews and, if possible, class observation too. However, the knowledge generated from this study may not be completely new. It just adds one more brick to the existing knowledge.

Concerning my study, the epistemology can vary from participant to participant. The information in my research study was gathered through inter-subjectivity, or interaction with participants and others, which entails collecting experiences, feelings, perceptions, and meaning within a relative environment. According to Creswell (2007), one must remain close to the participants to attain it. As a result, I interviewed my participants and requested them to narrate their real-life experiences. My part was to actively listen, and my participants' roles were to actively convey stories to my readers

about it (Chase, 2008). My body of knowledge was built through my personal experiences, the knowledge I learned from reading various texts, and knowledge I learned from the experiences, views, opinions, and beliefs that participants acquired through the research interview because my research design is qualitative and the paradigm is interpretive. Subjectivity is the foundation of my epistemological ideas. Each participant shared with me their own, hitherto unknown tales of training and instruction (Costa, 2005). They shared their personal experiences with me as I combed them using various questioning based on the interview standards.

Axiology

Axiology refers to what we value in our research. I believe that each individual is different. They are different in thinking, analyzing, perception and understanding. In addition, their perceptions, thinking, and knowledge are not valueless rather they are value-laden. The participants in this study, based on their understanding, knowledge, and experience are not value-free but value-laden. I will value my participants' views, understandings, and experiences for getting the result of this research study.

Interpretive Research Paradigm

This study's major goal is to investigate how English language teachers teach reading comprehension. The interpretive paradigm used in this research is a good fit for this purpose. Understanding the subjective world of human experience with the conviction that reality is subjective and formed by the individual is the basic characteristic of the interpretive paradigm (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Instead of attempting to generalize the basis of understanding for the entire population, researchers are more likely to get a deeper grasp of the phenomenon and its complexity in its context

(Creswell, 2013). Within the interpretive paradigm, humans create meaning in different ways depending on their surroundings and personal frames of reference as they interact with reality (Crotty, 1998). Creswell (2013) argues that as the research progresses, insights are revealed by interactions between the researcher and the participants in the research that is guided by the philosophy, tactics, and aims of the interpretative research paradigm.

I have chosen the interpretive paradigm of research because I intend to investigate the experiences of English language teachers and interpret those experiences to extract meanings inductively. This study intends to investigate the subjective and contextual nature of making students understand reading using the interpretative paradigm.

While doing the research, I hold a variety of worldviews. Therefore, no one reality is claimed in this work. I assumed that different persons have various presumptions, assumptions, and views. Researchers that use a qualitative approach prioritize understanding social phenomena and giving voice to the thoughts and views of the study's participants (Lodico, 2010). So, using the available literature as a guide, I thematized and analyzed the perceptions and behaviors of my four participants. These relative truths typically provide information on the methods English language teachers employ in teaching reading and the methods they value. To investigate their various realities, I placed more attention on the narratives of everyday lives and their behaviors (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011) in the classroom and outside of it. I choose this paradigm to analyze the perspectives and understandings of English language teachers regarding how they effectively teach in ELT classrooms.

Narrative Inquiry

In my study, I used the research method known as narrative inquiry. Here, the researcher and participants collaborate through narrative inquiry. It is the examination of experience as a narrative. According to Atkinson (2007), telling stories comes naturally to us. As a result, it is a method for considering and researching experience. According to Connelly and Clandinin (2000), narrative inquiry is the study of a person's interaction with words, including their ups and downs.

Narrative also suggests that humans are surrounded by a variety of stories, which they recount and live. As a result, narrative inquiry aids in accumulating human experience. It recognizes that people are an essential component of society. In this way, "partnership between researcher and participants, over time, in a place or series of places, and social interaction with milieus" is how narrative inquiry seeks to comprehend and enquire into the experience (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 20). To collect vivid accounts of experiences together with interpretations of their meanings, this study used the descriptive and interpretative features of instructors to analyze their experiences. I learn from this that the shaping or ordering of the participants' experiences in narrative inquiry produces meaning.

Since stories are regarded as the raw data in narrative inquiry, I gathered my data in the form of stories. I employed this approach to uncover more information about the participants' earlier experiences, cultures, and lifestyles. I used interviews to gather information in the form of narratives from the research participants. I created an environment for my participants' internalized, evolving, and integrated stories. Based on the storylines, I came up with the themes. Sharing the final report's draft and the

interview transcript helped me establish trust by ensuring that I accurately reflected their opinions.

I used narrative inquiry to create an extraordinary universe where the story governs experience. I employed this technique to investigate the individual stories of my four participants (Chase, 2008). I selected a narrative approach to elicit participants' first-hand accounts because my research's goal was to study the understanding of English language instructors. This approach was given as a useful tool for developing a thorough understanding of English language instructors' involvement in the delivery of reading comprehension instruction in public schools (Merriam, 1998). This strategy also gave me the chance to interview, record, and require me to piece together the entire story. As my participants took part in the study, I as a researcher worked with English language teachers to collect data (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). My participants told me in chronological order about their untold happy and painful events. As Clandinin & Connelly (2000) suggested instead of gathering statistical data, I instead collected information in the form of words, texts, and stories.

I built a strong rapport with my interviewees during the interview. Because my participants came from a variety of institutions and were of varying ages and levels, I asked them about their prior experiences, their current circumstances, and their plans. I concentrated on identifying planned and implemented, felt and seen, conception and perception in the form of a meaning-making process during the engagement with them as I studied the teaching strategies that they employed to teach reading comprehension.

While employing narrative inquiry as a research method in this study, I kept three things in mind: temporality, sociality, and spatiality which are the major conventions of

the narrative research method. I relate the narratives to the themes of Connelly and Clandinin's (2006) narrative inquiry, specifically sociability, time, and location. These aspects included investigating the time (past, present, and future), sociability (dialectics between inside and outside, person and society), and locations (places where experiences are lived and shared) during my research process (Clandinin et.al., 2011).

Temporality suggests that events must occur in temporal transition for example from past to present to future. It includes two things: the temporality of the researcher and the temporality of the participants. To maintain temporality, I talked with my participants about the events and experiences with time. As a narrative researcher, I was sensitive enough to temporality and the past, present, and future of all the occurrences involving my participants, locations, and objects (Clandinin et al., 2011). Based on an understanding of the stories, I think we (I as a researcher and the research participants) developed our experiences over time, and our knowledge of ourselves and how we communicate it to others was constantly being revised.

Sociality is another crucial feature of narrative inquiry research. Sociality refers to the social condition in terms of cultural, social, institutional, and linguistic narratives and inquiry relationship between the researcher's and the participant's life. I have paid attention to the social and personal circumstances of my participants by adopting sociality as a fundamental component of narrative inquiry. In other words, I have identified my feelings, hopes, aspirations, and moral principles, as well as those of the research participants (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). On the other hand, following the suggestion of Clandinin & Huber (2010), during the research process I related social circumstances, occasions, and experiences.

Another important quality of narrative inquiry is spatiality which denotes the physical and the topological boundary. Narrative researchers should think that all events take place in some places, as Connelly and Clandinin (2006) asserted. The location is a distinct area with concrete, physical, and topological bounds where my investigation's process and events occurred (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). To maintain the very quality of spatiality, I gave priority to the location of the original narrated event and the location where the account was being told.

I have framed the relationships and circumstances that my participants encountered narratively while staying anchored in these subtleties. By engaging with the open-ended questioning in this inquiry about time, sociability, and place as they occurred from my participants' experiences, I entered the three common spaces of narrative inquiry as a narrative inquirer. So, during the inquiry process, I am conversing in dialogue with the participants as a storyteller (Clandinin, 2013).

Fiddler (2021) explains that a narrative inquirer needs to be ready to pay close attention to the emotional context of research dialogues in this situation. I asked the teacher participants to share their untold stories as well as their regular teaching and learning experiences to incorporate this terrain and to enable our talks to reveal the vivid colors of life and the magnificence of our shared experiences. I also become ready to allow room for any unresolved feelings that may surface during our discussions.

Selection of Research Site and Participants

Because the purpose of a narrative inquiry study is to create a rich or dense description of the phenomena being studied in a specific setting (van Manen, 1997), I selected the participants purposefully to ensure that they were able to reflect upon a range

of experiences to discuss how they taught reading comprehension. The participants were secondary-level English language teachers having experience from seven years to nineteen years. As qualitative studies are conducted on a small sample of participants for the detailed case-by-case analysis of the individual transcripts, I started taking narratives from a single participant who was a permanent secondary-level English teacher. As per the quality of qualitative research, the number of participants in the research can vary, and there is no hard and fast rule regarding it. Therefore, I kept on adding the participants until I felt that the data was saturated.

Cresswell (2008), argues that the small size is useful for analyzing the data properly. Keeping his view in mind, I selected six participants for my research but I had to cancel two participants because of the rudeness of one participant and the inability to be expressive of another participant. By the end of my research journey, I had four participants altogether including two males and two females from the public schools of Kathmandu, Bhaktapur, and Lalitpur. Throughout this dissertation, I use the pseudo names for all the research participants. I chose Kathmandu valley as my research site so that I could easily access my research participants and talk and interact frequently as per my need.

I also made some criteria for selecting the research participants. One criterion was being a permanent teacher and the next criterion was having experience of at least three years so that they could be expressive enough and could give the required information in detail.

As van Manen (1997) said, I selected the participants from those who were eager to talk about their experiences, and who were different enough from one another to increase the chances of rich and original stories about the experience.

Initially, I started data collection from one male participant, Chandra based on purposive sampling. I generated his narratives through the interview and recorded them with his prior consent. Although there is no hard and fast rule for using the audio device, I bought an audio recorder thinking that it would be difficult to record on my smartphone because the incoming calls might obstruct the smooth and natural following interview. I listened to his narratives and transcribed them without losing any hidden and sensible meaning. It was a sort of trial for me because it was my first interview. I learned how many questions to ask, how to initiate the conversation, and so on.

Before I went to the second participant (Rewati), I made a slight change in my interview protocol: I modified, added, deleted, and edited some questions realizing their need from the first interview. I requested my second participant to share her story as the data was not sufficient to analyze and make meaning. After taking her interview, I again made up my mind to visit the third participant because I thought the data was not saturated. In this way, I interviewed the four participants until the data was saturated.

The participants who supported me by participating in this study and eliciting the data were Chandra Tamang, Bhawana Sharma, Rewati Thapa, and Nirmal Shrestha. While presenting their stories, I used each participant's pseudo-name. The information/data about participants regarding their school life, higher studies, and experiences of a teaching career are entirely different as each participant's childhood, socio-economic life, growing up, traditions and cultures, norms, and values are different. Each of my research

participants was a permanent secondary-level teacher having experience of a minimum of nine years. Among my research participants, there are two males and two females which also ensures gender equality. Each of the participants participated in this research study voluntarily upon my request. The detailed profile of each participant is given in Appendix II.

I also thought about gender balance which is why I took both males and females as participants for this research study. I visited them according to their comfort and leisure time and took an interview for three rounds. My first participant, Chandra agreed to allow me for his class observation too. I observed his class teaching English in grade ten. In this way, I took the data happily and with comfort from my participants. Time and again I contacted them via phone in case I got any confusion during transcribing the data.

Data Generation Techniques

In this section, I am writing about what exactly I did for collecting the information from the participants. I used the interview as a main tool for collecting information. Regarding interviews, Kvale and Brinkman (2009) assert that qualitative researchers use interviews as an effort to discover their experienced world before scientific explanations, to unravel the significance of their experiences, and to grasp the world from their subjective point of view. In qualitative research, the interview is the most common practice in collecting data. Cohen et. al. (2011) defined an interview as an “In-depth interview is two-person conversation initiated by the interviewer for the specific purposes of obtaining research relevant information as content specified by research objectives of systematic description, prediction or explanation” (p.351). It is mentioned by Cohen et al. (2007) that the interview is carried out to obtain research-

relevant information. Therefore, I found the interview as an appropriate tool for eliciting the data and used this in my research too for the same purpose.

To collect participants' narratives, first of all, I built rapport with the school administration, the headmasters as well as the subject teachers. After meeting them and building rapport, I requested the English teachers for their valuable time and made an appointment to collect data. I had already developed a set of interview guidelines/ interview protocols related to my research topic. I visited the participants with those interview protocols and took the interview. I prepared interview guidelines in such a way that only open-ended questions were asked to take information from the participants. I recorded the interview for transcribing it afterward with the consent of the participants. Along with the audio device, I carried a notebook with me and noted down the important events and things in it. I felt that writing in the notebook would be better in the sense that writing is permanent in comparison to the electronic device because the electronic file can be damaged and broken at any time. Before transcribing, I listened to the interview several times, pausing and listening, and transcribed them, trying not to lose their original meaning. After getting home, as suggested by my supervisor, I wrote the reflection every day whenever I visited my research participants.

To help comprehend the broader meaning of the information process, I read through all of the interview transcriptions and created themes in the margins of each transcript. "Coding is thus a mechanism that enables you to organize and classify similarly coded data into groups or "families" because they share some attribute - the beginning of a pattern," claims Saldana (2016, p 9). To make it easier to locate text passages and keep track of files effectively, I colored the text that was color-coded into

distinct sections and broke it up into several pieces by copying and pasting words onto cards.). According to Creswell (2013), qualitative researchers make notes in the transcript's margins to capture their overall impressions of the data at this point. I followed language conventions and kept clichés when transcribing the data. Finally, I had the transcription read by the participants, which allowed me to retain the veracity of the facts I had gathered.

Meaning Making Process

After collecting the data from an in-depth interview, transcribing the audio recording was the first stage in the analysis of my data, as it is with all qualitative data. I transcribed the audio by playing it back and writing down every word that was said, but for the analysis, sentences or groups of sentences served as more helpful units of reference. To get a basic knowledge of the interview's content and any pertinent reflective written journals, I read the interview data in its full once or more. This process, which is frequently referred to as "immersion" in or "living with the data" (van Manen, 1997), includes both preliminary engagements with the texts' meanings and interpretation. The following phase was finding and creating meaning units inside the transcript, which therefore made coding easier. I concentrated only on the meaning units that would offer insights into the phenomena being researched because not all meaning units in an interview were connected to the phenomena being investigated. Then, as indicated by Nowell et al. (2017), I sorted, collected, and aggregated pertinent codes to create overarching themes.

I created these labels that allow me to categorize the meaning units according to what they reveal about the phenomena under study. At this point, I concentrated on

seeing, comprehending, and articulating the connections between the ideas. I created sub-themes to support the main themes and used Riessman's (2008) thematic analysis method to interpret and analyze the narrative material. This required reading and rereading all of the data while taking into account both its portions and its entirety during the process of understanding and interpretation, which was guided by the narratives. I carefully studied every transcription to make sense of the data gathered. I upheld the data's coherence. Then, I created themes and sub-themes and connected them to pertinent theories and literature. I used an interpretive lens to examine and evaluate the data.

Quality Standards

I believe that maintaining the relevant quality standard is indeed a challenging task. As a qualitative researcher, adhering to the interpretive paradigm, I tried to maintain the quality standards of trustworthiness, authenticity, credibility, transferability, and conformability as far as possible (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). I tried my best to avoid fabrication and misinterpretation of the experiences and practices shared by the participants. I remained careful enough to maintain quality standards. I maintained the following basic research ethics throughout the research process.

Reflexivity

My philosophical ontology is based on multiple realities. So I dealt with literature in reflective ways, and my research is reflective based on the arguments of the story. After collecting the data, I was reflective on what insights I got from the participants. Not only in data collection but in data analysis and interpretation too, I remained largely reflective.

Truthfulness

Researchers can persuade themselves and readers that their research findings are important by being honest (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). I am well aware that any misrepresentation and non-re-representation would lead to no trustworthiness. So, I tried not to keep any fake reality of my participants. I just kept the things that happen in the real-life situation of my research area and participants. To ensure a richer and more profound exploration of the teaching of critical thinking phenomena chosen for the study, I also maintained all the pieces of evidence of those realities that came from the interviews.

Authenticity

The quality of making the research authentic is crucial. According to Guba and Lincoln (1989), authenticity is the impact that the researcher would likely have on members of the culture or community being researched. To maintain authenticity in my study, I became respectful towards my participants, my original identity, and towards myself. I considered the participants' voices as the main tool of my research. To maintain authenticity, I quoted some of their original voice as well to justify the authenticity. I attempted to seek a full range of perspectives of participants along with contradictory views and tried my best to represent the value of pluralism in my research. I tried to facilitate my participants to see themselves as change agents in their local contexts and empower agents for their own professional lives.

Ethical Standards

Ethics is an essential element in any kind of research. Ethics is an appropriate or approved behavior of a person. So in my research, I kept in mind the following issues while doing interviews and observations.

Informed Consent

It is often argued that the researcher must ask for consent from the participants before conducting research work (Atkinson, 2007). I made my participants feel easier by explaining to them that the information they gave would be only for my research and I also explained the nature and purpose of the study so that the participants trust in me. I asked about the reading strategies of the students in the EFL classroom and the teaching reading strategies of the teachers in the EFL classroom. I asked for their permission before recording the interview and observing the classes.

No Harm and Risk

During the journey of conducting research, I was very careful while asking questions. Before I asked questions, I inspected the background of the participants, not to make them hurt from their cultural values and aspects, but I was very much conscious of their cultural, social, and linguistic backgrounds. During my research time, I ensured that there would not be any harm or risk to my research participants. I tried not to force them to answer my questions. Similarly, I created a friendly and comfortable environment while taking interviews, which helped them share their thoughts, ideas, and experiences.

Privacy, Confidentiality, and Anonymity

I always respected my research participants and kept them hidden from sensuality and secrecy of my research participants. As a researcher, I was mindful to ‘steal the

stories of the participants' (Kvale, 2007) but with appropriacy. Therefore, I duly informed the participants of their consent; for the entire stages of data collection. A researcher needed to protect the participants' private experiences when recording their thoughts, comments, and feelings. Such private experiences were kept confidential. I did not break the confidentiality that was kept between me and my research participants, while interpreting, describing, and analyzing the data. I informed them that their opinions would not be made public on any occasion other than the research. Following the suggestions of Lincoln & Guba (1989), I also tried not to enter into their private lives beyond the scope of the study. I put pseudo names of all my participants to maintain their privacy as my honesty, confidentiality, and anonymity.

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented methodological guidelines for the research process I have included in my research. The chapter began with the research paradigm and philosophical considerations and moved on to the research method. Then I presented the selection of the research site and participants, data collection method, and meaning-making process. Then the chapter was closed with quality standards and ethical considerations which were necessary for this study.

CHAPTER IV

DIFFICULTIES FACED BY STUDENTS IN READING COMPREHENSION

This chapter primarily focuses on the study's first research question: How do English language teachers narrate the students' difficulty with reading comprehension? Each participant in this study discussed their personal classroom teaching experiences. Each participant's story is evaluated critically and supported by theories or available literature. The stories of the participants were categorized, and themes emerged. Each theme is described.

Reading comprehension is a crucial skill that all pupils must master to assure success in both their personal and academic lives. The majority of pupils, however, have significant difficulties understanding what they are reading even once they have achieved the required decoding skill (Kessler, 2009). Students may face a variety of reading comprehension issues, such as incorrect background knowledge usage (William, 1993), lack of reading fluency, inability to discern between various text structures, lack of vocabulary knowledge, and inability to make inferences (Graham & Bellert, 2005), and lack of reading fluency (Hall & Barnes, 2017) are all contributing factors that lead to reading comprehension difficult.

All of the research participants in this study shared some problems that impede the students' reading comprehension skills. They shared their stories as they were experienced in teaching secondary-level students for many years. Their stories were coded and categorized and finally, themes were derived. I derived the themes based on my research participants' stories and then I explained each theme as the answer to the

first research question. I also analyzed each theme critically. I outline the issues that the pupils face in reading comprehension in the following subheadings.

Absence of Prior Knowledge

Reading is a cognitive process in which students need to understand the meaning of a given text. The text may not be always easy. Sometimes, to achieve an understanding, the learners have to connect knowledge to their past experiences. The absence of prior knowledge indicates that students do not have sufficient prior knowledge and experience as a result they cannot comprehend a reading text well. To understand the text completely, learners must have background knowledge and past life experience.

All the English teachers who participated in this study had different views relating to the difficulties pupils have with understanding reading. One of my research participants, Chandra shared his experience:

Yes, prior knowledge has a crucial role in getting the meaning of the reading text. If students have prior knowledge about any text they can make connections to the present reading which facilitates getting the meaning. in the absence of background knowledge, students have to struggle a lot for understanding. When I teach any text I always provide background knowledge about the author, the type of the text, and the things or subject matters that are presented in the text beforehand so that students relate it to the text while teaching. It is more important to provide background knowledge while teaching poems because the poet has his/her style of writing and the subject matter is presented differently in the poem through the use of literary devices.

Chandra's narrative indicates that lack of prior information regarding the topic in the students has been one of the problems in reading comprehension. He added that he provided background information about the text at the beginning of the lesson and then only he started teaching the lesson. It helped students understand the lesson properly. He also shared that providing prior/background knowledge while teaching poems is necessary because teaching poem is more complex in comparison to other informational texts. Prior knowledge about the time when the poem was written, in what context the poet has written the poem, its denotative and connotative meaning, the poet's childhood and lifestyle, the theme of the poem, and so on, if given to the students in advance, it could be easier to grasp and understand the meaning of the poem.

Chandra's narrative seems similar to the views of McEwan (2007) who opines that one of the difficulties that prevent children from comprehending written material successfully is a lack of using prior information in the right way.

Similarly, my next research participant, Rewati shared her experience regarding the problems that learners face in reading comprehension in her class as follows:

Yes, sir, let me share my experience on the initial days' experience. There is a lesson on 'Memoirs of my Visit to France' in grade ten. It was the first time I have taken a class in grade ten. In section A I taught the same lesson with an explanation sometimes translating the difficult words. But in section 'B' I slightly changed my teaching method. First of all, I gave information about France, the museums which are worth visiting there, and so on. The next day, when I went to section 'A', I had to repeat the lesson because the students requested to repeat the lesson. But in section 'B', the students understood well.

Rewati's narrative indicates that prior knowledge is important for comprehending the text well. I asked her, "how do you give prior information in the class while teaching reading comprehension lessons?" she further said:

Well, I do not teach any text directly. Before entering into the text, I ask students to guess who the author is, and what is the context of the written text, to watch the pictures which are given before every lesson or reading text, to think about the given pre-questions about the text which are given in the book. When they express their opinion, I make corrections if required, and most of the time their guessing is correct. This helps a lot to understand the text and to engage and motivate the learners toward the lesson.

The narrative of Rewati reflects that she has been providing background information to the class before teaching every lesson. She believes that providing background knowledge has a lot to do with getting the idea about the text better. I found her experience is similar to the view of the scholar, McNamara and Kintsch (1996) who said that in order to comprehend a written piece better, the readers must draw connections between the new content and everything that came before, familiarity of the outside world and personal experiences with the subject of reading.

Similarly, another research participant, Bhawana also agreed that a lack of background information leads to low comprehension of the reading text. She shared her experience as:

No doubt that background information is required for better comprehension. But I think students' socioeconomic conditions also determine their background knowledge of the students. For example, if the student's family is rich, then they

can celebrate the holiday in different cities or different new places. There the student can see new things, and new items as a result he/she learn new vocabulary. Not only that, but the students also relate the information to their past experiences.

Here, Bhawana's narrative is slightly different than the previous participants. She believes that background information can be generated and the children who are grown up in rich families can have a high chance of learning more things and can create more experiences which ultimately becomes helpful for students' new knowledge and facilitates reading comprehension. I requested her if she could give a piece of evidence or she could share her experience to make it clear. She shared her experience in the following ways:

Yes, there is a lesson, 'A memorable journey from Terai to the Hill' in grade eight. While teaching this lesson, a comparatively weaker student (who does not speak much in the classroom and hardly answers the questions,) told me the meaning of 'homestay, marigold, and garland' before I wrote on the whiteboard. He looked very happy and confident too while teaching this lesson. I asked how he knew the meaning of those words and he replied that he visited Ghale Gaun last year with his family.

Bhawana shared her experience which showed that students who have past related knowledge can link it with the present topic and understand the reading text better. But not all students may have such facilities for traveling or visiting new places. Her narrative aligns with Armand (2001) who says that students can better understand a text by using their past knowledge in the right ways and activating it.

My fourth participant, Nirmal also agreed with the narratives of previous participants and shared his experience on the problems of the students in reading comprehension in the following lines:

In my thirteen years of experience in teaching English, I can say that context creation and providing background information are crucial in teaching reading. Students cannot understand well in the absence of context and background information. If I do not give the background information of the lesson, the students remain dumb. To activate their background knowledge, I generally ask them questions related to the topic. I also simplify the difficult information in the text so that each student can understand it easily. Not only this background information also helps students understand all the connotative meanings of the text.

Nirmal's narrative stresses that contextualization and background information helps students understand the indirect meaning given in the text easily and students feel as if they are participating in the learning through questioning. Nirmal's narrative reminded me of the view of Oakhill et al. (2015) who explained that past knowledge plays a significant part in assisting pupils in comprehending all implicit information and effortlessly recalling what has been read. He further says that although prior information is an important factor in helping pupils understand, some students, struggle to fully understand a text because of their low background knowledge.

The narratives of the participants regarding the problem as lacking prior information when it comes to understanding seem to be similar to the transactional theory of reading. According to Rosenblatt's (1994) transactional theory, reading comprehension

happens when pupils combine the text with their prior knowledge. This combination is referred to as the aesthetic attitude (Rosenblatt, 1994) in which the student's experiences contribute to improving the text while the text itself also enhances their experiences.

Problem with Vocabulary

Vocabulary refers to a set of lexical items in the language. Woolley (2011) asserted that a collection of lexemes that includes single words, compound words, and idioms is referred to as a vocabulary. This suggests that a vocabulary item might consist of more than one word. Vocabulary serves as the vital organ and the flesh of language if linguistic structures serve as its skeleton. In order to use vocabulary accurately and effectively, one must be able to recognize it, produce it, and do so both orally and in writing. to be aware of its collocation and metaphoric use, to recall it at will, and so on. Learners need to learn what words mean and how they are used. For the proper use of vocabulary, the learners need to learn four aspects of learning words: word formation, word grammar, word meaning, and word use. Communication breaks down in the absence of appropriate vocabulary. Therefore, a good store of vocabulary is essential for communication in speech and writing.

Knowledge of vocabulary is an important component that supports learners' reading comprehension. In this regard, Qian (2002) argues that an essential component of reading comprehension is vocabulary knowledge, which enables pupils to easily understand terms in written texts. The association between vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension is thus strong and obvious. Cunningham and Stanovich (1997) put out the idea that vocabulary competency and understanding have a mutually reinforcing relationship in terms of their link to reading comprehension. In other words,

reading experiences can help children become better readers by increasing their vocabulary knowledge. Hence, vocabulary knowledge is a must for achieving better reading comprehension.

All four participants of this research study shared their experiences on how lack of vocabulary knowledge hinders reading comprehension. One of the participants, Chandra shared his experience in the following lines:

I don't need to tell you the importance of vocabulary in reading comprehension. In our time our teacher used to give us a list of word meanings (English word and Nepali meaning) in each lesson before teaching. Our duty was to learn them by heart. If anybody missed a single word's meaning, then he or she used to get one stick as a punishment. But now this method is totally regarded as a grammar method and outdated method and no teachers like to apply it in the classroom. Nowadays, the GT method is seen as a sin these days. It is focused that vocabulary should be taught through contextualization and communicative ways. But one of the biggest problems in reading comprehension is the lack of knowledge of vocabulary in students. Students cannot comprehend the text because they do not know the word's meaning. This is the simple answer to the question of why students cannot do better in reading comprehension exercises.

Here Chandra revealed that he was taught through the GT method at his school level and teaching vocabulary was taught through rote learning. He also admitted that one of the biggest problems in reading comprehension that the learners face is a lack of vocabulary knowledge. After reading Chandra's narratives, I remembered Chou (2011)

who asserted that children with more vocabulary than children with less terminology may pick up on new words more rapidly and comprehend written texts more effectively.

Similarly, another participant, Rewati shared her experience of how a lack of vocabulary negatively affects the learners' understanding in the following ways:

Vocabulary plays important role in reading comprehension. One of the reasons why students cannot acquire reading comprehension is that they have a controlled vocabulary that negatively affects the comprehension of the text. There are so many words in a passage that they are unfamiliar with. If they know the meaning of all foreign words, no doubt they can understand any written text fully. Each time they come across new and unfamiliar words, they stopped and their comprehension is also stopped. Not only this they feel discouraged whenever they encounter unfamiliar words again and again.

Rewati claimed that controlled vocabulary has been a major problem in reading comprehension. One most remarkable things she shared was that students are discouraged due to frequent encounters with unfamiliar words. I feel that this is true because when we do not know the meaning of the vocabulary in the spoken or written language then communication is not smooth and it breaks down. Rewati's narrative resonates with Graham and Bellert (2005) who explains that using foreign vocabulary impairs a student's ability to comprehend what they are reading, which deflates their expectations and saps their desire to read. He went on to say that Inadequate utilization of previous information and a lack of vocabulary knowledge are two more problems that have a detrimental effect on learners' understanding of a text. Understanding passages with a lot of tough academic vocabulary is quite difficult for students., and as a result, they

frequently make reading mistakes because they are unable to relate the passages to their prior knowledge.

Regarding the same question, ‘what creates difficulty in reading comprehension?’ another participant of this study, Bhawana also had a similar experience. She said:

Obviously, vocabulary is the major cause of difficulty in reading comprehension. Those students who are good at vocabulary can have a better reading understanding capacity in comparison to the students who acquired less vocabulary. But within vocabulary also there is another problem, which is the nature of the multiple meaning of the word. For example, the student who knows the meaning of ‘bank’ as the place where we get money gets confused and happens to make mistake when he finds a sentence like ‘the cows are grazing on the bank of the river’. In this sense, students have to struggle a lot to understand and to get the differences between the multiple meaning of the same word.

Bhawana admitted that vocabulary has a major role in reading comprehension. Moreover, she emphasized the knowledge of multiple meanings of the same word that the students should possess and teachers should be wise enough to teach how a single word can have multiple meanings and in what contexts they are used. Her narrative is very convincing and aligns with the view of the scholar, Chou (2011), who concludes that learners’ reading comprehension is influenced by their vocabulary size. Vocabulary size increases when students have good knowledge of multiple meanings of a single word. He further stated that Students with greater language knowledge are superior to those with less vocabulary knowledge and may understand the material better.

My fourth research participant, Nirmal had a slightly different view, though, he meant the same thing as the previous participants. He said why reading comprehension is difficult in the following lines:

Students seem confused and cannot get the meaning of the word when the words are derivatively changed. They cannot find the meaning when the words are changed into different other parts of speech. At the same time, they have to struggle a lot whenever they come up with academic vocabulary. Therefore, teachers' responsibility is also to teach their students how words are changed into a different parts of speech and they also should be given knowledge about the vocabulary that is used in daily life and academic situation. For example, students know the meaning of the word 'start' but they struggle a lot to get the meaning of the word 'commence' in the sentence, the school commences from next Monday.

Apart from emphasizing the importance of vocabulary in reading comprehension, Nirmal highlighted two pertinent things: knowledge of the derivational nature of the vocabulary and academic vocabulary. If students have good knowledge about these two natures of vocabulary, he believes that students, to some extent comprehend the reading text easily. I feel Nirmal's narrative is genuine for he revealed the practical problems with vocabulary with examples. His narrative seems more similar to the view of Graham and Bellert (2005) who alleged that students find it most challenging to read passages that utilize much challenging language and terminologies as a result they frequently make mistakes in comprehension because they are unable to relate the passages to their prior knowledge.

Additionally, In the same line as Nirmal, Ricketts et al. (2007) revealed that pupils' poor storage of terminologies could hinder their understanding, particularly if the material uses uncommon words. In this regard, Anderson and Pearson (1984) also have the same opinion which justifies Nirmal's narrative. They expressed that students' understanding of a reading text is directly influenced by their familiarity with the terms used in that passage.

Moreover, the participants' narratives in regard to lack of vocabulary knowledge align with Walker (2002). She mentioned the four elements that lead to difficulty in reading comprehension. Among those four elements, she argued that lack of knowledge of sight words in the text brings problems in understanding the passage better.

Problems with Inference

Another problem that hinders reading comprehension in students is their inability to draw conclusions from a reading text or passage. Oxford Advanced Learning Dictionary of English (9th edition) defines the term 'inference' as reaching an opinion or deciding that something is true on the basis of information that is available or something that you can find out indirectly from what you already know. According to Keene & Zimmerman (2007), Making inferences is the ability of a student to come to their own conclusions about what is being said in a book without the writer's expressive statement, to make predictions both before and while reading, and to use images or imagery to help with understanding. To make sense of the text, students must therefore connect several forms of information, and be able to employ all these metacognitive skills.

Therefore, in order to generate meaning from the text and be able to use all these metacognitive skills, students must connect various sorts of information. Creating

extrapolations from printed texts is a useful mental activity that enables students to visualize a text by combining several types of information in order to comprehend the sense of the text. Woolley (2011) views that to connect many informational items that are clearly presented in the text, for example, students must draw connections between them. However, Hall and Barnes (2017) differ in defining the term inference and say that an illustration to infer a relationship between a pronoun and the textual subject it alludes to within the text.

All the research participants of this study agreed that the low level of inferring skill of the students has been the problem in comprehending the reading text well. One of the research participants shared his experience regarding how a lack of inference skills brings problems in reading comprehension in the following way:

Most of the students have difficulty with the connotative meaning of the words. They do not look for the connotative meaning in the stories rather they look for direct meaning. There is a story in Grade X 'Ant and the Grasshopper'. While teaching this story, the students hardly understand the meaning of the connotative words. They just understand the basic and literal facts. They cannot make a connection with what will happen or something that happened because of something. It is causing a problem in reading comprehension.

Chandra shared his experience that denotative and connotative meanings of the words affect the reading comprehension of the students. He insisted that students have difficulty with the connotative meaning of the words. His narratives showed that if the students are creative enough to deduce the meaning of the words, it is quite easier to understand the text but for those students who are not skillful to deduce the meaning of

the unfamiliar words, comprehension is really hard for them. Chandra's narratives align with Laing and Kamhi (2002) who assert that numerous children struggle with reading comprehension due to the inference generation skill's complexity. I totally agree with the view of Laing and Kamhi (2002) in the sense that when I was a secondary-level school student we could not even guess the meaning from context. Our teacher usually used to coax us to guess the meaning of the word on the basis of the situation and background of the text. Some students used to guess the meaning from the context and their answers would be sometimes right and they felt a kind of satisfaction thinking that they understood the text.

Similarly, Rewati, another participant in this research shared her experience regarding learners' difficulty in understanding because of inadequate inference skills in the following lines:

When the passages/texts are long, students forget the previous parts of the text which makes them difficult to remember what happened in the previous section of the story. This mainly happened in the lower-level students' storybooks. In classes nine and ten the texts are shorter and students have fewer problems. The memory and concentration of the student also plays role in making connections with the text. If they cannot remember the sequence of events in previous paragraphs, surely they cannot make a sense of the text which directly hampers the reading comprehension process.

Rewati revealed that the length of the reading text also, to some extent, determines the comprehensibility of the text. At the same time, she added that students' memory and concentration have also been the cause of difficulty in making inferences.

When I read Rewati's narrative, I remember that what she experienced in her classroom during teaching was true. Her experience resembles my personal student life too. When I was in grades XI and XII, there were story books namely 'The Magic of Words' and 'The Heritage of Words' respectively. Those books contained long essays and stories on different themes and subject matters. It would be difficult to remember what happened in the previous section of the same story. As a result, I along with my other classmates would feel difficulty connecting the previous ideas to the present information.

Rewati's experience and opinion seem to be supported by Chard et al. (2002) who insist that learners may have to struggle to understand written material because of a variety of issues. Among those issues, long fiction having more characters, a limited vocabulary sluggish reading speed, and unable to distinguish in comparing relationships between various textual types are the main reasons. Likewise, my other research participants Bhawana and Nirmal also admitted that making inferences is most important in reading comprehension, and in the absence of it, comprehension cannot be achieved. They shared their common experience in the following ways:

Cognitive power and creativity is the most important part of reading comprehension. But I am sad to say that due to rote learning habits, the cognitive power and creativity of the students seem to be lost. They can memorize a whole text for debate competition but are unable to guess the meaning in the context and unable to find out the minor things in the text if it is written indirectly. Not only in English language subjects but also in mathematics the teachers are complaining that in comparison to previous SLC batch students, the present generation students seem to have less creativity. One factor that minimizes their creativity

might be the use of technology as well. Nowadays, everything is available on Google and YouTube. Whenever they face any problem they search on these social sites rather than practicing themselves or using their mind. Therefore, loss or let's say a low level of creativity has also been one of the problems in reading comprehension.

Here, Bhawana and Nirmal shared their experience revealing that the cognitive power and creativity of the students are prominent in understanding the reading text but in absence of these qualities, the students cannot comprehend the text well which also has become a major problem for students. The research participant reported the increasing problem of rote learning and lack of cognitive power in students. Their experience is somehow similar to Jenkins et al. (2003) who argue that to understand the meaning of the text, the students should combine the information presented in the text with their own personal experiences, prior knowledge, wisdom, values, thoughtfulness, and creativity.

As the research participants in this research revealed that the inability of the students in making inferences about the text that they are reading has adversely affected their comprehension, Walker (2002) also mentioned similar problems of reading comprehension. She mentioned in her book, *Supporting Slow Learners*, that instead of integrating all relevant cues, the learners appear to rely on only one given source of information. Moreover, she added that the meaning-making of the text is difficult because the readers passively read without actively questioning their knowledge.

Problem with Decoding and Pronunciation

Another issue that adversely affects young readers' reading comprehension is their inability to read texts quickly. According to McEwan (2007), reading fluency is the

capability to recite a text fast. Reading fluency refers to a reader's capacity to accurately, automatically, and quickly read a paragraph or other content while expressing themselves appropriately. Therrien (2004) argues that children need to be able to quickly process vocabulary units, like letter-sound correspondences, naturally create word connections, quickly absorb knowledge, and reflect on the passages as they read in order to understand what they read. Reading rapidly and fluently aids students with word recognition and decoding which frees up more cognitive resources for meaning construction.

On the other side, a sluggish word processing rate may make it difficult for readers to concentrate while reading and their working memory with repeated word-pronunciation efforts, which might obstruct comprehension of the text. Reading slowly, then, prevents readers from retaining knowledge in their working minds for a sufficient amount of time to understand it. Instead, readers are forced to concentrate on letters and vocabularies rather than on the reading's substance and how words are connected (Therrien, 2004). Therefore, reading fluency is essential for enhancing learners' reading comprehension in addition to helping them read and absorb information quickly and properly.

All four research participants who participated in this study shared their narratives based on their teaching experience which revealed that students in Nepalese public schools struggle with understanding reading, and one of the issues was slow or ineffective reading of the text. Chandra shared his experience in the following ways:

One major problem with my students is a problem of decoding. They take much time to decode or read a single word. Not only this but also, they spend much physical and mental energy focusing on deciphering the word. When they spend

much time just trying to pronounce a single word, then they cannot think about comprehension and they cannot pay attention to what is going on in the text. It is not unnatural that when they read slowly they have difficulty deducing the meaning of the sentence and paragraphs.

Chandra's narrative indicates that students in public schools have a problem with reading speed too. They read too slowly that they cannot make the connection to the meaning. As a result, they lose comprehension of the passage. I also realized and experienced this problem with students in public school when I taught as a pre-service teacher (teaching practice as required by the university for the partial fulfillment of the course in M. Ed.) ten years back. Chandra's narrative parallels with Cunningham and Stanovich (1998), who were convinced that word recognition processes are laborious and slow up cognitive resources that could be used for comprehension.

Similarly, another research participant, Rewati also shared a similar experience regarding the lack of reading fluency among her students which obstructs reading comprehension. She shared her experience as:

Most of the students in my class are really sluggish readers. They have a problem in decoding the word. When they have a problem decoding a single word, no doubt, their understanding of reading the text is slow and obstructed. They can comprehend the text as far as they know the Nepali equivalent of the word but due to their inability for decoding, they lose the meaning not only of the sentence but also the meaning of the whole text.

I requested her to share her experience on how she helped her students improve their slow reading skills.

I spend much time just drilling the multi-syllabic word several times (minimum three times in the class). Likewise, I read the text and ask them to repeat it after me. I re-read for them too. Then I have them read individually by calling them in front of the class and I make corrections whenever they mispronounce the words or whenever they feel in reading the passage. For a single passage, I spend two-three periods just developing reading skills only. Then after I proceed with the text through an explanation for comprehension and other related exercises given in the book.

Rewati told that she had students in her classroom who were slow in reading speed. Therefore, they cannot comprehend the text well. To improve that situation, she adopted drilling and modeling so that her students could be motivated and improve their reading skills gradually. After reading her narrative, I found that her experience is closely related to Chard et. al. (2002) who viewed that fluency issues in pupils are correlated with their hopelessness to read sight words, decode words, read phrases and sentences precisely and quickly, and decipher words.

The other two research participants, Bhawana and Nirmal shared their experiences slightly differently. They both admitted and shared their stories:

Not only slow reading but also fast reading creates problems in understanding the meaning of the text. There are very few students in our class, who completed their primary level education from private institutional schools. They read very quickly, their reading speed is very high. As a result, they cannot achieve comprehension. When we ask them questions about the text and the content they start re-reading.

Bhawana and Nirmal said that not only lack of reading fluency negatively affects reading comprehension, but fast reading of the passage also hampers the understanding process because the readers only pay attention to decoding the words rather than understanding by linking backward of the text regarding what they read and how the text is moving ahead.

The research participants' narratives in this study can be compared with Walker (2002) who also argued that inadequate knowledge of sight words, decoding skills, and letter sound relationship leads to difficulties in comprehending the text.

Problem with Technical/Expository Text

Students come into contact with and cope with a variety of textual information as they move through the school and the college level. Graham and Bellert (2005) argue that the common varieties of texts that learners encounter when learning are narrative and expository among all the other text structure types. According to them, expository texts are a type of information that is frequently created for readers' new knowledge and insight into the world and natural events. In other words, the fundamental goal of expository writing in the opinion of Berman and Nir-Sagiv (2007) is to explain ideas, concepts, issues, arguments, causal relationships, Issues and remedies, comparisons and contrasts, definitions and examples and to make clear the logical relationship between them.

The objective of the narrative text, which takes the form of a story, is to amuse or entertain the reader against the textual explanation. Examples of chronicle texts are fiction, myths, plays, and legends but these are not the only ones. Graham and Bellert (2005) opine that it is simple for children to understand narrative writing because the

setting, characters, events, and outcome are the four components of a story that are usually used to write the narrative text's parts.

One of the problems that can impede learners' reading comprehension is their lack of familiarity with academic and expository text structures. Weaver and Kintsch (1991) define text structure as the method a writer organizes text to make a point to a reader. Understanding text organization is crucial for learning because it helps students connect textual material and distinguish between main concepts and supporting elements (Saenz & Fuchs, 2002). It also benefits students by urging them to ask appropriate questions about the text as they read from the written contents (William, 2014).

William (2014) went on to say that, although understanding text structure is a crucial skill, most students, struggle to differentiate between various text structures which has a detrimental effect on their reading comprehension. All the participants in this research study shared their experiences and agreed that academic and expository texts have been one of the difficulties that impede learners' understanding. Chandra, one of the research participants shared that his story is based on his teaching experience on how these texts have helped create the problem in reading comprehension of the students.

In my teaching experience, what I feel is that students have difficulty understanding technical texts in comparison to stories that start with 'Once upon a time...'. They comprehend the stories well and narrate to you everything about what happened in the story, who were the characters, what were their role, how they were acting in the story, sketching the character, and so on.

When I asked him what made the academic text more difficult, he went in the following lines:

Well... Ummm, I think the main reason for the difficulty in those texts is a presentation of unfamiliar and difficult vocabulary in expository writings. Sometimes there is such vocabulary in the texts which students never come up with in their academic life nor have they heard in their daily life or conversations. The next thing is the grammatical structure used in those texts such as impersonal writings, use of passive voice, selection of highly formal and standard vocabulary, and so on.

I requested him to share an example of such expository text that he taught in the classroom which was highly difficult for students to understand, he shared:

Yes, sir. There are two newspaper articles presented in unit seven of Grade ten. These news articles are given the heading 'Rampant pesticide use risks health', published in Nepal's national daily and 'Climate change is going to make inequality even worse than it already is', published in The Washington Post. The second article was a research-based article that uses highly academic and formal vocabulary. At the same time, the structure of the writing report was also different than normal writing which makes it difficult to understand for the students.

Chandra shared that technical and expository texts given in the textbook are quite difficult to understand in comparison to stories or fictional texts for the students because of their nature of selecting academic writing style and unfamiliar vocabulary. Here, Chandra's experience aligns with Saenz and Fuchs (2002) who asserted that for most children, understanding expository and academic literature is more challenging than understanding a narrative text.

Similarly, Rewati, another research participant shared a similar story supporting that academic and technical texts are more difficult for students than non-academic ones.

Technical texts are difficult for students to comprehend well because they seem to have been written at a high cognitive level, which is difficult for weak students.

The next reason for the difficulty of such texts is that such lessons use facts, scientific data, and sequence of particular events. And students do not seem to be motivated to read those texts as they are not directly related to their lives or might be they are not written according to the cognitive level of the learner.

I asked her how she taught those passages in the classroom. She shared her experience as:

Well, first of all, I give the background knowledge about the lesson, who wrote it, for what purpose it was written, and so on. Then I read for them, and they follow me. I ask them to underline the difficult words in the book with a pencil and I write their meaning on the whiteboard at the same time I use those words in Nepalese context. Finally, I explain the lesson with examples.

Rewati agreed that technical and expository writings are difficult for students due to two main reasons. The first reason was such lessons use high cognitive level language which is difficult to process for young learners and the second reason was such text contains scientific facts, data, and events that students find difficult to memorize. She also revealed her teaching technique for such texts in the classroom. When I went through her narrative, I found that her narrative seems similar to Weisberg and Balajthy (1989) who claim that students tended to retell less information because they took longer to recognize and gain knowledge of the key elements of expository texts.

The narratives of Chandra and Rewati in this study seem to be in a similar vein to Walker (2002) who also mentioned that texts which are difficult to read and comprehend are frequently offered to the learners as a result reading comprehension becomes difficult and it demotivates the students towards their study.

Teaching reading has been the major teaching skill according to my research participants. They spend most teaching hours teaching reading. The research participants reported that they experienced the following problems in their learners during teaching reading comprehension texts. One of the problems that the research participants observed was that the learners did not have background knowledge of the text that they are going to read. Similarly, another difficulty with teaching reading comprehension that all the participant teachers shared was lack of knowledge of vocabulary. Lack of Nepali equivalents of English vocabulary creates problems in understanding the reading text of the learners. Therefore, the teacher participants narrated that they gave more emphasis on teaching and instructing vocabulary.

The participants also shared that teaching reading becomes difficult due to the lack of inference skills among the learners. The students could not make conclusions about what has been said in the text if the author uses implicit writing. Similarly, they cannot guess what happened before and what will happen at the last of the text which also creates problems in comprehension of the reading text.

Teaching technical texts, according to the participants was another difficulty that they faced in the English classroom. Technical texts use more difficult and unfamiliar vocabulary as a result learners find it difficult to grasp. The learners and the teachers both have to work hard to make teaching and learning activities meaningful and effective.

Among the difficulties faced by the learners in English classrooms, as narrated by the research participants in this study, lack of knowledge of English vocabulary with Nepali equivalents and learners' inability to make inferences seem to be universal in the sense that some scholars such as Grahm and Bellert (2005), Walker (2002), and Hall and Barnes (2017) also mentioned in their research work on English Language Teaching. Although these difficulties shared by the participants of this study seem to be similar to other researchers' work, these problems narrated by the participants in this study are context-specific and were observed by the teacher participants in the context of Nepal's public schools in Kathmandu valley.

After interviewing the research participants regarding the difficulties that the students faced in reading comprehension in their daily classroom, I am well acquainted with the problems that learner face in reading comprehension. At the same time, I also got insights about some strategies to overcome the problems in teaching reading.

Problems in English Textbook in Grade IX and X Related to Reading

Comprehension

Apart from two research questions, I wanted to know their views on the textbook that they had been teaching. Therefore, I requested my participants to share their experiences. The participants shared their common views in the following ways:

The chapters are medium in length but chapter-wise vocabulary and their meanings are not provided. it would be better if difficult vocabulary were presented with meaning in each chapter. Another problem, I experienced was that the difficult vocabulary is not included in the glossary. Similarly, the photos are followed by each reading text but those photos are neither colorful nor can be

seen properly. Grammar is the skeleton of the language but I found that grammatical rules are not presented properly and grammar exercises are not sufficient. Only four or five questions are given for a single grammatical item which is not sufficient for the students.

The above narrative reflected that there are problems regarding the presentation of vocabulary. The participants also complained that the difficult vocabulary was not included in the glossary.

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the narratives of the participants on the problems faced by secondary-level students of public schools in reading comprehension in ELT classrooms in the context of Nepal. The stories based on the teaching experiences of the participants implied that there are ongoing problems in reading comprehension, which are presented under five sub-themes. At the same time, the participants also narrated that they applied appropriate problem-specific techniques to overcome those problems in ELT classrooms.

I presented each participant's experiences as narratives collected from first-hand interviews in line with the interpretive research paradigm. I also provided an analysis and interpretation of how the participants' accounts compared to those of other researchers in the body of work on the difficulties learners have with reading comprehension. Each sub-theme of this chapter is also connected with the available literature and theory.

CHAPTER V
ENGLISH TEACHERS' TEACHING STRATEGIES FOR READING
COMPREHENSION

This chapter deals with the second research question of the study: What teaching strategies the English Language Teachers use in reading comprehension? Each participant of this study shared their unique experiences in using their teaching strategies, especially in teaching reading comprehension. This chapter also presents the critical analysis of each participant's stories and experiences. Before presenting their stories, I present a short introduction to teaching strategies.

Every teacher has his/her own way of teaching, planning, techniques, and so on. A teaching strategy is a broad lesson plan that comprises the framework, the learning objectives, and a description of the planned techniques that will be used to carry out the strategies. Furthermore, Harmer (2008) explains that teaching strategies are the teacher's behavior that is displayed in the classroom, such as the refinement of teaching strategies, providing the right stimulus for prompt responses, practicing previously learned responses, boosting responses through additional activities, etc.

Teaching strategies, as previously indicated, offer a suggestion for how to handle a teaching issue. It is crucial to emphasize these fundamental qualities of theirs. They are the training element of lively conditions, which are characterized by flexibility and internal elasticity, and have a normative nature without the rigidity of a rule. It is possible

to modify and adapt the general teaching strategy specified by educational techniques to the training occasions and environmental factors.

Harmer (2008) argues that teaching strategies link the learning contexts in which students are placed and activate their psychological learning mechanisms. The strategy's component parts—methods, means, and organizational frameworks—form a system that establishes their connection as well as their interdependencies and dependencies on one another. A teaching strategy can be divided into several steps, phases, and behavior guidelines particular to various teaching sequences, with each decision signifying the transition by utilizing the knowledge gained in the previous step.

Each participant in this study shared their experiences regarding the teaching strategies that they used in teaching reading comprehension. I present their stories on the following sub-themes.

Teaching Vocabulary

In the past, second language programs frequently gave vocabulary acquisition and teaching very little attention, but recently there has been a resurgence of curiosity about the nature of vocabulary and its function in both learning and teaching (Richards & Renandya, 2002). Vocabulary has received a lot of attention from academics and professionals because it is an essential component of language proficiency and plays a significant role in how well learners talk, listens, read, and write. Without a large vocabulary, students might not reach their full potential. Richards and Renandya (2002) argue that a lack of vocabulary knowledge among second language learners may deter them from taking advantage of the available learning opportunities, such as listening to

the radio, speaking with native speakers, reading real texts, or watching films and television shows. Regarding the significance of terminology, Harmer (2008) notes that:

If language structures make up the skeleton of language, then it is vocabulary that provides the vital organs and the flesh. An ability to manipulate grammatical structure does not have any potential for expressing meaning unless words are used.

Likewise, Therrien (2004) emphasizes the need for vocabulary instruction and learning for second languages.

In communication, vocabulary is often more important than grammar. It is frustrating for learners if they discover they cannot communicate effectively because they do not know the words they need.

All the participants in this study reported that without the knowledge of vocabulary, students cannot achieve reading comprehension. They claimed that to make reading comprehension easier, they introduce vocabulary items before teaching any reading comprehension text. Chandra shared his experience of teaching reading in the following ways:

Yes. In our school time, when I was a student, we had to remember all the English words with Nepali meanings. The teacher used to write all the word meanings on the whiteboard and our duty was to memorize them by heart. When we knew the word meaning we felt a kind of satisfaction in learning. An important component that helps in reading comprehension is children's knowledge of vocabulary. If students know the meaning of vocabulary, they can quickly interpret and understand the sentence in the text. There is a strong relationship between

learning vocabulary and reading comprehension. Therefore, first of all, before teaching the lesson, I ask the students to underline the difficult words in the text with a pencil. When they finish the task I write all the Nepali equivalents of English vocabulary on the whiteboard and make meaningful and contextual sentences by using those words.

Here, Chandra emphasized the importance of teaching vocabulary for reading comprehension. He said that he wrote the meaning of difficult vocabulary on the whiteboard to facilitate the reading comprehension process. His experience of prioritizing teaching vocabulary is aligned with Chou (2011) who argues youngsters with higher vocabulary knowledge may quickly grasp the meaning of new terms and have a better understanding of written texts compared to kids with lower vocabulary knowledge.

Similarly, Rewati another participant in this study also said that she focused on vocabulary instruction and shared her story in the following way:

For me, reading comprehension means teaching the meaning of the text or passage. And the text or passage is an extended form of the vocabulary. Without teaching vocabulary, how is it possible to teach longer texts? If they don't know what vocabulary means, how can they get the meaning of such longer texts? That's why I ask about the meaning of vocabulary to the students. If they do not know, I make them write the meaning in their copies.

I asked her what technique she used in teaching the unfamiliar words in the passage. She replied in the following way:

Well, there is no single technique to teach the vocabulary of the text. Sometimes, I define the unfamiliar word in simple language so that they can understand the

meaning. Sometimes, I provide synonyms or antonyms of the word to make them understand. There are also cases in which I translate the word into their mother tongue language (Nepali language) when I feel difficult to teach the meaning of some abstract words. Action words are very easy to teach through action.

Rewati also emphasized the need of teaching the meaning of vocabulary. Her experience seems similar to Anderson and Pearson (1984) who asserts that pupils' knowledge of the terms used in a paragraph affects how well they understand it.

Bhawana and Nirmal agreed that learning new words is essential for improving understanding. They shared their common experience of their teaching strategy as teaching vocabulary in reading comprehension:

Lack of vocabulary knowledge has been a major problem that greatly affects students' ability to grasp a text. Students also find it extremely challenging to read a passage which a lot of difficult vocabulary. Students' poor vocabulary knowledge could hinder their comprehension of a text. Therefore, we prefer teaching difficult vocabulary before starting to teach a new lesson.

Bhawana and Nirmal's narrative indicated that they also teach vocabulary prior to teaching the new text. Their narrative resembles McEwan (2007) who claims that foreign vocabulary impairs a student's ability to comprehend what they are reading, which deflates their expectations and saps their interest in reading.

The experiences that participants in this research narrated under the theme of teaching vocabulary seem to be parallel with Therrien (2004), Chou (2011), Anderson and Pearson (1984), and McEwan (2007) who emphasized the need for vocabulary instruction for better understanding of the text. Moreover, regarding the importance of

teaching vocabulary, Qian (2002) highlighted that knowledge of vocabulary is crucial for reading comprehension and it should be given priority by every school teacher. Although the participants in this study and the above-mentioned scholars emphasized equally the need of teaching vocabulary for better reading comprehension, there is a noticeable difference between the techniques of instructing vocabulary between the participants of this study and the other researchers in the literature. The major difference in instructing vocabularies lies in applying student-centered techniques and teacher-centered techniques.

Teaching vocabulary can be connected to Rosenblatt's Transactional theory of reading comprehension in the sense that transactional theory says, when a reader sees a text, he uses his linguistic and experiential reservoir to interact with the text. Here, I assume, by the term 'linguistic reservoir', Rosenblatt (1994) seemed to mean that the readers must have adequate vocabulary so that they can interact with the given text and ultimately make its understanding.

Questioning

For all children across all grade levels, the affective metacognitive reading technique of Questioning was created to improve understanding of reading. Students must actively engage in the reading process by often pausing and posing a series of questions to themselves about what they are reading in order to assess their own understanding and sense-building of the passage. According to Cotton (1988), questioning is a reading intervention strategy in which students have the chance to read independently and actively, to consider what they are reading critically, and to critically evaluate their reading by posing questions as they read.

There are two approaches to creating the questions when employing the questioning strategy. Questions are created by students and teachers to improve students' comprehension of what they read. Before, during, and after reading, students who employ the self-questioning strategy generally come up with their own questions. By coming up with their own questions and providing the answers, students can check their understanding, identify important features, comprehend the book more fully, and remember the information they have gained from the text. In this case, the study relates to the use of questions created by teachers to promote reading comprehension. In this regard, the participants in this study agreed that they utilized questioning as a strategy. Their stories are given as follows.

Chandra, the first research participant shared his experience in the following ways:

I tell them to read the whole passage themselves. But in the middle, I ask them questions to check if they comprehend or not. I believe, it helps them motivate towards reading and makes them compulsion for reading. They pay attention to reading properly thinking that the teacher is going to ask them questions. It increases the habit of asking questions to teachers if they do not know the vocabulary, sentence structure, or sometimes the meanings of phrasal words which ultimately assists in their reading comprehension.

Likewise, Rewati, another participant in this study shared her story in the following way:

I tell the students to read each paragraph. But after completing one paragraph, I make them stop reading and ask the related questions. Through this strategy, I

observed that the students understand the main idea and concept of the text. Moreover, through the questioning strategy, I observed that it helps improve learners' skills of understanding the text, focusing on reading the text, making their mind about the most appropriate answers, and they can go back to the passage and re-read it in case of missing pertinent facts.

The narratives of Chandra and Rewati seem to be similar to the observation of Medhavi and Tensfeldt (2013). Numerous research has looked into how questioning affects pupils' reading comprehension. For instance, Medhavi and Tensfeldt (2013) investigated how questioning affected high school students' comprehension of literary works. Participants were given a list of five pre-structured questions about various tale characteristics. The reading was supposed to stop three times, at which intervals the pupils were supposed to pause and ask and answer questions. The findings showed that after getting training through inquiry, students' understanding of narrative texts and retelling considerably improved. The results also showed that every participant was able to hold onto their reading comprehension scores after the application of the approach.

A helpful foundation for comprehending the purpose of teacher questioning practice is social development theory (Vygotsky, 1978). Vygotsky regarded that Children do not learn alone, but rather through conversation that is greatly influenced by social contact. Children build a comprehension of the topic with the assistance of people who are more knowledgeable or competent (parents, teachers, peers, etc.). The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), a Vygotskian concept, demarcated development as the difference between students' capabilities to come up with a solution on their own and their abilities to finish a task with adult supervision and/or peer engagement. In a

student's ZPD, a teacher's aid can be described as "scaffolding". For instance, if a youngster comes up with a difficult task that he/she is unable to solve on his/her own, at that time When the child's issue could be properly scaffolded by the teacher. By encouraging individuals to solve problems using methods within their ZPD range, such as visuals as clues rather than providing a solution (Watson et al., 2012). Effective questions could be used to provide some of this scaffolding for student learning by, for instance, asking students to explain, elaborate, or defend their positions in response to questions.

I believe that the participants' narratives in this study under the theme of questioning have a similar belief to Rosenblatt's transactional theory of reading. The major focus of this theory is an interaction between the reader and the text to get appropriate meaning for gaining complete comprehension. Questioning as a strategy helps the reader interact more with the text. Keeping the questions in the mind, the reader tries to read the text from different angles and perspectives which leads to a complete understanding of the passage. In this sense, I assume it is not inappropriate to link the philosophy of Rosenblatt (1994) with the narratives of research participants in this study.

The strategy of Peer-assisted Learning

Peer-assisted learning is a further technique that seems to be fruitful in improving understanding for all pupils. It is a well-known instructional strategy that involves having students participate in a peering-tutoring exercise to improve their reading comprehension. With this approach, teachers pair up a strong learner with a weaker one and give them the opportunity to collaborate on a range of reading assignments designed to improve comprehension. Teachers who employ this method give an individual task to perform during pre-reading chores and activities, such as a tutor or tutee. Each group of

students has the chance to switch positions as they complete the reading assignment. By letting students switch roles, tutors and tutees can practice the same responsibilities that their partners will acquire and develop the necessary abilities to do so.

The three reading activities in the peer-assisted learning strategy –partner reading with brief recounting, paragraph downsizing, and prediction-improve students’ reading comprehension (Hanson & Padua 2011). Each student in the group must recite the text loudly for around five minutes during the partner appraisal activity in the first phase before switching roles. Each couple begins the reading by having the more experienced reader read to the less experienced reader. The unskilled reader must read the same chapter again after the proficient reader is done. While a student reads, the other students pay close attention, try to identify any errors, and, if any are found, offer constructive critique. The less experienced reader could grow familiar with the content and feel more at ease by reading it first before reading it themselves. The retelling phase, which takes place after each student has had a turn reading aloud, lasts for around two minutes. The inexperienced reader begins by sharing with the experienced reader what they took away from the reading.

I presented each participant’s story on how they experienced the strategy of peer-assisted learning in teaching reading comprehension. Chandra shared his story in the following lines:

Students feel it easier and more comfortable to learn with their classmates as a result their learning becomes long-lasting. I believe peer teaching helps in reading comprehension, especially in teaching stories. The classmates narrate the story so well to their friends who do not understand the context well. Similarly,

some students are very shy and afraid of sharing their problems with the teachers. Such students are highly benefitted from peer teaching strategies. They feel quite easy to ask their friends instead of asking their teachers.

Chandra's narrative focused on the role of classmates as very important in teaching other weaker students. When I reflect on his narrative in my school days, I remember learning the mathematics problems with my friends so well that the teachers could not make me understand. As Chandra said, most of us in our school days learned from each other. Chandra's narrative aligns with Fuchs et.al.(1997) who argues that peer tutoring, the peer-supported learning technique enhances student learning by pairing students of diverse ability levels, allowing students to engage in a variety of reading activities, and enabling teachers to accommodate the specific educational requirements of all students.

Likewise, Bhawana, another research participant narrated her story regarding the use of the very technique in the following lines:

Yes!!! This is a very good technique in which students get a good opportunity to learn extra information apart from the book. They can generalize the themes in their own colloquial language. They feel more comfortable and confident about what is happening regarding the general understanding of the content.

She added the benefit of peer teaching in the following words:

Another benefit of the peer reading strategy is students see each other's writing, hear each other's spoken English, learn the way to pronounce, and so on. In this sense, peer-assisted learning seems more useful in teaching English in the classroom and I frequently apply this strategy in the classroom.

Bhawana also admitted that she also used a peer-assisted learning strategy in her classroom for teaching reading comprehension which had a positive impact on students' learning. Her narrative seems to be aligned with Calhoun et. al., (2005) who claim that numerous research studies have demonstrated the efficacy of peer learning in boosting reading fluency and comprehension for all children through high school. Calhoun et. al., (2005) went on to say that enabling the students to use a variety of cognitive methods, including forecasting, confirming forecasts, asking questions, and identifying important concepts, improves the students' reading comprehension.

Nirmal narrated his story regarding peer-assisted learning as:

The comparatively weaker students in the class may have another partner with the same learning ability. So, they can listen to each other's problems and help each other. They can read and write together to look back at the text to learn together. The talented students remain more active than the weak students, as a result, the level of interaction among the students increases which ultimately brings communication and comprehension. Therefore, I often apply this strategy in teaching reading, especially in fiction parts.

In his narrative, Nirmal highlighted that students learn better together with their classmates which increases students' talking time and reduces students' talking time. His narrative seems parallel with Hanson and Padua (2011) who investigated the impact of a peer-assisted learning strategy on reading comprehension among high school students with impairments. The participants were 89 children who were enrolled in regular classrooms despite having individualized education plans. Four times per week, they received instruction from peers. Each instruction lasted 20 to 30 minutes. The 18-week

intervention was in place. The findings of this investigation demonstrated that using a peer-assisted learning strategy to enhance students' basic alphabet and decoding abilities was a successful strategy.

Co-operative Reading Strategy

Cooperative reading practices enable students to take part in reading activities that will improve both their own and their peers' learning. In the words of Liang and Dole (2006), the major goal of the cooperative reading strategy is to help students learn a variety of comprehension techniques that they may use with any factual or expository texts they read as well as to encourage them to develop their own unique approaches to understanding a document.

The cooperative group activities before, during, and after reading, learners participate in a material comprising the four cognitive strategies that make up the collaborative strategic reading technique (Boardman et. al., 2016). The first technique is called 'preview.' Before beginning the reading process, students are required to make predictions, brainstorm, and use their prior background knowledge in this step. "Click and clunk" is a second strategy that requires self-monitoring while reading. Students have the chance to control their understanding throughout this stage by noting any new or challenging-to-understand words, sentences, or phrases (clunk).

Additionally, they record easily understood and familiar words, ideas, phrases, and sentences (click). After identifying each "click and clunk", the students will reread each clunk as a group and attempt to infer meaning from the context. Students have the chance to learn from one another through that group exercise as they discuss and attempt to solve all of the identified clunks. "getting the gist" is the third tactic. During this stage,

children read aloud while engaging in a specific exercise that requires them to synthesize and analyze the key details of each paragraph and restate its major theme.

The final strategy is “wrapping up”. Students begin to formulate questions regarding the material after finishing the reading assignment. In a cooperative group, students can ask questions and give answers to other group members’ questions. By sharing significant concepts and details from the text, the students conclude their group discussion.

Regarding cooperating reading strategy, the participants of this study narrated their experiences in different ways. Chandra shared his story:

I apply a cooperative reading strategy especially for question-answer and summary writing exercises because of its effectiveness in long and open-ended questions. My experience is that in a cooperative reading strategy, the students work together in a small group, help one another and come up with different ideas so that they can solve the language-related problems themselves. The only demerit of this strategy is that some students make noise and do not complete the task in the absence of the teacher. This is why I feel that the teacher’s presence is necessary along with frequent instruction. My role in the classroom as a teacher is facilitator and observer. I observe each group whether they are doing their work or not.

Chandra highlighted that he found the cooperative reading strategy effective for summary writing and other question-answer activities. He added that this technique needs the teacher’s presence for frequent instruction and observation of the students. His narrative seems to be parallel with Kim et al. (2004) who argue that cooperative strategic

reading is an approach that offers students a cooperative learning environment in which they collaborate in disproportionate groups to help one another, assess one another's comprehension of the lesson, and talk about how their thoughts interact. They went on to say that some studies have shown that certain cooperative strategic reading elements have a good effect on how well children understand what they are reading. The first element is collaboration within a group.

Likewise, Rewati, another participant in this research narrated her story:

Yes, cooperative teaching is also effective in teaching reading comprehension. I mainly apply this strategy in teaching poems and their related exercises. I found this strategy more appropriate because poems can have several interpretations and each group has different views on the theme of the poem. For example, when I teach the poem, 'I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud' I used this strategy. I just gave background knowledge about the poet and the poem, I explained the meaning of the difficult words and each verse then I ask them to write a summary themselves. Even weaker students also seemed to be motivated because they did not have to work individually and they got the back support from the group. Each group completed the task happily, though I had to make some corrections for grammatical errors.

Rewati also shared her story emphasizing the appropriateness of the cooperative reading strategy. Her narrative is in line with Gambrell, and Newman. (2013) assert that cooperative strategic reading helps children read more effectively by encouraging their helpful habits. Moreover, an empirical study conducted by Swanson and Hoskyn (1998) revealed that students perform better academically when they worked in cooperative

groups. Students can take part in a cooperative and mutual teaching activity that enables them to share ideas and solidify their learning while also helping them to better understand the textual content by asking and responding to questions about it.

Another participant Bhawana shared her story regarding how she taught using a cooperative reading strategy in an English classroom in the following lines:

In my initial teaching career, I only spend time explaining everything. I was the active speaker in front of the class and the students were passive listeners only. I came to know about cooperative teaching when I was doing my M.Ed. In my M.Ed. second year there was a course on Advanced ELT Methodology in which most of the modern methods and techniques that can be used in ELT classrooms were discussed and I was familiar with this cooperative teaching.

She further added:

I just gave it a try for cooperative teaching. I found that students also have the knowledge, though not equal to the teachers. They also have the rational capacity, they can judge, and they also can analyze. They did well in the groups, they completed the task faster than individuals and weak students also got the opportunity to learn from the talented students. My role was just to initiate the lesson, assist them in need, and act as a co-operator. Nowadays, I do not spend much time explaining everything through the lecture method rather I divide the whole class into groups and specify the task to them and I closely observe how they do the task.

Bhawana agreed that teaching reading through a cooperative strategy is effective.

Her story seems similar to the view of Crowe (2005) who admitted that Students

remember facts for a long period and can quickly recall the story's features and lessons by thinking about what they were reading and participating in group discussions.

The stories presented by the participants in this study seem to be comparable with a transactional theory of reading comprehension. According to transactional theory, each student's interactional process for deriving the meaning from a passage is unique and depends on what they bring to the text (Rosenblatt, 1994). It follows that each student would understand the same passage differently even though they had all read it. When they have different opinions and views regarding the theme of the text, then they can exchange their understanding with one another and it makes them easier to come to the conclusion. This strategy seems to be very effective in teaching and learning poetry and fiction.

Explanation of the Text

Chandra and Nirmal, two participants in this study agreed that they explained the text for making students comprehend the passage. They shared their common story in the following lines:

First of all, we tell the students to read the passage themselves. At the same time while reading, we ask them to underline such words which they cannot pronounce correctly and which have difficult meanings. When they finish their task, we start explaining the lesson line-wise, reading word by word so that they hear the correct pronunciation of each word. At the same time, we explain the meaning of the difficult words by giving examples, using the word in sentences, giving the similar or opposite meaning of the word, or translating the words into Nepali.

When I asked, “What does explanation exactly include and how do you think this strategy is beneficial?”, they replied in the following ways:

Yes, the explanation mainly includes three things: first is teaching the pronunciation of difficult and multi-syllabic words. The second thing is teaching the meaning of vocabulary that they do not know. The third thing that we have to teach is teaching how to use vocabulary in context and make suitable sentences with the given words and finally teach the gist or theme of the text or lesson. The ultimate goal of the explanation of the text is to make the students able to give the answers to the questions based on the text and to increase their comprehension capacity by providing them with much exposure to English language text.

Regarding the benefits of the explanation strategy they narrated as:

By explaining the lessons, we can complete the course on time. We do not go off the track in explanation. The next thing is we feel a kind of satisfaction because we teach everything in the passage and students listen attentively. Another benefit is that teaching individually or in pair work is more time-consuming for large classes and it is not effective either. That is why we prefer the explanation method even if many communicative approaches are against it.

All the participants emphasized the suitability of the explanation strategy for large classes, teaching more content over a short span of time, and uniformity of teaching and preparation of exams.

Regarding the explanation of the text as a technique of teaching reading, Rosenblatt (1994), in the transactional theory of reading, opines that teachers should encourage students to engage with the text in a smoother way and help them with

teaching while they try to understand it. Through transactional theory, she suggested that although teachers are not directly involved in that interactional process, they can still provide students with a variety of interpretations of the passage to help them understand it better.

Teaching Punctuation Marks

One of the research participants, Chandra, narrated a very interesting strategy for teaching reading comprehension. He shared that he gave equal priority in teaching punctuation marks so that the learners' understanding of comprehension passages could be increased. He shared his belief in teaching punctuation marks in the following lines:

One of the most common sayings is that you only get one chance to make a good first impression. Success in everyday writing assignments, tests, and other academic endeavors as well as later in life depends on pupils using proper punctuation. Students will be evaluated on their written English throughout their lives, whether it is while applying for employment, scholarships, work experience positions, or just drafting letters of introduction or resumes.

When I asked him in what sense teaching punctuation marks help in the reading comprehension of the learners, he replied in the following way:

Punctuation makes it easier for the reader to understand the point you're trying to get through. A sentence's entire meaning can be altered by incorrect or missing punctuation. Punctuation largely aids in signaling pauses and emphasizing particular concepts or ideas that are conveyed in the text.

Chandra highlighted that teaching punctuation marks in the English language support understanding the reading comprehension passages in a better way. In the

absence of knowledge of punctuation marks the learners can misinterpret the meaning of the text.

The teaching experience narrated by Chandra under the theme of teaching punctuation marks for a better understanding of the reading text seems to have a similar interpretation to Rosenblatt's transactional theory. This theory emphasizes that The reader and the text interact to create meaning, which does not already exist in the text or in the reader. Thus, reading entails giving text meaning in order to derive sense from it. While interacting with the text, the reader can derive the meaning of the passage effectively if he/ she has good knowledge of punctuation marks. In this sense, I believe there is a good relationship between knowledge of punctuation marks and comprehension of the text. This very relationship can be supported by Rosenblatt's (1994) transactional theory.

Multiple Readings

Multiple reading is the process of reading a text several times while focusing on specific elements in order to draw conclusions and gain a thorough grasp of the material. It involves reading a piece of information text more than once and analyzing the storyline, language, syntax, structure, and/or point of view to determine how an author's ideas develop throughout the book. Two research participants (Rewati and Nirmal) in this study stated that they used multiple readings as a strategy for teaching reading comprehension. They shared their views regarding multiple readings in the following way:

When I asked students to read the same reading passage twice or more than two times, at least they can notice the spelling of the word properly, they can take

care of the grammar used in the sentence, they can read and observe the structure of the sentence. Not only this but they can also have time to guess the meaning from the context. As a result, their capacity of comprehending the text upsurges. Therefore, before explaining the text and passages, I always ask them to read more than two times by themselves.

The common narratives of Rewati and Nirmal reflect that giving learners enough time to read themselves can bring positive outcomes. The learners can observe the spelling of the words, and grammar in the sentence, and they can even guess the meaning of the text by going back and forth. Rosenblatt (1994), in the transactional theory of reading comprehension, mentioned that if a student reads the same paragraph a second time, they frequently understand it in a different way. The students' involvement and knowledge after reading it the first time lead to alternative interpretations, which has a substantial impact on her comprehension when reading it again. Therefore, the participants' narratives about their teaching experiences especially in applying multiple reading strategies seem to be similar to the transactional theory.

The narratives provided by research participants in response to the second research question indicate that the learners face problems in reading comprehension which seem to be similar to other scholars. All four participants in this study agreed that they used teaching vocabulary as a strategy for teaching reading comprehension. They reported that they taught vocabulary through different techniques. Mostly they taught vocabulary by giving simple definitions and sometimes by translating them into Nepali equivalents. Teaching vocabulary while teaching the reading text seems to be a newer and more creative way for Nepali teachers. Similarly, another contextual and creative

strategy the participants narrated was that they used multiple reading strategies in their everyday classroom teaching. In multiple reading strategies, they made students read the text for several readings. The benefits behind this strategy were that students improve pronunciation skills and they can have more exposure to grasping the spelling of the new words.

Another teaching strategy that the participants used in improving the student's reading comprehension are questioning. According to this study, there are two ways to use questioning as a strategy depending on the skill of the students: (a) While students are working, when pupils are reading, teachers recurrently stop and ask, and (b) while they are reading, students are asking themselves questions about the text. The findings from the literature (Taylor et. al.,2002) are largely supported by these two types of questioning. Additionally, the use of questions as a tactic increases students' understanding by motivating them to reflect on what they are reading, maintain attention on their reading assignment, consider the best possible responses, and if they oversight anything, they should go back to the text and review it. Encouraging students to pose hypothetical questions and develop relations between the text and their past knowledge, and also aids in their understanding of the book's major themes and details. What the research participants said generally agrees with what is written in the literature.

In a study, Watson et al., (2012) looked at how understanding among high school students was impacted by self-questioning. The results revealed that understanding of chronicle texts and retelling significantly increased after using self-questioning to train them.

Another reading comprehension technique frequently cited as successful by the teacher participants in this study was peer-assisted reading. The participants show that the learners benefit from the peer-assisted reading technique by collaborating with and listening to a friend, increasing their desire to learn, making predictions, and picking up on each other's unique connections to the material. Additionally, it helps students understand the material by allowing them to participate in cooperative learning activities where they collaborate, share, and discuss knowledge from the book with one another. Additionally, sharing and confirming what they learn from the text with others helps students gain more confidence (Fuchs et al., 2001). What teachers expressed about this method is generally in agreement with findings from the above-mentioned researchers.

Chapter Summary

This chapter focused mostly on the themes that emerged from the stories that the study's research participants revealed. In relation to the second research question of this study, this chapter essentially described the participant's stories. Based on the thematic analysis of the transcribed data in this study, I focused on the topics of vocabulary teaching, questioning, peer-helped reading method, cooperative reading, and explanation of the text.

The participants' narratives indicated that teachers applied different strategies in teaching reading in ELT classroom to make their teaching effective in comparison to past teaching methods, which was only lecture method and Grammar Translation method. The narratives of the participants also disclosed that they learned new techniques and strategies during their university-level study. While hearing the narratives of the participants I realized that if the teachers become active and dedicated to their profession

they can make their classroom interactive and improve the learning outcome of the students.

CHAPTER VI

INSIGHTS, CONCLUSION, AND REFLECTIONS

In this chapter, I summarized the complete research process from the first phases of problem identification to the final stages of conclusion drawing. I also explain how I came to understand this research problem and the difficulties I ran through while conducting this investigation. Additionally, this chapter follows the fundamental principles of using participant-shared narratives to support conclusions from research questions. After then, the research's findings are presented. It also provides the important conclusions drawn regarding the implementation of the findings to practice and policy levels. The chapter's reflection includes a perspective on my complete learning voyage.

Key Insights

I went on this research quest for my dissertation for more than two years. I had numerous difficulties along the way, and I gained a valuable lesson from them. Due to the ongoing support of my mentors and tutors, I was capable to continue my research path in spite of such difficulties. I committed myself to complete this journey because I was very interested in learning and researching more about teaching reading in Nepal.

I was able to realize the perspectives of my participants on the current teaching practice in reading comprehension in the public schools of the Kathmandu valley by conducting extensive formal and informal interviews with them and paying frequent visits to them before and after transcribing and coding the data. Additionally, it assisted me in learning more about the challenges associated with teaching reading in Nepal's public schools.

To direct the overall research process for this study, I established two research questions. In relation to the first research question, the study's participants reported certain difficulties while attempting to teach reading from the perspective of their students. The four research participants shared a variety of unheard tales, and from those tales, I developed themes including a lack of vocabulary knowledge, a reading fluency issue, a restricted comprehension of conventional text structures, and an issue with inference. Participants agreed that while it may appear that teaching reading is simpler than other subjects, this is not always the case.

They added that there are some problems that the students face in reading comprehension. One of the easily noticeable problems with all the students was a lack of vocabulary knowledge. The participants shared that limited knowledge of vocabulary negatively affects the comprehension of a text. A passage contains several words that children cannot understand as a result comprehension is obstructed. Whenever the students come up with a new word in a passage, the students stop reading and their comprehension is also stopped. Similarly, the nature of multiple meanings of vocabulary also affects the reading comprehension of the students. I reflected that teaching reading comprehension can be made effective if students have more knowledge of vocabulary and for this students should be taught vocabulary in meaningful sentences so that they can develop their reading comprehension ability.

The participants also shared that the lack of background knowledge about the text/passage in the students has remained problematic in teaching reading comprehension. The absence of prior knowledge about the text brings trouble in comprehending the text. Therefore, students should be made known in advance about

what they are going to learn, what the text is about, who are the characters, the settings, the plot, etc. The participants narrated that students understood better if they started teaching with the background knowledge of the text. It gave me an insight that background information or prior knowledge of the text is very important for understanding the text and it should be introduced to the students before starting the lesson.

Likewise, the participants in this study also narrated that students have a problem with reading fluency which brings problems in reading comprehension. If they can read a text rapidly, they can at least think about the meaning but they spend a lot of their time pronouncing the word, as a result, their attention is only on how to vocalize the word, not on the comprehension of the text. They just spend their physical and mental energy producing the word or sentence. Hence, they cannot think about the meaning aspect. It is learned that students need to be taught rapid reading skills in order to make them competent in comprehending the text. At the same time, they should be taught the ways to pronounce difficult and multi-syllabic words so that they can improve the problem of slow reading.

The participants also revealed that students face problems with technical or expository text. They experienced that students felt stories and fiction were easier to comprehend in comparison to academic, expository, and research-based texts. Students know everything about the story such as the characters, plot, theme, etc. but whenever they encounter academic text, they cannot comprehend it well. The reasons for difficulty in comprehending academic text, according to the participants are unfamiliar and difficult vocabulary presentation in such texts, written at a high cognitive level, use of passive

voice, standard sentence structures, and so on. It is learned that academic texts are difficult to comprehend well by the students. Therefore, teachers need to be wise enough while teaching such texts. Teachers need to think in advance and make a plan about how to teach those texts effectively and efficiently. This could be the topic of further research in English language teaching in the context of Nepal.

In reference to the second research question, the participants of this study shared their stories on the strategies that they used in teaching reading comprehension. I transcribed all the narratives and generated themes such as vocabulary instruction, questioning, Peer-assisted Learning, Cooperative reading strategy, and explanation of the text.

The participants shared their experience that they gave much priority to vocabulary teaching because, without the knowledge of vocabulary, students could understand nothing. The participant teachers asked the students to underline the difficult words that they did not know the meanings and then they wrote the meanings on the whiteboard. Sometimes, they explained the vocabulary while explaining the text. In the question of how they taught vocabulary in English class, they answered that sometimes they define the word, giving the synonym and antonym of the words and they also teach vocabulary by analyzing the root, suffix, and prefix of the words. They added that action words are easy to teach through gesture, action, and demonstration. It can be reflected that vocabulary teaching plays a pertinent role before teaching reading comprehension. Without vocabulary, students learn nothing. That is why teachers need to teach vocabulary effectively so that it becomes the base for teaching reading comprehension.

The participants' narratives also indicated that they used questioning as a strategy for teaching reading comprehension. They observed that Teachers' questioning had a positive impact on students' learning outcomes. Questioning helped the students motivate towards study and makes them a compulsion for reading. The students pay attention properly to the reading text thinking that the teacher is going to ask them. It also makes their habit of asking teachers if they do not know the vocabulary, sentence structure, or sometimes the phrasal meaning of the text. The literature also showed that questioning can be used as a major strategy in reading comprehension. The major findings can be taken as the questioning strategy in ELT classrooms, especially in teaching reading comprehension improves the comprehension skill of the learners by activating them, motivating them, and encouraging them to develop their reading habits.

The participants of this study also narrated that they used Peer-assisted Learning Strategy to teach reading comprehension text effectively. They experienced that students feel easier and more comfortable learning with their classmates as a result the learning will be long-lasting. The peer can narrate the stories or summary of the text to their friend in their own languages who do not understand the content well. Through this strategy, the participants observed that students got a good opportunity to learn extra information apart from the exercises in the book. They can generalize the themes in their own colloquial language. They feel more comfortable and confident about what is happening regarding the general understanding of the content. Another benefit of the peer reading strategy is students see each other's writing, they hear each other's spoken English as a result they learn the way to pronounce it and so on. The findings suggest that peer-assisted learning techniques can be used in ELT classrooms having a positive impact on students learning.

And this strategy also has been shown as effective in increasing confidence and comfort for weaker students. The comparatively underperforming students can learn better from their classmates and peers. The teacher's role is just to specify the task for each pair and observe them and facilitate them wherever they seek help.

Similarly, the research participants also shared that they applied a cooperative reading strategy in teaching reading comprehension. They narrated that in a cooperative learning strategy, the students work together in small groups and come up with different ideas. They realized that this strategy only works in the presence of teachers because students make noise and do not do their tasks in the absence of the teacher. The teacher's role, according to participants is, as an observer, facilitator, and instructor. One participant in this study shared that he found this strategy more appropriate in teaching a poem because poems can have several interpretations and each group has different views on the theme of the poem. From the participant's narratives, it can be suggested that cooperative teaching also works effectively for teaching reading comprehension but the teacher should closely monitor the students and his/her presence is compulsory.

Explanation of the text and direct instruction was also used as a teaching strategy for reading comprehension as recounted by the participants of this research study. This strategy seems somehow similar to the lecture method which was predominantly used in past in teaching pedagogy, though, it still, exists. The participants described that they included three things in the explanation of the text. The first element was teaching the pronunciation of difficult and multi-syllabic words. The second element was teaching the meaning of difficult vocabulary throughout the passage and teaching the contextual use

of vocabulary in a sentence. And the fourth element of explanation, according to them was teaching the gist or theme of the text.

According to the participants, the ultimate goal of explaining the text was to make the students able to comprehend the meaning of the text and to give the answers to the related exercises. After going through the participants' narratives, the major findings can be taken as explanation and direct instruction as a strategy that can also be used in the effective teaching of reading comprehension. This strategy is the most widely practiced technique and both the students and the teachers seem to be satisfied with this strategy.

I carried out this research to explore the Experiences of English language teachers in teaching reading comprehension. To make the study more specific, I kept two research questions and the whole study has been centered to answer those research questions by applying narrative inquiry as a research method and interview as a tool for data collection. As I set two research questions, the first one was related to the problems faced by the students in reading comprehension. My research participants narrated their experiences regarding the problems that the students faced in their classroom and how they taught reading comprehension texts in their daily classroom.

Since this is an explorative research study, as a researcher I just collected and compiled the experiences of English language teachers according to the research questions. Therefore, I am not in a position of drawing exact conclusions for the readers. However, I strongly believe that the experiences presented by the research participants as narratives will be rewarding for all the readers in expanding and deepening their understanding in the field of teaching reading comprehension.

Pedagogical Implication

I do not claim that I carried out completely new research. However, I added one more brick in the area of teaching reading. I believe that this is new and innovative research in the context of Nepalese ELT classrooms. This study can be useful to English teachers who teach reading comprehension skills. Teaching reading is always a matter of difficulties faced by teachers in the EFL context. In this situation, from this study, I have derived some implications in the following paragraph.

It gives knowledge to English teachers about the difficulties that students face in reading comprehension exercises so that they can improve students' reading comprehension skills. At the same time, it is helpful for the teachers to teach reading comprehension by selecting the appropriate teaching reading strategies since the participants of this research shared some teaching reading strategies that they used. This research can be used as a resource and reference for new teachers who have just started their teaching careers. If I reflect on myself I learned various knowledge and skills to teach reading comprehension text to the students. I also gained knowledge and skills in carrying out qualitative research in ELT. It is a practical skill that I can use to carry out qualitative research in the days to come.

Space for Future Research

During the progression of conducting the study, I came to know that the area of knowledge is massive. However, there are very few researches that are carried out. I realize that this research is just a drop of water in the ocean, though it took me much time, energy, and expense. For future researchers, I would like to suggest some areas

which can be beneficial for the sake of knowledge in the world and the Nepalese context in particular.

I think it would be possible to conduct a quantitative study utilizing a survey as a research method since this is a qualitative study employing narrative inquiry as a research method replicating the current research with a bigger sample size that can be gathered across a wider area. It would be intriguing to conduct a second qualitative study examining the same research question as this one using other data collection techniques like ethnography. conducting additional research to examine how the pupils' socioeconomic situation affects their baseline knowledge for reading comprehension

Reflections

Joining my M.Phil. degree at Kathmandu University School of Education (KUSOED) has been a completely new and unique experience for me. I learned a lot of theoretical and practical knowledge during the three semesters of the course. The first and most important thing that I learned during these semesters is skills in basic research methods which I lacked in the past. Similarly, I got comparatively deeper knowledge about methods of qualitative research. As a result, now I got the confidence to carry out research using qualitative research methods and tools. Before joining KUSOED, I was unknown of qualitative research. I can utilize this knowledge and skill in writing a thesis or research articles in my future life.

The next very important theoretical knowledge I gained was ways for teachers' development and conducting a teachers' training program. I achieved this knowledge from the course English Language Teacher Development in the second semester which is very beneficial for me to conduct a teacher training program in my future academic life.

Similarly, I had little knowledge of academic writing and research. But during this M.Phil. degree I got sufficient exposure to writing skills including several topics such as paragraph writing, essay writing, writing a literature review, and so on. This course helped me improve and boost my writing skills.

In this journey of writing a dissertation, I faced a lot of hurdles. Different difficulties in different phases that I encountered made me mature. I learned interviewing skills from my research participants during the data collection process. I also learned how to maintain my emotional and soft skills during an interview with my participants. To be honest, after completing the collection of data for this dissertation, I felt like I am a mature and responsible person in society. I realized my self-responsibility and engagement with the research participant. I acknowledged the role and value of research participants for the researcher. At the same time, this dissertation taught me to be punctual, responsive, and interactive enough with the research participant which is also an essential quality of a good researcher.

Another very important skill that I got during this project is the skill of coding, categorizing, and making themes while analyzing the text data in qualitative research. For this, I enjoyed reading Seldana's (2016) book "Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers." Data collection, data analysis, and meaning-making processes are complex which I was able to grasp and can utilize in carrying out research in the future.

After writing this dissertation I felt a sort of confidence within me. There was a time I felt I should stop writing a dissertation. I neglected a lot thinking that it needs too much mental effort. But one day I saw myself doing Ph.D., writing more research articles, and carrying out research in the education sector. These were the real motivation

that drove me to defend my proposal and I started working regularly on this. The economic problems, technical problems such as damage to the laptop, the problem with time management, etc. taught me to become bold and mature. This dissertation is the product of sleepless nights, physical pains, mental weariness and combined efforts of myself, my supervisor and research participants.

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APPENDIX I

Guidelines and protocol for interviews with English teachers

Research Title: English Teachers' experiences in Teaching Reading Comprehension

Time:

Date:

Location:

Declaration for Participants,

I would like to thank you for taking part in this study. I have no doubt that your insightful information will assist me in completing this study. The study aims to investigate how English language instructors have taught reading comprehension. The interview is anticipated to last for 30 to 45 minutes. Your privacy and confidentiality are assured.

Participant's Background Information:

Name:

Gender:

Teacher Position: Permanent/ RAHAT/Other

Teaching Level:

Teaching Experiences:

Degrees Obtained:

Ice-breaking Questions

1. Could you please describe your student life?
2. Can you please share the story of the teaching method of that time?

3. Please share the story of your teaching career.
4. What motivated you to join the teaching profession?
5. Please describe your teaching career in the beginning and now. Do you think experience helps in solving the day to day classroom problems?
6. There are four language skills in ELT. Which language skill do you find more difficult to teach and which skill do the students feel more difficult to learn?

Research Question 1: How do English language teachers narrate the difficulties faced by students in reading?

7. Please explain your personal beliefs on teaching English.
8. In your class, what sort of problems do the learners face in reading comprehension? Please describe in detail.
9. Did all the students face a similar types of problems or did they have different problems?
10. Did those problems seem to be similar when you were a student?
11. How often have you talked to your colleagues about the problems your students face in reading comprehension? Did your colleague who is teaching in the next section of the same class experience the same sort of problems?

Research Question 2: How do English language teachers share their stories of teaching strategies for reading comprehension?

12. Please share the actual teaching strategies that you employed in your classroom.
13. What classroom activities did the learners find most engaging in reading exercises?

14. How did you motivate the learners in the classroom? Could you please share your story?

Closing

I am thankful for your readiness to participate in the interview process. Your entire information provided will remain private and confidential. If I need an additional explanation from you to review for my research, I will come back to see you. You are always welcome for any queries.

APPENDIX II

PARTICIPANTS' PROFILE

Chandra Tamang

Chandra Tamang (pseudo name) was born in 1975 AD as an eldest son of his parents in remote village of Lalitpur district, Bagmati province. He recalled himself as hardworking, curious and brilliant student. Because his father was a teacher, he got a good academic homely environment for study in his home. He remained first boy of the class till grade seven. He was the model student of his village because of his hard work in the study and well-disciplined behavior.

Academic Journey of Chandra Tamang

Chandra started going to school from 1982 A.D. in the nearby primary school. The school was ten minutes walking distance from his house. He joined in grade one directly since there was no any provision for early child Development education like today. He studied English book only in Grade four. He remembers that he started reading English book from grade four onwards. His favorite subjects in his primary school life were MERO SEROPHERO and MERO BATAWARAN. Then after class five he had to change the school because this school was only primary school (up to class five). Chandra completed his SLC in 1992 A.D. in a good second division. After completing SLC he could not join for higher studies because he was in dilemma on which subject to choose either science or major English. But after one year, he made up his mind and

joined intermediate level majoring English and History. He said he enjoyed studying history and English stories. He continued his study up to masters' level.

Initial Teaching Career

Chandra started his teaching career in 1995/96 AD after completing his intermediate level. He started teaching because his friends involved in it and it made him easier to find a private school where there was vacancy of English teacher. He started teaching from one of the private schools of Kathmandu. He wanted to continue his study but he had to manage money himself. Therefore, he started teaching at Pragya Kunja school (pseudo name) in Kathmandu after he completed his intermediate level. He joined bachelor's degree majoring English and History. He took his regular class in the college in morning and worked in the school in the day time. This is how he managed the expenses of my study. He taught nearly five years in a private school. Then he entered in a governmental school. At that time there were very few people who completed Bachelor's degree. He completed BA so he was eligible to apply for the post in secondary level English teacher. In the beginning, he was given salary from NIJI shrot (non-governmental salary).

He faced some problems in his beginning teaching career such as large number of students in a classroom, nervousness, problems in controlling the students' behavior and discipline and so on. He also added that pronunciation also brought problem in his initial teaching career. There was no any provision of internet like today, not even cell phone. he had a RAPIDEX (a bulky book for learning English) from which he learnt many things related to English conversations. He felt much difficulty with pronunciation of the

English words, for which he bought a portable small oxford dictionary. Gradually he became habituated and then he felt easier.

Bhawana Sharma

Bhawana Sharma was my second research participant. She was born in 1975 AD in Chitwan district of Nepal. She was the eldest daughter of her parents. According to her, she was very interactive and inquisitive from her childhood.

Academic Life of Bhawana

Bhawana was born in the rural area of Chitwan district, southern part of Bagmati province. She struggled a lot to complete her primary level education. She started her schooling from the government school. She joined to Grade one in Arunodaya Primary School (pseudo name) in 1982 AD. She studied in this school up to grade five. Her study in this school remained average. She was an average student of the school. Due to low socio economic status of the family and the village, she struggled a lot during her study. She changed the school in class six and studied in this school up to grade ten. In class seven, the teacher used to come to the class and start writing word and their meaning on the board. They had to memorize the word meanings next day. He focused entirely on GT method while teaching. After she passed SLC, she joined I ED from the college in the district headquarter. At the same time, she had to complete her household activities. Then she came Kathmandu for her higher study. She joined my BA in one of the public campuses in Kathmandu in 1995AD. She studied English and History as a major subject. Actually, she enjoyed studying English stories and novels in major English. After completing her BA, she joined one year B.Ed. so that she could get teaching license for

appearing in TSC exam and for getting pedagogical knowledge. To get the mastery over the education subject and to make her teaching career more prosperous she joined M. Ed. Programme in central department of Tribhuvan University in 2000AD. The MED programme was really useful and appropriate for her in the field of teaching. It also gave enough idea on child psychology and making lesson plan, annual plan, curriculum design, and so on. Now to fulfill the thirst of knowledge she is doing M. Phil. In English Language Education from Tribhuvan University.

Initial Teaching Career

Bhawana started teaching career in 1996 AD in Caribbean English School in Kathmandu. It was her first school in her teaching life. She worked in this school for nearly for four years. In 2012 AD she was appeared in the open competitive exam taken by TSC and passed the lower secondary level. She became more than happy to be a permanent teacher. she felt secure in her profession and got more motivated to teaching unlike in private schools. It was in 2017 AD, she took examination of Secondary level teachers' examination and passed it. Now she has been working as a secondary level Permanent English teacher. At the same time, she has been given the responsibility of the Vice Principal. She is happy and enjoying her teaching career.

Rewati Thapa

Rewati, born in 1976 AD in Bhaktapur, was the eldest daughter in her family. Rewati, being a city dweller studied in a private boarding school. She liked herself to be called a weak student. She was admitted to the school very late. It's her duty to take her brother to the school with her. She was too weak in mathematics and science, as a result

she had to repeat class nine. But in her second year of class nine, she improved a lot because of her self-study. In grade ten, she passed SLC in the second division.

Rewati's Academic Life

Rewati completed her SLC in 1994 AD with first division. Then she was admitted to a reputed college for her further study. She got admitted in VS Niketan college (pseudo name) in Grade 11, majoring English in 1995 AD. In comparison to her school level studies, her higher studies were good. After passing her SLC, she joined Humanities in of the reputed higher secondary schools in Kathmandu. She passed in first division. The teaching method of English teachers in this level was lecture method with providing note. But in major English, the teacher used to translate the stories in Nepali language which they enjoyed much. After her intermediate level, she joined BA in one of the governmental colleges in Kathmandu in 1998 AD. Her college life during Bachelor level was the most entertaining and happy and memorable life. After one-year gap, she joined for Master's degree in 2003 AD at Ratna Rajya Campus. She took regular classes in the morning but it annoyed her whenever she returned home without studying due to political clashes and disagreement among different student organizations. She did not pay attention to the political activities that went on in the campus, although some friends enjoyed involving in it and gave their valuable life for the sake of campus politics. She completed her MA majoring English in 2005 AD. Then she joined one year B.Ed. to get teaching license.

Rewati's Initial Teaching Days

Rewati started her teaching career in 1998 AD from a private school. She started teaching as a primary level math teacher after she completed her class 12. When I wanted to know about why she started teaching career, she explained that she was highly impressed by the female teachers' smartness and teaching method when she studied grade eleven and twelve. She also wanted to be economically independent. In the beginning of her teaching career, she faced some problems such as disciplinary problems in students. She also could not handle the class properly. She could not counsel the students about their behavioral and academic performance. She even felt a sort of hesitation to talk with the students' guardians. But after getting the experiences in her teaching profession she overcame these above mentioned problems. she even enjoyed talking to the guardians regarding students' progress and problems. she learned a lot of things from her teaching profession. When Rewati shifted from private school to public school, she felt she got more time for her study. She felt the less work load. She got time to prepare for TSC examination and passed it. But she became more than happy when she became a permanent secondary level teacher.

Nirmal Shrestha

Nirmal was born in 1985 AD in the remote village of Ramechhap as the third son of his parents.

Nirmal's Academic Life

Nirmal received his primary education at Tamakoshi Primary School (pseudo name) at his village in Ramechhap district. He recalled that he was directly admitted in class one and taught in a multi class teaching where the students of class one, two and

three were kept in a same class. As he remembered the number of the students at that time was around 26-30 combining the three classes. There was a provision of class monitor whose duty was to collect the copies of homework and classwork and submit to the subject teachers, to give permission for going out for short toilet and drinking water. When he went in Grade four another new school building was established. He shared his primary school experience as:

After completion of Grade five, Nirmal was admitted in grade six in 1997 AD at Arun Lower Secondary School (pseudo name) which was 20 minutes walking distance from his home. The number of students, according to him were more, around 35 to 40 students. Although the number of the students was good, the infrastructure such as benches, desks, chairs etc in that school was not enough. Most of the benches were broken and walls of the building looked as if they could fall down anytime.

The infrastructures also seemed to affect the study, according to Nirmal's narratives. When he passed grade eight, he had to join in grade nine. It was the beginning of his secondary level education and SLC. But due to CPN Maoist insurgency and internal conflict between The then government of Nepal and CPN Maoist, he was compelled to transfer in district headquarter where he could feel secure, to some extent. He stayed at the district headquarter with his uncle in the rented room and joined in Class nine in 2000AD at Ramechhap Secondary School (pseudo name). He shared his secondary level schooling experience as follows:

After completing SLC from Ramechhap Secondary School with second division in 2002 AD, Nirmal joined I. Ed. majoring English in the same year at Metro Multiple Campus (pseudo name) Kathmandu. Nirmal studied happily at Metro Campus and passed his I.Ed.

regularly with first division in 2004 AD. After his intermediate he continued his study. He joined B.Ed. majoring English in 2004 AD at the same college. Nirmal completed his Bachelor's degree majoring English in 2008 AD. He is making a plan for his Master's degree. I hope he will successfully complete it too.

Initial Teaching Career

Nirmal started his teaching after taking examinations of B.Ed. third year. He started working in Adarsha English High School (pseudo name) one of the private schools in Lalitpur. He started working as a primary teacher. His responsibility was to teach English and Social Studies from Grade four to grade six. During this time, he learnt a lot. he shared his initial teaching experience in the following words: After taking his third year examinations, he joined in Adarsha English High School in 2007 AD. It was his first teaching experience. In the beginning the senior teacher gave him feedback on his classes and the coordinator gave briefing about the rules and regulations and norms of the school. In the beginning he faced problems with the behavior of the students. He felt a sort of irritation due to the noise in the class. There was no provision of physical punishment but the students hardly obey the teachers except the Principal. After teaching nearly a month, he got habituated. But he could not continue more than one session in this school.

He worked in Nobel Academy for four years. During these four years he learned a lot about students' behavior, culture of the private schools, duties and responsibilities of the teachers, and administrative staffs. He taught English from grade six to ten in this school. He experienced that the students were far better than him in spoken English whereas they were weak in grammatical items and cognitive activities. He resigned from

this school in 2012 AD Because he was able to pass the TSC examination and became the secondary level permanent teacher in public school.