

PERCEPTIONS AND PRACTICES OF SECONDARY ENGLISH TEACHERS ON  
TEACHING WRITING SKILLS: A NARRATIVE INQUIRY

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## AN ABSTRACT

of the dissertation of Sandip Kumar Patel for the degree of Master of Education in English Language Teaching presented on December 14, 2021.

Title: *Perceptions and Practices of Secondary English Teachers on Teaching Writing Skills: A Narrative Inquiry*

Abstract Approved

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Prof. Laxman Gnawali, PhD

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Writing is one of the productive skills of language teaching and learning. It is essential in every aspect of one's life including students and teachers. We, teachers, believe that writing is one of the wearisome tasks and thus know the significance of teaching writing skills effectively to our students. However, despite all the efforts that we teachers are making every day, students in public schools are not satisfactorily developing their writing skills.

Thus, this study was intended to explore perceptions and practices of secondary English teachers on teaching writing skills in public schools. At first, it aimed at exploring how English language teachers understand teaching writing skills. In the second place, it attempted to observe the teachers' practices of teaching writing skills in the classroom context.

The study was qualitative. So, I purposively selected four in-service English language teachers of four different public schools for the study. Hence, depending on the nature and demand of my research, I conducted unstructured or in-depth interview

sessions and classroom observations for collecting information. The information then was interpreted, analyzed, and discussed narratively.

The key insights this study drew, are that the teachers have a positive understanding of the strategies of teaching writing skills such as parallel writing, guided writing, free writing, process approach to writing, and genre approach to writing in their classroom teaching. However, teachers' writing classes are not satisfactory in practice. They seem to be aware of the significance of teaching writing skills in the ELT classroom and their roles to make it effective and receptive to students. Practically, teachers lack performance. The study also identified factors affecting teaching and learning writing skills such as teachers as non-writers, students' low motivation and varied linguistic backgrounds, classroom space, students' size, and time constraints.

In conclusion, teachers perceive that they teach writing skills to their students effectively using various strategies of writing in their classrooms. In addition, they believe that their classes are evidence-based featuring: presentation, interaction, collaboration, feedback, and outcome-based. However, I found their writing classes partially evidence-based. However, the observation show that teachers ineffectively make use of writing strategies in their classroom teaching. In this regard, the Socio-cultural perspective suggests that learners learn from more knowledgeable others through interaction and collaboration in the classroom. Teachers should be encouraged, motivated, and supported to practice what they perceive of teaching writing to develop students' writing competency at the secondary level in public schools.

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December 14, 2021

Sandip Kumar Patel, Degree Candidate

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## DEDICATION

To my Uncle

Late Abadh Bihari Raut (Timothy Patel)

## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is my work and has not been submitted for candidature for any other degree.

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This dissertation entitled *Perceptions and Practices of Secondary English Teachers on Teaching Writing Skills: A Narrative Inquiry* was presented by Sandip Kumar Patel for Master's Degree of Education in English Language Teaching on December 14, 2021 and approved by

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I understand that my dissertation will become part of the permanent collection of Kathmandu University Library. My signature authorizes release of my dissertation to any reader upon request for scholarly purposes.

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## ACRONYMS

AD	:	Amino Domini
BA	:	Bachelors in Arts
BICS	:	Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills
BS	:	Bikram Sambat
CBS	:	Central Bureau of Statistic
CDC	:	Curriculum Development Centre
EFL	:	English as a Foreign Language
ELT	:	English Language Teaching
IA	:	Intermediate in Arts
ICT	:	Information Communication Technology
KU	:	Kathmandu University
MA	:	Masters in Arts
M. Ed.	:	Masters of Education
MKO	:	More Knowledgeable Other
MoE	:	Ministry of Education
PNC	:	Prithivi Narayan Campus
SEE	:	Secondary Education Examination
SLA	:	Second Language Acquisition
SLC	:	School Leaving Certificate
SSDP	:	School Sector Development Program
TU	:	Tribhuwan University
ZPD	:	Zero of Proximal Development

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter begins with the background of the study which includes my research agenda. I also include my reflection that motivated me to identify the topic. In addition, it is followed by a brief discussion on basic concepts of teaching English writing. It also includes writing competencies and objectives stated in the secondary level English curriculum. Then, it presents the problem statement, research objectives, research questions, and rationale of the study. Finally, it presents the delimitations of my research.

#### **Background**

I was born to a Bhojpuri speaking community in Rautahat district of the Terai region. As reported by the Central Bureau of Statistics [CBS] (2011), Bhojpuri is one of the languages spoken mostly in the four central Terai districts (Rautahat, Bara, Parsa, and Rupandehi) of Nepal. I grew up in the same language community where I acquired Bhojpuri as my mother language.

I was six years old young child and a proficient speaker of my mother tongue (L1) i.e. Bhojpuri. Supporting the idea Skutnabb-Kangas (2013) says that children master basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) related aspects of their L1 around 5-7 years of age. That also means I had already attained communicative competency in Bhojpuri language in reference to my age.

I was sent to class one in a government school in my village. At school, all the textbooks were in Nepali language and teachers would teach and speak in Nepali medium only. I didn't remember it well. Nevertheless, I learnt and could speak Nepali



language in my four years of schooling. However, I had to start learning English Alphabet and words from class four. Since then, I embarked upon the rigorous journey of English language learning. After that, there was merely an English textbook in every class till grade X just as our English course book. Did I learn English?

Though I was one of the brightest students in my class who secured 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> rank in different classes in my school, English was the most difficult subject for me. I still remember those English classes vividly. Firstly, I recall how every first lesson of English would begin with copying words and meaning (English to Nepali) of a reading passage that included stories, poems, essays, biographies, news, letter, etc. from our English textbook. The teacher would write the words and their meanings on the blackboard and we (here 'we' implies to students) would write them down in our notebooks and memorize as the teacher would ask the next day.

We would think that word-meaning (vocabulary) was the most important aspect of English language learning. We would also think that if only we knew words and their meanings we would know how to read, speak, understand, and even write in English. After one or two classes of learning the vocabulary of the passage, we had to listen to the teacher reading the passage. We were also asked to read, but were always afraid of reading English in the classroom. Having read the passage, the teachers would write the questions and their answers on the blackboard and we would copy them in an exercise book. In the next class, we would come into the class by memorizing the answers to those questions of the passage and present to the teacher. That was a reading comprehension class of my schooling!

Secondly, I remember my speaking classes. The teacher would ask two students to stand in their place and he would ask them to read the conversation from

the book. The same thing would go for a few more students and the class would get over. I wonder today, 'Was that a speaking class?' Thirdly, my experience of listening classes is similar to speaking. I do not remember that I had a particular listening class at school. My classmates and I believed that listening class meant listening to the teacher speaking and reading in the class for us.

Fourthly, writing class was only limited to writing or copying what teachers would write on board or from textbooks and other practice books. So far, I believe that none of the above-mentioned classes adequately taught us the four skills of English language learning in particular.

Despite that, we developed reading, listening and speaking skills to some extent except writing. When I passed my School Leaving Certificate (SLC) in 2010 A.D., I could only write a few simple sentences in English correctly-This is a book. This is a pen. Ram is a boy. I am a student. It was the outcome of Grammar-translation teaching and learning in school. I firstly used to think in Nepali and translate it into English. I did not know how I passed my English exams in school. Perhaps, practical marks and some reading passages where one could guess the answers to the questions to some extent, helped me pass my SLC. Moreover, I was not able to write a paragraph. I could not write a job application. I did not know how to write letters, essays, stories, invitation cards, condolences, etc. However, it was not only me with such poor writing skills but most of my friends were there too! Why?

Why couldn't we write a sentence? Why couldn't we write a paragraph? Why were we unable to write letters, essays, applications, news reports etc.? Why were we unable to maintain cohesion and coherence in our writings? Where was the problem? Was the problem with students? Was the problem with the teachers or textbooks or

curriculum? I wanted to know why I was a poor writer in my student life. I wanted to find out the answers to those questions.

Then, as a university student, I wanted to explore where the problem lay. Are there any changes regarding the perception of teaching writing? What are the current practices in teaching writing skills in school? How do teachers and students take writing in school? I believe, it is worth exploring how teachers' perceptions and practices of teaching writing at schools are.

In the upcoming sections, I discuss the terms perception and practice in relation to teaching and learning of writing skill at the secondary level in reference to my own observation as an English language teacher. I briefly discuss about the writing competencies to be developed in the learners of this level as per the secondary level English curriculum stated by Curriculum Development Centre (CDC, 2005). I also discuss on English test and contents that are covered in the Secondary Education Examination (SEE). I believe that the discussions will offer a linkage for setting out the agenda of the study in this chapter.

### **Basic Concepts over Perception and Practice of Teaching Writing**

Second language learning encompasses the learning of four skills. They are listening, speaking, reading and writing. The development of a second language learning process begins with listening primarily as it is a receptive skill that first develops into a human being (Renukadevi, 2014). At the beginning of the second language learning and development process, learners listen in the target language, and gradually learn to read and write the English alphabet to words and sentences.

I wanted to research this area of study because of my career as a teaching professional. I started my teaching career in 2012 AD. In my ten or more years of

teaching experience, I have observed that teaching practices differ from teacher to teacher.

What happens in an English writing classroom in a Nepalese context?

Generally, a teacher goes into the class with some questions, for example, essay writing. S/he writes the question and the essay (answer) on the board. S/he asks students to write or copy. Students write until the class is over or till the bell rings. When the period is over, s/he assigns a new essay question to students to write the answer of at home. In the next class, neither the teacher asks about the previous writing assignments nor do the students share their write-ups. It is not because students are afraid of the teacher but they are of writing.

Another practice is this, a teacher goes into the class with a textbook. S/he opens the text and the page. S/he asks students to open the same. Then s/he reads for the students and asks them to produce a similar one.

Despite those, I observed during my teaching in schools that second language learners made much progress in listening, speaking and reading skills. Whereas they lacked in developing writing skills. The learners developed a good competency in listening and speaking and reading skills. Also, I observed that the students were able to read and comprehend texts in English. Surprisingly, they could speak English at an adequate level. Then what about writing?

However, I noticed as an English language teacher that the ability of the learners in writing appeared insufficiently developed. This may be due to teachers who perceive writing as only a part of teaching and learning grammar and syntax, which resultantly misjudges the nature and importance of writing, and that observation of teachers affects its growth (Fareed et al., 2016). So, I thought to carry

out this research project that explored how teachers' perceptions and practices affect the writing skills of students in public school.

To understand what writing is, we need to have a bird's eye view of the taxonomy of writing. According to Jacobs et al. (1981) and Hall (1988), the taxonomy of writing includes the mechanics (spelling and punctuation), vocabulary, grammar, syntax, organization, cohesion, coherence, content, diction (or word selection) and is appropriate to the audience, topic, and occasion. I understand that the letters are put together to form words and words are arranged to form sentences. The sentences are grouped into a paragraph to develop ideas. The paragraphs are the developed form of sentences. Similarly, rhetorical devices such as cohesion and coherence are used to maintain unity and the flow of connected ideas throughout the texts. Apart from these, transitional is used to connect sentences to keep the track of ideas in writing. Along with this, the punctuations such as commas, quotation marks, period, a mark of exclamation, the mark in question, are used in sentences and paragraphs. Likewise, the word selection appropriate to the audiences and the contexts are equally important in writing to convey the intended message to the readers.

Byrne (1988) asserts that writing is not just only the production of graphic symbols. Also, Nunan (2003) highlights that writing is a physical representation of words and symbols along with it is also the product of the mind. Consequently, I understand that many elements are consciously taken into consideration to produce a form of writing. English language teachers might possess different perceptions that guide their ways of teaching writing too. So this study might help to explore how teachers' perceptions and their practices are interrelated. That also might help teachers to reflect upon their teaching for the betterment of teaching practices in teaching writing skills.

## **Place of Writing in English Curriculum**

Here I discuss the pronouncement regarding teaching writing as per the secondary level English curriculum. Along with it, I discuss the objectives and competencies expected to be developed in our students of secondary level. First of all, I must state that this research study is concerned with secondary level classes 9 and 10; in fact, according to the Ministry of Education [MoE] (2015), under School Sector Development Plan (SSDP), a new overall structure was introduced with basic education covering grades 1 to 8 and secondary education grades 9 to 12 (p. 6). However, it has not been implemented everywhere in the country in the same way. Thus, this study treats grades 9 and 10 as secondary education at this point.

Secondary level education is the foundation of college and higher education. It is also a landmark for literacy skills. Adding to this, it is expected that the academic skills have to be enhanced concerning the composition skills to advanced essays. Writing at the secondary level does not limit to answering questions, which many English language teachers might think of. According to Curriculum Development Centre [CDC] (2005), the competencies regarding writing of the English curriculum at this level are to enable learners to ‘write descriptive, narrative and imaginative texts, in a range of different forms and media with a fair degree of accuracy’ (p. 2). CDC (2005) has also stated grade-wise learning outcomes of writing skills for secondary level students (see Appendix 2).

As stated in the CDC, students at this level have to be able to develop writing skills in the areas such as writing a book and film review, essay, story writing, and letter writing. Similarly, students should be able to write about personal experiences and feelings creatively by composing meaningful paragraphs to express facts, ideas, interests, likes and dislikes, opinions and attitudes. In addition, they should be able to

develop processes to enhance their written products such as planning and organizing ideas for writing, revising and checking structure, spelling and punctuation. They also have to follow the writing process such as controlled, guided, and free. Furthermore, pupils have to be able to use strategies to generate ideas for writing such as brainstorming, mind map and taking notes. They have to be able to develop simple paragraphs using appropriate cohesive devices and transitions. Moreover, students at this level have to be able to use appropriate format and layout to produce a variety of texts such as messages, menus, cooking recipes, letters and invitation cards, a letter to an editor, CV and brochure etc.

In the board exam i.e. in Secondary Education Examination (SEE), as per the specification grid, 35 marks is allocated for the writing tests, to assure that the students have obtained the learning outcomes of writing mentioned in the curriculum. It is stated that the writing test should test the following writing constructs such as organization, cohesion and coherence, the relevance of the content, appropriateness of the language, grammatical accuracy, style, layout and format, orthographic convention, and creativity and originality. They are the advanced writings that the students at this level are expected to develop. Do our school students meet these requirements of writing?

In SEE, the writing skills of the students are tested under different topics. The guided writing test includes direction, instruction, electronic text messages, postcards, advertisements, messages of condolence, and messages of congratulations, menus, and recipes. Similarly, it includes interpretation of charts, graphs, tables, lists, pictures. Moreover, it covers writing short skeleton stories, invitation letters, thanksgiving letters, letters of regret, news stories and paragraphs. Under the free writing test, these items such as dialogue, paragraphs on personal experiences, short

stories, and views and attitudes are included (Test Specification Grid, 2017). Thus, students at this secondary level have to be competent enough to go through the above test items conducted under SEE Board. Have they developed such writing abilities?

The importance of writing in the present world has been increased to its ultimate level. Urbanova and Oakland (2002, as cited in Klimova, 2012) affirm that the written language has high social prestige since it has nowadays an important social and educational function. In the context of Nepal, writing has been an important tool for higher education; whether within the country or abroad studies, occupational, and social success. Writing skills for secondary level learners, in particular, have become much more significant. In school, students' grades are also determined by their performance on writing tests and assignments written (Graham, 2006). After School Education Examination (SEE) students go for higher studies. Their areas of study depend on how good they are at writing. Writing helps them to secure the seats for admissions in high school through entrance exams conducted. Writing also supports them to get full time and part-time jobs in schools as teachers, and in offices which are essential for the livelihood of these students during their higher studies. To get such jobs, they have to write a good job application as there is a cutthroat competition to get jobs. Students have to write news reports and essays for office, schools, and personal growth. Thus, learners must develop their writing skills.

### **Rationale**

Literature shows that teachers' perceptions and practices have significant effects on students' achievement in English writing. As stated by Noe (2004) that there is a reciprocal relationship between our perceptions and practice. Thus, teachers' perceptions affect their performance in teaching writing too. If teachers understand that writing is not as important as grammar, speaking, and reading, consequently this



perception can influence their teaching of writing skills too (Ferede et al., 2012). Similarly, if Nepalese English language teachers do no longer pay interest in developing the writing of school students, their performance in this skill will lag. As claimed by Kroll (1990), instructors play a vital role in assisting students to increase their writing ability. Harmer (2004a) also points out that teachers need to decide on strategies for writing lessons such as the process of writing or the product of writing before designing a writing task. I believe teaching writing will be effective if teachers determine the strategies of writing before entering the classroom. Thus, this study was essential in exploring teachers' relations between their understandings of teaching writing and practices for the development of students' writing ability.

I felt the need for research on this issue to improve our teaching and learning. More specifically, it contributes to teachers' knowledge; enriches research, and enables teacher educators, and policymakers to strengthen the possibility and influence of perception and practice in developing teachers' professionalism in general and students' achievements in particular. Therefore, I realized it is a significant space for researching this issue.

Moreover, I thought to illuminate this topic to be considered in the field of teaching. Therefore, I focused my research on the area of teachers' perceptions and practices in writing believing that it will be helpful for those who are part of teaching and learning to write. I am also an English teacher and I mean to say that there might be, of course, many possible reasons behind students' success or failure in English writing, but one can be the teachers themselves. Therefore, this study is significant in the sense that it can reform language teaching and raise awareness among teachers for adopting effective strategies in teaching writing. Finally, this study is expected to be

important for educational practitioners, curriculum developers, teacher trainers, and educationists.

### **Statement of the Problem**

I instigated my statement of the problem with the questions that Brown (2000b) puts forward: Why isn't everyone an excellent writer? Why don't people learn to write "naturally," as they learn to talk? How can we best teach second language learners of English how to write? What should we be trying to teach? These questions always hunted me when I was an English language teacher in schools. Fortuitously, as a university student, I got the opportunity to explore the related area in the context of Nepal. It is because I assume that poor writing ability is seen as one of the prevalent problems in teaching English. Since it is a complex process that needs other sub-skills such as planning, organization, expressions, vocabulary, spelling, grammar and punctuation and so on.

When I started teaching English at the secondary level in some private schools of Kathmandu Valley, one of the biggest and serious problems I observed was that students found writing difficult. I have also realized that my students were not able to write on any topic though I created real-life situations while teaching. Most of the time they did not complete the assignments in which they needed to write a long answer in comparison to other assignments like answering the short answer questions, and objective types. Moreover, I observed as a school teacher that learners are not developing the required level of competencies. Most of the students have problems with spelling and compositions. They struggle with writing in the classroom or exams due to inadequate practices and the use of vocabulary. Also, they are unable to write a short paragraph with proper organization. Their writing seems to lack coherence and cohesion. Similarly, there seems a dearth of selection of words in writing. Their

writing is just free flow. Similarly, I witnessed such conditions during I corrected their exercise notebooks and exam answer sheets. Then I discussed with other teachers about the problem. They also said that they had similar stories to mine. They also added that generally, students were not interested in such kind of writing. Likewise, I got an opportunity to correct the English papers of the SLC Examination. The exam papers were from different government school of various districts. While marking those papers, I found that the students lacked writing skills. As a result, students get failed in exams. They also drop out of schools due to the poor performance in writing. They suffer in colleges and universities too. Nonetheless, they fail in securing their careers as writers or professionals. Thus, there is a long term impact of school education in students' life. So, I thought this study would be helpful to explore such teaching writing status of school teachers scientifically through research.

I probed myself asking these questions. Why do students of grade ten lack writing skills? Why cannot they write a well-developed paragraph? Why are these students still struggling with the basic skills of writing such as spelling and punctuation, grammar, syntax, vocabulary, organization in writing and fail to maintain cohesion and coherence throughout the writing? Who is responsible for their poor writing skills? Are the students responsible for their lack of writing skills at this level? Are the schools and parents responsible? Are the teachers responsible? If the teachers are responsible, how? Are these teachers not competent at teaching writing? Do they know teaching writing? Do they know the strategies of teaching writing? Do they plan for teaching writing? How do they teach different writing lessons and skills? What do they think about teaching writing? What is their attitude towards writing and teaching writing? How do they perceive teaching writing? How do they practice teaching

writing skills in the classroom? How do they take students' writing? These were the few questions that motivated me to carry out this study. I wanted to discover the relevant answers to those questions through this study.

Establishing the statement of the problem in a nutshell, it was worth exploring that how teachers' perceptions and practices had impacted students' writing achievement after all. I wanted to ask teachers about the preparation they received to teach writing. Similarly, teachers were asked questions on the importance of writing beyond school and their students' writing attainment in the classroom. I hoped that teachers' perspectives of writing and practices would offer me some potentially critical facts through this study. For example, if teachers viewed writing as unimportant in the long run, they might be less inclined to teach it too (Kiuahara et al., 2009). Their practices in the classroom are the reflection of what they perceive. The student's progress or the failure in writing can be the outcome of the teachers' ways of doing things in the EFL classroom.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to explore the stories of teaching writing of English language teachers. I sought to explore their perceptions, practices, and their difficulties they faced in the past and at present in relation to teaching writing.

### **Research Questions**

Concerning the above objectives, the following two research questions were formulated for the present study.

- a. How do secondary English teachers perceive teaching writing skills?
- b. How do they practice teaching writing skills in the classroom?

### **Delimitations of the Study**

My research is on the teachers' teaching writing. It is based on the participants' narrative on their experience of teaching writing skills. I delimited this research just on teachers' perspectives, and practice to socio-cultural understanding. I only envisaged those stories, which indicate explicitly the teaching writing.

Though teachers had stories of the experience of their life from childhood to their present state, I studied the stories, which belonged to teaching writing only. My concern was not to explore other experiences. I delimited this study to explore English teachers' teaching writing experiences. It included their perceptions and practices from the past to the present.

### **Chapter Summary**

In this chapter, I reflected on my personal experiences regarding teaching and learning English as my second language (L2) in school and particular to writing skills along with the practices of teaching writing skills so far. I discussed the basic concepts of perception and writing skills in brief. Likewise, I discussed the competencies and outcomes expected to be developed in pupils regarding writing skills stated in the secondary level English curriculum. I have also dealt with the statement of the problem, rationale, purpose, research questions, and concluded it by discussing the delimitations of my study.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter deals with thematic, theoretical as well as empirical reviews correlated to 'teaching and writing skills'. This chapter begins with the introduction to writing skills, and their importance in the ELT classroom. It explores what other scholars say about writing skills, the importance of strategies to teaching writing skills, the process of teaching writing skills, strategies to teach and its development stages. I endeavour to establish a link between my research issue and the sociocultural theory of writing. Also, I represent the roles of a teacher while teaching writing skills. Likewise, I review previous researches in this area and summarize their objectives and conclusions which assist me in identifying gaps for my study. I create my conceptual framework for my research. Finally, this chapter ends with the gap that I have noticed in the previous studies that my research aims to fill in.

#### **Setting Out for Review of the Literature**

Having realized that 'literature review helps to determine whether the topic is worth studying, and it provides insight into ways in which researcher can limit the scope to a needed area of inquiry' (Creswell, 2013 p. 25). I visited libraries such as Kathmandu University School of Education and Central Library Kirtipur. I spent most of my hours in the library of Kathmandu University School of Education located in Hattiban, Lalitpur. Moreover, to gain and review more information, I browsed the internet to get relevant articles, journals and research papers allied to my issue. I studied several sources such as books, articles, research reports, magazines, and newspapers to connect and familiarize my ideas with the existing literature.

I reviewed the theoretical literature in my research area to find out the answer to the following questions: What is writing? How is writing important for secondary level students? What are the strategies for teaching writing skills? What is the process of teaching writing skills? What are the stages in the development of teaching writing skills?

In the sections below, I present the summary of my review under the headings: Definition of Writing; Importance of Strategies to Teach Writing; Product Approaches to Writing; Process Approaches to Writing; Sociocultural Theory of Writing; Previous Research Studies, and the Gap I noticed in the previous research studies. Finally, I present the conceptual Framework and Chapter Summary.

### **Definition of Writing**

In a Second Language (L2) learning process, there are four skills that learners develop. These skills are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Writing is one of the four skills of English language learning. Durga and Rao (2018) define writing as the system of written symbols which represent sounds, syllabus or words of a language, moreover, it has different mechanisms such as capitalization, spelling, and punctuation, word, form and function. In addition, Nunan (1991b) asserts that writers must be able to structure and integrate information into a cohesive and coherent paragraph and text in writing. Thus, writing is both representing written sounds, symbols with the integration of connected ideas in paragraphs and text.

### **Writing as a Skill**

The writing skills incorporate several sub-skills such as mechanics, organization, syntax, and grammar, contents, and the writing process. Supporting the idea Yusuf et al. (2019) state that a good piece of writing requires standard forms of grammar, syntax and word choice, not forgetting good mechanics, organization of

paragraph and content. The writers must be able to write readable handwriting and, use correct spelling and punctuations. They must select appropriate vocabulary and idioms as per the genre of writing and the audience. They must arrange the words in grammatical order to form sentences. The organizations are equally important such as in a paragraph, a good detailed topic and supporting sentences with cohesion and unity among sentences. In syntax, the writers must have adequate knowledge about sentence structure, sentence boundaries and styles. Grammar in writing such as rules of verbs, agreement, articles, and pronouns is also important. The content should be relevant, clear, original and logical in writing. At last but not least, the writing process such as getting ideas, getting started writing drafts, revising, etc. are very much required in writing.

### **Why Teach Writing?**

I have already discussed in the foregoing introduction section the importance of writing for the students of secondary level. Here I discuss teaching writing skills in general. Writing is an eminent medium and it is used to serve many functions. Writing serves many works in our everyday life in distinct areas like education, workplace, media, social, cultural and personal situations. The expertise in writing helps to access journals, magazines, books, letters, etc. Moreover, Harmer (1998) signifies teaching writing stating that it is a basic language skill, just as important as speaking, listening, and reading. Likewise, Students need to recognize how to write letters, put written reports collectively, a way to reply to public notice, and the way to write using digital media. Most importantly, they require to know the use of punctuation, paragraph construction etc. For that reason, it is teachers' job to develop those skills in students from schools.



As the answer to the question of why teach writing, Byrne (1988) states that it performs multiple instructional purposes. At first, he mentions that there are learners in school who do not learn only through oral practice but they learn much better writing in the language. Similarly, written work provides us with evidence that students are making improvements and progressing in the language. For instance, we keep the records of our students' written works such as exam answer sheets, assignments, and classwork as proof of how much they are progressing. Equally, it is important to note that learning through more than one medium such as writing, is effective. Finally, writing plays an important role in bringing variety in the classroom activities where both teachers and students get a break from the oral works.

Walsh (2010) highlights the importance of writing stating that it is used extensively in higher education and the workplace. Moreover, he asserts that students will not be able to communicate well with professors, employers, peers, or anyone else if they do not know how to express themselves in writing. In addition, much of professional communication is done in writing; proposals, memos, reports, applications, preliminary interviews, emails, and more are part of the daily life of a student.

Therefore, the need to learn to write in English for academic and occupational purposes is growing and demanding. In the field of education, writing plays a dominant role in writing projects, assignments, examinations etc. In the Nepalese context, assessing academic abilities is closely linked with proficiency in writing. Writing is the only medium through which learners are assessed formally in schools, colleges and universities. Written tests are administered even for job placement in Nepal. So writing has become the tool for survival these days. It is necessary to train our students from this secondary level for their future endeavours.

### **Importance of Writing Strategies**

Starting with the point that Pringle (2006) has made that a commonplace in education is that most teachers teach the way they were taught. Strategies are the processes and methods that teachers can use for classroom teaching and learning, which help the learners to be motivated towards the subject matter and also feel comfortable. By using strategies teachers and learners can achieve their goals. It can be used consciously and unconsciously by the teacher and the learners. Conforming to Richards et al. (1999) strategy means procedures used in teaching and learning. Also, it is a way of reaching a goal. Moreover, strategies are conscious or unconscious procedures that teachers and students go through in teaching and learning.

Likewise, the strategy also helps to solve the problem posed by learning consequences. Brown (1990) asserts that strategies are specific plans that teachers make to solve problems. They are also important techniques that teachers employ to solve problems in teaching. I supposed that strategies are all procedures or techniques that teachers and students use in their classroom teaching-learning. Successful writers use written or mental procedures for the production of writing. These written or mental procedures are called writing strategies. Hence, writing strategies are those procedures or processes that focus to think about how to write.

Strategy is required in both teaching and learning processes. The related teaching strategy is applied to make the students involved in the activities to learn something. For example, a teacher applies a parallel strategy to teach letter writing to his/her students of class ten. On the other hand, learning strategy is a procedure used by learners to develop their writing skills in the process of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) (Ellis, 2015). For instance, a learner might memorize, overgeneralize, infer, repeat, paraphrase, etc. to the words, sentence structures, and

patterns to learn letters writing in English language learning. Hence, memorization, overgeneralization, inference and prefabricated patterns' are the general headings of learning strategies (Ellis, 1995). The following words by Brown (2000a) draw our attention to the significance of teaching strategies:

Your job, as you continue this journey, is to make the connections between research/theory/principles, on the one hand, and classrooms/teaching/practice on the other. By making those connections as you learn to teach, you will perhaps avoid some pitfalls of haphazard guesswork and instead engage in teaching that is enlightened by research and theory, that is, teaching by principles (p. 11).

I strongly agreed with the point made by Brown on the importance of strategies of teaching. It is conveyed that if teachers learn to connect research, theory, and principles in the classrooms teaching and practice, it will help them engage in teaching and learning effectively. It will also assist and aware teachers in avoiding haphazard guesswork while teaching in the class. Thus, strategies are significant for teachers for effective teaching.

### **Product Approaches to Writing**

A product approach to writing is a conventional approach wherein students are encouraged to mimic a model text, commonly is supplied and analyzed at an early stage (Gabrielatos, 2002). Similarly, Badger and White (2000) assert that the product-based approach views writing as to learn the structure of language, and writing improvement by the imitation of the text provided by teachers. For instance, students are provided with a standard sample text and they may be asked to follow the pattern to construct a new piece of writing in a product-based approach writing classroom. The product approach model includes four stages (Steele, 2004). Likewise, Badger

and White (2000) state that this approach has four stages: ‘familiarization; controlled writing; guided writing; and free writing’ (p. 153). The familiarization stage makes learners aware of certain features of a particular text. For example, students are introduced to a formal letter and its features. In controlled and guided writing, teachers allow students to practice the skills with sufficient freedom till they are ready for the pendent writing. In freewriting composition, the teacher gives only the title and it is for the students to decide on the facts s/he should include and their arrangements and expression. Brown (1994, as cited Bijami & Raftari, 2013) affirms that in the product-based approach, teachers focus on a final product of writing. It is assessed through the criteria where students use vocabulary appropriately, consider grammar and mechanics such as spelling and punctuation, as well as content and organization in their writing. The teaching writing course may vary from controlled, guided to free writing. Letter, report or application writing can also be included in teaching writing.

All the stages and procedures are important and they can be used as per the context required. Teachers and students have to be interested in writing at first. They are free to apply the stages that are best for them. Here, I discuss the three stages in brief.

### **Controlled Writing**

Controlled writing is simpler than guided writing and guided writing is simpler than free writing. In this stage of writing, students are provided with a sample of writing. They analyze the sample writing and after analyzing they need to write in the same way, but on a bit different topic with the help of the sample. Controlled writing is also called parallel writing. Students are not free to write. The shape of the writing is already fixed. Learners are already introduced to the sentence structures.

The only work of the students is to make a parallel copy. This task can be allotted by the students in the initial stage, or it is fruitful for beginners. This strategy is easy for motivating students towards writing. Students seem to be excited and interested in such activity.

### **Guided Writing**

The guided writing consists of filling the gaps or spaces in a passage or answering questions based on the picture or image in which the teacher gives information and ideas in the form of an outline. Also, learners are provided with a strip or guidelines or outline of the writing and asked to complete it. This type of writing involves grammatical exercises, construction of simple dialogue, etc. Moreover, teachers also engage students in activities such as completion items, drills and replacement exercises, expansion of simple sentences, etc. to make writing class meaningful. To make us clearer how guided writing strategy works in the classroom, Hill (1999) presents in this way:

Guided writing involves an individual small group of students writing a range of text types. The teacher may provide short mini-lessons to demonstrate a particular aspect of the text type, grammar, punctuation, or spelling. Guided writing is linked to reading various text types used as models. Students may use writing frames or templates as scaffolds for writing. In guided writing, students are given guidelines for writing. A guided framework with perimeter bounds writer to go out of track (p. 45)

The framework will now come from stories and articles they have been reading. At this stage, they may get more freedom in their choice of expression. Therefore, at last, after reading about this stage, I felt that it stands as a bridge between parallel and free writing in which a model to follow a plan or outlines to

expand is also provided. Thus, I believe this strategy can be used to teach writing effectively.

### **Free Writing**

The word ‘free’ enjoys no restriction. In freewriting, students are allowed to produce their writing freely. The word ‘free’ can here be focused on either being free enough to write without thinking on any topic or free enough to write is focused on a topic. Both styles can be used to make students improve their writing. Our focus is being free enough to write being focused on a topic.

In this stage, the learners concentrate on the content rather than form by not stopping for a moment. Hedge (2001) announces that freewriting is also known as speed or quick writing because its predominant function is writing as quickly as possible without stopping. I think this is the integral stage for teaching writing because in this stage they can write anything which comes into their minds or which they can imagine, as free writing is also related to the imagination of the writers. It can keep the writer in touch with the writing “free freewriting limber up your writing muscles and make you familiar with the act of writing” (Langan, 2005, p. 26.). I believe this is true because when students are given freedom for writing in the classroom, they can write beyond our expectations. So, quick or fear-free or I also call this freedom writing is very important for beginners because they are given opportunities to be less concerned about the grammar, spelling, words or sentence structure for writing a draft.

While the learners are at this stage, teachers should be careful because of the freedom they get for writing; they may commit a lot of errors and jot down the non-sensible ideas as Hedge (2001) has suggested that the teacher needs to be aware of probable variation of response to this activity. I believe freewriting is one of the

techniques that can be helpful for any individual beginner. Langan (2005) suggests that questioning, making list, clustering or webbing, and preparing scratch outline techniques can be followed by teachers while implementing this stage of writing. Thus, freewriting is one of the effective teaching writing strategies that can help students to write freely on a topic. However, teachers need to have careful plans involving students in activities that can help students to produce accurate and sensible text.

### **Process Approaches to Writing**

This approach has been recommended in opposition to the product approach of teaching writing. Flower (1989) supported that process writing came in a reaction to the traditional product-based approach. The process of writing allows students for writing naturally like writing in one's mother tongue. I agree with Flower's point that students get the opportunity to write in their second language the way they write in their mother tongue. In this line, Nunan (1991a) highlights that the process approach emphasizes the steps such as producing, reflecting, discussing, and reworking on drafts that the students will get closer to creating a perfect draft of a text. However, Graham (2006), points that the process approach is productive work that students and teachers need to invest sufficient time and at the same time students need positive feedback to be perfectly accomplished. On contrary, Badger and White (2000) view that the process approach characterizes writing enhancement as an unconscious process that takes place while doing exercises in writing skills facilitated by a teacher. Thus, I believe that the process approach has an important role in teaching and learning writing skills at the secondary level.

Writing is a process. It is a process in the sense that writing needs some sort of procedure to be followed by the writer. Raimes (1983) raises two crucial questions

that every writer asks before writing; how do I write this? How do I get started? Thus, many scholars have identified overall the same process of writing in general: prewriting, drafting, revising, rewriting, and editing (Williams, 2003; Urquhart & McIver, 2005; Hedge, 2005; *Oxford*, 2010). However, I believe that every student or teacher has different objectives and desires and their way of approaching diverse parts of their writing process. Here I discuss each stage in brief.

### **Pre-Writing Activities**

When a writer decides to write something, s/he must have some prerequisites of writing such as a topic and ideas or information about the topic. Despite its importance for beginning to write, this stage of writing is often ignored by writers (Murray, 1985, as cited in Urquhart and McIver, 2005). So, prewriting activities can be helpful for the writers to explore and gather information on the topic. Teachers can allow their students to discover a subject completely in such prewriting activities as “discussion, reading, debate, brainstorming, and list-making” (Raimes, 1983, p. 10). Brainstorming is rapidly gathering words, phrases, idioms as possible, just the way they occur to us, without situation for appropriateness, order, or accuracy. It helps in making connections and generating ideas. The advantage of this stage of writing is that it can be done in a class or group. Hence, I understand that the writing process is a method of discovery where students explore new ideas and new language forms to express themselves.

Similarly, Urquhart and McIver (2005) assert that in the prewriting stage students get ready to write by selecting a genre; they collect information, organize their ideas in order, and think about their audiences and purpose of writing. It is important to note that good writers always show much interest in the use of prewriting and planning activities. Whereas novice writers or beginners do not pay attention to



such activities as prewriting and planning. I understand that in the prewriting stage students are allowed to questions that stimulate their thoughts about the writing topics. Also, I understand that prewriting is an obligatory stage, thus, teachers and students should not take this lightly.

The strategies of prewriting are freewriting, talking, brainstorming, and making lists, outlines and other graphic organizers. Students are asked to write freely for five minutes on the topic that helps them move forward at their first attempt. Talking in a pair or group is also an effective prewriting strategy because it has low risk. Students discuss a topic or subject matter with peers. They try to involve in exercise that comes to them naturally. Talking, as an activity allows students to interact with their peers focusing their discussion on specific topics. Likewise, the brainstorming strategy allows students to explore what they already know about a given topic. Also, it helps students discover what they need to learn more about the topics. Hence, freewriting, talking and brainstorming all help students identify what they know about their writing topics. There are strategies such as outlining and graphic organizers that assist students to scaffold their thoughts for writing on the given topics.

### **Writing the First Draft**

In this stage, learners are ready to write their first draft after prewriting activities. They try to build words, phrases, and incomplete sentences into paragraphs following the outlines they prepared in the prewriting stage. The students develop the notes to larger text that they have taken during the prewriting phase. The students have to elaborate their organized notes into sentences. Sometimes, they also need to add more elements such as facts, ideas, arguments, and examples. However, it depends on how inclusive the notes they have made.

In this phase of writing students reorganize things if necessary like adding, eliminating, re-ordering, separating or merging sections or paragraphs (Gabrielatos, 2002). The advantage of this stage for students is that they do not have to worry about the sequence of the ideas and the order rather they just try to create sentences out of it. They also write paragraphs without much concern about spelling and punctuation. Students write much freely where they can develop paragraphs on their topics. I understand that writing the first draft is a developing form of text that students write in two steps of the process approach to writing.

### **Re-Writing/Revising Activities**

This stage of writing is also called revising. Writers revise or re-write once they have produced a draft. While re-writing, Harmer (2004b) asserts that reading through the draft again and over improves what students have written so far. It also supports students to find out where something works and where it doesn't. Williams (2003) suggests that students focus on sentence-level for example, changing words and reorganizing sentences. Students are required to read again and again so that they can re-write into paragraphs on the subject matter. It demands every student to be a critical reader so that they can cut unnecessary sentences or shift sections from one place to another to enhance the overall organization of the composition.

Langan (2005) asserts that there are three stages of revising process; revising content, revising sentences, and editing. Students revise their writing contents to be on track with their purpose of writing. There may be some irrelevant content that must be removed or the place or section can be changed to look the writing coherent. Revising sentences provide an opportunity for students to check some unstructured sentences and their irrelevancy. Sentences can be rewritten appropriately to the audience's level. Overall, this phase of the writing process helps writers to organize

their ideas into paragraphs that are coherent and appropriate. If revising is done by a peer or reader, then it will be better.

### **Editing**

This stage of the writing process is also as significant as others. Most writers seem to be reluctant at this stage that results in poor writing. Hedge (2005) highlights that a few students have a tendency not to involve in editing. They assume that their writing is apparent to others because it is far clear to them. This practice makes them bad writers after all. Nevertheless, in this editing process, students prepare for their final copy of the text and check whether the text is accurate and readable for the readers or not. Hence, Harmer (2004b) declares that as soon as students have edited their draft, they produce their final version making modifications they think to be necessary. Finally, writing is a process where learners have to follow some procedures for their writings. These processes are mandatory in one or another way for successful writing; however, it depends on the subject and the writers as well. For secondary level students and teachers, the methods of process writing help to learn to write in the classroom.

### **Genre Approaches to Writing**

The genre-based approach is one of the third main approaches to writing instruction in English language teaching and learning. Etymologically, Dirgeyasa (2016), informs that the word ‘genre’ is derived from the French language meaning ‘form’ or ‘type’ (p. 45). Hyland (2007) defines genre as abstract and socially recognized ways of using language. I understand that genre is the use of language in a social context. Similarly, Martin (2009) asserts genre as an aim-oriented social process of using language. I believe there is always a purpose for using a form of language in society on different occasions. Likewise, Swales (1990) defined the genre

as "a distinctive category of a discourse of any type, spoken or written" (p. 33). In a nutshell, Dirgeyasa (2016) states that genre is a form of text oral or written in which there is a relationship between language and its social characteristics. Hence, I believe that genre is a type of written or spoken form of language which is used on social occasions to show the relationship between language and its social function.

Many scholars are interested in the genre approach to English language teaching. Badger and White (2000) too mention that genre approaches are relative newcomers to ELT. Similarly, Hyland (2007) affirms that for decades, it has been seen that the perception of the genre and its application in language teaching and learning has been growing these days. I accept as true that these days genre approach is also gaining its place in classroom teaching and learning. It is possible because "with expanding numbers of students from traditionally excluded groups entering universities, classrooms are now more culturally, socially, and linguistically diverse places than ever before" (Hyland, 2007 p. 149). Therefore, I accept as true that the genre approach to writing can be a revolutionary approach for our classroom teaching. Our classroom also might have students from different linguistic backgrounds. So, this approach can play an important role in effective teaching in such an environment of our context.

One thing to be noted is that there are substantial similarities between genre and product approaches. The genre method shares many commonplace functions with the product method. In this line, Badger and White (2000) affirmed that the genre approach appeared as an extension of the product approach. The genre approach, just like the product techniques to writing, portrays writing as in a particular linguistic area. However, in contrast to the product approach, it stresses that writing is different from the social context in which it is produced (Bijami & Raftari, 2013). I think there

are different kinds of writing that students have to write which have direct social relationships such as letters of sympathy or condolence or congratulations. Badger and White (2000) declare that there are distinctive varieties of writing genres which include letters of apology, recipes, or law reports, which might be used to perform special functions within the social context. In line with Carlson (2009, as cited in Bijami & Raftari, 2013) genre approach focuses on linguistic knowledge, however, it considers writing in distinctive social contexts. Within this approach, a student is meant to have a relationship with the target audience and the structural format of the text.

Cope and Kalantzis (1993, as cited in Badger & White, 2000) mention a wheel model of genre learning. This wheel has three phases. The first one is modelling the target genre or form of text, where students are displayed to specimens of the genre they have to create. The second is the construction of a text by students and teachers, and the third is the autonomous creation of texts by students. They suggest that this cycle can be repeated as and when necessary. In my opinion, teachers have to present a model or sample of genre writing. For example, a letter of condolence and now the teacher and students together write the targeted genre i.e. condolence writing. Finally, when the learners are familiar with the structure of the text, they produce texts of their own independently.

It is pivotal that teachers have to create a real-life social context of the related genre to be taught in the class so that students feel motivated towards writing. Students indeed feel self-motivated if they are aware of the purpose of the writing lesson. Referring to Hashemnezhad and Hashemnezhad (2012), in genre approach writing is set in a social scenario so that a chunk of writing is supposed to obtain a particular purpose which comes out of a specific situation. The genre-based

pedagogies provide us with clear and systematic descriptions of how language works in a social context. Hence, this approach of teaching writing will help students to look into their own culture and social context in their texts, which I believe is very important in English language teaching classrooms in Nepal.

### **Techniques in Teaching Writing**

There are numerous language teaching strategies or techniques that can be adapted in our teaching writing classrooms. Following Anthony (1963), a technique is an application that takes place in a classroom. It is a particular trick, strategy, or contrivance used to accomplish a direct goal. It is believed that techniques must be consistent with a method and harmony with an approach for achieving the goal successfully. Teachers need to have a proper understanding of a few techniques used in our language teaching and learning classroom.

The technique is used to achieve the immediate objectives of teaching and learning activities. Using techniques in the classroom is the implementation of methods and approaches of language teaching and learning. Techniques are used to deliver the subject matter effectively. Some of the commonly and frequently used techniques by teachers in classroom teaching are drilling, simulation, role-play, strip story, the use of a picture, group-work, pair-work, and demonstration.

Drill refers to the repetition of any language item or structure in a language classroom. Allen and Vallette (1976) state that drill is a technique implemented in language teaching to train the learners to talk and write using particular patterns or structures. Similarly, simulation is a group activity that entails imitation usually of those which are likely to arise in one's real life. In other words, it is to create the presence of real-life circumstances in the classroom and allow students to simulate the

real world. Simulation is the representation of real-life events created in the language class to help the learners in writing.

Likewise, Strip story is a kind of learning procedure used to help students gain writing skills. The teacher provides students with scrambled sentences and lets them memorize and write them down. To relate the idea, Lewis and Hill (1992) state that strip story is the creative process of thinking which enhances the learners to think and develop that thought in writing. Strip story, a technique used in language teaching, is an interesting game in which students actively participate. Also, group work and pair-work are effective classroom teaching techniques that help all kinds of shy or active students to collaborate for learning. Students can work in groups or pairs for writing tasks. These techniques provide them opportunities to learn from peers. Teachers are required to have knowledge and skills using such techniques in teaching writing in the classroom.

### **Sociocultural Theory of Writing**

Sociocultural theory is based on the notion of Vygotsky (1978), according to which human mental activity and learning are mediating activities and developments in the social and material environment through interaction with more capable individuals. The sociocultural theory emphasizes motivation, affect, and social influences as important factors of writing (Hodge, 2017). The sociocultural theory developed from the work of Vygotsky (1980) who theorizes that children learn about anything around them from more knowledgeable others (MKOs). This means children learn from those who have a greater mastery of the subject matter. This notion of Vygotsky also applies in classroom teaching and learning. It means students learn from their teachers in a school setting. Moreover, they learn from peers too. I believe that teachers are more knowledgeable persons for teaching writing skills for their

students in the classroom. So, this theory is believed to be making difference in the teaching writing and educators' perceptions and practices.

The sociocultural theory emphasizes the importance of language to social and cultural interaction. This emphasis on language allowed researchers to link sociocultural theory to writing instruction and its development in children. The theory also highlights the significance of collaboration in language teaching and learning. Traditionally, writing has been viewed as an unsocial or independent activity, but with the significance of sociocultural theory, writing is now taken as a collaborative social activity in which novice writers can learn from more experienced writers (Prior, 2006). On this basis, MKOs can be other students, teachers, or authors in writing classrooms. I agree with the point that writing is a collaborative social activity like other language skills such as reading and speaking. Writing also serves communication and plays important role in establishing relationships among the people in the society. Believing this fact, teaching writing collaboratively will help to achieve the expected competency in our students too.

It is important to understand that writing has many functions rather than simply as a skill in language learning. The sociocultural theory emerged as writing and it has become a tool for learning (Prior, 2006). According to sociocultural view, students must master writing as a discipline i.e. writing to persuade or writing to inform. Students have to write essays such as descriptive, narrative, persuasive, etc. at the secondary level. Also, writing is viewed as a tool for learning other content like writing to learn. Writing to learn means how students write notes, summaries, or journal entries to express their understanding and thoughts about a topic. Hence, I believe that writing is not just a language skill but it is a tool for learning.



The sociocultural theory of writing believes that writing covers the areas beyond the classroom. It means writing is not limited to the classroom. Students use their prior knowledge and have an understanding of the language, multiple genres, motivation and influence of technology in their writing. The sociocultural theory of writing has a unique place in schools because it aims for a collaborative view of writing. It includes the division of labour and co-authorship. It means teachers divide different activities for students to work in the classroom. Students are designated with different roles in the group to accomplish their writing tasks. By this standard, teachers in classrooms are always co-authors on students' writing. Teachers play active roles in instructing students, offering support, providing feedback, and modelling writing practices. Additionally, writing research that originates with a sociocultural lens focuses on specific classroom practices, actions that make up literate practices, and the specific kinds of collaboration that schools support (Prior 2006). In other words, the socio-cultural lens prioritizes the interaction between participants (e.g., teachers and peers), rather than the products.

From the sociocultural view, writing is a collaborative activity. Collaboration can take many forms. For example, teachers and students can collaborate on a piece of writing. Teachers can discuss with students the topic. He/she can suggest students for revision. Students get feedback continuously. The teacher can work with students or they can work independently. In the same way, students can collaborate. By using online tools, teachers allow students to write group pieces in which each student plays an active role in conceptualizing the idea, writing, revising, editing, and publishing.

Prior (2006) and Vygotsky (1980) highlight that sociocultural theory supports the idea that students learn from mentors and more knowledgeable others (MKOs). They explained that in the classroom the students who meet the teacher often get more

chances to learn as they receive concrete feedback. The teacher reads the paper aloud to the students and discusses patterns that can be improved. Through this form of mentorship, the student gets individual feedback and suggestions that can be immediately applied to new writing. Students can learn from the teacher for self-correction. For example, there is a student who always makes mistakes with a third-person singular subject and verb agreement. The teacher can correct and suggest corrections to that one. Finally, the student would take those suggestions and feedback and make the remaining corrections independently. Additionally, this method increases trust and rapport between the teacher and student, increasing the likelihood that the student will utilize the feedback suggested. This conferencing approach can later be modified and used in peer review when students are reading their peer's papers and providing feedback.

### **Review of Previous Studies**

It is postulated that theory is the proven idea for systematically doing something. The realm of theory is immense; theories can have different areas to be guided. Since my research issue is to explore the secondary level English teachers' perceptions and practices of teaching writing skills, it is a must to review some already conducted researches in the related areas so far. It is required for a researcher to discover the research gap for the study to focus on a distinct area of study.

Reviewing the literature of decades and so, many scholars and instructors have made remarkable steps in understanding effective practices and methodologies in teaching and learning writing. Pandey (2004) has carried out a dissertation on 'A study on the effectiveness of project work technique in developing writing skill: A practical study' from Tribhuvan University (TU) Department of English Education. She has tried to find out the effectiveness of project work techniques in developing

writing skills and also aimed at suggesting some pedagogical implications on the findings of the study. She has attempted to find out the different methods of project work techniques in developing writing skills.

Next, Neupane (2008) did his research on the topic '*Strategies for teaching writing*'. In his study, he has discussed the meaning and importance of writing. Also, he has mentioned the process of writing and types of writing. The main purpose of his thesis was to find out the strategies that can be followed in teaching and writing to make writing class effective. Through his thesis, he has tried to diagnose the problems faced by the teachers in teaching writing and the ways to make ELT writing class more effective.

Similarly, Karki (2012) carried out her research to explore teachers' use of strategies for teaching creative writing in lower secondary levels. In her study, she has focused to explore creative writing strategies used by the teachers. They aimed at exploring the perception and practices of teaching creative writing. She found out that parallel writing helps to promote students' creative writing habits in the initial phase so that it can be progressed with guided and free writing. Further, Kayestha (2012) did research to explore Teacher's strategies on teaching essay writing in secondary level in Nepal. There, he has mentioned the strategies for teaching essay writing, categorizing and outlining essays as well as the strategies of applying and supporting the principles.

Likewise, Dhakal (2014) conducted his research on the topic '*Use of teaching-learning materials in teaching writing in secondary level EFL classes*'. He has mentioned the stages of writing. He has also dealt with the strategies of writing and structuring in writing sessions. In his research, Dhakal mentioned the usefulness of different materials in EFL classes such as textbooks, radio and television, programs,

wall posters, slides, reality shows, magazines, flashcards, whiteboards, flannel boards, and many more.

In the same way, Pokhrel (2017) conducted an action research on developing creative writing skills of grade VII EFL students. In her research study, she mentioned the activities for teaching creative writing such a story-based work, writing a diary, writing literary journals, book-based activities, creating a poem, writing a biography, and writers' workshop. In conclusion, she found out that creative writing helps in increasing the learners' interest in writing. She suggested that teachers have to explore the problems facing in the classroom and use different strategies to help the students learn. In like manner, Khatiwada (2018), carried out a dissertation to explore an online engagement for developing writing in English. He has talked about EFL pedagogy and use of technology, availability of online resources, the relation of online learning and writing, and the benefits of the Internet, challenges, and practices in Nepal. The main aim of the study was to explore how EFL practitioners perceive and engage learners in the use of online resources. He found out that online engagement has given both the teachers and students ample ground to practice interactive learning forums.

Finally, on reviewing empirical study in the related subject area outside Nepal, there is Jashari et al. (2019) who carried out a quantitative research with 85 teacher respondents to explore teachers' perceptions regarding the development of the writing skills of elementary and secondary school EFL learners. The study found out that even though teachers believe that writing is important, they do not give the same emphasis to developing it as to others skills. However, the study doesn't integrate teachers' perceptions of teaching writing skills.

On reviewing some previously done researches interconnected with the subject area, I must state that it became a breakthrough for noticing a gap and essence for my study. Although several studies have been carried out on writing or effective strategies for teaching writing and its other aspects, my research was about perceptions and practices of teaching writing skills as a whole. I believed this research study would cover the approaches and strategies of teaching writing skills and teachers practicing them in the classroom context.

### **Research Gap**

There are many books written on the approaches and strategies of teaching writing and many researchers carried out on the effectiveness of strategies for teaching writing. Scholars have tried to explore the effectiveness of project work for developing writing skills and the use of materials for teaching writing. Similarly, they have talked about strategies for teaching writing, and writing an essay at a particular level and so on. There are researches carried out to see the effectiveness of the strategies for teaching creative writing. Moreover, researchers have tried to improve students' writing ability using different strategies for a particular group of students.

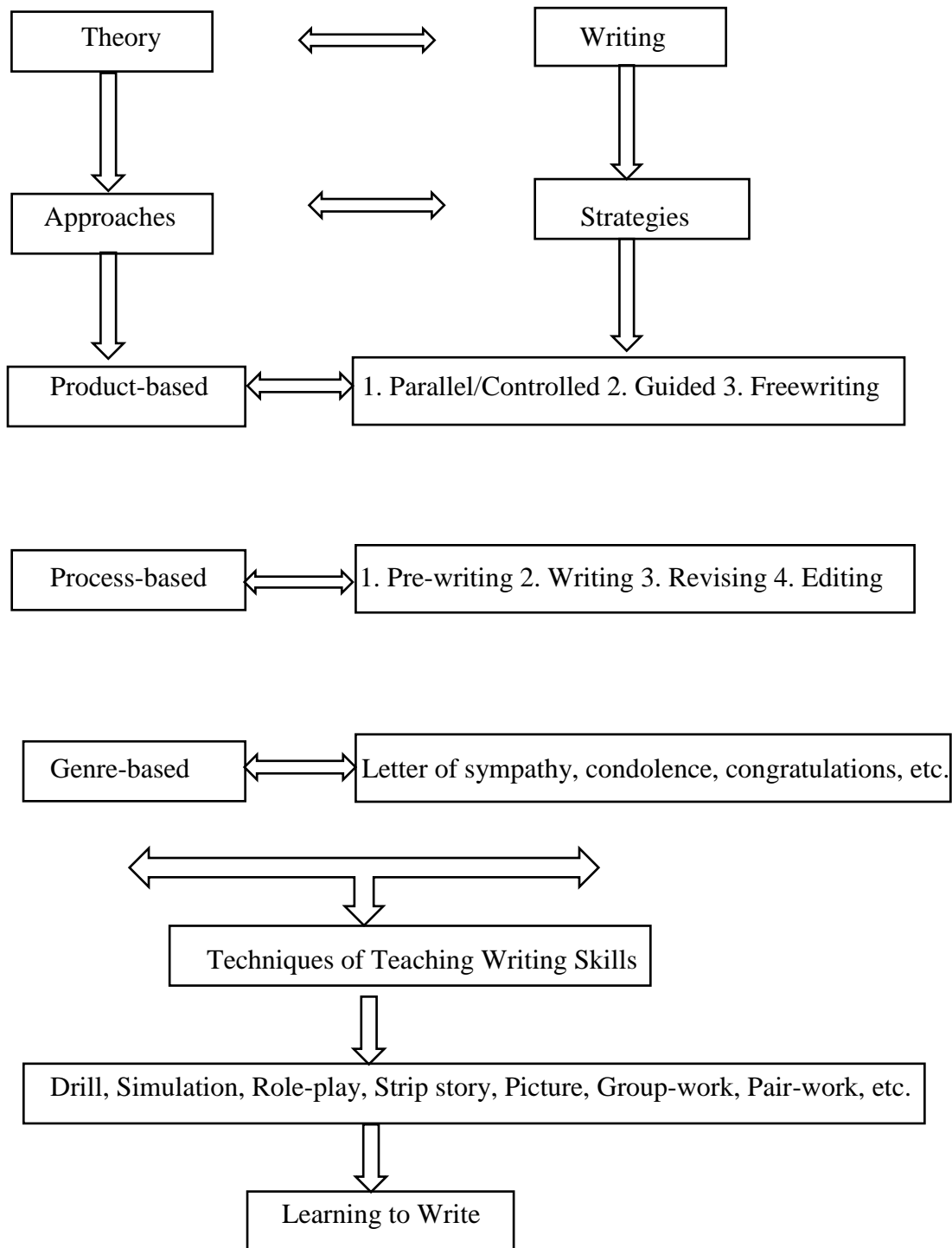
After reviewing the existing literature thoroughly in the related subject matter, I realized a gap in the research study. I realized, researchers have focused only on the theoretical part of writing and strategies of teaching writing. They have neglected to see the practices of strategies in teaching writing skills. We invest most of our time and money to talk about the importance of strategies for teaching the writing skills of the students, but it is only a theoretical side. If we are concerned about teaching writing and want to bring positive changes, we have to see the real practices into behaviours i.e. classroom teaching and learning.

I was concerned and became curious about how teachers perceive and how they practice teaching writing in real-life situations i.e. in the classroom context. There have been many trainings conducted, books and papers written on writing and teaching writing; however, perceptions of the teachers and their practices are yet to be explored. Therefore, I felt the necessity to explore this area of the study.

We all know how important it is to learn writing. I wanted to explore perceptions and practices of teaching writing possessed by English teachers of the community schools. I believed this research will open their blindfolded eyes helping teachers to reflect upon their practices and modify if needed.

### **Conceptual Framework of My Research Study**

As I believe, a conceptual framework is only one concrete framework in the entire research process on which my research study is established. It is the gist of the theory and organized knowledge that describes the relationship among various components. It tries to establish the interrelationships between theory and writing. It also presents how learners learn to write finally. Due to this framework, a reader can reach the gist of my study and conceptualize the whole idea. The conceptual framework of my research study is shown here.



### Chapter Summary

The review is made in terms of what is writing, importance of teaching writing, approaches and strategies and their importance for effective teaching writing skills in the classroom in this chapter under different themes. Moreover, this chapter included review of various approaches in the field of teaching writing such as product approaches, process approaches, genre approaches. In addition it discussed some

relevant techniques of teaching writing in the classroom. Furthermore, the chapter covered the sociocultural theory of writing that has guided my ideas and views for this research. In the same way, I reviewed some previous research studies related to my study areas that have been carried out so far. The empirical review consisted studies carried out in Nepal and outside country pertaining to my topic. I then drew the research gap for my study and presented the conceptual framework. This chapter covered different views about teaching writing and strategies and their usefulness in writing classrooms.



## CHAPTER III

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter contains a discussion of the methodological approaches and research design employed to examine the research questions set out in Chapter I. It also contains my ontological, epistemological, and axiological assumptions and interprets the actual situation of teaching writing in Nepal. Similarly, it discusses an overview of the research design including research site and participants, and data collection tools i.e. interview and observation. The subsequent section deals with the data collection process and the process of analysis of the data. Finally, it presents the quality standard and ethical considerations of my research study.

#### **Philosophical Considerations**

Research philosophy in the research is based on the interpretation of reality, the way of knowing, and making meaning through the subjective interpretation and the value system of viewing the knowledge and the meaning. The philosophical guidelines pave the way out to assimilate the proposed research and the philosophical ground. So, I explored my research issue with the philosophical stances of ontology, epistemology, and axiology.

#### **Ontology**

Ontology deals with the nature of being or what exists (Neuman, 2016). It focuses on the nature of reality and its essential categories. For me, the reality is what and how English language teachers perceive teaching writing and what they practice in their classrooms. They have their understanding, experience, and perception. I interviewed them and recorded the information or their stories from their perspectives.

Therefore, my ontological stance is relativist or in the words of Neuman (2016), ‘nominalist’ as there is no fixed single, absolute, and universal truth. The reality or truth changes with the passage of time, situation, person to person, and context to context and so on. Every individual constructs subjective meanings from their own experiences and understandings. So, the reality is completely context-based and socially constructed as well. In other words, I believe in the multiplicity of opinions, experiences, and contexts.

Researchers need to take a position regarding their perceptions of ‘how things really are and how things work’ (Scotland, 2012, p. 9). As far as I am concerned with my study, all the key insights are based on a particular context and the study is entirely subjective. Since my participants were different, their perceptions about teaching writing and artefacts were different from how other individuals perceived them. Their varied experiences reflected varieties of realities that were acceptable ontologically. The reality for me regarding my research was based on what teachers perceive and practice while teaching writing. What I believe is that learners when given exposure to appropriate and systematic guidance, and are involved in activities the way required, certainly gain achievement. This concept is a reality for me but on the same topic; others might comment saying that teachers’ perception and practice might not affect in teaching and learning of writing of the students. I must say that people who go in opposition to my belief might be correct too from their point of view; that is the reality. For instance, a woman wearing a thick jacket seems perfect if we go to the Himalayan region of Nepal but if we see a woman wearing a similar kind of jacket in the Terai region of Nepal, it seems wrong. The context is the same, but the reality is different. This is how reality differs from person to person. Reality is

inherently subjective. So, my participant's belief system and their reality have dominion over this research.

### **Epistemology**

Epistemology is concerned with the nature of knowledge. It questions about nature and also keeps concerned about the truth. In other words, it is a form of knowledge. Epistemology assumes that knowledge can be created and it can be gained. Epistemology involves the aspects of knowledge.

Epistemology is the study of human knowledge. It is the point from where we can get an idea about anything. Any concept related to truth is known as knowledge. A false idea can never be considered knowledge. So, if anything is related to knowledge, then there must be a discussion about the nature of truth. Epistemology is the floor for knowledge. It is the philosophy of knowledge that may differ from individuals to individuals and generating knowledge is the nature of every individual.

As a researcher, I have taken the epistemological stand to value the knowledge that is generated during my research. Crotty (2003, as cited in Ahmed, 2008), defines epistemology as a way of understanding and explaining how we know what we know. When one takes the epistemological view, he can get the view of the world. I have credence that my research has viewed teaching English writing trends from the perspective of my participants. There ought to be the concern about the nature of knowledge for finding which people live and work that enables them to understand how the world is described and the common understanding is created. So, my research has led me to the answer that counts the relationship between the knower and the known. What my participants knew was all out of what they have experienced.

For further explanation, epistemology deals with the base of knowledge. My research covers a scope of epistemology for it deals with the change to be brought in

teaching English writing. Thus, it functions as the pillar of the foundation. As per the tools and methods I have used for this research, it certainly brought up the validity rate in that particular field. My strength was exposed to the stability and usage of my research. My research is fundamental to how my participants thought. It is the research that has dealt with the questions such as: how I can know, why do I know something but not others, how do I acquire knowledge and how can I differentiate truths from falsehood. Epistemology is important for the existence of sound thinking and reasoning. Therefore, this research was completely guided by an epistemology that led me to seek the answer from the point of view of my participants.

### **Axiology**

Axiology is understood as a theory of value. It deals with values one should live by. Tomar (2014) believes that axiology is all about the nature of values. It is also all about the value that everybody carries. It is important to know what is good and what is bad. It is equally important to know about right and wrong. How to find beauty in devastation is also a concern of axiology.

I value the classroom which is interactive and full of relevant display charts. Teachers and students should move inside the class as per the need. The class should run in such a way that the students get to work in groups for learning. Students should be encouraged to delve into writing maximally. Teachers have to address the development of writing. Students should be free to discuss and ask questions with friends and teachers. They should be excited and active in learning in the classroom. They should complete the task assigned to them and should learn something out of activities done.

Teachers should plan for writing lessons. They should introduce and instruct activities and processes of doing something always in the classroom. Teachers should

allow discussion and questions from students on the topic. The teacher should have time for each activity and be appropriate to the lesson and student. Teachers should have depth information on the topic. They should study and apply different teaching methods and strategies to make learning fun and easier for students. They should implement in behaviours, what they perceive and want to become.

This is my axiology which has guided my research. At the same time, I have honoured the values that my participants carried. I was determined not to interrupt the values of my participants. I equally valued their ideas and creativity. Thus, my research study is value-laden.

### **My Paradigmatic Stand: Interpretivism**

The term paradigm needs clarification. Willis (2007) vindicates that ‘a paradigm is a comprehensive belief system, world view, or framework that guides research and practice in a field’ (p. 8). All the researchers are rooted in their own beliefs and the ways to interact with their surrounding environment. As different people have different beliefs, the ways could be different in which the research varies. However, certain standards and rules guide a researcher’s actions. Such standards are known as paradigms. According to Gokturk (2004) paradigm is an inborn notion that acts as glass and through which we perceive the world. It is something that gives a view towards the world and worldly things. Paradigms help researchers guide to a better understanding of the researcher’s choice for the methods. The research paradigm is thus a wide view of research.

My paradigmatic stand is interpretive. As the reality is entirely subjective, this research concerns the realities that I witness during the visits with participants. Thus, it is interpretive research. The paradigm of interpretivism provided me with the road map to understand the cultural perspectives of my research participants. It guided me

along the proper way on which my whole research is based. It also helped me to engage with the participants in their natural settings for a prolonged period to explore what they say and do. Hence, it enabled me to construct inter-disciplinary knowledge regarding the impressions of teachers' perceptions and practices of teaching English writing skills at the secondary level. Walsham (2001) claims interpretivism as a method of research that assumed the situation that the knowledge of reality that we gain is a result of social construction by human beings. Interpretive research believes that there is reality and the reality is constructed socially. This paradigm assisted me to adopt the emergent nature of the inquiry. Furthermore, I engaged in the natural setting of my research area for the interpretation of subjective realities. Similarly, I explored the perspectives or viewpoints of research participants sitting with them in their natural settings.

Everything can have multiple meanings. The meaning differs from person to person. So in my view, to observe how English teachers' perceptions of writing guide their practices of teaching writing skills and how their practices influence students' writing performance, there should be field visits and interaction between the teachers and students because knowledge can be constructed through interactions. Similarly, my issue guided me to choose this paradigm because of the focus on the teachers' perceptions and practices on teaching writing skills. As the interpretive research paradigm aims to generate reflective understanding, it is obvious that it can help me to see the practices of using different techniques and approaches of teaching writing skills at the secondary level. I used interviews and classroom observation which were primary data collection tools for me to get involved with my participants.

The researcher of this worldview believes that it is important to understand human experiences and these experiences are as important as the explanation and

prediction of something. Their experiences make sense and give meaning to the information. Goldkuhl (2012) pronounces that the interpretive paradigm carries the main aim and that aim is to make the meaning of the particular aspect subjective. As a researcher, I must say that I too made the sense of the world with the sphere of my meaning during and from the research. Thus, I have counted my research as interpretive research.

### **Narrative Inquiry as My Research Method**

The narrative method has a long literary tradition of reporting the art of narrative. It indicates the meaning of events. In this sense, Saldana (2015) states that a narrative is a storied account of events, a symbolic representation of knowledge and experiences. The interpretive paradigm, by its key assumptions, facilitated me in exploring the subjective world of research participants and developing an understanding of their experiences. In doing so, I used narrative as it always positions stories. According to Connelly and Clandinin (1990), narrative inquiry is the study of experiences. In this regard, I have used the life experiences of participants in the form of stories on their perceptions towards teaching writing skills in the English language classroom.

Through narrative study, I documented my participants' attitudes, feeling, and stories in written form. Saldana (2015) presents that it encourages a researcher to document self and participants' perceptions in written forms that represent the meaning of participants. During my research, I explored the personal and professional stories of teachers' practices of teaching writing skills to EFL learners in community schools.

In narrative inquiry, different dimensions show how humans have stories. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) have mentioned the three-dimensional spaces of

narrative inquiry i.e. interaction (personal and social), continuity (past, present and future), and situation (place). It motivates others to be dynamic and receive change constantly through narrative inquiry. Therefore, narrative inquiry is well suited to address the complications and details of human experience in teaching and learning. Likewise, Satre (1964, as cited in Webster & Mertova, 2007) states narrative inquiry as:

People are always tellers of tales.  
 They live surrounded by their stories and  
 The stories of others; they see everything  
 That happens to them through those stories  
 And they try to live their lives as  
 If they were recounting them (p. 1).

The above-mentioned sentences explicitly show that all the teachers have different tales to share. This is why, to explore teachers' perceptions and practices of teaching writing skills in the ELT classroom, I followed the narrative inquiry method that helped me underpin participants' personal narrative experiences.

### **Research Design**

Research design is an overall plan, procedure for the whole study which includes data collection, data analysis and interpretation. Through research design, a researcher sets out answers to the research questions. Research design is guided by the purpose which selects methodology. It is the preparation of the design or the conceptual framework of research.

A research design is a procedural plan adopted by the researcher to deliver the fact. It indicates that the research design is a procedure or plan of a researcher to



accomplish investigation of the finding which is valid, objective, and accurate and finishes in an intended time and budget.

Similarly, Cohen et al. (2000) opine that research design and strategy provide the researcher with answers to specific research questions having a clear plan of action if the research is to have momentum and purpose. The work without a plan is just like a boat without a sailor. Research is a path to find the destination. The destination of a researcher is to find the hidden fact. To investigate the factual things which a researcher is supposed to do; they must have a good guideline. So about this research study, I pictured out different aspects of the study from the research process concerning collecting, sampling, and analyzing data.

### **Study Site and the Selections of Participants**

One of the phenomena of the researchers was to find out the study site and participants. Purposively, I chose Kaski district as my research site and English language teachers from community schools as my research participants. Kaski district was chosen as a study site for the reason that the schools were running physical classes after COVID 19 lockdown.

I chose purposive sampling to select my research participants as my research study is guided by qualitative research. Etikan et al. (2016) claim that for purposive sampling a researcher has something in mind and participants that suit the purpose of the study are included. The researcher selects a participant due to the qualities the participant possesses. In this technique, “the researcher decides what needs to be known and sets out to find people who can and are willing to provide information by knowledge or experience” (Etikan et al., 2016 p. 2). It is normally used in qualitative research to characterize and select the information-rich cases for the most proper utilization of available resources. This includes the identification and selection of

individuals or groups of individuals who are proficient and well-informed with a phenomenon of interest.

Thus, I selected a particular group of secondary level English teachers for my study depending on their practices, experiences or expertise on the proposed study. I conducted this research in government schools of the district. I chose government schools for my study for two reasons. Firstly, I went to a government school. Secondly, it was important to explore community school teachers' perception and practice of teaching English writing because a large number of children go to such schools although there are some private schools situated in the city of our country as well. Moreover, I believed that the research key insights would represent most of the public schools in Nepal. This site is located approximately 25 km from Pokhara to its western border of the Kaski district. It is a completely hilly and rural area with beautiful views of the Machhapuchhre Himalaya and the Annapurna Himalaya.

I selected four schools and a participant from each school since I believed that the number of participants would be suitable for my study. Among four teacher participants, one was a female and the other three were males that made my research study not gender-biased. I decided on these schools and participants as I wanted to find out how EFL teachers perceive and practice teaching writing skills in the classroom. The selected teachers were teaching English at the secondary level with teaching experiences ranging from five to ten years.

### **Data Source**

Collecting data can be carried out through a primary source where the researcher is the first person to obtain the data. To make my research output effective and to get the main problem and solution of the problem following data sources would be prominent. The primary source of data is based on original data sources. The

primary sources of data consisted of mainly observation sheets and interview recordings as well as transcripts of this research study.

### **Data Collection Techniques**

The data collection techniques help researchers for collecting information and set the boundaries for the research. In the data collection of qualitative research, there is a need for the involvement of the participants. Moreover, it enables researchers to select the appropriate tools and techniques to fulfil the purpose of the research. Different techniques can be used to generate data. The techniques depend on the nature of the research. In my research, I have used two tools: interview and observation.

I visited schools twice or thrice as per the need for interviews and classroom observations of the teacher participants. Mostly, my first visits to schools were limited to meeting with the headmasters and teachers just to get acquainted with my purpose of visits. In my second and third rounds of visits, I interviewed the teacher participants and observed their classroom teaching. The interviews and classroom observations were carried out in a very flexible manner because the time, date, and period were desired and set by the teacher participants themselves.

### **Interview**

Showkat and Parveen (2017) highlight that interview is an important qualitative information collection tool in which the researcher collects information directly from the participants. They opine that interviews are significant in unfolding opinions, experiences, values, and various other aspects of the population under study. Similarly, an interview is one of the prominent tools to gather data for my research project as it is also a “flexible tool for data collection, enabling multi-sensory channels to be used: verbal, non-verbal, spoken and heard” (Cohen et al., 2007, p.

349). It is not simply an ordinary everyday conversation. Rather it is question-based where the interviewer asks a series of questions to the interviewee to gather required information and gain insight for the research study.

For my research, I used unstructured or in-depth interviews to understand the informants' worldview (Fox, 2009). Interviewing is an art governed by certain scientific principles. Every effort should be made to create a friendly atmosphere of trust and confidence so that participants feel easy and comfortable while taking interviews. I believed an in-depth interview would be the best tool to explore lived experiences and perceptions of the teachers regarding teaching writing skills in the ELT classroom. Also, I exercised interview as one of my data collection techniques to explore teachers' perspectives, views, feelings, and opinions on teaching writing skills in the story form. While interviewing, I used interview guidelines to acquaint them with my study, as well as to elicit information about their backgrounds and contexts. Doing it, I asked open-ended questions believing that participants would get sufficient space to share their stories. I recorded the interview sessions using a cell phone recording system with the prior consent of the participants. I transcribed the audio-recorded information on the same day every evening.

I managed to take two interviews; a pre-observational interview and post-observational interview. Pre-observational interview was conducted before the classroom observation with the purpose that I could learn about the participants' perceptions regarding teaching writing skills. Moreover, it was done with the aim to explore about teacher participants' introduction and background of their personal and professional life. Also, it played important role in exploring their opinions, attitudes, beliefs, and understanding of teaching writing skill that would answer my first research question. Whereas post-observational interview was carried out after the

classroom observation. It included stories of teacher participants' feelings about their own classroom teaching. It also helped me to gather information about participants' views or intensions towards their teaching writing practiced in the classroom. In addition, I queried about their purpose of doing particular things in the classes. Moreover, during this interview session, I got to explore about their further plans and continuity of the lesson in the next class. Finally, the pre-observational and post-observational interview sessions helped me to scaffold each and every story of the teachers to gather thick information for the study.

### **Classroom Observation**

For my research, I used observation as a significant tool to generate live information from naturally occurring social situations i.e. classroom settings and also to gain insights about them (Cohen et al., 2007), where the English language teachers practice teaching in a real classroom setting. Hopkins (1993, as cited in McDonough & McDonough, 1997) considers language classroom observation as “a pivotal activity with a crucial role to play in classroom research, teachers' personal-professional growth, and school development as a whole” (p. 101). Maintaining authentic relationships with English language teachers as my research participants, I observed their real classroom situations where they practiced teaching writing skills.

So with the purpose to observe teaching writing lessons of the teacher participants, I entered the classroom along with the teacher. I tried to ease students in the classroom with my short introduction and purpose of my visits when teacher initiated. I managed to sit in one of the benches in the last of the classroom. I always had my diary in which I took running commentary of the classroom observation. For this, I had already taken general consent (Richards, 2003) from the school authority as well as the teacher participant research regarding observation of their classes. I chiefly

followed the unstructured observation procedure and also semi-structured classroom observation for qualitative data generation. The running notes/commentary of the class was taken from the beginning to the end of the classroom activities. I drew and took points as required while observing the classes. I wrote what the teachers said or told to students. I also wrote what students said or read when asked or replied to the teachers. I tried to capture the natural expressions, tensions, and celebrating moments of the teachers as far as possible. I was an active observer throughout the class period. I engaged myself in the extended observation that Geertz (1973) suggests important for immersing into participant observation maintaining ethical codes of observation required with the aim of producing ‘thick rather than ‘thin’ data for further analysis and interpretation. Finally, when the class was over I simply thanked the teacher and students for the opportunity and left the class along with the teacher. The teacher and I had some formal and informal talks that also enriched the information needed for the study.

### **Data Analysis**

Analysis and interpretation of information is an important and rigorous aspect of research. Cohen et al., (2003) suggest that the criteria for deciding which forms of data analysis to undertake are governed both by fitness for purpose and legitimacy – the data analysis should be appropriate for the kind of information gathered.

Following all these suggestions, I collected the information and compiled them together for analysis and interpretation.

I critically reflected on the information that I had collected through interviews and classroom observation. As I had already transcribed the interview and class observation, I printed them to read over the hard copy for better analysis of the information. I went through the transcribed interviews and observations sheets several

times. I read and underlined words and sentences that we also call coding. According to Saldana (2009), coding is a process that permits data to be segregated, regrouped and re-linked to combine meaning and explanation which also enables to organize and group, similarly, categorizing shares some characteristics such as look like or feel like. Again she adds that coding consists of interview transcripts, observation, field notes, journals documents, literature, artefacts, photographs and so on.

I adopted three strategies- rethinking, reorganizing, and reflecting. Rethinking their stories helped me present their narratives. To present several fragmented events in the life of the participants, I made a plot of the stories and employed the narrative techniques of Saldana (2014) for generating themes from their interviews.

The meaning-making process is one more important process in a research study, which is not isolated from several other activities of the research such as reading, writing, and thinking, interviewing, and producing research texts. Rethinking the interviews offered me ideas to frame narratives such as presenting their narrative in the first person that helps me to distinguish between researcher and participants. To keep the important voice, I transcribed the interviews focusing on the speaker (Riessman, 2008). As I read the narrative stories, I looked for possible meanings behind what each teacher shared.

After that, I developed themes and sub-themes to organize the contents that the participants said along with their stories. It helped me to use thematic analysis after coding. I made two themes for the research question- ELT teachers' narration of their perceptions and experiences on teaching writing skills. Secondly, I gathered the stories of the participant teachers' practices of teaching writing skills in the classroom. The teachers' perceptions and practices of teaching writing were

interpreted and analyzed. I examined the participation through the analysis of the themes by using different contexts and theories.

### **Maintaining Quality Standards**

I ensured quality standards during the process of my research. I always freely let the participants express their wishes and feelings during the interview process. In the process of collecting data, I interacted with the participants in the field and listened to their individual life experiences. Most importantly, I carried out the process and gathered data from the perspectives of the participants. It also helped me jot down the in-depth information of the participants' perceptions and practices of teaching writing skills.

### **Trustworthiness**

To gain trustworthiness, I followed the aspects of quality standards such as creditability, transferability, dependability, and conformability (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Taylor, 2014). I applied these criteria for maintaining quality standards during the research. Trustworthiness, in general, refers to the quality of making our research work trustable from academic perspectives. Therefore, the stories, opinions, and reactions of my research participants were taken into account for the successful accomplishment of my research. To maintain trustworthiness in teachers' teaching writing practices, I paid attention to these quality standards.

Credibility, in my research, is enhanced by thick description (Geertz, 1973) through the construction of the participants' experiences and taking their stories into account through interviews and observations. To establish credibility, I have selected the research participants with teaching experiences ranging from five to ten years.

Writing narratives using the field notes further ensures credibility and provided a record of meaning derived from the field texts (Given, 2008). To maintain



credibility with the participants, I kept in touch and had several communication about the data and subject matter. Also, I shared with them to validate the information extracted from the classroom observation. In this line, Guba and Lincoln (1988) believed that the interpretive paradigm used in this study focuses on building the match or relation between the constructed realities of participants and those realities as presented by the evaluator and various stakeholders.

Next, I maintained transferability through checking thick descriptions for interpretation and stories of participants to take up the major part of my writing to let other researchers evaluate how my conclusion was transferable to other teachers in diverse contexts. For example, information received from participating teachers has to be transferred consistently to other teachers. In this regard, this research transformed not only my outputs but also my consciousness about teachers' teaching writing practices from the teaching profession in general.

To establish conformability, I took narrative transcriptions (recorded and transcribed) to assure that information and narratives are embedded with the contexts and persons (Guba & Lincoln, 1988). Finally, the narratives were established to explore how the teachers perceive and practice teaching writing in the ELT classroom. The idea is if the context and procedure are accurately followed, the research key insights can be simulated in real practice (Given, 2008). Indeed, to maintain conformability, the recorded narratives were returned to the participants so that they could confirm the stories they shared. In the meantime, they were permitted to edit, add, and revise their stories.

### **Verisimilitude**

The concept of verisimilitude as defined by Creswell (2008) is a standard for a good literary study in which the writing seems 'real' and 'alive' and entices the reader

right into the world of study. So, my next quality standard is the verisimilitude that signifies the quality of seeing to be true or real. I understand verisimilitude means an approximation toward or closeness to the truth about the way the world is. The stories and the experiences shared by my research participants created a natural setting and the readers feel like they are also a part of it. Verisimilitude is attained if the reporting of stories and events are done in a way that echoes reality. Therefore, attaining verisimilitude, I attempted to put my participants' stories into words without changing their real meaning. For that, I included their actual voices in the places believed necessary. The reading of my study, therefore, is a 'retrace' (Elbaz-Luwisch, 2007) of the actual experiences of the English teachers rather than a mere research paper.

### **Pedagogical Thoughtfulness**

Another quality standard for the study is pedagogical thoughtfulness which involves engaging the readers in critical reflection of their practices when they read (Van-Manen, 1991, as cited in Taylor et al., 2012). In addition to this, pedagogical thoughtfulness helps readers raise questions about whether they have the same types of experiences to reflect their context and situation. That is a reason, I included plenty of narratives to invite the readers to compare and contrast the experiences with their context.

### **Ethical Considerations**

The ethical issue of research is significantly essential to ensure that the research process and a researcher's results are trustworthy and legal. Recker (2012) mentions that ethics form a branch of philosophy that seeks to address questions about morality i.e. about concepts such as good and bad, right and wrong, justice, and virtue. So, I was always aware of maintaining ethics during my study where I respected gender, caste, ethnicity, and different social diversity. I always respected

my participants and requested them for their time to communicate as per their availability. I did not force the participant for providing an answer to my queries. I ensured them that the collected information would not be misused. I took due consent before recording their voice and observing their classroom during the information collection process.

To make collected information trustworthy, I transcribed field information and further requested their feedback and comments. Based on their feedback and comments, I revised the transcription and documented information. Therefore, to make my information clear, I always tried my best and always gave my full effort. I claim that my information gathered, compiled, interpreted, and analyzed for the study is reliable and the key insights are trustworthy.

### **Informed Consent**

I duly informed the participant teachers about the purpose, nature and consequences, and information collection method of the research before the commencement of information collection (Zukauskas et al., 2018). The consent letter also informed them that they are participating in this research study voluntarily and they are free to withdraw anytime they wish. Participating in this research does not harm them physically or mentally. After they agreed to be participants in this research, I started my study-related tasks such as interviews and observation.

### **Anonymity**

To make my research more trustworthy, I maintained anonymity for ethical consideration. Recker (2012) states that under the principle of anonymity, individuals cannot be identified based on the data collected. I ensure that this study does not reveal any personal, cultural or social identity of the participants. The names of my participants are used under pseudonyms.

## **Confidentiality**

Confidentiality that determined the right to privacy of participants was also an ethical consideration of my study (Zukauskas et al., 2018). I maintained it by using pseudonyms of my participants. I had been conscious that the narratives of my participants were used only for research purposes. It maintained confidentiality in my research. Likewise, I followed the ethical considerations being fully responsible for the ethical treatment of research participants.

## **Chapter Summary**

In this chapter, I discussed the methodologies applied in this research that included philosophical consideration, methods, sources, and procedure of data collection and ethical consideration. I presented the description and reason for choosing interpretive as a paradigm and narrative inquiry as my research method. In-depth interviews and classroom observations of the teachers were the ways to depict information from the participants. The selection of research sites and participants, crafting meaning out of teachers' narratives and the quality standards adopted along with the ethical considerations have been discussed in this chapter.

## CHAPTER IV

### PORTRAYAL OF PARTICIPANTS

This chapter presents the stories collected from the research field. There were four research participants, namely Pimala, Dipendra, Gaurav, and Naresh (pseudonym). The participants were community school teachers. All the participants had a wide range of experience ranging from 8 years to twenty years.

This chapter presents my participants' narrative accounts drawn from the interviews and classroom observations. The narratives present the stories of their schooling, their experiences of learning English at school and higher education along with their entry into the teaching profession, teaching experience and finally the experience of teaching writing skills to the students of the various levels and interests. Though my research participants are English language teachers, their stories are different and since my interview was in-depth or unstructured, I could elicit different stories. Similarly, to keep confidentiality, I have used pseudonyms in presenting their stories. I have gone through their narratives as well as classroom observations and analyzed their stories to get insight into their practices of teaching writing skills in the English classroom.

#### **Pimala**

Pimala, a teacher involved in the teaching profession for eight years was my first participant. She was born in a village called Dhital, which lies in Annapurna Rural Municipality in Kaski district. She expressed about her birthplace saying, '*Dhital is near the Annapurna Himalaya and it is one of the trekking routes*'. She was born and brought, and completed her schooling from there as well. The school was

near her home. '*It just takes five minutes to go to school from my house*', she smiled and said. Her schooling was one of the reasons that she became a teacher, not just a teacher but a teacher of English. She recalled, '*I was good at English at school*'. That is why she chose English for her higher studies.

I happened to meet her at a school named Nishpakshya Madhyamik Viddhyalaya where she was a secondary level English teacher. When I was going through the name list of schools, I decided to visit this school at first because it was 25 minutes walking distance from the place I was staying at. I reached the school at 3:45 pm. When I entered through the school gate, I saw that most of the students were leaving for their homes. I went into the staff room where most of the teachers were preparing to leave the office too. I met with the principal and handed him the consent letter. After reading for a while, he said that the teacher had already left for home and suggested coming the next day. Also, he provided me her cell phone number so that I could contact her.

In the evening about 8 o'clock, I made her a call and I introduced myself and the purpose of calling. Also, she responded positively since I informed her that I got her number from the principal and he told me to contact her. I inquired about periods and her leisure time for the next day.

The next morning, I reached the school at about 9:30 am, where I was welcomed by some students at the gate with a sanitizer. I received the sanitizer with gratitude and they looked happy. I went to the staff room and met with Pimala, my research participant. She easily recognized me since we had a conversation previous night. She welcomed me with a beautiful smile and greetings. Her appearance made me guess that she was about 28 years old; a young lady with a round face and fair

complexion. She had a class at that time; so she told me to wait for in the library as she would be free in the second period. Then I took her interview in the library.

Pimala informed me that she completed her schooling from Dhital Higher Secondary school, Dhital. It was also the school she passed her higher secondary education from and went to Pokhara. After that, she joined her Bachelor degree at Prithivi Narayan Campus (PN), Pokhara. Similarly, she completed her Master Degree in English Education from the same campus in 2012 A.D. After completing her study she started her teaching career in a school situated in her village. Then after teaching for four years in that school, she joined the current school i.e Nispakshya Ma Vi in 2016 A.D. It was her 4<sup>th</sup> year in the school when I met her.

Further, I got to know that Pimala joined this current school as a relief quota teacher. She taught English at the lower secondary level for two years. At present, she is a permanent lower secondary teacher since she passed teacher service commission in 2018 A.D. She exclaimed with happiness, *'Now I am a lower secondary permanent teacher!'* Though she was a lower secondary teacher as per the teaching license, she has been teaching English at the Secondary level for two years too.

Next, she had a few in-service teachers' professional development training. She said that she enjoyed every training and tried to be the best among other trainee teachers. Applying what she learned from different trainings was always her priority. Students loved being in her class because she could add fun to her English classes with her extra skills of dancing and singing.

When I put forward my enquiry on the way she learnt English when she was a student, she recalled, *"My school didn't have an English-speaking environment. Teachers used to teach us mainly using the lecture method. I studied English subjects in Nepali. The teacher used Nepali translation all the time in the class."* According to

Pimala, the environment shaped what she learnt and how she learnt. In the school system where she was taught, not much effort was made to make each child learn to speak and write English.

Then, to pursue higher studies, she went to Pokhara. It was her dream to study English education. She joined Prithivi Narayan Campus (PN Campus). It was not much difficult for her higher study as she passed her Bachelor Degree in 3 years. After passing her Bachelor's degree she joined a Master's degree course in the same campus. She completed her thesis and returned back to her village.

She started teaching in the school of her village where she was a student once. The school supported her with some salary while she was looking for a better school. After working for two years, she joined Nispakshya School since there was a vacancy for relief reservations. She taught English up to class eight. At the same time, she was also preparing for her Teacher Service Commission examination. In 2018 she passed the teacher service exam as a lower secondary English teacher. Fortunately, she was appointed to the same school. It was easygoing for her and she did not have to go to another place for her career as a government teacher.

When I asked her about the initial days of her teaching in the classroom, she recollected the events in the following way:

*I still remember my first day as a teacher teaching English to young children in the school in my village. I used to enjoy every class. Since I belonged to the same village, most of the students knew me already. I was friendly to them and they loved my class. Another thing was that all teachers were supportive to me so it wasn't difficult. I used to tell stories and teach them reading passages from a textbook. Also, I used to sing and dance with the young children. However, teaching English to children at public school wasn't easy since they*



*didn't have good basics of English. I must say I used to teach English stories and read passages to children translating them into Nepali. I taught the way my teachers has taught me; mostly lecture and translation methods. We have to do this even today while teaching the upper graders too and the reason behind this is the same i.e. students don't understand all in English. Students have poor basic skills of English.*

She pointed out two things that how she enjoyed her initial days of teaching and the way she taught young children. The methods she applied was lecture and translation methods. That was what she had learnt from her teachers of school and college.

Finally, talking about the present, she said that there has been a lot of changes during the eight years of her teaching. In her own words, *'I have been to a few in-service teacher training and I have learnt a lot of teaching strategies. I apply to them to my classroom teaching; those strategies help.'* She told that she was one of the best teachers in this school. Every teacher including the head-teacher appreciates her work. After passing the teacher service exam, the school wanted her to be in the same school. Luckily, she got appointed to the same school. Pimala began her teaching career from the school she passed her SLC; from a relief quota to a permanent government teacher.

### **Dipendra**

Dipendra was born in Kusma, Parbat. He was working at Bhumeshwor Secondary School (pseudonym) Machhpuchchhre Municipality, Dhital, Kaski. The second school I was planning to visit. As I was staying in one of my friends' room. He was a teacher in a school of the same Municipality. Luckily friend had got the contact number of the headteacher of Bhumeshwor Secondary School where Dipendra

was working. So, I made a call to the head teacher and informed him about my purpose of calling him. I got Dipendra's contact number from the head teacher. It was Friday when I first had a conversation with Dipendra over the mobile phone. I informed and requested him to be one of my research participants. He immediately accepted the proposal and told me to come the right next day i.e. on Saturday to meet him in the place where he was living. He was living in the same village. According to my friend, it was only 20 minutes walking distance from us. I agreed to visit him on Saturday for the interview thinking that it could allow me to have enough time with my participant.

The next day, it was a freezing morning and the sunlight was fairly trying to warm us. I took the help of my friend to visit Dipendra. On the way, I saw a lot of orange trees and their branches full of red and yellow oranges hanging on them. One could smell the fragrance of the orange trees by far. I bought 2 kg of oranges that we picked ourselves from the trees. We reached Dipendra's home around 10 am where Dipendra was eagerly waiting for us. He was sitting on a chair outside his home in a yard surrounded by a fascinating environment. From the East, the sun was lovingly giving us warmth and the house yard was surrounded by orange trees from the South. By the west there stood high hills covered with tall green trees. In the North was a charismatic view of the Machhapuchchhre and the Annapurna Himalaya. What an amazing environment we were in.

He welcomed us with greetings and offered chairs to sit on. We sat in a triangular shape and had some informal and formal conversations with Dipendra. We took full advantage of a holiday spending 5 hours till 3 pm. He was living in his maternal uncle's home because of his teaching job in the school. In his own words, *'I'm from Parbat. I live here in my maternal uncle's home. I have been working as a*

*relief category teacher at Bhumeshwor Secondary School for three years. It is a beautiful place.*’ He added that travels on the motorbike to his school. It takes him about 30 minutes to go to school.

Dipendra’s schooling began at home in his early childhood. He had already learnt Nepali alphabets and words from his father before going to school. He belonged to an upper cast i.e. Upadhyay within the Brahmin community. He uncovered on of his childhood moments saying:

*‘My father was a very strict person as a pundit. His every day would begin with chanting mantras and worshipping. He didn’t allow me to play with other children in my village. He used to say that we are Upadhyay Brahmin, one of the upper-class Brahmins. Then my father used to teach me at home every day. I had already learnt to read and write before I went to school, my father said this to me.*

Dipendra went to Shree Poorneshwor Higher Secondary School located in Kusma. He got admission in class one. He was six years old. He enjoyed going to school those days just because he could play with his friends.

When I questioned him about his experience of learning English at school, Dipendra frowned and said that he was not good at English. In his words, *‘I learnt basics of Nepali like alphabets and words from my father when I was a young child. But, I learnt English from class four. It was difficult to learn things such as English alphabets and word-meaning. I could hardly speak and write but I could read.’* He found English a difficult subject. When I furthered my query on why English was difficult for him, he told me that it was because he learnt Nepali alphabets and words from his father whereas he read English from class four. The gap between learning

first and second language was one reason. He was not much interested to learn English.

Why weren't you much interested to learn English? How did the English teachers teach you? Dipendra took time and replied, *'The teachers used to teach us the word and their meanings most of the time. Afterwards, they used to read the book and teach us answers to the questions. I couldn't understand them. They used to speak Nepali even in English classes.'* I discovered further that Dipendra passed his +2 Education from the same school of his village and went to Pokhara for higher studies. He joined Bachelor Degree in Prithivi Narayan Campus (PNC), Pokhara. He joined B.A. with an English major and continued his studies till master degree. In his own words, *'I completed Intermediate in Arts (I.A.) from Shree Poorneshwor Secondary School, Kusma and Bachelors in Arts (B.A.), and Masters in Arts (M.A.) from PN Campus at Pokhara.'* His spoken English was not good since he did not get an English environment during school days. Nor did he get much exposure to speak English at college. After doing his master degree thesis, Dipendra started teaching in schools.

Dipendra started his teaching career in 2001 AD in a community school. While he was hunting for a teaching job, one of his relatives suggested and managed a teaching job for him in Ramechhap. The school in Ramechhap was looking for an English teacher. He went and started teaching as a relief quota teacher. Initially, he taught Health, Population and Environment subjects for two years there for 7 years. When he got married in 2008 AD, he left the school and went back to his home town. He worked in some of the schools there and started coaching and tuition centres for SLC preparing students after some time. In 2017 AD, he was appointed as a relief quota teacher in Bhumeshwor Secondary School, where he is currently working.

In this way, he shared a bunch of experiences in the teaching profession. He always taught in community schools where he found an easy-going environment. He has been holding a prominent position in the school due to his master degree. When I asked him, *'How did you find teaching English to secondary level students?'* He replied that students have problems getting things in English. However, he motivated his students to learn English. He used to teach English to them in a variety of ways: lecture, group discussion and self-reading practice sometimes. He further added, *'This is the era of technology and we can find everything over the internet and YouTube so I use ICT tools like smartphones in the class too.'* He does not have a plan to change the school yet; but, he desires to be a permanent teacher in the same school. At present, he holds an administrative department of the school. He runs all the programs including academic and extra-curricular activities of the school.

### **Gaurav**

Gaurav was born in Parbat. He was born to a middle-class family. His father was an army in India and his grandfather was a farmer. Since Gaurav's father was an army, he wanted him to become an army after passing school education. He tried his best to become an army that his father desired to make him but they couldn't succeed. Gaurav became an English teacher.

I met Gaurav in the school named Shree Barahi Higher Secondary School (pseudonym), Bhindabari (pseudonym). He was working as a higher secondary English teacher in the school and I was there for my research purpose i.e. to interview wan an English teacher and observe his/her classes.

Meeting with Gaurav is a short story. I along with my friend set out for the school after having lunch. It took us about an hour to reach school. We arrived at the school at about 9: 45 am targeting to meet the school admin and teacher. The school

had a large area surrounded buildings from all its sides. When I entered inside the school through the half-opened gate, I saw some students playing football in the playground. Some were running and shouting while the teachers and other students were entering inside the school. We stood on the ground and waited for some teachers to come so that we could ask about the head teacher and his office. After sometimes the bell rang and all the students gathered for assembly. Most of the teachers had already come. My friend and I kept standing still on the ground and pretending that we were not nervous. The assembly continued where after some time, a student asked questions of General Knowledge (GK) to the assembly. At that time, I felt like talking to a teacher who was close to me. So, I moved towards him who was wearing black pants and a blue colour shirt and over it was a black leather jacket. I liked his shoes which were brown-red. I asked him, *'Which subject do you teach, sir?'* He replied, *'I teach English.'* He had a round face with a fair complexion and looked young with his short black hair and no sign of beard at all. He inquired what I had been there for. I introduced myself and the purpose of my visit. I told him that I had come there to get his consent for being my research participant. He agreed and advised me to meet the head teacher in his office for consent. He helped me to the head teacher' office as well.

Then, I approached the head teacher with my consent letter. He read the letter for a while and approved to meet the teacher and talk to him about the rest of the procedures. Luckily, the teacher had his first-period leisure. I met him again and handed him an informed consent letter. He read and told me to come the next day because that was the first-term exam's report day of grades 11 and 12 after the first period. So we exchanged each other's cell phone numbers. I inquired him about his

English classes in grades nine and ten of the next day. After that, we left the school on the consensus that we would meet the next day.

The next day, I reached the school around 10 am. The teacher's first period was off again; but, he told me that he had switched the class with another teacher for our meeting. That was interesting for me. I went to the class with the teacher for class observation. After observation of the classroom teaching, we had an interview session.

When I asked, he introduced himself in this way, *'My name is Gaurav. I am a permanent resident of Kusma Municipality, ward no. 14, Parbat. And currently, I am living in Pokhara-I have my own house there.'* I further asked him to share about his family and birthplace. He shared, *'I was born to a middle-class family. My father was an Indian army.'* He added, *'I belong to a military family.'* Furthering my inquiry, I asked whether his grandfather was also an army. He said, *'No he was a farmer.'* However, his uncles and other family members belonged to the army. That is why he was influenced to become an army in life but it is said that everyone is governed by destiny. One wishes to be one thing and becomes another thing.

Then, moving towards his schooling, he recalled, *'I went to Shree Narayan Secondary School and I passed SLC from there. The school was far from my house; a half an hour walk to reach school. Also, I had to climb up and down high hills on the way to school. It was very difficult to go to school.'* Although Gaurav had to walk hours to go to school, he was a regular student. He studied in that school from primary to secondary level. When I wanted to know about his favourite subjects and interests, he shared, *'I was good at English but I found Maths a difficult one.'* When I further inquired the reason behind his good English, he told, *'English teacher used to live in my home. He was on rent.'* The teacher used to help Gaurav with English at home as

well. The English teacher used to tell Gaurav to study English in the higher class. The teacher used to tell Gaurav that his English was good.

I added, *‘That might be one of the reasons that you studied English after your SLC in +2 Education, didn’t you?’* He revealed:

*Yes, that might be one but I didn’t join +2 after SLC as I wanted to join the Indian army. I started training myself for it. I spent two years and applied for it two times. But I wasn’t selected for that. So I thought to continue my education. So, I went to Pokhara and joined +2 English Education at PNC. Then after I continued my study till master degree from the same campus.*

I became more curious about his study and career. I wondered whether he had a hard time or not while joining college after 2 years of a gap since he had a different aim. I asked, *‘Was it easy for you to join college after two years?’* He smiled and said, *‘It was ok for me as I was a good student at school. It wasn’t difficult. Otherwise, I would have not been studied till master degree.’* The English teacher had his influence over Gaurav that made him choose English as major faculty for higher studies. I asked Gaurav to share about his English teacher and how he taught in the classroom. He recollected the memory of his school English teacher:

*He was a kind-hearted man who loved his work. He was punctual and taught us nicely. He used to tell us stories and read poems for us. He encouraged us to speak in English. Sometimes we used to play games in the English period. We learnt grammar and composition. He taught us to write essays and letters. He used to write letters and essays on the blackboard and we copied. Overall, he was a good teacher.*

*‘How and when did you start teaching?’* I asked further and Gaurav shared that he passed his master degree in 2067 BS and completed his thesis in the same



year. Then after he started teaching in the school of his village as a relief quota teacher. He worked there for 3 years. He got transferred as he passed teacher service commission in 2070 BS and recruited as a government teacher in 2071 BS. He worked in Parbat for 2 more years and got transferred to Barahi Higher secondary school, Kaski. In his own words, he said:

*I started my teaching career as a Rahat Kotta, +2 English teacher since 2067 B.S. I passed my master degree and got my certificate in the same year and since then I've been involved in teaching service. After working for 3 years as an Anudan Kotta teacher, I passed Teacher Service Commission in 2070 and got recruited as a secondary teacher in 2071. I worked for two years in Parbat. I have been teaching here in Kaski after that.*

When Gaurav joined the teaching profession, he said that he eventually came to know how to teach and create a conducive learning environment which he was unaware of earlier. He also realized how closely he worked with his students and how he loved them. He started thinking and exploring about the ways to make his class interactive and fun for students. He made plans for teaching. He started to use local materials for teaching purposes. He asked students to bring materials related to subject matter such as how to prepare tea etc. Remembering the initial days' teaching strategies, he said:

*In the initial days of teaching, I followed the strategies employed by the then best teaching strategies such as lecturing, making the students laugh, building rapport with them, creating classroom fun, telling them jokes, etc. I started making lesson plans for topics like reading, speaking listening and writing. I taught speaking and reading by asking students to read in the class. I sometimes asked them to prepare lessons and present in the class individually*

*and sometimes in pairs. I taught them skills like writing essays, letter writing, and story writing etc. I even used samples while teaching writing sometimes. I used books and practice books for resource materials too.*

Gaurav teaches students from grades 9 to 12. He teaches English in all the classes. He said that it made him easy in the class since he got the opportunity to teach the same students for four years. He teaches the same students in grades 9, and 10 till 12. He had a responsibility to make students good at English and help them pass SLC and 12 grades with good marks. So he was serious regarding his teaching in the class from class 9. He wanted his students to build a base in grade 9 so that it would be easy for him in grade 12. Though in government school teachers are not much serious about teaching, he thought it was his duty to prepare students for future endeavours. He said that he enjoyed his teaching profession.

### **Naresh**

Naresh was my fourth research participant. He was born in 1985 in Lwang, Kaski. He was born and brought up in his village. His father was a farmer. He didn't have any siblings. So he was only the child of his parents. He completed only primary education from the village. The most interesting thing to me about him was, he was the participant with whom I interviewed in English. Sometimes we used Nepali too. Since he started speaking in English when I asked him a question in Nepali. And we continued. His schooling started in 1990. He studied at Baraha Basic School, Lawang. He studied there till grade five. After completing his primary education, he went to Hemja for secondary education. He joined Shree Mahendra Secondary School in grade six. The school did not have an English environment like his previous school. His English teacher would teach English in Nepali medium. He used to speak English sometimes. The teacher used the lecture method only and did not encourage

interaction in the school. However, Naresh learnt simple conversation, composition and grammar in English. He recalled those days:

*At school, I learnt how to have conversation in English. I also learnt English compositions and grammar. The teacher did not speak English all the time in the class. He used Nepali. He used to translate into Nepali after reading sentences. He used lecture methods in the class. There were 36 students in the class and it used to be a noisy one. Most students would not do homework that used to discourage our teacher. I was also one of them who didn't do homework.*

After passing SLC with 1<sup>st</sup> division, he went to Pokhara for higher studies. It was not so easy for him to survive in Pokhara. However, his father managed all the expenses he needed. He joined +2 in Prithivi Narayan Campus. He chose English as his major subject in +2. The reason behind studying English in +2, was his poor English. He wanted to be a good speaker and writer of English. He wanted English because the Machhapuchchhre area is one of the tourist areas, where most of the people were employed in homestay and hotel businesses. That is why he continued his studies till Bachelor degree. He completed his bachelor degree from the same campus. Then after he left Pokhara and came to Kathmandu for his master degree.

Furthermore, in the quest of earning an education, he joined M.A. in English at Tribhuvan University Kirtipur. He was exposed to English literature and that became the foundation of his career later. He joined a boarding school for teaching. He used to teach at some tuition and coaching centres as well. Gradually, he became able to earn and manage to live in Kathmandu Valley during his master's studies. He completed his master degree in 2013. After completing his master degree, he left Kathmandu valley and went back to his hometown i.e Hemja. There, he taught in a

boarding school for 2 years initially. Then there was a vacancy for an English teacher at Gaurishankar Higher Secondary School as a relief quota teacher. He joined it and started working. Eventually, he got married and had a girl child. His wife was a government teacher. She worked in a different school and had to live in a rented room. She rode to and fro every Friday on her scooter. They are happy with their teaching profession. However, Naresh had been trying for a teacher service commission that would make him a government teacher. So he was also preparing for exams. The story he shared in the following lines in brief:

*My name is Naresh Lamichhane. I am a secondary and higher secondary level teacher at this Gaurishankar Higher Secondary School. I belong to Machhapuchchhre Municipality ward no. 8. It's a neighbouring municipality of this as well. I completed my primary school from the village and I passed my SLC from Hemja and I did my Enter and bachelor from PN Campus whereas I completed my Master Degree from Tribhuvan University (TU) Kirtipur. After my Master's degree, I worked in a boarding school for two years. I have been working at my present school since 2015. I am married and I have a child as well. My wife is also a teacher. She is a government teacher and she is living in Hemja. It's not easy to go to school from here so she lives there. She comes home every Saturday with our daughter. Very soon she will be transferred to a near school here and that will be easy for both of us. I am also trying in teacher service exams. We're happy that we are both teachers.*

Likewise, when I asked him how his initial days of teaching was, he quoted that his teaching was a different one. He tried to know the background knowledge of the students on the subject matter-first. Speaking about his particular English writing class, he said:

*I teach writing lessons at the beginning of the class to test their ability. Talking about language and skills, writing is the most difficult skill of a language. Writing is a secondary skill whereas speaking is primary. I teach writing once a week usually. Most writing lessons come from the textbook. If there is no writing lesson in the book for a week, I sometimes let them write on something.*

Naresh pointed that English is a difficult subject and the students had weak foundation. He meant to say that students were not taught well at their lower level. Since he was teaching to the upper level from class 9 to 12, he claimed that students did not have basic skills. In his opinion, the lower level teachers might not have taught using teaching strategies that helped students learn things in the classroom. He claimed:

*Umm... Even free writing in Nepali is difficult though it is their language. It may be because of a lack of practice. In English, it is more difficult. They are poor in it. If teachers had taught using techniques of teaching from the beginning, the problems wouldn't been here. In my experience, as I teach to the upper level only, I feel like students have not learnt well at the lower level. It is because they have to have learnt simple writing from the beginning of school. Teachers do not seem to have used better techniques of teaching so far. It seems that writing skill has been neglected. It seems they focus on reading and speaking only. However, students are doing; they are trying their best. They make mistakes but they do not hesitate to write.*

Curious about the strategies he used to teach English, I asked, 'How do you teach or how do you start a lesson'? As a response to that, he shared one of his recent writing classes in the following way:

*First of all, in one of my past classes anh...anh...I gave some guided terms such as Ah... go straight, walk for ten minutes, climb down the stairs and climb up the stairs, and take your left or take you right, turn left and turn your right, like this cross the bride and different phrases. Simultaneously, I used actions to demonstrate the directions. Umm...for example I walked and turned left and right to give the concept of directions. So, I performed the actions myself and then gave them some instructions. For example, to reach your home....turn your right and turn your left, cross the river step down the stair, climb up the stairs etc. They wrote on the basis of the guidance given.*

I guessed that was an interesting class and the students might have enjoyed the class. He exclaimed with affirmation, *'They love my class because I teach them the way they want. I demonstrate and use examples. I motivate and never discourage if mistaken.'* Nevertheless, he found some challenging students too and knew some are good and some medium types of learners. Teachers have to be encouraging and help everyone learn by giving extra time and care to the poor and medium level of learners. Teachers should not be strict; instead, they should provide freedom to students where they learn from each other.

### **Reflection**

Everyone has a unique story in life. After listening to the vignette of the participants, I can reflect that some teachers are guided by their destiny to become a teacher while others have come to this profession because of their passion and dedication. Life is the combination of both destiny and conscious actions. Life is a journey of learning.

Teaching is interaction and learning is the outcome of it. Teachers impart knowledge to the students because teaching is the methods of attending to people's

needs, experiences, feelings, and intervening so that they learn particular things, and go beyond the given. In this reference, Hirst (1975) says teaching should involve two things; setting out with the intention of someone learning something and considering people's feelings, experiences and needs equally.

The lived experiences of the participants Pimala, Dipendra, Gaurav and Naresh, motivated me a lot for my research study. I felt like I was also there somewhere in their stories. I also felt like the stories were my stories too. I like the way how Pimala went to school and continued her higher studies till master's degree. Similarly, I like the way she started her teaching career at the school. In the initial days of teaching she taught the way teachers have taught her. But later she changed herself and became a good teacher. Similarly, Dipendra who was born in the Brahmin community went to school and completed his master degree. He started teaching and the changes that took place in him are always important. He gradually changed his teaching strategies. He used ICT tools for teaching that shows that teachers can do anything if s/he desires. Likewise, Gaurav made his career in the teaching profession. Once he had a different aim in life but it is proved that he was born to be a teacher. He prepares well for his classroom teaching and tries his best to engage students towards learning. He is very much concerned about skills that students have to learn at different levels. Finally, Naresh is interested to bring real-life examples in the classroom that interest his students towards learning. Also, he employs a demonstrative strategy for teaching. I realized that students learn best if strategies are chosen wisely by the teachers.

Therefore, after having some formal and informal talks, tea talks and phone conversations as well as conversations over messenger with my participants. I understand that there are differences between teachers' learning experiences during

their school life and their teaching experiences at the present. It means there is a kind of paradigm shift in their lives and teaching cosmos. When they were students, there was no technology-driven teaching; the teacher was mainly focused to deliver the content and the process was less focused. However, the experiences that my participants had from their teaching encouraged them to bring about changes in teaching-learning strategies at the present.

### **Chapter Summary**

The chapter dealt with the narratives of the English language teachers, their childhood, schooling experiences, and the way they used to be taught in the course of their higher studies. It presented details of their teaching and learning lives and the teaching strategies they used in classroom teaching. Similarly, it was an introduction of my four research participants portraying the stories about the way they were taught and the way they taught when they entered the teaching field. The narratives were sequentially presented under running paragraphs. The narratives of Pimala were presented in the beginning. Dipendra and Gaurav's stories were placed one after another respectively followed by Naresh's life story on teaching and learning English writing.



## CHAPTER V

### TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS ON TEACHING WRITING SKILLS

This chapter explores the lived stories of English language teachers from community schools in connection with their perceptions of teaching writing skills to secondary level students. To be specific, it includes the stories of the teachers' perceptions on teaching writing skills in the classroom.

It critically, critically examines the perceptions of the four teacher participants of my research namely Pimala, Dipendra, Gaurav, and Naresh on teaching writing skills too. It further goes on to explore their understanding of teaching strategies of writing skills to the learners in the classrooms. Each of the four participants recounted their experiences of how they understand teaching writing skills in the classroom contexts and how they dealt with them. In short, this chapter seeks to answer the first research question by exploring and analyzing the narratives of the four participants which are based on their lived experiences regarding the development of the writing skills of their students.

#### **Writing for Communication**

Teaching is to make learners learn. However, learning may take place only if the opportunity is given to the learners the way they ought to be. It means teachers have to perform different activities. They have to use materials and other resources that support learning. National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine [NASEM] (2018) supports the idea that there are several aspects involved in learning, not only the content available to students but also what teachers do in the classroom. I believe that teachers are solely responsible for what and how students learn in the

classroom context. They ought to have proper knowledge about writing skills. They also have to be aware of the effective delivery of the writing lesson to their students. They have to know strategies for teaching writing skills. Teachers should know what writing is and what writing skills comprise of. Their understandings of writing skills have much more influence over the classroom activities. That is why, in this section, I delve into bringing out teachers' understanding of teaching writing skills.

When I asked the question, '*How do you understand writing skills?*' Pimala believed writing was one of the four skills of English language learning. Also, she assumed that writing was just a medium of communication. She further added that we just wrote to share our views and opinion. In her own words, '*Writing is one of the four skills of English language learning. Writing is a medium of communication. We write to share our views and opinion.*' Her thought was comparative to Dipendra's understanding of writing. He said, '*Writing is simply communication: to write about anything such as a news report, one's feelings, past events and to express ourselves.*' Dipendra believed that writing is mainly for communication. People write to share or express their feelings, and past events. They also write news reports. In this regard, Prabavathi and Nagasubramani (2018) state that any form of communication which is written and documented including letters, memos, research papers, reports, etc. from the sender to the receiver is known as written communication. However, I believe that writing is more than just a means of communication. Teachers should not take writing only for communication. I strongly believe that teaching English writing skills involves developing the linguistic and communicative competence of the learner which is quite a challenging task.

However, in contrast to Pimala and Dipendra's perceptions about writing for communication, the other two participants Gaurav and Naresh had different point of

views. In Gaurav's words, *'Writing is very useful because is used in everyday life. For example, letter, job application, thanks giving, invitation, condolence, essays and news report writing. In writing, grammatical structure, logic, cohesion and coherence, etc. are important.'* Gaurav perceived writing skills in relation to the life skills. He highlighted that writing was important for everyone since it could be useful for aforementioned purposes in our lives. For instance, it is important to learn to write job applications for our professional career. Thus, he did not take writing just for communication; rather, he emphasized its significance in our day to day lives.

Similarly, Naresh's understanding of teaching writing skills is presented in his own words:

*Simply, when we say writing, it's something like visual or orthographic, right? Not only this much. The first thing is the idea for writing and then we think of the words and from words sentences and so on. So everything is connected to convey a message clearly, right? Writing is itself important. It is needed. It is a language skill given in the curriculum as well. Students must be able to write at this level. Besides that, for examination point of view, it is important too. It is used in our day to day life and thus a necessity. It has a vital role to play when there is no face to face communication; we can write. Writing ranges from a simple task to the official purpose.*

Naresh said that writing is a simple visual or orthographic representation of the sound of language that we speak. Letters make words and words are combined to form sentences. Everything is connected to convey the intended meaning. Orthography is not only the symbols used to write a language, but also the set of rules describing how to write these symbols including spelling, punctuation and capitalization. I think Naresh meant to say that writing requires proper knowledge

about syntax. Syntax is the study of the formation of sentences. Kinno et al. (2021) define-syntax as the process that governs the word order structure of sentences in a given language; how words are combined to form a meaningful sentence. We study about it under syntax. Hence, students should have proper knowledge about the subject and verb agreement. They should learn how to use words to form large sentences. He further added that writing was important for students from the examination point of view as well as in their day to life. Pointed at the current situation of pandemic he said that people perform most of their everyday activities online. So, our students must write well-structured personal letter, email writing, assignments and job applications.

Connecting to the theory, sociocultural perspective views language as means of social interaction. In this way, writing is one of the written forms of interaction in society. Since writing is one of the facets of language, Vygotsky (1962) states that language is human's greatest tool and it develops from social interactions or communication. In the light of this argument, it can be stated that the main purpose of writing is communication.

All my participants also believed that writing is for communication. Writing indeed serves to convey messages from one person to another. The 21<sup>st</sup> century is the era of Information Communication and Technology (ICT), where I believe writing skill is much important to carry out the purpose of language in society. Now the question arises, how writing skills should be taught so that our students at schools can communicate effectively through their writings.

### **Writing is Tough**

It may not be a coincidence that writing is one of the less understood tasks of English language production. Levy and Ransdell (1995) mention that professional and

non-professional authors frequently complain that the writing process is difficult and complex. Similarly, Adas and Bakir (2013) indicate that writing is the most difficult language skill for English language learners to master. I wanted to know what the English teachers think about writing skills that would help me find the answer to the first research question of my research. I also believe that the perception that teachers have trouble teaching writing has a direct impact on student success in writing.

Naresh who had completed his Master's degree in English and had been teaching for 5 years or more shared that writing is the most difficult skill of language learning. Besides, he pointed that writing is a secondary skill to learn after speaking skills. He, therefore, only preferred to teach the writing lesson once a week because it was there in the text. The following lines tell us about Naresh's teaching writing, '*I teach writing once a week usually. Most writing lesson comes in the textbook itself.*'

Similarly, Gaurav who had been teaching English to secondary and higher secondary levels for 10 years or more concerned about the reasons behind why writing was tough. He explained that the students find it difficult to write even in their native language, i.e. Nepali and this area of study is not yet realized in the context of Nepal. However, Mu and Carrington (2007) report that learning to write in a second language is strategically, rhetorically and linguistically different from writing in a first language. Therefore, learners must receive explicit instruction to learn English writing. In Gaurav's own words, '*Writing even in free writing in Nepali is difficult though it is their native language. It may be because of a lack of practice. In English, it is difficult too. They are poor in it.*' He pointed that students have problems in grammar as well as they lack vocabulary that make writing difficult for them. He shared that he taught to upper grades 9-12 where students lacked basic writing skills.

He blamed the lower class teachers for the failure of pupils' basic writing skills. He narrated:

*If teachers would have taught using teaching techniques from the beginning, the situation would be different. In my experience, as I teach the upper level only, I feel like students have not learnt well in the lower levels. It is because they have to learn simple writing from the beginning of school. Students have problems with grammar, lack of vocabulary etc. Teachers haven't used techniques of teaching so far. It seems that these writing skills have been neglected. It seems they focus on reading and speaking only. However, students are doing, they are trying their best. They make mistakes but they do not hesitate to write.*

Gaurav also mentioned that teachers should employ teaching methods and strategies for teaching the English language in the classroom. Teachers did not give much priority to teaching writing other than speaking and reading. Students tried their best in their way to learn to write and develop writing skills. But a question that gets arisen here is what efforts he was making to improve the writing skills of the students. So I posed this question, '*What are your efforts to improve students' writing?*' He replied, '*As I told you that they need is practice and exposure for improving writing skills. I am doing the same. I sometimes provide samples and help them to write. I also make them work with a peer.*'

The idea that Gaurav posed is partially coordinated with the Vygotskian concept of the *zone of proximal development (ZPD)*. Defined as 'the difference between what a student can achieve independently and what he or she can achieve working in collaboration with others or with someone more expert' (Johnson, 2009, p. 19). This indicates that teachers are aware of what students can learn independently.

For instance, if they are provided with samples, they can produce what is intended. Also, students learn targeted writing items if they engage and collaborate with peers or groups.

Similarly, Dipendra's ideas of writing issues were a bit specific and sensible. He focused on the students who are struggling in writing and that covers a large number of students in his class. According to him, students had problems regarding tenses, subject-verb agreement, etc. It means students had problems related to grammar. If they had issues with grammar, it is obvious that they would have trouble with other aspects of writing such as generating ideas and maintaining cohesion and coherence throughout the writing too. He also stated that English is a foreign language and students in public schools like that had no writing base. Students did not know the system of forming error-free simple sentences i.e. supplying verbs appropriate to the subject in present simple tense. Writing had become tough for them since parents did not help children at home. Students were not interested in the learning materials that teachers just informed about such as watching YouTube on a topic too. By the way, he accepted that he did not possess proper knowledge about using ICT tools in the classroom. The school had a computer lab and internet facility for students though. Unfortunately, teachers never took students to the computer lab for teaching and learning purposes. He recounted:

*A good student always does well in all aspects of writing. But with others, I found problems regarding tenses, subject-verb agreement, etc. It might be because of the poor base of the students. Another, English is a second or foreign language and they do not have a good base in it as this is a government school. This is upper grade so there is a problem with the system as well. They have problems with grammar. For example, they have problems*

*with subject-verb agreement. They should know which subject takes what verb. The guardians cannot guide at home as students must practice at home. We tell them about materials though they cannot do that too. Now, we do have some problems. We cannot bring ICT materials to the school. We, teachers, are not good at using ICT tools. We struggle to use ICT. We have a computer lab with the internet at school though.*

At last but not least, Pimala's stories were different from other participants' in terms of writing is easier versus tough. She expressed that writing is one of the easier tasks. Writing has got sort of fixed pattern such as letter writing, essay writing, invitation writing, etc. Since there were samples and formats available to students, they find it easier. In this line, it is clear that she must be talking about the product approach of teaching and learning writing. In this context, Harmer (2007) posits that students concentrating on the product are simply interested in the aim of a task and the end product. A product approach to writing values the construction of the end-product as the main thing to be focused on. Besides that, she also supposed that writing had some more to do than just format and sample. Such as students need to develop skills related to sentence formation, maintaining cohesion and coherence throughout a paragraph. Likewise, pupils should write error-free sentences. She shared:

*It is because writing has some kind of fixed pattern. They have format and samples available to them. They need to know some common things about writing a particular genre. So they find writing easier. They feel difficulty in comprehending reading though as there is always new vocabulary. Writing has fixed formats such as letter writing, essay writing, invitation writing etc. Not completely but they have got samples and models in writing. Simply, they*



*need to practice a lot. Other things are also required such as words, sentence and paragraph development, cohesion and coherence, grammar etc. which they can develop gradually.*

Pimala's school had got a computer lab and internet facility that she used sometimes. She said that the school had all the required teaching materials. Despite the viability of the ICT tools, it was yet to become used to since it required proper planning and time management. She shared that she could use ICT but she did not. She regrets:

*Umm... We can use ICT in our classroom. The government of Nepal has also prepared videos regarding teaching and learning we can use them as well. Along with this, we can give them extra classes. We have a computer lab and internet but we use them sometimes only. You know we need to have good plans as well as time management is the problem. We don't get supports from the school administration if we want to do anything new.*

All of the teachers Naresh, Dipendra, Gaurav and Pimala participating in the study appear to agree with Brown (2000b), when he claims that the written language is more complex than the spoken language; they, therefore, stress the importance of teaching writing in the EFL class. Similarly, the teacher participants also expressed that students have problems in grammar and vocabulary that affect their performance in writing. Similar findings were also drawn by some researchers Abdellatif (2007), Hammad (2014), and Mojica (2010) that problems with grammar and vocabulary strongly affect student performance in writing. It seems to me that the lack of writing practice has hindered the operationalization and correct use of language aspects of writing; for example, subject-verb agreement. From the sociocultural viewpoint, Hammad (2014) supports the idea that students should be taught grammar,

vocabulary, and cohesive linkages in context. Students are encouraged to understand a language item e.g. subject-verb and communicate with friends and teachers in context, and finally write them in notebooks. Thus, it will help learners to eliminate some of the problems they experience in writing.

### **Teachers' Narratives on Teaching Writing**

Teaching writing effectively is a challenging task. We cannot teach writing; but, we can use a variety of techniques and strategies to help our learners learn writing. To make writing class effective and to help the students to write in their ways, we must know about different strategies of teaching it and also about its implementation. Different scholars have suggested various strategies and stages for teaching and learning writing skills. They are; controlled writing, guided writing and freewriting (Badger & White, 2000). Similarly, pre-writing, drafting, revising, rewriting, and editing (Williams, 2003; Urquhart & McIver, 2005; Hedge, 2005; *Oxford*, 2010) too. In this regard, my teacher participants also have shared their understanding of such writing strategies in their narratives of teaching.

Parallel writing is a strategy in which a teacher gives a sample of target writing and helps the students to learn about a topic. Students learn and produce writing on the topic taught based on the sample that teachers provide to them. Likewise, in guided writing students are provided clues and outlines on a topic by the teacher and students create their writing. In the same way, teachers make students involve and encourage them to write freely on a topic is a free writing strategy.

Considering writing as a process-based approach, there are activities such as pre-writing, writing the first draft, re-writing or revising and editing. The pre-writing activity includes brainstorming on the topic and gathering important information. Students are encouraged to develop the gathered information into paragraphs. In this,

way students write their first draft. After that, the students are motivated to revisit the draft and make some appropriate changes. The editing stage of writing gives a final shape of the text. This strategy provides an opportunity for the learners to explore the topic; however, it is a time consuming process. It depends on the efficiency of the teachers to choose the appropriate approach for teaching writing in the classroom.

With the aforementioned background about different strategies teachers can apply while teaching writing. I immersed myself in the exploration of the participating teachers on their understanding of their pedagogical approaches. While interviewing, my participants disclosed different perceptions about using strategies for teaching writing content. I did not question directly as to what and how they understood a particular strategy; rather, I asked them to share how they would teach a writing lesson if they were to teach. I made them feel easy and comfortable by allowing them to select a topic or writing content that they might have planned to teach in the future.

Pimala, my first teacher participant shared that she only knew a few strategies for teaching writing. When I asked, '*What strategies do you often use to teach writing lessons?*' She described one of the best writing lessons that she had taught recently. She explained the classroom teaching-learning activities just to exemplify to me how she teaches. She described;

*Ah...I will tell you how I generally teach writing lessons. For example, there was a paragraph (passage) in the text. But while planning to teach it, I saw that there was an exercise on email writing as well in the same section of the text. So, I thought to teach email as well. I integrated that passage with the email writing and started the lesson. There was a format that easily we can find on the internet. I brought and displayed it through projector. I helped*

*students know the format. The students have been learning letter writing since the beginning of school. So when we showed them the formats of letter and email together. They learnt the differences between them. The children also got motivated and when they engaged in finding the differences and it made them move ahead. Hence, I told them the differences between email and letter.*

In the above part of a story about a writing class that Pimala shared, firstly, I found that she used a sample of an email writing that she found over the internet. She showed the model or format of the email to students using the projector in the class. Here she used a parallel writing strategy to teach email writing. Parallel writing is also called controlled writing in which students are not free to write; rather, they are suggested following a certain format like ‘structure or imitation of some kind’ (Ross, 1972).

When I inquired, ‘*What did you do after that?*’ She continued;

*Yes sir. After that, I asked them to practice the format and I also wrote one on board to make them copy down. Further, I asked them another question and to practice more.*

She used a parallel writing strategy to teach email writing in the English class which was an effective one. Not only she brought a sample of an email but also allowed students to compare email with letter writing. Students of course got benefits with the comparison between email and letter writing. She was a clever teacher who used students’ background knowledge or already learnt information about letter writing. Talking about letter writing in an email writing class might have helped the students. According to her, the students easily understood what email writing is in English by studying a model or sample of it. It is also possible that students can write an email when practicing. But again, I put forward a question to her that I thought was

necessary, ‘Was a sample or format of an email enough to teach email writing and how do you think comparing letter writing with an email help students?’ Her reply to this question requires no further explanation. She shared;

*Ok. Ahh...at first in the letter we start from dear or respected, don't we? While writing an email, we decide whom we're sending first and we need address... umm .... ID, and we have to write to or from and subject etc. Emails aren't long as letters. We have to write facts. Ahh...it looks similar but these are some important points. They must remember about email writing.*

Similarly, Dipendra who was also an English teacher of a secondary level in a government school, shared his understandings about his use of strategies for teaching writing in his classroom grades 9 and 10. Essay writing, story writing, brochure, and letter of condolence writing were some of the writing lessons that he had already taught to his students. When he was asked, ‘What are some writing lessons you have taught recently?’ He answered, ‘To be particular, I have taught condolence, brochures, essays, stories, etc.’ I was curious to learn how or what strategies he used to teach. So I probed him another question, ‘How do you wish to teach English writing lessons to your students?’ His answer reflected his wish to teach writing to his students: ‘First of all, I inquire students’ background knowledge of the topic. After that, I teach them the format of the writing and provide samples and ask students to write of their own for practice.’ Dipendra here uses a parallel writing strategy for teaching writing. It sounds interesting since he talked about students’ background knowledge before teaching writing. He added that students became much excited about the writing lesson. Here I understood that students are already motivated towards learning writing. In this context, Madrid et al. (1993) define motivation as ‘a combination of effort, desire and positive attitudes towards the learning of

second/foreign language' (p. 19). *What makes them excited about the writing lesson?*

I asked him. He exclaimed, '*Students seem much excited about writing lessons. It is because they want to learn writing so that they can write well in exams.*' When learners make efforts to learn English writing skills just 'to pass the examination is instrumental motivation' (Ellis, 2012). Thus, students want to learn English writing to pass their examination too.

Dipendra opined that students should learn how to write an appropriate title, style and structure of an essay. Besides these, students learn other things from the sample provided to them. But in his class students work independently to write an essay. After completion of the work, students seldom share; however, he sometimes manages to see and give feedback. He shared:

*Sir, in writing the style or format is important to some extent. Suppose, when they are given a sample of a writing. They already learn something so they are asked to produce a similar one. When they have tips and guidelines. They write knowingly and unknowingly. They work individually. I see and make some corrections. After they complete writing, I encourage them to read or in case somebody writes well, s/he is asked to share in the class. I cannot go through every student's writing due to a lack of time.*

The strategy that I noticed these two teacher participants using for teaching two different writing lessons is parallel or also called controlled writing. From their responses, I assumed that they knew about parallel writing, and it is an easy way of teaching writing to the students of secondary level. Dipendra's understanding of teaching essay writing is alike to Pimala's teaching about email writing. Both of them use parallel writing strategies for teaching essay and email writing; however, these teachers seem to be disinclined towards 'collaboration' among teacher and students or

student-to-students that is more important. Beach et al. (2016) highlight that collaboration, from a sociocultural perspective, refers to students working with each other on writing tasks with a shared sense of roles and responsibilities. Nonetheless, parallel writing is useful for beginners where the students are already introduced to the sentence structure. In this stage, students produce new sentences with the help of the knowledge they have got previously and can think of new vocabulary as well. In this line, Brown (2000b) states that controlled writing is to present a paragraph to the students in which they have to alter a given structure throughout. He gives the example that students may be asked to change all present tense verbs to past. To conclude, it is one of the effective strategies to be used in the classroom for teaching writing skills which helps to promote students' writing habits.

Teaching and learning activities contrast from teacher to teacher. Some teachers believe in making difference in the classroom. They try to do something new in the classroom. Here is my 3<sup>rd</sup> respondent Gaurav. He had been teaching for 10 years or more in the secondary and higher secondary level. He completed his master degree education in English from PN Campus in 2068 B.S, since then he had been an English teacher. He had already worked in many schools and colleges. I met him during my visits to schools for research purposes and then he became one of my participants.

Gaurav had a keen insight into the secondary level English curriculum and writing specifications. When I asked him, '*What have you taught in writing to your students?*' His answer was not straight but a very satisfying one at last. It matches with the Specification Grid (2017) which emphasizes developing overall skills and knowledge regarding the writing ability of the students of this level. It proposes that writing should be taught and tested under these categories: guided writing and free

writing. The CDC (2005) urges teachers to follow its guidelines for better outcomes out of teaching and learning activities. Gaurav had studied and learned the specification grid that he shared with me during the interview. He asserted;

*As per the syllabus of the secondary level English curriculum designed by CDC, we have divided writing into two sections; guided writing-I and guided writing-II. We have to teach so many contents and topics underwriting at this level. For example, skeleton story, news story, news, dialogues, condolence, sympathy, letters. There are many types of letters as well; thanksgiving letter, invitation letter, etc. that we have to teach sir. After that, we have divided free writing into two sections; free writing I and free writing II. In free writing-I, we have to teach dialogue and paragraph writing, where students can share their attitudes and feeling. In free writing-II, we have to teach essays, letters, reviews, etc., sir.*

After listening to him, my curiosity knew no patience to learn how Gaurav understood teaching writing skills to his students in the classroom. So another question followed, ‘*How do you teach writing skills?*’ Gaurav shared how he taught story i.e. skeleton stories. He narrated;

*Ah...among many writing lessons, I would like to share the one about skeleton story writing. after entering the class. I asked my students the topic...ahh...the background of the topic “Skeleton Story”. After that, I described the patterns clearly that are to be followed by the students while developing a skeleton story. And after that... it’s like...ahh...I told them about a few important things: good topic selection, use of past tense and beginning of the story with phrases like long ago, once upon a time etc. I further described them; how we could use different branches (aspects) of past tense and create the moral of a*



*story. It is because students have to mention the moral of the story at the end. I gave them the structure of formatting morals. Ahh... I gave proverbs to form morals. And after that, when I presented the first and second models of skeleton story. I used my method as well. It's like, I put a story into strips (take away or remove or put into disorder). You can understand! Breaking a story into strips and distributing it to students and I asked them to rearrange them.. So, I used this method as well. Then after I gave them a new topic for writing a short story.*

As far as his understanding of the teaching of story writing was concerned, I assumed that he had a good concept of using guided and process writing strategies. He used a systematic teaching strategy for the use of the short story to improve the writing skills of the students. Firstly, he set the scene or background for teaching story writing by discussing structure, tense use, and use of phrase or vocabulary and moral of the story. That was a good start to draw the attention of the students. Secondly, he presented a model of a story by which students read and can do small scale writing tasks such as analyzing the text, and taking notes. In addition, providing a model story is a great idea for students to get motivated towards the topic. Also, students get excited if the story is given to them to read. Finally, Gaurav provided strips of a story in which a story is broken into different parts and students are asked to rearrange the parts into a readable story. Moreover, in this stage, students also learn how to develop a story. Most importantly, students conceptualize a story from beginning to its end. As a result, students are given a new topic or title on which they are encouraged to write a story. In this regard, Ghasemi (2011) presents a similar teaching strategy for the use of the short story to improve reading and writing skills that include the following stages; (a) Pre-reading activities: to provide students with vocabulary exercises and

cultural background, (b) Textual analysis and group work: to improve reading and small scale writing tasks, and (c) post-reading assignments: to establish the acquired knowledge and improve more comprehensive written skills. From these results, it is clear that teaching skeleton story writing can improve students' writing skills.

*'I divide the class into groups and provide them different strip stories and ask each group to rearrange. The same group will work on writing a new short story. Each group work together in that way,* Gaurav added in his narrative of teaching story writing. It is a fact that working in pair and group have tremendous advantages particular in writing class. It helps students engage and focus on the writing task. This finding is also similar to the idea of Richards and Bohlke (2011) that the use of pair/group work is one method that has been shown to ensure that students participate actively in a lesson. That is why pair/group work appear to be a very effective approach in writing class. Also, I believe that working in pairs or groups encourages students to be more involved and enables them to focus on the task. Moreover, the use of pair and group work in the second language classroom is supported by the social constructivist perspective of learning. This perspective was pointed by Vygotsky (1978), indicating that learners participating in collaborative activities can think at higher intellectual levels than those working alone.

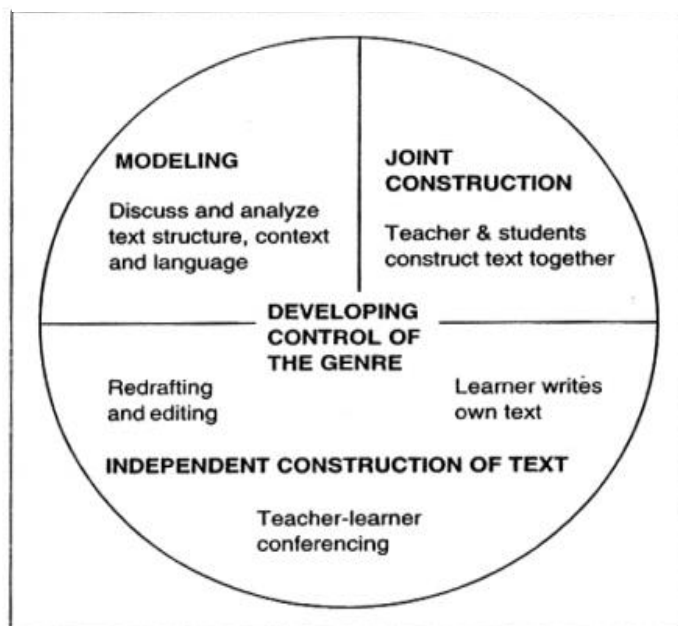
Naresh was one of my fourth teacher participants. He was graduated from Tribhuwan University (TU) and started his teaching career as an English language teacher from a private school. He was an English teacher at this Gaurishankar Secondary School for five years. Students from other nearby schools come to this school for higher studies since +2 education was only run by this school. Naresh used to teach English from 9<sup>th</sup> grade to 12<sup>th</sup>. He was a busy teacher, however, he managed to sit for the interview during school hours. My interactions with him made me guess

that Naresh was an interesting teacher. I asked him, ‘*Could you please tell me how you teach writing skills to your students?*’ He wanted to share one of his planned lessons about teaching writing directions that he might teach in the future. He shared;

*First of all, I give some guided terms there: go straight, walk for ten minutes, climb down the stairs and climb up the stairs, and take your left or take your right, turn left and turn your right, like this cross the bridge and different phrases. Along with it I give demonstrations of walking straight, left and right. Moving ahead, different examples are shown in the classroom-using match stick figures or realia. I perform myself and then I ask pupils to present the way I do. They try it in the class. For example how to reach your own home....turn your right and turn left yeah...cross the river, step down the stairs and climb up the stairs...are given and based on that students write down how to reach home. In this way, they are guided to write directions.*

From the short story above, I assumed that the teacher had used a genre approach to teaching writing directions to the students of grade 9. As a teacher, Naresh had taken the role of “authoritative rather than authoritarian” (Rothery, 1996 as cited in Luu, 2011), since he acted out what they are going to write. On the word of Luu (2011) as a classroom expert, the teacher offers students systematic guidance and careful support through a variety of activities to eventually gain control over written genres. Here, Naresh tried to guide and support students by saying and doing the activities; for example, turn right, walk for a minute, turn left and go straight, etc. Doing those things in the class made easy for the students to learn direction writing. In this context, students could write directions to their homes. Also, they could write directions to their school. The most important finding is that Naresh fairly followed the three phases; namely, ‘modelling of a sample expert text’ by familiarizing

Figure 1. The Hyland's Model of genre teaching and learning cycle



students with useful terms or phrases, 'joint-negotiation of text' with the teacher in which he demonstrated directions and so did the students, and finally, 'independent construction of text' by individual students in which they write directions to their

homes and school (Cope & Kalantzis, 1993, as cited in Luu, 2011). The vivid pictorial flow chart of cyclic teaching and learning of writing through a genre-based approach by Hyland (2003, as quoted in Dirgeyasa, 2016) can be viewed in figure 1.

Further, to be clearer how Naresh presented the useful phrases to students I asked, *Sir how do you present them the phrases?* He informed, *'Especially, I use the whiteboard to write, and show the example myself like turn left and turn right and move, go ahead and walk straight inside the classroom.'* Contextually, writing directions becomes easy for learners. They can write directions to their homes and school.

From the discussion above, it can be deduced that teacher participants have possessed different writing strategies to teach writing skills to their students. Pimala and Dipendra have a dominant understanding of the parallel or controlled strategy of teaching writing. They prefer to use this strategy for teaching writing skills. However, they are found to be less inclined to collaborative classroom teaching and learning. On the other hand, Gaurav was found to be much aware of guided strategies to teaching

writing. At last but not least, Naresh recognizes genre approach to teaching writing skills.

The sociocultural theory of Vygotsky (1978) if taken into account state that teachers play an active role in instructing students, offering support, providing feedback, and modelling writing practices. Thus in the case of my research participants, they have shown ample interest in using various approaches and strategies to teaching writing skills and have played a significant role in instructing, supporting, and modelling writing to students of English language learning.

### **Pedagogical Challenges to Teaching Writing Skills**

Writing is one of the language skills that has become very important to be mastered for students and teachers of English language learning. However, it is harder to do than it is just said for teachers and students in the Nepalese context. Most of my teacher participants reported that teaching writing is the most challenging job. Every single lesson needs careful preparation; teachers need to think about a variety of techniques, activities, and teaching aids to make the lesson appealing to the students. The analysis of the information collected from the interviews revealed three themes in terms of the challenges Nepali English teachers face in teaching writing: teachers as non-writers; students' low motivation and varied linguistic background; and classroom space, students' size and time constraints.

#### **Teachers as Non-Writers**

I identified the fact that teachers did not write in English themselves which is a primary pedagogical challenge. I asked this, '*Do you write sir/madam?*' to all the teacher participants to learn whether they write anything for their professional purpose. To that, the teacher participants detailed this challenge specifically in connection to a lack of interest, and time. Pimala exclaimed that she was not much

interested to write; however, she sometimes wrote songs. Similarly, Dipendra shared that he simply never wrote anything due to lack of time. Likewise, Gaurav communicated that he used to write when he was a university student but he did not write anymore after he became a teacher. It is a fact that teachers do not feel interested in writing. Many teachers do not have the writing experience. They themselves do not write much. From this, I assume that writing is challenging: it is because teachers do not write themselves but ask students to write. They are not capable of generating a sample of their writing for the students. It is the big missing part because it's very difficult to convince the students to write. Students cannot be encouraged to write if the teacher has not written anything and in the class probably the teacher is not presenting any sample of his or her writing. One of the challenges that we face in Nepal is that teachers do not have a culture of reading and writing themselves (Henderson & Pandey, 2019). Thus, to develop reading and writing habits in teachers, effective in-service training should be given to teachers.

### **Students' Low Motivation and Varied Linguistic Background**

Students think that writing is one of the most complicated skills because it requires better knowledge about grammar, lots of vocabulary, and other aspects to make it perfect and readable. Grammar is useful for effective writing abilities. In writing skills, grammar helps to build up paragraphs and ideas can be conveyed effectively. Pimala, for example, highlighted that students at government schools do not have good knowledge of grammar. Similarly, Naresh noted that students were not interested in writing tasks because they lacked vocabulary. Due to a lack of vocabulary, students could not write well. It has been challenging to teach writing since students have issues with grammar, vocabulary and other aspects of learning English writing.

On the other hand, teaching writing has been challenging for teachers since students are less motivated to learn writing compared to other language skills. A teacher, Naresh, responded that students are not motivated to participate in writing skills in comparison to the other three language skills. According to Dipendra, this was the result of the curriculum prioritizing other language skills, and teachers also do not provide writing tasks for the students. As per the English curriculum, 35% of marks is allocated for writing and 40% for reading, and 25% for listening and speaking (CDC, 2005). In this regard, writing skills are less prioritized as per the English curriculum. I understand that it depends on the teacher how much importance one gives to writing lessons.

Furthermore, teacher participants also revealed that the students' varied linguistic backgrounds as a serious challenge to their teaching of English. Gaurav, for instance, emphasized that students from varied linguistic backgrounds come to study in the same class. Since they came from different linguistic abilities, they seemed less motivated towards learning English. Poudel (2010) also provided evidence that the linguistic diversity of Nepal adds to the complexity of ELT. From this, I understand that teachers have to be competent enough to handle such multilingual classrooms. There are still debates going on whether to use single or multiple languages in the English classroom. However, learning challenges can be minimized if strategies based classroom teaching and learning take place.

### **Classroom Space, Students' Size and Time Constraints**

Classroom space, students' numbers, and time constraints have been found to be challenging for teachers to teach and learn writing skills. All the teacher participants affirmed that classroom management challenges prevailed primarily from space limitations and large class sizes. Such restraints had a straight effect on

classroom writing activities; especially when group work was required, and teachers' desires to implement some strategies of teaching writing that needed collaboration among students. Naresh noted;

*Students from other five different schools come to this school for secondary and higher education that makes our classroom crowded with a large number of students. There is no proper lighting. It's very hard to conduct group work or run the class effectively.*

Pimala added, *'Another challenge for us is classroom management. We don't have enough space for group work. We also can't conduct the different activities that we can do easily because of infrastructure issues. We can't move benches in the classroom.'*

Additionally, some teacher participants acknowledged that their poor and struggling students were most adversely affected by this classroom situation.

Gaurav shared;

*There are 50 or more students in one class. Because the number of students is high, I can't help all the students equally. Poor students become poorer because of this. This 40 minutes period is not enough to go through every student's works and it is impossible to give feedback.*

The teacher participants expressed their frustrations regarding classroom space, students' size, and time constraints as challenges for teaching writing. I suggest that teachers can consider the challenges while planning i.e. before teaching in the classroom. I think the challenges reported by teachers seem to occur due to the lack of planning that I have noticed while observing their classes. I believe the pedagogical challenges can be minimized to a greater extent if the lesson plan is prepared properly.



### **Chapter Summary**

This chapter contained the analysis of the experiences shared based on the first research question of the study, i.e. how English language teachers perceive teaching writing skills in the classroom. I analyzed their experiences based on what they shared with me during interviews. I also have made use of their voices wherever I felt necessary. Based on the information generated from interview, I discussed the following themes: writing is for communication, writing is tough, teachers' perceptions on writing strategies, and finally, pedagogical challenges to teaching writing. The participants believe that teaching English writing is a tough but important task. They were also found to be perceiving and employing these parallel or controlled, guided and genre-based strategies to teach writing skills. However, there are pedagogical challenges reported by teachers that seem to be affecting effective teaching writing skills.

## CHAPTER VI

### TEACHERS' PRACTICES IN TEACHING WRITING SKILLS

This chapter explores the teachers' practices in teaching writing skills. The practices were collected through observation of their regular classroom teaching. Also, this chapter analytically examines the practices in teaching writing skills of the four teacher participants namely, Pimala, Dipendra, Gaurav, and Naresh. In addition, it focuses on the teachers' practices in teaching writing skills and concentrates on the reflective accounts of the observation. Richards (2003) states that reflective accounts are an essential part of qualitative enquiry that helps to bring out the process of discovery about the data analysis and interpretation.

#### **Writing Pedagogy and Classroom Practices**

In the previous chapter, I already discussed teachers' perceptions regarding writing instruction based on the interview information. Here, I discuss how writing is taught at school is based on observational and post-observational interview information. I thought it was important to include this writing practice to see whether teachers were applying it.

#### **Teachers' Preparedness for Teaching Writing**

A writing instructional teacher needs to prepare a lot for the class so that effective learning takes place. Besvinick (1960) mentions that teachers are constantly planning. They familiarize themselves with resource units, textbooks, and available materials. In the same line, Cicek (2013) talks about the use of daily lessons for effective teaching and learning. He mentions that a daily lesson is a written account of what a teacher would like to have happened during a certain lesson or class period.

Relating this to my research, out of four participating teachers, only one had prepared a lesson plan for his class period. Gaurav seemed well prepared with materials that he was holding in his hands. He had some chart papers of different colours with something written on them to the class. He also had a tape that he was going to paste something on a board or wall with. He greeted students as he entered the classroom and asked them how they were doing and started the lesson. Gaurav was going to teach film review writing. He pasted a chart paper on the board, for this he asked two of the students to volunteer.

On the other hand, the remaining participants seemed less prepared. Participant Pimala entered the class holding a book and marker in her hands. The whole class stood up and greeted her. Having replied to the students' greetings, she asked them to take their seats. She wrote on the board, 'essay writing'. In the same way. Dipendra had an English textbook in hand when he entered the classroom. He wrote on board 'story writing' and took out his cell phone from his pocket. He started instructing story writing looking his cell phone. Naresh also simply had a textbook in his hand like Pimala when he went to teach direction writing to his students.

From the examples above, it can be stated that teachers lacked readiness and were poorly prepared for classroom teaching. I asked teachers, '*Do you need not prepare a lesson plan?*' Pimala, Naresh and Dipendra had a similar reply. They voiced that they prepared mentally. Their idea of a plan as a mental structure is similar to Rinvoluceri (1996, as cited in Ruiz, 2009) stated that a plan is a mental structure or the map teachers need. Ruiz (2009) mentioned that even when teachers do not write a plan, they generally have ideas in their heads anyway. Harmer (2005) criticizes this way of planning saying that the lesson where written plans act as a useful record of what we hoped to achieve, and where we aimed these records to say what happened.

Agreeing with the words of Harmer, I emphasized that the lesson plan should be in a written form and moved forward asking what they thought about making plans for the classroom teaching.

The teachers reported that they do not prepare lesson plans in written form because of the following reasons; lack of time and interest, low motivation of the teachers, costly, and lack of support from the school administration. It is thus found that all three participants were not interested in preparing for daily lessons. Pimala and Dipendra claimed that they did not have time for preparing lessons since they hold other responsibilities at school. All these three teachers replied that preparing a lesson plan is too costly. They did not get any support from the school. Pimala shared, *'Sir, being an English teacher at this school, I have several other responsibilities. I have to conduct assemblies and run other extra co-curricular and extra-curricular activities. Because of that, I cannot prepare a lesson plan, though I want to prepare.'* Likewise, Naresh regretted, *"I want to prepare a lesson plan. But sometimes we need money to buy materials. The head-teacher doesn't help with such things but also I prepare whenever I am free. I spend my money, sir."* Teachers reported that nobody makes lesson plans at school. If they try to do so, they were discouraged by other colleagues. They would not get anything in rewards if they made lesson plans. Naresh added, *"Here in this school no teachers make lesson plans. If we make and do some extra labour we get nothing from anyone. Every teacher gets the same salary. Why should someone work for an extra hour, sir?"*

From the discussion, I understand and agree with the point that Kiuahara et al. (2009) states that if teachers believe that planning writing activities foster students' writing development and also provide effective writing instruction, they must receive proper preparation to teach writing. Planning should contain the concept or objective,

the time block, the procedure, and the instructional materials needed. It contains the objective of the classroom writing instruction which is very important for the teacher and students too. The teacher requires to determine the overall procedures such as instruction, use of materials, presentation and practices, and evaluation accordingly. The teaching materials may include sample writing, chart paper etc. The instruction on the topic is delivered by the teacher. Students are engaged in a variety of practices and encouraged to present their learning. An evaluation is also carried out at last just to learn about whether the objectives are fulfilled which helps to plan for the next class.

In this context, Wong and Wong (2009) opine that an effective teacher has positive expectations for student success and it is a lesson plan that reflects such expectations of the teacher. I strongly agree with the statement of Wong and Wong that students' success can be reflected and seen if teachers make lesson plans. The lesson plan guides teachers to make their students successful. If teachers do not make plans, it cannot be expected that students achieve the goal in the classroom. In a nutshell, I want to state that the practice of teachers depends upon what they plan and their readiness for teaching writing. From the result above, I contend that secondary school teachers are poorly prepared to teach writing.

### **Teachers' Practices of Strategies for Teaching Writing Skills**

All the teacher participants used significantly different strategies to teach writing in the classroom. To start with, Gaurav used controlled or parallel practice of writing to teach writing a film review. Similarly, Dipendra used a guided strategy for teaching story writing. Likewise, Naresh engaged students in process-based writing practice (pre-writing, writing the first draft, editing). Whereas, Pimala used the lecture method or grammar-translation method to teach essay writing. Gaurav and Dipendra

used a product-based approach to teaching writing and Naresh used a process-based approach to writing. Finally, Pimala used the grammar-translation method or simply a lecture method to teach writing skills to their students.

**Controlled or parallel writing.** Here is a part of the class observation of Gaurav, where he was teaching writing a film review to his students of grade nine. There were 30 students in the class. The classroom was bright and ventilated. The four walls of the classroom were filled with chart papers of different subjects (English, Maths, Science, Social, Nepali).

*Gaurav, as he entered into the class greeted his students and tried to create a learning environment asking them what they had done the last weekend. He shared that he had watched a Nepali movie titled “Chhakka Panja 2”. He told students that he wanted to share a review of the movie that he watched last weekend. He asked two of the students to volunteer that they pasted a chart paper on the board. It was a movie review. There were five paragraphs handwritten.*

*Gaurav read the first paragraph himself. It was an introduction section of a review. He described what he read translating into Nepali. Secondly, he asked one of the students to read aloud for the class. Gaurav again explained to the students. In this way, he completed the review of the movie.*

*After that, he presented a format of a film review. For this, he pasted another chart paper on the board at the side of the previous one. He explained each sub-topic to the class. After that, he divided the class into three groups. Each group was provided with a chart paper and a marker. He assigned them to write a review of a movie that they had watched recently. The students spent*

*10-15 minutes on the task. After each group completed their work, the teacher asked them to share it in the class.*

In the above practice of a writing class, I found that the teacher used a controlled or parallel strategy to teach writing a film review. He presented a sample of a film review that he had written himself purposely for the classroom teaching. The teacher presented a sample providing good models of writing is very prominent to emulate students in the classroom. Gaurav thus meets the requirement that Kihara et al. (2009) have set that teaching school students to write is a shared responsibility. It means teachers should also devote themselves to writing first if they expect students to learn how to write in the classroom.

Having presented the model to the class, he provided a format to be followed while writing a film review. Next, he divided the class into groups and assigned them to write a review of a film that they had watched recently. Here, the teacher brings in the practice of controlled or parallel strategy to writing where they can easily follow the sample and the format or structure from the model that the teacher provides in the class.

In the light of this, it can be stated that parallel writing is an easy and effective way to teach students writing skills. It helps students get ideas about writing. It is a controlled type of writing where the students are not free enough to use their imagination; however, they can learn about the structure of sentences and it paves the way for them to write effectively. As per O'Malley and Pierce (1996), students ought to progress through several stages as they gain competency in writing. So, parallel writing is more useful for students learning to write, where students are already introduced to the sentence structure. In this stage, students produce new sentences with the help of the knowledge they have got previously and can think of new

vocabulary as well. Finally, I want to state that it is one of the effective strategies to be used in the classroom for teaching writing skills which helps to promote students' writing habits.

**Guided writing practice.** I went to observe Dipendra's class. It was grade 10. There were 15 boys and 9 girls present in the class. The classroom was very big. Three students were sitting on one bench. The benches at the back of the class were empty. There was a clock at the front just above the whiteboard. There was a stage like raised platform by the board with a table also. The teacher was going to teach story writing to the class. The detail of Dipendra's classroom observation is below:

*As he entered the class, all the students stood up and welcomed him with greetings. He greeted back to the students and requested them to take their seats. He wrote on the board, "Story Writing". Walking a few steps right and left on the stage, he said that a story has different parts; introduction, characters, setting, plot, etc. He was reading from his smartphone. He wrote elements of a story on the board: introduction, beginning, characters, plot, climax, and resolution. The last point was, 'moral'.*

*Having introduced the elements of a story in points, he wrote a description of each element of the board and explained side by side. Students were writing in their notebooks from the board. After that, he wrote an outline of a story on the board. "Two goats \_\_\_ narrow bridge \_\_\_ come from two opposite direction \_\_\_ both want to pass at the same time \_\_\_ Both reach at the middle of the bridge say "Let me go first! Both get angry and fight. \_\_\_ both fall into the river \_\_\_ moral." Next, he wrote a complete story from the outline on the board. Students were asked to copy in the notebook.*



*At last, for students to practice story writing, he gave a guideline of a story and asked them to write a complete story. "A crow very thirsty\_\_\_ searches water\_\_\_ rivers and ponds dry\_\_\_\_\_ searches villages \_\_\_\_ sees a small water vessel \_\_\_\_\_ peeps into it \_\_\_\_\_ water at the bottom \_\_\_\_\_ cannot reach \_\_\_\_\_ going to die\_\_\_\_\_ gets an idea \_\_\_\_\_ small pebbles \_\_\_\_\_ drops into the water vessel \_\_\_\_water rises up \_\_\_\_\_quenches his thirst\_\_\_\_\_ moral." Students wrote a readable story based on given guidelines. A few students were asked to share their stories in the class. Finally, the bell rang and he summarized the class.*

In the above practice, the teacher used a guided strategy to teach writing a short story. First, he discussed the elements of a short story and he presented a sample of a story. It was guided writing since he provided guidelines for the story. For students to practice writing a story, he gave guidelines for a different story. I observed that the students found it easy to develop the guidelines into a readable story. In this line, Raimes (1983) supports that students should be given an outline to fill in, use questions to respond or information to include in their piece of writing. From the above practice, I assumed that in this strategy a teacher guides the students to write new things providing outlines or hints to them. Students also get more freedom in selecting lexical and structural items for their writing exercise within a framework. I also assumed that after providing clues to the students, they can select new vocabularies and use their understanding in the story. In this line, Raimes (1983) opines that if a teacher provides guidelines for discussion helps the students beforehand with the vocabulary and sentence forms that they might need in their writing. So, it is useful if teachers can ask the students to write stories, articles, passages, etc. with the help of guidelines.

**Freewriting.** Freewriting is also one of the important strategies for teaching writing to learners in schools. It is supposed to be more innovative where students write freely. Harmer (2007) asserts that free writing provides powerful motivation to find out the right words to express their experiences. Similarly, Raimes (1983) evokes that free writing often revolves around subjects that the students are interested in, and those subjects then become the basis for other more focused writing tasks. According to Clouse (2004), freewriting shakes loose ideas by freeing writers of worry about correctness, organization and even logic. This implies that they can jot down everything that comes to their mind. In freewriting, students are free to write whatever they know about the topic without any clues or guidelines. It is actually free from all kinds of restrictions. Writers are free to express their views.

I went to observe Pimala's class. There were 40 students in the class. The classroom size of big but occupied with desks and benches. There was a large whiteboard in the front and a clock was hung just above it. She was going to teach free writing to her students. Here is a part of the observation of her class.

*She wrote on the board 'free writing'. She asked questions to students: what's an essay? Have you written essays? Students replied 'yes'. She wrote on the board; introduction, body and conclusion. After that she asked another question to students: what are the types of essays? She responded herself; descriptive, reflective, argumentative, narrative, and persuasive. She asked student to tell the types of essays. She asked a few more students. Then after she wrote the types of essays on the whiteboard. She also wrote a short description of each type. Students copied them in the notebook. She wrote a question 'Importance of English language' on the board and commanded the students to write an essay on the given topic. She provided 10 minutes for that*

*task. Students started to write. Most of the students were confused and later started gossiping with their friends. A few students were working seriously. She reminded them about the time. When the time was over, she called a few students by their names to share their essays in the class.*

After observing the class, I noticed that the teacher did not have a clear idea about applying free writing for a writing class. She wrote about an essay on the whiteboard and assigned the students to write freely on the topic. Most of the students looked nervous and later did not care about the writing tasks. Most of the students even could not write a sentence in the class. Very few students could write. However, one or two students only wrote a few paragraphs on the topic. In this context, the teacher ought to facilitate the students properly otherwise they get puzzled and they will face the complexities in the writing. She did not encourage students to write free no matter what students could write. For the reason Clouse (2004) supports that even if it seems silly or irrelevant, do not stop writing for any reason. The teacher set the time for writing but the students did not write. There might be some possible reasons; students did not know about free writing and its practice or students' level was below that they even did not know to write simple sentences. It is for sure that there were a few good student writers and a large number of students were strugglers.

The teacher can use possible techniques to teach free writing to students in the class. They are speed writing or quick writing. Students write as quickly as possible without stopping for a moment. In this line Hedge (2001) opines that freewriting is sometimes called quick writing because its main feature is writing as quickly as possible. I believe that students practicing this free writing should be clear about how they are going to write on a topic for 10 minutes or more without stopping. In this

way, they can gather content or the information about the topic that they already knew. This strategy also helps students to develop the habit of thinking for writing.

Thus in my view, freewriting is one of the most effective techniques that might be useful for all kinds of writers; from beginners to an experienced ones. In this practice, learners as well as teachers can use and implement different techniques followed by free writing such as: questioning, making list, clustering or webbing, preparing a scratch outline as suggested by Langan (2005). The teachers need more careful planning before practicing this important strategy for teaching writing skills to their students at schools.

**Process-based approach to writing.** There are different writing stages when the process-based approach to writing is taken into practice. They are pre-writing, writing a first draft, and re-writing or editing. These three steps of writing consist of thinking about topics, selecting needed information or appropriate ideas to be used in writing, and helping the students with different structures for teaching writing. They also help teachers to lead a discussion on the given topic and encourage them to promote pair or group work in the classroom. I found one of the teacher participants applying a process-based approach to teaching writing in his class.

Naresh attempted to use a process approach to teach his students to write an essay. I went to observe his class. It was extremely cold outside. The classroom was dark because all the windows were closed tightly. There was a bulb in the ceiling providing light to the room. The four walls of the room were dirty-filled with all kinds of messy writing with marker and chalk. There was a whiteboard on the front wall. At the top of the board on the wall was a clock, which was not showing the right time. There were 36 students in the class.

*All the students stood up and greeted the teacher, Naresh. He greeted back to students and told them to sit. He wrote on the board, 'Essay writing'. He opened the book and told the page number to the class. He read the essay, 'My First Visit to Zoo'. After reading, he instructed students to write an essay. For this, he wrote on the board, 'Brainstorming'. He told the students that brainstorming is very important for beginning to write an essay. It is the first stage, to begin with. Brainstorming is a good concept to generate ideas. It is a practice in which the writer can jot down a random idea like words, sentences, and concepts that might be linked to the topic. He gave examples from the essay in the book. Then he asked students to think of a topic on which they wanted to write an essay. For example my school, educational tour, my best friend, the most memorable event of my life, etc. He provided 2 minutes to brainstorm on the chosen topic. He allocated time for each stage; brainstorming 2 minutes, writing a first draft 10 minutes, editing 5 minutes, and writing a final draft 10 minutes. All the students seemed working. The classroom was a silent one. The teacher kept moving around in the class instructing, encouraging, and guiding the students. Students questioned to him whenever they needed help. After 10 minutes, a few students reported that their work was completed. The teacher would take the notebook for a minute and give feedback to the students. Some boys and girls shared their essays with the teacher only.*

*The teacher instructed them to go through the first draft and make some corrections regarding grammar, word choice, the structure of sentences, etc. The bell rang. He summarized the class and gave the assignment to complete*

*the essay. He instructed them to write essays in the format; introduction, body and conclusion.*

In the above glimpse of a classroom practice on teaching writing essays, I noticed that Naresh was trying his best to implement a process-based approach to writing. It shows that he has got the concept but the class was not much effective for all students. The students got puzzled because they were not clear about what to write especially in each stage. While observing I also realized that students needed more clear instruction and practice for brainstorming in pre-writing. Hedge (2001) opines that in this process students generate ideas and make plans for writing. Similarly, students needed a clear concept about writing a first draft and editing. For a better result, the teacher could ask students to collaborate with a peer for brainstorming. Unfortunately, the teacher did not create an environment for students to collaborate on each part of the task either. The teacher encouraged all the students to write and that was the good part of the class. He tried to create a comfortable situation for students. He told students not to care about grammar or sentence structure, words and spelling while writing. That made students feel free to write what they already know. Sharing their work with the teacher was also a good idea. As the teacher gave feedback to students orally, that also worked in the class but it would be better if they were asked to work in pairs or groups to find problems in their writing and also find the solution of it.

From the observation, I also came to know that using a process-based approach to writing is a bit complicated for both teachers and students. It is a time-consuming activity that needed continuous effort and motivation from both teachers and students. The teacher lacked different techniques or skills using this approach to teaching writing skills. I noticed that students were in dilemma about what to write

when the teacher asked them to write. In such a situation, this process can help students to plan and sketch an outline for writing. Before getting started, students may not be able to think of an interesting topic or they may have trouble writing because as per Langan (2005) a mental block may arise when students sit down before a blank sheet of paper. At the moment, this process helps the learners to think of their own words or plans to step forward for writing on the intended topics. In this process, teachers might help learners to initiate their writing on their topics too by using different techniques such as brainstorming, listing, webbing, sketching, etc. During my classroom observation of my teacher participants, I did not find aforementioned techniques being applied in the classroom practice.

### **Chapter Summary**

In this second last chapter, I mainly discussed, analyzed, and interpreted the information that I obtained from classroom observation regarding the practices of strategies for teaching writing to the students of secondary level. The four teacher participants were found to be practicing the strategies: parallel or controlled, guided, freewriting, and process writing in their classrooms. However, they are intensively required to have proper knowledge about implementing those strategies in the classroom context.

## CHAPTER VII

### KEY INSIGHTS, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND MY REFLECTION

In this chapter, I present a summary of the insights of my research study. Based on the key insights, I conclude. I also depict the implications, my reflection, and experiences that I gained from the beginning to the end of this research.

#### **Key Insights**

After interpreting, analyzing, and discussing the research information obtained through interviews and observation, I present the key insights under the different headings.

By carefully assessing the information, it is found that there is a lag or disparity between what teachers perceive and what they practice in the real world. The teachers believed to be using writing strategies to their utmost level; whereas, in practice, they were found less skilled in applying them within the classroom context. Even though all the teachers knew about different strategies to teach writing skills, they were found to be less inclined to implement.

Firstly, all the teachers considered writing skills merely a means for communication. Secondly, they found teaching writing as a tough task in the classroom for various reasons: English as a second language, challenging grammar, lack of vocabulary, less time allocated for teaching writing skills compared to reading and speaking, no use of ICT in English class, absence of strategy-based teaching, dearth of interest and motivation in both students and teachers, and no good base of the public school children the lower classes.



Thirdly, viewing perceptions about teaching writing skills, the teachers believed to be teaching strategies-based writing classroom. For instance, the teachers perceived to be teaching writing skills using strategies; parallel or controlled, guided writing, freewriting, process-based writing, and genre approach to writing when they were asked to share. Their narratives on their perceptions of teaching writing seemed very ideal and evidence-based practice. They believed to be making their classroom interactive and collaborative.

Nonetheless, in the practice, the classrooms were merely so-called strategies based on the teaching writing skills. The strategies that the teachers used in the classroom teaching were parallel or controlled writing, guided writing, freewriting, and process-based writing. However, the results and discussion revealed that the strategies were not fully implemented. The partially applied strategy did not help students to learn writing skills anyway. There was an absence of interaction and collaboration among students. Students were found confused on how to do the task and teachers seemed puzzled too. The teachers were partly found to have theoretical knowledge on strategies of teaching writing skills; though some teachers used some while some of them did not. The methods did not yield expected improvement in learners since teachers were found less prepared with lack of readiness for the writing class.

Most notably, instruction from the teachers' side was unclear for the students in the classroom. It was because the teachers received no preparation for the writing class. The goals were not set beforehand by the teachers. Also, teaching materials were not prepared. The teachers seemed ignorant since strategies based classes required proper planning and careful execution at the right time.

There were some pedagogical challenges that the teachers reported to me; however, it was found that there were no such issues none other than classroom space, students' size, and time constraints. The challenges that I accepted were teachers as non-writers, students and teachers' lack of motivation, and students varied linguistic backgrounds. My key insights seem to suggest that teachers can minimize the challenges if they try to write and be an example for the students. Also, if they plan and implement accordingly to the classroom practices and that would eventually motivate the learners and therefore minimize the effect of their first language interference.

### **Conclusions**

This study explores English language teachers' perceptions and practices of teaching writing skills in secondary level public schools of Nepal. The key insights indicate that teachers perceive writing primarily as a means of communication and as the most important and demanding skill to acquire in language learning. The teachers also perceive that they integrate process and product approaches of writing in their teaching. In addition, they believe that their classes were evidence-based featuring presentation, interaction, collaboration, students' receiving feedback, and outcome orientation.

However, I find their writing classes partially evidence-based. Teachers partially implement the strategies of writing. But they do not plan for their writing classes. Teachers do not present samples of writing to the students in the class. There is no interaction and collaboration among teachers and students. Teachers do not provide proper feedback to students. Most of the writing classes conclude without students' writings of their own independently. Finally, the teachers report and my observations show that there are some pedagogical factors affecting teaching writing

such as teachers as non-writers, students' low motivation and varied linguistic background, classroom space and students' size and time constraints.

Through this study, I understand that this is not the case in every context where teachers do not practicing what they perceive. Actually, one of the fourth teacher participants conduct the writing class very effectively where the teacher plays the role of model, demonstrates the lesson contents sufficiently, and finally students write a first draft of the writing task followed by different classroom activities. It is one of the most celebrated writing classes I have observed during my study.

Besides, the methods that most teacher participants use in their classroom teaching perform the least favorable outcome in terms of lack of planning, lack of proper knowledge about implementing strategies from the teachers' side. From the results, it can be assumed that the problems do not lie with the teachers' perception regarding teaching writing skills; but with how they teach writing in the class. It might be said that teachers partially fail to practice what they believe in as. They pay little attention to writing in class, give more time and emphasis on teaching other language skills; reading and writing. Unfortunately, this study did not explore how much time teachers put into teaching writing skills in comparison to other skills; reading and writing. This can be one area to research in the future.

Taking into account what Socio-cultural perspective, one of the emerging schools of thought, suggests that learners learn from more knowledgeable others through interaction and collaboration in the context. In this context, teachers ought to find some alternative and innovative ways of teaching writing skills to the students to prepare them for their future endeavours. If they study, prepare and plan for each writing class, I believe students will develop writing ability from their school level.

### **Implications of the Study**

This study comes up with stories of teachers' perceptions and practices of teaching writing skills in secondary schools. Based on the above key insights and conclusions, the following implications of this study have been derived.

First, teachers need to understand that the main purpose of a writing class is to make students write something or facilitate them to produce a piece of writing at the end of a class. If students are not able to produce a piece of writing, teachers have to reflect their teaching practices in the classroom and they might need to change their way of teaching too. They might need to study and apply teaching writing strategies for an outcome-based writing class.

Second, teachers need to think how their perceptions and the ways of practicing teaching English writing skills get differed and how to make their writing classes effective for their learners. They are suggested following different strategies; parallel, guided and freewriting as a product-based approach to writing. Similarly, they can follow the process-based writing: pre-writing, writing and editing strategies for making their students better writers always. Teachers can use parallel writing for the promotion of the writing habits of the students by using sample writing in the beginning. Likewise, by using a guided writing strategy, teachers can encourage students to learn new ideas, new vocabulary, sentence structure, and patterns about writing a subject matter. Finally, freewriting can provide a platform for students to think of new ideas themselves. It also helps students to explore how much they can write if freedom is given to writing while worrying less about grammar error, vocabulary, poor spelling and sentence structures in writing the first draft.

In the same way, teachers need to follow all the three stages of the teaching writing through process-based writing properly. Teachers can involve students to

collect all the information and content knowledge themselves in the pre-writing stage. But before this, they should be well aware of their tasks and ways of implementing them. Teachers can involve students in different techniques in this stage such as brainstorming, webbing, sketching, listing, etc. While writing the first draft, teachers need to facilitate students to organize the collected information or ideas out of the pre-writing stage and help them in the selection of vocabulary and formation of sentences of different lengths.

Elaborately, teachers always have to be aware of good teaching strategies and plan accordingly so that students can be engaged in various group and pair work activities in the writing class. For example, collaboration among students and between teachers are the most important techniques for a successful writing class. Also, for providing feedback, teachers can encourage students to work in group or pair-work through which they can share their ideas and try to find the errors themselves. Students can find their errors themselves and also can make corrections if they collaborate with their peers. The most important thing to remember is that teachers ought to facilitate and motivate students along with positive feedback. Finally, teachers have to interact with students and allow them to discuss with their friends in the writing class too.

To wind up, there are always some factors affecting pedagogical implications regarding teaching writing in the school. However, I would suggest that teachers have to be aware of the strategies and be always prepared for the class, doing so challenges can be minimized to a greater extent and classroom teaching and learning will be always fruitful. For this teachers can make a lesson plan and plan about activities as the strategy suggests. Teachers also need to study, do as they believe, and, be a writer first, if they wish their students to be writers, a world's need today.

### **My Reflection**

It was my dream to pursue Master's Degree at Kathmandu University. It came to be true in August 2018 when I joined this university. In every semester, we studied a course on research methodology. We were asked to write research papers. Writing research papers triggered me that I could also become a researcher and more than that I can learn to write. So, I decided to write a dissertation though there was an easy way out to just pass out from KU by writing a research paper. However, I was not completely aware of the time and the long journey that I had to take through.

Whenever, I used to meet my seniors and talked to them, they used to tell me that writing a thesis at KU is tough and challenging. They used to refer to some names who had completed all their semesters but had been lingering due to the thesis. No matter what, I decided to choose to do a thesis just because I wanted to learn.

In the third semester, our professors and faculty teachers suggested choosing a topic for dissertation writing. Choosing a topic was not an easy task though. I was interested in writing; so, I chose this title. It went through many changes and reforms throughout its proposal until it came out as a final shape. I wrote a proposal and defended it on September 2020. The one-year-long journey began since then.

I went to Kaski district for information collection of my research. It was just a release after lockdown due to Covid-19. So, it was not easy. I stayed there for two weeks and visited schools. I met with English teachers. Interviews and classroom observations were carried out. It was all very exciting and challenging for me. To name a few, visiting new places, enjoying the mirth of beautiful mountains, hills and delightful nature was exciting for me. Whereas, visiting different schools, teachers, students, people of different culture and background were challenging on the other hand. To sum up, those days were the most mesmerizing days ever in my life.

I came back to Kathmandu with my interview and classroom observation information. I had to transcribe them all. I had several meetings with my dissertation supervisor Prof. Gnawali. Every meeting with him was a motivation for me. He used to refurbish the work with his continuous comments, feedback and compliments. I had to study a lot. I had to find research papers over the internet and books in the library to support each idea or topic that emerged. I spent most of my time reading and writing. I also spent time on re-reading, re-writing them over and again. Several drafts were written and printed for revision and feedback. Doing all those things, I did not come to realize that I have come to the end of this research writing. I am very delighted to write my reflection as the last topic of my dissertation.

Through this research, I got an opportunity to sharpen and develop my interpersonal, communicative along emotional skills. I could also think of the area of my interest for specializing in this particular aspect of language teaching and learning. I was also able to think of and accept various perspectives, to be flexible in my work, work ethically, and accept differences while doing this research. In a nutshell, writing a dissertation has created a different real world where I got a place for learning and relating my theoretical understanding as well as to strengthen my professional career and educational life. At last but not least, I want to say that my thrust for learning and education started the day I was born and will be continued. So, I am giving the break to this work stating the words of Robert Frost:

*The woods are lovely, dark and deep,*

*But I have promises to keep,*

*And miles to go before I sleep,*

*And miles to go before I sleep.*

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## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX 1

## SAMPLE OF PARTICIPANT'S TRANSCRIBED NARRATIVES

Interviewer: I am Sandip Kumar Patel. I am doing a master degree in English Teaching at Kathmandu University. I would like to welcome you sir at first. Could you please introduce yourself in brief?

Interviewee: My name is Naresh (Pseudonym). My old home is Achham (Pseudonym) and currently, I am living here. I am a teacher at Birendra Ma. Vi. Lahachowk, Kaski (Psydonym).

Interviewer: Ahh...There are four skills of English language teaching and learning. I would like to know about writing one. So, sir which lesson in writing did you teach recently?

Interviewee: I taught letters of condolence and letter of sympathy.

Interviewer: What else have you taught so far in writing?

Interviewee: Before this ah...I have taught letter writing.

Interviewer: Which class do you remember well sir condolence or letter?

Interviewee: I remember the letter writing lesson well.

Interviewer: Could you please explain about that class?

Interviewee: Generally, in the class, we follow the ABC framework. In the beginning, I try to be fresh and friendly in the class no matter how much I am angry or there is pain with me. And after that, I sometimes sing and sometimes I dance in the class as well. Sometimes I draw in the class and sometimes I tell proverbs and idioms. I try to motivate students in this way for the class. After that only I revise the previous lesson and ask some selected students about the previous lesson and ask the

rest of the students to prepare for the next class. I ask students about the previous class and give them feedback based on their responses and finally, I start the new lesson.

In this letter writing lesson, there is a letter-writing format. Brainstorming, ahh...collection of vocabulary...after that revision and editing ...after that final draft, we write. While doing so what happens in our community school is that it is difficult to maintain the level of the students. The English language is difficult. So time to time we have to use Nepali Language in the class. Because we have to give them the concept. If they don't have a concept there is no use in teaching. At least they should have known some basic things. We do that and after doing that we talk about the parts of the letter only.

Interviewer: Sir you said that you sometimes sing or dance in the English classroom. How do you think it influences the class or students?

Interviewee: It really does sir. It is because, in the beginning, when a teacher enters the classroom, students should feel light or friendly not as a burden. Some people think that if students take teachers lightly, the class gets disturbed but I don't believe this. I begin my class with motivation and get my students' attention. If you observe my class inside or outside it is always the same. There is silence and students are disciplined. Students get attracted sir, we cannot blame students for this, this is what we have to create.

I try to link the subject matter. When I teach letter writing, I try to create songs about letter writing. I use it in class.

Interviewer: Sir as you said that you were teaching letter writing and you motivated students and got their attention towards you, right? After that what kind of letter did you teach, how did you teach?

Interviewee: I taught personal letters. They are used to personal letters. They are also familiar with a formal letter. We join the parts of a letter and we do.

Interviewer: Do you remember the parts of the letter?

Interviewee: Yes I remember.

Interviewer: Could you please share?

Interviewee: In the beginning, I introduce the importance of letter writing and types of letter writing and we start with personal letters. A personal letter is an easier one. Students also write some personal letters.

Now we talk about parts of the letter. At first, we write the address, date.

While writing address I ask them to write their address. And after that only district or any other address is written. And after that, I salutation part generally used like what to write to father or brother. And only after that do we go to the body part. In the body part, it is commonly written like how are you... and I am fine... like this, we start so that students can easily recall. I hope that you are also fine there. Last time you asked me about this based on that I would like to write. It depends on the topic they are writing about. And only after that do we write as like introduction, body and conclusion. At last, we write a subscription.

Interviewer: Sir you talked about letter writing and its parts, besides these things what else is important about letter writing?

Interviewee: in letter writing, umm... letter writing is a part of communication. Maybe the types are different or anything but it's a part of communication. The communication part is connected to language skills.

Interviewer: While writing body parts, what are some important things? Like it's a paragraph, right? There are lots of things in a paragraph, so how to give them the concept of like cohesion and coherence?

Interviewee: We can give concepts like when we complete the introduction part and now in the body part, we have to think what message or subject is there. I try to be brief and concise because students may feel bored with long text. The use of cohesion and coherence is short and the grammar is also not very emphasized and they are short. I simply give them short information about them.

Interviewer: Simply, when we say writing, then it's something like visual or orthographic, right? Not only this much but the first thing is idea for writing and we think of the words and from words to sentences and so on. So everything is connected to convey a message clearly, right? Did you make students write?

Interviewee: First of all, I ask their pre-knowledge or background information. Based on that I make a list and I correct it later. And after that, I ask them to write. if the subject matter is difficult or new for them I do it first and then only I ask them to write.

Interviewer: After they wrote, did you ask them to share or did you read?

Interviewee: I allow them to share. There are students of a different levels so I try to include all.

Interviewer: After they shared, how did you find their writing and do you provide feedback?

Interviewee: They mostly have grammatical mistakes. They have lack vocabulary as well. It is because they do not practice it.

Interviewer: How much are you satisfied that your students have learnt letter writing?

Interviewee: I am much satisfied that most of the students have learnt.

Interviewee: What feedback did you give?



Interviewer: While providing feedback, I mostly focus on grammar, parts of speech, structure and subject-verb agreement etc.

Interviewer: How is it so important to teach writing at this secondary level?

Interviewee: Writing is itself important. It is needed. It is a language skill as well. It is given in the curriculum as well. Students must be able to write at this level. Besides that for examination point of view is also important. It is used in our day to day life.

Interviewer: Sir you said that it is necessary for our day to day life. How do you think so?

Interviewee: In our day to day life, it is necessary. It is because we cannot meet every day and when there is no face communication we can write. These days our villages have been developed and we should write letters for a simple task as well. For the official use also we write different letters or applications.

Interviewee: How much are students interested in writing?

Interviewee: Students seem to have 50-50 interests in writing. The students who have good vocabulary power, are interested to write. Whereas the students who are not so, look less interested. They do write but the outcome is not so satisfactory.

Interviewer: How can we motivate students to write?

Interviewee: To motive, we have to tell them the advantages and disadvantages of it. We have to teach words. And we also have to teach design and samples of it. We have to give priority to what they know and tell them day to day practical things about it as well.

Interviewer: How much do you give priority to writing?

Interviewee: I do give sir, I do. It is because our curriculum and evaluation systems are all about writing. Evaluation is done through writing. Obviously, we have to give priority to writing.

Interviewer: What do you have to teach in writing at the secondary level?

Interviewee: In writing, there are paragraph writing, letter writing, ...essay writing, brochures writing, bio-data writing, condolence writing; it's a part of the letter writing, ammh...leaf-let writing. After that diagram, charts; describing them and writing about. There are guided writing and free writing.

Interviewer: How do teaching methods, strategies and techniques help in teaching writing?

Interviewee: Obviously, they play important role in teaching. Some approaches and techniques are popular all over the world. We cannot ignore them. But in the beginning, we also have to ignore them it is because if we put them with a frame or system at first, it is difficult for them. Because they are frameworks. We should allow them to do it in their way in the beginning.

Interviewer: How can we increase students' participant in writing class, as a teacher?

Interviewee: It depends on the subject matter. For example, we can assign them to write about themselves, Write about their best friends, and write about your family and school...we can start with simple subjects or topics. ...they cannot write if ask them to write an essay at first. We have to motivate them to write in this way.

Interviewer: As a teacher what message do you want to give regarding teaching writing?

Interviewee: Writing is documentation and is recorded. So teachers always hesitate to teach maybe because everyone can see it, even parents. Some mistakes can be from the side by teachers as well. So teachers can give simple and easy topics to write....amhh...ask them to write about school ... ask them to write only five sentences and so on. Ask them to compare and share their work. If there are mistakes ask them to discuss and find where the mistakes are and ask to correct them as well.

Slowly the level of the students will increase and ...we have to motivate...we shouldn't say this is wrong or something at first otherwise they will feel bad and won't write. It all depends on the teacher if he/she wants. There is the effect of the environment as well. Whatsoever the environment is, it all depends on the teacher inside the classroom.

Interviewer: How sir?

Interviewee: It's like this sir, how does the teacher take teaching? Does he take it as a burden or what? Do the teachers have a good rapport with students or not?

Learn...learn...teachers themselves are learners so they have to learn. I feel like I am a learner. It is because there is everyday new thing adding to our areas. If teachers teach students in a joyful environment... we can do that. It's not necessary that a teacher knows everything. Teachers have to plan. These days it is a bit easy because of the internet and so on. Everything we can find there. We can show videos and make students listen to audios there as well. We can see about pronunciation and so on. We can use a mobile phone as well. It depends on everything on teachers. We have to take everything positively and teachers should feel that it is their responsibility and they have to do something for the students and teach them what they can do. They should keep trying.

I prepare and plan but due to some problems, I cannot present. There is an internet or electricity problem as well. The period is of 40 minutes only and we have to do a lot. I use computers sometimes but I don't get help from the school administration. There is a big possibility. I am concerned about making happy my students not others.

Interviewer: Min sir thank you very much for your time and sharing.

Interviewee: Thank you Sandip Sir!

## APPENDIX 2

Table 1. Writing Skill

S. N.	Grade Nine	Grade Ten
1	<p>Write for a variety of audiences, purposes and in various forms to communicate meaning, ideas and emotions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Write about personal experiences creatively by composing meaningful paragraphs to express facts, ideas, interests, likes and dislikes, opinions and attitudes.</li> <li>▪ Express and share feelings and reflect on their personal experience in meaningful sentences.</li> </ul>	<p>Write critical comments or review notes on current events and incidents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Prepare book and film reviews to display.</li> <li>▪ Draft news stories on current issues and events.</li> </ul>
2	<p>Develop writing process to enhance their written products:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Plan and organize ideas for writing.</li> <li>▪ Revise and check structure, spelling and punctuation.</li> <li>▪ Practice peer, group and self-editing to improve writing convention.</li> </ul>	<p>Follow the writing process: controlled, guided and free:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Compose essays, short stories, dialogues with the help of given clues and hints.</li> <li>▪ Make notes on a variety of texts.</li> <li>▪ Compose a simple essay with introduction, body and conclusion under guidance.</li> <li>▪ Write about personal experiences creatively.</li> </ul>
3	<p>Use different strategies to generate ideas for writing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Brainstorm, mind map and take notes.</li> <li>▪ Develop simple paragraphs using appropriate cohesive devices and transitions.</li> <li>▪ Make notes on a variety of texts.</li> </ul>	<p>Use appropriate format and layout to produce a variety of texts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Write in different forms (e.g. messages, menus, cooking recipes, letters and invitation cards, a letter to an editor, CVs and brochure etc).</li> </ul>
4	<p>Demonstrate awareness of the practices and values of both national and target cultures while writing:</p>	<p>Demonstrate awareness of the practices and values of both national and target cultures while writing:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Write about the current practices in national and target cultures.</li> <li>▪ Write about human contributions from national and international culture.</li> <li>▪ Write a short description of your own cultural values and traditions.</li> <li>▪ Write reflectively on common beliefs and attitudes of the national culture.</li> <li>▪ Express views on events and occurrences presented in different media.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Write about similar/different traditions and celebrations in both national and target cultures.</li> <li>▪ Write about famous national and international figures.</li> <li>▪ Develop the main ideas with supporting evidence (e.g., scenarios, facts, commonly held beliefs, definitions).</li> <li>▪ Write reflectively on public opinion, beliefs, attitudes and taboos of national culture.</li> </ul>
5	<p>Develop thinking skills while writing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Complete the unfinished text in a coherent way.</li> <li>▪ Predict the likely consequences of an event.</li> <li>▪ Develop paragraphs on imaginary topics.</li> </ul>	<p>Practice thinking skills while writing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Make mind map to generate ideas for writing</li> <li>▪ Complete the unfinished text in a coherent way.</li> <li>▪ Predict the likely reasons and consequences of an event.</li> <li>▪ Develop essays on imaginary topics.</li> <li>▪ Adopt constructive feedback in correcting, self-editing of own written text</li> </ul>
6	<p>Produce a variety of authentic text types:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Design a variety of grade-appropriate visuals such as posters, slogans and advertisements.</li> <li>▪ Write electronic text messages.</li> <li>▪ Design postcards, draft messages of congratulation or condolence.</li> <li>▪ Write personal and official letters, draft news stories and notices.</li> <li>▪ Make a questionnaire for project work.</li> </ul>	<p>Plan and organize ideas and information for writing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Conduct inquiries to collect information for writing.</li> <li>▪ Follow conventions for standard writing (e.g., spelling, punctuation, usage) for the appropriate grade.</li> <li>▪ Revise and check structure, spelling and punctuation.</li> <li>▪ Practice self, peer and group editing to improve writing e.g. word choice, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization, as well as sentence and</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Use grade-appropriate tools to evaluate their own, peers and group writing.</li> </ul>	<p>paragraph structures, organization.</p>
7	<p>Transfer information from the table to prose and vice versa:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Create with guidance a variety of writing texts such as short stories, short poems, and argumentative texts. etc.</li> </ul>	<p>Transfer information from the table to prose and vice versa.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Observe information presented in the non-verbal text.</li> <li>▪ Present the information of non-verbal text in paragraphs.</li> <li>▪ Convert verbal text into non-verbal text (e.g. pictures, diagrams).</li> </ul>
8		<p>Develop vocabulary in a variety of ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Use grade-appropriate reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, for a variety of purposes (to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning or its part of speech).</li> <li>▪ Use the relationship between particular words (e.g., synonym/antonym, cause/effect, part/whole, item/category) to better understand each of the words.</li> <li>▪ Develop a personal vocabulary dictionary.</li> </ul>

Source: (CDC, 2005, pp. 8-10)