

EXPLORING ENGLISH TEACHERS' JOURNEY OF CHANGE AND IDENTITY
CONSTRUCTION: AN AUTO/ETHNOGRAPHIC INQUIRY

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A Thesis

Submitted to

School of Education

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Education (English Language Education)

Kathmandu University

Dhulikhel, Nepal

November, 2022

AN ABSTRACT

of the dissertation of *Vidhya Pokhrel* for the degree of *Doctor of Philosophy in English Language Education* presented at Kathmandu University School of Education on November 8, 2022 entitled *Exploring English Teachers' Journey of Change and Identity Construction: An Auto/Ethnographic Inquiry*

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This is an auto/ethnographic research based on my and my participants' experiences that I examined critically in association with culture and society that brings the transformation in my identity and my participants' identity as English teachers. The research is the exhibition of the struggles in personal life that reflects on professional life. It aims at exploring the life events and stories of the change and shifting identities that led to our identity as English teachers. The story of how the childhood understanding of the *Dīkṣā mantra* impacted professional life and how the maturity worked to apprehend its deep meaning is commendable to read. Childhood etiquette and its impact on professional life afterward is an excellent aspect covered by the research. The theoretical framework of the transformation theory and identity process theory has guided me to look at the growth we got in our professional career as English teachers through the changes we brought to our teaching practices. The research depicts the construction of our identity as English teachers and the shift in identity that occurred in our life as English teachers. Identity construction is such a phase in life that it makes teachers conceptualize who they are in their profession.

This construction of identity in English teachers' life and their struggle while constructing identity has got space in the research.

I used auto/ethnography as the method of study, which has given strength for me as a researcher to capture 'self' and 'others' that are portrayed with different life stories in the research. With the interview and observation, I generated data from the participants and I too generated the data of my 'self' by using reflections, journals and by noting the events and stories. The research conveys the critical awareness of how my participants and I established our identity as professional English teachers and what did we face on the way to construct our identities in different life experiences we went through. The emancipation we exercised in teaching English and the way we chose to sharpen our professionalism is something good to read. Our experiences and life stories have been used as data for the research since it is an auto/ethnography.

The stories and experiences were given meaning, building a passage to get the final insights that English teachers face different hurdles during their journey as English teachers and those experiences differ from one person to the other. The context they have and the events they go through are different too, since we live in different societies and have different roles in those societies as individuals. The research concludes that English teachers' identity has different layers within it since it is a combination of personal and professional life. Critical reflection on the life journey and teaching journey assists them in understanding their journey of identity construction and professional growth. The research concludes that the identity gets constructed with many situations that demand 'change' and that change assists teachers for the transformation. As a result, that transformation in teachers' lives encourages them to reflect on their teaching and life journeys as a whole. The study contributes to the knowledge that teachers' identity construction gets root from

unexpected, unsuspected and unanticipated stories teachers carry due to societal norms and values or unavoidable circumstances that come in their life and they add onto their learning phases. The idea of a 'born-again teacher' is also the contribution that the research has made in the field of knowledge since it could initiate the awareness to be updated, competent and efficient teachers.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Vidhya Pokhrel', is written over a horizontal line.

Vidhya Pokhrel

Degree Candidate

November 8, 2022

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that to the best of my knowledge, this dissertation is original otherwise acknowledged, no part of it was submitted earlier for the candidature of any other research degree to any university.



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November 8, 2022

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my valued teachers who inspired me to see the light in the darkness, who held my hand to help me come out of the pit, found me when I was lost and filled me up with ideas and thoughts to make me able to come up with such an innovative idea which would have seldom been possible without their precious direction and inspiration.

Doctor of Philosophy in English Language Education dissertation of *Vidhya Pokhrel*
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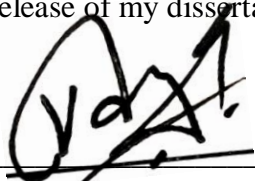


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I understand and agree that my dissertation will become part of the permanent collection of the Kathmandu University Library. My signature below authorizes the release of my dissertation to any reader upon request for scholarly purposes.



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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My sincere gratitude goes to the dissertation supervisor Prof. Laxman Gnawali, PhD as he provided his continuous support to complete this dissertation. Without his supervision, I would not have been able to do this. Without his guidance, it would have been impossible to come up with this massive effort. He sustained me through all the ups and downs and confusions I faced in my research's early phases. An absolute encouragement from him made me take steps to accomplish this work. I would like to acknowledge that without Prof. Gnawali, I would not have been able to achieve this success.

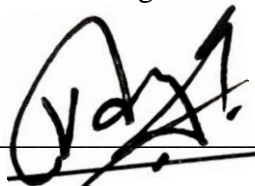
I would like to give my sincere thanks to the dissertation supervisor Prof. Jai Raj Awasthi, PhD, who became an encouraging personality for my academic life. He always became a valuable character who let me capture my own value as a researcher. He is the one who gave me the notion of self-perspective while carrying out research. Dr. Awasthi remained as a resource person to provide me with enough books and articles during the research which assisted me in going through the new and recently published books. I am really thankful to him for inspiring me and giving me the encouraging words that enabled me to tackle the situations that came along the research journey.

My special regards go to Prof. Bal Chandra Luitel, PhD, the Dean of Kathmandu University, for his continuous impetus for writing the dissertation. I got real motivation from him to carry out this research. I learnt to be responsible by his way of making people alert. Prof. Luitel has always been my motivator who gave straightforward suggestions with a serious motive, which has got special count in my life.

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to Asst. Prof. Tikaram Poudel, PhD, who became the source of inspiration in my life from the beginning of this course. Presenting himself as the provision of support, he has proved that he is a true teacher in the academic field. His regular and constructive feedback assisted me in bringing about my research as a headway. I got his full support for developing the research which is why I am grateful to him.

I would like to extend my gratitude to my research participants who supported me by providing their valuable data and information. Also, I am grateful to all my teachers and colleagues who directly and indirectly helped me to conduct the research. I cannot forget the support and suggestions provided by my colleagues Mr. Siddhartha Dhungana and Mr. Bharat Prasad Neupane. Their cooperation is worthy of mentioning and appreciation.

Last but not least, my special thanks go to my life partner Mr. Nawaraj Sanjel who always supported me in carrying out this research. Similarly, I am beholden to my daughter Joanna and my son Joel for their sustained patience during my busy time with the research. I am very much indebted to my parents, Mr. Vishwo Nath Pokhrel and Ms. Sita Pokhrel who taught me how to take careful steps during busy and challenging times. I am thankful to my mother-in-law Ms. Goma Sanjel who abetted me to manage time to carry out this research.



Vidhya Pokhrel, Degree Candidate

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GLOSSARY

<i>jal</i>	holy water
<i>panchapatro</i>	a vessel made up of copper, specially meant to keep holy water
<i>jap</i>	whispering out the spiritual words with meditation
<i>dīkṣā</i>	an initiation of knowledge by guru
<i>śikṣā</i>	a formal education
<i>mantra</i>	words enchanted to have a connection with spiritual entities such as God
<i>guruaama</i>	a female spiritual teacher
<i>guru</i>	a spiritual teacher
<i>śiṣya</i>	a spiritual disciple
<i>mokṣa</i>	the highest goal of liberation
<i>sabdādīkṣā</i>	an initiation through words
<i>bhav</i>	spiritual emotion
<i>sparshādīkṣā</i>	an initiation by touch
<i>adnya-chakra</i>	the space between eyebrows
<i>darshandīkṣā</i>	bhavawastha by looking at the guru
<i>drukādīkṣā</i>	the bhavawastha created by a guru in the disciple's life through his merciful gaze which is also known as Mayurdīkṣā
<i>tirthādīkṣā</i>	dīkṣā that injects initiation into the disciple by giving the holy water to the disciple by guru

<i>patradīkṣā</i>	dīkṣā that create initiation in the disciple through the letter reading
<i>sankalpadīkṣā</i>	the disciples' initiation through the guru's determination
<i>nawami</i>	the ninth day of Dashain (the most significant Hindu festival)
<i>gunyo-choli</i>	a dress offered to a girl by her parents as a sign of maturity
<i>sanomommy</i>	aunt
<i>pidhi</i>	the little place extended outside the house to sit
<i>aangan</i>	yard
<i>dalits</i>	untouchables
<i>sun-paani</i>	water that is made sacred by bringing it in contact with the gold
<i>damini</i>	a dalit woman called in a discriminating manner
<i>kal</i>	a sewing machine
<i>chaamal</i>	rice
<i>gagri</i>	a pitcher
<i>fariya</i>	a wrapper-like long fabric that is used as a dress for females in Nepal
<i>choli</i>	the upper part of the dress used with fariya.
<i>puja chauko</i>	where the god is worshipped with all the holy pieces of equipment
<i>manda buddhi</i>	the one with slow understanding power
<i>bindi</i>	a cigarette- like local thing that is used to smoke

<i>dori</i>	a string that is moved and passed through a gap made with a jump
<i>jiwit pameswor</i>	living God
<i>tettis koti devata</i>	thirty-three gods and goddesses
<i>peepal</i>	a fig tree
<i>aarati</i>	Hindu religious ritual of worship
<i>naibedya</i>	a devotional offering (fruits, dryfruits) made to God in Hindu puja
<i>prasad</i>	food or other offerings, considered to be sanctified, after being presented to God
<i>agarbatti</i>	a thin wooden stick covered in a substance that is burnt to produce a pleasant smell, especially as a part of a religious ceremony
<i>abir</i>	the red powder used to decorate the idols
<i>kesari</i>	the yellow powder used to decorate the idols
<i>pushpa</i>	flowers offered to God
<i>namaste</i>	the way to greet people meaning ‘bowing to you’
<i>jaimashi</i>	greeting used by Nepali Christians which means ‘Victory to Jesus’
<i>gyno</i>	relating to women
<i>aandolan</i>	movement
<i>odhne</i>	a warm blanket-like wrapper
<i>petticoat</i>	skirt-like undergarments worn for warmth
<i>jwain</i>	brother-in-law

The celestial city	heaven
<i>Angreji</i>	English language pertaining to Englishmen or of England
<i>aama</i>	mother/grandmother
<i>fupu</i>	father's sister
<i>maiti</i>	mother's home, denotes to girl's real family into which she was born
<i>bhat pakai</i>	a traditional game for children to act like adults playing the role-play, for example, a father, a mother and the children in a family, where they cook food, dine together and enjoy their life
<i>śikṣāk</i>	a teacher
<i>sādhak</i>	someone who follows certain spiritual practice

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Teacher identity is associated to values and beliefs teacher holds towards being a teacher. It is related to the profession they are involved in and it carries the responsibility of giving response to who they are and how do they act because their identity is about who they are in the society. This research is about both personal and professional identities of English teachers. It discusses critical reflection as the means to bring change in teachers' lives and brings the scenarios of how change takes place in their life and how it leads to their professional growth. With an autoethnographic glosses, the research depicts my and my participants' experiences as English teachers in regard to change and identity.

This chapter starts with the context of my study, which revolves around '*dīkṣā*' I took from my mother, and that became a point where I conceptualized the enchanting of the *dīkṣā* mantra secretly and applied the same in my teaching practice by being rigid to learn and to share. This chapter views how I critically looked at myself and tried to see the change in my attitude towards coming out of the rigidity. I have developed a problem statement to discuss the real problematic situation related to my research study. The purpose of the study has been set in the chapter, and the Research Questions have been formulated. The delimitation of the study has been projected and my attempt to the initial exploration before the beginning. The research is about the journey of change and shifts that occurred in my life that led to my identity construction. The chapter provides the glimpses for what the research is about.

Dīkṣā from Guruaama and Śikṣā to Students in English Class

Whether it was a cold, frosty morning or a rainy morning, my mother took *jal* (water) in *panchapatro* (a vessel made up of copper, specially meant to keep holy water) and used to murmur some words in a shallow voice. It was in the form of whispering. My mother is a spiritual person who believes in worshipping God. Worship is the source of spiritual growth, and people worship God to receive God's peace, mercy, guidance and sustenance (Tritten, 2016). In alignment with worshipping God, doing *Jap* (whispering out the spiritual words with meditation) was her usual task in the morning. I was excited to know what she was doing in actuality. I tried to ask when she was in the act, but I noticed that she stared at me and did some signs, which made me understand that I was not supposed to disturb her. Later, when she finished, I asked her, "What were you doing?" My mother answered, "It was the enchanting *dīkṣā* mantra I took from my '*guruaama*' (female teacher)." I asked who my mother's guru was. Then I knew that it was none other than the old lady who used to be my neighbour and who was always treated as somebody like God by my mother. When I knew who she was, I noticed that my mother respected her *guruaama*. Gurus are the spiritual masters who emerged from Vedic times and are known to be prestigious since they lead their *shishyas* towards the highest goal of liberation (*mokṣa*) through their teachings (Jain et al., 2018). In my kitchen, there used to be one glass made up of brass for my mother's *guruaama* to give her a glass of milk every morning. None of us was allowed to touch the glass except her. As her home was near, my mother used to take a glass of milk to her every morning. When she finished drinking milk, my mother would bring it back, wash it, and put it in the same place. That was the respect that my mother had for her *guruaama*. The same respect was for the *dīkṣā* she received from her. My mother used to say, to take *dīkṣā* from guru is a

huge fortune. Taking mantra from guru who lives the life is far insightful than taking knowledge from books which consists of just words (Swahananda, 2020). I wanted to take *dīkṣā* too because I too wanted to be a fortunate person who could take it from guru but my mother told me I needed to wait for the right time to take *dīkṣā*. I did not mean what my mother meant by the right time. I waited patiently for my mother's 'right time.'

Viewing Dīkṣā Meticulously

Dīkṣā is a *Sanskrit* word for initiating an education in a student by a teacher. There is a practice in Hinduism that a *guru* (teacher) starts teaching in the student's life. *Dīkṣā* is the phase where the *guru* imparts vision to his *śiṣya* (Sanatan Sanstha, 2015). Imparting vision includes the practice of making a student the receiver of knowledge in different ways. One of the ways is *Sabdādīkṣā* (Initiation through words), where the *guru* whispers a *mantra* in his ears and projects energy through those words that create a *bhav* (spiritual emotion) in the student. The next type is *Sparshādīkṣā* (Initiation by touch), where the *guru* touches the disciple's hands or *adnya-chakra* (the space between eyebrows), injecting the sense of learning in the disciple. Another type is *Darshan dīkṣā* which creates *bhavawastha* by looking at the *guru*. The next type of *Dīkṣā* is *Druk dīkṣā*, the *bhavawastha* created by a *guru* in the disciple's life through his merciful gaze. It is believed that the peacock impregnates its lover simply by looking at it without physical touch. So, *Druk dīkṣā* is also known as *Mayur dīkṣā*. *Tirthādīkṣā* is another type of *dīkṣā* that injects initiation into the disciple by giving the holy water to the disciple by *guru*. *Patra dīkṣā* is the one that creates initiation in the disciple through the letter reading. Here, the disciples read the letter written by their *guru* to them. The last one is *Sankalpa dīkṣā* which is about the disciples' initiation through the *guru's* determination. *Dīkṣā* is the way of receiving

divine knowledge from the enlightened master (Swami, 2017). Through different types of *dīkṣā*, the initiation is projected on the disciples, giving a feeling of respect to the guru.

No, You are Not Ready Yet

On the day of ‘Nawami’, the ninth day of Dashain (the most significant Hindu festival), I heard my mother saying something about *gunyo-choli* (a dress to offer a girl as a sign of maturity). I was curious to know what she was saying. I asked her what she told sanomommy (aunt) about *gunyo –choli*. My mother said that she wanted to give *gunyo-choli* to me. I asked her what it was, and she explained that on the day of Navami, *gunyo-choli* could be given to a girl who was nine years old. My mother also reminded me of the measurement *Mishri didi* took a few days ago. *Mishri didi* was the brilliant tailor of the whole village. I used to cherish the moment *Mishri didi* was there in our home to stitch new clothes for my mother, myself, and even my brothers. *Mishri didi* used to spend two or three days a year in our house, but that would be the best time ever because she used to make lots of jokes about her family members and sometimes about our neighbours. Sometimes, she used to burst into laughter in such a loud voice that everybody on the way to our home would stop and say, “When *Mishri didi* is there, there is always happiness around.” Indeed *Mishri didi* was the source of happiness. I, too, remember *Mishri didi* sharing her situations and bursting into tears. Whenever people talked about *Mishrididi*, the happiest person ever, I would think of her tears and see her miseries even in her laughter.

When *Mishri didi* would come, my mother would search for green chilly because she loved hot and spicy pickles. I was amazed at how spicy food she could eat. She would eat and enjoy food and give thanks to my mother many times. My mother used to have a good chat with *Mishri didi* and would want her to talk. As my

mother used to call her in our winter holidays, I could spend time with her. I valued her as one of the most important person for us since she was the one who would keep us warm during the winter season. Only the thing that would bother my little mind was that Mishri didi was not allowed to enter our home. She used to spend the whole day outside our house in *pidhi* (the little place extended outside the house) and *aangan* (yard). When I remember her now, I feel like though she used to entertain us with her life stories, she was a character of many untold stories. She never left her plate and glass to be washed. She used to clean it and dry it so she could save others from being untouchable. In Nepal, *dalits* (untouchables) have endured discrimination and oppression from the higher caste people (Pariyar & Lovett, 2016). Mishri didi would make sure that she took a separate jug when she had to use our toilet. She looked happy even when people would spray *sun-paani* (My translation: Water that is made sacred by bringing it in contact to the gold) on them when touching her by mistake. I would think how Mishri didi could be satisfied when she was discriminated in the society, saying that she belongs to the lower caste.

Some older people would call her *damini* (My translation: A dalit women called in a discriminating manner), reminding her that she belonged to the lower caste. Mishri didi had accepted that she was from a lower caste as she used to tell my mother, *Haami ta damini ho bajai...hajurlai sel-roti man parne, maile pakaayeko sel-roti khaana paaye hajur lai kati man parthyo hola* (My translation: *Had I not been from the dalit group, I would feed you sel-roti (a dough-nut like round thing made up of rice flower with sugar, ghee and masala) and you would find it tasty*). I used to recall my knowledge from my social studies class about the caste system in Nepal and told my father and mother that we should not discriminate people by caste. I would ask my mother to let Mishri didi enter our home. My mother would scold me, saying

that the words written in the book may not change what is going on in society for years and years. Mishri didi would add, *K garnu nani, daibale thageko haamro jaat lai...* (My translation: *We are cursed and that is why we were born in this caste group.*) but I was not ready to accept that it was God who made Mishri didi of the lower caste. My little thought would take me to the imaginary world where Mishri didi could enter our home. I knew that was only my imagination and was not possible in our society.

Mishri didi's granddaughter, Dhana was my age, and I loved talking to her. I used to ask Mishri didi why Dhana did not go to school. Mishri didi again would start another story of how Dhana was poorly treated in her school and how she was forbidden to enter the school. Due to the reality of untouchability that Dhana had to face every day, she felt ashamed of her classmates and teachers. Finally, she left the school. Dhana used to help Mishri didi by carrying the little black *kal* (sewing machine), which was Mishri didi's friend for years and years. I remember she would say that if she got fear of darkness on the way home, she would make her sewing machine her weapon. She would say, *Ma ta kehi aayo vane, yei kal le haandinxu. Yo vayepaxi malai dar chaina.* (My translation: *If there is anything on the way, I will hit with this machine. I am not scared because I have this machine with me.*) I asked Mishri didi if Dhana was helpful at home. Mishri didi replied that she is so helpful that she cooks rice out of *chaamal* (rice) that Mishri didi gets from people's homes every day as a reward for sewing clothes. I felt pity for Dhana and Mishri didi for their struggle to survive.

Mishri didi's story would never finish. She presented the report of how people threw away Dhana's *gagri* (a pitcher) since she kept it in line to get water from the tap. Ladies from the village thought Dhana committed a great sin by making herself

equal to others by putting her *gagri* in line with others. They shouted at her and cursed her for that. I noticed that the Nepal caste system has restrained *dalits/untouchables* from enjoying their rights to social justice and equality, leading them to social exclusion at the water tap, temples and social functions (Gandhari, 2013). Dhana could not tolerate what she heard from them, so she went to the pond nearby and filled water from there. She cried and told Mishri didi that they would drink the muddy water from the pond but would not go to the tap to listen to people's slang words that they shower on her. While telling this story, Mishri didi was full of tears, and Dhana was trying to wipe her tears with the pieces of clothes that she was sewing. I could not think of being in Dhana's position. I found her a brave girl; more than her, Mishri didi symbolized courage. Mishri didi her stories are still in my heart. Last time, I asked my mother about her, and she said Mishri didi is no more. I thought she left the world and got paused of all the miseries she got from the social taboos. Mishri didi is still alive in my memory, and her stories became the source to move my pen at the present.

Mishri didi was in our home a few days ago and took the measurement. I knew that it was for choli. I, a nine year old girl, could not stop asking several other questions and made my mother irritated. I kept gathering much information on *gunyo-choli* and became happy to know that my friends Sunu and Saani would also get *gunyo-choli*. I went to buy *fariya* (*a wrapper-like long fabric that is used as a dress for females in Nepal*), which I was supposed to wear on the day with *choli* (*a Nepali dress used with fariya*). I still remember the pattern on the fabrics of both choli and *fariya*. An oval-shaped egg-like pattern on the choli and a floral design on the *fariya*, I would always like that design. I was made ready like a bride. As many people looked at me, I felt ashamed to walk to the temple. I thought I would be big enough after my

gunyo-choli was done. While returning, finishing all the functions related to *gunyo-choli*, I asked my mother if I was big enough now. I kept my curiosity in front of her about whether I was ready to take *dīkṣā*, for which I was waiting desperately, and mother replied, *No, you are not ready yet*. To take *dīkṣā*, one should have the preparedness because unless they are ready, they should be advised to wait for it is like preparing the soil before planting seeds (Bhuteshananda, 1995). My mother might have known the need of preparedness in me. I waited for four more years to take *dīkṣā* and received it after my first menstruation period. Maybe that was the sign of being at the stage where I could handle the responsibility towards *dīkṣā*.

Sabda dīkṣā from Guruaama

I irritated my mother several times by asking about '*dīkṣā*' that she took from her guruaama. Still, she did not share it with me, saying no one should hear it. Her guruaama whispered words into her ears and conveyed *Sabda dīkṣā* to her, and I asked my mother what if I made her my *guruaama*. My mother was quiet. She thought for a while and said that if I became her *chela* (disciple), I needed to give her more respect. I accepted as that was nothing like a big deal to me. If I counted the love my mother showered on me or the care she gave me, it would be less even if I started giving her respect from that time onward. She already deserved more than a person to be respected. As a mother, she was to be respected, but more than that, as a guru, I had to bow down before her, which made me feel better because she deserved it. So, I took it easy.

The next day, my mother asked me to shower in the morning and be ready to take '*dīkṣā*'. I did the same and went to '*Puja Chauko*' (where the god is worshipped with all the holy pieces of equipment). There, my mother told me that I was then ready to take *dīkṣā* and said that all those years she wanted to make me prepared to

take *dīkṣā* (Bhuteshananda, 1995). It was exciting to listen to that *mantra* which was a private entity for me. My mother took her mouth close to my right ear and started chanting it. I could not understand it initially, but later, when she repeated the words, I could grasp it. They were Sanskrit words as below:

ॐ ऐं ह्रीं श्रीं	<i>Om Aim Hrim Shrim</i>
आत्म देवताय नमो नमः	<i>Aatma Devataye Namō Namah</i>
सूर्य नारायण नमो नमः	<i>Surya Narayana Namō Namah</i>
इष्ट देवताय नमो नमः	<i>Ista Devataye Namō Namah</i>
ब्रह्म देवताय नमो नमः	<i>Brahma Devataye Namō Namah</i>
बिष्णु देवताय नमो नमः	<i>Bishnu Devataye Namō Namah</i>
शिव देवताय नमो नमः	<i>Shiva Devataye Namō Namah</i>
पितृ देवताय नमो नमः	<i>Pitri Devataye Namō Namah</i>
कुल देवताय नमो नमः	<i>Kul Devataye Namō Namah</i>
ॐ नमो नमः	<i>Om Namō Namah</i>

When the words passed through my ears, I felt something different, but I could not realize whether that was the power of the mantra or just because I got something more to memorize (as I had to remember so many things from my course book). I compared it to the memorization of ‘words and meaning’ in my English subject. It was nothing complicated compared to that. *Dīkṣā* was just a few words I had to memorize and speak in the morning. It was not meaningful for me, except there were some of the God’s names that I thought were important. I took it as something I needed to recall every morning, not enchanting it audibly and that would act as the starter of the day. However, I was unknown of the meaning behind it. I used to

wonder why my mother told me it was not to share with others. That question remained in my mind until I got the revelation of what it actually means. I have brought the topic ‘revisiting *dīkṣā*’ on Chapter nine where I have discussed why the *dīkṣā* mantra is kept secret. The pondering question at this moment could be, ‘Does *dīkṣā* really teach to keep your knowledge secret or is there some other meanings behind it? Chapter nine holds the answer to this question.

Recalling *Dīkṣā* and Stepping to Give *Śikṣā*

Remembering that event of taking *dīkṣā* from my guru, I find it completely different when I give *Śikṣā* (education) to my students in the present. Taking *dīkṣā* was only about teaching some words to *chela* by the *guru*, which the *guru* took from her *guru*. When we come to ‘teaching English’ at present, it is not only about teaching what the teacher learned. Instead, it is about teaching students with different methods of teaching. I had a traditional teaching mindset when I started my career as an English teacher. I used to hold a textbook in my hand and teach from there, and that was it. I assumed that I could give education to students just by one-way communication as I got *dīkṣā* from my guru. Coming to the teaching field, I realized in my later career that it is not about pouring education but about sharing what the teacher knows and facilitating to make students learn new things. I followed only the Grammar Translation Method at the beginning of my teaching career but later learned about other teaching methods. So, I underwent different ways to teach the English language.

ELT methods emerge to teach English in a better way. Of course, all the methods are suitable for teaching English, but not all the processes are equally effective in all contexts. These methods are indeed best in themselves, but they can't be best in every situation. English teachers should have confidence in their planning

and choose the right one to fulfill their objectives. There needs to be a shift in how people used to think of teaching. There used to be an emphasis on lectures but now, assessing is kept as the priority (Keiler, 2018). The change is relevant today because it is not concerned about what the teacher teaches, but the main problem is how the learners learn. Our attention should be on them and working out how to enable them to learn. One particular method may not be prescribed for every situation. One way may work well for a specific group of students but may not be suitable for the other group. That is why they argue that there is no appropriate method of teaching. Each method has its strengths and weaknesses. So, it is about finding out the best ways of teaching students and perhaps the best time for how I was given *dīkṣā* at the right time, as my mother told me.

In my later life, I realized that the basis for all the knowledge or initiation was ‘*dīkṣā*’ that I took. It was not easy for me to go to school and teach students. I had used *dīkṣā* as a tool to make myself responsible but also I grew up with the one way understanding about it that I should not share my knowledge with anyone. That developed a feeling in me that I should not learn from others too. So, I was a rigid teacher who would not share anything with others and learn anything from others. This attitude made my beginning career worse. I never felt comfortable asking anything with others. That troubled me when I got appointed as a teacher. I could not make my class better, nor could I request anyone for help. Gradually, I learned that sharing knowledge enhances our learning habits. Different academic courses, training and workshops changed my thinking about giving *śikṣā*. When I recalled my teaching career and saw how my teaching was, I saw many difficulties and struggle because I was a reluctant teacher. Whenever I recalled my teaching and tried to do better next time, I got good results. That encouraged me to reflect upon the teaching and to see

the incidents critically so I could do the same thing differently in my next move. Then, I started implementing different methods of teaching in the English classroom. I learned that creating an environment where students can learn better is necessary. Compared to *dīkṣā* taken from the guru, it is similar in the sense that it is about getting the base for learning the life skills. Getting the formal education is identical to giving *dīkṣā* as both are about taking initiation to make disciples and to make them responsible in their life. Coming to this point, I got the discernment that *dīkṣā* is about injecting initiation in disciples informally though the ceremony takes place with specific religious steps, and *śikṣā* is about imparting knowledge to students formally. Both are imparted to students to give them a feeling of commencement in their life.

Problem statement

Everybody has their own stories, which are of significant meaning to them. It is the same with my story of strengthening my professionalism as an English teacher. Being a teacher of English, my habit of reflecting on my teaching and finding out the meaning of the action taken by recalling what happened in my class (Dewey, 1938) could have led me to be a (good) teacher. English teachers in Nepal are still very poor in case of their professional growth (Rijal, 2013). In the case of Nepal, as English is a foreign language, many people get to struggle a lot to learn it as well as to teach it. People with good English get many opportunities; if they don't, they lag. In such a situation, teaching students the English language is necessary. English teachers need to grow professionally to seek the change that helps them think differently. Being involved in associations such as NELTA, English teachers get the opportunity to learn from one another and to bring in new ideas that create situations to learn and grow professionally (Gnawali, 2013). Still, if teachers do not reflect on their teaching and continue teaching traditionally without seeking opportunities to grow, students might

not get the best from the teachers' side. English stands as a global language as different people worldwide speak various languages, and there is a need for a common language to communicate among all nations (Rao, 2019). Covering all the areas with its impact and that today's education needs change, a transformation in what it used to be done in the past, it is not easy to adjust to an environment where increasing demand for English is there, and there has to have a transformation in teaching.

Teachers are known to have good pedagogy if they can make the classroom a social setting where students can interact and engage with the invented activities (Danielewicz, 2001). However, the question remains, "Do teachers think critically about their pedagogy?" Teachers face different complexities and challenges during their teaching journey. In between that journey of ups and downs, English teachers need an inevitable change in how they teach, perhaps in how they think.

Understanding their teaching helps them assess their professional growth and gives them the skill to make decisions and show confidence (Farrel, 2018). English teachers having the attitude to change themselves in teaching, can grow in their profession. The problem is that critical reflection's power as change is rarely realized (Artzt & Armour-Thomas, 2002). English teachers need to reflect on their way of teaching. Farrell (2016) points out, "The teacher education programs could navigate complex issues and challenges that teachers face, for which reflecting critically on teaching is necessary" (p. 105). At the same time, it is necessary to reflect upon the endurance of self with 'Others.' A lack of critical reflection upon their delivery by themselves is missing, resulting in the stubborn nature of change.

The more the teachers reflect on their teaching critically, the more they are towards change, bringing transformation in education and cultivating the habit of

reflecting, not only before but also after the lesson and beyond (Cirocki & Widodo, 2019), would help them be critical of what they teach or what they taught earlier. The willingness and ability of teachers regarding their effort to problematize practice, reflect on it and think critically about the techniques they use in their specific context give a root to developing knowledge and theories essential for professional practice in the field of education (Walkington et al., 2001). Thus, there are more powerful tools that enable teachers to look back on their teaching career and see their practice of what kind of improvement is needed. The education policy is silent on these types of issues and this is the problem. The education policy has pointed out the importance of reflecting upon the teaching-learning activities. It has also pointed out the importance of having new visions on the ways of teaching by comparing or associating that with the previous practice (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2019). However, there are no clear write-ups on the necessity of implementing those things practically since it has mentioned other issues than a critical reflection on teaching (NIRT, 2016). Policy review says there needs to be precise planning from the government level to bring awareness to critical reflection in teaching-learning. In such a situation, exploring my journey of being and becoming (Colliander, 2018) an English teacher is thoughtful since the discourse on English teacher identity construction through critical thinking is missing.

Teachers' identity construction is often made the major concept for the research (Lapidus et al., 2013; Ryan, 2012; Suhr, 2014, Yazan, 2018, 2019). However, the missing discourse is of change and identity construction through critical reflection (Farrel, 2016) upon teachers' previous teaching practices. Focusing on the female English teachers' stories and experiences of change into teaching practice by not simply as a description of lived experiences of self and others in a social setting along

a variety coming from people's lives such as in the form of their stories, poems, or art but this has to be looked in a way that it creates multiple layers of learning (Qutoshi, 2015) could stand as the gap filler. By bringing the discourse in research on critical reflection as the way to get change in teachers' way of teaching as well as in their way of looking at the teaching profession, this research could motivate other English teachers to reflect on their personal and professional journey critically. Through my MPhil research on ethnographic inquiry, I could observe other teachers' teaching life, which motivated me to observe my own life as an English teacher associated with my 'self' and 'others.' So, this research could also encourage other teachers to reflect on their journey as teachers. The study holds that missing discourse through my and my participants' journey into the English language and the critical reflection on our professional growth and identity construction.

The Rationale of the Study

Teachers are in a profession where they have many trials and errors while teaching, which builds them into good teachers. It is not easy for them to be good teachers as they go from one step to another and gain experience during those phases. It is even harder to go through the novice stage of teaching. Looking at English teachers' life and profession, it is interesting to learn how they construct their identity as English teachers. As identity construction occurs with the desired ideal identities (Lopes, 2009), it directly connects with people's professions. It is thus, exciting to see teachers' growth with their involvement in various professional development activities, serving them to understand their role, their teaching context and the nature of teaching and learning (Sadeghi & Richards, 2021). This study is worth exploring as it holds my and my participants' stories of being English teachers and enhancing ourselves in the professionalism constructing our identity, where there might be

several other stories that brought changes in our teaching practices. The concept of identity and agency to view teachers' self-development efforts demands the designing of identity-oriented courses for teachers of English (Yazan, 2018). Though it is a complicated endeavour for the teachers to reflect on their time which would be practice time for many, reflecting upon the self is a way to create an environment where teachers examine their classroom performance and, at the same time, foster their teaching practices (Mesa, 2018). My reflection and my participants' reflection have been explored of how they got strengthened in their teaching English using different methods and strategies in English class.

Looking at the policy is important, since it is a concise official statement that works as a framework to outline what it observes and aims to achieve. The policy acts as a vehicle to encourage the government to engage with community people's welfare, such as their income security, employment initiatives, childcare services and social marginalization (Torjman, 2005). Policies are principles that are formulated to be adopted by people or organizations. They are rules and guidelines formulated to attain long-term goals. Policies are the published manual or booklet typically made to follow to reach the estimated goal. When it is about education policy, the state policy on education has a considerable impact on shaping the daily activities in schools and colleges and the lived experiences of those who work and study under those institutions (Bell & Stevenson, 2006). In Europe, the gradual transformation of the educational landscape was interrupted by the First World War. During the post-war period, education was the first sector to be influenced by fundamental changes. Among many changes, school supervision and inspection were gradually made necessary, whereas teaching methods and 'frontal' classroom instruction by the

teachers remained the same (Mattheou, 2010). In the south Asian context, teachers' development has been far from satisfactory.

An analysis of the quality of professional development programs provided to teachers in India has confirmed that the quality is unsatisfactory (Setty et al., 2019). With the dawn of democracy in Nepal in 1950, the need for education was felt in a real way after which the Education Board was established. It then suggested appointing a National Commission for Planning Education in which Dr Hugh B. Wood, a professor from the University of Oregon, was to serve as the educational consultant who then spoke about the role of teachers and the need for widespread teachers' training in the new scheme of things (Pandey et al., 1956). Teacher development is one of the essential factors influencing the quality of education. The quality of teachers, their competence, and their character are significant. To make teachers fully effective, there must be the provision of the best professional preparation and the urgent need is there to create satisfactory conditions to help teachers improve continually (GOI, 1966). In Nepal, there seem to be many lingering factors that undermine the quality of education, among which problems with teacher development is one major factor which includes other associated problems such as inadequate supervision, monitoring, academic support, problems with educational accountability, teacher-centered instruction, assessment not focused on learning and outcomes and other many (NIRT, 2016). School Sector Development Plan (SSDP) brings forward two types of capacity to undertake it.

The first one is performance capacity which talks about the overall performance of the country's economy and the other is personal capacity which is the section that looks at the extent to which the staff (teachers) are knowledgeable, skilled and confident in terms of training, experience and motivation. The educational

policies that have been made are for different sectors of education. Policy 10.44 (all nine points) addresses the importance of professional development. It is written that the teachers should be developed in such a way that they could meet the ability to be good teachers labeled by the nation and the professional development will be conducted according to the need of the teachers (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2019). Policy 10.44.6 has pointed out that reflecting upon the teaching-learning activities is important and having new visions on the ways of teaching by comparing/associating that with the previous practice. However, there are no clear write-ups on the necessity of implementing those things practically. Policy review says there needs to be precise planning from the government level to bring policy on teacher professional development.

The study can be the standpoint for the education policymakers to think of the policies which could incentivize teachers' behaviour and strategies they apply in the classroom with children since there is no such policy regarding the implementation of critical reflection in teaching (NIRT, 2016). This research holds the capability of impacting education policy. A precise policy is needed to improve English teachers' traditional way of teaching. Perhaps, they could get support through the courses or training that would guide them on how to reflect critically on their teaching style and practices. We might fetch this through regular teacher workshops, teacher education programs or training and giving teachers time to notice they can reflect upon their teaching practices being critical so that later, it becomes their habit.

An activity of looking back over own thoughts and actions, written and spoken ideas, along with feelings and interactions with an attempt to make new meaning for 'self' is what critical reflection means (Watanabe, 2017). The rationale for my dissertation is based on the recommendation that more research has to be done on

improving teaching practice through critical reflection by teachers, as the knowledge so conveyed by teachers has to be analyzed, criticized and re-examined (Biney, 2018). By reflecting on our experiences, my participants and I made meaning out of our past and present pedagogical practices and out of the being and becoming teachers which is about ‘what we do’ and ‘what we experience while doing’ respectively (Wenger, 1998). The study could be further essential to view the teacher identity with many success stories and the stories of our failures in our identity construction. This study is about the transformation that has occurred in my life and my participants’ life as professional English teachers. Thus, the research is worth conducting since it encourages readers to reflect on a life journey as professional English teachers.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of my study was to explore my and other English teachers’ journey of change and identity construction.

Research Questions

1. How has our (my and my participants’) journey of English teachers been? How have we evolved and changed?
2. How has our journey helped us to look at the shifting identities in a span of time along with the construction of our identities?

Delimitations of the Study

Researching any topic might not be accessible when we try to capture everything related to the topic. It is absurd to carry out research with the umbrella scope of bringing the central and peripheral entities within the same study. Concerning this, I have delimited my research study. The study is delimited to exploring my and my participants’ journey as English teachers, of exploring our ‘being and becoming teachers’ since one infers the other and is interconnected

(Colliander, 2018). It is delimited to the exploration of identity from the post-structuralist view, which considers identity as “fluid, multiple, diverse, dynamic, varied, shifting, subject to change and contradictory” (Kouhpaenejad, 2014, p.200). The research is delimited to stories of our teaching practices and identity construction as professional English teachers.

Structure of the Study Report

Chapter one introduces my study of exploring English teachers' journey of change and identity construction. This chapter brings the initial story of how I got *dīkṣā* from my guruaama. The excitement for taking *dīkṣā*, its effect on my growing phase, and the responsibility I took when taking *dīkṣā* have been presented in sequential events. Connecting the story of taking *dīkṣā* with the story of giving *śikṣā* to my students, I have demonstrated how a single event ‘taking *dīkṣā*’ gave me the maturity of being self-responsible in teaching and learning both. The chapter has presented the purpose of the study, research questions and the delimitations of the study. Chapter one is the introductory section of the whole thesis as it has given the context of the study along with the study's rationale and the problem statement, which is essential for initiating any research. The way I made the context setting at the beginning of the chapter and the initial explorations on the topics related to my research have made a pathway for my research and has given a glimpse of auto/ethnographic writing.

Chapter two is the depiction of my journey towards teacher identity and autoethnography. It depicts the events that made me explore the topics. Certain circumstances in our life make us ponder upon certain issues like ‘what does it mean,’ ‘why is it so’ and so on. This chapter is a journey that I made for initially exploring the topics I was interested in, such as ‘identity,’ ‘autoethnography,’ ‘transformative

learning' and many others. This chapter triggered me to conduct research on those topics, which made me engage with them from the initial stage of my research.

Chapter three is about setting myself in the field of inquiry. The discussion on teachers' experience at the beginning of the teaching career has been carried out. The challenges of teaching and learning in English and the need for professional development for English teachers have been brought. This chapter has brought the biblical illustration of Jesus as a teacher, taking him as an important personality to teach students different strategies in and out of the classroom. My Theoretical intent has been brought along with the usage of the theories for my research. Two theories, 'Identity Process Theory' and 'Transformative Learning Theory' are the major theories that are explained well in the chapter. Also, the reason for choosing those theories for my research has been discussed.

Chapter four is about research methodology, starting from my philosophical consideration and research paradigms. It has covered how I have considered the multiple realities in my research by mentioning my ontological view. I have mentioned my research as a knowledge-oriented process from an epistemological standpoint. I, too, have mentioned its contribution to the construction of knowledge. The axiological viewpoint has been mentioned to explain that this is value-laden research. It goes on with the explanation of the research design, data coding process, data analysis process and meaning-making process of the study. Then, there come the quality standards and ethical considerations I have maintained in my research.

As the research is the auto/ethnography, the meaning-making and discussion go along with the chapters. Chapter five carried my identity in the otherness. To support it, I have brought data from my participants which support my thoughts on otherness and identity construction in such otherness. My participants' feelings of

otherness and their experiences have been brought up in the chapter. It gives a precise scenario of how people struggle to find their identity and how the identity gets constructed with a process that includes ups and downs, fullness and emptiness. This chapter is also the countenance of the self-esteem that made me and my participants find our feelings necessary.

Chapter six is about the personalities and other sources I have taken as my ideals. These sources of inspiration in my life led me to find my identity. I have brought the stories that have portrayed the importance of having an ideal person in our life. Not only in person but also the books could be sources of inspiration; even the characters of the novel and the movie could be the source of inspiration. Those sources of inspiration became my ideals since I looked upon them and took steps in my life. My participants' stories of ideal people also have space in the chapter. Overall, the chapter has taken a mode of distinctiveness which I carried with the inspiration I got from my ideals.

Chapter seven consists of the story of my life, where I found my identity threatened. The lost situation and the crisis I had about my identity are all brought up in this chapter. The faith I had earlier and the faith I adapted to in my later life has brought conflict in my identity because I went through the stage of a threatened identity. The supporting stories of my participants have made the chapter more thoughtful on how much people struggle to save their identity. The stories of belongingness have played the role of a capsule in the chapter. It lessens the participants' pain in the research. The chapter is about threatened identity versus belongingness. It compares my identity with the biblical character 'Mary Magdelene,' which has given the research a different path of keeping faith in God. Comparing my and my participants' lives with the character 'Christian' of *the Pilgrim's Progress* is

another point to see our life from the perspective of John Bunyan, the author of Pilgrim's progress.

Chapter eight is about my journey into English. It carries the story of why English became important to me and how I struggled to learn English in my life. This chapter has given space for stories of being English teachers. The chapter includes accounts of the impact of being an English teacher in our life. Also, stories of our continuity in constructing our identity as English teachers have been brought into the chapter. My participants' accounts of being English students and teachers have been brought into the chapter. The chapter's primary focus is the continuity that English teachers give in their life, which becomes challenging for many.

Chapter nine is the stories of my professional development activities, which gives the picture of how I made myself a self-efficacious teacher and how challenging was for me to come out of my comfort zone and step out in search of an identity as a professional English teacher. Different strategies to be a professional English teacher appear in the chapter that comes as a motivation to those who seek to develop their professionalism. With my participants' stories, readers get a supplement to fulfill the hunger to know the needs for teacher professional development, especially for English teachers.

Chapter ten is the conclusion chapter. It includes my reflection on the overall research journey. It is the last chapter of the whole thesis, concluding with remarks on the two research questions developed in the first chapter. The answer to those research questions has made the chapter the ending one since it has given a sense of completion of the research. My reflection on how the journey went has given an overall glimpse of the whole research, which I would love to say is my life's journey. In this chapter, the readers can find my insights into the research. It has included the

concluding remarks with the limitations of the research. Also, the future direction and the research implications have been mentioned. Thus, the chapter has endorsed itself as the concluding one for the whole research.

Chapter Essence

Chapter one brings the initial story of how I got *dīkṣā* from my *guruāama* and how it impacted me to bear the responsibility as a grown-up girl. This chapter introduces my study of exploring English teachers' journey of change and identity construction. The excitement for taking *dīkṣā* and its effect on my growing phase and the pathway I created to bear the responsibility when being a *dīkṣā*-holder have been presented in the form of sequential events. Linking the story of taking *dīkṣā* with how I gave *śikṣā* to my students, I have revealed how a single event, 'taking *dīkṣā*' gave me the maturity of being self-responsible not only in my matters but also in teaching and learning. Chapter one is the introductory section of the whole thesis, as it gives the context of the study and rationale. The problem statement has been stated that talks about the topic-related missing discourse in education. The chapter has presented the purpose of the study, research questions and the delimitations of the study. My initial exploration on the related topics have been brought in the chapter that serves as the starter of the research. The structure of the study is in the chapter, which assists readers in grasping the overall outline of the research. One can find the autoethnographic nous in how I presented the stories at the beginning of the chapter and in my initial explorations.

CHAPTER II

A JOURNEY TOWARDS TEACHER IDENTITY AND AUTOETHNOGRAPHY

Before I start the research, I wanted to have a very initial thought about the aspects I can contemplate for my research. I explored teacher identity and autoethnography as I was to do research on teacher identity with autoethnographic writing. So, I went through some studies on the topics which gave me some ideas to build on initially.

An Initial Exploration on Teacher Identity

I had different images of teachers in my mind. Some have made positive space in my mind and heart and some have made quite negative space. Looking at teachers of different behaviours and performances, I thought it must be because of the circumstances they had around them. I got interested to know what kind of identities teachers hold. I went through Trahar (2013) and studied her journey of learning and teaching in higher education. Her study discussed her ability to interrogate the philosophical underpinning of her teaching and learning experience. The researcher has here kept the questions based on the context and the way of academic traditions in the university. The research is her personal experience of changing her attitude towards the teaching she did by conversing with the 'self.' With the same interest on research on identity construction, I read Suhr (2014) where he focused on the internal and external factors that affected his identity construction, especially in the context where he was not a native speaker and the teaching environment was English speaking dominant. This study made me realize that teaching experience can be wonderfully interlaced by establishing close relations with one's identity.

Teachers face different situations and gain experience of being in a noisy class and getting annoyed but also rise above to talk about respect for the child. They are the ones who see individual differences in the classroom and find respect for those differences. Getting nicknames from students and even from the administration is another main challenge. In spite of many challenges, teachers find teaching as a respectful job (Sapkota, 2016). Challenges come on the way but they lead to constructing their identities as English teachers. Sometimes, teachers do not know how to move forward and find teaching as respectful job or the job of their desire. In such a case, 'Critical Autoethnographic Narrative (CAN)' can be used as a teacher educational tool to remember, narrate and examine their experience of using and teaching language (Yazan, 2018). The concept of identity and agency to view self-development efforts adds to the primary goal in teacher candidates' learning, focusing on digging out the narratives of their self-identity. A critical perspective on language teaching practices can be developed by designing identity-oriented courses for teachers of English as a second language and using autobiographies as an essential instrument for identity-oriented courses. The situated nature of teacher identities focusing on the social, cultural, economic and political contexts can make the space to remember past experiences and (re)story their current practices.

Unique challenges are faced while teaching English but English teachers can explore their identity, keeping concern about their feelings and experiences (Yazan, 2019). The linguistic competency of bilingual teachers is the major area to be researched where teachers with 'native' and 'near native' proficiency in English are automatically assumed, competent teachers. Yazan discusses the ideological conflation of linguistic and professional identities. It is the misinformation on teachers about their pedagogical skills that the ideological assumptions is made on their

competency being judged by their native-like proficiency in English, not by their pedagogical skills. The situation is worse in the ELT field regarding the low salary paid to non-native speakers and that they are reminded of being unfortunate of not being native speakers of English. So, these are the burning issues related to teacher identity. With this view on teacher identity, I was thinking, is this all about teacher identity? I thought there must be other hidden things that we could excavate. I thought of my identity as a teacher and found that there is more that I can bring through this research.

An Initial Exploration on Becoming English Teacher: Its Connection to Autoethnography

As an English teacher, I wanted to go through the write-ups that would talk about becoming a good teacher in English. Language teachers can be empowered if they analyze their personal paths critically (Lapidus et al., 2013). Here, I could see the practical aspects of the highlighting term ‘personetics.’ Autoethnography can play an important role in developing ‘personetics’. The process of looking at their identity as well as learning is what the researchers called ‘personetics’. Writing about self helps the language teachers understand their lingua-cultures and assists them in viewing themselves as ESL writers, and makes them aware of the importance of their writing as a tool for teaching -writing. The researchers aspire to write about self to explore the ESL teachers’ teaching-learning journey. That made me feel that I was on the right track to go for autoethnography. To be a good English teacher, Gagon (2011) highlighted the importance of writing in ESL teachers’ life. With the help of writing effort, English teachers could express their past experiences, present experiences, and future visions as ESL teachers. Gagon found that ESL teachers can go beyond their surrounding pedagogical space and can excavate more than what they know.

An Initial Exploration on Teaching in Adverse Situations

I got a concern about teachers who teach in adverse situations, especially English teachers teaching in a context where they do not feel comfortable teaching English. Lemberger (2017) brought his experience of teaching English in Japan. His teaching philosophy of using authentic resources for teaching English has been highlighted. He laid out the purpose of documenting his experience of being a novice English teacher in three elementary schools in Japan. He discussed the activities like paper-scissors-rock he ran in his English class to motivate students. The behavioural issues that he dealt with two students, which later stopped when he gave attention to them and played dodgeball with them at recess, have been brought as his experience in the research. The challenge that EFL teachers bear in Japan has been exposed by situating themselves in a position where people speak English only in class but everywhere the Japanese language is used. He conceptualized that understanding Japan's culture is more important than teaching English. However, he focused on making students enjoy the curriculum and build a community in the classroom. This study reminded me of being a teacher in a school where they had occupied fifty students who were orphans. When I was newly appointed as an English teacher in the school, I did not know that there were students who were orphans. One day, after explaining the chapter, I gave them a paragraph writing as class work. I gave the topic 'My Mother.' I never thought that I would face such a situation. One of the girls started crying and her friends tried to console her. I asked why she was crying. One of the students said that she did not have a mother. I felt so bad for her. I could not think of what to do. The student behind me whispered in my ears, "Maam, many of our friends don't have their parents." Without delay, I changed the topic and said, "I think I should change the topic. I want you to write a paragraph about your best friend. I

rubbed the topic 'My Mother' that I wrote on the blackboard before and replaced that with the new topic 'My Best Friend.' I did not dare to go to that little girl who was crying but I noticed her picking up the pencil and writing something afterward. Later, when I learned from my teacher colleagues that there are students from orphanage homes in each class, I realized that we, as a teacher, first need to understand the situation and culture of the school and should behave accordingly. Giving a topic, 'My Mother,' was nothing wrong but finding out that the girl cried for that reason made me feel bad. It was a lesson for me that the teacher must know the students' situations and their surroundings.

Holland (2015) adheres to the idea that the practitioner of autoethnography in ELT acknowledges more than one way of thinking, writing, speaking and believing. He learned about Japanese culture and learned about his own identity and culture. The culture of America does not work in Japan, where there is a culture of taking 'silence as gold' and not sharing problems for not giving a burden to others. EFL classes in Japan have a mismatch between the expectations of teachers and students. Teachers find students inactive, lacking initiative and silent and students find EFL teachers as the imposers of uncomfortable practices such as asking them to participate verbally. Mentioning the dark times in his psyche, he has demonstrated his feelings of despair when being in another country as an EFL teacher. So, there are situations where English teachers get into adverse situations that empower them to face the challenges that make them strong as a teacher.

An Initial Exploration on Professional Development of English Teachers

As I was interested in having an initial view on professional development, I wanted to know in what area the explorations have been made. It was interesting to see how the researchers have brought their feelings regarding their professional

development. The local vernacular practices of the English teachers should get a platform to share their experiences of locally practicing the global language. To facilitate this, a community like TESOL could be a great platform (Canagarajah, 2012). Canagarajah shared a situation where he had a devastating experience of not being able to answer the questions posed by the foreigners who were the experts in the English language. The questions were about the methods he used while teaching English and his target language, which made him fumble for an answer. It made him explore his journey of developing himself as a TESOL professional and the one. They developed an idea that methods cannot be mandatory but are to be appropriated according to our needs and local pedagogical traditions. The research navigates the English peripheral teachers of competing in the communities of their practice, raises the voices of these teachers in the professional organization and strengthens teachers' voices to constructively criticize the practices in the centre and periphery. Ryan (2012) expresses a similar feeling regarding methods for teaching English. He brought his experiences of learning a second language while travelling to another country. His experience is of the time when he was working on his graduate degree, where he was teaching English as a second language. Ryan brought his experience as a second language student and an ESL teacher. From the research, Ryan realized that there are some questionable methods in English language class. He did that based on his teachers using those methods in English classes. The autoethnographic research made him re-examine his own identity as a teacher and learner of a second language.

Teacher development strategies employed by associations such as NELTA is an integral way for English teachers' growth (Gnawali, 2013). 'Teachers' professional growth' was the term I wanted to explore more and Gnawali explored the experiences of English teachers of how they undergo development when they are in the teaching

profession and are involved in such associations. The research has discussed that the teachers enjoy the resources provided by the associations when getting involved in those associations and become the resources themselves. They get benefitted by learning from one another. The research focused on how NELTA prioritized Teacher Professional Development by creating leaders and guiding them to support and promote teachers. The focused TPD activities included organizing events, publishing, running blogs and providing opportunities for foreign exposure and higher studies. The research concluded that the members of such associations add to their capacity by bringing new ideas and creating conditions for their own learning. When going through Rijal (2013) which was about the professional development of English teachers in Nepal, he focused on the experiences, perceptions and motivating factors for the professional development of English teachers. The researcher explored the current position of English teachers in terms of professional development through collaborative learning, innovative approaches, helping others to learn, taking alternative courses, self-reading and writing journals, which seem very poor and that the school leadership also does not involve teachers in decision-making. The research discusses the motivating factors for teacher professional development such as students' progress, engaging in innovative activities, getting satisfaction with new techniques used by the teachers, and feeling that teaching is important. The study further talks about the inquiry-based teacher professional development strategies to be maintained like action research, classroom observation and portfolio collection, which help teachers to be aware of the importance of their professional development.

Exploring the research by Gautam (2018), I found that the research was on the professional development of becoming and being an English Education professional where he has brought his own experience of changing of his identity

from respected Guru culture to a marketable respected sir of English culture. There are other stories that serve as the background as well as the inspiration for the author to develop himself as a professional English language teacher. Othman and Senom (2020) researched on mentoring English teachers for their professional development. The study was based on how mentoring assisted English teachers in their novice teaching stage. To succeed in a new environment, English teachers need support and mentoring to make their working environment easy. In most cases, as an English teacher, I found it different when I came to the workplace after teacher education and that is where I felt like I needed support to grow. It is necessary to guide teachers in social and professional growth.

An Initial Exploration on Autoethnography

I researched using ethnography as a method of study in my MPhil degree. The research helped me to observe other teachers' ways of teaching English. When I pursued my PhD in English Language Education, one of my professors told me that I could even look at my own life and write autoethnography. The idea triggered my mind and I developed an interest in exploring my own journey as a teacher and writing my stories from the autoethnographic line. That was how I got the initial thought of autoethnography. So, I made initial studies on autoethnographic studies that helped me to see what aspects do the researchers of autoethnography see. Also, I could see how autoethnography is used as the genre of writing. One can self-reflect on their relationships and help build compassionate relationships with their mates with the help of autoethnography. With the Critical literacy pedagogies in a classroom, one can realize the dehuman characteristics among the youth of colour, which make them know their own 'self' and each other's struggles (Camangian, 2010). The study reminded me of the dehuman characters that people would show towards Mishri didi.

The study further explored the move from self to considering others as a tool to foster communication between them and between different cultures. That made me think of myself blindly following the dehuman character, following the caste system and making Mishri didi the outsider. In the research study, when assigned autoethnographies, the students came to a healing strategy from the dehumanization they experienced every day in their communities rather than academic obligation. It led them to be transformative learners. I was thinking had we got the awareness against untouchability, we would have known little about how to treat nice to Mishri didi. The researcher used language arts classes, writing, listening and speaking components of language to make students gain humanizing learning, to get experiential knowledge of self and others and to promote understanding and a unified classroom community.

Autoethnography has the potential to deal with research issues such as language teaching and learning (Mirhosseini, 2018). Exploring the diversity of research in ELT, Mirhosseini discovered the autoethnography in TESOL, where he found these studies. However, they are small in number and focused on bringing the 'self' and 'society' together. Life-like findings and understandings can be brought through autoethnography. Autoethnography can go into a deeper layer of language education contexts and bring the experiences of language teachers and learners. Stanley (2019) claims that autoethnography is a booming genre in ELT research. It is a method to have applied the evocative nature of storytelling but has ignored to comprise social justice. There is a misreading of the intention of autoethnography in ELT. Autoethnography in ELT is misinterpreted as memoir or life-writing. A huge question to consider is doing equitable research that incorporates the redressing of social justice imbalances in a broader sense.

By generating the narratives through autoethnography, the researchers can analyze their narratives (Park, 2016). The researchers of the ELT field can narrate the conclusion of a particular situation and again move backward, discussing the historical, cultural and biographical details relevant to the excerpt. This line of the study made me ponder upon my position in the present and view it by moving backward and looking at the historical, cultural and biographical details. The research is more towards the relationship that has to be kept with the students of TESOL graduates even after graduation. Park raises her voice for the TESOL, being too focused on passing the students out with its degree and never being passionate about keeping those degrees activated. She sees a lack of 'Community of practices' among TESOL practitioners and can sense the stagnant community though they were once live TESOL members. Park even claims that TESOL programs do not offer teaching credentials which has hindered students from having teaching jobs. She suggests a TESOL curriculum to emphasize making students develop professionally by applying the innovative routes sown by the TESOL program. I could see how we can be critical towards the ongoing practice and see the progress or the downfall of the community where we live in. Autoethnography creates the room to see around and explore what was, is and is to come.

Autoethnography and Pedagogy of Teaching

I wanted to see the pedagogical usage of autoethnography that would allow teachers to link their personal to pedagogical theory, keeping the relationship between teachers and students (Vasconcelus, 2011). Exploring that the researcher tries to tie her memories which she recollects by the snapshots of how she used her personal stories in her professional settings and how that helped her build the relationship with students attracted me more towards autoethnography. Her shocking experience of

taking herself as a perfect EFL teacher when teaching phonetics and phonology in a perfect manner but getting to know that the students took her as a poor teacher made her realize that she had ignorance in her instructional approach rather than the subject matter itself. Her pedagogical practices of listening to the EFL students while having class allowed her to learn a few lessons, such as a need to make EFL class enjoyable. Autoethnography in ELT research has paved a pathway for the researchers to look at themselves, reflecting on their teaching practices and exhibiting a need for changes in some areas.

I also learned that autoethnography helps come to the ground-level observation of practical teaching in the English classroom (Arikan, 2015). Arikan's observations in his classroom teaching revealed that he learned the value of attitude rather than content. One of the students ran towards him, hugged him and said, "I Love You." She then said to him, "You smell like my father!" Arikan responded, "Maybe we use the same cologne." Her answer made him feel awful as he turned red with embarrassment. "No, my father smokes, too!" Arikan never went into the classroom, having smoked a cigarette again. Carrying out the autoethnographic inquiry, he understood that the theory and practice of teaching foreign languages to young learners differ widely. A simple instruction, "Be a flower," works. Simple things like students' attention span, class size and managing materials may challenge an English teacher in a practical setting in primary classes.

An Advent as the Practitioner of Auto/ethnography

With a huge expectation to be selected for my PhD entrance exam, which consisted of both a written exam and a proposal defense (the qualifying one), I entered the hall for my proposal defense. My topic was related to school leaders' journey into English. The method I selected was ethnography. I got a lot of

constructive feedback for my presentation. However, in his turn to give me feedback, one of the reputed professors asked me, “Why don’t you explore your journey into English? Why to explore others?” At one point, I did not understand whether that was serious feedback or just light humour made upon me. I kept on thinking about that particular feedback throughout the days and nights for about three days. I reflected on my life and recalled a chronological journey of my attempt to learn and teach English. Finally, I realized that the professor was serious about the feedback and that I was in a position to research myself to explore my journey. As an auto/ethnographer, I got an advent from there and am contented to be an auto/ethnographer.

Auto/ethnography is writing about the personal by relating it to the culture. Auto/ethnography is a form of ethnography that overlaps art and science; therefore, it is auto or self and ethno or culture (Ellis, 2004). It is a platform that allows researchers to explore the inner self and to write it down as a story of their own life which would even include the story of other people’s life because ethnographers’ stories of self is never their own but they are others’ story as well (Ellis, 2007). Auto/ethnography is above ethnography because it is ethnography of the self as evocative, unfolding and scenic stories. It can also be called the real calling of researchers as it is about writing the stories of researchers’ own souls. Autoethnography is about ‘self,’ making it easy for researchers to have words flow onto the page, which gives strength not to be worried about being criticized because the work is less academic (Campbell, 2016). The need is for a solid and clear explanation through the auto/ethnographers’ writing that can clarify the real value of auto/ethnography in the field of research. Auto/ethnography is not simply a description of lived experiences of a continuum that comes out of people’s lives in the form of stories or poems or as art-based expressions or metaphorical expressions, but

it is also a process that creates multiple layers of learning (Qutoshi, 2015).

Understanding own experience is such a stage of the research process that later allows the researchers to interpret their participants' experiences and represent them through writing (Mendez, 2013). It makes the multiple layers of learning happen.

Auto/ethnography thus has a huge essence since it focuses on the self and the others within the self.

Contextualizing Myself as the Practitioner of Auto/ethnography

Reflecting on my life, I came to recall the story of my life that has made me a person with an experience of being a girl born in a Nepalese Brahmin family who had to be bound to different social taboos but later struggled to be a good English teacher. I was raised in a family where I had to follow different rules that did not apply to my friends from different caste groups. One thing I found not right was that my friends would call me *Bahun* (Brahmin) and that *Bahun is mean*. They would even make fun of my nose as it is the pointed nose and say that my nose tells them that I am *chhuchi* (mean). I would see myself in the mirror and would wonder why my nose is not like those of my friends. When they would play games like the *game dhalai*, which they used to play with lots of fun by piling up the stones and making towers within the time given by the other group and by escaping the touch of another group, they would enjoy it a lot. I also enjoyed those games, but my friends told me *Bahun* which meant that I was born to conduct *puja* and I was supposed to stay at home rather than play with them. That might be fun for them to tell that about my caste, but I would think *bahuns* are upper in the hierarchy if we look from the eyes of the caste system because they are known to be in the upper caste. Still, I wished I was from the other caste since I felt ignored every time. They would tell me that I would go to conduct *puja* in people's houses and collect money from there and run my life which I always

denied. I had a strong determination that I would study hard and be a successful person. That is where I found myself being 'Other' while being with friends.

Either amidst my friends or in the family, I was compelled to ask, *who am I?* People made me question myself. When Mishri didi was in our house, I would find that I was in the upper caste. When I was among my friends from different caste groups, they would make me feel that I was from the upper caste. However, I was not worthy in my own family and I was not allowed to share the same level of *chulo* while eating with my brothers. So, I searched for my identity in the society where I was born and with the people I had to deal with daily. Being an auto/ethnographer, I comprehended that I have such a story in my life that would make me explore my life more. Like me, other auto/ethnographers tend to explore their own stories as they see the essence of those stories of their past to shape their life or profession in the present, where they experience the transformation in their life.

Auto/ethnography as an Approach to Transformative Learning

An auto/ethnography brings out the experiences of the delineated period from the past to the present. This threads up a sequence of life from the beginning stage to the ongoing stage, often an illustration of transformation. An individual can transform (Sykes, 2014). There is a strong link between auto/ethnography and change.

Auto/ethnography is a lens to view past and present practices and envisions future possibilities, and transformative learning holds the same characteristic (Belbase et al., 2008). When we talk about transformation, it is the positive changes that occur in personal and professional life. The importance and value of auto/ethnography are to hold the capacity to initiate positive change (Starr, 2010). Transformative learning contains a significant element called 'reflection,' which assists an individual in doing a real and high level of assessment about self. It is because reflection leads to

recalling the past moments to see the difference that has ensued in the individual's present life. This shows the knotted relationship between auto/ethnography and transformation.

Chapter Essence

Chapter II is about my journey to explore teacher identity and autoethnography. I put my thought on the topics and gave the reason for choosing teacher identity as the topic and autoethnography as the method and the genre of writing. Teacher identity has been the topic of my interest since long ago when I had questions regarding teachers having different performances in the classroom. The interest towards autoethnography arose with my professor's words on the essence of autoethnography that rooted in my mind. The chapter consists of the depiction of my initial exploration as a journey to teacher identity and autoethnography.

CHAPTER III

SETTING MYSELF IN THE FIELD OF INQUIRY

I was motivated to justify my research questions going through some research studies (Snyder, 2019). I wanted to ground myself in the essentials of other researchers' achievements in a particular research field to enhance the body of knowledge (Schryen, 2015). Engaging myself in the study helped me determine what has been undertaken and what needs to be undertaken (Onwuegbuzie, Leech & Collins, 2012). I could gain ideas from the existing research studies and debates relevant to a particular research topic or the study area and could clarify my subject area by helping me view long-standing debates on it (Tummers & Karsten, 2012). It helped me see the originality and relevance of my research problem and demonstrated my preparedness to complete the research. The journey started with a review of teacher identity, which needed viewing the teaching profession.

The Teaching Profession

Many of my friends say *I will be anything except a teacher*. It made me think about *being a teacher: Is it easy or too difficult that people do not want to be a teacher?* According to Topkaya and Uztosun (2012), motivating young people toward the teaching profession is challenging. To hear many people say they do not want to be a teacher, I wanted to learn what teaching is. When I was in high school, my principal called me to teach in his school. I was overwhelmed by his proposal, and I quickly accepted. For many people, to be a teacher is just to hold one profession. For some people, it is just to have a respectful job. Other teachers become a teacher to fulfill their aim as a teacher. But other teachers want to be successful. If so, let us

discuss who the successful teachers are and what are the ways to becoming successful teachers. Behind Huberman's model is the idea that teachers may move to other directions from teaching, and this may be due to teacher burnout (Huberman, 1993 as cited in Eros, 2011). Moving ahead, crossing this stage makes teachers successful in their profession. In the teaching process, if a teacher knows how children learn in terms of their learning styles and multiple intelligences and lets them learn things in their own way, then that particular teacher become a successful teacher. Let us discuss how children learn in detail. Then, we can move to the responsibility of a teacher.

Children are innocent creatures who make sense of the world in their way. They learn new things every moment, building a deep understanding of the world and the things around them. I have a school with around seven hundred children in total. Amazingly, they all have different ways of learning. Some children learn by engaging with objects, as Piaget has said in his theory. Some learn by interacting with each other, as Vygotsky has said. As Erikson has said, some can face many challenges when doing something, and some children learn more if their multiple intelligence is uplifted. It is all about how children learn. Once I took the students of class five to the zoo. After returning from the zoo, I thought of engaging them till their afternoon snack was ready. I provided the materials and asked them to take the materials from the creative corner. I asked them to express their feelings about the zoo in whatever way they liked. It was interesting that some drew pictures of different animals in the zoo. Some painted pictures of animals, some made the zoo model using dough, some children did collage work, and some older children wrote their experiences with their visit to the zoo. It shows that our students in a class also have different learning styles. They learn new things and construct new knowledge. Teaching is often taken as only a job but it is not only the job but a skill to understand children and provide treatment

according to their needs. In the case of English teachers, Ulum (2015) points out, “it is crucial to figure out learners’ language needs to make a firm base and to implement the specific language course” (p.16). Running the classes by understanding learners’ needs gives effectual output. As teachers can relate teaching by addressing learners’ needs, they can make a good base for their learning. By realizing this in my later career, I could establish myself as a teacher who prioritized meeting learners’ needs and making the base for the English language, keeping in mind its space in Nepal.

English: The Space It Has Made in Nepal

English in Nepal has such ample space that it is prestigious to be known as English-speaking people here. People used to ask me what is my major subject at the college level and I used to be proud to say that it was major English and they would see me as someone who possessed important skills. In that sense, it might be good that English has been made a compulsory subject for students at the school level. English medium education has stood as an influence in making English popular. If we look at the status of English in Nepal, it seems crazy. Everybody is running after English, but nobody knows why they are doing so. Bista (2011) claims that most parents are fond of sending their children to English Medium schools. It is because English is used everywhere; in families, workplaces, shopping malls, parks, hospitals, schools and colleges. I have been in a situation where I was in a shopping mall and my thought led me that I must speak in English while shopping with my children there. It was because almost everybody was speaking in English. I even got a feeling of existing in the shopping malls of European countries.

It seems like English has become the foremost thing to have spoken. When people say they can speak English, they get a job quickly. If they do not have English, they may have to stay unemployed. English has strongly influenced Nepalese people

since the British had contact with them in the second half of the 18th century (Poudel, 2016). It is interesting here in Nepal. We have our language, 'Nepali.' Apart from that, we are multi-linguals. Many of us have our ethnic language, which is worth thousands of Englishes. We have our own identity, and our tongues have their own identity.

English has grown so that it has kept its roots all over Nepal, and Nepalese are running after it. This is the effect of English as a global language. A global language achieves its global status by being recognized in every country (Crystal, 2003).

English is a global language; thus, its influence is on everybody everywhere and Nepal is no exception.

Spread of English in Education System and Public Space

English has been made compulsory for students not only as a subject but also as the language of communication in schools. It has become a familiar language, and many English loan words are localized now, such as a doctor, computer, camera, cancer, bag, and so on (Pandey, 2020). English medium education has stood as the medium for teaching the English language. Parents expect their children to learn good English and get them admitted to English medium schools. Schools in Nepal compete to give the best education by making a child competitive in the English language. It is necessary since the English language has slowly been injected into people's minds since it is considered an obligatory skill (Seki, 2015). In the school where I am currently working, people come to admit their children and the very first concern they show is whether we ask our students to communicate in the English language or not. If we say 'No', we might lose that child because parents come with an expectation that their children must be good in English language when they are admitted to English medium schools like ours. In the present context, English has become a craze for people. So, they are ready to pay a good amount to make their children learn it.

English has now tempted Nepalese society in the form of the subject and medium (Bhattarai & Gautam, 2005). There is a good spread of English in Nepal with many faces after its introduction to the formal education system and it has come up as Englishization and Nepalization of the English language to express their localized state (Giri, 2015). Nepali people find success in the English language. English has become such a language that parents cannot think of enrolling their children in a government school where English is only the subject taught in the English language. In contrast, they are happy to enroll their children in an English medium school where all the subjects are taught in English except Nepali. English is the language that has become the “flesh and blood of Nepalese academia today” (Karn, 2011, p.30). There is a rapid growth of institutes and academies offering the whole range of proficiency in English that is supposed to give the strength to be fluent and to make them fit for any sector, sharpening their English language.

Teaching in Foreign Language, a Challenge

Becoming a teacher in a foreign language class is a challenge. I have struggled many times being a teacher of English. In English medium schools, children are good in English language since they have to study many subjects in English, whereas in government schools in Nepal, students find English very difficult as they have all other subjects in the Nepali language except English. Among my village friends, I had good English as I studied in an English Medium school but they studied in a government school. Whenever the girls from my village had exams coming nearer, all the village girls used to come to me and ask questions related to English grammar and even about seen and unseen passages that they would get in exams. I have experience of teaching English to students of government schools. I used to teach tuition to a group of students who were in class ten. At that time, I realized that teaching English

in Nepal is not easy since it is a second or third language and a foreign language. I had to teach them English but by translating everything in Nepali. As a Nepali English language teacher, I used to relate the lesson with the Nepalese context which would help them understand it but again, it was difficult when it came to grammar rules. It might be due to their less exposure to English language, it was a huge challenge to teach them. There are cases where English is one of the used languages of the country but not the mother tongue; in this case, most teachers do not prepare adequately to teach students (Goldfus, 2011). The lack of teaching materials is another problem. Though teachers are well-trained, there is a lack of teaching materials in many parts of the country. Still, we have places where textbooks do not reach till half of the session. In government schools, classes are too crowded with over 60 students, making it difficult to get all of them. Also, the mobilization of teachers in class is out of thought in a packed classroom. This results in inadequate interaction between teachers and students.

Nepal faced a massive earthquake in 2015, and there are no permanent classes after the earthquake in many places in Nepal. Students tend to go to school and finish their duty of being in class in the allocated time, and teachers do the same. There is no provision of good delivery of English from the teachers' side, and due to a lack of proper teaching methods and style, students do not gain what they are supposed to. There is a trend of reading and writing for the exam. According to Akbari (2015), as students of a second language tend to study exam-oriented, they are less motivated to learn English. This lowers the students' English Language skills because they focus only on how to pass the exam, not what to learn. Even the students expect teachers to teach English in Nepali so that they understand what it means. This is because they do not understand teachers' instruction in English (Gnawali, 2018). Teaching English is,

therefore, a big challenge. There are multiple challenges in second-language classrooms, as stated above. However, to stand as a teacher in a second language class and bear those challenges is a challenge. Yildiz (2020) claims that there should be a flexible classroom setting with good technology and space for visual materials, which leads learners to feel a need to learn a language. The problem is: It is not possible in all parts of Nepal because the situation prevails that the teachers have to teach English in Nepali. Therefore, teaching in a second language class is a challenge for English teachers despite being an everyday discourse nowadays.

Learning through Foreign Language, a Challenge

The demand for English is increasing day by day. More than the mother tongue, English is given priority. English has been made compulsory for students. English medium education is an emerging means of English Language Teaching today. Parents expect their ward to fulfill their dreams and admit them to English medium schools. It is not easy for students to learn English at once, but they must learn it. Souriyavongsa et al. (2013) claim that people struggle to learn English when it is their second or foreign language. They discuss the poor performance of English teachers and the lack of well-trained teachers as a reason for students' low performance in English. Abdalla and Mustafa (2015) stated that the English language is essential for people and valuable in their professional lives. Low teaching materials, unqualified teachers, and lack of motivation are the primary reasons affecting their English learning. Ahmed (2015) discusses perspectives and the factors affecting the English learning of the learners. Also, the researcher brought the views of non-major English learners towards English learning.

The students' low performance in English due to a lack of well-trained teachers has become a major topic for discussion today as it is also one of the

challenges of learning English. The difficulty arises in many schools when a mother tongue is kept under the shadow and the second language is made the medium of instruction. Sua and Raman (2007) claim that using a second language as a medium of instruction leads to learning difficulty due to the language barrier. They stated that the negative attitude of students towards English, the dominant use of the mother tongue, the problems in the methods of teaching English and the lack of qualified teachers are the causes of students' poor performance in the English language at the Secondary level students (Sa'ad & Usman, 2014). Learning the English language is a big challenge for people to whom it is not their mother tongue. It is difficult to grasp other languages.

English medium education comprises issues such as a lack of understanding of individual differences and the way to use these differences. Students may not find every teacher's teaching style impressive because every student is different and expects different teacher performances (Sriuliyana, 2016). Because of this reason, students are not able to perform in the way they want. Thus, production is not desirable. The teachers must be able to handle the individual style. Also, there are cases where the contrastive combination of introverts and extroverts within pairs and groups would produce maximum success. Sometimes personal time is precious for students; sometimes, their collaboration gives them a learning mode. The teachers' keen observation is fundamental. Teachers can assist students using their mother tongue in relevance to the context, which would aid students in gaining the optimum benefit, which seems lacking in English education. Again, it is about becoming an English teacher.

English medium institutions seem as stricter in the matter of discipline. It is almost the case that the teachers are warned not to use the mother tongue in their

classroom. Students are made quiet in the class and expected to learn well. Usually, the class gets quiet when a teacher asks them to speak in a language with which they are not familiar. Wilson and Barnard (2007), as cited in Jones (2009), discuss the importance of meaningful exchanges during the discussion. Any discussion is significant when there is a charm in exchanging their ideas. The textbook authors claim that books contain tasks designed to reduce learner anxiety and promote language acquisition. Still, the reality is that there is already anxiety in people when there is the imposition of language which is not their mother tongue. These things are practical issues in any institution though the reality of 'English as a global language' exists. In such a situation, looking at the essence of English Language Teacher Development is useful.

English Language Teacher Development: Its Essence

English language teacher development is a string in teachers' life that makes them able to climb up and try to meet the higher level of the teaching platform. It is a tool for educators to make them climb the teaching journey hill and stretch their professional development. Professional development includes the analysis of teachers' previous learning and their needs as basic things so that they take it as an ongoing and continuous process (Craft, 2002). Their prior learning does matter in what they are practicing at the moment. Teachers have their struggles in their teaching journey. Thus, they have many ups and downs in their lives getting entangled with being and becoming teachers, which have to be considered by teacher educators in such a way that they are built up confronting such situations and giving priority to teaching as their dearest profession.

In the present education, teachers not only need to possess good knowledge of expertise but also have the capacity to organize teaching activities, control teaching

discussion and explore teaching (Jiang, 2017). To develop such qualities in themselves, teachers need the support of teacher educators who have a significant role in uplifting teachers. Understanding teachers' problems and encouraging them to go ahead with a good spirit is one of the tasks of teacher educators. Liu (2015) claimed that teacher educators keep pace with 21st-century global complexity, including lifelong learning in teachers that get passed to their students through their cognitively and relationally-oriented classroom practices. Teacher educators can only give them ideas about how the class can be effective. The responsibility is of the teachers who are to make it happen. Teachers need the help of the school management as they are the leaders who can encourage teachers to transform their teaching. Teachers are to be able to compete and develop themselves as bold learners to implement the learned gear in their school. School management can mould teachers into the best teachers, but it takes time. They go through the stages that sharpen them to be excellent teachers. Teacher Development assists teachers in developing their professionalism step by step and progressively. However, while constructing their identity as teachers, they go through many challenges that come as complexities in their life.

Teacher Identity and the Complexities within It

Teachers are the ones who go through different phases to establish their identity as teachers. Many teachers become researchers to explore their own identities. An identity is an essential tool for researchers in understanding the self and society (Gee, 2000). Teachers learn and teach simultaneously, and during this process, they interact with significant others, which gradually takes them to their identity construction (Izadinia, 2015). Teacher identity is pertinent to fulfilling their commitment to care for learners, growth, and learning support (Robinson &

McMillan, 2006). In the beginning days of my career, I took it very lightly that I was the teacher.

To some extent, I was unsure about my aim in life. I was in dilemma of whether I will be continuing the teaching profession or will I do something else. Gradually, there came growing phases in my life as a teacher, which made me think and grow like a teacher. That thought of being a teacher took me to the stage where I started finding satisfaction in being a teacher. In a society where teachers are considered god's symbol, it is worth developing one's identity as a teacher. However, a genuine commitment is needed to be a teacher. After all, it is not only about being but becoming the teacher is also a matter to be understood.

Teachers' commitment, motivation, self-efficacy, and job satisfaction are associated with their identity, which results from their personal and social experiences (Day et al., 2005). Teachers' identity construction happens through two approaches to identity, psychological and sociological. A psychological approach concerns characteristics different from those of other people and personal identities. A sociological approach is about negotiating the society to construct their social roles through personal experiences and social identity (Rucieman, 2018). When going through both the process, psychological and sociological, teachers get many complexities in their life. Connecting this with language teachers, they have a different strain in constructing identity. Though there is respect for language teachers and those language teachers have the next level of status in society, there can be complexity in language teachers' identity construction (Matsumoto, 2012), which might be the research subject. Teachers' identity construction is a significant concept for research, and language teachers' identity construction could be the other of interest for the research. Some questionable methods in English language classes can

make English teachers re-examine their identity as teachers and learners of the second language (Ryan, 2012). At the same time, language teachers' identity construction might have other associated complexities. Even in their professional life, they might face complexities while going through different stages of their 'teacher life.'

Developmental Stages in English Teachers

English teachers go through certain teaching and learning stages and might have tremendous stories in their life. These developmental stages may not be linear to all. In teacher education literature, 'stages of teacher development' is a topic that has been widely researched. According to Berliner (1988), there are five stages for teachers to develop their professional careers. The first one is the 'Novice Stage.' This is when teachers try to implement all they have learned about teaching. However, this stage takes them to the classroom reality, which is contextual and different from what was taught in the teacher education programs. Real-world experience makes teachers the features of situations. The second stage is the 'Advanced Beginner Stage,' where the context begins to guide the behaviour. Teachers gain the experience of where to follow the rules and where to break them. Also, they recognize the similarities across contexts. However, they still follow the rules and describe events concerning contexts but do not determine through personal actions. The third stage is the 'Competent Stage'; in this stage, teachers consciously choose what they will do. They are confident about what to prioritize from the curriculum and what to ignore. They are very much conscious of what is safe and unsafe while planning. They are emotional about success and failure but in a more advanced way than that of novice and advanced stages. Competent performers are still not fast and flexible in their behaviour. The fourth is the 'Proficient Stage,' where the know-how becomes prominent. In this stage, teachers can easily predict what will happen by seeing the

patterns and similarities. However, they are still analytic and deliberative in deciding what to do next. The fifth stage is the 'Expert Stage,' where teachers are neither rational nor intuitive but are 'arational.' They show fluid performance where they are flexible in deciding as per the situation. They place their teaching qualitatively at a higher level without any effort. If something is not going well, they make decisions by reflecting on the actions. They do things as usual but in an efficient way. These are the developmental stages that the teachers go through. Some teachers go through all five stages, and some might stay in stages 2, 3, or 4. English teachers, too, go through the developmental stages. For English teachers, there is more to develop along with the abovementioned stages. They need to search for the teachers' voice, strengthen the practice of peripheral knowledge construction, adopt language theories to improve their pedagogical skills, and communicate with local scholars and educational authorities to bridge the gap in the national policy for ELT (Moncada, 2007). Teachers go through different stages during their journey as teachers and learn from each stage that would help them be stable teachers.

Looking at Personal Path Critically

English teachers are empowered if they analyze their paths critically (Lapidus, Kaveh & Hirano, 2013). Language teachers understand their lingua-cultures, view themselves as ESL speakers and writers and make others aware of the importance of English. It is crucial to explore the ESL teachers' teaching-learning journey. It is emergent to analyze their path critically. There are several situations in my life as an English teacher where I have seen my personal path critically. Teachers are seen as respected people in Nepalese society. In the context where teachers are considered wise persons, English teachers get more respect as they are regarded as the ones who are familiar with the foreign language, English. Being a teacher made me

aware of choosing simplicity in my lifestyle. Being an English teacher, I maintained that standard of an English teacher—for instance, listening to the English news and translating it into the Nepali language to make people get information. I, too, grabbed opportunities to talk to foreigners when they were in our village and taught English to the village students. When I am in the class as an EFL teacher, I always feel like there is a responsibility in me to make my students successful learners of English. Critical perspectives can be developed for language teaching practices, focusing on the positioned nature of teacher identities in their social, cultural, economic, and political contexts and affording the space “not only to remember the past experiences but also to (re)story their current practices” (Yazan, 2018, p. 2). Affording the room for my students to recall the past and present their current practices or situations, journal writing has become a fantastic tool. Keeping reflective journals has helped me reflect upon myself, see how my actions are going, and decide what to do next. Critical analysis of the personal path gives English teachers a space to be thoughtful about the present and future actions of whether they are going well to establish their identity as English teachers. When lacking this part, English teachers get the complexities of having a mess in their professional life for not being able to analyze their personal path critically.

Bilingual Complexity

Zuniga et al. (2019) narrate their experiences of a cross-section of U.S. bilingual teacher educators, focusing on their bilingual identity. The opportunities and challenges faced by bilingual teachers are related to curriculum design. Informing curriculum design and instruction in the field should be made strong so that they could be meaningful to bilingual students in terms of their rigorous engagement in learning which may give them their bilingual identity stand. Encouraging bilingual

students is a duty of an English teacher, especially when they are in a society where the students come from different language backgrounds. Suhr (2014) conducted research where he focused on the internal and external factors that affected his identity construction, especially in the context where he was not a native speaker and where the teaching environment was English-speaking dominant. The study examines the author's teaching experience, his positioning of the self, and his establishment of close relations with one's self. Being teachers of a second or foreign language is a challenging task for English teachers, interweaving many stories related to linguistic challenges (Holland, 2015; Lemberger, 2017). I have faced complexity regarding the bilingual context. I was in a school giving tuition classes for grade seven, where I was asked to teach English. I was happy to be an English teacher, but I never realized the situation where I had to give up for not being able to help a student who knew the Nepali language but not the Newari language. As all the students were from the Newar community, but that student was from the Chhetriya community, she could not mingle with her friends. Even in English class, others would translate into a Newari language to conceptualize English. At that time, I realized had I known the Newari language, I would help that student cope with that community and that she would not have left the tuition class. So, English teachers face this type of bilingual complexity.

English teachers can express their bilingual experiences by wonderfully interlacing them through autoethnography. For this, 'Critical Autoethnographic Narrative (CAN)' can be used as a teacher educational tool where a new assignment was designed to make students remember, narrate and examine their experience of using and teaching language (Yazan, 2018). The research carries the concept of identity and an agency to view his self-development efforts. As the primary goal was the 'identity' of teachers, he focused on digging out the narratives on their self-

identity. The research focuses on designing identity-oriented courses for teachers of English as a second language (TESL). Being unaware of tools like autobiographies or other means as the essential instrument for identity-oriented lessons, English teachers face complexities where they land on giving up.

Non-Native Complexity and Englishes as the Way Out

It is difficult to express their feelings when it is about the experience of non-native English teachers or students. So, they need to explore their experience of being non-native practitioners of English. The identity of non-native English teachers is complex, and their identity heavily relies on the power, race, and ideology of both students and the instructor (Huo, 2017). The authentic and imagined selves appear to be the conflict creator in the non-native teachers and students (Hsieh, 2016). English teachers must address issues such as the international students' identity of new and old selves. Students' negativity towards their little knowledge of English pushes them to have inward development of negative feelings about their identity of being a non-native speaker of English. There was a Chinese class as an extra class for students in the school where I work. We had a native speaker of the Chinese language as a teacher for two years, but the students found the Chinese language very difficult. After two years, we hired a Chinese teacher who was a Nepali woman but was a coach for the Chinese language. When we took reflection on our students, they expressed that it was easier to communicate with a Nepali woman as she could understand the difficult points of Nepali children. She was a Nepali woman and could relate it to her learning Chinese, which a native teacher of Chinese would never understand.

I have had a similar experience of being a non-native English teacher and being compared with a native speaker of English many times. I, as a non-native

teacher, did understand the complexities of students. However, I realize that we non-native teachers of English have more complexities in our life as a teacher since we have the responsibility of relating the content to the students' locality and their life as well as culture. The mismatching of the habitus and the struggle of shaping the identities as English users become the prominent tension. Our emotive response to the experiences affects our sense of self (Hopkins, 2015). English teachers must cultivate a deeper understanding of being professional teachers and help students from non-native English-speaking contexts and multicultural students. English teachers sometimes have to be friends of non-native students, using their mother tongue (Walkinshaw & Oanh, 2014) to make them understand English and they should not just help by knowing them but by understanding their feelings and hardships. As non-native speakers of English, L2 learners always feel inferior compared to native speakers of English (Lei, 2015). English teachers sometimes get trapped in their profession with various problems, such as the inability to use English in communicative contexts. However, their grammatical knowledge is intense, and they continuously search for light in the tunnel with gradual improvement. To express such feelings of being inferior and courageous in the journey of identity construction, non-native English teachers have to have the courage to explore their identity through complexity.

There is a way to change the viewpoint of English teachers' non-native complexity. As English teachers, we must be aware of the varieties of English Braj B Kachru talked about in the 1960s (Kachru, 1992). In many non-native English-speaking countries, the English language has got the status of being the official language or of the second language (Yusuf, 2019). We have heard of American and British English, and based on those Englishes, people worldwide speak English where

they communicate with their own accent. However, their different accents and pronunciations make it challenging to teach English to the students. In the countries like India and Nigeria, people make their children speak English and treat it as their first language though they have their mother tongue and come up with a different variety of English (Lucie & Llurda, 2008). In the case of Nepal, too, people have started bringing up their children in the English language and relying on English for their intercultural communications, giving rise to Asian varieties of English (Kachru et al., 2006). The target of English Education is to involve learners in communicating in English rather than making them competent in the English language, but this demands the learners to be evaluated differently in terms of contents and methods as per their needs and local bilingual teacher could be better to bring up those learners with the variety of English (Leyi, 2020). English teachers in Nepal can deal with the non-native complexity, getting confidence in developing a new variety of English in Nepal, 'Nepenglish,' which is not unique as new varieties of English are being evolved (Sharma et al., 2015). Complexities are there, but Non-native English teachers of Nepal have a way of getting out of non-native complexities, getting hold of the concept of Englishes.

The Role of Teachers

To develop the English language and education, English teachers have a huge role as they are the ones who can envision English teaching to bring transformation in people, and this happens when English educators play the role of activists and intellectuals (Morrell, 2005). I see myself as a teacher who can change somebody's life. As I got my teachers' words still in my heart, I can make my students remember me in the same way. We, teachers, have a huge role that can transform students' life. Donnelly (2015) focused on his English language development through his

relationship with the administration and colleagues. The impact on his L2 teacher identity by his sustained teaching experience and the formation of his teacher identity after his first teaching term has made him realize the transition from playing the role of an ESL teacher to feeling like one. I experienced that when teachers get appointed as English teachers in Nepal, they get more school responsibilities. As an English teacher, I fulfill the responsibility of an editor, a writer, an assembly leader, a translator, and many more. Every institution wants an improvement in its ways of doing things. From my experience, I have found that this expectation is kept from English teachers a lot as they are the ones who can develop the English language status of the particular institution, which is the desire of many English medium schools now. That is why just being an English teacher is not enough but being able to handle all the responsibilities that come, English teachers must seek to becoming English teachers. English is a global language (Crystal, 2003), so it has made good space in Nepal. I run a speakers' club that encourages students to speak English. To develop teachers' confidence in the English language, I have started a weekly staff meeting where one teacher leads the discussion one week, and the other teacher gets a chance to lead the meeting the following week. The lead teacher takes the initials of the meeting, describes the agenda, and closes the discussion in English. As the English teacher, I highlight their strengths in English, encouraging them. So, the English teacher is responsible for developing the English language itself.

A Tension between Teacher's Language Competence and Pedagogical Skills

Second-language teachers are believed to possess communicative skills in one or more foreign languages. There is a thorny debate on language teachers' competence and pedagogical ability, which dramatically impacts the personal and professional identity of language teachers (Casteneda, 2011). Language teachers

always feel socially disadvantageous to have dealt with issues of being judged as less competent than the native speaker or are expected to be more intelligent than any other subject teachers. In many cases, I have left my pedagogical stuff behind and tried competing with other subject teachers. As an English teacher, I was asked to make my classroom outstanding compared to other teachers. My priority could have been my students' outcomes in the English language. Still, to fulfill the expectation of the school administration, I designed the displays myself and stuck them on the wall, for which they showered me with much admiration. However, I was not happy with my hard work, which was to show others. The complexity interlaced with my competent feeling bound me. Now I realize that I could have involved students in developing those displays by making them interact and giving them opportunities to bring their ideas to make displays, which would fulfill the goals of good pedagogy. Good pedagogy requires teachers to engage deeply with the invented activities by making their classroom a social setting (Danielewicz, 2001). In my case, I failed to maintain good pedagogy, for I kept my effort on being competitive rather than becoming a good pedagogy practitioner.

English teachers define their professional roles of being English teachers and integrate them with their identity construction which shapes their professional identity. In their identity construction, English teachers face different complexities that come as challenges. These are the complexities that English teachers sometimes face as the general problems that every teacher faces and sometimes for being teacher of English as a foreign language (EFL). I remained focused on the complexities English teachers face in their life while they were determined to grow their professional careers as English teachers. These complexities strengthen English teachers' professionalism, making them professional English teachers. However,

English teachers face different hurdles and still move ahead with the optimistic thought of shaping their professional careers as English teachers. While strengthening their professionalism, teachers might see some inspiring teacher figures and adopt their qualities as teachers. If we look at the Bible, we see Jesus as the master teacher of his disciples. He could be taken as an encouraging figure and a leading teacher.

Biblical Illustration of a Master Teacher

Jesus comes first when we talk about Christianity. Jesus being the master teacher, taught his disciples life lessons. Jesus became a role model as a teacher and taught his disciples to live in faith and act in faith. Jesus is the most excellent model of all regarding the leadership he carried out (Nsiah, 2013). It is because, along with teaching the prayer, he modeled the prayer. Jesus modeled prayer life in front of his disciples to teach them how to pray. He implemented the experiential knowledge of God (Taylor, 2011). When discussing professional development, the leading team needs to count the teachers who can run classroom pedagogy as they want. To motivate the faculty, the professional development team can use techniques to engage them in active learning. Jesus led his learners by developing their power of retention and memorization, which we call mnemonics (Metsämuuronen, 2019). The prayer he did with his disciples is an example of it.

Our father, who art in heaven

Hallowed be thy name

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven

Give us this day our daily bread

And forgive us our trespasses

As we forgive those who trespass against us

And lead us not into temptation,

But deliver us from evil (Matthew 6: 9-15)

The intensive use of mnemonics could be noticed in Jesus's teachings. Jesus prioritized evidence-based conceptualizations related to the faculty's expectations of suitable models to observe. Jesus focused on actions since he believed that we, as teachers, could give the greatest lessons not with our words or our sayings but from our actions. Jesus is a great model for teachers or professors, teaching them a beautiful lesson of "Practice what you teach." He is the best teacher example, and the whole world knows this (White, 1894) that can encourage teachers becoming role model of what they teach. Jesus's model of teaching consists of several characteristics. Jesus was fluent in teaching, for he would connect his teaching with life lessons.

Jesus would be selective to meet individual needs. Jesus delivered his message as of his father (God), but he adapted those messages to his audience and tried to touch their lives with his teachings. Jesus adapted his message to meet their learning needs in the case of Samaritan women or the case of his disciples. He executed healings and miracles to illustrate and taught the contents to make people aware of what he wanted to deliver. To teach his disciples, Jesus used different methods (Ninan, 2010). Jesus used contrasts such as "You have heard it said... but I say..." in the sermon of the mount (Matthew 5: 21-48, NIV). Jesus carried the characteristics of the professional teacher, for he focused on teaching by doing rather than just by saying. He asked his disciples to practice and apply what they learned from him. Jesus was also aware of the absorption level of his disciples (learners). In the book of Mark, it has been mentioned that Jesus focused on teaching only what his learners could take (Mark 4:33). In the book of John, He indicated that Christ told them, "I still have many things to say to you; you cannot bear them now" (John 16: 12). By emphasizing

collaborative learning, Jesus, the master teacher, empowered his disciples to reflect and do the action based on what they learned, grounded on the principles of adult education (Lawler, 2003). Jesus is an example of a professional teacher who used different techniques to make his disciples understand his teaching. I see Jesus being master teacher through his words in the bible. One gets a huge revelation through his words such as 'Love your neighbours as you have loved yourself.' There are many moral lessons we can get from Jesus and his teachings. Thus, the teaching of Jesus, the way he taught his disciples and other people, is an example of the professional development skills to be adopted by teachers.

Professional Development of English Teachers through Reflective Practice

Teachers need significant commitment as they face multiple challenges due to their interrelationships with people from various backgrounds. In this situation, teachers often see the challenges. Some teachers find problems in their challenges and consider the reasons for those problems. These teachers are reflective practitioners. Reflecting on their own teaching practice and understanding the inner self is something teachers can know themselves. Kuswandono (2017) focused on reflective actions that engage teachers in self-evaluation and assist in their growth. Sometimes, teachers need to look back to their teaching practice and think about whether that meant to go in that way or not. If not, posing the question might help like, how we can improve teaching-learning by creating a situation where teachers can inquire about themselves as persons and individuals and support others to explore and understand the inner self (Gnawali, 2008). Most of the time, teachers see what they do not have but rarely see what they have. They can see their weaknesses but they neglect their strength. To view both teachers' strengths and weaknesses, they may have to use their ability to reflect on themselves.

Many teachers desire to establish their identity as professional teachers. However, they are in a situation where they cannot tell themselves as professional teachers. Teachers give knowledge and teach others skills and values, which is why they feel proud. Dwelling in the position of teachers, they desire to develop themselves as professional teachers. Teachers can discover their underlying beliefs by exploring their past and evaluating their current practices. This would assist them in thinking of the options for the next step (Mathew et al., 2017). Recognizing the potential of reflection and counting the developmental value, teachers can develop a habit of reflecting on their beliefs, practices as teachers and identities (Cirocki, & Burns, 2019). Reflective practitioners hold some common types of reflection, which are: reflection-in-action, reflection-on-action and reflection-for-action. The first two reflection types are the problems that arise in the classroom and the reflective practitioner deals with them immediately when the action occurs, whereas the other one is about improving practices by taking future actions (Schön, 1983). Being a teacher today means being aware of continuous professional development, which is possible through training, and workshops on reflective practice (Stăncescu et al., 2019). Reflective practice is vital in the life of English teachers. Being the teacher of English as a Second language or English as a foreign language, they face different challenges and having reflective practice, they can see what the real problem is. They can reflect upon their teaching and minimize the challenges they face in the English classroom with the help of reflective practice. Pardo & Tellez (2015) stated that classroom assessment is the main step where teachers need to reflect on their actions, including resources, methods and strategies, and their impact on students' learning outcomes.

Getting exposure to different teaching-learning educations, training and webinars encourages teachers to have reflective practice (Nurfaidah, 2018). English teachers who are well known for the reflective practice have the habit of being open to embracing change which brings transformation in the way they teach. ESL/EFL teachers become self-confident with their open-mindedness as they gain the ability to narrow down the gap between theory and practice (Pacheco, 2005). English teachers with reflective practice are critical thinkers who can read their past critically and bring change at present for new inventions (Gudeta, 2022), which even assist them in taking wise actions in the future. Thus, reflective practice is of great value in the professional development of English teachers. As the explorer of the complexities within language teacher identity with the help of reflective practice, I am here trying to analyze the opportunities and challenges within the reflective practice of English teachers in terms of an association with their identity and professional development. The question, “What are the opportunities and challenges of reflective practice for identity construction and professional development of English teachers?” becomes pertinent here.

Many teachers are aware of being researchers to explore their own identities of being and becoming teachers. An identity is essential for researchers to understand the self and society (Gee, 2000). Teachers learn and teach simultaneously, and during this process, they interact with others who are significant to them, which gradually takes them to their identity construction (Izadinia, 2015). Teacher identity is pertinent to fulfilling their commitment to care for learners’ growth and learning support (Robinson & McMillan, 2006). Teachers’ commitment, motivation, self-efficacy and job satisfaction are associated with their identity, which results from their personal and social experiences (Day et al., 2005). Teachers’ identity construction happens

through two approaches to identity; psychological and sociological. A psychological approach concerns one's characteristics, which differ from others' identities. The sociological approach is about negotiating the society to construct their social roles through personal experiences and social identity (Rucieman, 2018). Language teachers have a different strain in terms of constructing identity. There can be complexity in language teachers' identity construction (Matsumoto, 2012) which they might reflect upon and examine their struggle for identity construction. Teachers' identity construction is a significant concept for the research as there are some questionable methods in English language class that can make English teachers re-examine their own identity as the teacher and learner of a second language (Ryan, 2012) and this can be done by reflecting their own teaching practices. The reflective practice supports teachers to think of their pedagogical practices, reflect on them, and be competent in bringing innovative ideas for improvement. There is a thorny debate on language teachers' competence and pedagogical ability, which significantly impacts the personal and professional identity of language teachers (Casteneda, 2011). In light of this debate, I went through different research studies from which I could extract the following themes under the opportunities of reflective practice by English teachers, which assist in their identity construction and professional development.

Developing Reflective Habits in English Teachers

Teachers are taken as role models for students and even to other people in society. So, they must cultivate a reflective mindset in them. One may not know how to be reflective and be confused about the term reflection with thinking. Thinking is just getting thought of something but reflecting is much more than that. There are specific ways to cultivate a reflective mindset. With the help of reflective practice, which is done systematically, independently and collaboratively, teachers can think

about their practice, which also helps in decision-making (Hidayati, 2018). It is about making one's mind broad to look at own practices and beliefs and to have a vision of future action to improve own practices. Nurkamto and Sarosa (2020) studied English teachers in Indonesia and are unable to reflect upon their teaching to improve their teaching practice. This study is a result of intensive training that was given to those teachers to develop reflective habits. The study found that English teachers at the school where they did research lacked an understanding of reflective teaching and that the improvement was seen due to the intensive training.

Farrell (2016) reflects on the situation of novice ESL teachers, how they endured their first year of teaching, how they learned from their facilitator to reflect on their issues, and how it helped them through difficulties and challenges. The study shows a need to make aware of the importance of reflective practice in the teacher education program that would allow teachers to apply it in their novice stage. Cirocki and Widodo (2019) investigated how reflective practice is promoted through workshops on the continuous professional development of EFL teachers in Indonesia for their pre-service and in-service teaching stage. The study encourages EFL teachers to have reflective practice to deliver successful lessons and maximize student learning. It deals with the engagement of English teachers in reflective practice with the question of when, how and why they need to be involved in it. Reflection before the lesson, reflection after the lesson, and reflection beyond the lesson are some reflective moments the EFL teachers can follow to make a habit of reflective practice. These studies showed that a reflective mindset needs to be cultivated in EFL teachers to help them grow in terms of their knowledge and skills. Through the mentioned studies, it is understandable that teachers' reflection is necessary. A reflection is an act that enables teachers to motivate themselves to improve their professional skills

(Sellars, 2012). Cultivating a reflective mindset, thus, assists teachers in growing their motives for enhancing their professional expertise.

An Awareness of Theory-practice Gap

What teachers learn during their pre-service and what they experience in in-service teaching are different as they might not be applicable when it comes to in-service teaching (Moyo & Modiba, 2013). Teacher education programs are based on theory and equip teachers with theoretical knowledge. Still, when the time comes to bring that knowledge into practice, teachers face lots of challenges. In our schools, we face many situations where a theory-practice gap exists. Pacheco (2005) brought the impact of reflective teaching in the field of ESL/ ESL. For professional growth, reflective thinking is seen as a keen thing. The study has brought the essence of reflection on our action and classroom practices in foreign language teaching to make teachers aware of the theory and practice gap. It reveals how teachers can improve their practice through reflective teaching and action research. Farrell (2019) studies two main inconvenient truths about language teachers: the theory-practice gap and no contact with a newly qualified teacher. The study has also given solutions to these problems. The paper has brought some possible solutions for the theory-practice gap: skill-learning, cognitive process, personal construction and reflective practices. For no contact with newly qualified teachers, a possible solution could be maintaining contact with their newly qualified teachers after graduation. By providing novice-service teacher education, bridging can be made between the usual pre-service program experiences and the first year of teaching in the real context.

Pawan and Fan (2014) investigated the types of knowledge that emerge when teachers reflect with peers. The research concentrated on the contribution of teacher reflection to Chinese ELT teachers' development. It was found that self-reflections

serve complementary roles in English language teachers' learning and professional development. Reflective practice alone or with peers is equally valuable as they are involved with learning and acquiring expertise, which leads them to shape their language. Hanane (2015) has discussed that reflective teaching brings changes in the teaching process of teachers and the study has addressed the importance and benefits of reflective teaching in EFL teachers' life. The research claimed that the pre-service training needs to be strong to enable teachers to learn reflective practice and the EFL teachers should reflect upon their practice at University. The absence of compulsory teaching practice prevents teachers from calling for practical learning rather than focusing on theoretical practices. According to Sulman (1998), teachers need to have mastery of the theoretical knowledge and also, they need the skills to apply those theories into practice. Therefore, teachers need to see the gap in theory and practice so that they can fill it; for that, reflective practice helps them.

Understanding Pedagogical Skills

Teachers are known to have good pedagogy if they can make the classroom a social setting where students can interact and engage with the designed activities (Danielewicz, 2001). Teachers can see their teaching from the down level by having pedagogical skills. Mesa (2017) has brought the idea that reflective teaching can be one of the strategies for language teacher professional development. The research showed that raising awareness on English language teaching can be done through reflective teaching. It also demonstrated that reflective teaching could help English teachers update their teaching methods and open their minds to improve lessons. Ghimire (2019) brought the term 'reflection' in his research, claiming that his reflection on his teaching practice let him know that students from different language backgrounds face different problems. Farrell (2018) frames the issue by saying that

many teachers might think reflective teaching is unnecessary. However, he brings the idea that English teachers who engage in reflective practice can develop an in-depth understanding of their teaching. This helps them assess their professional growth and provides decision-making skills and confidence. The research presents pedagogical skills that help English teachers reflect upon their teachings, such as teaching journals, critical friends, teacher development groups, classroom observations and action research. Kabilan (2007) talks about the importance of teaching students to engage in reflective practice more rigorously, which must contribute to their professional growth. The study has discussed the reflection to help students view their own and others' abilities and see the classroom practices with their perceptions and beliefs. Olivera and Shoffner (2009) have revealed the reflective practice as a tool to ponder upon or examine the issues related to diverse students in the English classroom. The research has talked about action research as a gateway to reflective practice, which helps language teachers to focus on individually chosen topics on the need of English language learners. Reflective practice allows teachers to address issues related to their identity and pedagogical skills. Teachers' way of delivering the knowledge to students depends upon their personal and social reflection (Vavrus, 2009). Reflective practice thus assists English teachers in developing their skills to bring improvement in their pedagogy.

English Teachers Applying Different Strategies through Reflective Practice

An ideal teacher in the EFL class has good knowledge and skills to apply in the classroom along with students' involvement in English language use with various strategies (Intarapanich, 2013). Using different strategies, teachers can make the course matters interesting for students, motivating them to gain what teachers want to deliver. Video recording, observation, action research, students' feedback and joint

workshop are some reflective activities that English teachers use to reflect on their teaching (Maulid, 2017). The study found that teachers learn from their own experiences as learners and teachers, which helps them improve their teaching skills. The challenges English teachers have to deal with, such as lack of time and difficulties in encouraging colleagues who lack readiness for reflective teaching, are all depicted in the research. I remember the moment when I was a novice teacher and was not aware of different strategies to apply in the class. When I was observed by the volunteers from England, they made me realize that I was following the traditional way of teaching. It was the grammar class and I taught students the 'Action words'. I explained everything that was in the book and gave some examples. Then, I asked them to do the exercises that were in book. Students did exercises and the class was over. The volunteers gave me the feedback that I can teach the same topic using games and other interesting strategies. With their feedback, I made them play 'Simon Says...' in the next class. Students then enjoyed the game and at the same time, I could explain them the action words with action. So, that made me realize that I need to learn more to become an English teacher. My trajectory of English teacher evolved from that moment. Göker (2006) reflected upon teacher reflection as the tool for revitalizing teaching and learning. The study focused on the strength of reflective practice in language teachers that helps them learn from the inside. It focused on the value of experience coupled with reflection. Kömür and Gün (2016) explored that English teachers are willing to self-rate their reflective practice in the language classroom. The study showed that English teachers are eager to learn about their student's learning styles and preferences and also about the strengths and weaknesses of the students. The study focused on the insight to be gained by English teachers through reflective practice that reflective instruments such as classroom observations, dialogue

journals and action research must be encouraged. EFL teachers use strategies and techniques in the classroom, like providing students with language information, asking them different questions, giving corrective feedback, correcting language mistakes and helping them practice (Seghayer, 2009 as cited in Al-Awaid, 2018). English teachers discover students' strengths and weaknesses through reflective practice, which assists teachers in planning and acting accordingly.

Self-efficacy in English teachers as Reflective Practitioners

Teacher self-efficacy is teachers being confident in their ability to do something to promote learning and being flexible in dealing with the problems that occur in the classroom (Mehmood, 2019). Reflective practice enables teachers to have self-efficacy. Ginmard (2017) explores novice teachers' facilitation of the authentic environment of English online at a distance and their reflection on their experience influences their autonomy. Rahimi and Weisi (2018) studied EFL teachers and examined the relationship between EFL teachers' reflective practices, self-efficacy and research practice. The result showed that the EFL teachers who were actively engaged in research did more reflective practice and were more self-efficacious. Tutunis and Hacifazlioglu (2018) address the gap by examining the experiences of language teachers working with young learners. It focuses on teacher agencies in language teaching. With self and peer-reflective practice, EFL teachers found that 'trust' is vital in creating communities that 'innovative practice in teaching English' was noted for which the teachers were interested in joining the intensive workshops. Wetzel et al. (2018) examine practice-based experiences, which include tutorials, internships and student teaching, shaping teachers' practical knowledge in literacy. The study identified how those practicum experiences influenced pre-service teacher learning as it reflected success and struggles that helped them take the next step.

When teachers are determined to deal with their problems and can encourage other teachers to improve their self-efficacy, that is self-efficacy in teachers (Genc et al., 2016). English teachers gain self-efficacy by making themselves reflective practitioners.

As the themes above highlighted, there are many opportunities for English teachers as reflective practitioners. However, there are some challenges for the reflective practice too.

Challenges Faced by English Teachers with Reflective Practice

Reflective practice is challenging as it holds the complexity of taking different shapes and forms and is such a tool for students and teachers. It helps them see the complexities of the English language and shows them how social conditions are incorporated into teaching (Kano et al., 2017). When it is about understanding the social conditions, many factors influence society, and it gets complicated to comprehend those factors. Al-Issa and Al- Bulushi (2010) did a survey that showed that the student teachers were helped to develop reflective practices on them. In doing so, some practices were adopted by learners, such as telling them how to teach which prohibited them from exploration. Niones (2018) investigated junior high school English teachers' reflective practices. It discovered the reflective teaching practices of those teachers with the help of principals and students. The study revealed the challenges the in-service English teachers faced: they need to have more self-reflection practice to know more about themselves as teachers and to bring necessary changes in their pedagogical practices. The lack of seminar workshops or training for the teachers has hindered them from modifying teaching practices as they were found to have less reflective practice. "Reflective thinking requires teachers' actions, experiences, strengths and weaknesses" (Sunra et al., 2020, p.295), which sometimes

might be challenging to discern. Though it is worth carrying out reflective teaching as it makes the teachers open their eyes to see things critically and helps them act accordingly, it is sometimes challenging. The studies showed that reflective practice is sometimes challenging in a foreign context. There is no surprise that it is challenging to practice it in Nepal, where it is hard even to find a hand full of research in reflective practice.

Sah (2015) researched 12 EFL teachers in Nepal and raised issues such as institutional support for professional development, access to teaching resources and possibilities for professional development. The research survey suggested online courses with plenty of resources needed for training, workshops, short-term courses, publications, a collaboration between urban and rural schools and discussion groups. Nothing was raised on reflective practice, which shows that EFL teachers are unaware of reflective practice for professional development in Nepal. Pandey (2012) researched EFL teachers to collect their opinion and experiences of English language teachers on reflective practice. The result showed that English language teachers are aware of reflective practice that enhances teaching skills and changes instructional practices. However, the study also found that English language teachers do not reflect much on their strengths and weaknesses, which is a challenge. When Bharati and Chalise (2017) collected teachers' perceptions on the reflective practice for teacher development, it was found that 65% of the teachers knew the meaning of 'reflective practice' that it is to learn from one's own performance. Still, the other 20% took it as the process of learning from experts, 15% of them thought it was the process of observing other teachers' classrooms. The finding showed that some teachers still do not know what reflective practice is. Joshi, Gnawali and Dixon (2018) researched professional development strategies for English language teachers. Under self-

initiated professional development, 10 participants agreed, 19 disagreed and 16 partially agreed that their professional development is through reflective logs. Though the research findings indicate that Nepali EFL teachers have positive experiences with different professional development strategies, reflective practice is found to be the least understood to be applicable for teacher development.

Similarly, Nyaupane (2018) found out something interesting that Nepali teachers concentrate on their teaching hours and salary rather than their professional development though they know that they can improve themselves with reflective practice which would make them better EFL teachers.

A Gateway to Reflective Practice

Reflective practice is the root of professional development and the identity construction of English teachers. There are opportunities as well as challenges within the reflective practice. To cultivate reflective practice as a habit, teachers still need to learn about their responsibility as teachers. They still need to develop a culture of reflection on themselves. Open-minded, wholehearted and responsible are three ways that lead teachers to be reflective (Dewey, 1933). These three terms are crucial for teachers to grow as reflective teachers. Let us look at these terms in detail. When a person has an active desire to listen to others' ideas, to listen to more than one idea to search for alternative possibilities, they are open-minded. In the case of teachers too, when they are open to learning from others or seek opportunities to learn from more than one source, they are called open-minded teachers with a reflective mindset. Open-minded people recognize the possibility of errors in the previously existing belief, even if that belief is their dearest (Zeichner & Liston, 1987). Sometimes, we feel hard to come out of the previously set beliefs. We do not want to deny those beliefs, but when we are open-minded, we accept that there might be errors.

Wholeheartedness refers to open-minded people who think of responsibility even when the situation is not easy. When open-minded people put their responsibility at the centre, they are known to be wholehearted (Subject Centre for Education ESCalate, 2007) and those teachers are the responsible teachers. The latter are efficient in their subject area and have strong communication with students by which the students trust them (Gunduz, 2016). English teachers are not being able to come out of the stoppages that come across their profession, that is, stubborn nature of not trying to be whole-hearted and following the traditional mindset of carrying out the same way of teaching as their teachers embraced. EFL teachers must be open-minded and responsible in their profession by molding themselves as reflective practitioners who shape their professional identity as English teachers.

Going through different studies on the reflective practice of English teachers, it is found that reflective practice has been used to develop their reflective habits. EFL teachers have also used reflective practice to make aware of the theory-practice gap in classroom teaching, for their in-depth understanding of pedagogical practices, to adopt different strategies to be reflective practitioners and to develop self-efficacy in English teachers. Reflective practice is helpful to EFL teachers in bringing newness to their teaching. EFL teachers have many opportunities within the reflective practice, giving them access to construct their identity and help them develop professionally. EFL teachers are aware of reflective practice, but many challenges prohibit them from having it. Teachers, being reflective practitioners, can develop as whole-hearted teachers who open their minds to new challenges in their teaching life and are responsible for what they do as EFL teachers (Dewey, 1933). EFL teachers' reflective practice changes their teaching strategies, impacts students' learning, and makes way for identity construction and professional development. During their life cycle as a

teacher, they go through different stages and reflecting on those stages of their life, teachers can comprehend their whole life cycle and find out how important those stages were for their development as a teacher.

Life Cycle of a Teacher and Developmental Change

Teachers go through different life stages, which are very important to know by teacher educators to evaluate and supervise. The article presents the distinct cycle in the life of teachers with the idea of Huberman (1989). According to him, the teachers first go through the 'Exploration and stabilization' stage. In this stage, teachers bring out the experiences they have gained through different informal situations and try to implement those in the classroom. To be stable, they collect different resources to solve their problems. Secondly, teachers go through the 'commitment' phase, where they work for students' improvement and keep the effort on maintaining the quality teaching for students' quality learning.

The third phase is the 'Diversification and crisis' phase, where the teachers nearly leave the teaching profession as they question their role. They cannot decide whether to continue this or go to the other posts. Another phase is the 'Serenity and distancing' phase, in which the teachers are settled down and are satisfied with what they have chosen as their career. Finally, they are in the 'conservatism or regret' phase, where they select either of the topics. That means they might be too conservative and prepare the teaching models suitable for their comfort or they might regret and live the retirement life and still can be a strong motivator for the educational community.

I have gone through these stages in my professional life. I have experienced many Ahh moments and Uff moments. These stages remain for a long time in some teachers' life. Some may go from one stage to the other easily. To be a stable teacher and continue teaching is not easy for many. Teachers have to deal with children from

different family backgrounds and socio-cultural backgrounds. Those who can stay bold as a teacher are the ones who can see themselves shine in the teaching profession.

While going through the stages mentioned above, teachers see many changes in their life. Change is the state which occurs to take an individual to a new state of maturity (Alverman, 2012). The concentration here is on developmental change, which is the layout of the patterns of the shifting pathways that occur in human life (Greenfield, 2009). Developmental change demands improvement in the way of living or operating without being radical in bringing any change. When the change is possible by adapting to certain skills and performance improvement strategies, training, and knowledge, it is the developmental change. In teachers' life, this change occurs as a process that brings them to the developmental stage of their profession and, at the same time, demands their effort for development (Williams, 2007). My research focuses on the developmental change in an individual's life and leading them to be English teachers.

My Theoretical Intent

There is a need for specific theories to guide any research. I have taken some theories to guide my research. In the beginning, I needed a theory that could guide me to discuss 'change'. For this, I found Transformative Learning Theory as the suitable one for my research. Secondly, I needed a theory that could guide me to bring a discourse on identity. For this, Identity Process Theory assisted me. I have discussed both the theories below:

Transformative Learning Theory

Transformative learning is about the mind and meaning perspectives that create a sense of what is reserved in mind as experience. It gives a pathway to the

learners to understand education in a new and revised form of learning by using the prior interpretation of one's experience, which helps guide future actions (Mezirow, 1996). This theory focuses on human experience but takes it as a guide to catch future directions. Transformative learning theory could be taken as a paradigm as it explains many unanswered questions related to adult learning and has made a space with specialized practitioners (Kitchenham, 2008). Structures of assumptions and expectations form the transformation process. These expectations take an individual's prior interpretation of experience to construct an interpretation of the same experience. Christie et al. (2015) put on that individuals have a worldview rooted in their minds in the form of habit and this gives them difficulty in bringing change in themselves. The unconscious dynamics inside humans are symbolically expressed rather than such as in dreams and fantasies. It represents the language of the self and the key force for the fundamental transformation in their life. Thus, being aware consciously is important to discern the meaning of those unconscious (Dirkx, 1997, 2000, 2001, as cited in Cranton, 2006). It acts for perspective transformation and this is where paradigmatic shifts occur. It makes the researcher's interpretation critically reflective. The involvement of critical reflection with the assumptions that arise at the individual level or in the group is what transformative learning constitutes (Mezirow, 2003). It involves emancipatory learning, which includes task-oriented and problem-solving skills and critical self-reflection is at the center.

This theory has successfully been employed in the research that researchers transform while going through different steps in carrying out Action Research with the steps of planning, acting, observing, analyzing, reflecting and evaluating. The researchers add value to the transformative learning process while engaging in the research (Christie et al., 2015). Transformative Educational Research has emerged up

with the vision to transform lives through education (Luitel & Wagle, 2017) and some researchers like (Qutoshi, 2016) has already taken a stand as a researcher coming up with their own living theory introducing the power of soulful inquiry (Qutoshi, 2018). Regarding transforming lives, 'transformative pedagogy' is a new concept being forwarded to teach mathematics which has helped improve pedagogical practices in the classroom (Shrestha et al., 2021). Transformative learning theory holds that the interpretation of experience mediated by context is significant in the evolution of the transformative process and that the personal and the historical context are equally important (Taylor & Cranton, 2013). This theory has guided my research, encouraging me to reflect upon my experiences critically and interpret my participants' experiences. As prior experiences guide future actions, it has helped to bring the story of transformation that happened in our professional life, being engaged critically.

Identity Process Theory

Identity refers to the self-role of a person attached to their multiple roles in the society they live in. It is also about personal uniqueness. Affirming our uniqueness gives us a problem as we are to define ourselves without referencing our cultural commonalities or any shared history (Lindholm, 2007). This sense of personal uniqueness makes us confused about who we are. It results in an identity crisis where we wander around to find ourselves and want to get into our feelings of not being ourselves. So, identity is becoming ourselves with personal effort but at the same time, it also seeks social demands. There are four ways to view identity: Nature-Identity, Institution-Identity, Discourse-Identity, and Affinity-Identity (Gee, 2000). The four mentioned views have their concepts on identity. Nature-Identity believes that we are what we are primarily because of our nature. Institution-Identity thinks we

are what we are primarily because of our societal positions. Discourse-Identity believes that we are what we are primarily because of our accomplishments, as those accomplishments are interactional and are recognized by others.

Affinity-Identity believes that we are what we are primarily because of our experience within certain affinity groups (Gee, 2000). Especially identity theory makes the self and society the researchable aspects. It is because people live their lives in society. So, it is about a person concerning others. This theory concentrates on the origin of a person's self-identity and examines why the salience of identity changes over time. The identity theory asserted a link between the salience of identity and the behaviour tied to the roles within the identity. The identity theory proclaimed a connection between the salience of identity and the behaviour tied to the roles within that identity (Stryker & Burke, 2000). Identity theory states that self-categorization is vital and relevant to forming an identity.

Identity is accounted to a person in a particular context of society, creating their recognition as per their role or position (Stets & Burke, 2000). Identity theory is here, viewed in a slightly different way. According to Jaspal and Breakwell (2014), identity theory is the holistic analysis of a person's real identity. The theory is Identity Process Theory. This theory proposes the dynamically derived elements of the identity based on every aspect of the person's experience. Generally, these experiences involve social category memberships, interpersonal relationships, social representational exposure and individual activity. Identity content such as social roles, traits and attributes and values such as pride, shame, and distinctiveness are derived from our relationships with the material environment. It constitutes the place we live or work in or the place we make central to the self. Identity Process Theory argues that there is no point in categorizing personal self and social relationships because

every person abides by the social aspect in one way or another. So, when it is about a person's identity, it is also about his/her identity in society.

In Identity Process Theory, identity structure is claimed to be regulated by some dynamic processes. These processes are the process of accommodation/assimilation and the process of evaluation. These processes are believed to be psychological processes, which are universal. The two components in this process are assimilation and accommodation but these two components are of one process. Assimilation is about the absorption of the new component into the identity structure and accommodation is the adjustment that occurs in the existing structure to find a place for new elements. The way we evaluate which entails its value or effect on identity contents remains. It shows the connection between new and old identities. The two processes have such a relationship that while determining the changing content and value of identity over time, they interact, which means if changes occur in the patterns of assimilation, it gets changed in the evaluation of the identity. If the evaluation gets changed, there is a change in the assimilation pattern.

Identity process theory posits universal processes to facilitate identity construction (Jaspal & Breakwell, 2014).

1. Continuity across time and situation (continuity)
2. Uniqueness or distinctiveness from others (distinctiveness)
3. Feeling confident and in control of one's life (self-efficacy)
4. Feelings of personal worth (self-esteem)

Those mentioned above are the processes to guide the principles of Identity process Theory. Vignoles have added one more motive: 'Belongingness,' which concerns people's acceptance of one's identity (Vignoles, 2011). Apart from these, Breakwell (1986) emphasizes the term 'threatened identity', where he brings

discourse of people who fall into the situation where they feel they have a threatened identity. A threat to identity occurs when there is a failure to have a good go with identity processes. When a disorder occurs in assimilation-accommodation and evaluation, there are obstacles in the principles of continuity, distinctiveness and self-esteem, which usually guide their action. When there is this obstruction in the processes of identity, it leads to a threat.

This theory has already been successfully employed in research where it was found that there is a centrality of identity, and it gets changed with the social changes as values get changed due to automatic and effortful routes (Bardi & Goodwin, 2011). Also, the researchers have come up with the use of identity process theory, focusing on conservation values as to see how it differs from individual to individual and found that some people take conservation values as important to continuation and some find it as a leading entity to identity threat (Bardi et al., 2014). Identity Process Theory has guided my research as it has helped my participants and me to perceive our identities. It has helped me view how identities got constructed and threatened in different stages of life due to various social/religious factors. The theory has assisted me in seeing how our identities shifted at some points and how it added to our identity construction. Thus, this theory has given thoughtful guidance to my research, making me engaged critically and finding that the narratives I have brought are not aligned to the theory somewhere. However, they are aligned to it heavily.

Emergent Research Questions

Coming to this stage of my research, I could get a sense of the need for other research questions. With the two leading questions that I developed in Chapter I, I started my research but as a researcher of teachers' journey of change and identity and

as a practitioner of autoethnography, I felt the need for the following research questions:

1. Who am I? What part of identity do I choose for myself?
2. What are some major milestones that I achieved when I faced changes in my life?
3. What do we (me and my participants) stop and what do we continue doing?
4. What are some ideas for professional development?
5. What have we done to strengthen our professional skills?

The above emergent research questions (1 and 2) assisted me as the overarching questions for all the chapters, whereas question (3) helped me build Chapter VII. The remaining questions (4 and 5) became crucial for developing Chapters VIII and IX.

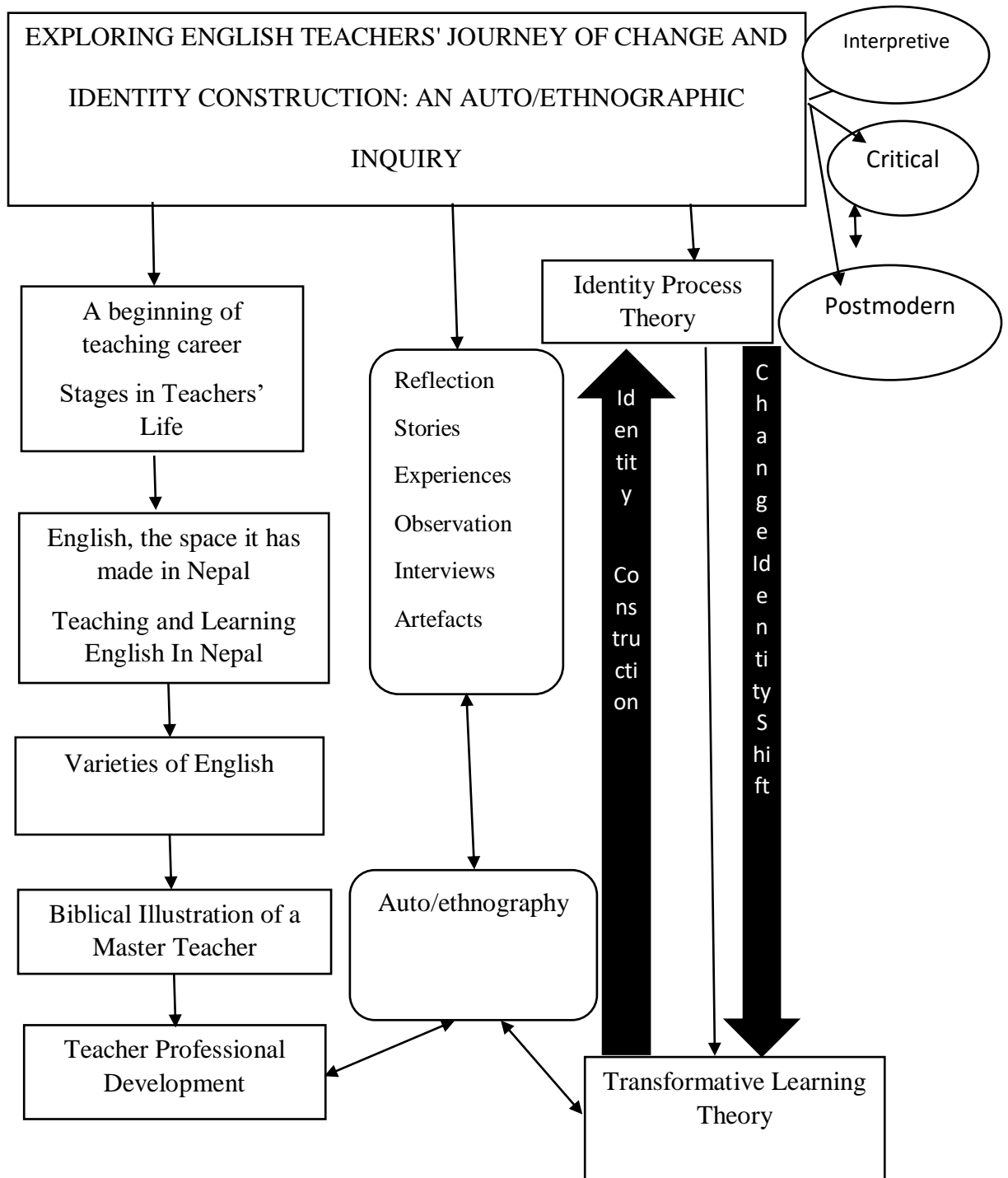
Conceptual Map

The conceptual map sets a scene to let readers know why the research is significant. The issue I have raised is the English teachers' identity construction and change. For that, exploring English teachers' journey of their identity construction was important. Since the method of inquiry is auto/ethnography, I had to explore my journey and my participants' journey. Setting out to explore my journey and find my inner 'self,' I wrote my life stories first. Then, to explore 'others,' I generated data from my participants through observation, interviews and collecting the artefacts related to their journey. For this research, the conceptual map below has become a framework that includes my improved knowledge while exploring our journey and has appeared as differentiated and integrated knowledge (Miles et al., 2014). As I went through different research studies and theories, I framed those studies under

various themes and theories. The themes such as ‘The beginning of teachers’ career,’ ‘Stages in teachers’ Life,’ ‘English Language Teaching and Learning in Nepal,’ ‘Biblical Illustration of a Master Teacher and ‘Complexities in English teachers’ Life’ are the major themes that were developed under the thematic review of the research studies.

‘Identity Process Theory’ and ‘Transformative Learning Theory’ guided this research. To show this, ‘the conceptual map’ section has helped me to make an argument to address the value and significance of my research and to be intentional in incorporating the process that I followed while uncovering the ways through which the study emerged (Maxwell, 2013; Ravitch & Riggan, 2016). Major and minor stories that were layered inside me and my participants were excavated through this research, out of which I could develop themes and sub-themes to connect them with theories. By making a framework for my research in the form of a conceptual map, I could make readers see the whole picture of the research in a single look.

The conceptual map given below attempts to give the overall outlook of my research. The conceptual map serves as a guide for the research (Ravitch & Riggan, 2016). A conceptual map can be just the graphical representation of the elements of research as to how I did in the above graphic representation or can be in the narrative form, which could be more understandable (Adom et al., 2018). It helps the researcher to bring all aspects of the study together in an explicate form, describing the connections, junctures, disjunctures and overlaps to make a setting for the research.



Chapter Essence

Chapter three is an autoethnographic review where my self-thoughts have been embedded with the thematic study on teachers' experience at the beginning of

teaching career, challenges of teaching and learning in English, the biblical notion of faith with the illustration of Jesus as a teacher and the need for professional development. The theoretical intent has been presented in the chapter. I was guided by two theories for carrying out my research, 'Identity Process Theory' and 'Transformative Learning Theory,' which have been illustrated well in the chapter, along with the reason and usefulness of choosing those theories for my research. The emerging research questions stated in the chapter were the means to guide the research. Also, the conceptual map has been developed, demonstrating the research layout.

CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The chapter begins with a philosophical consideration. Every individual has philosophy in his/her life as an individual entity. It is the attitude the individual holds. It is easy to talk about and analyze others, but it is sometimes difficult to see our behaviour and attitude towards others. Philosophy is the behaviour we show to others, the attitude we present in front of others, and that philosophy of mine is determined by the society where I live. With this, I have taken a paradigmatic stand for this research. Also, the method of inquiry has been discussed, which is auto/ethnography. Then moving toward the data collection procedure, I have discussed the meaning-making process. After that, the research has described the quality standards and ethical considerations that have been maintained.

Philosophical Consideration

Society is where we live. Here, we have people from different backgrounds and ethnicity. Had everyone had the same thought and philosophy, there would be no creativity and critical thinking, making us dull. Every person has their ontological stance and this makes them unique from others. Ontology deals with the form and nature of reality; therefore, it views what is there that can be known (Aliyu et al., 2015). Ontology is the reality of being. Ontology is the nature and structure of reality and the attribute within its reality (Staab & Studer, 2009). Different people have different ontological views because there are multiple realities. People have a formal way of describing their perspective, which we call ontology (Smith, 2004). The same thing could be right for one person, whereas it could be wrong for the other person.

People have subjective realities and they hold subjective beliefs. In the bible, it mentions *behold the reality with the eyes of Jesus* (Eronimoose, 2022), which simply means entering into the perspectives of Jesus regarding life's many realities and looking at life not with human reason but with faith in Jesus (Wolfmueller, 2020). As this research believes in multiple realities with the realm of symbolic discourse and reality as the contextual field of information, my ontological stance embeds in the subjective meanings of what is involved in its existence (Lawson, 2004) within my own stories and that of my participants. For this research, I bracket (Jesus) and put (me and my participants) instead and consider the verse as *behold the reality with the eyes of (me and my participants)*. I have taken myself and my participants as social actors and information processors here. So, my ontological stance makes me believe that this world is a field of ever-changing field of information. I state this research as the base for the ontological stand I have taken.

This research has held the epistemological mainstay as it is all knowledge-oriented. Epistemology is a perspective that includes the process of the production of knowledge (Ullum, 2016). As I have brought my stories based on my experiences, it has revealed that knowledge is what we seek while researching something.

Epistemology in my research is about how I, as the researcher, created, gathered and presented knowledge (Tennis, 2008). My and the participants' stories and experiences have become knowledge-oriented, creating an information-based situation while waving the stories. In Christian theology, knowledge means a set of contents that go beyond the given sphere of knowledge. So, knowledge is "*an opened window in heaven*" (Revelation 4:1) which would share the light among people. Thus, my epistemological stance is of the understanding patterns of symbolic discourse and of the mapping of the context of my and my participants' stories and experiences of how

we know what we know (Crotty, 2003 as cited in Ahmed, 2008) which leads to the light and that light would create the emergence of knowledge.

Human beings have different thoughts and desires and so have their values. Axiology is the study of values that assists in understanding reality through the value of aesthetics in research (Viega, 2016). I believe that people have different values and as we are in society, we must respect each other's values. For me, there needs to be a value of something right, suitable or desirable, and the inculcation of that desirable entity in research is the axiology (Biedenbach & Jacobsson, 2016). I went to the research field with the belief that my participants do have their values that are embedded with their personal stories and that might be similar to my stories or might be different than that of mine. There was somewhere the aesthetics of nature of values (Tomar, 2014) while they were telling their stories. My axiological stand is embedded to embracing the value of my participants. This research is value-laden since it has valued the aesthetic of my and my participants' values in the research.

Research Paradigms

The research Paradigm is a broad view of research. I have conducted the research with a multi-paradigmatic stand using interpretive, critical, and postmodern paradigms as lenses to see the research world. So, my paradigmatic stand is multiparadigmatic.

Interpretive Paradigm

The interpretive paradigm deals with meaning which is important for the researcher to understand social actions (Samkange, 2012). As reality is entirely subjective, this research concerns the realities I got while interpreting my and my participants' stories. Taylor and Medina (2013) emphasized on interpretive paradigm as "Recent developments in the interpretive paradigm have highlighted the

importance of the researcher's subjectivity in the process of interpretation, and have emphasized its progressive development as a key part of the inquiry process, thereby adding to the emergent and reflective quality of interpretive research" (p. 4). The interpretive paradigm is about interpretation. It is about the reflection of the researchers. As it has undergone my and my participants' reflection and the interpretation of those reflections, it is interpretive research.

Interpretivism deals with social actions and focuses on people's actions (Gray, 2004). Human beings have their own actions, experiences and reality, all the components of the interpretive model. By giving meaning to those components, they make sense of reality. Researchers of this paradigm believe that human beings go through different circumstances, giving them experiences. Participants' perceptions and experiences become the lens for the researchers to see their world (Thanh & Thanh, 2015). Their experiences make sense and that helps generate meaning to the data. Interpretivism is an approach that focuses on human social and cultural life whereby they construct meaningful nature of human behaviour and participation (Elster, 2007; Walsham, 1995 as cited in Chowdhury, 2014). I have made sense of my participants' world by providing meaning to it. Interpretive research keeps its belief in reality and the reality is constructed socially.

Using the interpretive paradigm, I have focused on my subjectivity while interpreting data (Taylor & Medina, 2013). Since the interpretive paradigm deals with an important entity called 'interpretation,' it has brought my reflection by constructing meaning to my research with the interpretation of the data. According to Maroun (2012), interpretive research has a higher degree of subjectivity. While interpreting, the subjective reality has appeared; these realities are keys to making meaning for my research. The interpretive paradigm has thus counted the interpretation that emerged

with my reflection. With interpretive research, a conciliation arose between me as a researcher and my participants, bringing the inner standpoint. With the philosophy of the interpretive model, I made sense of reality as a human being. Then, I attached the meaning to it. As the researcher of this worldview, I believe it is essential to view human experiences as meaningful as the explanation and prediction of something. When I deeply contemplated my research, I found that the paradigm of interpretivism was insufficient to deal with the research issues I have raised. So, I have carried out my research through a critical worldview.

Critical Paradigm

I have explored the experiences that are layered inside of me which are responsible for the transformation that occurred in my life as a professional teacher. Here, I needed to look for the chance in my professional life where I had to look for emancipation time and again to view my position then and now. The impediments to constructing the identity and bringing transformation in the way I used to study and teach have been explored through this research. The hegemony is the suppression of students by viewing my story of being in place of students, getting punishment for not being able to learn English grammar, and tolerating those brutal behaviours thinking that English teachers are meant to be like that. Hegemony is a leadership that is political in nature and authority in behaviour (Bates, 1975). Hegemony is imposed in such a way that people tend to accept it though it is an injustice. In my case, I was bound by this hegemony being student and my students were hegemonized in the same way for several years until I changed my teaching style. Yilmaz (2010) further defines hegemony as "the dominant and oppressive status of one element in the system over the others" (p. 194). These 'hegemonized' needed empowerment and the empowerment has been given initiation by hearing and uplifting their voice which this

research has done through my and my participants' own stories and experiences.

Thus, criticalism is the preeminent paradigm that has undergone my research.

Critical pedagogy is a new trend in the process of teaching, which views the teaching-learning process critically. Palmer and Emmons (2004) stated that critical pedagogy seeks for knowledge and activism to meet in the same place, which results in praxis. It seeks to deal with students' needs and puts concern on their social surroundings, which deviates from the traditional way of teaching. The intellectuals exercising critical thinking reflected that there was no critical pedagogy in the beginning but they found that just viewing the reality was not enough and needed something that would give voice to the existing reality (Abraham, 2014). If we look at the social critical theory, different ideas have given diverse trends to traditional teaching-learning.

Learning takes place in people's interactions in society but is different from individual to individual in how they learn, which is called the individual learning process (Habermas, 1987). It is not about gaining knowledge but about how they reflect on their learning. This theory encourages reflection in the learners. When reflection is practiced in the classroom, it empowers them to be self-autonomous. This theory is linked with the vision I have in this research process. According to Merriam (1993), learning has a more significant impact when done scientifically and in experiential ways. Social critical theories are important because people in society create discourse which must be looked at as a medium to suspend everyday beliefs of the people in the form of knowledge that needs to be investigated (Scott, 1978). Social critical theory favours every social being, which is why it tries to look at traditional knowledge being rational so that such rationality brings knowledge that is fair to everyone.

The banking concept (Friere, 2005) of depositing knowledge on students is against students' freedom to learn what they want. This is about being critical to look at what teachers are doing. Are they creating an environment to make their students learn, or are they just depositing knowledge in their brains? Looking at anything critically gives an open picture of the educational world. A just society needs to be established with an emancipatory education where the learners are aware of rejecting violations and discrimination (Aliakbari & Faraji, 2011). Transforming society is the goal of the critical paradigm. It has opened my eyes to raise consciousness within the stories and understand my participants' real-life struggles and challenges that seem oppressive in nature. As I have seen further than the existing practice, consciousness in me and my participants has become critical in how we view our personal and professional world. Thus, this paradigm has given me a new perspective to view our personal and professional world as a root to make my research, critical research, which generates the view of the 'oppressed before and transformed after' stratagem.

Postmodern Paradigm

Most often, we are bound to tradition and traditional beliefs. We accept the norms and values that our ancestors followed and follow the same strategies as observed by the people previously. Postmodernism is a way to look differently at education as social practice and it looks at education more critically with a distinct view on the way education is transmitted (Campbell, 2018). Mostly, we feel comfortable following the simple way to move on. Some people want to move on with the exploration of new ways. The postmodern paradigm assisted me in making a complex adventure (Kellner, 1998) of human roles in their society with the space they have created by deconstructing the structures (Rotaru et al., 2010). Humans have now encountered new forms of socialization with new media and technologies that have

taken them away from their loneliness. The paradigm helped me view the impossibilities living in itself and existing in life by accepting the differences in lifestyles (Kahraman, 2015). Postmodernism encourages researchers to move with different strategies and philosophical directions along the path of broad discussion (Ulianova et al., 2022). It helped me view different education approaches and identify how my participants and I agreed and disagreed with those approaches and directions.

Auto/ethnography as a Method of Inquiry

The research method is essential to choose to make the methodological ground. I have chosen auto/ethnography as a method for my research. In the beginning, it started with my personal stories layered in a sequence to make meaning out of my experiences. Later, the research was guided by ethnography when I reached my participants for the study. So, my method of inquiry is auto/ethnography.

Autoethnography simply means autobiographical writing. It is a written document of somebody's own life and experience. Autoethnography consists of the unique life experiences of an individual in an autobiographical writing style which is also qualitative research and is related to the social and cultural aspects of that individual (Custer, 2014). It means it is more than an autobiography as it is research-based writing. To state simply, it is research on one's own life experiences. Mendez (2013) stated that there are no such rules for writing an autoethnography. Autoethnography assisted me to construct my reality as a researcher through my own experiences of the past with the construction of my belief in the present. Autoethnography thus dealt with the meaning-making of my past experiences.

Auto/ethnography is not only descriptive performative storytelling but also combines the cultural analysis and interpretation of the narrative details that follow the anthropological and social scientific inquiry approach (Chang, 2008). It is the

method where the research is carried out based on the stories as data and storying as the method. The researchers report the data by presenting them with the narrative inquiry. Autoethnography combines the characteristics of autobiography and ethnography (Ellis, Adams & Bochner, 2011). While writing autoethnography, the practitioners of autoethnography not only write their past experiences but also brings others' narratives along with theirs. There are three types of reporting the research which would follow the view of narrative inquiry:

- a. A privately constructed descriptive report in the original narrated form with the construction of a self-account;
- b. A dialogically generated narrative or set of narratives which is in the story form;
- c. A storied account of an experience we get from interviews, written reports, observations and artefacts (Hoshmand, 2005 as cited in McIlveen 2008 p. 181).

As a method of inquiry, autoethnography can come up as the original narrated form where the descriptive report is constructed out of a privately built self-account. It can also be written in a dialogically generated narrative form where the stories are recounted. It can also be a written account of an experience in the form of a story. Analytic reflexivity is expected to be presented in the form of writing, which we call the writing styles within autoethnography. They could be exhibited by the researcher's consciousness which has multiple layers and could be delivered through evocative methods (Struthers, 2012). Thus, autoethnography as a method is more evocative and convincing.

Wall (2008) stated that autoethnography typically starts with an individual's personal story. Autoethnography became a challenging research genre, enabling me, the researcher to attest to all forms of autoethnography with some strength. For instance: I learned how to interpret my experience with the narratives that I generated as the materials to investigate. While writing this autoethnographic research, it evoked something in me, such as myself in the dominant culture, my valiant attempt to fight with faith and family and to decide on my other personal stories. These experiences of mine in the form of autoethnography would give readers insight into my and my participants' worlds beyond theirs.

Autoethnography has something important to offer, to share new and unique knowledge applicable in a broad context. Personal stories can coexist with autoethnographic research. Normally, autoethnography consists of short stories, poetry, fiction, novels, fragmented and layered writings and reflections. According to Wall (2006), autoethnography is a more authentic use of resources as it consists of the researcher's voice and the self as an insider. It is wise to label the writing category to bring them under autoethnography. As we live in a time of great possibility, the writings based on personal experiences lead to a great research inquiry, especially for understanding autoethnography.

When we come to the definition of ethnographic research, it is derived from the discipline of social and cultural anthropology, which requires a significant amount of time from the researcher's side in the research field (Myers, 1999). A researcher needs to spend most of the time in the research field so that s/he can get maximum out of the engagement in the research field. The more time is spent there, the more one can view the participants' world and it helps the researcher to make meaning of the ongoing practices in the field. The significant attributes of the ethnographic research

include the first-hand cultural encounters that are specific, regular and continuous participation as well as contact with participants, understanding the meaning of that encounter, making a record of the same where the participants' experiences should not be reduced, and the presentation of discourse is with thick description (Mullick et al., 2013). Regular contact with participants and the continuous engagement of the researcher in the field allows for a thick description of what is seen, heard and experienced in the research field. Sangasubana (2011) proclaimed that when the attachment and empathy grow for a research site along with the growth in rapport and trust with participants, the ethnographer is more a participant than just an observer. Observation is just the way to view the participants' world, but being in the research field with participants and getting that experience of being in that world is itself meaningful. Ethnography notes what happens in the research field and records their subjective reactions to observation (Tin, 2014). The researcher gives their subjective response to any events in the field of what s/he saw and what s/he felt, giving an ethnographic sense to the research. In auto/ethnography, a subjective response is much richer. The history of autoethnography provides more transparency as to why this method has been chosen.

It is Hayano (1979) who is often taken as the first person for the use of 'Auto ethnography but Heider (1975) is the one who used the term 'auto ethnography' (Zake & DeCesare, 2011). Autoethnography came into existence when ethnographers considered their observations. The researchers first thought of understanding the 'self' to understand 'others.' Now, coming to the meaning of autoethnography, it has a deeper meaning in itself. The personal experiences ("auto") that embed the cultural beliefs and practices ("ethno") that get described and interpreted ("graphy") build up as auto/ethnography (Ellis et al., 2011). Researchers take the help of autobiography,

combining it with the doctrine of ethnography and conducting research (Ellis et al., 2011). History has shown that auto/ethnography provides the unique opportunity to learn through personal to general, which means that through the exploration of personal experiences, one can learn about general aspects, including social, cultural and political (Douglas & Careless, 2013). Auto/ethnography evolved with blending fiction and the real social world because it could be highly personal, rewriting the selves in the social world and simultaneously crafting fiction (Denshire, 2014). When we talk about autoethnography, it is the research that is entirely on the researcher's way of writing and even it is not free from the researcher's manipulation of words and meanings. Autoethnography is highly inclined to researchers' subjectivity, emotionality and influence in the research and denies assuming the absence of those entities that matter for the actual meaning of autoethnography (Ellis et al., 2011). As subjective research, researchers bring up the emotional aspects of their life experiences and give the aesthetic quality to it, ultimately creating meaning to what the researchers bring as stories, poems, narratives or dialogues. The history of autoethnography affirms it as a distinct research method since it comprises the holistic aspects of researchers' subjectivity by incorporating their stories and experiences. Autoethnography is, thus, the evolvement of a subjective exploration with prior precedence to discover the hidden aspects within the researchers' own stories and experiences.

Stories as Data in Autoethnography

The story analyst or the auto/ethnographer takes the story as data, analyses the narrative, and objectifies the story as any other form of qualitative data (McIlveen, 2008). The stories rooted inside the auto/ethnographer come out in the form of narration, which becomes the data for the research in auto/ethnography.

Auto/ethnographers rely on the memories of their lived experiences (Wall, 2008). It seems not to qualify as legitimate, but if we look at the data collected through interviews, it is based on experience too. The difference is that an interview gets recorded and transcribed to make it a transcript, and the auto/ethnographic text is recalled and written down as text. However, both are based on the same set of memories. So, in an autoethnography, stories of the researcher's 'self' and 'others' are data for the research.

Why Auto/ethnography?

Ethical issues differ in the types of autoethnography that we conduct. There are two types: one is 'researcher and researched,' where the researcher's focus is on the conventional 'ethno' ethics where the focus is on understanding the culture of the researched and the next is 'researcher is researched,' where the focus is on researching on the 'auto ethics' where the researcher researches on the self-stories and experiences (Doloriert & Sambrook, 2020). As my research explored self and others, I have gone to the field not only to observe and grasp the stories of some events from there. Rather I depicted the in-depth portrayal of what I experienced from there. Thus, auto/ethnography is the inquiry that I use for my research. As auto/ethnography is a study of self and others, I have explored my 'self' inside of me and the 'other' associated with my 'self.' At the same time, I studied the 'self' of my participants and the 'other' associated with them. My research is the portrayal of my experience as well as of my participants. I got the freedom to explore the stories going to that deep level and to bring our experiences that happened due to auto/ethnography. So, autoethnography became a suitable method for my research. So, I chose auto/ethnography as my methodological inquiry.

Evocative and Analytical Autoethnography: Where Do I Stand?

An autoethnography is taken as a debatable method of inquiry (Anderson, 2006). I too dared to choose the same method for my research. I went for autoethnography and I wanted to embody my life account and that of my participants that would bring our lived experiences of being and becoming English teachers. Developing the broader social phenomena is focused by analytical autoethnography, whereas evocative autoethnography keep focus on the presentation of narratives that evoke emotional responses (Ellingson & Ellis, 2008). I joined both evocative storytelling and analytical research. Evocative autoethnography inspired me to look deeply at the issues of my life and gave me the way out for how I can live life for myself and others and also gave me the sense of living a better life and thinking of better life for others (Osvath & Bochner, 2022). In the journey of this research, I could reflect on my life journey and I brought narratives from my participants to examine the culture that has shaped me to be who I am today. I have used both evocative and analytical autoethnography while making meaning out of our life stories. Multiple layers of life accounts have been brought with a desire to explore my identity construction with a specific cultural context that evokes feelings and persuades readers to make personal connections with our stories (Bochner & Ellis, 2016). By using the techniques of both analytical and evocative autoethnography, I used my life stories and experiences along with that of my participants. However, I looked at the self-more than observing others. So, my research is the joining of both analytical and evocative autoethnography.

Research Design

I have focused on participant selection and data collection tools in research design. For my research, site selection was not only the proper place that we usually

assume for data collection since data were collected even in coffee shops or churches. However, we tried to meet most of the time in schools, especially to observe their classrooms.

Participants Selection

As it is auto/ethnographic research, my two participants and I are the participants in this research. However, I brought two categories of my participants in the research; the participants by virtue of my memory (Appendix IV) who came in my stories as different characters and are the people that exist in my memory from the past. The participants by selection are the participants that I chose purposively. As I have the experience of more than ten years in the teaching profession, I selected participants with similar experiences. Both the participants are females because I wanted to explore the female English teachers' stories. I chose the participants with purposive sampling as I wanted to look at the journey of teachers with the same profession line. The periphery we have made in the past and present, as well as our workplace (the schools), is my research arena.

Data Collection Techniques

The research is auto/ethnography, which means my participants and I are the primary data source. The experiences for this study of our teacher identity construction and change of practices have been recounted by memory and self-reflection (journal writing). Data collection techniques for autoethnography led me to my narratives, stories of my own experiences, and the stories of my family, friends and colleagues to collect the associated information to enrich data.

Noting Stories and Writing Reflections

For bringing my stories, I noted all the stories per my life's events. These stories are my personal stories and have been given the space under suitable themes. I

wrote reflections of incidents in my life related to my journey into English and the journey of my identity construction and change that occurred in my life. Then it was thematized later. My participants' stories, experiences, and current practices in their professional lives have been captured to generate data from them. The data were generated through the following methods:

Observation

Observation is an essential tool for data collection in my research. Observation opens a doorway for getting into the collection of a series of critical incidents that occur in the field (Slack & Rowley, 2001). To carry out the observation, I mainly followed four ways: unstructured observation, running record, naturalistic observation and observation of participants (Appendix III). To collect data from my participant, I observed her everyday routine and jotted down every possible thing in my notebook with unstructured observation, keeping the field notes (Appendix IV). I carried out naturalistic observation which I maintained by going to the field and being in the natural setting. I wrote the anecdotes of those events which I could not jot down in the field. I did that after returning from the field every day. The running record was kept of some specific events in the field so that I could do a micro-level description for my research. Ethnographers become more reflexive when they get shifted from participant observation to 'observation of participation' (Bochner & Ellis, 2016). In observation of participation, I, as a researcher, observed the interaction I had with my participants. So, observation was not limited to what they did but was also based on how their behaviour was in the interview. Observation became an important tool for collecting data for my research as it assisted me in gathering an ample amount of data through my presence in the research field and through the observation I carried out while conversing with my participants.

Interview

I took in-depth interviews with my participants. The participants were asked open-ended questions which would lead them to discuss different life events that occurred in their life (Appendix VI). Qualitative research follows an unstructured interview that consists of broad and open-ended questions where the interviewer follows directions of the participant's response (Ryan et al., 2009). I started small talk before an interview that allowed my participants to feel relaxed. I offered coffee, and the conversation went on but I took care of my interview questions while directing the conversation. By interviewing my participants, I gathered ample data for my research. As the participants were volunteering for the interview, I took care of the starting and ending times of the interview (Bolderston, 2012). I took several rounds of interviews. The repeated rounds of interviews assisted me in compiling the missed data from the previous ones. During the interview, I also learned not to ignore the participants' unwillingness to answer certain questions (Jong & Jung, 2015). With such ethical care, I had five sittings for one round of interviews with one participant and the other three sittings for the second round. I followed the same process with the other participant. This way, I could gather my participants' treasured stories and experiences through interviews.

Artefacts

Artefact is the material that people create after they accomplish their intended task. Artefacts are the socio-material practices that illustrate their thoughts (Edwards et al., 2020). They are constructed or made to value the work and are such proofs that are tangible. In research, artefacts speak of many hidden aspects. To get readers to see these hidden aspects, I collected the artefacts such as my participant's written work,

lesson plans, photographs, diaries, or other valuable things (Appendix V). They were the present documents and the past credentials that helped me interpret the data.

Meaning Making

I mostly heard of the term ‘Analyzing data’ and analyzing the data is taken as the vital step in the research process. In the beginning phase of my research, I tried to follow a general data analysis process, such as data transcription, organization of data, familiarization, coding and identifying themes (Lacey & Luff, 2009) but it was difficult since I had to deal with my personal stories. As I started researching on myself and wrote my life stories, I realized that the meaning making of the stories would help me bring my stories in a meaningful way. When I reached my participants to collect data, especially when I transcribed them, I found that I need to be guided by processes because I got overwhelmed by the data when I saw them once I transcribed it because there was so much text to deal with. At some point, I found that everything was important. I was confused about choosing one particular thing as essential. I was stuck and was afraid of leaving out something important (Holton, 2007). I was stuck and unable to interpret the data and I could not begin anything. I started the process by my interpretation and tried to see if the data supported my interpretation. Then, gradually I saw every bit of data bear on my research concerns.

I went through Aurbach and Silverstein (2003) and found that they have forwarded some steps for constructing a theoretical narrative from the text. In my case, I wanted to get a guideline to help me move ahead with data. So, I followed their idea which made my data manageable.

Six Steps for Constructing a Theoretical Narrative from Text
Making the Text manageable
1. Explicitly state your research concerns and theoretical framework

2. Select the relevant text for further analysis. Do this by reading through your raw text, keeping in mind step 1 and highlighting the relevant text.

Hearing what was said

3. Record repeating ideas by grouping together related passages of the relevant text.
4. Organize themes by grouping repeating ideas into coherent categories.

Developing the theory

5. Develop theoretical constructs by grouping themes into more abstract concepts consistent with your theoretical framework.
6. Create a theoretical narrative by retelling the participants' stories in terms of the theoretical constructs.

[(Adapted from Aurbach and Silverstein, 2003)]

Keeping the research concerns in mind, I started to construct narratives as a staircase moving from a lower to a higher-level understanding. The step was taken by looking at the raw text as the lowest level and the research concern as the highest level. First, the raw texts were cut down to manage the proportion and avoid the overwhelming situation. Then, I kept in mind the research concern and highlighted the relevant texts. I had in mind that I was there to turn the raw data into a communicative and trustworthy story (Lenneberg & Korsgaard, 2019). I shed light on repeating ideas, which means the participants' words or similar words to express the same opinion. I then tried to find something in common and developed a theme out of those common ideas to organize a group of repeating ideas. Then, organizing themes into larger (more abstract) concepts, I went for the abstract grouping of themes as theoretical constructs. Lastly, I organized my theoretical constructs into a theoretical narrative. It assisted me in summarizing my learning on my research concerns.

Meaning making took three basic stages of subjective experiences as the focus, describing the meaning of a social situation and going into spheres of implicit and even unconscious aspects of a social phenomenon (Flick, 2013). Similarly, meaning making was done taking support of the stages identified by Jaspal and Breakwell (2014), which they presented as the universal processes to facilitate identity construction. These steps are as follows:

1. Continuity across time and situation (continuity)
2. Uniqueness or distinctiveness from others (distinctiveness)
3. Feeling confident and in control of one's life (self-efficacy)
4. Feelings of personal worth (self-esteem)
5. Belongingness (Vignoles et.al, 2002a)

The meaning was constructed side by side being based on Jaspal and Breakwell's elements of identity construction. Out of the stories I get from my own life experiences and my participant's life experiences, I made meaning for my research. Meaning can be created through human interaction, and therefore researcher needs to participate in the life of the research participant to create the constructs, ideas and meaning (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010). Meaning is socially constructed and it is relative to a specific context. I have crafted the enhanced auto/ethnography with the meaning I created from my and my participant's stories and experiences. When the real context was captured, I gave it the route to develop auto/ethnographic research with meaning in it. I also made a way to examine the meaning behind the socio-cultural practice critically. In auto/ethnography, meaning is constructed, valuing stories and personal experiences to make them meaningful to the readers. It happens when cultural beliefs, practices and experiences are interrogated to focus on life as 'lived through.' The construction of meaning is a critical element of human existence

and learning, which should be done with various perspectives and approaches that lead to worldview formation (Krauss, 2005). Meaning-making can be done by constructing meaning with the achievement of richer forms of understanding with a full sense of the meaning of ethics within the research contexts. I have built meaning with the narrative, dialogical and metaphorical point of view (Taylor, 2013) since this is research on identity construction through the transformation that occurred in my and my participants' teaching practice and the overall profession as an English teacher. This allowed me to construct the meaning out of the account of connected events of stories, relating to the logical discussion of ideas and opinions and relating to metaphor, respectively.

Quality Standards

Quality standards are to be maintained in the research we do. As my research is auto/ethnography, I have selected the quality standards suitable for my study. They are discussed below:

Transparency

A researcher is responsible for disclosing what, why and how s/he did what s/he did, which is transparency (Rivka, 2016). It is, therefore, not about what the researcher did not do and why s/he did not do it. It is about the researcher's process of doing research. Transparency is the significant event that took place in the research purpose of the study.

Sometimes the types of papers also matter about how transparent the researcher should be. If it is a publishable article, the researcher can be less transparent, whereas if it is a dissertation, the researchers are free to be transparent. Transparency in qualitative research helps increase visibility in research which controls the misleading in what the researcher intends to research. When everything is

brought as data, there is less transparency, and this causes misinterpretation of the research. Thus, transparency permits researchers to reuse existing data to extend the research or to improve or launch research in a linear perspective. However, it obliges them to publicize how they measure, interpret and analyze evidence.

Reflexivity

Reflexivity is a way for the researcher to acknowledge the changes that are brought about in their journey of research (Palaganas et al., 2017). It is questioning about self as a practitioner and as a researcher. Patnaik (2013) claims that reflexivity is the awareness that constantly arises in the researchers, leading them to assess and reassess their contribution and influence in shaping the research and its findings. According to Wiesner (2020), reflexivity is reflecting on self to see who I am at the moment and to develop a feeling of not apologizing for being different from before. To bring my most unforgettable experiences with the sense of my identity as a researcher is what reflexivity means.

Pedagogical Thoughtfulness

Pedagogical thoughtfulness is the practical understanding at the very heart of teaching (Manen, 2008). This standard has been maintained in my research as I have become critical to see practical teacher knowledge. Questions like what is the child's interest, what is appropriate in terms of teachers' reaction to the child's question and an adjustment of voice are all to be cared for. I reflected on my teaching and saw those practical entities in my teaching. The same applied to my participants' teaching journey of how they taught previously and how they are doing that now. For all these, pedagogical thoughtfulness has been maintained. Pedagogical thinking is concerned with how the decisions taken are justified. When the researcher makes a decision, it is a normative decision at that very moment. However, when taking a stand and

evaluating what the participant is doing all the time, the researchers bring a quality of thoughtfulness to them. Giving importance to every aspect of pedagogical content with background thinking and the kind of justification they use is all related to pedagogical thoughtfulness.

Verisimilitude

Verisimilitude likeliness makes researchers write personal stories that may create a sense of sameness in readers and make them feel like that is their own story (Qutoshi, 2015). It is a criterion to create a good literary study that takes readers to a real-world of study. Verisimilitude is a quality that researchers maintain in their research that makes their writing real. This leads to a skill of writing that makes readers feel like the story brought in the writing is their own. This quality takes readers to a similar situation of the vicarious experiences of the researcher and thus becomes able to understand the emotions of the research participants (Loh, 2013). When the verisimilitude was maintained as a quality standard, I could well craft the stories that I believe will help readers get a deeper insight into the sympathy and empathy of my research participants.

Rising above Solipsism and Narcissism

As a practitioner of autoethnography, my responsibility was to bring 'self' and 'others' into the research. In doing so, I have become conscious not to go to the state of narcissism where an individual cannot appreciate others and with an extreme focus on self, the 'other' is not respected or not even noted (Bartlett, 1986). I, too, became conscious of rising above the idea that solipsism holds that self is the sole thing (Ural, 2019). Having said this, I, too, had to come to the ground reality that I, as a researcher, needed to ponder upon the self; for that, some degree of solipsism is essential (Panta & Luitel, 2022). So, I have become self-centered as I was to research

myself. However, I have tried not to avoid ‘others’ in my research, and I have maintained the standard of respecting the ‘others’ whether they are my participants or the people I brought in my stories.

Generative

As a practitioner of autoethnography, maintaining generative as a quality standard was useful for me because of many inherent weaknesses of traditional empirical research (Simon et al., 1996). Generative was effective to give new strategies and to find solutions to the problems that arose while being stick to the systematic ways during the research process. Generative is a quality standard I maintained in my research which assisted me as a researcher in generating knowledge in a collaborative process where the process involved my and my participants’ own experiences and understandings (Chai et al., 2021). Generative ideas lead to creative thoughts which is raised from the natural settings or while interpreting the data. This has made my research more meaningful.

Vulnerability

Vulnerability in an autoethnography helps researchers be open to bringing personal narratives and discussing very personal events (Qutoshi, 2015). It functions as a powerful tool when it comes to the practitioner of autoethnography. It gave me the freedom to what to include in my research as I could bring too personal and emotional stories being vulnerable (Cooper & Lilyea, 2022). Maintaining this quality standard helped me to bring the stories that were emotionally challenging and were not likely to share with others. Still, it took me to the stage where I could face situations that would make me cathartic.

Ethical Consideration

Ethics governs every research. Human activities run in everyday life are alarmed with ethics. As a human, there are certain things that we do not want to reveal in front of other people. A researcher, therefore, needs to follow ethical guidelines which we call ethics. Autoethnography is mostly at risk to the well-being of the researcher and therefore, the research must give priority to the informed consent of the insiders of the story (Griffin & Griffin, 2019). Ethical consideration guides researchers to be aware of human rights concerning the values they have in their society. In the research field, a researcher needs to act ethically. I have considered privacy as more urgent as the participants I have brought may be more easily identifiable due to their closeness to me as the author (Starfield, 2020). While getting data out of my experiences, I have ensured the informed consent of other people in the stories I bring and their anonymity. I, as a researcher, have kept the ethical standards as this is about people's rights. I have considered my participants' overall welfare, including trust, confidentiality, harm, deception and consent. This is how I ensured that I abided by them fully before and after my research.

Chapter Essence

Chapter four is the methodology section consisting of my philosophical consideration and research paradigms. With the mention of my ontological view, the multiple realities in my research can be found in this chapter. The epistemological standpoint has been mentioned, and my research has been presented as a knowledge-oriented process. Also, its contribution to the construction of knowledge has been mentioned too. The axiological viewpoint has been mentioned, which aims to explain this research as value-laden research. It goes on with the explanation of the research design, data coding process, data analysis process and meaning-making process of the

research. The quality standards I have maintained in the research have shown the research as an autoethnography since the quality standards such as verisimilitude and thick description have been maintained. The ethical considerations are not harming the participants and maintaining their confidentiality. On top of that, the ethic of being the practitioner of autoethnography with the maintaining of depicting the real stories and also not being biased in terms of the characters that I bring in my life story have been maintained as an ethical consideration in my research.

CHAPTER V

THE NOTION OF OTHER IN CONNOTATION WITH SELF ESTEEM

I am always solicitous to introduce myself being who I am. However, my individuality takes me to the thought of discovering my own identity. For this thesis, I understand the concept of identity as the characteristics, social relations, and especially social group membership that identify one's role in society which defines who the person is (Leary & Tangney, 2012). From childhood, I have been searching for my identity as it shifted in different phases of my life. I believe many people like me long to search for their identity at an individual level when they learn that their identity is in a state of shifting. Identity theory includes multiple identities, emotions, and identity changes where the social structure influences one's identity and behaviour (Burke & Stets, 2009). Here I am to state the obligatory status of who I was in each step of life that led me to learn something from there. When I look at my identity, I can sense the 'Otherness' that has been enrolled in it. The notion of 'otherness' is understood as the sense in colonized subjects that they gain as somehow 'Other' and that they come to understand the world where they find themselves as primitive and degraded subjects of imperial discourse (Shyama & Verma, 2018). The feeling of 'Otherness' in each stage is presented with thoughtful autobiographical stories of self.

Identity theory concerns social identity formation, which consists of two main processes, social categorization and social comparison. Stets and Burke (2000) claim that social identity includes the emotional, evaluative and other psychological correlates of the group where they are related. There is a self-categorization that is

equally relevant to the formation of one's identity. Now, self-categorization implies that people are defined and recognized not only as individuals but as belonging to social categories such as child or adult, rich or poor and Eastern or Western. Self-categorization is the categorization of self and others in terms of in-group and out-group (Hogg & Terry, 2013). In self-categorization, an individual counts his categorization as where they belong to. With the idea of identity formation, my status of positioning myself as an individual begins from here, where I have brought up various stories to relate them to my identity. At the same time, there is a social association of my identity with people in different categorizations than mine, which has occurred with social comparison. People are influenced by a psychological mechanism called social comparisons, which make them compare between self and others (Malle, 2011). When engaging in social comparisons, people note how others are doing, what they are doing, what they achieve and what not and compare this with their own. Social comparison has thus, influenced my narratives.

My stories establish the 'feeling of 'Other' that I sensed while in a family and society and has kept me away from the pleasant feeling that comes from self-esteem but then the priority to self-esteem has encouraged me to speak and criticize the approaches (Arshad et al., 2015). The idea of 'Other' is a key concern here in my study. Other means 'not from the particular group.' As a researcher, I have kept my interest in tackling the issues of belongingness and affiliation to bring the image of race-class and gender-related dimensions (Sidhu, 2018). Though it is just the background of my study, it gives a scenario of my childhood and the discrimination I faced in different phases of my life.

Family Obligation to the Social Taboo

I was raised in a family where I was obliged to follow some rules, primarily rules that patriarchal norms determined, and those rules always evoked me to question my identity. Identity is about who you are, including the characteristics, preferences, goals and behaviour patterns you associate with yourself (Howard, 2000). My father, being a *brahmin*, used to wear a dhoti (long white shawl-like cloth) while having morning and evening meals. I never questioned that as it was about him, but I was never allowed to go to *Chulo* (kitchen). Our kitchen was made a bit higher in level, and there was a step separating the kitchen as up and down the kitchen. I was served the meal on my plate, and it used to be passed down the kitchen. My brothers were allowed to go to the kitchen, but I was not.

I was lucky to be born into my family because of their love for me. Still, when it was the question about having a meal, I found myself being dominated though I did not know what domination meant then. I never saw myself being treated like a family child because it was something like huge discrimination. We had two cultures in my family – one for boys and the other discriminatory one for girls. According to Bhugra (2016), discrimination is an inequality that is rooted in a society in a sustained manner that is carried out based on different measures of diversity. I became the prey of one of these diversities of the family culture developed years ago by patriarchal society for creating gender biasness. I became the prey of the hegemony (Gramsci, 1999) that made me follow the trends of the established cultures though I was to be smashed by the trend time and again, and I would take it as ‘this is what happens.’

One day, I dared to ask my grandmother about the discrimination I felt in the family. She said I must follow the rule made in the family, and many generations have followed that. I asked, “why only me and not my brothers?” Then she answered

because your brothers are already in the upper level as they are boys and you are a girl. So, girls are meant to be down. Boys are always in a better place than girls. That is why they are allowed to be in the kitchen, and their level is meant to be higher than yours. I asked, *then when am I allowed to go to the kitchen?* She replied *when you get married.* Again, my curiosity was not over. So, I continued *....but when I am married, I go to my husband's home and then how I can serve in the kitchen here in my own home? How do I learn to cook food? Can't I help my mother in the kitchen ever?* I was with these several questions, but my grandmother could say I am not allowed to do so as a girl.

A social taboo was already created, and that was to be honoured by every girl like me. Taboos are society's means of regulating people's behaviours, and this is done without any real and tangible effect on the event but is considered very strict (Dodo, 2015). I used to question myself, why is it so? Why can't I eat sitting close to my father in the *kushashan* (a cushion made from a holy bush named *kush*)? Why do I get only a *chakati* (a cushion made from the outer cover of maize) to sit in? As the cushion looked different from my father's and two brothers, I did not like mine. Though I did not have an idea that it was a trend carried out to discriminate against girls, I could at least sense that I was treated differently.

Also, I remember that my grandmother used to ask my father to leave little left over on his plate, and my mother would happily eat on the same plate. I used to ask my mother; *don't you feel disgusting?* She used to say, *No. instead; I will go to heaven after death if I do so.* I could sense the hegemony of patriarchy upon my mother and me. Hearn (2004) states that hegemony is the imposition of power and dominance by a superior group to an inferior group, where the inferior group takes it

as the taken-for-granted phenomenon. Being the victim of such hegemony, we did not dare to speak. My mother was silent. I was silent.

My mother and I were guided by a mechanism called hegemony, where the subordinated groups consent to belief systems and structures that support oppressive ideologies discouraging their interests. Hegemonic power convinces individuals and social classes to subscribe to an inherently exploitive system's established social norms and values. It was about the culture established in my family. In cultural hegemony, the question “who has the power?” is essential where ‘who’ could be parents, teachers, or other experts involved in shaping the society's values. Those victims of hegemony are within the boundaries of common sense ‘reality’ and cannot even resist or be called irresponsible (Lears, 2016). Hegemony had taken place in my mother’s life and my life in such a way that it became something that we had to accept and would guide our daily lives being born in a Nepalese Brahmin family.

An Upbringing with Obligations that Taught Etiquettes

Etiquette is a practice that encourages respect and value that promotes moral and ethical behaviour (Anunciacao et al., 2016). Jaisvi developed those feelings of respect, values and morality from her grandfather. Jaisvi’s grandfather was an Indian Army. His younger brother owned the whole land in the village and used to help lawyers. Her grandfather was so strict that not only her and her family but the entire village used to be scared of him. He was so scary. Her grandmother said that he used to have a hot temper. He fought in the First World War and Second World War. He had one special samoria he got when he fought for the Japanese in the war when the Japanese were dying. He used to keep it. He had all these army things and was very attached to that army life. We could not go to his room since Jaisvi and her sisters had to knock on the door to enter his room. Her grandmother said that even in the army,

he could not tolerate anyone. He became the captain and beat the British man though the British had colonized then. Being fought Marshall, everything was taken off. He was supposed to get the Victoria Cross as per her grandmother. Her grandmother's elder brother (her grandfather's friend) got the Victoria cross, but her grandfather did not (for some reason) though he became the court Marshall in the army.

Jaisvi beautifully brought up her childhood:

People used to run away from my grandfather. People did not make a loud noise because ladies are supposed only to be heard. We had the wooden house, and we were supposed to walk so quietly that he made my sister walk again from the beginning. When he brought anything from the market like sweets or other things, we had to stand according to our height and extend our hands. I have lots of things in my memory about my grandfather. That's why I am focusing more on him. When we became naughty, he used to beat us so hard. We used to climb guava trees to eat guava, and he used to wait for us under the tree to let us come down so that he could beat us. He used to wait so long that we could not stay in the guava tree for the whole day and so got down to get his beating. He literally used to beat us.

Jaisvi remembers her Christmas holiday at the same time and said,

We used to have three months of winter holidays. That used to be the Christmas season. Christmas there was different. That was Christmas for everyone. People used to chop wood. It was a very busy time. We used to enjoy catching butterflies. There used to be butterflies of different types. My father made a net for me to catch butterflies and dragonflies, and I used to go after the butterflies and dragonflies. We used to have picnics and camping at the riverside, and I never missed them till I was in Kalimpong. In the rainy

season, on Saturdays, it may be because we used to make lots of noise, my grandfather used to send us out small buckets, and we used to go with gumboots on, and we used to be busy crab catching. We were so busy looking for fish in the stream beside our house.

Jaisvi's cousins used to come to her house to play *bhanda- kuti* and used to play and dirty the place since they used clay and flowers. Jaisvi's grandfather used to come with his huge army boots and destroy everything. He hated people plucking flowers, and he used to chase us when we did that while playing. He used to wake up at four in the morning and put every tenant as he was from when they used to look after five or six tenants of land. The helper *didi* needed to put firewood to make fire; if she forgot to put the firewood, he used to put water over it and just walked off literally. Jaisvi said that he had a different table to dine on in the dining hall. *It was slightly higher than ours; he had to be served first, and we would be served. Like in the army, we were not supposed to make noise, we had to be quiet while eating, and there were many do/s don'ts while eating. While he used to be studying the newspaper beside the table, we needed to be quiet. Otherwise, he would shout at us.*

On the other hand, Jaisvi's grandmother was very gentle and soft-spoken. Jaisvi's mother is from Cosiyong, and they had come to Kalimpong, and then they shifted in between because her grandfather was transferred. He was in the food civil supply department. As a food inspector, he was shifted to Kalimpong, and they all came to Kalimpong. At that time, her mother fell in love with her father. They were just 14 and 15 or something like that when they eloped. They fell in love, and they eloped. Then they went to Cosiyong to her mother's aunt's house since her grandfather did not allow them to enter his house for some time. As her grandfather was the elder of the church, he was the recognized pastor of the protestant church. So,

the whole village used to see him as a holy person. So, he did not allow her parents to enter the home as eloping was not considered wise.

Jaisvi remembered; *my grandfather never showed any affection since he was strict. My grandmother used to smoke bindi (batta ma hune surti berera khane) and my grandmother used to shout at her but he used to bring that for her. He used to tell my grandmother engine udayo, engine udayo.* She had sugar and pressure, and she went through cataract surgery. After one year of the surgery, she expired. At that time, sugar, pressure and mild stomach pain were normal. Jaisvi's grandmother called everyone, spoke with them for a while, and just left. After six months, her grandfather had high pressure and got a stroke. Then he got paralyzed. In the last moments of his life, he called every one of us nearby him. She kept forward her words; *as we were scared of him, we used to see him and used to run away. One particular night, he called us, asked for water, looked at us endlessly, and left. Though he was strict, he taught us all those etiquette that helped us be good.* That was Jaisvi's upbringing. That was her base of being a person of good character. Jaisvi learnt about cultural norms and manners which helped her to construct her social identity since it assisted her to create a boundary that developed her to be a person who could be trusted (Qamar, 2015). Her grandfather taught her all etiquette and manners. Some examples include; serving food from a particular side, keeping a fork on this side, keeping a spoon on that side, closing the mouth while eating, taking off a cap while praying, and not eating while someone is praying, holding a napkin in this way or that and so on. Now, she feels it is good that she learned them from him. Her father wanted independent children. He used to teach his children that *we win the fear of darkness by the sword of prayer.* Jaisvi thinks she got hold of his words while travelling on the night bus or in other difficult times though she had fear inside.

Neighbours' Words against Female Education

One evening while my father and mother were boiling milk using firewood, they had a nice talk which they usually would not do in front of my grandmother, maybe because they would feel awkward as the husband and the wife would not speak openly in those days. They were talking about my higher education. I used to go to my village school to engage village children and teach them some alphabets of Nepali and Nepali numbers. My father worried about my future because I was a skinny little girl who often used to be ill. I was not strong physically. That was what my father was talking about, and my mother was supporting him.

My brothers were already admitted to an English medium school then, which was in the city area. My father said, *'I think we should give enough education to our daughter so that she can live a good life in the future. She is not physically sound, but she can survive with an education.* In her fearful voice, my mother said, *what do the neighbours say?* My father replied, *what do they say? It is my decision because she is my child. Let's not listen to them. I will manage my time to take all three children to school.* My father took a decision and dared to do what he decided though he was under the shadow of the hegemony created by a social group who had generated the culture of dominating females by making them bound in the household work, not giving them the opportunities to be educated and by adding values of power, hierarchy and influence that would not only rule but also would impose their worldview (Cortes-Ramirez, 2015). When the neighbours knew about my admission to an English medium school in the city, they started raising questions about it. They asked my mother about it, and her reply was readymade as my father asked her to reply to them in that way. She used to say; *I do not have any idea about it. I do not know why he decided to educate our daughter at a good English medium school. He*

better knows why he did it. Some were quiet after that, but some asked my father about it. They frightened him, saying that he had to repent later for this decision because girls are not to be educated but to learn the household work and admitting the girl in English medium school was more than that. My father went against society to make me educated in English medium school, but now I realize that he is the one who paved the way for me to make me enlightened as well as uplift me as an educated lady.

A large segment of our society takes no action to educate girls though they are aware of growing evidence of the importance of girls' education (Somani, 2017). Still, my father took that action and proved that he was the one who wanted to see the change through girls. Today, my father feels proud of me and the success I have in my education and I feel proud of him for being such a father who behaved me like his other two children, i.e. my brothers. An educated female is continually thankful for the influences behind her education, as I am thankful to my father. It is because he raised those ill-minded people of the society by giving a smash to their thought of going against better education for females. According to Kang (2010), hegemony is a necessary form of class rule that roots an existence not only in political and economic relationships but gets rooted in people's experiences and consciousness, as in my neighbours. I feel blessed to be a child of my father, who decided to send me to the English medium school, which became the best foundation for my English language journey.

My participant Pragati had a similar experience of being interrupted by neighbours and her relatives when she thought of doing higher studies. She expressed, *My husband and I decided to go to Kathmandu for higher education. At that time, my neighbours were not happy with that, and they told my family that I could have*

studied in Butwal as there were universities in Butwal too. The backbiting by her relatives on the same matter, saying that she could study at Bhairahawa Campus or Butwal Campus because, as a daughter-in-law, she was not supposed to be away from her responsibilities towards the family and stay at Kathmandu just for her study.

‘I’ Tagged As ‘Ujeli’

I was on the school ground having a snack with my friends. Suddenly, a group of senior students from our school came nearby us. They started playing table tennis. The table tennis board was near to us. The table tennis ball flew away from the board as it always did and came near to us. One of the boys shouted, ‘*Eh Ujeli! Tyo ball pass gara ta.*’ (My translation: *Hey Ujeli! Could you pass that ball?*”) We were all amazed as none of us was with that name. Then he shouted, pointing to me, *Ujeli! Timplai vanya. Malai timi ujeli jastai lagxa.* Hereko chha ni Ujeli telefim? (My translation: *Ujeli! I am talking to you. I find you like Ujeli. I hope you have watched the telefilm Ujeli.* My friends laughed. I did not know how to react. I was not happy to get that name, but I smiled at him, passed the ball and went from there.

I only thought about the name given to me....Ujeli.... Why was I called ‘Ujeli’? I knew that the character was in a positive role in a telefilm, but her role in the movie was of a girl with a dark complexion though it has no meaning in the telefilm. She wanted to get an education but became the victim of child marriage. Later, due to her sister-in-law's death, while giving birth to a child, she takes the whole responsibility of the house and even looks after that newly born child. The misery of poverty is seen. She is wrapped in a traditional Nepali *fariya* and *cholo*, which is the expression of the inability to come out of old trends. The whole scene of and around *Ujeli* came to my mind. I thought, *in what perspective am I Ujeli? Why did he call me Ujeli? Is it because I am from a village? Is it because I am not good in*

look? Do I look like Gaunle (a villager)? Do I look like a girl who is to say 'yes' to child marriage and bound to a house's four walls? Why did he call me Ujeli... Why? These questions appeared in my mind time and again.

Recalling myself, being tagged as *Ujeli* was a sign of suppression that a male does to the female, discrimination that a person from a city does to a person from a village, a dominion of a so-called senior to junior and so on. I realized that the people in the city area think the people from the village are like animals. At this point, I found the city people in the position of elites who use their hegemonic control with the dominant ideology along with their social, political and economic power to range people as not able and to make them realize that they are low in the hierarchy (Mapp, 2016). Whatever it was, I was never happy being tagged as *Ujeli*. I was to be called by my name, my identity. I always wanted to have my own identity.

Sense of Being in the Category of Otherness in Class

'Being' is what you are. When you are in the reality of being, that is what you are in real. Being yourself comes from your heart, and this cause problem when you do not belong to the category of a particular group. There comes a feeling of 'Otherness' when you are not from that group. This is what I have experienced in my school life.

The school where I was admitted was about two hours away from my home. My father used to make me and my two brothers ready to go to school and take us there. In God's favour, my father got a job as an accountant in the same school. Then, he was in charge of us all the time. However, I was finding myself alienated. We had to leave our home at 7:15 in the morning, and due to my father's work, we had to stay longer in school. So, we used to reach home at around 7 in the evening. It was not easy to go to boarding school, and that was a tough job for my parents to manage our

time, hunger, thirst and necessity. Sometimes, we used to reach school a bit late.

When I was constantly late for three days, my teacher asked why I was late. At that point, I gave a reason that my home was far away, and it took me about two hours to reach the school. My teacher asked if I was from the village, and I said yes. Then I went through some hard times in class. I heard my friends talking about me and that I was from the village. They used to laugh at me secretly and exclude me from games like 'L- O- N -D -O -N LONDON'.

One day while I was in the playground, one of my friends said, I have *chungi* (a bunch of rubber tied together to make a ball-like thing to play with). This might be interesting to Vidhya as she must know how to play it because she is from a village, and *chungi* is played in villages. Other friends laughed. I knew I could play L O N D O N very well, but my friends thought that is a game for children from the city and *chungi* for me, a child from the village. I got tears in my eyes, finding myself being discriminated against. I realized being treated as 'Other' from my friend's side. Tion (2017) attested that the discovery of 'Other' is the alienation experienced by the 'Other' in relationship with the colonial power, which takes the 'Other' to a state of lack. I belonged to the category of 'Other' while all my friends were bound together in the feeling of 'self', which brought a lack of lack in me, not being able to be in their group. I did not like to play with them. I went to the classroom and did not even attend the afternoon assembly, which used to be held in our school every day after lunch. The assembly was over, but I was still in the despair of Otherness.

Jaisvi got the experience of otherness in her life too. Cluny nuns ran St. Joseph's Covenant School. They used to get an education and run schools nearby. Same time, they used to teach children with normal economic backgrounds and also, they used to teach poor children. At that time, there were Irish nuns and Anglonian

teachers. For college, Jaisvi went to Calcutta, St. Xavier's School. In the very beginning, she felt homesick there. In Calcutta, she stayed in the hostel with nuns, but I felt homesick. She was quiet and never left home till that time. She had one Sikkimese fellow and one Darjeelingee fellow with her.

Others were all Bengalis. She started getting alone there. She puts on, *I used to find everyone else so intelligent and found myself so lost there. For two-three months, I found it very hard. When I looked at Bengalis, they used to wake up at 4 o'clock. I, too, used to wake up early since that was the nun's hostel and I had to go for Maas. We Christians had to go for prayer and Maas at 5 a.m. When we were going down for the prayer, Bengalis would have already studied and returned. Bengalis people study 24 hours.* She took political science because she thought she would do administrative work. She was suggested to take science by her mother, but she was not interested in that, so she took political science. She knew that she was lucky to get political science over St. Xavier's. Everyone used to say, 'Oh, St. Xavier's', but she was homesick and lost. She could not complete her college education.

Nepali Class versus English Class: Self versus Others

I learned 'Ka', 'Kha', 'Ga', 'Gha' (Nepali alphabets) before 'a', 'b', 'c', 'd' (English alphabets). So, I always find convenience in my mother tongue, Nepali. I understand 'Naam' better than 'Noun' and 'Bisheshan' better than 'Adjectives'. Sahelehkheirabadi (2015) stated that the first language or mother tongue is a factor in a child's development that helps to grow positive self-concept and well-being and widens cognitive development during the second language. The mother tongue is more accessible than the second language for anybody unless they are grown up with exposure to both languages. Had my mother tongue been made the way to teach a second language, in my case, I would have learned English better. Mother tongue is a

language that a child learns from their parents and is part of a child's personal, social and cultural identity (Yadav, 2014). I also found the Nepali language, my mother tongue, as a language tied to my identity. It is about myself showing energy in Nepali class and getting lost in English class.

My English teacher, Mr Aalok, always dominated me for not being able to speak English properly, especially for not being good at English grammar. He used to tell me 'Tube light, Manda buddhi' (both meaning: having a slow mind), and I was, not in case of my mother tongue but the case of English. I used to get the sense of 'Otherness' in this class. When my friends were ahead in finishing English grammar exercises without the teacher's teaching, I found myself lagging. Mr Aalok would make fun of me in front of my friends, and they would laugh, making me feel like I was the 'Other' in that class. Ashcroft et al. (2007) state that the colonized subject is categorized as 'other' through discourse such as primitivism, savage and barbarism which is the binary opposition to the colonizers who believe themselves as modern, benevolent and civilized. The sense of 'Other' prevailed over the situation, and I found myself in the position of the colonized.

Motherland versus Other Land

When we say motherland, it is the country where we are born. Any place other than your motherland is the other land for you. One of the successful moments I faced was when I got a visa to study abroad. I was in the United Kingdom (UK) for two years studying leadership and social work. My husband and I both got a scholarship to study the same course. We were excited. We stepped onto the land where we saw everything differently. People were around, but nobody was of our type, nor were they interested in listening to us. We stayed in one old couple's home for a night whom we already knew when they had visited Nepal. They made us feel better by

letting us know about the weather in England and a little bit about the people of England. They became kind to us, taking us to our college in their car, two hours away from where they lived. We thanked them and entered the college.

We were welcomed by the receptionist who was there in the front office, and she helped us find our room. Through her, we knew we would meet in the hall at 6 PM with all the hostel students and teachers. We became ready and reached there at 6 p.m. as they were prompt in a matter of time. It was an introduction session. I noticed that there were people from different countries. We were only students from Nepal. It was not a big deal for my husband but I was wondering who would be my friend and how I would survive in this world for two years.

The months passed by, and the year. We made many friends who were friendly enough. They would talk with us, sit with us and eat together, but the feeling of 'Otherness' was somewhere. Othering is as harmful as discrimination because it holds group-based inequalities (Powell & Menendian, 2016). As soon as two or more English friends started talking using their slang and tone, I used to feel like an alienated person and that I was in the other world. Remembering the people of my motherland, I could sense the misery of being in the 'Other' land. That was where the desolation was and I was in that desolation though I was in the midst of many people.

Silence Counter to Speech: Sense of Primitiveness

I was in a land that was far away from my motherland. I was with many people in my class and had meetings with life groups. However, I used to be silent there. It was because I am an introvert and had the same problem back in school and college. Though I knew the answer in school, I would feel awkward answering. Even now, I have so many queries in my mind but cannot express them in front of my teachers and friends. In England, I was in my life group with friends and a teacher

who were there to encourage each other, but I was always quiet. They used to talk about their problems and exciting events, but I always struggled to share. I hardly shared my feelings two or three times, whereas others had many things to share.

It is not that I did not like to share, but when we were asked to share something from our side, my friends would start, and they would never stop. They would engage in that sharing so that they would laugh and create humor, and I understood half of the whole stuff. I could not find out where to laugh and why to laugh. I had good English but the sense of loneliness made me detached even from that lively life group. A feeling of dispersion overcame my heart and mind, and I was utterly in despair.

Sense of Belongingness with an Affiliated Culture

Belongingness is a feeling of being safe and it motivates people to be positive about relationships (Allen & Bowles, 2012). I had the feeling of safety when I met somebody with the affiliated culture as that of mine. As I was in England for my study, my husband and I were sent to one place in England for placement. It was a part of the course where students had to go to their assigned place and family and serve them wholeheartedly. We went to the new place to live with a new English family. The family was nice to us. The lady, Mrs Rosemary, had a brown complexion though she was English. She was just like Nepalese in terms of complexion. The family gave us a nice bedroom and all the necessary things to use. We were new to them; they were new to us. However, during dinner, I strongly felt that these people had some connection with Asia. I sensed that due to the food that was served to us. I asked; *this food is like our food. So, would I be rude to ask whether you are somehow connected to Asia?* She smiled and said that she was English, but her mom was Malaysian, and her mom's mom was Indian. When I heard this, I felt like Mrs

Rosemary was close to our nationality because our country Nepal is near India, and she was connected to the Indian blood. So, the dish prepared for us as dinner had an Asian flavour.

We spent one month with this family, and I found my home in her kitchen with all the spices I used back in Nepal. In her talk, I found the sense of 'Self'. I forgot that I was in England because she was such a loving and caring lady that she became my close friend after our stay in her home. A sense of belongingness with her helped me cope with stress and it even developed my self-esteem (Wilezyska et al., 2015). I realized that we do not even need people from our nation, but even if they are from the affiliated culture, that would be enough to remove the sense of Otherness in the Other land.

Coming Back to My Land: A Motivation to Study Further

With many memories in my mind, I returned to my own country, Nepal. Recalling all those moments of being with foreign people, I realized that I got lots of confidence being with them. Maybe that confidence led me to encourage my husband to start a job that could give others a career. As we took a leadership course in the UK, we wanted to exercise our leadership learning here in Nepal. However, we were not clear about what to do. We had settled in a pretty good area where most people were educated. With a round of tea talk with some people close to us, we realized that we could do good in the education sector if we could establish a school of the kind they were searching for. They expressed that they wished there could be a school that could give an excellent education with a reasonable fee structure. They were in search of a school that would not be expensive and not cheaper either. Also, they expressed their feeling that the school would adapt to the progressive education and with good facilities. When I got this clue about their expectations, my husband and I thought a

lot about it. Finally, we decided to establish a new school that could meet those parents' expectations. With huge courage, we started our school.

We started the school with only thirty students in its first year of establishment, which was in 2010 AD. There was a preschool and five students in grade one. I had the experience of teaching traditionally as how I grew up with. We appointed one teacher for grade one, but I decided to take the English subject to bear the challenge of fulfilling the parents' demand of making their children good at English. I did not have an idea about how to teach those children as the foremost challenge was that we did not put textbooks in our school. I was not aware of the internet or Google search for teaching. I was unknown about what to do and how to do it. At that very time, I heard from one of my relatives that there is a provision for primary teacher training from a renowned organization. I went there and met the training coordinator. She explained everything, and I was inspired by her motivating words and decided to take that training.

My professional journey started with a one-year primary teacher training course, which became a real foundation for my teaching career. From there, I strengthened my professionalism, where I learned to teach practically and with real activity-based instructions. My students learned with good conceptual understanding when I applied my learning of teaching primary students in the real field. As I was taking the training and at the same time teaching in school, it was easy for me to bring all that knowledge to the application level I did, and I also saw the result of it, which was mind-blowing. That laid a foundation for me to join Post Graduate Diploma in Education from a renowned University in Nepal. That was again another milestone I got as my academic achievement. Later, I finished my master's degree and MPhil degree in English Language Education from the same university, and now, I am

pursuing my PhD journey. This is a long way I have come by strengthening my professionalism as an English teacher. It matters not only the degree in my life but other professional steps I took. Such steps include; attending training and workshops, joining the conferences, presenting the papers in the conferences such as Nepal English Language Teachers' Association (NELTA), organizing training and small workshops as per the teachers' needs, doing classroom research, carrying out project works and keeping portfolios of students have made me the equipped teacher.

From this journey, I conclude that there are many ways to develop professionalism, but we must search for them. When we go for it, we definitely will achieve success because success lies in perception, and it does matter how you perceive your journey. In my perception, life is hope to reach the destination that I have wished for. Paul (2011) claimed, "Life is a journey, not a destination" (p.20). In my context, it was a tremendous learning and teaching journey that made me enjoy as well as become conscious of the things that came up while on the journey.

Identity as an English Teacher amid 'Othering'

At the utmost of my life, my identity got constructed as an English teacher, for which I feel proud. As English has become a global language nowadays, and it is the language that denotes high status, many people are after it. According to Munandar (2015), English has become a basis of class distinction as it plays a role of being a factor in creating social hierarchy. In many situations, I have realized that I have good status just because I know English. People have a craze for English, and there is a growing interest in the English language. It is a global language that demands people to learn it. When a language achieves its genuine global status by developing a particular role recognized in every country, it is a global language (Crystal, 2003). There is no doubt that English is a global language as it is spoken worldwide. Though

I went through many challenges in my life regarding learning English, I am pleased to have learned it. Being identified as ‘Ujeli’ (a name that denotes a village girl) in my early life and being known as ‘English teacher’ in my later life is the peak level I have reached. Being an English teacher, the status I have gained, the satisfaction level I have achieved, and the transformation I have brought to my teaching profession are significant achievements. Though I faced the changing identity in my lifetime, though I struggled to construct identity in many roles that I got in life, the construction of my identity as an English teacher is significant. Moreover, my identity as the transformed English teacher has made my identity vigorous as it got established by encompassing all those challenges.

Pragati thought she was doing good in her profession as an English teacher.

She puts on;

My neighbours ask me sometimes, ‘Why didn’t you do the government job? Your husband does a government job. So, it would be better if you had done the same.’ At that point, I ponder that I am teaching children who are the future stars and that I, as a teacher, make them able to differentiate right and wrong, good and evil, and facilitate them to shape their future in education. So, why do people think that I am not in a good profession? When do people see teaching as an essential profession?

When Pragati leaves her home to go to work, people make her feel weak, and make her feel like she did not choose the right profession, but when she enters school and starts her work, she feels proud of what she is doing, no matter what others say. So, amidst othering, Pragati stands as an English teacher with the same pride and spirit that English teachers have when they accept their identity as an English teacher.

Pragati has another story. She considered this the story of pain she faced while she went for an interview for the post of English teacher. It is a well-known private school in the Lalitpur district. She was excited to meet the interview and went there, equipping herself with theoretical knowledge and doing lots of studies. She could answer almost all the questions as all were related to education and teaching-learning. She had prepared for that. During the time to sign the contract, Pragati was shocked. She never thought she would be kept in such a condition to be appointed as an English teacher there. She said,

The interviewer asked me if I was thinking of family planning. I was like, 'well, I am not thinking about it now.' He then kept a condition that if I am interested in working in that school, I cannot think of having a baby for two years, at least during the contract period. I then thought of my situation. I am a married woman. I was married for four years and did not have a baby. I thought, what if I got pregnant during the contract period? What if I get any problems later if I try to stop my pregnancy? I had several questions in my mind. I even thought of my right to be a mother. Then I thought, I have my professional and personal life. For my professional life, I cannot kill my personal life. After all, it's my life, whether it is personal or professional.

Both personal and professional life was equally crucial for Pragati. Getting a job was essential for her, but at the same time, being a mother and extending her family was also important. She further exclaimed, *How could I sign the contract which would open the way for my professional life but would close the doors for the happiness of my family?* She refused to work there and took it as a bold step. Regarding self-esteem, it does matter because “it is the evaluation of a person’s own worth that consists of a sense of how skilled, lovable and worthy the person is”

(Hepper, 2006, p. 80). While constructing her identity, Pragati underwent such tribulation, which sharpened her as a bold female who could reject a job and choose for the family. The feeling of being 'Other' hurts and at the same time, gives us the power to fight for self-esteem, which is a factor to lead our identity.

Identity process theory says that every person abides by society though they do not accept it. Being raised in a society which was patriarchal it was unavoidable to be discriminated but Pragati's story of getting in a situation to choose either a job or a family, my decision to ask questions against the prevailed hegemony, were the subjects of our self-esteem that identity process theory entails. We engaged in critical reflection regarding the ongoing practices and we kept critical self-reflection at the centre as how the transformative learning theory said.

Chapter Essence

Chapter five grip my identity in the otherness. I have brought data from my participants which support my thoughts on otherness and identity construction in such situations of otherness. My participants and my feeling of otherness are the focus of the chapter. The experiences we underwent have been brought in the chapter that gives an exact scenario of how people struggle to find their identity and how the identity gets constructed amid adversities such as pain, melancholy, sadness and threat. The process of ups and downs, fullness and emptiness, and identity construction are all depicted in the chapter. The attractions in the chapter are the self-esteem that made us find our feelings as an important entity and our courage to fight the situations that came along.

CHAPTER VI

THE IDEALS THAT LED TO MY IDENTITY: DISTINCTIVENESS

Every individual has their philosophy in their life (Krone, 2014). Philosophy is an individual entity. It is the attitude the individual has. It is easy to talk about and analyze others, but it is sometimes difficult to see our own behaviour and attitude towards others. Our philosophy is the behaviour we show to others and the attitude we present in front of others. That philosophy of mine is determined by the society where I am living. To talk about my philosophy, I declared the attitude I have as my philosophy. Since my childhood, I have been a person who does not like to laugh at others, especially when dominating others. Once, in my school life, my teacher told me one quotation: "Laugh with everybody but don't laugh at anybody." This particular quotation has become a philosophy of my life. I have become wise in many cases making myself bold not to laugh at anybody to dominate them, to make them feel guilty about themselves. I value people's self-esteem. I often become careful not to laugh at people's situations, even if it is funny. This habit of mine has saved me from different problems as well.

Once, I was on the way to my home, and it was a muddy road. As it was village side, only two people including myself were walking. The other was a lady. A man about twenty years old was on a bicycle on the other side of the road. The moment I was trying to give a glance at the bike, it fell, and I think the man had a tremendous clash. The lady walking near me burst into big laughter whereas I was there with that quotation in my mind which made me go and help the person. When I heard the man attacking the lady with rude words in his upset mood and telling me

“Thank you” even though he was not willing, I found myself being safe from those harsh words. I have faced many situations where I have found myself not being blamed only because of the philosophy that I have in my life. Of course, I laugh with everybody to have fun with each other but not in the way of hurting others. Once again, I would like to note my philosophy, “Laugh with everybody but don’t laugh at anybody.” I value my philosophy which has indeed determined the vision of my life. I will honour and follow this philosophy throughout my life.

If we look at the purpose of the philosophy of education, it deals with what people should learn and how they should learn, the style of learning (Zirhlioglu & Yayla, 2016) and with the aim of Education. I try to find the answer to the same ‘what, how, and what purpose’ within my philosophy. The philosophy of education is concerned with finding a correct way to educate a person; sometimes, that is done by the philosophy we carry. The progress is then evaluated as to how I have considered myself a wise person for my philosophy and the way I apply my philosophy in my day-to-day life. My philosophy has always become superior knowledge and has always directed me, making me aware of what to do and what not to do. With life philosophy, we need some ideals in our life that would lead us to construct our identity and they become the most remembered ones whenever we gain success in our life.

My Ideal Teacher: A Source of Inspiration in My Life

Life is a struggle. As a normal human being, I have faced different ups and downs in my life. It is funny to hear, but some moments turn away the regular pattern of life. It is not easy to accept reality, and it is not always counted as it should be. It was difficult to remember when I sat down to remember the special moment of my life that brought me up to the learning stage. I know that it has t been difficult not

because the event is absent there, but it has been difficult as the event was not counted. I did not value it. I broke into tears while I took the memory of the event. Even in my tears, I was finding the love of my teacher.

It is often found that teachers inspire people. My teacher inspired me too, but the state of affairs is different. It is not that I was impressed by her teaching style but I was very much touched by how she used to be distinctive and show me the correct way. She was unique and used to inspire others to be unique in terms of achieving success and making a difference (Breakwell, 2021). It was very tiring for me to concentrate in the class and grasp everything the teachers explained. I have to be honest that I was a daydreamer from my childhood. I used to imagine different pictures. Sometimes, it was about my family; sometimes, it would be about me. That means I was easily distracted in my class though teachers used to find me as a very attentive child. It is obvious because I never became restless physically. Instead, my mind would quickly fly away with the imagination. There was nobody to find my problem except teacher Marian, my science teacher.

It was when I was in grade nine. This particular era of my life became the learning point from where I learned the meaning of life. I studied in a well-known school in the Lalitpur district. We had an English environment in the school, so the base for my second language learning became strong. We had One-Act Play as the upcoming program. We had four teams in our school, namely Mars, Earth, Jupiter and Saturn, and I was on the Saturn team. As I was active in co-curricular activities, I often would win contests. For one-act play, the coordinator for Saturn Team was teacher Marian. I was happy thinking that I could get lots of support from her. I was more than glad to find that I was selected as the play's main character. We were learning to act on the play 'The Apollo of Bellac.' I had to perform the role of 'Agnes,'

the main character. Other role performers and I worked hard to memorize the dialogue and act it out as real.

I learned how to immerse myself in role play. As a daydreamer in nature, it was easy for me to act flawlessly. There was the performance on the one hand, and on the other hand, my economic pressure was there. I had to buy an elegant dress to play the role of Agnes. I was suffocating from my thinking about how to buy the cloth and the shoes. I could not tell my father as I did not want to add more trouble to him. He was the one who always sacrificed his happiness for my study. I further did not want to trouble him. This might be because God gave me a wise mind from the beginning. I talked with teacher Marian about my problem. At once, she held my hands and said, “You don’t need to worry about it. I will manage it for you.” Her touch was like healing for me, which took me out of tension to buy a dress and shoes.

My problem got solved. I tried to connect this with the ‘*dīkṣā*’ concept. I found teacher Marian using *Sparshadīkṣā* to make me understand that she was there to solve my problem because she was my teacher. I was pleased. My team and I only intended to win against other teams. We laboured hard for that. I cannot deny that other teams were doing their best to perform better. That's why I had fear somewhere inside my heart. But with the continuous encouragement of our teacher, we had built the spirit in our hearts that would not let us feel low.

The time was there in front of us to perform the one-act play. One after another, all four teams performed the play. I was in the hope of getting a good position. We all wait to hear the result from the panel of judges who were invited from well-known schools. My heart was beating. The result was announced, and I was shattered to find out that my team got the last position. I could not see anything around. My eyes were full of tears. I cried a lot. After a few minutes, the

announcement was made for 'the best actor and best actress award.' My name was there for 'the best actress award'. To my surprise, all my team members were there to lift me to the stage to take the award. I was not happy because my team got the last position, but my team members were happy as I won the best actress award, which counted as pride for everybody. At that very moment, I realized what teamwork was and that teamwork has strength. That was a huge lesson in my life.

More than that, my teacher came to me and spoke one sentence which is still twirling in my mind as the wave moving restlessly in the sea. Her sentence passed through my ears in the form of a whisper which said, "Be happy with what you have while working for what you want." That very sentence calmed me down. The conviction became a lifelong moral for me. Even today, I remember that sentence whenever I have a failure in my life. That one-act play became a learning event for me. I learned that we gain knowledge even from failure and should be happy with what we have while working for what we want. Giving such a great lesson in my life, she always remained the motivator for me. Today, I am an independent person who seeks success, no matter whether failure comes. I can at least learn something from that. By the utterance of her simple words, she made me an optimistic person. At present, I encourage my students with the same words. I run the 'Speakers' Club' among the students of classes 9 and 10, which has helped improve their English language fluency and confidence to give a speech in English. They go in front and speak on the given topic as featured speakers and impromptu speakers. The winners are always happy but the ones who do not win, get sad, and I use my magic sentence, "Be happy with what you have while working for what you want." This makes my students cope with the situation. As my treasured motivator, I salute my respected

teacher, my source of inspiration, and my ideal teacher. I always remember her while I use her words to motivate my students.

My Ideal Book: An Inspiration from a Teacher Character Who Teaches Life

I was in search of wisdom to mould myself as a wise teacher. While doing my Master of Education (M. Ed) at the University, I shared my longing with one of the professors. He quickly advised me to read Divaswapna by Gijubhai. I read the book without any tedious feeling. The story itself is a good picture of a whole school, and a yearlong scene is presented, which sounds natural, and along with the narrator's explanation, readers feel like they are there in the school to see everything. As the words used are simple, it is easy to grasp the idea. More than that, the story is mainly in a dialectical form, reducing boredom while reading. The story is prompt toward progress as day by day, and the teacher sees improvement in his students' life. It moves from the wilderness state of behaviour in students to the sensible product of the school. The teacher's hard effort was to give actual teaching to the students, lifelong and practical teaching for them in their everyday life. The story has shown that learning practically is about having fun and coming out of hypocritical rules and regulations.

Learning is in the freedom that is proved by the students of Grade four in this story. It was very strange to other teachers and Education officers when Mr. Laxmiram, the new teacher, brought about different trends in his class (Badheka, 1990). Even though the students were wild and could not cope on the first day, they gradually built intimacy with their teacher. This helped Mr. Laxmiram to apply many fruitful methods of teaching. With fun, he used to make his class engage in learning. Accepting all the criticisms from his colleague teachers, the head teacher and even the Education officer, he kept on struggling in such a tough environment. He never

thought of quitting his job, nor did he take those sharp things spoken towards him as obstacles. He seems very optimistic as he counts his students' progress. The story 'Diva Swapna' has proved to the teachers that they can bring a drastic change in the education field if they want. How the narrator describes the implementation of different methods for different subjects requires only a simple thing: the enthusiasm to make children learn. There was not the use of expensive materials but how simply different concepts were given by creating a time that was full of fun. It is possible in the story because it is a story, but this must have happened in actual practice.

Otherwise, Gijubhai could not portray everything so clearly and precisely about what the imaginary character Laxmiram did in the classroom. This story is a picture of a model class because anybody can read a part of the story where the narrator explains how he conducted the class to teach a particular topic. Teachers can apply the same thing in their classes.

The story starts with the teacher's effort to bring change in behaviour towards cleanliness. Slowly, storytelling becomes the medium to teach and goes towards a play method in teaching-learning. Then it turned into a discussion. After that, model reading, dictation, listening to the poem recitation, prayer, personal hygiene, etc. were involved in a discussion by the teacher which helped him build rapport. Later he entered subjects where he excitingly taught grammar. Geography was introduced, making students forward in the use of maps, globes, encyclopedias, attending trips, watching films of Madras, and conducting Map journeys where they pretended that they had a journey and that they needed to find the place using a map. The story is not just a story but a whole chunk of ideas that can be applied in 21st-century classrooms.

As a reader, I can find many positive aspects in this write-up. In the first part of the story, the idea is given that we should not give up if we fail in the first attempt.

As the teacher made another plan for the next day though he couldn't successfully take his plan on the first day, there is a positive input for the readers to gain. There is another part in the story where the teacher gives individual attention to his students' reading habits, cleanliness and maintenance of behaviour and looks at the progress level, keeping notes of their progress every week. This is what teachers can take to expect positive changes in their classrooms.

The use of humour has added flavour to the story. The teacher says, "I had a voice that would allure a donkey!" when he had to recite poems for his students. This kind of humour refreshes readers' minds while reading. When we move on to talk about good aspects of the story, we cannot deny the reality depicted by the narrator when he was there to look at the textbooks of history. He said that the famous book was interesting for adults but was difficult for students. Indeed, we teachers never realize if the particular textbook is of our students' level or not. We teach it as we are instructed to teach, but we seldom think of little children, whether they are interested in reading those prescribed textbooks or not.

The use of irony has made the write-up more sensible. The picture has been portrayed to bring the reality of our old practice, making children the items of entertainment. The forceful recitation of the poem with the pretending action though they are unaware of the meaning, just to impress the commissioner, is very ironic. It is not only the force but also an imposition of unwanted authority on innocent children, which is clearly shown in the story. There is one point where there is another essential idea being imparted to the teachers when the Education officer found that his class was going well with great fun. At that point, he says that everything is ok, but the way he is making children involved in learning is a bit time taking. The teacher's reply is: "Playing a game is interesting. Isn't it better to spend a little more time for fruitful

results rather than try to cut on time and then have bad results, which would ultimately mean a waste of the entire time spent?”

Diva Swapna has portrayed the quality of the writer as a teacher. The story is a successful write-up as it has become able to light up the spark of changes in the field of Education. Subject-wise, teaching in a student-friendly environment has shaken the teachers' self-awareness about how far they can handle their responsibility. As an intense reader, I must say that Gijubhai's 'Diva Swapna' is a book that must be read by teachers at least once so that they can evaluate themselves as a teacher. I am determined to persuade the teachers of any part of the world to read this book to motivate themselves, develop themselves as a teacher of that quality and move on their steps to create a learning environment for children because this is the voice of students which are wandering around us. Mr. Laxmiram is the ideal teacher for me though he exists only in the book as the story's character. Sometimes, we hear the words while reading books, and those words inspire us. I got inspired by Mr. Laxmiram and tried to become a teacher like him.

I have tried to be a teacher like him in my English class. Asking students to improve their vocabulary is not easy. I tried giving them word meanings and asking them to by-heart all those words, but it did not work. I thought to do something different as how Laxmiram would think for his class. I developed a vocabulary booklet where the first page on the left-hand side includes a list of ten words starting with 'A.' Then on the right-hand side, there are some blanks where students are asked to write their own vocabulary starting with 'A', and it goes on with the same pattern for the words beginning with other alphabets. This has given a tremendous result in terms of improving students' vocabulary skills. Mr. Laxmiram often makes me a jerk

and pushes me to think of new ideas to teach children with fun. That is why he is my ideal.

Jaisvi's Ideals: The Source of Inspiration to Her

Jaisvi was quiet, maybe because she was not allowed to go out of the house. As her grandfather was strict, they never talked with other people. She was taught to be decent as a girl, and she followed him. She did not have to go out. Also, they had lots of helpers at home. As her grandfather was the landlord, people used to come to him and ask to keep their children to help him. They had people from Sikkim too; they were Jaisvi's grandmothers' relatives who would come to their house and help. In school, Jaisvi was with the nuns, and as per Jaisvi,

Nuns are very strict. We could not even talk to the boys. They would take it in the wrong way. We would be bad girls if we did so. We did not have any male teachers. We had only old lady teachers who were Anglo-Indians. Only nuns used to teach us. So, we used to go to school and come back home. Maybe due to the brought up in that type of environment, I was quiet. Though they were strict, I used to like that strictness. I learned so many things from them. They are my ideals like my grandfather.

If nuns only looked at her, she would understand what they meant to say. As *Drukḍīkṣā* is the *bhavawastha* created in *śiṣya* when the *guru* looks at *śiṣya*, Jaisvi used to have the same feelings when she was in front of nuns. She developed that character in her and her students, who find her as their best teacher, which they often express to her.

Jaisvi had such brought up in school with nuns as teachers that she would respect them a lot. She said *I would understand life looking at the nuns*. She would get *Darshandikṣya* which would create *bhavawastha*, and she would appreciate life out of

the gaze she would give to them. She found her character different from that of her sister. She expressed; *However, my elder sister was very talkative. She was relaxed, used to say bye-bye to everyone when going from school, coming back home with laughter even if she had failed the exam, and I wondered how she did her homework by continuing her talk with our cousins. I think I was the irritating 'quiet type'.*

When I ask my elder sister if I was irritating in my childhood, she says, yes, you were!! Jaisvi took the shortcut from the school to go to her home and her elder sister used to go a long way, the boys' school way to go home. She used to tell her parents, thinking that she had accomplished a big thing by saying that. Her sister used to get scolded by her parents and she used to be very angry with Jaisvi. Jaisvi used to have tension, headache, toothache, bleeding, and all during an exam. She said *I had to pass. I needed to do well.... I just thought about that while my sister was too cool in that matter, and maybe I took it in a way that I missed the quality that was in her. Now, I feel, "Oh my God, why did I become so mean???"* My parents trusted me too much since I was that Goody type, giving my sisters' reports. Her mother used to check all her sister's books and things but not hers because they knew that she did not have anything with her. She was different from other sisters since she wanted perfectness, being good, and behaving wise, which are the etiquettes she learned from nuns and her grandfather. Jaisvi even gives lessons to her students to learn the etiquette from their parents, grandparents and teachers. Jaisvi's ideals led her identity as how teacher *Marian* and *Laxmiram* of *Diva Swapna* became my ideals.

The narratives I brought in the chapter entails that the ideals have a huge role in constructing our identities due to their distinctiveness, which is the universal process of constructing an individual's identity (Jaspal & Breakwell, 2014). If there is any uniqueness in the person that attracts others in terms of that person's distinct

behaviour that could change others' life or may add a brick to construct others' identities. The narratives entail the aspect of transformative learning theory that it can transform lives through education (Luitel & Wagle, 2017) and the medium for that education could be the ideals as discussed in the chapter.

Chapter Essence

This chapter is about the ideals that lead our life. It is about being distinctive with the ability to inspire others. The chapter has discussed the ideals of my and my participants' lives who inspired us at some point in our lives. That added to our identity construction. For some people, ideals might be a person. For some, they might even be imaginary characters such as fictional characters. This chapter is the depiction of the distinctive characteristics of those inspirers who could have an impact on their life. As the identity process theory constitutes 'distinctiveness' as one of the processes for identity construction, this chapter has brought the stories of such distinctive people. Also, the chapter covers my participants' distinct characteristics, which has shown that being unique or distinct is the universal process in our identity construction.

CHAPTER VII

CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY OF NEW BORN: THREATENED IDENTITY
VERSUS BELONGINGNESS

A newly born Christian is someone who has faith in Jesus Christ and who has been baptized to have faith in Christ as a newly born, getting new life (New International Version (NIV), 1984, Romans 6: 4). Being born again of water and the spirit is directly related to baptism, which means being renewed to repentance and communion with Jesus and the Holy Spirit (Fletcher, 1998). Being born again is also the symbol of the transition from traditional to modern thought. A redefined people in Israel, from circumcision to the people of God's kingdom, is what a newborn means, bringing along a new identity with new rights and responsibilities (Groenewald, 2003). When a person is a newborn Christian, he/she has a huge responsibility as a newborn that guides his/her character and how they represent themselves in society. Their newly born character is associated with their religious belief. It is believed that unless one is born again, one cannot see God's kingdom. Being shifted in religion from Hinduism to Christianity, I lived a threatened identity. My participant Jaisvi lived a threatened identity that made her cope with difficult situations, which brought different consequences in her life as an individual (Brygola, 2011), which kept me in a confusion about how to move ahead with the new religion I chose to follow.

To be newly born is not related to religion but life; those who are not newly born are spiritually dead and need new life full of spirit (Piper, 2009). In the bible, Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again" (NIV, 1984, John 3:3). Nicodemus replied: "How can a man be born when he

is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" (v. 4). Then Jesus responded, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (v. 5). This shows the meaning of being born again and the importance of being born again. Here Jesus meant regeneration which is not the physical rebirth but the spiritual rebirth, which is the real rebirth in spirit and is a birth of another kind (Sproul, 2010). This birth of another kind swirls our minds to have a different mindset than it used to be. It makes us feel reborn by the spirit, which lifts us in spirit.

My Spirit is who I am in Real

I am who I am. This reminds me of God's purpose in my life, which started from my creation in my mother's womb. Among these many people, God chose me to be born into a family that could support me for good education. I believe God had a plan and purpose in my life from the beginning, which is why my life got shaped so that I met him at one point in my life. It was a time of winter when all schools in Nepal had given winter vacation. My brothers and I were playing '*Dori*' (a string that is moved and passed through a gap made with a jump). Suddenly, a man came near to us and asked about our parents. As my mother had gone to fetch some grasses for the cattle, no one was there at home except my brothers and me. So, I told him that no one was at home except us. The man took out some booklets from his pocket and said that if we read this, we would get new life. I took those booklets. The man went away. My brothers continued the play, but I was touched by the word 'new life.' I started thinking about new life though I did not know what it meant. I took one of the booklets (there were three, I still remember). It was written about God in a way I had never seen before. I was the one who used to read the book of '*Shree Swosthani*' but never got those terms there, which I got in the booklet that I had in my hand. There

was written '*jiwit pameswor*' meaning 'living God', which triggered my mind. I thought if this booklet is about '*jiwit pameswor*,' what is the reality behind the existence of the '*tettis koti devata*' (thirty-three gods and goddesses) that I was worshipping then? Are all the Gods alive then? Or are they all dead, and we only keep them alive in our minds? What is the reality of a living god? Does that make a difference in who I am, or will I be? I had lots of questions in my mind. I could see my brothers still jumping and enjoying their play with a string, whereas I was thinking deeply about what was in my hand in the form of a booklet. I was imagining different scenes with living gods with all living people. Suddenly, my brother came and snatched those books and told me that the book would make me mad. He said that he had heard of those books and that it was of a different religion that would swirl our minds and make us crazy about it. I was scared. I threw that book away.

When my mother was back, I told all that story to her, and she said that none of the religions is bad. She said we never become mad by reading something associated with religion because they all are meant to make people wise. I found my mother's saying inspiring to see those booklets and reread them, but I was scared of what my brother said. I thought not to go to search for the booklets again. When I think of that moment, I feel like God had a plan to make me choose him from the beginning of my life. I realized that I am who I am today as I had the spirit of seeking for living God from the beginning. I don't know if this happens to all or not, but I used to question, *Does God listen to me?* Maybe that led me to long for God and made me live in the spirit of who I am from the inside. Our spirit is who we are from inside.

I am Still I but New

When we are newborn Christians, we are still ourselves but new. This newness is in our thought and our spirit. When we are newly born, we can discern so many things that we had never been able to do before, as it is about spirit more than body and soul. The Christian philosophy of body, soul, body and spirit is not understandable unless one is deeply immersed in finding out their meaning. More than that, the discourse on the spirit is incredible. Amazingly, our spirit is the home of the Holy Spirit, which comes and dwells inside of us and happens at the moment when we become reborn Christians. Our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. NIV (1984), 1 Corinthians 6:19 mentioned, "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own. Discerning the body, soul and spirit is a huge thing, and we need to walk the pathways shown by the spirit. Spirit must guide our body and soul to act according to God's will. This means the spirit must guide our will, intellect and desires. Spirit cannot be felt naturally. To feel the spirit is about us being supernatural. In John 3: 6-8, it is written, "Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. We should not be surprised at the saying, 'We must be born again.' The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So, it is with everyone born of the Spirit." So, feeling the spirit is your deep insight, and it cannot be felt physically. Spirit helps us to communicate with God. Through spirit, God communicates with us. James 2: 26 says as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead. We start living for the first time when God opens up our eyes. With the help of spirit, God Almighty speaks to us. Then, spirit leads our soul and body in that faith.

Every morning, we look in the mirror to ensure that our body's physical state is fine and good-looking. We even give a short glance if we find a mirror anywhere in the daytime. James 1: 23-25 says that human beings look at the mirror and see their face and forget their look immediately after they go from there and this can be compared to those who listen to the word of God but do not follow that in their life. Being new in Christ, I can sense that newness in me, which leads me to go ahead with faith and believe in Him in whatever I do.

In Christ: Discovering Who I am

Wondering who I am, made me search for my identity repeatedly and from different perspectives. Being a girl born in a Hindu family, I was socialized with the Hindu culture and realized the presence of *Tettis Koti Devata* whenever I conducted puja (worshipping of Gods). My identity then was a Hindu girl who would worship idols, whether that was *tulsi* of my *aagan* or the *peepal* near my home or even the stone. That identity was like a permanent stamp, leaving an everlasting tint on me. That may be because I developed a habit of waking up in the morning dawn with the musical sound of the bell that my mother would create while doing *aarati*. I would shower and participate in the *Puja* with my mother. My mother used to offer *naibedya* to God and I would wait for getting it as *prasad* after *Puja*. After all, I was a little girl who loved to eat sweets and fruits that I was assured of getting after *Puja*. I grew up worshipping god with *agarbatti*, *abir*, *kesari*, *pushpa*, and *jal*, which would give me the satisfaction of the Godly world.

When I gave my life to Christ, it was different how I perceived the Godly world and worship God now. The difference is not only in how I worship God but also in how I see my identity in terms of changing the way of living and thinking. Christians do not worship idols, but they adore the living Jesus Christ. Following

Jesus Christ, I have now changed my way of living. Now, I have a prayer life that is not limited to me but even to others. I pray for myself, and I pray for people's prayer requests. I am now learning to live for others with a corporate culture of fellowship to pray for one another. Apart from learning many life lessons such as loving neighbours, respecting elders, loving our life partners and meeting somebody and praying, my identity is shifted from a Hindu girl to a Christian lady, which obstructed my life in the beginning phase of being a Christian. Some of my relatives do not even talk to me because I am a Christian. I feel difficult during some festivals like Dashain and Tihar, which would make me feel detached from my family. However, I feel blessed to be in Christianity, for I now focus on one God and take it in a way that He listens to my prayer. About the shift that came, it is with my everyday activities from morning to evening, even in how I speak to people. The word choice while talking to people of the Christian and Hindu faith is different.

I habitually greeted people with 'Jaimashiha' rather than 'Namaste.' I established a culture of fellowship rather than a family gathering. I developed a habit of listening to the preaching by the pastor, which injects wisdom in me, which I would compare to *Sabdadīkṣā*, which would give me knowledge through words of knowledge initiation (Swami, 2017). So, the way I project myself in front of people also changed. I started making myself humble, adopting the Christian culture of simple living, mainly in wearing and get up. I got changed. In fact, I got transformed in my way of thinking and living. That's my involvement of critical reflection with the assumptions that arise at the individual level (Mezirow, 2003). Eventually, I adapted to this culture in such a way that I got different in my lifestyle. That was not easy in the beginning, but now, it has become my usual practice. However, there are some aspects of preaching that I adhere to. Being human, we mold situations in the

way we want them. We often say, “It is my destiny” but it is not the destiny but us who do not want to change the situation (Sadguru, 2016). In Christianity, everything in our life is believed to be planned by Jesus but I am a critical towards this aspect. I believe in what Sadguru said that we are the master to our destiny and to make our destiny full of pleasure, we have to be able to handle the responsibility. When human becomes responsible, they know their duty too and that makes them a human in a whole. Though being Christian, I see the events critically and the behave accordingly.

Life of Faith

Once I was baptized in water, I got a new life. I accepted myself as a newly born Christian. I started living my life in a new way since I learned from the bible that the old has gone. My born-again life taught me to walk in faith like what Jesus did. As Jesus (son of God) did miracles in his life just because he had faith in his father (God), I, too, started living in faith. With the same faith, I started praying for a better life. I did not want to work hard for the morning and evening meals. I knew the importance of struggle but wanted to do the right thing at the right time. Having strong faith that my life would be better one day and that I do not have to live squirmed life where I must depend upon others, I kept praying and working. With my faith in God, I could see improvement in my life. I got rid of the evergreen problem of sin in me. I got a better job and started hoping for well-established life.

One of the life stories that taught me to live in faith is about my and my husband’s study abroad. I thought I must see the world outside Nepal to see how people live there. I applied for a bible study course in the United Kingdom, the diploma course. I had no financial support to go for it. I searched more about the college and found that they provide scholarships for certain students from developing countries like Nepal. I talked with my husband. We both prayed about it and decided

that we should apply for this course. With faith, we both applied for it as a couple. We had no idea how the college would take us. Both of us wanted to do the course because we wanted to know more about the bible, and also, we wanted to be together wherever we went. We kept on praying for both of our scholarships. After about ten days, we got an email saying we both got a scholarship to study abroad. That was the moment I felt the presence of God. That was when I believed that God listened to our prayer. I shouted, hopped, danced, and cried. I could feel happy all over. We checked time and again if we read the email correctly or not. That was an overwhelming moment provided by God, opening the doors of success for us.

Another hurdle was the visa process. There was a financial problem as we had to manage a lot of money for the process. We took a loan from our relatives, and we both tried for the student visa since we both applied as students in the college. We applied for a visa. They explained that the process would take a minimum of nine days. So, they asked us to come after nine days. Every day, we would wake up and pray for our visas. On the fifth day, after the usual prayer, we ate and went to the cyber cafe to check our emails. We noticed that we had an email regarding the arrival of our documents. That was just the fifth day, and the email said our document was already back. We thought we did not get the visa because they had mentioned that the process would take a minimum of nine days. With lots of fear in our minds and hope that comes out of faith, somewhere in our hearts, we went to collect the documents. God proved that He was with us. We got a visa. I was not able to express my happiness. I just remembered that I could not move from the chair since my body was trembling. I took it as a blessing from God. Thanking God again, we returned with good news for our family. From that time on, we never had to look back. All doors were opened for us; doors of friendship, doors of mentorship, and doors of fellowship.

God is continuously blessing us on what we are doing, and we are being strong in our faith day by day.

‘Keeping faith in God’ applied to my academic endeavour too. With the blessing of God, I could pursue my academic degrees, which I had almost dropped after my Bachelor's degree. As I got to study in the UK, I gained that confidence to study again and gave continuity to it when I returned from there. I am now recalling all those moments, creating a reflective piece of writing to prioritize some inevitable moments of my life that are attached to the stories of faith. As an English teacher, I stood in faith and gave effort from my side too, which gave me the achievement I have gained today. Whether in my examination or my performance, I always prayed about it and gave a hundred percent from my side, which did not let me fail. My belief in God is my strength, which applies to every aspect of my life, from personal to professional and from individual to spiritual. I could trust in God and see His goodness, but when I came to Jaisvi's experience of facing darkness in her life, I asked myself if God always gives His hands while we are in need. It is because Jaisvi had faith in God and she prayed a lot about her worse life after her mother's death but had to go through many trials. I believe God also wants us to learn how to survive in difficult situations.

Darkness All of a Sudden

Jaisvi sat down on the chair and closed her eyes. I just waited for her response. She opened her eyes and said that she recalled her past life. She said, I never thought of all those events before but now, I don't want to forget and miss out on anything because I want to tell you *all what happened in my life*. She took her cell phone out, kept it silent, and told me *it might disturb me when I am in flow*. She then started talking about the events. When Jaisvi had her part one exam, her mother was very

serious. She had come to Jaisvi as the trend was that parents needed to reach their children on holiday, and she was complaining that she had a stomach ache. She was visiting her Gyno. She used to take medicines and kept saying she had a stomach ache, but nobody ever bothered. At that time, too, she was saying that she had stomach pain. At home, she was telling Jaisvi that she could not go. Jaisvi said with tears in her eyes;

I could see how serious she was. I was furious because I needed someone over there, and I could not tell the nuns. I was a timid type of girl. I did not understand what to do I dragged her and said, 'I don't know, anyhow, you need to go.' Then she took a bus to Siliguri though there was a problem related to the ticket as that was the last moment and my mother could not travel alone as she was of the timid type too and was bleeding.

People told Jaisvi how badly she was bleeding. She knew that she had cancer. When she reached Kalimpong, she was drenched in blood.

Jaisvi's father was working in Bhutan in the transport department, and later on, he came home and left the job and stayed at home only. Her grandfather used to say that her father was very naughty. He finished his class 10 only. He used to go to the teachers' house taking something and used to plead to make him pass the exam. After finishing class ten, he was at home only. He needed to be at home because he had to look after all the property and land when our grandfather passed away. He cultivated a bad habit that he started drinking. He was very kind and helpful to people, though. He used to help the villagers if there was any marriage ceremony. He would give our flower vase to the one who had asked for it. Jaisvi elaborated, *once, my father took the whole pot of cooked rice and gave it to the hungry people, and we shouted at him, thinking that he did it in a drunken state. He used to say, paalo ko*

paincho. Everything you give will be returned. They will also help us one day. I used to be angry at him because when he took the cooked rice for others, my mother had to cook it again.

Jaisvi's mother was already serious about over bleeding when she was admitted to the hospital. Her youngest aunt went around looking for blood, and they told her later. Then, they sent for a biopsy. Two two-three weeks after the biopsy, it was found that her cancer was in an advanced stage. Jaisvi took the tissue out and wiped her eyes and continued. She was called, saying that she was serious. She did not know what had happened. Her mother was taken home already when she reached home. Her stomach was puffed up. Jaisvi added, *I remembered her saying she had a dull pain every time. She was a teacher too and used to do everything, saying she had a dull ache. We thought it was not severe.*

All of a sudden, she was at the last stage. We did not think that she would die. She took a sip of cold tea and did not speak at all. After a while, she said, *it's hard to think of all those moments.* Then she said that she stayed at home for a month and so. Then, later on, she got a call from the hostel. They asked her for the payment and also asked if she was going back to the hostel or not. By that time, her father had already broken down. He used to drink the whole day, morning to evening. Her sister was also working. Her two younger sisters were at the hostel, and two younger brothers were at home. The youngest one was tiny. He was just three and a half. Her father was drinking and drinking. From then, Jaisvi had no exam, no college... She needed somebody to pay for her hostel, but her father was drinking day and night, and there was nobody to look after her younger sisters and brothers. To look after them, she did not go to college after that. She had to look after the house. She had to send her younger sisters to school. The smallest one did not go to school for the whole year.

Suddenly, a huge responsibility came to Jaisvi, along with the darkness that came to her life with her mother's death.

Gorkhaland Movement, a Terrible *Aandolan*

It was the Gorkhaland movement that took place to separate Kalimpong's people from West Bengal. Jaisvi considers it a genuine movement because the Darjeeling district was under West Bengal. Only the Bengalis would get the opportunities to get a good job. You could not complete any paperwork without Bengalis. Only the Bengalis would sit for competitive exams. There was no development in the hills and no opportunities for people from there. Jaisvi said,

The movement had just started taking a good tempo. There was forty days strike. As we were in the village, we took it as simple because we had our own rice, lentils and vegetables that we grew in our field. Still, we could see townspeople moving down the hill to the Sikkim border though it took an hour to reach there but crossing the bridge, and they could go to the market and buy rice, lentils, oil and all. People faced a tough time during the strike. As the responsibility came suddenly, I did not know what to cook in the kitchen or how to cook. I never learned to cook while mom was there. So, making food and looking after my brothers and sisters was very difficult.

The main person in the movement from Kalimpong was from Jaisvi's village. Every time, he used to get a list of what to cook. They used to keep meeting at her home, and if people could not attend the meeting, they would cut off the power and even water at their home. So, everybody would make sure that they participated in the discussion. Jaisvi said there used to be different meetings for youth, women, *and so on*. *Sometimes my father would say, mai petticoat lagaayera jaaun ki k ho...* (My Translation: *I shall go with a petticoat and attend the women's meeting.*) *The*

government had spies, and they knew where the leader was. They used to go to the village, push the door and throw everything here and there. They used to find boys at home, either deaf or dome and used to take them. They used to find the boys walking around and used to arrest them. The situation was worse. After my mother's death, I was at home, not going to college. I wanted to get admitted to the college in Kalimpong, but it was so difficult. Then I got hold of my cousin brother. He was also a very active member because his maternal uncle's relative was a prominent leader. So, through him, I got admission to the college. Maybe they were scared of the leader of the Gorkha movement and an active group member (my cousin). Though they told that Jaisvi needed to study from the beginning, she got admitted in the second year. As it was a government college, it was not like St. Xavier's, but she still completed her second year there.

The Worst Effect of the Movement

*As the movement was going on, Jaisvi's cousin and everyone involved. Her cousins started staying in her house because Sherpe burned all the houses. If the Sherpe did not burn, even the parties would burn the houses. Jaisvi, with her terrified face, expressed, *If you are from a different party and you do not follow what they say, they would burn your house. It was just like what Maobadi did in Nepal. They would punish people of people did not listen to them. The police forces would come day and night for Redding. We did not sleep many nights because we would not know who would come to our house and when... Sometimes they would come in the middle of the night and sometimes in the early morning. If they got any information about the leaders around the place, they would go immediately and take anyone deaf and dome; the punishment was terrible. I have seen it with my own eyes. They would be hung upside down and beaten so severely. They would be shouting and screaming inside.**

One day, Jaisvi's father went to one of the tenant's houses and found these police seeking for the people on the way. So, he climbed the tree. On the tree, he could not even cough though he was desperate because the army force was down the tree holding those big guns in their arms. He was unconscious when coming back from there. So, he went to Jaisvi's aunt's house in Calcutta for three-four months. Jaisvi was alone at home with her three younger brothers because due to the Redding day and night, she sent the helper to her home as she was a girl. She, too, used to get scared. She used to pray and pray every time. She did not want anyone to come in the middle of the night and do something to her. So, only the thing she could do was pray. Jaisvi says,

One early morning, around 3 O'clock, they started burning all the empty houses. We were so terrified. My father called all of them to our house to stay. They stayed with us for some time, and later they built a house and settled there. However, my cousin (the one who was active in that movement) did not leave our home. He became the convener. He became the MLA in Kalimpong. Then he started ruling us. His henchmen would come. Whenever people came and went, we were confused whether that was our home or his. I had to go to school, but I had to make tea for people who would come. Again, when I was about to go, he would ask me to do something. So, that was disturbing. Later, we were totally under his control.

Gradually, Jaisvi and her brother-sisters were not allowed to do anything independently. They had a very awful life. If they had to go anywhere, they had to go with him. People would see them as being protected by him and that they were supporting his party. But Jaisvi had seen him doing terrible things to other people too. In Kalimpong, there were two parties. One of him and the other of a different person.

They were the Gorkhaland party but with different leader types. If any person goes to one leader, the other would catch him and beat him so badly that people never know if the person would come back or not. They would take the person in the jungle and hang him. That type of brutal punishment was given. People would do anything for these leaders if they brainwashed them and provided them with alcohol to drink. That went on and on, and no one could do anything.

A Teacher under the Cruelty

Jaisvi's father asked her cousin to go to his house, for which her father was beaten black and blue. Then he started beating Jaisvi and her brothers and sisters too. He was so cruel. Jaisvi said,

I was a teacher, and from the outside, everything was normal, but from inside, I was beaten badly. If I came from anywhere, he used to throw everything that I brought. He even used to break the cupboards. There was nothing in a good state in my home. We used to get terrified that we could not say anything to him. My brothers were so terrified. I feel bad for them that they grew up in such an environment. Then, later on, when my father died, he took all our land papers. We knew it later because we did not know what he had done and had not done. We only knew that we were under the gun, and he would fire it in the air without any reason.

Jaisvi's cousin started being very possessive. He did not let them do anything. Her sister went to Delhi and did not return at all. Then, Jaisvi was alone and was strictly bound to his rules. She would go to teach and come back. If she wanted to go anywhere, she had to ask him. In the midst of this, she met one fellow. Jaisvi and the fellow used to talk on the way to school. When he knew that, he beat Jaisvi and the fellow. He fired his guns all over. Jaisvi told me *I even checked if my head was there*

or not. It was terrible. It was just like what we watch in movies. He took all the vehicles that belonged to Jaisvi's father. People would see Jaisvi travelling with him in the car and think she was living a happy life.

One day, Jaisvi's cousin crossed his limit and tried to molest her. Because of that, she did not have anything in her mind. She just came out of the house, taking some papers and a tiffin box in her hands. At that time, she was having exams in school. She collected her things from school and told the driver that she would not be returning home in the evening. She found one taxi in the school car park. Then, she took a taxi and went to her sister in Gangtok, who was already married and settled there. That night, her cousin came to Gangtok, but she was not in that house. Her sister set her in one teacher's house because she knew he would go there. It was awkward to stay in someone else's house, but Jaisvi stayed there. In the morning, she went to Siliguri, hiding under the van seat. Her brother-in-law sent her on the flight to Calcutta. In Calcutta, she had her sister, but they were scared to keep her with them. Then her *jwain* (brother-in-law) told her that his aunt's house was being built. She stayed in the house for two days because it was huge, empty and under construction and he would not come to that house searching for her. Then, her brother-in-law gave her some money as she did not have any and came to Kathmandu. Jaisvi said,

I remember coming to Kathmandu with my father once when I was small, and there were trees all around Kumaripati and Jawalakhel. This time, I looked around and found no one to whom I could go and talk. I roamed around Damkal chowk but could not see anyone. I called my brother-in-law and said I could not meet anyone. He suggested I take a taxi, take a flight, and return to Calcutta. Then I found a taxi and asked the taxi driver to go to Calcutta. At that very moment, I saw my aunt. I was like a mad woman. I

shouted because I recognized her though she did not recognize me. She did not know that I would be coming there. She just stared at me; maybe she wondered why I was so excited to meet her.

She explained how she was lost and could not find anyone there. She stayed there for some time. After one week, they came, searching for her even there, at her aunt's house. He went around searching for Jaisvi, but she hid. Her aunt said she did not know anyone and nobody had come. So he went. Jaisvi felt like she was safe then. She did not know who she was and had such a threatened identity (Breakwell, 1986) that she knew she was a guardian for her brothers and sisters but again, she was someone with an identity of threat. She did not know what would happen to her and she did not know who she was. She was a responsible sister (guardian) to her siblings but left that identity behind just to save her life. She was a teacher but left all her identity there and came to Kathmandu with a lost identity, for she was to hide every time. Living life under threat made her confused about her identity, but it somehow gave her the strength to tackle the situation and move ahead to give continuity to her identity as an English teacher. The encounter with her aunt and her help was the 'Belongingness' which is also the universal process of constructing the identity (Vignoles, 2011). That belongingness was associated with the feeling of being 'safe and created the emotional attachment to the feeling of 'being at home (Yuval-Davis, 2006). That tiny help from her aunt became a huge sense of belongingness for Jaisvi, leading to her identity as an English teacher.

In the process of identity construction, there are certain characters in our life to whom we compare our life and see it, being inspired by them. I have compared my life to that of Mary Magdalene, a character from the bible, to see her life of struggle.

As she had lived her life with a threatened identity, I found her to bring in the research so that it becomes interesting to see how I have compared my life with hers.

Mary Magdalene, a Biblical Character and My Identity

To seek the legendary Woman carrying a distinct identity, I am immersing into the biblical world of the feminine. For this, I am here bringing the scenario of the creation of the world by God. When we talk about the bible, it is famous for its life-changing stories. Biblical stories are popular as they are moral-giving stories. Bible, chapter 1, is about the book of Genesis and is related to the world's creation. Along with the world's creation, I can see my creation; to relate this, the story of God's creation becomes relevant. Here it talks about the creation of day and night, sky and earth, seed-bearing vegetation and animals of their kind, and finally, God created man (Adam) in his image. Later, God realized that man could not live alone, and he made a woman (Eve).

The creation of women in the bible itself is thought-provoking. It says that God created Adam with clay, but the clay would not work for the creation of woman. To make a woman with feminine beauty and emotional connections, God chose to fill up the fresh rib of a man. Bible talks about the importance of women in the world. Being a woman is one thing but becoming the daughter of God is of the next level. Many daughters of God have fulfilled God's calling. Among them, I am relating my life with that of Mary Magdalene, one of the hidden womanly figures of the bible, since I have counted myself as the hidden self.

Mary Magdalene, a Veiled Character: Faith in Otherness

Mary is viewed as a woman from whom Jesus casts out seven demons; subsequently, she was devoted to him. I would introduce some new directions in Magdalene's identity here.

In all the Gospels of the Bible, Gospel writers have discussed Mary Magdalene as she was the one who followed Jesus and supported Him. These Gospels include Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. In Luke, there is a unique detail that Magdalene was liberated from the demon attack. John, the beloved disciple of Jesus, gave Magdalene a special space as that of Jesus' mother. Mary witnessed the burial of Jesus (Mark 15:47; Matthew 27:60-61; Luke 23:50-24:10). Matthew (28:1-10) and John (20:11-18) portray her as the first person who saw the resurrection of Christ. In Matthew and John, we can find her to be committed to talk about the resurrection to other disciples (Matthew 28:10; John 20:17; Mark 16:10). Magdalene is always remembered first when there comes a discourse on female disciples. This signifies the fact that her importance is great.

Magdalene was a veiled character. Though she was famous for her devotion to Jesus, she remained in the shadow. When I view myself as a character, I find it as Magdalene's veiled character. When I completed my School Leaving Certificate (SLC), I chose to study Humanities and took Major English under it. A few months after my college admission, my father told me he had left his job because of some issues. Then, I was saddened because my father was only the source of income in my family. He used to pay me Rs. 20 every morning as transport expenses and paid for all my fees. I thought it was wise not to tell other family members about my father's job. I secretly started teaching in a school which was offered by my English teacher, Nayan sir, who used to teach me Compulsory English in class eleven. Nayan sir became a veiled character to support my family. He asked me to join his school exactly when I needed a job. I started working in a school as an English teacher.

Though I did not know the qualities of becoming an English teacher, I joined the school and started teaching English. That helped me to support my family. My

elder brother, too, started working in one brick factory, where he had to work hard. He was doing Bachelor's in management but still would work in the brick factory. We were compelled to do any work that would come before us. I appreciate my brother's effort in initiating his career with such hard work. I was there to support my brother in running the house. That was a crucial time in our family when we worked hard. My brothers and I faced many hardships during that time. I used to pay for my fees and other expenses, and at the same time, I used to support my family. At that time, I became a veiled character who helped my brother to manage the monthly expenses. Magdalene and I are similar characters in this sense; one a secret follower of Jesus Christ and the other a secret supporter of the family.

Mary Magdalene's Desperate Longing and Her Healing

Jesus' life, death, and resurrection are brought in every discourse in the bible (Ware, 2016). All the Gospels talk about Magdalene as a witness to Jesus's crucifixion and burial. Jesus is the one who healed Magdalene with his miraculous presence. That inspired her to follow Jesus not only when Jesus was there for healing but also when Jesus lay down in his burial. Mary wanted to be close to Jesus because she had faith on him. She took her life as something that existed just for Jesus. She learned to live a life of faith. I think of Magdalene and get inspired of her life of faith. Christians believe that Jesus chose Magdalene to walk out such an extravagant story. However, it is interesting to know what happened in Magdalene's life when she started believing in Jesus.

To proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God, Jesus travelled from one town to another with his twelve disciples. There was Mary Magdalene, the one from whom the demons had come out, and she was a Jewish woman from the fishing town Magdala on the western shore of Galilee (Taylor, 2014). Mark and Luke recorded the

healing she got from Jesus in their Gospel accounts. Mary must have suffered from severe psychological illness. She was shameful and emotional and often in psychological trauma because she was demon-possessed and tortured herself, injured and wounded. She did not have control over her anger and madness. Though she was a beautiful woman from an excellent economic status, she could not escape the evil attack. She got charged of the attack every day. In her injured body, she must have looked unworthy but Jesus could be only the person (God) who could recognize who she was regardless of her disrupted state. I think of Magdalene and find myself in her state sometimes because I don't need demons to attack over my body. My stress and tension become devils in my life. Though it is enough for me to go into a painful state of anxiety and stress, I remember Magdalene's story of how she kept her trust in Jesus and came out of that state. Jesus recognized her and his one command over the demon to leave her body, took her out from that hell and that was when Magdalene knew that she needed to give her life to Jesus. However, she never tried to take credit for being Jesus' devotee. She just kept on worshipping her lord. Sometimes, I, too, become a quiet worshipper of Jesus and feel safe. My silent attempt to becoming his worshipper being available in His kingdom gives me comfort and that comfort is not in the worldly presence of humans but in the presence of God. Faith keeps us steady in what we are doing and what we are will to become.

Myself and Magdalene

Just like Mary Magdalene, I kept many stories of my life hidden. Magdalene was not worthy of being praised before, but in her later life, when the love of God changed her, she was changed. She came out of her devil-haunted life and spent it praising Jesus. When I realized that I was not a commendable teacher earlier, I kept effort in my later life and tried to become a professional teacher with a different

personality. Mary Magdalene lived her life full of devil attacks and I lived a poorly constructed identity as a teacher where I was not equipped well and did not have the quality of a good teacher. Magdalene was unaware of her demon-possessed life and I was unaware that I was a teacher just by name who had no longing for being a better teacher. When Magdalene knew about Jesus, she gave her life to her. I believe that Magdalene was somewhere in a situation where she felt the stress of demon-possessed life and that she was seeking something that would change her way of living, and she got that when she found Jesus in her life. Being a teacher in a school where a traditional teaching method prevailed, I adjusted to the same teaching tradition. As Magdalene changed with the love of Jesus, I switched my step toward professional development, which I took when I felt that I needed a change in my way of teaching. Mary Magdalene thus is my source of inspiration though she is not counted as the most renowned figure.

Mary among Many Marys: Her Identity in Otherness

Mary Magdalene was not a minor character in the bible. Though her identity was kept under a shadow, she was one of the recognizable ladies who built her identity in Christ, no matter what others talked about her relationship with Jesus. She was among many Marys who followed Jesus. One thing here is that Mary was the name to be kept freely for women (Kent, 2010) and was common name in those days, and we are talking about Mary Magdalene. There were other Marys like the one who poured perfume on Jesus' feet... *"A woman in that town who lived a sinful life learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's house, so she came there with an alabaster jar of perfume. As she stood behind him at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them"* Luke 7:37. This shows that there were other Marys, but Jesus chose

Mary Magdalene as his woman disciple. I can relate this part of Magdalene's life to my professional life.

There were many Marys. Everybody could not be the disciple of Jesus, and they could not walk in the path shown by him, but Mary Magdalene did. This made her such a fateful lady who could see the resurrection of Jesus. Now, relating it in this way, many English teachers are working as a teacher to teach English subjects. Still, not all of them have come out of the English teachers' comfort zone and established themselves as professional English teacher. Marys can be taken as an English teacher, whereas Mary Magdalene can be taken as a professional English teacher. Magdalene saw the resurrection of Christ, which means she experienced that reality which others did not face. When I see Mary Magdalene, I reflect on my experience as a professional journey of English teacher. In this sense, among many Marys, Mary is just like I, the English teacher making the professional journey.

Magdalene and I: Being Radical to Search for Own Identity

Magdalene is regarded as the wealthy Woman in the bible as the meaning of 'Magdala' is 'tower or castle'. When Jesus was buried, she was found at the foot of the cross, meaning her radical presence against society to worship Jesus. She proved braver than men and could have done that because she was a woman and women were less likely to be put in jail. Magdalene was strong in her faith and deeds because she was the one who followed Jesus till his burial (Miller, 2009). I see myself in her. In Magdalene's strength, I see my strength because for a female, it is not easy to take the responsibility out of the home though they are loaded with all the household responsibilities. In Magdalene's life, she had seen many pains but stepped ahead, and she showed her strength by giving her life to Jesus and becoming the follower of Jesus. She stayed strong in her faith. I compare this to my life and feel all those pains.

I, too, stepped out of home and the patriarchal society to stand as a teacher. Though I was from a village and was tagged as the one who may not speak English, I dared to become an English teacher. With much struggle, I became an English teacher. I kept faith in God and my hard work and believed I would show society that I could take responsibility outside the home and do what men could. Magdalene found her identity in Christ. I found my identity in Christ in terms of faith, but in the profession, with the same faith, I could build my identity as an English teacher.

Magdalene's Shaded Voice: Voice in Otherness

Mary Magdalene was there during the resurrection of Jesus, and she saw all the glorification of Jesus, but her voice was lost somewhere just because she was a female and with less value due to her background. When I read the bible, I find Magdalene surrounded by the otherness people created to let her down. She was in the crowd, but still, she was alone. Wherever she went, she got hatred and betrayedness. As she did not have any support of male character, she got hatred from people. I think that was the pain of a single woman that Magdalene went through.

When her voice was lost, and she was not given much priority in her time, I see that melancholy of a woman not being able to express though she is the gospel. I have faced such a situation in my life too. I was a person who had a habit of doing my duty silently. In the school where I worked, I used to make a lesson plan, and that was what I was asked by the principal when I was interviewed. I must do it since I told him I know how to make a lesson plan. I made plans every day, taking it as my responsibility, but I was made 'Other' in front of all other teachers because I followed what the principal said. One of the teachers came to me and said that it was unnecessary because nobody did it. He said they are obliged to do a lesson plan if I make it. I was only the female teacher in that group, and I could not give him any

reply. I smiled and told him that I am making lesson plans to make my job easier and for my learning too. He was unhappy with my response, but I did not stop making the lesson plan. On the last week of the month, the principal came and asked for the lesson plan. All teachers looked at one another's faces. I, too, felt awkward giving the lesson plan in front of them but thought, If I have made all the lesson plans, why shouldn't I submit them? I took the register out and submitted it. That was my bold step to be once again, the 'other'.

Mary Magdalene was the woman who could witness Jesus's resurrection. To witness God is to see the light. For Mary, witnessing the resurrection of Christ is being enlightened with the goodness of God. Relating this to my life, I often pray to God and ask him to be with me in any situation, whether good or bad. When stepping out of my comfort zone while walking in the professional journey, I stay strong in faith and have received that favour from God. His helping hands have always supported me. Keeping faith in God has helped me rise in my professional life. In my journey to English, my faith in God took me to the desired level of learning. God gave me the courage, and I am thankful to him for that. It helped me to step out and make a difference in teaching-learning.

A Pilgrimage for the Celestial City Compared to Our Life Journey

Going through the book *The Pilgrim's Progress* (Bunyan, 1899), I compared my life with the fiction's main character, 'Christian'. A fictional realm that maps out a spiritual journey allegorically opens up with the narrator wandering through the wilderness and entering a den to sleep, where he dreams and sees a man wrapped up in a rag holding a book (the bible) crying. The man is Christian by his name. He is visited by the character Evangelist, who appears as the spiritual guide and tells him to leave his doomed town, which is 'the city of destruction', and to pilgrimage to the

Celestial City (heaven). This chunk of fiction is my initial observation of how we humans make our way on different journeys in our life—no matter whether that journey is spiritual or worldly. The journey I had, or let me put it in this way, the life journey where I was a character like Christian, took me through several stages that led me to construct my identity. One can think of his situation by observing the character ‘Christian’ in *The Pilgrim’s Progress*.

The situation *Christian* goes through while he wants to leave his hometown and make a way to the Celestial City is not different from my desire to study in the *boarding school and my parents’ desire to fulfil that dream, as well as my ‘why questions’ for being in a situation where I was*. This research was carried out with the experiences of three participants who are not less than Christian in the struggle to reach their destiny. As a main participant, I have brought the stories of my hardships and pleasures. Accompanying myself, my participant Jaisvi has come up with her distinct experiences of being in the harsh, threatening situation on her journey to become an English teacher. Similarly, my participant Pragati has given me full support to carry out this research by telling her stories of success and trials in her aim to be an English teacher. This research is about the stories of ups and downs of our lives as that of *Christian* in *The Pilgrim’s Progress*. Thus, in connection with the character *Christian’s* pilgrimage, I could compare our stories with his.

When Christian hears of Celestial City, he is ready to go for it. He asks his wife, Christiana and his children to come with him, but they think it is not right and that he is mentally ill and may recover. Christian tries to convince them but cannot do so. Then without persuading them further, he leaves home. Along with Christian’s determination to fetch the Celestial City, he convinces his neighbours ‘Obstinate’ and ‘Pliable’ to give him the company where ‘Obstinate’ refuses, and ‘Pliable’ agrees.

Though he agrees, he gets discouraged by their fall into a muddy pit called 'The slough of Despond'. Christian sinks due to his burden. When I reached this part of the story, I felt like I was in Christian's position and that his burden was like mine. When I was loaded with the responsibility as a wife, mother, daughter-in-law and professional person, Sometimes, it became a burden for me. I get all those things heavy, and then I get into the slough of despond from where I cannot get out.

Our experiences have been viewed from the perspective of *The Pilgrim's Progress*. The story of *The Pilgrim's progress* is framed as a dream dreamed by the narrator. In this sense, the research has captured the stories within it as past experiences which could be compared to the dream of Pilgrim's progress. Looking at life from the perspective of *The Pilgrim's progress*, I have observed the spiritual journey of the protagonist, *Christian*, in the story and tried to relate the journey to my life and my participants' life by observing our lives from the perspective of the struggle *Christian* had in his life to reach his destination '*Celestial City*'. By representing all humanity that goes through a struggle, ups, and downs in their life, the research has depicted the truth of human life with threatened identity of how they learn to cope with different situations that come up (Brygola, 2011) through the comparison with *Christian's* life journey. Having compared *Christian's* life with ours, I conceived the idea that John Bunyan tried to expose his life struggle through *Pilgrim's progress*, being bound in prison for giving his life becoming a strong preacher and follower of Christianity. Getting a feeling of belongingness after getting relief from the threatened state, we constructed a sense of self with people who were in relation with us to share the relational value (May, 2011). When we look at our journey, it is not less than that of *Christian* and that of *Magdalene* either that is about

our whole life journey or a part of our life journey such as ‘the journey into English’, which I have brought in the next chapter.

From Dīkṣā to Christianity

When getting dīkṣā from my guruaama, she covered her head and mine with a shawl and gave mantra. When my guruaama was speaking out dīkṣā mantra, I was excited to hear it aloud, but she said she would whisper it and suggested that I should not enchant it aloud. With that, I never dared to enchant it aloud and understood that I should not share what I learned from others. When I became a Christian and went to church, I saw everyone praying loudly and speaking with God. When having fellowship with Christians, I found that they would share their testaments on how they became Christians. They would share the prayers with others, would pray for others and even for themselves. I gradually learned the Christian culture and saw how they shared the gospels with the people.

We find the verse in the bible, “Then Jesus came to them and said, all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (NIV, 1984, Matthew. 28:18-19). Jesus asked people to go and share the gospel with many nations. Becoming a Christian, I learned to go and share to the people what I knew. When comparing that to dīkṣā, I could sense the undesirable aspects of it which teach people, ‘keep secret of what you know.’ However, dīkṣā made a foundation for me to gain knowledge and prepared me to be intuited to knowledge (Bhuteshananda, 1995). Christianity showed me a pathway to share knowledge with others. Being a Hindu lady, taking dīkṣā and becoming a Christian lady, taking water baptism made me a newborn Christian and along with that I got transformed in my thoughts of “If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has

gone, the new has come (NIV, 1984, 2 Corinthians. 5:17). I believe that becoming christian, I got transformed being aware consciously that helped me discern the meaning of those unconscious (Dirkx, 1997, as cited in Cranton, 2006) making me rise from the unconsciousness to consciousness. With the same consciousness, I can now see the elements of *dīkṣā* in depth and see their meaning in Hinduism and Christianity. The following chart shows some elements from *dīkṣā*. The chart displays my attempt to demonstrate that although *dīkṣā* comes under Hindu philosophy, certain elements of it which can also be found in Christian philosophy, interpreted in different context.

Elements from <i>dīkṣā</i>	Hinduism	Christianity
<i>Aatma (Soul, Spirit)</i>	The only <i>chaitanyabhav</i> (sign of life) that has complete proficiency over the eternal knowledge (Kamath et al., 2015)	Aatma is a soul that is about the mind, will and emotions which the human body holds. It cannot be made alive until it is open up for receiving the Holy Spirit (Ettore & DeWitt, n. d)
<i>Surya (The Sun)</i>	The light that dispels darkness, cures diseases, and heats and illuminates the world	God created the light (The sun) and he found the light good. So, he separated the light from the darkness (Genesis1: 3-4)
<i>Ista Devata (Close God)</i>	Personal, cherished and preferred god.	The close God in Christianity is the god in trinity (the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit)
<i>Kul</i>	Clan or dynasty taken as the	Christianity believes in dynasty.

(dynasty)	continuity to lineage	“I will establish your dynasty forever, and I will lift up one who will build up your throne from generation to generation” (Psalm 89:4)
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The above chart is my portrayal of how I have looked at *dīkṣā* as the foundation for my life. Although I am Christian, I try to see if there is anything in the space of *dīkṣā* that Christianity talks about.

Critical Analysis of the Events in the Professional Journey

The events that took place in my life have huge essence to me as they have helped construct my identity and brought me to the stage of who I am today. My identity remained in a threatened position when I became a Christian. I walked with a feeling of rejection that led to the identity threat which was the situation that invited conflict between the identity I held and the situation around me that was conflicting in nature (Slepian & Jacoby-Senghor, 2021). I was there to behave like newly born as I was baptized to be ‘a born again Christian.’ However, I had to struggle to accept the reality that I was in. It was same kind of feeling when I was a novice teacher. I was responsible for becoming an English teacher for the secondary level and was afraid of facing students who were even taller than me. I knew the teaching contents but had difficulty delivering what I knew. In my spiritual life, I had several questions regarding my faith in the beginning but gradually, I started counting myself as a born-again Christian which is to get new birth in Christ which would make me a truly alive person (Graham, 1989). In the same way, I accepted teaching as my profession and that I decided to continue it.

I brought Mary Magdalene, a biblical character so as to compare my life with hers as she was a lady with a strong faith in Jesus. Magdalene was a lady upon whom the power of demons was imposed but by her faith in Jesus, she could stand as a lady who could win the heart of Jesus and got the opportunity to witness the resurrection of Jesus. She was the first person to see the resurrected Jesus (Fedele, 2009). Her desperate longing for Jesus made her come out of the demon attack and she became the one who would listen to Jesus's lessons and would witness his healings and miracles. My professional journey is just like her spiritual journey. Starting with a frightening experience in teaching, I gradually stepped out of that fear and started moving ahead with confidence. Christian's journey from the city of destruction to the celestial city in *The Pilgrim's Progress* is like my professional journey where we both (Christian and I) met obstinate, fear, shame, giant despair and so on and at some points of our journey, we met hep, great heart, shining ones and worldly wisemen. So, the journey was pretty similar in terms of the intensity of tensions (Want et al., 2018) facing ups and downs.

Jaisvi's stories of her mother's death and the responsibility that came upon her were not less than the burden that Christian held which made him sink in the slough of despond. Though the struggle was extreme, Christian reached the celestial city. In my case and in that of Jaisvi, we too went through a similar struggle during our professional journey and now, I use the metaphor, "we are in the delectable mountains at the present" from where we can see the celestial city as we are now being able to make teaching-learning in English class more meaningful like how the teachers with professional expertise do (Rokhyati, 2015). That means we have now built up our confidence as English teachers and could see the essence of being a professional teacher. However, we are still in the journey. The narratives entail the idea that

interpretations of experience mediated by context is significant in the evolution of the transformative process (Taylor & Cranton, 2013) but Jaisvi's story of the Gorkhaland movement is not aligned to what the Identity process theory says in terms of continuity. If Jaisvi had given continuity to what she was going through and if she did not have revolt her situation in the name of giving continuity, she would not have become what she is at present. However, the stories necessitate the process of assimilation for the absorption of the new component into the identity structure as concurred by Identity process theory.

Chapter Essence

This chapter deals with faith as a standpoint for teachers' identity construction. The concept of 'New Born' in Christian philosophy is famous for leaving the old thoughts in us and being new by thought. It has helped readers to view the chapter the one with a faith point of view. Comparing my life with the character in the bible *Mary Magdalene* shows my way of comparing and contrasting with the mythical characters, getting inspired by her life in faith and living my life, being strong like her. Comparing my and my participants' life with the character 'Christian' from the book '*The Pilgrim's Progress*' is another perspective to look at our life struggles. This chapter has given a scenario of the whole human world of challenges and struggles. It has brought the concept of living in faith even in adverse situations. Finally, the chapter has ended with a critical analysis of the events in my professional journey. The events presented in the chapter and their link with my professional journey has given a clear picture of the value of those events in my life.

CHAPTER VIII

THE JOURNEY INTO ENGLISH: CONTINUITY TO CONSTRUCT 'ENGLISH
TEACHER IDENTITY'

This chapter begins with the stories of my life related to English language learning and covers my overall experiences with learning English. The chapter further brings the discussion on how I became an English teacher and what my struggle is with it. It consists of my participants' stories of how they continued to be English teachers. The experience of being the English teacher of class one in the beginning and being promoted to the teacher of class ten at present was something of huge continuity to move on for the identity construction or to gain knowledge and to enhance the collegial relationships (Siekkinen et al., 2020). Such stories of continuity as English teachers have been depicted in the chapter.

English as the Crucial Point in My Life: Laying Foundation

Learning English never became my passion when I was a child. When I was told to speak in English, it was like a huge boulder rolling upon my head until I would get escaped from that situation. I would feel trapped in the dark, suffocating and unpleasant place. I found English difficult, especially the grammar portion and was confused about using articles and prepositions. This still troubles me. I was not sure how the tenses worked. The types of nouns, adjectives and adverbs nearly made me mad. I failed my English grammar subject when I was in class four. At that time, my father was really sad. My father admitted my brothers and me to English medium school precisely thirty years ago, which was very rare then. He worked as an accountant in the same school and had many expectations from me. At that time, our

villagers had just started being aware of the need for girls' education but were sending their daughters to school to get a license to find them a good family through marriage.

My father always inspired me to learn English. He used to explain why he admitted my brothers and me to English medium school. He had many expectations from me because he never looked at me as a weak gender 'daughter' but rather as the youngest child who was equally able as her brothers. It made me proud to have such a father who counted my ability then and is equally encouraging me at present. He used to encourage me that he wanted to see me with a degree in English. I always went after my father's dream. I needed to fulfill his dream. So, whatever degree I have achieved today is all for fulfilling his dream, which later developed as my dream too. Learning English started from there. During my whole school life, I focused on understanding the English language as it was not easy as the Nepali language for me. Gradually, I improved my English with the help of my teachers and self-effort. In my college life, too, I took English as a major subject under Humanities, which made me specific towards learning English and helped me improve in this language.

Regarding the teaching profession I chose for my career development, the English language became the excess to enter the English medium school. When I faced the interview for the first time regarding the job, I realized that the English language is fundamental. I thought it might be my fortune that I got a good job from the beginning of my career path but being thoughtful, I came to assert that I got a better job just because I had good English. I was never refused wherever I tried, but I have seen one of my close friends get rejected so many times just because she did not have good English. She wanted becoming a good teacher in a good school where she could develop her professionalism but could not. At that point, I was thankful to my father for his decision to admit me to English medium school.

With the experience of the sway of English language in my life in being an English teacher, I met so many people who had their own stories of learning English and their stories are of huge importance to them. Jaisvi and Pragati, my participants, have their own stories of how they became English teachers.

Entering the Teaching Profession

Jaisvi taught in Kalimpong for ten years. When coming to Kathmandu (Lalitpur), she taught for fifteen years. She could not complete her college in Calcutta. So, she stayed at home for a few months and was later admitted to the college. She finished part one and part two from that college. Her younger brothers were studying in school as they were very small. There was a vacancy for part-time teaching for a year as the particular teacher had gone on a holiday. That was for class three. When she applied, she got it. She taught there as a grade teacher in class three. Then that teacher did not come back. She was an Anglo-Indian, and she had relatives in London. So, she stayed there. Jaisvi had already taught there for a year, so they asked her to continue teaching there. So, she continued teaching. In between, she prepared for West Bengal Civil Service.

As it was at the same time as the written exam, she could not go because she had to travel from Kalimpong to Darjeeling, which she thought would be hectic to go and come back. So, she kept on teaching. Later, she felt she needed to take some training to continue the teaching profession. So, for the training, she went to Namche, which lies in Sikkim. She did her B. Ed there and returned to give continuity to the teaching field. Jaisvi believed,

In doing any profession, we also see if everything is suitable for us or not. My brothers were studying in the same place, and I was teaching there. I could look after the house and everything. I was lucky to get a job in that

school at that time. The school was one of the best schools then. Once teachers got enrolled in the school, they would desire to continue. That's why there were old teachers in the school. As I had one year's teaching experience, I liked the profession. Also, I loved teaching small kids and remaining there, I could give my effort for becoming good teacher.

As that was her first teaching, she found it very important. Also, she needed that job since she had to look after her brothers and sisters. That was how she did her first teaching.

Happened to Be an English Teacher

Pragati finished her schooling from the government school. After her schooling, she was not sure about what to study further. Her brother suggested her to take English as a major subject, and she did the same. Pragati puts on, *I gradually liked the subject and took English in Education in my Bachelor and Master degree too. As I chose the education field, I did not have options other than being a teacher. So, that made me a teacher. It was not my will, but it just happened.* When Pragati became a teacher, it was challenging for her initially, mainly when she used to get parents to complain about her teaching. She learned gradually about how to teach effectively. Pragati explains that once I realized that I could make my students learn English, I never regretted *being an English teacher. That actually made me ponder, how can I think of becoming better teacher.* Pragati remembered being an English teacher during the pandemic caused by COVID-19 and said,

In our life, nothing is certain. I think this pandemic (COVID-19) was the unexpected one. I never thought of my profession this way before, but now, I feel like I should have engaged in other occupations. The schools have been seriously hit by Covid-19. Many schools are still closed. Although the schools

have started online teaching, teachers are not able to give what they are supposed to. On the other hand, students are not getting a proper education. On top of that, teachers are not getting a full salary, which somehow brings fear, uncertainty, and insecurity.

Pragati's friends who did not give priority to education are now abroad and have good earnings. Sometimes, she feels like this teaching profession is to earn respect and to gain satisfaction for being able to teach many children, but it does not satisfy people regarding earning. Even people do not give respect to teachers as per Pragati. She further elaborated that they pretend to give respect from the outside, but from the inside, they think that teachers are teachers because *they cannot do other jobs*. According to Pragati, this is the sad reality for teachers in Nepal.

English as a Language and as a Subject

Pragati finds English an essential language. As it is spoken worldwide, it is a global language. We can communicate with our friends abroad and also with the people of other countries when we go there. So, she thinks English is a very important language. In her case, her English teachers used to teach English in Nepali. English was compulsory as a subject, but it was not compulsory to speak in English. Even teachers used to speak in Nepali. So, she did not get exposure to English. When she talks to her friends abroad or even here, she feels like she still needs to learn more in English.

Comparatively, Pragati's English was good from the beginning, but she was not a brilliant student of English. She said *I did not speak English but could speak well in English at the Secondary level due to my teacher. He was an excellent English teacher. Being inspired by him, I tried to do good in English. My written English was okay*. As Pragati's brother was good in English, she had a kind of pressure that she

had to do good in English. Pragati thinks *we have a trend in Nepal that we follow page by page to teach English. As an English teacher, I have learned that we do not need to necessarily follow that trend because it is about teaching language to students, for which we have many options to make it enjoyable. It is not only about interest but also about evaluating textbooks.* As per Pragati, if we follow the curriculum and check, we find some unnecessary lessons in the textbooks which we don't need to teach. We can teach something extra instead of that. Following the curriculum, we identify what topics we need to cover yearly. Pragati breaks those lessons into different terms and prepares for daily lessons. *She said, if we teach everything one after another from textbooks, we will miss so many activities that we can do together with students. It is content focused when we follow textbooks, but there is creativity when we follow the curriculum and make plans.* She thinks teachers don't need to teach all the stories to their students, but they need to teach how to read those stories. If they get the concept of reading, they develop their reading habit and read themselves. They create their own stories when they understand how to write a story.

Being an English Teacher from Class One to Ten

One day, Jaisvi was reading the newspaper and saw a vacancy in one school. She told her aunt that she would like to work as a teacher in that school because that was a residential school, and she did not have to trouble anyone. Jaisvi found it very awkward to come all of a sudden, buzz in and stay at someone's house. Though her aunt insisted on staying at her home, she said she would remain in Residential school so that she didn't have to give trouble to her. Jaisvi joined the school. In that school, the coordinator was happy with Jaisvi's work as a grade teacher in class one and at the hostel. She was the one who looked after the children of the hostel. There were only

twelve children in class one, and the classroom was huge. Jaisvi says that by the end of the year, they were speaking English fluently, and they had become smart. She expressed,

I think, being a grade teacher, I taught them every single thing related to the course and to discipline. In the evening, too, I was their teacher at the hostel. They used to come to my room. I was very close to them. I used to show them movies in their classroom. At that time, we used to remove all the chairs and sit down on the floor. After food, we would lie together on the floor in the evening. I did not mind at all lying down with them. Sometimes, they used to make me lie down and act like they were doctors and operate me. I did not speak Nepali at all. It was because my Nepali is not beautiful but rough in terms of not being able to use timi, tapain, hajur (respectful words). To avoid being rude, I spoke in English all the time. So, maybe because of that, the children became fluent in English in one year.

Therefore, the coordinator was pleased with Jaisvi as a teacher. In her case, being good in English helped her to continue teaching profession with pride. That ultimately made her a way to become good teacher of English. While she stayed there, her brother had an accident in Calcutta. Then, she gave resignation from the school and went. She was told to go back and work there whenever she liked. In the meantime, Jaisvi's aunt asked her to give the application to one prominent school in Lalitpur. Jaisvi roughly wrote the application and submitted it to that school. Then, she was called for an interview in that school. In the interview, she met a fellow who knew her elder sister, and he said that if she needed any help, he was there. Jaisvi admitted, *Though I applied for the post of English teacher for class eight, he asked me to join the primary level as he was the primary school in charge. He said I would get*

the same salary as an English teacher for class eight. I agreed and joined the school.

Jaisvi kept on working in the school that she joined. Later, the next coordinator asked her to join grade eight. She said that she was not mentally prepared, but he encouraged her and said he would give her only a few periods so that she could manage. So, she started teaching English in grade eight. Then, gradually they took her to class nine and finally at nine and ten. So, she got experience of teaching in all the classes.

In her experience of teaching all level students, Jaisvi thinks that teaching at the primary level is enjoyable, but she also liked teaching the secondary level students. She said,

When you teach in primary, you need to work hard, you are busy all the time, but at the end of the day you forget everything, and you have that satisfaction, but in class eight, nine and ten, my experience remained quite different. When those students saw me in primary classes, I thought they would not treat me as their teacher, but I was shocked to see their silence and cooperation. I must say that the students of that time (nearly 20 years ago) were so obedient. If only I would look at them and stand without speaking a single word, they would understand that I needed silence and stop unnecessary noise.

This is '*drukḍīkṣā*' that students exercise with Jaisvi. Her way of looking at them would give them some lessons. Jaisvi also enjoyed teaching in senior classes because her students were always close to her. They used to go to her when they had any problems. Many of them are still in touch with her though they have passed out from school. Being English teacher, she was able to teach in the senior classes too but becoming a teacher who is able to understand the children's world, was quite tough.

English and English Teacher for Jaisvi

About Jaisvi's English language, she got it from school. She found that if you have people who speak your language, you do not go for the other language because they are comfortable with it. Jaisvi said,

When I studied in school, it was not like that. I had Bengali friends and Tibetan friends. As Bengalis would not understand Nepali, I had to speak English with them, the same as with Tibetan friends. At home, we had mixed up. My grandparents used to speak their own Lepcha language, and my grandfather used to insist that we had to speak their language. We used to only understand their language. In school, Irish friends would say, 'Read in English, eat-in English, dream in English.' I used to wonder, what is the dream's meaning in English??? When we went out, I had to speak in Nepali. So, it was such a mixture that now I feel like I now have just Chali-boli language only (My translation: the language that we speak to make people understand).

During this long teaching journey, Jaisvi has changed herself because of being interactive with children. People say that children learn from teachers, but Jaisvi says that teachers learn from children. She was very strict when teaching as an English teacher in the first year of her teaching profession. She wanted everything to be perfect and up to date. She studied the conventional method of teaching. So, she tried to bring that in her class too. She accepted

I followed my old teachers that I must be very strict, and I should not let them talk and should have pin drop silence in my class. I went in that straight line. At that time, I did not understand the children. Teaching forty students in class three and four, I did not try to know the children personally; I

just wanted to teach them and make sure they understood me. They had to do their work properly. If they did not, I would shout at them. It was like army rule. They had to do it. Otherwise, they were going to be in trouble. I did not want to hear any excuses from them. Whatever had happened at their home did not strike me. I did not even want to know their specific problem. If they made noise, I would punish them. I went that way.

Even in the residential school, Jaisvi worked, she went the same way somehow. But later, with time, she got changed, not suddenly but gradually. She saw children's problems having single fathers, single mothers, and some staying with their grandmothers only. From those children, she realized that they must have lots of problems at home which would hinder their studies. Jaisvi attested, *I started finding out why the problem lies, why the students behave this way or that way, and why they were writing that. So, I started understanding the psychology of children. Till then, I never went beyond the four walls of the classroom. Slowly, I started releasing myself to realize that I need to make sure that they do well in their study, but I came to know through them that outside the classroom, too, they have their own world and that world I have to understand.*

When Jaisvi sees herself as an English teacher now, she remembers the journey of being the English teacher in class one. Now, being an English teacher of class twelve at the secondary level (+2), she looks back and she her journey of becoming English teacher of secondary level. There were some motivators in her professional journey. When she was apprehensive about the syllabus, which she had never taught, some people said that it was a progressive method and that she would learn many things from there. They motivated, pushed, and strengthened her, giving different inputs, encouragements and training. Had they not been there, she would

have difficult times. She was encouraged to be the English teacher in +2 following the progressive education method. She took training and attended different seminars. She says,

I am enjoying my profession because I can teach in different ways, I can use multimedia and many more. I have been teaching English only. Sometimes, I feel sad when English is compared with other subjects like science and Mathematics, and people say it is just English. There is not much to teach; it is English, and it is easy. People here have an attitude that English is the subject where you can go to the class and tell one story or play a movie, and I was given more periods than other teachers. Also, whenever classes are empty, I am sent as the substitute teacher in the staff room. Teachers of other subjects say, “Maam, you can go and play one movie, vaihalchhani....” Even when their course is not finished, they say, ma'am, yours is English. Haven't you completed the course yet? We need your periods now. We have so much to finish...” I did one departmental presentation in one parent's meeting and tried to clarify that spoken English and academic English are different.

She had to explain to the parents repeatedly that English is not an easy subject. To get good marks in it, students must work hard. It does not work only if their spoken English is good. They must read and write to get good marks. To tackle these, we must be strong English teachers, and Jaisvi thinks she is now strong in all these.

The Images of Two English Teachers in My School Life

Two images come to my mind when I recall the images of my English teachers; one with an image of like and the other with an image of dislike. What it means is the image I saw in these teachers. Mr. Aalok was a teacher who was the

image of dislike for me. I was so scared of him that I neither dared to ask a question nor spoke a single word in his class. He was indeed a strange personality with a smart look but a monster-like behaviour. When Mr. Aalok was in class, I would never make my usual request, *Would you please repeat it once?* I would instead hold the question in my mind till the class ended. That was when I was in class four, and that was the time when I failed my English grammar subject. Mr. Aalok used to come to our class, asked us to turn page numbers bla bla and bla, and he used to read out what was written there. Then, we were asked to do exercise, and that was the usual trend. I wanted something different, a change to understand grammar. I did not know anything else at that time, but I could sense that Mr. Aalok needed to bring change in his teaching style. Mr. Aalok, who was not lesser than a monster, used to hit me with a very thin stick on my calf, which would give me such pain that the scar remained for about a week, and that was the punishment for not being good in English grammar. Being upset, I shared this with my father. My father, not taking it seriously, said, *Angreji padhaune teacher kadai hunchhan chhori. Tyesto farara Angreji bolnuhunchha uhanle. Uhanle timilai tyestai vayeko herna chahanuhunchha. Tehi vayera pitnuvako.* (My translation: *English teachers are strict, my dear. It is because he has such good English and that he speaks fluently. He wants you to be like him. That's why he beat you.*) I was thinking, *how can you make people follow you if they do not like you?* At that time, I just thought of one thing: If the *Angreji* teacher were meant to be like Mr. Aalok, I would never learn this English in my whole life and never be an English teacher.

People are not of the same nature or character. I was taught by an English teacher who was of Godlike image for me. He always remained in my heart as an ideal teacher. It was Mr. Prabhu who changed my thinking about English. I learned

from him that English could be full of fun. I enjoyed the English taught by him. I improved my English in class eight when he taught me English. I used to enjoy his jokes, the movie he showed though my friends and I had to write a review later, the grammar class, the literature, the writing class, and the speaking class all became interesting. His way of explaining the stories, his smile and his way of motivating students made me decide that I would be like him one day. My perspective towards Angreji teachers who were meant to be strict changed when I found that Angreji teachers could be friendly and teaching-oriented too. As a language teacher, Mr. Prabhu gave a little ownership of meaning-making, which made me (the learner) actively engage in my literacy practices and helped me explore a range of my identity, including thinking about my own English language (Norton, 2010). Then I thought, unlike Mr. Aalok, I could build myself in English and be an English teacher adopting the character of a true teacher, Mr. Prabhu. English teachers need some changes in themselves that keep them updated on the ongoing situation, which help students gain more from them. English teachers have to have a change-oriented heart that forbids them from being rigid, and they have to have an identity by which they are counted as the ideal teachers.

English Teacher

“Teachers are the role model for society,” my father used to remind me. “A person becomes a teacher when he/she cannot do anything else,” my friends used to tell me. I did not know whose thought was correct. I know that I became a teacher by the mercy of my teacher Nayan sir because he asked me to teach in his school. I did not have to face an interview for the job and did not run here and there to find the job. As I was good at English in my high school, Nayan sir asked me to join the school where he was the principal. That developed a kind of thought in me that I am good

enough to be a teacher. I remember that Nayan sir used to tell me *Fuchchi teacher* (little/tiny teacher) whenever I passed by him. As Nayan sir said, I was tiny physically and in thought and behaviour. Nayan sir used to introduce me as his dearest student as well as the English teacher of the school. That would always make me proud to be his student.

It was the day before the result distribution, and all the lady's teachers decided to wear *sari* the next day though we did not have them as a school uniform.

Everybody agreed to wear a *sari* on the result distribution day. I could not deny nor tell them that I don't have my *sari* apart from my mother's red *fulbutte saris*, which would not work for the result day. My colleague teachers decided to wear *sari* with decent colours and print as we had to be in front of parents. I asked them if I could wear a *sari* of any colour. They increased my tension, saying that I needed to look more decent than others as an English teacher. I didn't know whether they meant it or just made a joke thinking that I am a college student and immature enough to understand them. I could not think of what to do. They would take me lightly if I could not be in a *sari* like theirs.

On top of that, they said that I needed to look decent than them. I was thinking, *how can sari categorize English teachers from other teachers, and why should I be differentiated in look just because I was an English teacher?* The other part of my mind consoled me by saying that it might be because I was looked at as a teacher of a bit upper level. After all, I was an English teacher. I know that my mind struggled to distinguish whether teachers meant what they said or were pulling my legs. The whole day went on with a thought about the *sari*. At one point, I thought of buying the *sari* but realized that it would cost more than what I had carried in my little wallet. In the evening, when I reached home, I asked my mom to take out all her *saris*,

which were about six or seven in number. I could not find any *saris* as expected by my colleague teachers. I cried for not getting the *sari* of the right colour. After a while, my mother managed one with plain coffee colour with a border on it, which she asked my aunt, and I found it all right. I still remember that day whenever there was the result distribution day at school.

The next day, I went to school in the sari, which was not easy. That was the first time I wore a sari, and I struggled to walk as the whole sari got wrapped in my legs, but I managed. Everybody told me that I looked pretty in a sari, but I wanted to ask whether I was looking more decent than them or not. In the meantime, I saw Nayan sir coming toward me. I was shy because I realized I was his little student and was in a sari that day. He stood nearby and said, '*Sari lagauda ta timipani thuli dekhiyeu ta*' (My translation: *You too looked mature in sari*). I was blushing but tried to concentrate on the result distribution. Everything went well. However, I went home with the same question: *Did I look like a decent English teacher today?* I was with the threatened identity (Breakwell, 1986) which made me question about myself as a teacher and, most importantly, as an English teacher. Somewhere, there was a threat for becoming English teacher.

An Immature Teacher

Students would come to me and share their feelings, like, what is their favourite Bollywood movie? Which actor/actress do they like most? How do they feel about different subjects and all? Nayan sir never told me what to do and what not to do in school. Maybe he had trust in me. When I see beginner teachers in my current school, I remember my behaviour in my beginning stage as a teacher. It was about six months after I was appointed as a teacher in the school. My students were close to me. I would interact with them to make them feel easy in English class. It was Friday, and

students from Grade 9 gave me one formal letter and asked me to open it. I opened and read the letter. It was the request letter. They had planned a picnic for the next day as it was Saturday, and they had requested me to join their picnic. I took their request simply as a request made by students to the teacher and said 'yes' to them. They were happy. I was delighted to see their happy faces.

The next day, I went to the spot as told by them. When I got there, I found that I was only the teacher. I asked them if other teachers were coming. They said that they had invited, but nobody came. They were happy that I was there. They welcomed me, and I was pleased to see them enjoying themselves. It was raining heavily. I had no idea how they would manage everything, but those little kids managed to cook, play, sing and dance. I overlooked them as a teacher and enjoyed with them. They, too, enjoyed the day and thanked me for joining them. The picnic was over. I went home with the happy moment captured in my heart. The next day, when I went to school, Nayan sir called me and told me that I had made a big mistake the previous day. I immediately realized that I did wrong by going with the students. I started crying. I told him that I did not know that other teachers were not going. He scolded me for the first time. I was really scared.

Nayan sir loved me so much that he would even consider the time when I needed it. He would guide me when I was in confusion. I never thought I would do something that would hurt him. I was unsure how to explain to him that I did not even realize I was doing wrong. I took it so easy that I did not think of my wrong deed. Nayan sir told me if something terrible had happened, I would be responsible. I realized that I had made the wrong decision to go with the students and asked myself why I didn't ask other teachers about it. I made Nayan sir sad that day, and that was when I realized that as a teacher, I needed to learn so many things. That was the

biggest mistake I made in my teaching career, and I have learned a life lesson from that mistake. That immature conduct taught me many unsaid lessons, which I demonstrate in behaviour but do not express in front of others. That misconduct is still fresh in my heart and memory, and it reminds me of Nayan sir, who opened my eyes to take wise and mature steps as a teacher. At present, when the teachers at my school show immature behaviour, I remember my past and try to become like Nayan sir to give them advice. Critical reflection on the teaching journey showed me the misconduct I did in the past, which has become a lesson for me. It has helped me to use the prior interpretation of one's experience to guide future actions (Mezirow, 1996). This has assisted me to be in a novice teacher's position and to see those misconducts as the act of immaturity. It too reminds me at the present of being in a position of a teacher then but still needed lots of effort for becoming the mature teacher.

The Shift in My Personal Life

Recalling my personal life reminds me of the pains and pleasures of life that came along with my growth. The growth by my age, experience and development by external inputs all mattered in my case. The very first years of my childhood were full of blessings. As I was born into a big family, I got complete care from my *aama* and *fupu* (grandmother and father's sister, respectively). My *aama* had long grey hair since I recognized her. She used to make me busy nit-picking since she had lice in her hair. Sometimes I got a double job as my *fupu* would ask me to do the same. My *fupu* stayed in *Maiti* (parents' home) since she could not tolerate her mother-in-law's physical and mental torture. Though that was a big decision for her to come and stay in *Maiti*, I feel like I couldn't have brought up such encouragements and motivations

if she had not been there with us. The joint family taught me to be mixed with people of different natures. I think people who have a joint family are blessed.

Getting two months of winter vacation would give me much time to play with my cousins where I always desired to play the prestigious roles while we played *bhat pakai*, a traditional game for children to act like adults playing the role-play of a father, a mother and the children where they have family, cook food, dine together and enjoy their life. I had to collect enough members to act out, but I would ensure that I would get nice and prestigious roles such as the bride, the mother, the teacher, the foreigner and so on. I remember the incident where I took full advantage of studying in the English medium school. I took the role of a foreigner and spoke English, which I knew was nonsense, but I feel sorry to my friends who thought that I knew English very well. The role-play of a bride was much interesting because my friends and cousins would put on the makeovers and make me ready like the bride. I will never forget when my aunt beat my cousin for spilling her nail polish and breaking her lipstick. My cousin was quiet and did not take our name though it was not only her but four other people, including me. I would take the counted position, make others work for me, and make some friends angry too because they also wanted the same. For that, I used to call them at my home to make them follow what I said. When my cousins and my friends talk about our childhood, they remind me of those roleplays, and I feel a little ashamed for remembering that bossy nature. So many memorable childhood moments have roles in making me who I am.

Being a girl born in a Hindu family, I often faced situations where I was bound to traditions and beliefs. I recall the moment when I had extreme pain in my lower stomach. I shared that with my mother. She asked me to have some hot water and to take a rest. After an hour and so, I found that I got some blood spots, which scared

me. I started crying. My mother asked me what had happened and I told her what I saw. As soon as I told her, I saw blood in my frock, she covered my face with her thick woollen *odhne* (blanket). I suffocated inside it and felt like I was going to be killed. My mother told me not to speak and not even to cry. In the darkness caused by the *odhne* all over my head, I could not recognize who was around me and where I was taken. After reaching the destination, my mother took out the *odhne* and said I could speak quietly. I saw that I was in the cowshed, and there were hays and straws all around. I did not know what was happening to me. With fear, I asked my mother why I was there. Then she made it clear that I got my first menstruation period, and she declared that for fifteen days, I was not allowed to see the Sun, hear the voice of the male members of the family, and I could whisper to say something.

Further, I was asked not to touch anything except the things given to me. I was given my own plate, glasses and some sheets of clothes to make a pad to absorb the blood and blankets to wrap around me. I was told not to touch anywhere. I found myself being treated as *Mishri didi*, and I understood her pain clearly this time. My mother gave me some do's and don'ts lessons that I must be aware of during and after the menstruation period. I was told not to speak to the male members since their age would decrease if they heard my voice. I was like, how on earth does that happen... At that time, I saw the discrimination created by the patriarchal society to make females bound by the taboos they created to dominate them. I was brainwashed that I would commit sin if I touched my father and brothers or anything like water and other utensils or even if I saw the Sun. In January, I was shivering from the cold, but I was not allowed to stay under the Sun. When I asked about it, my mother had just one answer, 'You have to do it because I did it..' I was just a girl at the first menstruation, but I grew a thought which I did not share with anyone that *if I became the mother of*

a daughter one day, I would break this chain out, the traditional bondage, the chain of domination. My mother rooted in her mind the worldview in the form of habit, which gave her difficulty in bringing change (Christie et al., 2015). When my daughter got her first period, I did not even think of sending her out of my home. I got shifted into the thoughts and mindsets too. This applies not only to this case but also to other events that come across where I think in different ways and act accordingly.

The Shift in My Professional Life

When the discourse is on professional life, I recall the memories of different events I faced. Entering the teaching profession with a picture of my own teacher in my mind, delivering the lessons in the same way, and dealing with students, in the same way, worked for some time. Gradually, there came a shift in the education system in such a way that I established thoughts about *how to survive in the teaching field*. The way I used to teach my students, being strict, taking a stick in my hands, and punishing them if they could not memorize what I had written for them on the board, were all meaningless when I got a sense of being students' favourite teacher. My superiority would develop an attitude towards students for being more knowledgeable than them, and I would always see them as inferior to me. However, my awareness of change that entered education gave a hit to my prevailing teaching practice. Then I realized that I have to come out of what I was doing as a teacher, and I now need to view the world from the students' eyes, for which I needed some training. Not only training, but I had to bring changes in how I taught students and how I learned.

I started attending workshops and taking relevant training. I started asking my colleague teachers to observe my classes and give me feedback. I, too, started taking feedback from students and myself at the end of the lesson. I gave feedback to my

students' work in the form of written comments, encouraging them to do better next time. I followed the strategy of *Patradīkṣā* here. Reading the note given by the teacher, students could develop a positive sense in them, resulting in their academic progress. I observed my teacher colleagues' classes, gave them feedback, and took some ideas from their classes. These all built me into who I am today as an English teacher. My shifted identity as a professional English teacher is the result of my experience in teaching for many years. It might be the result of my eagerness to learn more and to change me as an updated English teacher.

My experience has sharpened me as an English teacher out of all the successes and failures, ups and downs. In my professional journey, I prioritized failure more than success because failure pushed me to learn more and upgrade my knowledge on a particular topic. Today, I encourage other teachers by sharing the story of how I established my professional identity, which gives me the sensation of all those steps I came through. Recalling those failure stages, learning, and improving stages remind me of how I came to the stage of becoming who I am today.

The Shift from English Teacher to an Academic Coordinator

It is difficult to go for one profession when you have your institution. I established my career as an English teacher, and at the same time, I was responsible for handling the academic part of my school. I developed my leadership skills by taking different leadership workshops and attending various training. As an English teacher, I had to be responsible for my class as a class teacher. As the academic coordinator, my responsibility was not limited to a single class and subject. It doubled since I started looking after my subject as well as the academic part of the school. Despite all my responsibilities as a leader, I recall my childhood play where I pretended to be a leader. That was just the pretending of the position of a leader, and

now, it is the reality, but I think I had the leadership quality inside, which I wanted to fulfill out of the play. Now, I find it more challenging when that childhood play turns into the reality that I need to be a leader and that my followers would look upon me to make their way.

It is thought-provoking to be in a position where I need to teach my teachers to grow in their professional careers. I have realized that being the academic coordinator is not easy because that is where you never get satisfied. Had I been only the academic coordinator, I would share my knowledge with the teachers and expected them to do everything perfectly. As the academic coordinator and the English teacher, I have created a situation where the teacher would learn and implement the lesson plan in the real classroom. It is important to focus on personal identity, but as a teacher, identity construction is equally important in terms of professional disciplinary identity since teachers' creativity needs to be linked with pedagogy to be good teachers (Hsieh, 2017). Sometimes, the lesson plan does not work. I have gone through such experiences many times, which is why I understand my teachers who say that their lesson plans did not go well. In that situation, I ask them to reflect on their teaching and make a plan that works better the next time. So, they need to change their lesson plan in that case and would have to think of it differently. I have involved my teachers in reflective teaching, which has built their strengths since they reflect on their teaching, find their strengths and weaknesses, and take action to overcome the problems they faced in their previous class. Just being a coordinator, I would not have made my teachers practice their lesson plan and observe whether it works effectively in the classroom or not. My experience of being a coordinator along with myself as an English teacher has helped me to get effective results in the academic part of the school.

Also, I have to appreciate what I have as the academic coordinator. Being an English teacher, I connected with only English teachers within and outside my school. Being an academic coordinator, I am growing in terms of my profession as an English teacher and a school leader, having professional relationships with the leaders of other schools too. This has given me a platform to learn and share among teachers of all the subjects. Since I look after the lesson plan and its implementation in the classroom as an academic coordinator, I support teachers in developing an effective lesson plan and delivering it effectively. I observe their classes regularly and give feedback which helps them come up with new and innovative ways of teaching. As an English teacher, I share my knowledge with English teachers through different workshops. Being an academic coordinator, I share my knowledge with all the teachers regarding classroom management, understanding child behaviour, child psychology, empathy management, teaching methods and so on. So, the shift from an English teacher to an academic coordinator brought some challenging situations. However, I am successfully handling both responsibilities though I have some hectic times when there is work overload. Again, I learn time management skills and stress management skills from there. Being an optimistic learner, I see many challenges in front of me, but I take it as the phase to learn something.

The Shift from Chalk and Duster Teacher to the Digital Teacher Identity

When I entered the class and wrote on the blackboard for the first time, I couldn't even move my hand. The chalk got stuck in my hand, and I could not move it. I took a long breath, held the chalk properly, and wrote once again. This time, I could write the date, but the dust kept falling to my face as I faced upward. That might be because I had a small height and needed to stretch my hand and look upward. Though I loved my hand full of chalk dust, as that would show my identity as

a teacher, I used to suffer from the dust while erasing with the duster. During that time, it was common for teachers to inhale dust from chalk and duster exposure in every class and suffer from respiratory diseases (Chen et al., 2020). I, too, got allergies in my eyes, skin, and throat. I even needed to quit my first workplace due to my throat problem that became worse out of dust. I used a whiteboard and marker in the next school where I worked as a primary English teacher. Though I missed the dusty white hand that would remind me of being a teacher, I was blessed to work in a school where I could write with a board marker. Later, we were asked to use the ‘overhead projector.’ I was shocked to see how it worked as something advanced than just the use of board and marker. At present, it is more than what we had thought of. We are now in an era where technology has led everything.

We are in a world affected by technology where our identities as digital teachers are immersing in the world of technology along with a change in our culture, habits and feelings (Lizenberg, 2013). It is not only about using technology in schools, colleges, or other sectors; every house is equipped with technology now. People have mobiles in their hands and they have the whole world in front of them with the internet. The world has gone digitalized. The digital world has made teachers not only immersed in technology in terms of learning skills but it is something they have to follow as a social practice (Kajee, 2018). Children today are born with technology and expect it to be used in their learning environment too. Digital transformation develops teachers towards learning approaches that emphasize creating learning environments that fulfill students' expectations of getting digital environments as they have grown up online (Engeness, 2021). Personally, I did not realize the value of being technology-friendly before but the sweeping change brought by the COVID-19 pandemic made me see the tangible change it brought in terms of

technology. The COVID-19 pandemic made me join online courses and learn technology to make me able to teach online, which taught me to learn digital identity management (Supriadi et al., 2022). I could feel the shift in my identity as a digital teacher who turned out to be an interactive instructor leaving the old identity of just the information-holder (Kwon et al., 2021). The need for adapting to the change was the substantive identity which made me think “everybody is changing, so I must change myself” but the difficulty of changing myself as a digital teacher was the situated identity (George et al., 2001) I went through where I could not learn technology quite fast. However, by deconstructing my identity as chalk and duster teacher, I could change myself as a teacher with a digital identity which would show the revive of my being and becoming of a teacher.

Navigating my identity from Ujeli and fan of Mishri didi to the digital pedagogue, I could see many identity shifts in different phases of my life. Being known as Ujeli and a fan of Mishri didi, I was an innocent girl who stayed quiet though I had many questions about Ujeli and the identity of Mishri didi. Today, holding a digital teacher identity, I question how I upheld the threatened identity with the feeling of inferiority with the name ‘Ujeli’ and how people could show such behaviour towards Mishri didi. Though I am a digital pedagogue, I am still dumb about the voice I have to raise for Mishri didi. Many Mishri didis in different parts of Nepal still live with threatened identities (Breakwell, 1986). Mishri didi’s granddaughter Dhana might be facing the same situation even today. Many Ujelis might be there in Nepal who lag behind due to child marriage. The nation has already entered the digital era, but the dusky traditions and beliefs are still prevailing in our society.

The Shift from English Teacher to the Mother of Many

My story of being a mother is different from other women's. When I was in Bible College, we (me and my friends) were in a prayer room. While praying, I saw a vision that I was giving something to the children, who were extending their hands in front of me. I could not count, but they were many. I shared this with my life group in college, and we all prayed about it. I did not get the answer then, but when we returned to Nepal, I was pregnant with my first baby. I was happy to get a baby after three years of our marriage. That happiness was there, but I continuously saw the children's pictures with their extended arms and decided to serve the needy children. When I prayed about it, my husband and I came to the decision that we would start an orphanage so that we could help those children. I believed in God in every provision that He has made in my life. For beginning the orphanage, too, I had faith in God that He would provide everything. After about a week, there came a situation where we had to keep an orphan child with us. After that, one after another, I had 11 children at my home by the time I gave birth to my first child. Gradually, the number of children increased to 11, 15, 17, 21, and 27. Some were under five years old, and some were six. So, they needed care since they were small. We, too, prayed about the people and got some merciful hearts who sponsored them.

My daughter was just seven days old, and I was changing her nappy. My husband told me that Charu *didi*, one of the members of our church, got a brain stroke. Charu *didi* had no one except her two sons, Karun and Barun. Her husband had gone abroad to earn money but never returned. She used to come to our church every Saturday. I had noticed her because her little son, Barun, once was on her lap, and he peeked at me behind and laughed. He was just one year at that time. When I heard the news of her brain stroke, I thought of Barun. He was just one and a half

years old at that time. All the church members prayed for her, but Charu didi passed away. Karun, a four-year-old boy, and his brother Barun remained in the little hut where they used to live.

When my husband saw that devastating situation, he brought them into our home. Barun became the youngest of all except my daughter. When I was there to feed my daughter, Barun would appear in front of me and sit on my lap. So, I would feed both of them. Karun and Barun have been with us since that time. Other children in the orphanage have their own stories, making me feel that I was made their mother since God knew that they all needed me and my care as a mother. This was a shift in my life where I understood the meaning of being mother of my own children and becoming mother of many children. There was a different level of responsibility for those children. Maybe God wanted me to hold that responsibility for those children by showing me the picture of the children extending their arms during my prayer.

When my daughter was six months old, I decided to join the school we started a few months ago. I started working there as an English teacher. I used to work at school, come home and look after my daughter and other children. I started teaching them in the evening and found they needed special care teaching. They were six years old but did not know Nepali alphabets, English alphabets, or counting. So, I decided to teach them thoroughly at home for a few months. I left school and stayed at home. During that time, I was not only their mother but also the teacher since I taught all essential things to them for six months. I focused on the foundation knowledge for them to join our school. I focused on the English language too. I could bring them up to the expected level within six months, except for two of them. They would tell all the Nepali and English alphabet. They would make words and sentences and would count the beads. They would write the number names. They started giving replies in

English. Finally, they were ready to join the school. The journey of being a mother of many remained nostalgic moments. When I see those children growing as teenagers and finishing their higher education and moving ahead with much success in their life, I feel proud of them. Those six months remained the precious time when I played the role of mother and teacher for those children and continued in their school too since I was their teacher in the school. Again, when they were in school, I took care of them not only as a teacher but also as a mother. My story of the shifted identity from an English teacher to a mother of many is commendable to remember. However, I have to come to the ground reality that it is not easy to be mother of many. Sometimes, I think of being mother of my own children and of others. Then, I see vast difference in the way my children treat me and the way they treat me. They call me their mother but in reality, they see me as the 'mother figure'. In fact, I can never take their mother's place nor I can put ointment in the pain they got out of losing their parents.

Shift from One Religion to the Other

Jaisvi was friendly with one teacher in the residential school that she taught. She met one guy through her who was her cousin. It was not like love at first sight, but as she was alone and there was nobody to help her, she became close to her, and through her, she became close to him. Sometimes, they used to go out. She found him very helpful. She did not know that he liked her then. After all those difficulties, he was there to help Jaisvi and calm her down. Jaisvi put forward her thought, *He used to carry my bags and help me in whatever way he could. I feared that I would be caught and taken by the same fellow again, even though my relatives told me I was foolish since I left all my ancestral property there and ran away without taking anything from there. So, he was there if I needed to go anywhere. I heard that the fellow treated my brothers so bad when I left. Gradually, my brothers also left the house. So, the place*

which used to be full of life once was left empty at the end. Jaisvi was hiding and not going to church for a year, but she told them she had to attend church every Saturday. She started going to church. Suddenly, when she started going to church, she saw the person (with whom she was close) in church. She said, "You are in church?" He said, "Yes, I am in church." He added, "I know the bible. I study the bible, and now, I have started attending church." Jaisvi was so happy finding him in the church and participating in church activities.

When she knew that he liked her, she told him everything. She said what her cousin brother had done to her. Though he is five years younger than her, he thought she was the right person for him. At that time, she thought it would be better for her to go nearby her sisters. So, she went to Gang tub, and he came all the way to Gangtok, and he called her up since she had given him her number. Jaisvi said *I had told my sisters about how I am involved with a guy. So, I told my sister that he was there to see me and she called him. My sister was not happy because I was already in my forties. He said he would be Christian, and I said, No, you don't have to be Christian. I said, as far as you understand me, that is fine. He said I would not keep you in my house because you cannot stay with my mother. After all, she is a tough lady. My sister and aunt worried because he said he was Rana Tharu. My younger sister joked that when we were in Kalimpong, one Tharu used to speak so rudely and was kind of awkward. She said he is also Tharu....* Whatever other people said, Jaisvi found him all right. She talked to her church father about him. She was a person who used to have a prayer life, and she used to pray to God whenever she had any problem. She used to think that if she became Protestant, she would not be able to pray to Mother Mary. Nuns brainwashed Jaisvi's mind saying that if you do this, you will go to heaven; if you do that, you will go to hell. She wished her daughter would also be

brainwashed because she learned so many things there. She learned how to believe in God. Her friends there asked her why she didn't admit her daughter where she is currently teaching. But she knows why she admitted her to the Christian school. She thinks that her daughter would at least be a cultured girl and would be immersed in religion. Sometimes, she feels like *laaa* (Oh No...) when asked if she prayed in the morning, and she nodded. She tells her daughter that God will punish her if she does not pray. It is to make her trust in God.

Jaisvi had mix marriage. In a mixed marriage, the father blesses *sindur* and *pote*, and the husband puts that over the bride. In Catholic Christianity, first should be the church blessing, but later they can marry in other religious ways. Culture-wise, you can get married like you can put *tika* and all. As it is liberal, she becomes busy in Dashain. She goes to the temple and be with all the family members though she doesn't bow. She said *I take part in Dewali. We have gharko dewata, dhungako dewata... I am really scared of that. My husband has Laxmi and all, and I even light the diyo, and I do dhup batti for Laxmi though I don't worship Laxmi. You know when I put alter, my husband brought his Goddess Laxmi simultaneously. I could not tell her not to put his God because he has a short temper. When I pray, I remove those pictures of Goddess Laxmi. Sometimes, I even think if I am sinning by keeping Goddess Laxmi together and praying to my God, but I don't know... I can't tell my church people because if they know about it, they will undoubtedly tell me not to put other idols.* Jaisvi got another difficulty when she gave birth to her daughter. She said, my daughter was born and my husband wanted to do *nwaran* (naming ceremony) for my daughter. He said *we have to call pandit and do all the functions. I had never seen how the nwaran would be done. I was really scared of what I needed to do. We were at my aunt's house, and she was catholic, and on top of that, my*

husband thought nwaran was important. At that time, I burst. I said, "Do you remember you also wanted to be catholic, and now you want to do nwaran." People were already there, and did some mantra and gave name, but that was a really difficult situation for me.

In church, church people have lots of groups. They have different prayers like at 6 O'clock, they have Rosary. They have more online prayers at present. If anyone is sick, Jaisvi and other people in the group have to go and pray or have an online prayer. Jaisvi sadly said, that *every Friday, we have adoration at 6 O'clock, where they put Icarus roti for praising and adoring. I could never participate in that because I have to cook then. October is Mary's month, where we have Rosary for the whole month. It is also difficult for me to participate at that time. We are in a community where we are involved in church activities, and my church people would think that I am unable to give time to God. People will not understand that I have to cook and make everyone happy at home. Jaisvi has to ensure that she is taking care of sick people at home and that she is taking good care of her mother-in-law. So, it is difficult.*

Shift in the Culture: Being an Outsider

Jaisvi's mother-in-law did not want them in the house as she used to stay alone. She has a small niece and nephew with her, and she said that she couldn't provide any space to Jaisvi and her daughter in that house. So, they stayed outside. Her mother treats Jaisvi as an outsider. Jaisvi remembered that some teachers treated her like an outsider, even in the school where she worked for 15 years. They expressed that she was from Darjeeling, and she came there because she did not get any work in her place. She described this as *My mother-in-law is from India, and she said that I came to loot/rob his son. Sometimes I think of the Ten Commandments.*

One of the commandments from God is 'Love your neighbours.' When I was a child, loving neighbours was nothing complicated. I used to love my neighbours, even the neighbours' friends, but when I got matured, I understood what loving the neighbours means. It is not the neighbours, but the literal meaning of neighbours means 'the one next to you.' I found it difficult to love my mother-in-law though I respect her. When I was in her house for a few days with my daughter, she did not even give me water to drink. When I bought water, she told her son (my husband) I was showing others that she did not provide us with water to drink. My husband always wants to make my mother and brother happy. Even now, her mother, brother, and brother's children come first and then my daughter and I, which she is slowly noticing. She doesn't ask anything from her father. She does not express that she is running out of something. I see her needs, and buy, but she does not expect that from her father. Once Jaisvi's mother-in-law told Jaisvi's daughter, "This child is not from our family. That's why she is crying all the time." Her elder sister was with her when she gave birth to her daughter, and she had noticed that her mother-in-law ran after one male child, thinking he was her grandson. Later, when she knew Jaisvi had a daughter, she was unhappy. Time and again, she used to tell if the child was exchanged in the hospital because she did not find her daughter as her granddaughter. Jaisvi's husband, too, expresses the same thing when they have arguments. He never woke up at night to look after her daughter, nor did he go to the hospital with her. She used to feel so sick carrying her little daughter and going to the hospital for her check-up, but he never helped. This is how Jaisvi has adjusted to her new culture. Though religion did not matter much, she got difficulties being an outsider in many situations.

The Status of Being a Student of Major English

I find my choice to take optional Mathematics in class ten as the optional subject is the wrong decision I have made. We had optional English, too, as an option, and I was interested in that, but I was kept in optional Mathematics by my optional Mathematics teacher. As a laborious student who would do all homework and classwork, he believed that I was good at mathematics. I never got a clue about any chapters from Optional Mathematics. I was counselled by the mathematics teacher that I could get a good result if I went for optional Mathematics. I was convinced by what my teacher said and took Mathematics as the optional subject, reducing my percentage in School Leaving Certificate (SLC). As soon as I passed my board exam of class ten SLC, my friends insisted on applying for the staff nurse course. They told me about the opportunities that might come in the nursing field. I was somehow convinced of what they said, but I dropped that off my mind due to a large amount of money I had to pay for joining it. I was admitted to +2 college, where I took English as a major subject under Humanities. After all, English was my dream that I derived from my father's dream. Though the challenge was there, I committed myself to studying English as a major subject. That was the initial step to fulfilling my dream.

I started being a good listener in English class. I had to study Compulsory English as well as major English. I enjoyed both the English and the teachers began focusing on me, making me feel like I was one of the good students of English. I started improving my English. Moreover, I started enjoying it. Whenever I had free time at home, I started reading novels, increasing my vocabulary. As I gradually got my name as a good student of English, I was encouraged more and more. This was perfectly shaping the way to fulfill my dream. As soon as I finished class eleven, I joined class twelve. My English teacher was well pleased by my hard work. He used

to admire my effort in front of my friends. He offered me a job in his school, and to my surprise, it was to teach English in his school. At that time, I realized that English was a key to opening the way for my career development. As I developed my English-speaking skill, I used to speak fluently in English, which gave me many opportunities in my life. Once, I was in a school event where foreigners had come, and they were about to start games and sports with students. The principal was announcing the start of the program. At that time, he too announced that I would interpret in Nepali what the foreigners said in English. I had just joined the school. To be an interpreter was a big thing to do in front of all the teachers and students. I took it as a huge opportunity, grabbed it, and did what I was asked to do. It made me feel like being prestigious because I could comprehend and speak English. Thus, I concluded that people who know English have a status among their fellows.

More Than an English Teacher

Being an English teacher made me an honourable person in my school. I used to be given the duty of writing the notice to be published. Most often, I used to be asked to speak in the assembly. I was given extra work as an English teacher in all the schools I worked in. It was a kind of additional burden, but it was my responsibility. When there was a time to make a wall magazine, I was there to correct the language of students' articles. I was there to edit teachers' language, and I used to make the final version of those articles. English teacher is not just a person who takes the post of English teacher. I found that English teachers have big responsibilities, and work has no limitations. As an English teacher, I fulfilled the role of the lead teacher, editor, commentator, advisor, speaker, designer, and many more.

Once I was in school with my usual routine. In the school, there was a volunteer from Germany who used to help students as well as teachers with First Aid

treatment. There came a boy who told me that one of his friends had a stomach ache. I immediately went to the ground where the boy was found lying down, and his friends were covering him with keenness. I immediately called the volunteer. She went there and observed the boy. She said that he quickly needed to see the doctor. The principal called the school bus and asked the volunteer to accompany the boy. The volunteer expressed that she needed one more person to translate her English language in the hospital. So, I was sent with the volunteer and the boy. Again, I noticed the 'extra' for me as an English teacher. This made me feel like an English teacher is not just an English teacher but more.

English Teacher: The Dreadful, The Proud, and The Painful Moment

As an English teacher, I found that I was given much respect. I applied for a secondary-level English teacher position in one English medium school. I was called for an interview. On the way to my interview, I met a man whom I met at one conference. I knew that he was in the same school. I told him that I was going to the school where he was working and that I had applied there for the post of English teacher at the secondary level. He told me that it was not easy to get a job there because it was a high-quality school. I was confused by his words, but I made my way. In the interview, I attempted my best to answer the questions. I was surprised that I was supposed to give all written, listening and reading tests. I felt like I would better take the IELTS test. I was asked to sit for the written test. I sat for the test. As I was pretty confident about the grammar and composition part, it was not difficult for me though I was scared. I attempted two questions given in the paper. I was then asked to sit for a listening test. I was panicking because I was never sure about the tone and intonation of English people. I used to struggle to understand what they were talking about when the conversation was between native speakers of English. I took a

long breath and sat for the listening test. I tried to be careful enough. The lady looking after me alarmed me of the finishing of time. Then, I thanked her and went from there.

After two hours, I got a call from the coordinator of the school. It was a dreadful moment when I heard that I had left all questions from the written test on the other side of the paper. I was not sure about what to say to the coordinator. He asked me whether I could be able to go and attempt the remaining questions. No sooner did he drop the words to give me a chance, I said 'Yes' and then went there again within half an hour and attempted those questions. I gave thanks to him for giving me one more chance. I waited for the result for about a week. Then I got a call from the school saying I was selected as the Secondary level English teacher. The moment is still in my memory when I faced the formal interview, listening, reading, and writing test. That was the most dreadful moment I faced as an English teacher, which I had not encountered in my previous attempt to be a teacher.

I joined the school with the big hope of making my career in the school. On the first day of my job in the school, I was thrilled with double joy. On top of being a secondary-level English teacher, I was made a coordinator of the block. That was the most joyful moment for me. I decided to give my hundred per cent to the students. I had to teach from class 6 to class 10. I started my teaching journey in the school at a good pace. Students were happy. I made my best attempt to give them the environment where they could learn best. At that time, it was all about how I taught from the book that was provided as teaching material. I taught in the school as a secondary-level English teacher. I was a class teacher in grade nine there. Grade nine was pretty happy with my headship as a grade teacher. They used to be attentive in class while I was teaching. They were friendly and helpful too. They were the perfect

example of good students. I used to go to my class with one simple game every day. That was the main attraction for the students. Most of them used to tell me that they liked that particular thing about me that I used to motivate them with some activities.

Meanwhile, I was admitted to the hospital due to a severe problem. I had to leave my dear students, my dear school. I informed the coordinator. He asked me to come to the school for one more day as it was the day of the school fair. Though I was sick, I went to school. That day was memorable because my dear students from class nine stood on the stage. I was happy to see their love towards me though I could not assist them anymore. I was feeling bad for not being able to be a responsible teacher. One of the students announced that they would sing a song dedicated to me. What a moment! I held my breath so hard. They sang a song for me, and that was amazing how they did it. They expressed all their feelings towards me, which filled my eyes with tears. That was the best moment I ever faced and was the proud moment I ever experienced.

Here is a painful moment I have ever faced as a teacher. It is a story about my student and me. It was when I was a primary English teacher. There was a boy named Mahenk. He was in class two. I was an English teacher in his class. He was a lovely boy. He was handsome by look, an adorable look with a catchy hairstyle that was made itself due to his curly hair. He was a sunny-natured boy with lots of humour. He had chubby cheeks, which used to be covered by dirt. He used to come to school being filthy. He had a runny nose all the time, dirty hands and dirt all over his dress. He had no worries. Neither was he worried about his homework nor classwork. He used to make me angry all the time. At that time, giving punishment was a common thing that teachers used to do. I, too, used to provide him with lots of punishment. There was no improvement in him. After months of teaching in that class, I noticed

that Mahenk could do his work nicely when he was kept near the teacher. I tried this sometime, and I found that it was true. When he was nearby me, I used to talk to him. He used to share his stories with me. Sometimes, he used to tell what happened at his home and what he did. I did not realize that I had developed a habit of listening to his happy and sad stories. This made me closer and closer to Mahenk. I started seeing the goodness inside of him. I realized there was an excellent Mahenk inside the tag I had given to him, 'Naughty Mahenk.' He started being the center of my hope that he could also do good in his study if he were given attention.

I used to give him more individual care. Mahenk brought good results in his second terminal exam, fulfilling my hope. I was happy with the improvement in his study. His mother came to meet me, and she thanked me for what Mahenk used to talk about me, saying that I was the source of his encouragement for him. I was contented with his mother's satisfaction. On the same day, Mahenk told me that they were going to Manakamana, the coming weakened. The days passed by. Mahenk told everybody that he was very excited about going to Manakamana. He said this almost twenty times that day. I was pleased with his excitement.

After the weekend, on Sunday morning, when I reached school, I had an unpleasant feeling. I did not know why but I could sense that something was wrong. The principal called all the teachers in the staffroom. He broke a piece of news that was heartbreaking news for me. The car in which Mahenk was travelling crashed on the way to Manakamana. He said that Mahenk is no more alive and his parents and sister are in hospital. Alas! Mahenk was just seven years old. I could not handle the situation—that moment when I burst into tears in front of the whole mass. People might have thought me being dramatic, but I knew how painful that moment was for

me. How could I believe my beloved student Mahenk left this world and remained just in my memory?

Jaisvi's Unforgettable Moment

I was teaching class nine. There were many boys. We had to keep our class very quiet at that time. We were conscious not to let children make noise. I tried to make them quiet since the coordinator was on the way, but students started shouting and did not listen to me. So, I left the class and did not go back. Later the monitors came to call me, and I shouted at them. After the break, I had just entered the class and saw the students pushing one another on the bench. They kept on pushing each other. I was standing and watching over them, but they did not stop. I grabbed them and took them to the principal's office and told the principal that I could not teach the class if they came to my class the next day.

The principal immediately took action and suspended them for a week. They were sent home immediately. I thought that was my big failure at that time. They did not do anything worst, but it was just that they did not give response to me when I continuously looked at them while they were pushing. I thought it might be my failure in handling children. Then I called some of the students and took their responses, and they said that I was so angry at that time and that the two students were also angry at me. I told them that I felt bad that they were suspended. Maybe they relayed the message to them. When they came back, they were not angry with me. They had no resentments. I was happy, and after about a month, I talked to them about that matter and fizzled it out.

The More You Learn English, the More You Realize How Little You Know

When I was a child, I used to think that I would learn everything when I reached standard ten. Later, when I reached standard ten, I started thinking about what

I will learn in my college life. It went on and on. At present, when I am at my PhD level, I started realizing that we learn in every step of our life and that learning never ends. We never reach the level where we think, “Now, I know everything.” Learning is a process that gives us new insight into something of our concern. I learned English from English Medium School, where I was admitted as a student and from where I completed my School Leaving Certificate (SLC). My base was good, but I was always in a situation where I was weak in English. In terms of pronouncing the words, I was weak. It was /tɒmɑ:rəʊ/ for me, not /tə'mɒrəʊ/. It was /bə'na:nɑ:/ not /bə'na:nə/. Also, it was /pɒtətəʊ/, not /pə'teɪtəʊ/. There are many words as such that I could not pronounce well.

One amazing experience I went through was when I was an English teacher in one institutional school. I was teaching in class six. There was a student who was good at English. Though I was a teacher there, I used to feel awkward in front of that student as she was brilliant in English pronunciation. There appeared a word ‘dough’ while I was teaching. I never saw this word before. It seemed like ‘enough’ to me. So, I pronounced it like /ɪ'nʌf/, saying /dʌf/. The student came near me and said, teacher, it is not /dʌf/. It is /dəʊ/. That was an embarrassing moment for me though I learned the correct pronunciation. I felt ashamed in front of her.

Nevertheless, I learned the correct pronunciation, and at least I became aware of being prepared beforehand. From that time on, I started looking at the confusing words and checking the pronunciation, taking the help of a dictionary. Even a minor incident made me learn a big lesson. The more I am in higher education, the more I find that I was wrong in conceptualizing this and that. For instance, I recently got the proper concept of ‘Let’s and Let us.’ I understood ‘Let’s’ as a contraction form of ‘Let us’, but in a conversation with one English teacher in my school, it became clear

that they are different. I never understood why the question tag of ‘Let’s go’ becomes ‘Shall we?’ and ‘Let us go’ becomes ‘Will you?’ That conversation made it clear of the difference between ‘Let’s’ and ‘Let us.’ So, there are things that are getting more precise day by day. I think this is what our life as teachers is. We teach and learn, and again we learn and teach. This process goes on and on.

The meaning I derived from the narratives is that teachers encounter shifts in different phases of their lives but the values such as pride and shame are derived from our relationship with the material environment. So, continuity across time and situation is the universal process for identity construction but the narratives is aligned with Identity process theory since they express that the obstruction in those continuity brings identity in threat. Being aligned to the transformative learning theory, the narratives come as a soulful inquiry of my ‘self’ and ‘other’ which is powerful (Qutoshi, 2016) and those of my participants which served for the emancipatory approach to search for many unanswered questions.

Chapter Essence

This chapter incorporated my story of being an English teacher. My choice for the teaching profession was to fulfill my father’s dream of making her child an English teacher. Pragati’s choice of teaching profession was due to her brother’s pressure, and Jaisvi’s good English language made her an English teacher. These stories of how we became English teachers are included in this chapter. As identity shift happens through a change in many personal matters and on professional issues, the stories of our identity shift have got room in the chapter. This chapter includes the story of my identity shift when my duty changed from the teacher to ‘the mother of many.’ The scenario of how I handled the situation of that identity shift is in the chapter. Similarly, my and my participants’ status, where we went through the

threatened identity and the role of belongingness during that situation to construct our identities, are incorporated in the chapter. The stories of how I navigated myself from Ujeli to a digital pedagogue are in the chapter.

CHAPTER IX

SELF EFFICACY: A STEP TOWARDS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Our life is not always easy. We want good things to take place in our lives and we want to develop. This chapter discuss my and my participants' effort for professional development. I have discussed how we were engaged in activities such as training, workshops, reflecting on our classes and self-evaluation. This chapter is the depiction of my steps toward professional development. The chapter describes our transformation from a caterpillar stage to the emergent butterfly from cocoon which helped us go around and find the opportunities to grow more. Also, the chapter talks about the essentials yet to be developed in us. It has covered the story of getting the revelation of the *dīkṣā* mantra in my later life.

Taking Teacher Training

Every mother can feel what motherhood is and sense the immense pleasure of being a mother. I enjoyed the same state of being a mother of my little princess. I thought of giving my whole time to her, not doing any job, because I wanted to enjoy my motherhood fully. For a few months after the delivery, I was busy with my princess, but as I developed a habit of going to the workplace and making myself busy with some work, it wasn't easy to pass the time at home. I then started inquiring about some work that would make me physically and mentally busy. I was also concerned about my self-efficacy, which would develop a belief in me as having the abilities to accomplish the assigned task (Bhati & Sethy, 2022) as a teacher. I heard of one training institute that would give training to the teachers. I had decided to be a teacher in the long term. So, I found this training as a foundation for my teaching career.

Leaving my seven months old child to my mother-in-law, I started going to the training institute. It was a long-term training course that would last for a year, and I made a mindset that I should never let my time go by doing nothing. So, I joined the Primary Teachers Training Program (PTTP).

As I had a gap in direct teaching-learning for a while, I was initially puzzled and did not know how to capture the idea delivered in training. Gradually, I found that they had three terms and different subjects to be learned in each term. I was worried about learning the same subjects I had learned as a student; English, Nepali (Language Arts), Mathematics, Social Studies, Science and Arts. Education Philosophy was a new subject for me which made me familiar with child psychology, the development stages in a child and different learning theories. I had no idea about learning styles, multiple intelligences and children's learning stages which I learned from the training. Also, I learned about Piaget, Erikson and Gardner. Other familiar subjects were my tensions because I thought I would again be a student and study those subjects. How could I conceptualize that the included subjects were not to study the subjects but to learn how to teach those subjects? It was a fantastic journey of training that led me to be a real teacher. Until then, I used to pick up the textbook and teach what was there. Attending a year-long training, I got ideas for being a skillful teacher. I learned to develop materials for particular subjects and to be prepared with lesson plans. I learned to teach the lesson with exciting techniques, mainly to engage students and make them explore the ongoing topics in different subjects.

That journey of teacher training equipped me with primary skills as a teacher, such as dealing with students of different cultures, backgrounds and contexts, understanding students' needs, learning styles and intelligence. I learned other skills like keeping anecdotes and running records of the students to analyze their language,

cognitive, physical and socio-emotional areas of development. As an English teacher, I focused on learning new techniques to teach English. I used to teach my students in a very traditional style, whereas the training made me realize that I was not an updated teacher. I learned to engage my students in task-based learning and model-making.

Similarly, I got the idea to involve students in learning and make a report of it in a big book demonstrating their creativity. Different vocabulary games, warm-up games and other fun activities to teach language made me realize the scope of English language teaching. I, too, realized the role of the teacher to make students explorative. The one-year teacher training program became a stone to lay the foundation for my teaching career, and I made a maximum out of it.

Training Transfer in my Classroom

Attending training by teachers is mostly by force from the school administration. In my case, I used to take it lightly and mostly enjoyed the training, taking it as a platform to be closer to my colleague teachers. I became a learner when I started being a bit serious about training. This pushed me to be attentive to what message the training course intends to deliver. It is challenging to take training to the classroom. Usually, teachers take training and leave it to the training hall. I often took training to accept the leader's request to join the training, making me familiar with the atmosphere. The beginning days of my training were just to attend it. Still, later, I conceptualized the importance of training in teachers' life, illuminating the idea of taking training to the classroom.

When the training transferred to my classroom, that brought a noticeable change in my teaching. I could sense students' attention towards the lessons, and my confidence was projected while teaching. I took several training and webinars, which

are useful for me. However, the training courses entirely designed to improve pedagogical practices were the practical ones for me. As a teacher, the first thing projected is our ways of teaching, and I got different ideas from different training and workshops to use several interesting techniques and methods for teaching. Getting a concept is difficult, but taking that idea to the classroom is challenging. Not everything we learned in training is transferable to the classroom. That may be due to the context and situation of the schools. In the training transfer process, I realized that teachers could directly transfer the training to their classroom in most cases, and they can slightly mould certain things to make it applicable to their classroom, and there might be something that cannot be transferred. I do not claim that I have made everything I gained from the training applicable to my classroom, but I am sure I have tried my best to use many of the techniques and methods in my classroom which I learned in the training or workshops. Training transfer is one of the successes I gained after each training, and through that, I have brought changes in my classroom and in the way my students learned.

Action Research, a Medium to Solve Classroom Problems

I did Action Research on developing the creative writing skills of students. Creative writing is a way to increase learners' interest in writing. It develops students' way of thinking. Creative thinking can be a tool to navigate the contemporary world of work as it is one of the soft skills that the students require to articulate different strategies while doing work (Aboluwodi, 2018). My research agrees with Aboluwodi's idea about creative thinking, which is associated with creative writing. Creative writing enhances students' creative writing skills and assists in their academic writing. When students get an interest in creative writing, they apply that skill in their academic writing as well, which ultimately supports them in any writing

skills. Addressing my research question, what are the practical pedagogical challenges in helping students develop their creativity? The answer might be that the pedagogical challenges appear in the class while teaching creative writing. The challenges are often associated with the students' interest, their learning abilities, and their dispute in the matter of cooperation. These challenges can be overcome gradually over time but with a systematic plan. This research stands as the learning phase for all those challenges seen during the research.

Addressing the next question, how can the problem be addressed and students' creative writing skills be developed, the diagnostic stage of this research has helped capture the problem, and the therapeutic stage has given the real experience of action plan implementation in the real field. To enhance the creative writing skills of students, activities have to be chosen in a way that they learn writing. When this is done with proper attention, the improvement in writing is obvious, as creative writing is the best way to improve writing skills (Pawliczak, 2015). We can launch different activities to develop the students' creative writing skills. When systematically commenced at the action plan implementation phase, these plans work as the treatment for the existing problem and gradually bring improvement. The teacher can measure the progress of the students and can encourage students time and again. To tackle them all, several activities, when instigated, give the solution for those entire pedagogical problems. Students' interests and teachers' regular efforts must get the desired outcome. This Action research attests that creative writing skill is one of the great skills that every child carries, and this skill can be enhanced in a language class and has helped me to bring change in the prevailing situation of creative writing in the classroom.

Today's parents want their children to be problem solvers. Teachers, too, are involved in various training programs to be equipped with the knowledge and skills to make their students creative. I found the problem in my students: they were stuck when asked for free writing. I developed an action plan and implemented the plan, which involved my students in activities that would demand higher-order thinking skills. Some types of thinking require greater cognitive processing to solve problems. Critical thinking helps in problem-solving (Zetriuslita et al., 2016). Higher-order thinking incorporates critical and creative thinking where the learners engage and put effort into creating something (Pokhrel, 2018). Today's society demands output, which also applies to school students. Creative and critical skills assist students in coming up with the output. Students can conceptualize holistically and reflect artistically when approaching higher-order thinking skills (Shukla & Dungsungnoen, 2016). Students' imaginative power grows and they can think of a bigger picture at a higher order thinking level. Teachers need to give students higher order thinking tasks to find the difference between higher order and lower order thinking tasks and give importance to higher order thinking tasks while developing their lesson plan (Ganapathy et al., 2017). I, as a teacher, had to work hard to bring learning output to the class. With action research on higher-order thinking activities for developing creative writing, I could bring change in my students' creative writing skills.

Inspired by that, I carried out another action research on going beyond textbooks in English class, which helped me be a creative teacher. It also made my students critical thinkers, and at the same time, they could come up with different learning outputs. When getting success in conducting action research, I also encouraged my colleague teachers to conduct action research, and we got an excellent

result. This personally assisted me in growing as a professional English teacher since I developed confidence as a classroom researcher.

Attending and Presenting in the Conferences: Refining the Self as an English Teacher

Attending international conferences helped me see how people around the world present their papers. I used to keep myself in their position and think of presenting the paper in front of scholars worldwide. I would be scared of that. After attending three or four conferences, I also considered presenting my paper, rising above the fear. Presenting at the conference has built my confidence and made me professionally strong. I learned to stand in front of people and speak to them. Not only that, but I also got practical knowledge about dealing with educated adults. The first paper I presented was on the topic, 'Creative Writing Skills: Wow!' I presented this by collaborating with my colleague, who equally participated in the presentation. In that presentation, we shared the benefit of initiating creative writing in English class. The presentation was based on desktop research on creative writing, which led me to write an article on that topic. The article I wrote is about how creative writing has got a place in teaching and learning. I have explained the process involved in creative writing, and the idea has been presented regarding the benefit of being involved in creative writing. The article I wrote is a bash to the traditional way of teaching English, including copying from the board and memorizing the notes given by teachers. We are familiar with the laid-back trend of teachers who go to the class, take books in hand, read out what is written there and do not give anything new. This made me feel that students' creativity remained inside them and could not emerge. This made me write an article on the topic 'Creative Writing: Wow!'

My first experience of speaking at the conference with many adults was on the same paper, 'Creative Writing: Wow!' My colleague and I took the concurrent session with the participants of the 21st NELTA conference. We engaged them in creative writing, from free writing about the day to creating their own short stories and poems. It was fun to listen to what they wrote and to see how they enjoyed the session. Moreover, the presentation at the conference gave me a different level of confidence as an English teacher. I felt like I was an able English teacher who could even make the adults understand English and make them do tasks related to English. This confidence assured me that I could present the paper next time too. I started working out with another research on paragraph writing.

The topic of the paper was 'Paragraph Writing Skills.' I presented that with my colleague too. That paper was also the desktop research on paragraph writing skills. It was about writing a paragraph with a topic sentence. In the conference, the participants were first given an example of two different paragraphs, one with a topic sentence and the other without it. They were asked to find out which was a good paragraph. Then, the reason was given why one of them was a good paragraph. They were made clear about the topic sentence and how to write the remaining part of the paragraph with the alignment of the topic sentence. That was at the 22nd NELTA conference, and the participants were delighted with our presentation that they even took our email address.

At the 23rd NELTA conference, I thought of being more confident and decided to present alone. This time it was all about the field-based research that I did as classroom research on Higher-order thinking skills, and the paper was entitled, 'Higher Order Thinking Skills to Boost up Students' Creative Writing.' I was able to explain the participants of the conference that higher-order thinking incorporates

critical and creative thinking. Creative and critical thinking serves to fulfill the demand of today's society. With their plan to give higher-order thinking activities, teachers can make students creative. I encouraged the participants that with their effort for students' involvement in such activities, they can grow with problem-solving skills and become critical thinkers. Teachers must work hard to bring the learning output of higher-order thinking skills in the class.

At the 23rd NELTA conference, I was standing in front of more than twenty people who were all English professionals. As I was standing as a presenter, I found myself confident enough to deliver my planned presentation. However, there was a fear as that was the first time I presented alone at the conference. I gave my introduction. Then, I moved toward the warm-up by displaying my first slide, which consisted of an excerpt. I read it aloud and asked them to listen carefully. I created a situation where the participants were taken into a dilemma. The question was kept in front of them, "Which survivor among the two should have spot on the boat?" Two of them were given a chance to give their ideas. Then, linking this to 'higher-order thinking,' I entered my topic, "Higher Order Thinking Activities to Boost Students' Creativity."

I talked about higher and lower order thinking from the point of view of Bloom's Taxonomy. I shared my experience of encountering a student with higher-order thinking. It is a simple, usually unnoticed event, but that was where I found the higher-order thinking in students. I further explained that enhancing students' learning through higher-order thinking activities in English class is possible. Some relevant literature was brought to make my standpoint authentic. I conveyed a sharing of my Action Research related to the same topic. I made the environment enjoyable by showing the difference in English class by launching higher and lower order thinking.

These differences were in terms of content, process and product. I tried to show how the teachers should bring a twist in their planning, how much effort they need to make and how the students get engaged in their learning when the activities are of higher order. I showed them the differences in the writing product by showing them the actual writing samples.

After that, I asked the participants to think of the moments they had encountered higher-order thinking. One of the participants shared how she dealt with the situation when she faced higher-order thinking in class. Some shared how the teachers can be serious about uplifting students with higher-order thinking activities. I wrapped up the session with my view on how we can make English teaching-learning better by including higher-order thinking activities in English class. It was a fantastic session with good recalling, open sharing and effective learning.

That was the experience which made me feel like a professional English teacher. As soon as the concurrent session was over, five or six participants came to me and asked for my phone number and email address. At that time, I found myself complete as an English teacher and realized how pleasing it is when people count you as a professional. I was excited to research again, making me a continuous learner who would explore different English-related topics. Presenting at the conferences has given me a different level of strength, making me an efficient English teacher. This time, I found myself raising in the spirit, which was something more than my body and soul. That was not the bodily pleasure, not the pleasure out of something I did with my intellect but of something that was above that, and that was none other than floating in the spirit, the spirit of high satisfaction, confidence and pleasure.

A Visit to different Schools in the United Kingdom (UK): A Huge Prospect

I was in Alina's Bakery Cafe with my family and a friend who came to visit us from the UK, Mr. Alan Harris. We had taken him for dinner. Alan was expressing his amusing reaction to the dish in front of him, which was a smoky dish. After a while, he asked me, Vidhya, how did you feel when you were in England last July? That was your second visit to the UK, right?" I said, "Yeah, that was my second visit to the UK, and it was great to be there with the whole family. Especially when I found my nine-year-old daughter and six-year-old son trying to get the English accent of the people over there." Alan said, "Wonderful!" After a while, he continued, "I heard that you were there after a decade." I replied, "Yeah, that was after a decade. I was in England in 2008 and went there last July in 2018, and maybe I will revisit England in 2028, after a decade." Alan burst into laughter. My husband and I gave company to his laughter. After a while, he said, "Hang on... I think you don't need to wait for a decade to go to England. I have some friends in the UK who would help you visit schools over there. I already remained the governor of the public school. So, I have good connections with the head teachers. Would you be happy to visit England on your own? Hmm... being a professional English teacher and the school leader?" I nodded in confusion and, with a weird look on him. Probably Alan understood my confusion. So, he continued, "When I explain to my friends, I mean, the head teachers that you are from Nepal and that you are leading more than sixty teachers in your school, they won't say "No" to your visit, and they don't have reason to say 'No.' They will be more than happy to share their ideas with you. I think you would like to gain that experience of visiting schools in England, wouldn't you?" I looked at my husband's face to see his expression. I felt lucky to have a husband like him. He smiled and nodded his head with an expression of 'Yes.' Then I said to Alan, "Alan

will that be possible? I mean, I heard it is not that easy to visit schools in England. So, how can I....” Alan did not let me drop the whole sentence and said, “Well, it’s not easy, but when I tell the head teachers, it’s not hard either. As they are my friends and they trust me, I am sure they will say ‘Yes.’ You just make a plan to go to England next year around October-November. You will stay at my home. Amie, my wife, will be more than happy to welcome you.” I was like.... “Okay...” Alan said, “Cool, hockey ducky.”

Planning for the Visit

I started planning for the visit. I needed to make the visit fruitful. To make the visit fruitful, I planned to take one more teacher with me. I chose one preschool coordinator to go with me. I intended that when we visit the schools over England, we could take some collaborative projects assigned to us by British Council for participating in International School Award 20-23. We were supposed to do three collaborative projects with partner schools abroad. So, I thought, *why don't I make the maximum of my visit by making that collaboration happen with the schools I visit?* I talked with Alan about it, and he spoke with some head teachers about the projects. He gave me their email address. I contacted them and explained to them everything related to the ISA award. As I talked with Ms. Bina about the possibility of taking her to the UK with me, she was so happy that she said if she got that opportunity, she would be more than happy and would fulfill the duty I expected from her. I explained to her how she needed to run the collaborative project of our preschool there. We sat together for many days and designed a plan to accomplish our project in a successful way there. Ms. Bina took the responsibility of one project and took the responsibility of two projects; one language project and the other collaborative project of science. I prepared all the materials, and the tasks I needed to make my students do here in my

school were all done. I prepared all my presentation slides to give a presentation in the schools there. Then, Ms. Bina and I were ready to go to England.

I was already in contact with the head teachers of five schools. I was in regular chat with them. I did not take my visit as something unusual because the head teachers had already given a briefing about their schools and made the whole schedule for my visit to their schools. Ms. Bina was scheduled to visit different pre-schools as I asked Alan to manage in the same way since she is the pre-school coordinator and needed to take ideas about setting up and running. Though we were conscious about warm clothes and boots to be taken, we were more conscious about not missing any materials for our projects to be done there.

On the Day of Departure

At 6:00 PM, we left our home and headed toward the airport. This time, I had a different feeling inside of me. Though it was my third visit to England, I found myself being a responsible person this time because I was leading Ms. Bina on the whole trip. Previously, I used to follow my husband, and I was not aware of any particular responsibilities. When Ms. Bina was a bit sad to leave her family, I stood as a lead person to calm her down, behaving like I was her leader and making her understand that this trip was a life-changing opportunity. At this point, I was rising above my body and soul and floating in the spirit, praying with God for a safe journey on the first hand and then for a fruitful journey. God knows how scared I am of the height. This time, it was scarier since I had left my husband and two lovely kids back home. There was a strange feeling of unhappiness inside me, but I made myself bold and tried not to be emotional. Instead, I had to behave like a leader to Ms. Bina by calming her down. I still remember Ms. Bina giggling to see me praying throughout the flight. Ms. Bina might have realized that I have a height phobia, but I proved to be

a leader in guiding her to reach the right place and deal with the authorities in immigration. We had lots of fun on the way, on the flight, and in the transition.

From Dubai Airport to Stafford

When Ms. Bina asked for the milk coffee at Dubai airport, she was asked whether to put in little milk or more. She was worried about the price to say ‘more.’ So, she said, “Less milk, please.” After a while, the coffee was ready. Ms. Bina was excited to have coffee in Dubai. It was a cup with a lid. She sipped coffee. I found her face shrinking as if her face is a bottle containing boiling water. I burst into laughter. Ms. Bina opened the lid and said, “Maam, there is no milk.” I said, “You said little milk. So, they put little in yours.” Ms. Bina said, “Maam, I said little, but I can’t see any milk in my coffee, nor does it taste like a milk coffee... I think I could make five cups of coffee with the amount of coffee they put in this cup.” I could not control my laughter at seeing Ms. Bina’s experience of having coffee for the first time abroad. She kept saying, “I will have anything except coffee in the UK. It must be of the same taste everywhere.”

I thought, “I wish she would not have this type of experience in other matters such as her visit to schools or the shops in Stafford.” After three hours of transition in the Dubai International Airport, we boarded for Heathrow. As usual, I spent the whole eight hours praying. Ms. Bina watched some Bollywood movies. I tried to watch films but could not concentrate. So, I thought prayer was the best solution to my journey in the air as I could rise above the body and soul and pray in the spirit for safety. I was praying in the tongue and speaking to the Holy Spirit for safety.

In Heathrow, Mr. Steward and his wife, Helena, were waiting, who had already been to Nepal and in my home. They were taking us to Alan’s house. We got into their car, and it took about two hours to reach Alan’s house as it was in Stafford,

which is quite away from Heathrow. On the way, we had a good conversation with Mr. Steward and her wife, Helena. I realized how wonderful it is to speak English with native people. Being with native people of English made me think and react immediately in English, and I also focused on making them understand what I was trying to convey. I did not think of my English grammar, nor did I think of errors I made. Even that informal meeting with them in the car gave me some lessons related to English language learning.

Finally, we reached Alan's house, where his wife, Amie, was waiting outside with her four sons. We were welcomed to their home and asked for dinner. I immediately grasped the plate. Ms. Bina smiled and took the plate too. I gobbled the prepared food without hesitation but saw Ms. Bina taking time to digest the taste of England. To give company to her, I pretended to be slow in eating. I think Ms. Bina compared the dinner with the coffee she had at Dubai Airport. She must have thought that both had similar tastes. I could see her finishing a plate of food with such difficulty that she may not have had before in her lifetime. Due to such a long journey of 12 hours, I was hung with a time change. Time favoured me as it was evening there, and I could request Amie that we wanted to go to bed. Amie was ok with that. She handed over a schedule of two weeks to me. I saw that Bina and I were scheduled for different schools according to our purpose for each day. I could appreciate how organized British people are. If I were there to schedule people in Nepal, I would just wait for the day to come and then give them the responsibility as per the situation on the day. But here, I was scheduled for two weeks, which made me think that I was on a complete professional trip to England this time.

My First Visit to the School in England

Ms. Wall, the personal assistant (PA) of Mr. Alan, had taken the responsibility of picking us up from Alan's house to the schools and vice-versa in the evening. I felt blessed when I found everything being arranged and had no problem regarding my visit. It was the first day at St. Dominic's Grammar School, UK. I was excited about the visit. It was the first time I entered a school in the UK. That was great to go to the reception and say I was from Nepal. The lady in the reception expressed that she already knew about my visit. With her cheerful smile, she said, "Hello, Vidhya! I know you are here to visit our school. Mr. McNabb has already informed me. Please, have a seat. Mr. McNabb is coming. Here is your schedule for the day." She handed me a sheet of paper where I was scheduled for different classes at different times. I again thought about the British people and their organized way. I was nervous about meeting Mr. McNabb. I was not able to think about how to have a conversation with him. In about five minutes, Mr. McNabb came and shook hands with me, saying, "Hi Vidhya! I am Mr. McNabb, the head teacher of the school. We had a conversation through email, right?" I said, "Hello, Sir, nice meeting you. Yeah, we had a conversation through email, but it's nice to see you here in person." Mr. McNabb asked me to go to his office with him. Though I was nervous, I had to make my visit fruitful to learn something from him and his teachers. I went to his office.

He asked me to take out my coat and hang it on the hanger beside the door. I knew it was the trend in Britain to take out the coat or jumpers to be comfortable while sitting with family or in other places inside the building. I thought of Ms. Bina. She might have taken it as an unusual thing to do so. I thought that would be another experience for her that she would share with me in the evening. After a general talk about my school in Nepal and Mr. McNabb's school in the UK, he took me to the

staff room, where I was introduced to Ms. Clerk. She was the senior English teacher in the school. I talked with her about the collaborative work I would like to do with her year eight students. Ms. Clerk was okay with my proposal. It was a wonderful experience doing collaboration work with an international school, 'St. Dominic's Grammar School.' As she agreed for the orientation class, I did it. After that, I distributed our students' stories to the students from St. Dominic's. They read the stories and were amazed to see how they tried to write even though English is not their first language. They gave comments, and I requested them to write similar stories. Ms. Alexander taught them how to be imaginative while writing a story; they took it as homework. I left it to them, saying that I would take it on my next visit next week. I thanked them and Ms. Clerk and made my way to Mr. McNabb's office.

I did a briefing of the whole day. I said how wonderful it was to see different classes, such as cooking class, where students were made apple crumble, and drama class, where students acted out the dialogue written in the script. In the ethics class, students were taught about how police officers recognize and catch thieves. Mr. McNabb was pleased to hear that I was impressed by the classes there. He asked about the subjects we teach in our school back in Nepal. We had a good conversation at the end of the day too. I realized that my nervousness was over, and that might be due to Mr. McNabb's friendly behaviour. I thanked him and went to the reception. Ms. Wall was already there. I returned to Alan's home, where Ms. Bina desperately awaited me.

Mending Little Rhinos

I gave Alan and Amie time in the evening since they wanted to talk to me about my family back home and school. I stayed with them for about an hour and talked about my family and my plan for further study. I also explained how I managed

the time for their visit to our school back in Nepal. They shared how wonderful it was when they visited the school last time. After talking with them, I went upstairs with Ms. Bina, who was waiting for me to join the little models of Rhinos that we took from Nepal to give them as a gift to the head teachers of the schools we were supposed to visit. As the rhinos were broken, we had to mend them. We laughed a lot while fixing them because, on the one hand, the showcase with rhinos went different from what we brought from Nepal, and on the other hand, Ms. Bina's experience of taking out the coat and shivering in the cold class was full of amusement to me. It was hilarious to see Ms. Bina's expression on how she felt when taking out the coat in that cold weather of England though she was inside the classroom. Anyway, we made all the showcases of rhinos all right and kept them ready to hand them over to the head teachers the following week.

Continuity to the School Visit

The next day, I had to visit one public school in Stafford. It was another big day since I had to do another collaborative work there. I went to the reception and discovered that I had to enter all my details into the computer and that I would receive one card with my image captured there during the entry. I took that card as the card for the visitor and then waited for the head teacher Mr. Sam. Mr. Sam knew Alan as he was the governor in that school earlier. He was happy to meet me and took me to Ms. Smith, the science teacher. I had a good talk with Ms. Smith and then spoke with her about our project in Nepal. I requested her to let me present about the food habit of Nepal. She was okay with that. I presented Nepal's food habits with the slides I had prepared. The students were excited to learn more about Nepal. Ms. Smith helped me by explaining Nepal, such as the country with Mt. Everest. Then I distributed some worksheets I had brought from Nepal where the students were supposed to fill their

food habits as breakfast, lunch and dinner. They did so. I collected the worksheets, thanked Ms. Smith and went to other classes. I found it fascinating in this school that students with problems such as autism would be given separate courses. I was asked if I like to see that class. I said 'Yes' and went with the teacher. It was a dark room with lots of materials like blocks and the teacher would teach in different ways. These students were taught differently because they were asked to put things in sequence, listen to the sounds and build the blocks. I thought of some students back in my school and wondered if they could get this education.

I observed the English class in year six. It was interesting to see that the students were doing exercises given by the teacher. Still, whenever they had confusion, they could go to the self and take out the laminated sheet with different topics such as Adjectives, Verbs, Nouns, Prepositions and many others. They could read the information written there, see the examples, and come back and solve the problems related to the English language. The resources were made fully available to the students. That was something of a takeaway for me. That was nothing complicated, but we never thought of doing so. I thought I would take this as something that I would implement in my school. I met Mr. Sam in the evening, and he was happy about my thought of taking something as a part of learning from there. He asked me about my interest in doing a PhD As Alan had shared with him that I am interested in carrying out my further study and do PhD, he wanted to know about what might be the topic and all. I shared some ideas and left the school, hoping to learn more when coming back the following week.

The third day was to visit another public school from years 1 to 10. In this school, I had to enter my name and the name of a person I needed to meet. This was to make a visiting card. With the visiting card, I went to Mr. Jonny's office. There he

was with huge files in front of him. I thought he might not have time for me. He welcomed me with a huge smile and then kept explaining what his school was like. He said he is the assistant head teacher and wants to help me regarding my school. I told Jonny that I am here just for a visit this time and to make a good relationship with schools in the UK which may help my school in the coming days. So, I told him that I may not ask anything now but may need his help to strengthen my school's policy in the future. Mr. Jonny was more than happy to help me. He took me around the school. He left me for the class and was there to pick me up from there. Again, he took me to the other class and returned to receive me. So, he did that throughout the day, and then I departed from there with a lovely talk with Mr. Jonny, especially about the future relationship between the schools.

On the fourth day, I was to visit the Sandon Road Church playgroup. In this school, I did not feel that difficult because my friend Ruthy was there as the coordinator. She was there to receive me in the gateway. I was happy to see her and that she made me visit the whole school before the children were in. When the children started coming, I was appointed as one teacher to look after a group of children. This time, I had a different feeling because I was with a playgroup I would typically not enjoy. It is because I am not a person to handle tiny kids. However, this was what I could not get rid of because I have the preschool back in Nepal too. So, I preferred taking the experience of being with small kids. I helped teachers to serve snacks for kids and to wash the dish. Also, I helped them clear up the stuff inside the room and make the things ready for outdoor play.

Meanwhile, Ruthy told me how they keep records of all the children and evaluate them. I like the idea of how they give an update to the parents about their daily performance. It was lovely to be in the preschool for the whole day and have

the bulk of experiences with adorable little kids and outstanding teachers who would even change children's diapers. In my school, my teachers would not even touch the handkerchief of their students. I thought Nepalese teachers need to learn a lot about what a teacher's duty is. I was happy that Ms. Bina could be the witness of seeing teachers on their duty and she could explain that to other teachers in the school. That was a fantastic experience I gained in Sandon Road Playgroup, an understanding of being a real teacher.

On the fifth day, I was to visit the other school. It was a newly established private school in the UK. I met Ms. Brown, who came to receive me from the reception. She introduced me and then took me to her classroom. While looking at Ms. Brown, I felt how difficult it would be for her to be the teacher of primary-level children. It was because Ms. Brown was a huge body and the class's lead teacher. She had to be active almost all the time. I could see how energetic she was and how actively she would do everything in class. It was great to see parents trusting Ms. Brown that they would meet her and talk about the snack of the children, their health, and other necessary matters with her. She was responsible for doing every work she needed to fulfill her duty as a good teacher. I learned a lot from Ms. Brown. That was the only day I could spend time with Ms. Brown because I was not scheduled for that school the next week. However, the ideas I collected from there in a single day would be perhaps more than enough for taking to my school. Another week was ahead of me when I was to repeat my visit to all the schools.

Fun in England

Saturday was a fun day for us. I had arranged a London trip for Ms. Bina since that would be a milestone for her whereas I had planned to visit my friends Samuel and Rosy as I had already seen London twice and my friends were important to me

since Rosy has been my best friend since 2008. Ms. Willy came to pick Ms. Bina up, and she went for a London visit. My friend Samuel and Rosy came to pick me up. We had a great day together, and Ms. Bina had the most fantastic day ever as she shared in the evening. On Sunday, we visited Stafford town. We went shopping to take something back to Nepal. That was another fun day with the experience of having fish and chips with Ms. Bina, though she was not a fan of it. We bought lots of chocolates and little cosmetics to go back to Nepal and give them as a gift to our relatives and friends. We hung around and enjoyed the chilly weather of England. The following week went on with the visit to the same schools. We had a good time in the schools the second week too. We handed over the showcase of Rhino to the head teachers of all the schools. They lovingly kept it on their table. We both had a great experience visiting UK schools and Stafford town overall. With massive memory in our hearts and mind, we returned to Nepal after a whole stay of two weeks in the UK, and that was all about my UK trip.

Being the English Language Project Coordinator

As a language project coordinator, I designed one project related to story writing for which I made a plan and then executed that to bring better output in story writing. We usually ask our students to write stories when they are free or when we want to fill the gap we have during the teaching-learning process. When taking this ‘story writing’ as classroom research, this is not only a gap-filling activity. Instead, it is an important activity that builds creative writing skills in students. To make students creative, the ideas need to be developed as creativity. That means a person having just an idea but not bringing anything into action is an imaginative person, whereas when the person changes imagination into creativity through an act of writing, it is creative writing (Avilla, 2015). This research is based on the idea of

creative writing with its attempt to meet Sustainable Development Goals (Quality Education) and (Partnership for Goal). Nepal has participated in global forums on Sustainable Development. It has also been active in formulating policies and programs reflecting global concerns and has become an active member of the global initiative for sustainable development (National Planning Commission, 2015). Concentrating on SDG, this research has focused on Quality Education, SDG 4 and Partnership for Goal, SDG 17. Quality Education ensures equal and equitable education and promotes lifelong learning opportunities, and Partnership for Goals strengthens the means of implementation and revitalizes the global partnership for sustainable development. This research project has ensured this by involving 81 participants (the students of classes six and seven), giving them equal and equitable quality education and a sense of partnership for goal while engaging them in creative writing. So, this project covered all these by strengthening the implementation part and energizing the global partnership for sustainable development.

Also, this research project shows a curriculum link with English Language Art of the National curriculum of Nepal, which covers class 7 Listening Skill (Respond to common queries about personal and immediate surroundings), class 6 and 7 Speaking skill S.N. 7 (Retell stories, information and events using simple sentences, class 6 and 7 Reading skill S.N. 3 (guess meanings of words by position in a sentence, context or similarity to other words) and Reading skill S.N. 8 (Read and enjoy poems, short stories, picture stories) and class 6 and 7 Writing skill S.N. 1 (Use punctuation marks, use correct layout, full stop, capitals, commas, questions, exclamation, apostrophes and inverted commas), Writing skill S.N. 6 (Describe a picture/ real object using 'and,' 'but,' 'because') and Writing skill S.N. 9 (Revise or edit one's writing with pair/teacher support). The research project has intervened the action plan on the

emerging issues of story writing in EFL class. In this, the researcher's intervention is to make students create their own stories. Students thought of the story's setting, characters and plot. Teachers played the role of facilitators just to give them guidance in a time of need. In this project, students were engaged in writing to create their own stories. They made the first draft on their own. The second draft was completed with the suggestions of their friends and teacher. They made the third draft adding the necessary information provided by the students from the international partner schools, and with this, a final draft was completed. It was quite a long process. They needed a month to accomplish their work. Finally, each of them came up with their story books.

Creative writing is a broad process where students can be made creative through writing. The role of a teacher is equally important in this case. A teacher who emphasizes writing skills while teaching can bring about a change and this change makes students efficient at generating and organizing creative ideas as a result (Nasir et al., 2013). Rather than focusing on textbook-bound questions and exercises, if teachers emphasize creative writing, that helps students a lot. Donnely and Barrett (2008) stated that creative writing could be enhanced by teachers' specific creative thinking tools, creating a foundation for students to work creatively. When students are given a platform to learn the value of creative writing, they can go far beyond their teachers' teaching, leading them to create their writings. Tok and Kandemir (2015) revealed that creative writing allows students to write about the subject they want to write on, which helps them grow their cognitive skills. Creative writing makes students imaginative as well as innovative, and this allows them to develop their cognition.

A writing workshop was conducted to develop creative writing skills. Meijer (2016) claims the importance of writing workshops by saying they benefit students and everyone involved. He further explains that the authors can hold the chance to gain insight into readers' responses, and this can be done without trying to explain. This means the author might just defend the work without an effort to present it. The author's job in the writer's workshop is to silently observe the class discussion until its end. This promotes patient listening to the authors. At the same time, it helps authors genuinely consider the readers' thoughts about their write-up. The benefit of the writers' workshop is that the participants in the discussion can openly express their thoughts and bounce ideas off one another to gain ideas about their writing. The writers want to express their views in the form of a story, and for this, they make a story (Morley, 2007). Thus, writing a story draft-wise is a wonderful project to flourish creative writing skills in students.

The project was related to the task associated with creative writing though the way to present it is different. The students' activities are very creative to construct the results and enhance their creative writing skills. Creative writing needs practice mostly to go deep into the imagination and get immense satisfaction. Eighty-one student participants from an institutional school in Lalitpur were involved. Together, six main activities were focused, described below under different topics. As part of project number one, We All are Writers, the orientation class was conducted for classes six and seven. They were made introduced to the project. Students were made clear about the project, and the reason for doing the project was also made clear. The PowerPoint presentation was done to make students visualize the project. I started the class with a talk about famous writers. Gradually, I talked about the project 'We All are Writers'. The SDG focus of the project was made clear. They got the concept that

the project is linked with SDG 4, which is Quality Education and SDG 17, which is Partnerships for Goal.

The students were explained the research project with a curriculum link too. The orientation program became interesting as all the students were excited about the project and showed interest in being part of it. I took orientation classes as two separate classes, one for six and the other for class seven. However, the content was the same. The project title, its number, the steps they are supposed to take, and their responsibility were all made clear. The project's objective was also made clear to the students and the member teachers. Once again, the whole idea about the project was repeated to make them review their responsibility for the project. The orientation class was thus thought-provoking.

Writing a story is an activity that was the project's initiation in terms of writing. The activity was about the students' imagination and the story's creation. In the activity, all the students from classes six and seven participated in maintaining the inclusion of every single student from those classes. Also, involving them in imagining and creating their own story was lifelong learning for them. The activity started when students were asked to bring different home materials. When the materials they got were kept in front of them, they were asked to look at them and imagine a short story. They were given some time to imagine. After that, they were asked to jot down what was in their mind in the form of a story. Students started writing their first-hand stories that emerged out of their imagination. That was their first draft of the story.

The story's first draft was shared with their nearby partners to get suggestions and comments. This was the peer evaluation technique we used to evaluate their stories. The peers gave suggestions to improve their stories. They were excited to get

the comments. After getting the comments, they addressed them and wrote the second draft of the story. In the second draft, the teacher evaluated their effort in story writing. They were given comments from the teacher, and also, and the teacher checked the grammatical portion. Then, they developed the third draft of the story. They made an effort to create their own story and develop several drafts to ensure the improvement of their story, fulfill the curriculum link, and maintain quality education, which is the focus of SDG 4. Their effort was praiseworthy. The whole students were evaluated overall by the evaluation sheet developed.

As it was a language project, the students kept their effort on the project to learn the language. They got help with English language learning through collaboration with a UK partner school. However, we wanted this project to be beneficial to students regarding language, for which we also chose a Chinese school to support their language learning. This activity strengthened the means of implementation and revitalized the global partnership for sustainable development. The students from the partner schools (Chinese schools) read our students' stories to translate some vocabulary items into the Chinese language. The students benefited from the Chinese volunteer who visited the school and got the idea of the word visualization technique from the Chinese volunteer. The story they wrote was sent to the Chinese school and the Chinese students read their (participants') stories and translated some words from the stories into Chinese. Our students learned those Chinese words, and with the help of a Chinese volunteer, they learned to visualize those words in Chinese. It became a fantastic way to make students diverse in language learning. This activity was worth conducting as the students could learn the Chinese language and the Chinese language technique. It was an activity to revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.

This research was conducted through an international collaboration with the UK. The activity strengthened the means of implementation and revitalized the global partnership for sustainable development. An international collaboration was given importance to make students learn the impact of the partnership. The students' stories were sent to the UK and the stories of the students from the UK were brought here. From all of the stories, the story books were developed, and a collection of story books was made. For this activity, I searched one of the schools in the United Kingdom (UK) as already discussed earlier. The main activity I did there was giving the orientation class for the students of the same age group as the school of Nepal, to ask them to go through the students' stories, to provide comments for them and ask the students from the UK to write their own story to take them back to Nepal. He arranged a time for me to sit with the senior English teacher. After hearing about the collaboration work, she took me to her class and asked me to give orientation. Later, I gave stories written by the students from Nepal to them. They were all amazed to see the effort of the students. They marked the story itself to give comments and feedback on the stories. I collected all the input. The next day when I visited the same class, I found that the teacher was putting much effort into the collaboration work. She taught students how to create a story. She taught them to build a mind map for writing the story. The students wrote their stories and handed them over to me.

When students got feedback from their international partner school, they read those comments and addressed those comments in their stories. They were excited to make story books. They made the dummy book which gave them the outlook of their story book. This activity developed their creativity as they became writers and illustrators in making story books. They wrote acknowledgment and the moral of the story too. They put nice covers on their story books and decorated them with the

story's title. They learned different skills such as drawing, colouring, managing papers, being careful, putting outer cover and designing, and developing the storybook as a whole. At the same time, some students from classes six and seven made the storybooks out of stories written by students from the international partner school UK. They put much effort into making sense of the story and drew pictures according to the plots of events. This illustration was the evaluation that we made for evaluating their comprehension level. The story from both the schools was developed, and there was a nice collection of story books.

As it was a language project focused on language learning, the learning outcomes covered the development of students' vocabulary skills while in this project. Students were involved in 'Making vocabulary booklet' activity. The activity developed students' level of understanding of vocabulary items they enlisted in the vocabulary booklet. In this activity, students from class six were asked to collect ten vocabulary items from their own stories. In contrast, those from class seven were asked to collect fifteen vocabulary items from their own story. This made them go through their story and write the vocabulary from there. It enhanced their vocabulary skills as they made a booklet where they wrote the vocabulary items and their meaning. Some just wrote words, and some even wrote the Nepali meaning. This activity became meaningful for students as they developed a reading material for themselves, a vocabulary booklet.

The Writers' Day started was an activity that developed students' presentation skills. This activity is about students' involvement in the presentation of the story. The students developed their communication skills from the activity. They learned different skills such as speaking, listening carefully and giving a response, being confident, being explicable, making eye contact with parents and visitors, being clear

in pronunciation and presenting well overall. These all led students to be confident in the English language. The activity has a curriculum link with English Language Art which covers class 7 Listening Skill (Respond to common queries about personal and immediate surroundings) as the students listened to the questions of parents and visitors in the event respond to them, class 6 and 7 Speaking skill 7 (Retell stories, information and events using simple sentences) as the students retold the stories to teachers as well as parents and gave other information related to the project. It has curriculum link with class 6 and 7 Reading skill 3 (guess meanings of words by position in sentence, context, or similarity to other words) as our students read/ told the summary of the stories from partner schools to their parents.

The activity started with decorations all around the school. The parents were invited to the event to encourage their children. The students became ready to present their stories. Parents and visitors were given a briefing about the project, and then they were asked to visit the stalls and listen to the students' stories. They presented their stories and the stories from the UK partner school. The students shared their stories and the stories from the U.K. Also, the vocabulary booklets (both English and Chinese) were in the presentation stalls for the exhibition. The day was the writers' day, as the stories and storytelling surrounded the whole environment. It was wonderful to end the research project with such a great performance of students and a huge gathering of parents and visitors. It was indeed a great day.

View on the Project

Writing a story can be one of the best tools to develop students' creative writing skills. Story writing is based on narrating events that are weaved to make text. This develops with factors like entertainment, artistic expression, the discovery of the value and function of writing, improvement of imagination, self-discovery and

literacy development (Temizkan, 2011). As teachers, the responsibility goes higher because developing creative writing skills in students needs a process. When going beyond ordinary writing without destroying the normal values and creating ideas different from any other is creative writing. Story writing is an open-ended design process that comes under creative writing as it brings the account of an event or an experience in sequence (Pishghadam & Mehr, 2011). The learning atmosphere should be created so the students could benefit from creative writing, leading them to quality education. This is possible by making children understand the meaning of creative writing and giving them the experience of imagination and its link with creative writing. As it is a project with an international dimension and partnership, it focuses on the exposure to the writing of an international school. Thus, this project has ensured its importance for students in terms of learning outcomes. The students came up with their own stories and enhancement in their listening, speaking, reading and writing skills.

The students also developed their vocabulary skills and learned some words and techniques to learn them in a completely new language (Chinese). The research revitalized the idea that Actual writing is not just being dedicated to writing or doing grammar or vocabulary exercises. Still, achieving success lies in improving their ways of thinking, which ultimately gives them satisfaction (Pawliczak, 2015). A writing workshop is thus a tool that facilitates students to write a story and helps them develop their creative writing skills. Thus, the project assisted my students in becoming confident in creative writing, especially story writing. That was a huge success my students achieved and encouraged me to carry out other such projects.

Being the Mentor for a Novice English Teacher: Observation and Feedback

Observing somebody and giving proper feedback to improve the teaching strategy as well as the attitude of that person is a triumphant job. We must have observed at least somebody in our lifetime, either for a professional purpose or something else. To watch without purpose and do the same with a purpose is different. If you have become a teacher in your life, you must have become prey of observation many times. That is what the school leaders do in the schools though teachers feel very insecure about this. According to Powell and Steele (1996), observation is essential for good teaching and teacher development. The way to observe teachers makes a difference. Classroom observation allows the observer to discern into the fact about how the theory and practice are enhanced in the class during teaching-learning (Schoenfeld, 2013). Observing the teacher is positive because it is how the teachers could follow the developmental path.

Another important co-partner of observation is 'feedback.' Hattie and Timperley (2007) attested that feedback is corrective information about one's teaching, which is given with encouragement to show classroom performance. Observation is not only to see what the teacher does and what the student does. It is also about the strategies that must be maintained during the observation. Similarly, giving feedback is a vital thing to do after observation. Sutton et al. (2011) claim that feedback constitutes constructive criticism, advice, and praise. This is meaningful because it helps teachers improve their teaching through feedback.

Reading and Understanding the Novel

A novel gives its rooted picture through the cover page, which speaks about its story. The title, however, has a huge meaning within itself. The term '*damini*' evokes a caste system entrenched in Nepalese society. It also gives a visual image of female

subjugation in society. One can imagine how deeply rooted the story could be behind it. When we turn the pages to get on to the novel, there comes a scenario of a village where everything has become faded. It was due to a bomb explosion in the village school in 2054 B.S. Youths went to Kathmandu, a capital city, to work. Some went abroad with a dream of wealth in their eyes, and the Maoist group took some never to be back. The barren lands seem to be waiting for somebody to plough and sow the crops, but the weeds and other unwanted plants already cover them.

The author gives an introduction to the characters along with their character description. That helps us to make an image of the characters in our minds. The main characters are Dhaule Kanchho, Lachhi, Hangdima, Namdeng, Chetan, Purna Dotel, Som Kumar, Deugan, Dhiten, Dhibang and many others who are connected with these characters. The story shows a glimpse of happiness in the villagers' eyes about the roadways and their facilities for them though they are hard-pressed by their own stories. The author brings a story about '*Damini Bhir*'. The story is about a poor man named Suke Damai who was from a lower caste '*Damai jaat*' and was newly married then. When he could not repay the loan he took from the village landlord, he was harshly beaten. He left the village as he could not pay back the loan and did not return. As the sensually thirsty landlord 'Kaaji' saw Suke's newly married wife (*damini*) crying for granting some days to pay the loan, he assured her that he would give her some days for that. In return, he quenched his thirst by going against her rejection. On the same night, she jumped from the hill near her house. In her memory, the hill is named '*Damini Bhir*'. The story evokes the pain of the marginalized group. It demonstrates the power of the bourgeoisie upon the proletariat. The misuse of power could be sensed in the story.

Kanchho and Lachhi, their Stories within the Story

The novel's main story starts with a scenario involving the villagers in the roadway construction in Batase danda. Physical difficulties and effort could be imagined through the characters' expressions. Using the exciting village dialect, 'Dhaule Kanchho', distinguished the reality of rich and poor. He looks up in the sky when the aeroplane is there. He speaks out a painful truth with the help of a song, "Koi ta bhane jahaaaj ma sarara koi ta bhane pasinaa tarara, hamro Nepal ma..." The author describes Kanchho, a poor villager, by out figuring him as a mountain of sadness. At the same time, Hangdima reveals the truth about Kanchho and Lachhi that they are in a love affair and need to be married for their betterment. This takes us to the past story about Kanchho and Ganga, his beloved.

Ganga and Kanchho had a well-going life with their son Sovit. Though they were poor, they were happy. Their destiny took them to Ganga's death. This was due to the unawareness of Jaundice in the village. She had become pale, and Kanchho did all kinds of superstitious acts to save her, but he could do nothing in front of the disease. Ganga left him forever. The same scene is connected to the story of Lachhi. As Lachhi was innocent, Chetan, the son of 'Kaaji', trapped her in his love and made her believe that he loved her so much. Lachhi believed him and gave every sort of right to Chetan. Chetan calmed her, saying he loved her, and went away. The following day, Lachhi knew that he had left the village. Lachhi was unknown that a baby was growing inside her. When Chetan's sister insisted, she go with her to a strange place, she knew she was taken to a place where people go to abort. She then decided to be a mother and give life to that innocent baby named Amit afterwards. During their togetherness, Kanchho and Lachhi have a conversation about the possibility of their marriage. Lachhi remembered how she was given a dash by the

upper caste woman when she tried to help her carry the pitcher. She then knew that she was from the lower caste, which could hinder their marriage. Also, there comes a conversation about Amit's uncertain future. This uncertainty was about the citizenship certificate where he needed his father's name. Kanchho tells Lachhi that he would give his name to Amit as his father's name. Lachhi, on the other hand, becomes optimistic about the change that society is to face. She is optimistic about her name being considered for Amit's citizenship certificate. This displays the hopeful eyes of the single mothers toward their rights.

Namdeng and His Living

Kanchho and Lachhi bring Namdeng into their discussion, who had a huge dream to be an actor. When Namdeng is presented as a sad man in the novel, his story reveals too. His encounter with Rambha in the hotel, their closeness, love affair and marriage were all defined. They had a son named Ridum. Their city life was well going, but the excessive interest in acting made her a bit far from Rambha. One day, Namdeng came across a message sent by Rambha's lover, who was abroad. He knew that she had an affair with him. He scolded her. She left him and did not return. Then, Namdeng is back in the village.

Maoist Atmosphere

There is a story about the youths taken by the Maoist troop and involved in the war. Their story in the warfare and when they were with comrades have also been revealed. The Maoist people made Nabin and Nisam Maoists. When they were taken to the group, they were enabled with strong words which made them think about their country. Their story about the moment when they faced guns was painful. It makes readers feel like they are going through the pain themselves. In the novel, there is also the expression where villagers became happy with some good deeds like throwing

gambling away from society. Nabin and Nasim are the live characters who feel every pain and struggle in the war.

There is a scene where people are having a discourse about the election. They talk about the new party, probably talking about the Maoist party. Poor people have hope for this party and even talk about the fear of the loss of that party. They talk about the corruption that is held in the society at the time of election. They fear if the old parties distribute money to the people and make them vote for their parties. All the people are running after the election discourse. They present their hope for a new party and its rule over the country.

Honest Love

The story of Paruma and Deuman proves that human beings go through different stages of life, and there comes a romantic situation in everybody's life, especially teenagers. Paruma's love story encourages Hangdima to go ahead in her love affair. Though there comes a good proposal for her marriage, she rejects to marry. This shows that she wants to marry Namdeng, and there is no doubt that she takes care of Ridum, Namdeng's son, in the novel.

Smell of Modernism

There is a scenario in the novel where everyone runs towards Damini Bhir. They hear the sound of the horn and are excited to see the vehicle that is there for road construction. It is interesting how the characters personify the vehicle (dozer). They compare the dozer with an ass. Some say that it must be the female as it eats a lot, some compare it with the mill, and some compare it with God Bhimsen, a god of strength in Hinduism. They compared its parts with the neck, the mouth and a huge body as if it were a huge animal. That was amazing to view the innocence of village people towards modernism.

Death, an Inevitable Truth

Nihang's death brings a death ritual in front of us. It presents a reality in front of us that no matter what comes as a change in people's life, death is an inevitable truth. There is hope in people's lives that there is life after death. In that life, the living people do different rituals, which have been made clear to the readers. It feels as if we, the readers, are there with the villagers to look at all those rituals performed after Nihang's death.

A Weary Experience; All in Kathmandu

Namdeng goes to Kathmandu. With his wandering in Kathmandu city, the readers can gain a picture of real Kathmandu. The smell of urbanization and its weary impact can be easily seen. School and pub together, clinic and branded alcohol shop are all the satire for growing urbanization and its odd message. A description of sign boards with a glamorous picture of a young lady shows the objectification of women in the name of modelling. Kathmandu's messy situation with torn posters and pamphlets, electric wires hanging around, negative and positive words and sentences by different political parties on the walls, growing buildings, shops and vehicles etc., give a real picture of Kathmandu. Namdeng found huge changes in Kathmandu. He found the change in people, change in their looks and change in the behaviour of people living in Kathmandu. He finds that the people with hot blood against Bourgeoisie are now settled. His eyes were searching for the people who could die for the nation and would fight for the right and justice.

The story revolves around Kathmandu. Everybody from Batase danda goes to Kathmandu. The purpose was to demonstrate on the road and make the party of their desire win. In Kathmandu, Hangdima met Lahure, with whom she got married when she was fourteen. She remembers how she was compelled to marry him. She takes a

remembrance of Lahure's unwanted behaviour towards her. Lahure does not recognize her though he gets confused about her face repeatedly. Hangdima does not want him to recognize her because he was the reason that Hangdima left Madesh and went to Batase danda. Similarly, Lachhi sees Chetan, who left her alone in the village, making her pregnant. Namdeng made Chetan realize his mistake and took him to Lachhi. Chetan wanted to accept Lachhi but Lachhi rejected him and courageously said she wanted to spend her life with Kanchho, who took care of her in every circumstance.

Tyson's Hotel: Its Role to Stir up Damini Bhir

At last, the novel brings in another story of Ambar, who was in Tyson's hotel. Namdeng heard from him his sad story. It was about his loneliness. It was about the reality that his mother left him when he was a child, and his father did not care for him. As Ambar's story was just like that of Ridum, Namdeng wanted to know who the mother of Ambar was. Later, he finds out that Ambar is Padma's son and Padma, the daughter of Deuki, who also became the prey of "pradhan ghare," the powerful one in the society. Maybe, Padma, too, had the situation like her mother Deuki and left Ambar. Namdeng knew the reality and was quiet as if he knew people's stories that could help him with his interest in the act.

An argument in the Novel

Nepal's deeply rooted caste system has taken away many people's lives. Some faced death, some committed suicide, some were half alive, and some went into depression. The story is about innocent villagers who dreamed of a good life, but the powerful people (Chetan) snatched their (Lachhi) well-going life showing the hope that is never fulfilled. We could sense a smell of domination by Chetan's sister towards Lachhi. She stood as an indirect character, but a demon-like creature could be perceived in her. Being a lady, she was for the abortion. This could save their prestige

in the village as the upper-class people. Poor Lachhi was wordless and decided to bear a huge responsibility as a mother. Motherly courage can be seen in this part of the story. This is a mirror that shows the reality that an innocent infant could be a sin for powerful but poor people see them as lives that are waiting to see this world though it is a world of falsehood. Even nature betrays these poor people. The disease takes root in poor people and takes their (Ganga) life. Had it been a case for the rich, they would have money for the treatment. The educated and so-called modern people and their way of deceiving people (Rambha and Gagan) have been well portrayed in the novel. The innocence of self and the trust upon own people could sometime bring disaster in life, as happened in Namdeng's life.

The novel reveals people's dreams about the freedom they were supposed to get when the system of the government is changed. It has touched the glimpse of change in the government system and the hope connected with that change. Nepal, a country without a monarchy, and Nepal as a Republic country have been brought into the conversation. Later, with the people's everyday conversation, it is shown that nothing is changed in the lifestyle of people from the village though it is heard about the change in the system. Poor people never could understand the meaning of change. The country's history has also been revealed in the novel, along with people's life stories. A glimpse of a boarding school gives a smell of modernism in the novel. They talk about Ridum and the heavy load of boarding school due to books. It reflects the boarding schools being a burden to the children. The unity of villagers is demonstrated in the novel when there is a fire in Dauman's house. Everybody ran to extinguish the fire. They even built a new house though it was small. It shows that there is power in unity.

Hangdima, a symbol of true love in the story, is an irony. It is because Hangdima started to like Namdeng. Namdeng's mother, Paruma, brought up Hangdima. She returned from Madesh and never showed interest in going back. When she looked at Namdeng, she used to get a different feeling, which came to be discovered as her love towards him. Namdeng's honesty and Lahure's disgusting character would make Hangdima choose Namdeng to be her hero. The irony is that Namdeng still remembers Rambha. The novel brings in the real face of Kathmandu, where thousands of unborn babies are murdered. This is a place of destruction where human beings kill their own species. Deadly mothers are in the same city who never cry for their unborn babies who did not see the world. This is a melancholy of Kathmandu. The movement in Nepal after it was made the Republic country, the movement that was there for the Sanghiya Rajya, innocent and marginalized people's effort for that and the effort went in vain are some of the real depictions that the author has been able to grasp in the novel. Namdeng's encounter with Chetan gives us an idea about Chetan's lingering with Jwala, a Maoist leader. It shows that power can do everything. Also, to know that Chetan became a specialist in music and art because he ran after Jwala gives a stingy nature of power. Though he did not know anything about music, he became a specialist, but Namdeng, though he was the mine of an act, could not become anything which is another irony. Everything in the novel shows that the lives of people in Damini Bhir are of huge importance, but their existence is never counted. There is a smile on their faces just with the hope of getting changed. There is a hope to work hard and to fill their belly. The novel is a satire to people in the urban areas with huge power but never do anything prosperous. Damini Bhir and its characters are bold. Whatever the situation comes in their life, they just accept it.

They keep on moving. They keep on struggling. They are the parodies who stir Nepal's social, cultural and political reality and bring it as it is in front of the readers.

This novel carries the story of many people connected with Damini Bhir. Different love stories that are entangled with life situations are there in the novel. Power perspective and its rule in Nepalese society have been clearly shown in the novel. More than that, the political status of Nepal, its movement and people's hope situated in those movements has been demonstrated in the novel. This has been done with real stories about political movements in Nepal. An individual state of affairs related to each character, their family situation, a societal condition, and the circumstances of the whole nation have been captured as the real depiction in this novel. More than that, a local dialect used in the novel gives typical Nepali tenor and encourages readers to go through every dialogue that offers a Nepalese smell. The readers could visualize the picture of characters, places, and circumstances and even feel the character's stories. The whole novel revolves around Damini Bhir. Damini Bhir, the hill itself bears an unheard story. Many stories are intertwined with the people of Batase danda, just above Damini Bhir. Everything can face changes with modernization, but Damini Bhir remains the same. The story behind its name has been filmed for the readers of this novel. Still, there is somewhere scream in silence, which will never perish as far as Damini Bhir exists, as far as this novel exists.

Discernment on the Novel with the Lens of Deconstruction

I went through the novel "Damini Bhir" several times and got a general meaning, simply a critique. In my educational journey, I encountered a theory of deconstruction by Derrida, which helped me view the novel from the deconstructionist's eyes. With this, I could explore different characteristics of deconstruction within the novel. According to Tyson (2006), deconstruction offers us

a radical vision of thinking; that is what I was able to do with the novel here. I developed the discerning eyes to see the novel through the eyes of deconstruction. Deconstruction is a reading that counts decentering. It is about unmasking the problematic nature of all centers. Derrida believes that all Western thought is based on the idea of the center. Now, let us discuss the center first. Traditionally, the center was considered the grounded one. All structures get oriented from the center, a fixed origin. It is something that fixes the structure, such as a king, president, or landlord. The center is the one with a focal point. Currently, the center is a question, and it is a problem when something arises as the subject of the question. Many structures had the center elsewhere than the center itself. This shows that different versions of myth created the myth. It was not the result of a basic mythic structure. The center emerged due to the mythic structure's growth.

Deconstructive ideas are neither a method nor a technique but deal with the text's deconstruction (Philosophy Column, 2004). Deconstructing a content of a text means uncovering its backings and mystery. In deconstruction, the significance is not in a fixed place. It is not before the text, nor is it after it. It is not inside the text nor is it outside. It has an unending binding of signifiers that do not discuss the text's conclusion. Rather, a deconstructionist seeks for the infinite measurement of the text. Richter (2007) asserted Derrida's thought that if there is a text, it is always the entity that can be investigated. So, a deconstructionist exhibits contradictory and undecidable possibilities. No single and right significance can be agreed to the content of the text. There could be several possibilities that a deconstructionist must find. Gnanasekaran (2015) claims that deconstructionists must be conscious of verbal signs, wordplay, metaphors, allegories and allusions. They have to be a decipherer, an

investigator and a correct critic while being a reader. They must be an eyewitness who is materially outside the content and purposefully included inside it.

Center, a Paradox

The Center is the point for every strength and power. The center is the 'whole'; anything that lies on the other side of the division is presented as secondary or deficient (Campbell, 2012). It has the role of standing as the head of other peripheral entities. Everything begins with the center. This novel is a paradox for those who focus on a center. The novel starts with a controlling scene about powerful people, focusing on the dominant group. Bringing the lowly counted people (Suke damai and damini), the novel has thrown a nice spoof on the so-called powerful people of the society. The author has become brainy enough to pick up the story of poor people within whom a huge world of reality appears. This novel even makes the readers aware of the enclosed reality of society by building beautiful plots on several centers within the novel. The thoughtful scenarios have been created between the characters by making them uniquely different from one another. The stories about each character, the tension within them for various reasons, and their appearance in the novel as important people are the author's movement to make the center a paradox in the novel.

On the other hand, the novel has brought a flicker about political power and its emptiness. The power is considered the entity where the center lies, but when the power moves from there, the place becomes powerless. The Center is not the center there at that time. Power seems to be in the Maoists' hands; later, there is again the emptiness. There is confusion about the central power unit, which the author wants us to gain. The scene of the house of Pradhanghare is described as something which had power some years ago and is like that of the other people's home later in the novel.

The author has broken the centeredness and has come out of the traditional belief about the presence in the center. Instead, the absenteeism in the center has been highlighted.

Deconstructive Language in the Novel

The deconstructive theory believes that language is much more ambiguous than what we see at the surface level. There are many points in the novel where we can encounter vague language. In the first part of the novel, there is a story about damini. The name given to her, *damini* itself, is a huge melancholy. Damini is never the name. Rather, it evokes the caste system of Nepal. The burden of domination that the character has to carry is the real misery of the Nepali dalit society. Unlike other ordinary people, the dalit community is not treated as humans and is known by the caste rather than by their name. So, damini is a live example of suppressed women from the lower caste.

When damini was reaped by the jamindaar, it was made visible to us that the situation was worse. "Chichyaaii damini tara sunena kasaile. Baru aanganko ghodachahin jod jodle hinhinaayo." This is another deconstructive language. The situation can be compared to the death of Icarus. Everybody was busy with their work, so they ignored Icarus's death. Similarly, the cry of damini was heard, but nobody gave attention to it. The horse, though it was the animal, listened to the cry of damini and reacted. It illustrates the dehumanized nature of humankind in contrast with the kindness of the animal. Within that particular text, there is a huge meaning hidden.

When Namdeng looks outside and sees the roughly standing tree, deconstructive language is used. At that moment, the author compares the tree with Namdeng's life. He says, *Aaganma asaare fulko bot sikrikka thadiyeko thiyo,*

manaun uskai jindagiko paryaye jasto. Here he uses the simile to compare Namdeng's tragic life with the naked tree. Ridum, then comes back from the school and the author says, *Faalyo jhola Ridumle, boarding schoolle bokaaidiyeko* where he wants to give satire to the boarding schools to make children carry the load of books. So, there are many deconstructive languages used in the novel which have been made ambiguous so that it could give richer meaning to the readers.

The Pervasive Ideology in Damini Bhir

First, the deconstructive eyes have been prompted to look at the main apprehension within the novel. Now, the center is the primary concern here. As the deconstruction believes that the center is not a center, this novel also has tension about the center. Every story seems like a central point of the novel though they all are connected with the main story of Damini Bhir. Each center is with the central tension. The tale within 'Damini Bhir' is very proactive towards deconstruction. The ideology that the text seems to promote is the capitalist ideology. The story, from the view of deconstruction, generates the capitalist ideology that is there in the text. It is about innocent villagers who dream about the good life, and the capitalist world (Chetan) swallows them (Lachhi). They are full of hope which is never to be fulfilled. The use of the exciting village dialect 'Dhaule Kanchho' distinguished the reality of rich and poor. He looks up in the sky when the aeroplane is there. He speaks out about the painful reality of the capitalist society with the help of a song, "Koi ta bhane jahaaaj ma sarara koi ta bhane pasinaa tarara, hamro Nepal ma..." This says that there are people who can travel the world in an aeroplane, and those who work hard, sweat for the whole day, and still it is hard to live.

The author describes Kanchho, and the description gives a picture of a poor villager, distinguishing him from the capitalist figure 'Chetan' (as both are connected

to Lachhi to some extent). The capitalist is given the name 'Pradhan ghare' whereas Kanchho, the poor, is given a simile 'like a mountain of 'sadness.' These portrayals in the novel give the reader the sense of a big difference in the family background. The capitalist mentality that money can do everything has been made clear in the novel. Chetan's playful nature with Lachhi and his departure from her life, his sister's demonic appearance, which was up to the murder of the baby who was to be born from Lachhi and the comparison of life with money are some examples to confirm these types of an ongoing trend of the society.

Undecidability

The novel reaches undecidable circumstances where the characters fall into a dilemma. As per Robinson (2003), any decision where moral considerations are relevant and a requirement for the choice of one between two is called a dilemma. As it was dance time in the village, everybody was there to celebrate the custom. Lachhi says, "Sanskaar po aafno hunchha, sanskriti ta sappaiko hunchha bhanthe." These words came out from Lachhi as a text that is undecidable. On the one hand, Lachhi did not want to dance. On the other hand, she expresses that the culture is of everyone. The rituals might differ from family to family, but the culture is of every single human in that society. This shows that the decisions are not made as the situation is undecidable. There is a trend that the lower caste should not be allowed to dance. Lachhi does not want to dance for this reason. Also, the expression that is deviated toward equality and non-discrimination is there. There is confusion. There is a struggle for the decision. There is undecidability which is one of the characteristics of deconstruction.

Undecidability within the mentality is another example in the novel. Nabin and Nisam are the youth of the village and are taken away by the Maoist leaders.

They were made stood in the field where everybody was armed with weapons. They were instructed to hold the group position and start the war for the country with the insisting words such as "Banche sansaar mare sahid," meaning "to see the world if alive and to be a martyr if the death embraces." In such an environment, it was hard for these youth. They were simply the village boys, and it was difficult to decide whether to say "yes" and live or say "no" and die. The undecidability has prevailed there.

Binary Opposition

Binary oppositions are made the strong characteristics of the text in the novel. Binary opposition consists of the oppositions where one's existence means the non-existence of the other and that one is privileged (Shafieyan, 2011). Higher and lower caste have been the primary concerns in the novel. As it is an ongoing trend in the society of Nepal, the higher caste versus lower caste struggle is still there. The scenario is of the real Nepali society where untouchability is the major problem. Higher caste people do not even drink water touched by the lower caste. In the name of authority, the higher castes dominate the lower castes in such a way that there is discrimination. People treat people as animals and as if they are not human. Suke damai and his wife damini have faced the same thing as being the lower caste people. Also, Lachhi and her mother have become victims of the caste system.

Superiority and inferiority are other binary opposition shown in the novel. The story of Chetan and lachhi is an example of superiority and inferiority. Chetan tries to grasp every possible pleasure from Lachhi, and then he disappears. As a superior lady, Chetan's sister tries to abort Lachhi's baby as if the inferior people's life is of no value. Similarly, the progress of Chetan due to his superiority and Namdeng's deteriorated dream due to his inferiority is a notable aspect of the novel. Rich and poor opposition

is also exposed with Kanchho and his living. Other villagers who are working on the roadways demonstrate the poor people. Jamindaar, the rich and Suke damai, the poor, are the characters who show the rich-poor relationship. It demonstrates the pain that is there for the poor of being poor. The story of Ganga, Kanchho's wife, also evokes poverty and despair when she faces death due to the disease and the inability to cure the disease on time. Modernism and traditional society are the other oppositions brought in the novel. People in the village are very innocent. Their hope for modernism demonstrates these people's pain of being a member of the traditional society. Traditional society and its associates such as discrimination, poverty, chhuwachhut, dust, no roadways, struggle, sweat, hunger, and disease could be contradicted with the associates of modernism such as city, vehicles, facilities, education, health, awareness, entertainment and so on. For this reason, the people of villages had hope in their eyes toward modernism.

Grief and happiness come as another binary opposition in the novel. The death of Ganga and the death of Nuhang brought grief to the novel. Other everyday life difficulties work as an input for increasing distress in poor people's life. Happiness, on the other hand, has come with hope in people. They hope for development, change in the government system and the hope of change in their lifestyle. Honesty and betrayal, the other binary oppositions in the novel, have to do with the distinction of people's character. Rambha's betrayal with Namdeng, Namdeng's honesty towards the village, Chetan's betrayal towards Lachhi, Kanchho's innocent love towards Lachhi, betraying of jamindaar towards Suke damai and Damini, honesty in the suicide of damini are all in the binary oppositions that have made the novel interesting. Power and powerlessness are other binary oppositions that have made space in the novel. Power, authority and dominion have been expressed through the characters such as

jamindaar, Chetan and Jwala. Powerless were those who came into the soreness through the powerful ones like Suke and damini, Lachhi and Namdeng, respectively. These binary oppositions have made the readers aware of the power of deconstruction with the element of binary opposition.

Thematic Tensions

The corrupt world in Namdeng's eyes comes as a thematic tension in the novel. Curteman (2013) defines tension as the element that creates emotions such as worry, anxiety, fear and stress in the novel's characters and the readers. Lachhi and Kanchho's romantic readiness amid poverty is another theme that prevails as a tension of uncertainty about the future. Hangdima's love for Namdeng, Deuman and Paruma's love story and the relationship between Namdeng and Rambha are all romantic readiness, although they are all empty. The youths taken for the Maoist war, other villagers moving towards the city and abroad, Rambha leaving Namdeng and Ridum behind, the relationship between Chetan and Lachhi, Hangdima, her hatred towards Madhesh and the story behind it all are the aspects of alienation. The smell of urbanization and its weary impact can be easily seen. School and pub together, clinic and branded alcohol shop are all the satire for growing urbanization and its odd message. A description of sign boards with a glamorous picture of a young lady shows the objectification of women in the name of modelling. Kathmandu's messy situation with torn posters and pamphlets, electric wires hanging around, negative and positive words and sentences by different political parties on the walls, mushrooming buildings, shops and vehicles, etc., give a real picture of Kathmandu. Namdeng found huge changes in Kathmandu. He found the change in people, change in their looks and change in the behaviour of people living in Kathmandu. He finds that the people with hot blood against Bourgeoisie are now settled. His eyes were searching for the

people who could die for the nation, who would fight for the right and justice. But there was an emptiness in modernism. The novel's present village evocation would give a glimpse of emptiness in so-called modernism.

Likewise, the aesthetic illusion was the major entity in the novel. Whatever came as the central tensions all became the prey of the aesthetic illusion. Somewhere it was the aesthetic charm of nature, it was for satisfaction, and somewhere it was to fulfil the unachievable dream. Finally, the nature and civilization association made the novel beautiful. Among many central tensions, the beauty of nature and civilization made everything settled to some extent. Still, there are many things to be explored as deconstructionists because the meaning of the text is never the same. It changes whenever we reread it because it takes the reader to depth, and they dig more and more out of it. Deconstruction is a theory that changes the way to read any text. A simple reading turns into a discerning ability to read the text. I could deconstruct *Damini bhir* by Rajan Mukarung since the texts within the novel have been dug out and then given the deconstructive movement. This movement, which I applied as a theory, would help readers find meaningful context in the novel. The ideas in the novel reflect the world's reality about human entanglement in society. Especially, the Nepalese society and its existence have been noticeably expressed in the stories of the characters. Overall, deconstruction has made this novel a mirror for me in which I could see the picture of the societal realm.

Overlapping of Personal and Professional Life

Nowadays, many people have busy lives. People do not even have time for their personal life. A person engaged in any profession has professional life, and at the same time, they have a personal life too because a person cannot be separated from personal life. Work-life and personal life have become common problems hindering

career progress (Rahaman & Jannet, 2015). Jaisvi is quiet and does not speak much with her colleagues, but they sometimes ask her if she has any problems. She presents her views on the interconnection between personal and professional life: *Maybe when my personal life interferes with my professional life, my colleagues sometimes ask me if I am going through any problems. I remind myself of my responsibility towards the profession, and Once I enter the class, I forget everything, all the tensions that I have at home. I think I have become aware of ensuring that my personal life does not hamper my professional life.* When I went to Jaisvi's school, I waited for her for some time. As soon as I met Jaisvi, she asked me how I was. I said I was fine and asked how she was. She looked too busy. With a folder in her hand, she told me, *let's go together. I will tell you on the way.* On the way to her class, she said that her daughter was not feeling well and that she had a fever. She entered the class. I, too, entered with her. She taught about 'Humility.' During her teaching, I could see how proficient she was in her language as well as content delivery. Her smart look in shirt, pants, and coat made her assertive in look.

A lady with dark hair and dark kajal on her eyes performed undoubtedly excellent in her class with all those interactions, jokes, love and care, questions and answers. Inside her assertiveness and confidence, I could sense her sadness. The intelligent look outside had somewhere that melancholy; I could sense that in her eyes, wrinkles and lean body. How smart she looked with her slim body but was that slimness out of the difficulties that she went through? I questioned myself. Jaisvi believes in prayer, and miracles happen in her life due to prayer. When it happens, she forgets every tension and gets relaxed with her students. She expresses that *Faith has a significant role in improving my professional life.* Whenever unprepared, she prays and immediately gets the idea to run her class. She believes that there is God who

helps her in her time of need. I could see that when she was moving around and interacting with students. It seemed like she was an angel dancing around to protect those children, to give them the light of knowledge.

Pragati finds herself as a simple person with dreams of living the good life. As a professional, she is a teacher with a progressive mindset, but Pragati has realized so many times that she has gone through difficulties with the overlapping of her personal and professional life. She accepts; *these two things overlap most of the time. When I am tired of doing my duty at school and coming back to my home, I am not away from my responsibility because I reflect on my teaching on that particular day at school. I think of the success and failure at school and plan for the next day. If I were in another profession, maybe I would leave all my burdens at the workplace and go, but as a teacher, my duty doesn't finish on the school premises. Instead, it sometimes kills my personal life.* There are many times she hasn't given her hundred percent to her personal life. On the day when I was with Pragati in her class, she had severe pain in her leg muscles. She told me that she was not in a situation to go to school and teach students, but she did not take a rest. She thought of her students as they were close to their final exams. She said that her personal problems should not affect her students. She explained the lesson and gave them some work to finish during the class.

In professional life, personal life interferes. Pragati has a small daughter who is at home when she is at school. She says, *I remember her thinking if she ate properly or not, if she is happily staying at home or is she crying.... When she is not feeling well, I cannot concentrate on teaching. I get worried about her health. Other personal problems, such as her sister-in-law being at her home for so long, due to which she could not focus on lesson planning, affected her professional life.* It is both the way around. Personal life is overlapped with professional and vice-versa, and I am

not the exception in this aspect. I don't think there is a human without any problem.

As we are entangled with many relationships, we do have different issues. I have a big family with many children, as I stated earlier. Having many children, I am most often tensed, sometimes with their health, studies, and behaviour.

There are many stories as such, but one of them does not get out of my heart. As a mother of many children, I had to teach them the basics in the beginning. As an English teacher by profession, I was focused on teaching English because I was convinced that if their English language were good, nothing would stop them from studying in an English medium school. So, I started speaking in English with them during the study hour. My closest boy Barun was such a cutie-pie in look and his smile. I worried about him because he would only express his feelings with signs but would not speak. This made me sad because he was the youngest of all, and everybody was expecting him to start talking as other children would normally do but sadly, he did not speak at all though he was already three years old.

I joined the school after six months of home teaching for my children. I used to go to school in the daytime, but in the morning and evening, I would still guide them in their study because I wanted them to be competent like other students in the school. One morning, I was teaching everyone how to make sensible sentences using nouns in English. To guide them in making sentences, I gave them some examples. I gave the word 'home' and generated the sentences from them. The other word I gave was 'the garden,' and I gave an example from my side. Then after a few other nouns, I uttered the word 'mother.' One of them made a sentence using the word 'mother.'

I, too, gave them an example. I noticed that Barun started crying. I could not determine why he was crying because he could not speak. I thought he was hungry. I gave him some biscuits, but he did not stop. Then I took him on my lap and asked him

not to cry. I asked him lovingly, “Why are you crying? What happened to you? Do you want something? Barun, who had never spoken earlier, spoke that morning for the first time; the word he spoke was ‘Aama.’ He just uttered ‘aama’ and then continued crying. I realized he suddenly started crying when I talked about the word ‘mother.’ I became happy that he spoke but felt pity for him, for I made him cry. Also, I noticed that Barun even understood English words, and then he internalized its meaning in Nepali and remembered his ‘aama’ (mother), who passed away. My eyes were full of tears for Barun. I tried to console him, saying I was his aama, but he did not stop crying. A three-year-old child (Barun) fell asleep after some time, but I noticed his tears all over his closed eyes.

The incident was not big for others, but for me, that haunted me the whole day. Though I was in school teaching my students, I just thought of Barun, and that disturbed me to some extent. I could not deliver what I intended to. Instead, I gave students some exercises to accomplish as classwork. My students would ask me where they were confused, and I tried to clarify their confusion using my mind, but again, my heart would take me to the incident that took place in the morning. My personal matters have often come on the way to my professional affairs. There are stories of professional affairs coming on the way to personal affairs too.

Ways to be Professional English Teacher

As a teacher, Jaisvi always questioned herself at the end of the day and saw how her teaching went. Sometimes she did it well, and sometimes, she felt like it went wrong. Then she tried to do it differently the next day. Jaisvi says, *All my lessons don't go well. I realize that when I reflect on my teaching at the end of the day. I take hours to make it right the next day. The next day, it goes well because I give much time for the same thing to work in a better way. Then I feel relaxed. I find myself full*

as a teacher when there is good going of a class with effective learning from the students' side. Jaisvi never hesitated to ask her students how her teaching went. She asks them if they feel bored in her classroom. If they say 'yes,' she changes her way of teaching the next day or brings some activities in between. She says *I am curious about how other teachers teach and how they make their teaching effective. So, I even ask my colleague teachers how they teach.* Whenever the school gives workshops, she tries not to miss them. She expressed *whether I have time or not, I literally manage to attend the workshops. I learn from there and can implement that in my class.*

Sometimes, Jaisvi looks at her students' faces and notices that they are feeling monotonous, and she leaves in the middle and continues interacting with them. She believes that teaching is not what we have to go and deliver in class as planned, but there are times when we have to understand children, and Jaisvi takes herself as that type of teacher. Sometimes, she stops the slides in the middle, shows them the movie, and asks them to review it. They become so happy when they get to watch the movie.

Jaisvi did not become only the English teacher in the schools where she worked. She had to do editing for the school magazine. She was responsible for making students ready for different inter-house competitions. She, too, had to handle the house since she was the house runner. As the students get older, they don't want to participate in anything; that is where Jaisvi finds the challenge. They say they have to do their homework, bring materials, and give their time, which they don't want. Jaisvi attested that I encourage them to say that they don't have to win and that I will not scold them. *Most of the time, I encourage the students who are backward in participating to go ahead and take part. I always tell them that they don't need to win. I remember my team got lost for two/three years, but my students were happy to give them a chance to participate. So, that was the victory for me.* Jaisvi also worked as the

main editor of chief in the school. She really had a hard time when she did that. She remembered, *My child was small at that time. I had to stay in school from 7:00 AM to 7:30 PM. I could not even ask for other teachers' help since they said they didn't want to take work at home. So, I stayed late for many days and finished. Again, the principal came and showed some errors. At that time, I told him that it was the students' work. So, we have to keep it as it is. When the magazine was issued, it was such a relief.*

Also, in the school where Jaisvi is currently working, they have given her the responsibility of an English teacher and class teacher. In +2, there is more responsibility since the boys and girls want to hold hands. They know where the CCTV cameras are and where to go and hold hands. Parents come and tell Jaisvi that they are just best friends. Again, the uniform is another problem. Since the uniform is not ready yet, they come with short skirts, and again she has to talk to them about the dress. Some students have attitude problems. They look at teachers from up to down. Jaisvi thinks it might be because of their upbringing or age or because their parents don't have time for them, but the English teacher has to deal with all these things.

Pragati accepts that she is improving day by day as a teacher. She recognizes the learning styles of students and supports them. In the course of enhancing students' performance, she improves her performance too. She thinks that if she continuously practices new things in her profession, she will be a professional teacher. That is what she says, and she, too, thinks that other people should judge that. She gives a hundred percent from her side to be a good, updated teacher but knows that she still needs to do a lot of things to be called a perfect professional teacher. She puts all these in this way, *I am walking on the way to being a professional teacher.* When she reflects on her early teaching, she says she did not know anything about teaching. She tried

teaching in the way her teacher taught her. How she was taught was different from how her students are taught today. It is because nothing is similar to the teaching strategies of that time, as ‘memorization’ was the main learning strategy, but now, it is different. *She says that students nowadays learn by doing and being engaged in activities related to specific topics. I gradually improved my pedagogical practices. Improving pedagogical practices is not only possible through education, training, or workshops but also through the experience we gain from our daily activities with students. In Nepali, we say, ‘padhera vanda parera dherai jaaninx.’ (My translation: We learn by experiencing rather than through our study).* However, Pragati has gained many ideas from training and workshops, which made her realize, ‘*Oh, I can do this in my classroom.*’

Pragati tries to find out the prior knowledge of students. When I do that, it makes easier to decide how I can teach them further and in what way. That determines the strategies. After that, I make goals to determine what to teach. *I think of the study's outcomes, and to meet those outcomes, I design different activities. I mostly focus on creative activities. At the same time, I make sure if students are getting enough materials for that or not.* During the activities, she checks how the students are being involved, and she tries to facilitate them to have collaborative work from which they learn better. Taking students’ and parents’ feedback and other teachers’ feedback also helps her determine teaching techniques.

When Pragati conducts action research, she keeps a record of the identified problem and the activities they do to improve. For example, she conducted action research on creative writing skills and kept a record of the plan that worked and did not. She puts on, *I reflect upon the teaching every year at the end of the session to see how effective I could teach in that particular year. I have kept the worksheets that I*

have developed for my students. During the online teaching, Pragati documented the necessary resources digitally, thinking they could also be used in the future.

The Turning Point

When Pragati was in the teaching profession, she started joining different conferences. One of them is NELTA Conference. She joined as a participant in two of the conferences. When she was in the concurrent session, she felt like presenting at the conference was not a big deal. It's about sharing our experiences either in research or teaching. So, she thought of doing a presentation the following year. Then she started presenting at conferences. Pragati accepts *when I am presenting, it gives me a confidence to stand in front of adults and speak to them. Then I started attending different training in educating teachers. That helped me grow as a teacher educator.* When she was doing her Master's degree, she got an opportunity to do an online course. In the first year, she was rejected to take that course. She tried for the second time. She wrote an application, submitted it, and was selected for the Teaching English to Young Learners course. That was a ten months course. In that online course, there were many students from different countries. They had lots of discussions related to teaching. They used to share our ideas. She said,

We had different collaborative work that we needed to do together.

We used to design various project work together. Such a course would provide a scholarship to the teacher who is forward in sharing and participating. The scholarship was in collaboration with the University of Oregon and the U.S Embassy. The University of Oregon selected me from Nepal and informed the US Embassy. I knew it when I got a call from the embassy. I was told that I got the highest score in the online course and that they would like to give me a scholarship to attend a one-month course in the U.S.

The U.S trip was the turning point of Pragati's life. That trip made her realize that she had not even travelled on a plane, and that was the first time she had travelled in an aeroplane. She learned a lot during her travel. She found herself being independent, moving here and there and going far from home to learn something and achieve some goals. She expressed, *the way people looked me was changed. I used to be looked at as 'Hyaa yo ta euta boarding school ma padhaune śikṣāk ta ho ni'* (My translation: *She is just a teacher who teaches in private school*), *but after I visited the U.S, people used to look at me as 'Yo ta bidesh gayera, tehan ko rahan sahan dekhera aayeki maanchhe'* (My Translation: *She is the one who has travelled abroad and has seen the lifestyle of the people there.*) So, *the way people looked at her became different.* Pragati's in-laws and relatives understood her dedication to teaching and learning. Her relatives, who thought she could stay in the village and do her further studies and who blamed her that I was going to Kathmandu for no reason, understood her zeal and my dedication. They expressed that she did something other people in the village could not do. Usually, being married and bound in the household work bound women's life in the house's four walls, but Pragati broke those walls made up of people's superstitions and old traditions and could stand as an example for others. She is proud of what she can do, and her family is proud of her.

Professionally too, that was the turning point in Pragati's life. She started getting many opportunities after that. She was invited to share her experiences in the University and other sessions. People got to know her. She started her career as a teacher educator after that course in the U.S. She has used many ideas from that course to educate teachers here in Nepal. She got the confidence to talk to people and educate them about what she had learned on the U.S trip, especially in terms of teaching. United Missions of Nepal had a mission to teach children in remote areas of

Nepal. They extended their hands to Pragati, which she took as a great opportunity for her profession. She explained, *I interviewed children from Humla and Jumla of Nepal and identified the problem. At that time, I realized how important it is to recognize the needs of students as per their context and background. I then designed fifty activities for those children, which helped me to focus on children's learning styles and their multiple intelligences to educate them.* This taught Pragati that she could design different activities for a single topic to make children of varying learning styles learn that particular topic. So, the U.S trip, as well as the work she did with United Missions of Nepal, were the turning points in her professional life.

Revisiting Dīkṣā and Getting the Meaning Behind it

My later life made me revisit the meaning of *dīkṣā*. I took *dīkṣā* as the simple mantra from *guruama*. I felt something when I took it, but I never gave importance to its meaning. I took it in a way it taught me not to share it with anyone. I remember my mother saying *we should not share it with others; otherwise, the person who listens to it goes crazy.* I was aware of not making others go crazy because of enchanting the *dīkṣā* mantra. As I had given a clue in Chapter one that I have revisited the meaning behind *dīkṣā* in this chapter, I start the discourse on my exploration of the meaning behind *dīkṣā*. Maybe going crazy was to symbolize not getting anything out of it or making no sense out of it. I now think it was not to share because we have to be in a certain stage to receive and give it. For me, it took years and years to get the meaning of the whole mantra. According to Iyer (2021), ॐ (*Om*) in the *dīkṣā* mantra means sound to quieten the mind and open the heart. This means we first need to open our hearts by quietening our minds to receive knowledge. ॐ (*Aim*) means creativity, intuition and enlightenment. We need to be creative in thinking and doing, and we have insight into anything we learn, which can give us revelation and enlightenment.

ह्रिं (*Hrim*) refers to the achievement and fulfillment. This achievement is what we achieve as knowledge and what we achieve after that knowledge dwells in us. The fulfillment of our desires and wishes in our life is all due to the power of this word. श्रीं (*Shrim*) means resource abundance. The resource here denotes both health and wealth. आत्म देवताय नमो नमः (*Aatma Devataye Namō Namah*) is the verse that teaches us to honour the self. It leads to honour 'aatma' and respect the inner 'I'. सूर्य नारायण नमो नमः (*Surya Narayana Namō Namah*) is the verse that teaches us to respect the light, The Sun (light). इष्ट देवताय नमो नमः (*Ista Devataye Namō Namah*) teaches us to worship God whom we remember when we are in trouble. It is to honour the close god. ब्रह्म देवताय नमो नमः (*Brahma Devataye Namō Namah*) is the verse that teaches us to honour the creator. Creator here could be the creator of humans, animals, art, poem or other creations. बिष्णु देवताय नमो नमः (*Bishnu Devataye Namō Namah*) refers to the honouring of the preserver, the one who takes care of anything. शिव देवताय नमो नमः (*Shiva Devataye Namō Namah*) is to teach us to respect even the destroyer as *Mahadev* in *Hindu dharma*. पितृ देवताय नमो नमः (*Pitri Devataye Namō Namah*) is the verse that leads us to give respect to the people from a family who have already died. It leads to respect the ancestors who are not in this world anymore. कुल देवताय नमो नमः (*Kul Devataye Namō Namah*) teaches us to respect the clan that we belong to. ॐ नमो नमः (*Om Namō Namah*) is the verse that recalls all other verses and gives an ending saying that those mentioned entities are more respectable than the self (Iyer, 2021). *Dīkṣā* mantra teaches to be thoughtful and wise by making the mind quiet and opening the heart to receive knowledge. Honouring the self, the light, close god, creator, preserver and destroyer, ancestors and clan gives maturity to an individual,

for s/he gets success in life only if s/he is aware of honouring those entities. I now got the revelation that life is successful when we can acknowledge the mentioned entities, and *dīkṣā* held that deep meaning that I could not understand then. Now, I got the revelation of the *dīkṣā mantra*, and realized that I still need to bring *dīkṣā* to the application level, making it a foundation of my life.

Though I explored the literal meaning behind *dīkṣā*, I was unable to get the profound meaning behind the way I was asked to enchant it. I still was unaware of why do I need to keep secret of what I know? Then, I studied more about *dīkṣā* and got revelation that *dīkṣā* never holds a meaning ‘do not share knowledge to others.’ Rather, it is about the *mode* of giving *mantra* by guru to *śishya* where the *dhun* produced by the *śabda* goes to God and come back from God to *Sādhak*. So, it is about creating the connection between God and *Sādhak* with the power of words. So, I got this revelation from him. Then, I explored more on *dīkṣā* and found that *dīkṣā* is about freeing the individual (the disciple) from the worldly drawbacks and to make him/her progress with a free mind to engage in the spiritual spheres. So, I came to learn that *dīkṣā* is not about keeping the things secret but it is about going to the state of quietening the mind and letting the *śabda* passes to God and to come back with the power of God that help the *sādhak* grow in spiritual world in a powerful way (Dasi & Dasi, 2022). Comparing it to Christianity it is like the man praying to God by speaking in tongue which happens in presence of the Holy Spirit. As a born-again Christian, I have experienced speaking in tongue which is the supernatural gift from God which he made to fulfill his plan to deal with the human race (Strauss, 1997). I now realize that *dīkṣā* mantra was not about keeping secret of what you know but it is about sharing knowledge with a faith that it reaches to God and come back with power.

Connecting *dīkṣā* concept to the professional development, I found that *dīkṣā* taught me to be responsible for what I was told to do. *Dīkṣā* was just the initiation of knowledge in me but to take it to *śikṣā* level and to explore it for finding out the meaning behind it was my duty which I gradually learned in the latter phase of my life. When I relate that to *śikṣā*, it was just an initiation to my knowledge when my professors suggested me to conduct the research with an autoethnographic inquiry but the entire exploration rest on me for I was the one to conduct the research. So, *dīkṣā* was the initiation which I explored when I delved the *śikṣā* and that has taken me to the level where I am being able to make meaning of both *dīkṣā* and *śikṣā*.

From Novice to Expert Teacher: Where am I?

There was a time when I had to take a long breath before entering the school gate. I learned some techniques from my teachers and used those in my class. I had seen my teachers reading from textbooks and explaining students. I, too, did the same in the beginning of my teaching career. Berliner (1988) claimed that there are five stages in the professional career of a teacher. The first one is the ‘Novice Stage.’ I went through the novice stage when I tried to implement all I had learned about teaching. However, this stage took me to the classroom reality, which was contextual and different from what was taught in the teacher education programs. The real-world experience made me experience the landscapes of situations. I used to think that I had to teach everything that I knew. I often struggled because I compared my work with other teachers who had the experience of many years and I would find my work frustrating and unrewarding (Fantilli & McDougall, 2009). There are many times I found myself a failure. I reached the ‘Advanced Beginner Stage,’ the second stage, and I found the context very important. I began to guide my behaviour according to the context I was in. At this stage, I gained experience, which helped me decide where

to follow the rules and where to break them. I was still unaware of determining certain things according to personal actions and I was still a follower of the rules and would describe events concerning contexts.

With a little more experience, I reached the 'Competent Stage' where I would consciously choose what I would do. I was confident about what to prioritize from the curriculum. I started meeting the curriculum through other activities rather than teaching only from textbooks because there is much more to teach when we go beyond textbooks (Pokhrel, 2021). I was very much conscious of what was safe and unsafe while planning. I would think of success and failure but in a more advanced way than that of novice and advanced stages. I was a competent performer but I was still not fast and flexible in my behaviour. I pushed myself to go a little ahead and started seeing patterns and similarities, which is where know-how became prominent. I believe I was in the 'Proficient Stage.' I was analytic and deliberative in deciding what to do next. Then, I moved towards self-efficacy with different training and workshops and conducting action research on different topics. I do not claim that I am an expert teacher but I can certainly say that I am in the 'Expert Stage' at present, where I am neither rational nor intuitive but 'arational.' I love to show fluid performance where I want to act flexible in deciding as per the situation. I give value to teaching and place it qualitatively at a higher level. If anything goes wrong or does not go well, I make decisions by reflecting on my actions. I try to be open-minded, wholehearted and responsible and these three ways lead me to be reflective (Dewey, 1933). I do things as usual but in an efficient manner. I have found developmental changes whenever I had turning points in my life. Every turning point lifted me up and I underwent some changes which led me to the transformation while going

through these changes. There is still a long way to go and to achieve success by being an expert teacher.

I Am the Emergent Butterfly from Cocoon

Comparing my previous life to the present is no less than transforming from a caterpillar to a butterfly. Jaisvi, Pragati, and I have the same feelings regarding this. We were once the caterpillars that were dull in look, hungry, and without vision. The emphasis on individual change has led us to the emancipatory transformation (Taylor, 2007). I was in darkness regarding education, understanding the society, culture, world of teaching-learning, students, and professionals. I was scared of coming out of my comfort zone. I used to get scared even when I was promoted as the teacher for upper grades. I had no idea to collaborate with teacher colleagues. I could not share my classroom problems with others. Sometimes, I would think if I was in the wrong profession. Jaisvi and Pragati, too, shared their situation of how inexperienced they were initially and how different personal problems hampered their professional life. Once we stepped towards professional growth, we started growing wings, which helped us fly.

I am now confident enough to meet English teachers worldwide, participate in international conferences and present my papers in those conferences where I can share my knowledge and practices with others and learn about them. I educate my teachers regarding English language education and go out of the valley to educate teachers who are out there in the darkness. I reach out to the teachers of developed countries to see their pedagogical practices and bring those practices here to my classroom. Updating myself with technology, I Google search and find out solutions through YouTube whenever I get stuck. I am growing with a digital identity. I try to

make my classroom different in terms of meaningful displays. This is not less than being a ‘born again’ (John 3: 5) teacher who is to see the kingdom of professionals.

My target is to motivate students in English class and help them conceptualize that English is fun to learn. I make my class full of fun using warm-up activities at the beginning of the class, taking ice-breakers in between, and engaging them in a task using different methods. I lived with multiple identities, which I continuously negotiated, reconstructed, and enacted through interacting with different individuals (Yazan, 2014). Though I lived multiple identities, I am proud to be called an English teacher. That is my identity as a professional person. Jaisvi and Pragati are also happy with their identity as English teachers, although they face some ‘uff’ moments in their teaching journey. They also think engaging students with fun activities could help expand their creativity and critical thinking skills. We can make a difference in our institutions by being English teachers, executing our self-efficacious behaviour to bring success and produce outcomes (Bandura, 1977). We set out to reach the destination where we would be called professional English teachers. However, I am the emergent butterfly that has come out of the cocoon. I still need to make my wings strong by developing some essences in me that would help rise my spirit. There is still a long way to go and a huge task to accomplish.

Essences Yet to be Developed in Me

I sit quiet and reflect on my growth as a teacher. It gives me a sense that I am still in the process of being transformed and in the process of identity construction. Identity process theory itself discusses on the process that human beings go through while in their life journey. It addresses four universal processes; continuity, distinctiveness, self-esteem and self-efficacy for the identity construction (Jaspal & Breakwell, 2014). I am still in the process of being professional English teacher. I

went through different experiences which are related to pedagogical skills as well as to professional development. However, the context I grew up in and the norms and values I have got huge essence in my life which made a way to gain personal experiences. I could see my essence as a researcher who use transformative learning theory for the ongoing research and find that I, as a researcher added value to the transformative learning process while engaging in the research (Christie et al., 2015). How this happened was that while in the research process, I realized that the theories I used gave me the direction to carry out the research and I could emerge up with a vision to transform lives through education (Luitel & Wagle, 2017) which I can do by some essences that can add to my present context so as to lead me towards the professional development.

If I could meditate on my own performance at this stage and be open-minded, wholehearted and responsible, it could lead me to be a real teacher (Dewey, 1933). These three terms can lead a person to be optimistic while moving towards professional development. When I have active desire to listen to others' ideas, to listen to more than one idea to search for alternative possibilities, I develop myself as open-minded with which I see the world with broad view. When I am open to learn from others or seek opportunities to learn from more than one source, I reach the level where I can be what I want to be. Being open-minded I recognize the possibility of errors in the previously existing belief, even if that belief is my dearest (Zeichner & Liston, 1987). Whole-hearted living teaches me the meaning of life and reminds of a purpose to live (Cunningham, 2021) and responsibility shows me the ways to solve the encountered problems that trigger me to be responsible in what I do (Nurfaidah, 2018). I wish to develop these habits in me in the coming days so that I live the life of fullness and reach that level of being professional English teacher.

The meaning behind the narratives I brought are aligned to Identity process theory as it is about my attempt to strengthen my professionalism through self-efficacy which leads people to develop feeling of confidence and being in control of one's life (Jaspal & Breakwell, 2014). They align with the Transformative learning theory too as they hold the idea of transformative pedagogy in the classroom (Shrestha, 2021) and the idea of new and revised form of learning by using the prior interpretation of one's experience that guides future actions (Mezirow, 1996). The life stories on self-efficacy bring into line the ideas carried out by both the theories.

Chapter Essence

People go through different stages in their life. These stages are not always easy. However, as humans, people want to develop. They want to be better and do good deeds while they are in this world. Through professional development activities such as training, workshops, reflecting on their classes and self-evaluation, English teachers could also develop their professional skills. This chapter is the depiction of my steps toward professional development. There are stories of my participants who developed their professional skills through involvement in different activities. The chapter portrays our transformation from a caterpillar stage to the emergent butterfly from cocoon, where we have wings to go around and grasp other opportunities but there are some essentials to be developed in us. Taking *dīkṣā* in my early life and getting the revelation of the *dīkṣā* mantra in my later life is exciting coverage of my learning experience in the chapter. At the same time, the reality that I am still on the way and that I still have to develop some habits in me such as open-minded, whole-hearted and responsible.

CHAPTER X

REFLECTIONS, KEY INSIGHTS AND CONCLUSION

The journey of the research went like the journey of my life. The reason is that during the research time, I got to go through the whole experience of my past, which made me travel my entire life. While bringing my participants' stories too, they took me to their life journeys which made me feel like I was present with them at those moments of their life. The beginning of the research made me more studious. I went through many books, articles, and research studies to conceptualize my selected topic. I had lots of reading for building the literature review section. I also learned about the method I chose, 'auto/ethnography.' Then entering into the data collection process, I experienced real difficulty. The difficulty was mainly on the time management part. Sometimes, I could not take the time to sit and recall my stories and write them down; sometimes, my participants could not manage time to talk to me. With all those hurdles, I finished collecting and analyzing the data. It would give a sequential understanding if I explain my journey under the following topics:

The Beginning

There was much confusion when I was in the beginning phase of the research. I joined my PhD immediately after finishing my MPhil degree. Due to that, I had a fear if that it would be too much for my mind. In terms of completing the course, I did not have much problem. I knew how I had to manage time for assignments and presentations. However, with time we get maturity. I found my way of giving classroom presentations too simple because I only used to bring the content. I then brought a change in that particular area first. I made myself able to connect content

with life or ongoing situations. That gave me confidence in making others understand what I was trying to convey. In choosing the research topic and conceptualizing the research concepts, I struggled, but self-study in those topics made me a bit easier to grasp the ideas there. I would be nervous whenever people congratulated me for joining the PhD course. I was at the beginning of the race, and I feared if I could finish the race or not. I too, had a fear if I could fulfill all the requirements or not. I would think of those requirements, and suddenly, I used to feel a burden in my head. I could not think of how to manage time for doing all those things. The beginning of the journey remained tough though I took it lightly, thinking I could do it. With all hardships I underwent that phase, but many things were in front of me that I needed to accomplish during the journey. With more study and writing, I kept on and on.

Slash '/' in Autoethnography, the Difference it Made

I started researching my own stories. I reflected on my past and wrote stories from my experiences in different phases of my life. I tried to give autoethnographic sense to my writing, especially connecting every event with 'self.' While doing this, I was contented with my attempt to bring my 'self' into the writing. The center of my writing was 'self'; I thought it was what I wanted to bring to my research. When I kept reflecting on my past and writing those events in the form of reflection, I realized that I am 'I' because of 'others' who were together in my life's journey. Then, I focused on the 'others' who had a significant role in shaping my identity as an individual in society and an English teacher. Then, I started concentrating more on this 'other' and felt the necessity of others' stories in my research. As my research deals with the identity construction of English teachers and the change they had in their life as English teachers, I took it substantially to go through others' journeys and to bring their stories into my research. I was interested to know how other English

teachers' life journeys went and how their identities as English teachers got constructed. For incorporating that, autoethnography was not enough. I found it valuable to go through the line of auto/ethnography that would lend me a hand in incorporating other English teachers' stories. Thus, '/' has huge significance in my research.

In My World of Recalling

While recalling the incidents or events that took place in the past, those events took me to the same state of my life. I lived my childhood once again. I survived all those memories once again. This journey toward a PhD assisted me in counting the value of my parents and other ideals of my life, who had a massive role in my identity construction. Had I not undergone this journey, I would not have discerned their contribution to my life. I would not remember specific events as they just occurred and went out of my memory, but I even recalled those memories and found how important they were to bringing me to this stage. I gave birth to the participants by virtue of my memory. While recalling the events from the past took me to the state of childhood, school life, my teenage, college life, and teacher life. While reflecting and writing those stories, I went to a different world. Sometimes, I would smile, and sometimes, I would cry. I went crazy enjoying the world of memories. I started living in the recalling state as if the incidents were going on at present. That made me proud as I could count my struggles of being an English teacher, and it made me proud too, as I could value the people and events that came into my life who selflessly and knowingly or unknowingly assisted me in constructing my identity.

Being in the Participants' World

While generating stories from my participants by selection, I went into their world. They took me to their childhood, teenage, and whole journey. In interviewing

them, I was not bound to the questions. I let them flow in their memory, and they went on and on. When my participants were telling some funny stories, we laughed as if we were living in the same event and having fun. When they cried, I had my eyes full of tears. I realized that I would go into their world and feel like I was there with them while they told me their life stories. I even imagined all those stories as movies. My participants were narrating their life stories, and I felt like I was watching those events with my own eyes. Going through their pains and pleasures, I could get into their perceptions of viewing the world. I could stand in their shoes and see the world. Being in the participants' world gave me the experience of understanding others' feelings. It gave me the indulgence of being in their world and to go through their adventures of undertaking different roles, which gave me an understanding of their struggle to construct their identity.

Key Insights into the Research

I got key insights into the research while on this journey. In our life journey, there are several stages that we go through, and those stages are nice sometimes, whereas sometimes, they are challenging. My participants' and my life journey and our journey as English teachers have been a journey of unanticipated experiences which brought a change in different phases of our life that led to the construct of our identity. Going through the life stages and collecting the memories of being in the position of 'Other' makes life more challenging. That uplifts us with an entity called 'self-esteem.' Self-esteem does not let us down. My story of being in the category of 'others' made me realize my worth, which led me to persevere and keep the value of self-esteem in mind. The failures and successes are the two sides of the life journey, which are parallel in terms of appearing in our life. My experiences of failures and then successes taught me the value of some ideals in my life that are important figures

to add brick to my identity construction. Going through the threatened identity through different identity shifts, English teachers discern how they strengthened during that time by keeping faith in God or by supporting with belongingness. My participants' stories of identity shift demonstrated that.

As an English teacher, I started from the novice stage. To come to this stage, the 'continuity' I gave to the teaching profession is of great importance. As English teachers, we get into situations where we cannot say 'no' to what comes before us. Leading different activities and events, I encountered difficult situations such as being unable to manage time, due to which I did not even have time to think about my hunger and sleep. I can see those times as the pillars of my professional development. It was hard, but it taught me to work harder and give continuity to the profession where I was. With the overlapping of personal and professional identities, there come different moments in our life where we cannot manage personal and professional life together. Again, 'faith' or 'ideal people' make us strong at that time, and the power of perseverance makes us continue. With critical reflection on my own teaching journey, I felt a need for 'change' in my way of teaching and thinking. I started seeking opportunities where I could go and learn something related to English language teaching. To find the platform where we can go and learn, makes us different from others. With time, I realized the 'New Born' concept in Christianity, which revealed that 'old has to go, and new has to come.' I applied that to my spiritual life as well as professional life. With different training, seminars, workshops, and conferences, English teachers could change themselves into self-efficacious teachers.

With self-esteem, distinctiveness, continuity and self-efficacy, my participants and I had our identities constructed and changed in our personal life. In professional life, too, we went through those stages and constructed our identity as English

teachers. In this journey, what I found is that there is the common thread between me and my participants in terms of transformation that we all went through the universal processes conferred by Identity Process Theory though they were overlapped in some cases or might have repeated in some cases. For example: The feeling of belongingness in Jaisvi when meeting her aunt and the feeling of belongingness when I met Rosy in the UK might be different due to the circumstances we were in but they gave the same feeling of being safe and reaching to the comfort place. In terms of transformation too, I construct a common thread that all three of us went through the developmental changes that led to the transformation in our professional journey. That may not happen in everybody's life in similar way but in our case, we sought for moving ahead with English teacher identity and we had the similar kind of passion to walk on the way that could lead us to our professional growth. Every English teacher might have obstacles and challenges on the way to professional development. Still, we have to believe in our strengths as English teachers who have the potential to grow as professional English teachers.

Conclusion

This research made an effort to contribute to research evidence in the identity construction of English teachers and the change they undergo while sharpening their professional development. The study's primary purpose was to explore my and my participants' journey of change and identity construction. The study used autoethnographic writing to answer research questions and address the research purpose. Using narratives to answer the formulated research questions "How has our journey of English teachers been? How have we evolved and changed?" and "How has our journey helped us to look at the shifting identities in a span of time along with

the construction of our identities?”, the individual interviews were conducted with my participants and my reflection was used to bring my stories.

To conclude, this research sought to explore our teacher identities with the methodological feasibility of an autoethnography informed by my philosophical background. This is autoethnography of my journey as an English language teacher, my identity construction, and the transformation I underwent while constructing my identity. Along with my experience, this research includes my participants’ stories, which has extended this research to auto/ethnography. My philosophical background offers a philosophical underpinning for autoethnography. With my understanding (auto), this research has acknowledged other (ethno) with my subjectivity, thinking, and writing (graphy), which has embodied my personal and professional practices as well as my participants’ personal and professional practices.

Focusing on the first research question, “How has our (my and my participants’) journey as English teachers been? How have we evolved and changed?” this research has explored my experiences and the experiences of my participants and came to the conclusion that English teachers, being critical in reflecting on the self, can identify many stories of failure and success in their personal and professional life, which lead them to be transformed English teachers. With the overlapping of personal and professional life, female teachers see many obstacles in their life as they are entangled with the responsibilities of raising children, looking after the sick and old people at home and many more. Undergoing the threatened identity in personal or professional life, English teachers persevere for change. That change makes them distinctive teachers and leads them to be in the identifiable group as professional English teachers. With continuity as English teachers in any kind of adverse situation, they establish their identity with self-esteem and self-efficacy. They evolve with the

ups and downs in their lives and strengthen their professionalism with success and failure in different life steps, transforming them into teachers with much expertise.

Focusing on the next research question, “How has our journey helped us to look at the shifting identities in a span of time along with the construction of our identities?” our stories of identity construction have come as the answer to this question. The identity construction of English teachers is not only about being a teacher. Instead, there are many layers of life to be understood. Identity construction is complicated because it also comprises an identity shift. In this research, our stories of identity shift have tried to omit the quest of how our identity got constructed. Teachers going through different phases of life undergo many trials, which knowingly or unknowingly give a revelation that they need a change in their doings, and that revelation helps them transform. The journey from the beginning stage in teaching to the proficient stage is the milestone that the teachers achieve, which would embrace many stories of coming from one level to the other.

Although I have applied the auto/ethnographic approach to explore my journey as an English teacher, it has parallelly helped in critically exploring my and my participants’ professional practices. This is why I do not hesitate to claim this research as the ‘complete opening’ rather than a ‘complete closing.’ I know I have brought many stories as “said.” However, there are still ‘untold’ stories that could be the subject for another research. Thus, I would like to leave this research as the starting point for the next research.

Contribution to New Knowledge

Addressing the multiple gaps, the study makes significant contributions. First, the study extends the idea of the identity construction of English teachers that it gets root from the events that took place in their earlier life. Certain events make them

realize that they belong to the identifiable group (English teachers), encourage them to be a better teacher and that add to their life stories of identity construction. Second, there are unexpected, unsuspected and unanticipated stories teachers carry due to societal norms and values or unavoidable circumstances in their life. However, without being radical, negotiating with society and traditional beliefs, they keep growing like how the rose blooms with its beauty even amidst thorns. Nothing stops them from moving ahead to grow their professionalism. Third, the study has explored that identity shifts teachers go through in their personal and professional life make the way to their professional development. For English teachers, it works as a jerk to bring positive vibration in their life that motivates them to participate in different activities which lead them for their professional growth. Finally, the research contributes to the new concept of 'born-again teachers' that motivates teachers to follow the path of newness that makes them better teachers. My autobiographic and autoethnographic orientations constitute to the body of knowledge since they excavated the enlightening experiences of my 'self' and 'others' which gave a trajectory to knowledge construction.

Implications

When we have discourse on teacher identity and professional development, we generally look at teachers' present status as teachers and their engagements which sometimes may miss an essential body out there. Teachers become actual teachers when they realize how they became teachers. It is worth looking at how they have become teachers. For the professional growth of teachers, there are several ways. However, teachers need to choose those ways as opportunities and move ahead and become professional teachers when they can be motivational for other teachers. They become real teachers when they can recall their stories and tell other teachers to

encourage them. The research concluded that teachers go through different phases of their life, which teach them what struggle is and what success is. English teachers' identities get constructed with many changes they go through in their life, leading them towards professional development. From the conclusions, I have drawn the following implications:

1. Recalling past experiences and getting to see the change in own growth is a teacher's quality of being a professional teacher. Reflection is the heart of teachers' professional growth. So, teachers need to reflect on their previous actions and see if there needs any change for the next step.
2. English teachers need to encourage students to write journals that may include topics that make them recall their life journeys and enjoy writing those experiences. This would not only help them write their stories but also improve their English language since they cultivate the habit of developing the writing flow.
3. Teachers go through different phases in their life which could be even bitter, but the struggles they make in their life uplift them to see the bigger picture in their profession.
4. English teachers not only teach English but fulfill other responsibilities that come up in the institutions they are involved in, such as writing notices, being translators, editing the writings, leading assembly and other programs and maintaining the English language speaking of students in the school. They need to take it as a learning opportunity to gain experiences in a diverse field.
5. Teachers from various cultures and backgrounds might not have the same way of presenting themselves in teaching. Their cultural background and how they were brought up as students matter. The society they lived in and their

situation may leave a long-lasting impact on their lives, reminding them of how their identity was constructed amid such circumstances. Teachers can make those stories to motivate other teachers on how they can move on even in adverse circumstances.

6. A teacher's personal and professional life overlaps since the person is the same but has different responsibilities. However, teachers need to balance their personal and professional life even though there are situations where the personal life interferes with the professional one and vice-versa. As teachers, allowing faith/sense to work while entering the class to forget those personal problems and run the class with the same joy as usual, helps them sharpen their professionalism.
7. Being English teachers, there are several ways to find growth opportunities. English teachers need to embrace 'change' which takes them to the next level of the teaching profession. By taking part in different English Language Teaching programs, attending training and workshops related to teaching-learning as well as professional growth, attending national and international conferences and presenting papers in those conferences, conducting action research to improve the classroom issues, collaborating with teachers for teaching-learning, doing peer observation and providing feedback, are some of the ways where English teachers find change and that change transform their identity as professional English teachers.

To draw more implications focusing on English teachers, English teachers belong to the identifiable group. They enjoy sharing their experiences with others and are committed to reaching certain performance standards. They do not just teach but also learn to be a better teacher giving continuity to their involvement in

professional development activities as well as their own subject matters and English language teaching methods. English teachers are even mentors for new teachers since they are responsible for guiding them with training and workshop. This research thus implies that English teachers seek for the opportunity to grow and construct their identity as professional English teachers.

Making Sense of the Research: Understanding Life

While going through this research journey, I could relive my life and see each event of my life minutely. I had thought that we have a specific purpose of living on this earth, and it just happens and then it is done, but when I revisited my life journey, I realized that certain moments in our life that just come and go, even have huge essentials in shaping our identities. Though we had not taken those events or incidents as necessary at that moment, they might have a huge role in constructing our identities. At the beginning of the research, I had no idea what I would do, selecting autoethnography as a method and thinking that it might not be intense research as it was about myself. During the research, I found out that it is not easy to research the self and that researching the self with its connection to theories and other research studies made me take my research as a valuable one. Not only that, but I, too, learned to find the relationship between my past and the present. Bringing others' stories and experiences into the research has made this research more meaningful. In short, this research made me able to make sense of my identity as an English teacher, and that has helped me to count this research as means to make sense of life as well as the research itself.

I See My Research as Knowledge-oriented

Research is the production of knowledge (Simons & Masschelein, 2014). As it is the sharing of knowledge, it creates space for the learning process. My research has

not only made room for learning to the readers, but it has also become the platform for me to be the learner as it has brought a change in the knowledge basis. So, this research is a resource for researchers in the education field. The research process itself was knowledge-oriented since I approached the 'knowledge society' such as school, teachers and teaching learning as a researcher. The product (this research) is the result of what I could accumulate as knowledge during the research. The research product can be applied in the settings like school systems and government (Levin, 2013). Understanding people from their ground level, entering their life, getting into their society, and looking at the world from their point of view was no less than getting knowledge from thousands of knowledge-oriented books. Getting to know somebody's life from that closeness and getting enlightened to the hidden truths of life is more of being knowledge-oriented through research. I, as a researcher, have revisited my whole life during this research journey and noticed the developmental changes that I went through that led me to reach the transformation in my professional life. Also, looking at own life with critical eyes showed the downfalls of my confidence on myself. I too saw the things to be improved in me and learned to appreciate so many people in my life who became the source of knowledge and who led to my identity construction. While in the research process, I learned to admire self and others, creating a new level of knowledge. In fact, each step in the research was knowledge-oriented.

Concluding Thoughts on Change and Identity

The research gave me the understanding that change is part of development. Every moment I faced change, I got one step ahead of what I was. I did not realize that before, but this research journey made me look at myself. I could feel that whenever the change is there in my life, I get to do better in my life. During my PhD

journey, I got participated in different international conferences. I, too, presented my papers at those conferences, which changed me from what I used to do as my regular work. That built confidence in me to speak in front of people around the world. Publishing the research papers in international journals and seeing my name printed in those journals were proud moments. Also, uplifting my confidence, giving training to teachers, and involving myself in educating them have brought another level of change in my life. Gathering all these experiences, my identity has changed along with the change in my professional steps. Now, I am a self-efficacious English teacher moving towards professional development, which is my identity.

As a concluding thought over the whole research journey, I would like to say that I learned to see and examine my own social construction of 'self' through this research which was challenging but essential since we as a person are built up in identity with all those stories we have gone through. While examining the self, I, too, learned to appreciate the value of 'others.' Similarly, I realized that the change that comes in our life gives us a shake which makes us learn something out of it, that learning pushes us to get out of our situation and to move ahead, and that undertaking brings transformation. Finally, I strive for English teachers to be critical and conscious of how the social dynamics have operated, how they have changed in their life, which transformed them on a personal and professional level and how they lived their life which helped them construct their identities.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I

The Sample of My Reflections

Jaisvi was in a staff room where her colleague teachers would ask her for help time and again. They were telling me if I am looking at Jaisvi's life journey, I am the luckiest person. She is the one who gives her 100 percent to the work she does. One teacher came towards her and asked Jaisvi to check if his questions are ok. Jaisvi took the question and took a long time to check it. She smiled and said, "We need to be careful while checking questions maam. Otherwise, we have to regret later." I nodded my head. I was learning from her that we should not just finish our work but should give time to do it correctly. She took students' notebooks and corrected them. She was telling me that she would finish correcting the pile of notebooks she had in this period. As she was in leisure, she started correcting. Somebody came and called her saying she has to go to the substitute class. She stood up with her file again and went to the class. As the students were also expecting to be free, they were having a good talk with their friends. She gave some tips for how to be prompt in submitting their work.

Education Abroad _____ Date: _____
 Jaisvi
 Shared her idea on how is it difficult for a woman to handle personal & professional life. She shared that she and her husband bought a house in a 'housing thing'. They did contact with them and payed money for the house but because of Covid-19, the houses are still under construction and also they have ~~problem~~ ^{with some} construction issues now. Her husband and herself bought that house in their daughter's name but due to the problem with construction, her husband says that because their daughter is unlucky, this is happening.

Jaisvi was sitting quietly in the staff room. I asked her if she needs any help. She told, she is having tension because of her household work. As her husband had an operation, she had to look after him. Also, her mother-in-law had an operation and she had to be fully engaged in home looking after two of them. On top of that, her daughter was not feeling well. Jaisvi, "My body is here but my mind is there." She said she is not able to do her work properly. She said, "In class, I forget everything and I am there fully but when I am sitting like this, I think of my daughter. She is having exams. So, I have sent her to the school today but I don't know how hard it has been to her. I too think of piled-up work at home. Maam something is here, something is there. Literally, it has been a mess, my home. Sometimes, I feel like life itself is a mess. We never know what comes in front of you and all of a sudden, you are there to take the responsibility. You even can't say no. I have many things as such in my life. That day, though Jaisvi went to class, taught her students the intended lessons, she had that sadness somewhere in her face.

Appendix II

The Sample of My stories

When it comes to the teaching profession that I chose for my career development, English language became the excess to enter the English medium school. When I faced the interview for the first time regarding the job, I realized that English language is very important. I thought it might be my fortune that I got good job from the beginning of my career path but being thoughtful, I came to assert that just because I had good English, I got better job. I was never refused wherever I tried but I have seen one of my close friends being refused so many times just because she did not have good English. She wanted to be a teacher in good school where she can develop her professionalism but she could not. At that point, I was thankful to my father for his decision of admitting me to English medium school.

Learning English never became my passion when I was a child. When I was told to speak in English, it was like a huge boulder rolling upon my head until I would get escaped from that situation. I would feel like I am trapped in a dark, suffocating and unpleasant place. I always found English difficult especially, the grammar portion. I was confused in the use of articles and prepositions. Being honest, this still troubles me. I was not sure how the tenses work. The types of noun, adjective and adverb nearly made me mad. I failed my English grammar subject when I was in class four.

I joined the school with big hope about making my career in the school. At the first day of my job in the school, I was thrilled with double joy. On top of being secondary level English teacher, I was made a coordinator of secondary block. That was the most joyful moment for me. I decided to give my hundred percent to the students. I had to teach from class 6 to class 10. I started my teaching journey in the school with good pace. Students were happy. I made my best attempt to give them the environment where they could learn best. At that time, it was all about how I taught from the book that was provided to me as a teaching material.

I taught in the school as secondary level English teacher. I was a class teacher of grade nine there. Grade nine was pretty happy with my headship as a grade teacher. They used to be attentive in class while I was teaching. They were friendly and helpful too. They were the perfect example of good students. I used to go to my class with one simple game every day. That was the main attraction for the students. Most of them used to tell me that they liked that particular thing about me that I used to motivate them with some activities.

Appendix III

Observation Techniques I Used During the Observation

Ways of Observation	What Did I Do?
Running records	<p>Kept running record to note the participants' behaviour with which I noted their physical and verbal behaviour. Example:</p> <p>Jaisvi wrote the date, turned around, asked for the duster and said "Who takes the duster from here every day?"</p> <p>Physical- Jaisvi wrote the date, turned around</p> <p>Verbal- Asked for the duster and said "Who takes the duster from here every day?"</p>
Unstructured observation	<p>Under the unstructured observation, I noted the participants' activities and their overall performance freely in the class and with teacher colleagues in the staff room or outside.</p>
Observation of participants	<p>I did observation of participant too. I did this by noting down the behaviours of the participants when they were teaching, speaking with other teachers, with her daughter in the phone and with me. That helped me the</p>
Naturalistic observation	<p>I carried out the naturalistic observation. It helped me to observe my participants in natural setting. I observed with purpose and kept the anecdotes. Returning back from the field, I wrote the anecdotes for the things I could not keep note of while in the field. I did that immediately after returning back from the field by reflecting on the whole day with participants.</p>

Appendix IV

The Field Notes During My Time with Pragati

In the class where she is class teacher
Student your made concentrated.

- On the thing that happened at their home
- One student shared her poem
- Other students commented on her poem: subject matter
- Strengths
- Weaknesses

Announced the name of students who are left to do presentation.

Next class

Students were made involved in physical exercise - up-down (hands)

- Then to make them concentrate, they were asked to close their eyes and to listen to their own breathing.
- Teacher asked what are they doing
- She explained, its for their concentration and to make them ready for the class.

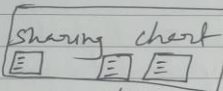
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- Talked about yesterday's work.

Reading book, vocabulary, vocabulary table - They created

- meaning, synonym, antonym,
- Textbook - p. 64

Here are crassess and sharpness

Sharing chart	Job chart
	Birth day chart

The clover Rabbit

Exercise from textbook True/False

Talked about adjectives: used.

Explained the whole text even while ~~doing~~ discussing on True & False.

Goals

Bigger doesn't mean smarter.

Use your brain

If we want to request, use polite language.

make sure you follow copy format properly."

Reminded some students to write the topic and to write page no. on the top of their ex-books.

- To draw margins beforehand
- To make handwriting little bigger

<u>Magical words</u>	
Excuse me	Sorry
Thank you	Please
Pardon	Welcome

Her mobilization towards every student...

Reminding about time and helping students for time management.

Reminded about the pending tasks.

- collecting copies
- the next day

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noticed

found in one student's thumb

asked him to write sloppily

Brother Elephant

Brother Rabbit

Describe the plan to pull the cord from the mud.

Clarified students' confusion on how the plan was made.

Took them to the text and made them clear.

The whale and elephant

The whale and the elephant

If we use the, that's the particular

Gave example of the doctor and the nurse

Assignment: Read the chapter

The more you read, the more you understand.

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closing the eyes - to avoid distraction

It was after lunch when I found her in that she had class in different section but she was giving priority to her the class where she is class teacher. She settled them down, made them ready for their class and went for her class (English class)

It started with closing the eyes to make them review their previous class.

Checked the assignment if they have done or not. For some students who did not do, she suggested them to be responsible for their work and to finish on time.

Shared about the meeting with all the class teachers and subject teachers.

Reminded some students by calling their name to write it in their diary.

Two questions

Answer the following questions in detail.

1. Sketch the character of 'Rabbit' (Include appearance, personality, actions and text evidences)
2. What did you learn from the story 'The clever Rabbit'? State any give points.

✓ File breaker
clap once,
twice
thrice
clap in two three.

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In teacher's class, there was a sharing on 'Facts', 'Interesting facts'.

Made the class quiet by asking them to clapp their hands.

- checked their home assignments if they've done or not.
- Those who don't did not do their H.W were given advice to make them alert on why doing H.W is important.

- Asked students to share the answer they have written.

closed the chapter

Advertisement

- Influencing people
- Make people buy products
- Ways of promoting
- A medium to introduce the product

cleaning our classroom will be the delight.

MOTIF
Education Abroad

We don't let our belongings out of our sight.

- Letting people know about the product
- Medium to show the benefits of the products
- Manipulate people to like the product.

Can you remember any advertisement?
Any language,
convincing and polite language

Generated ideas from students

Let them discuss about what type of slogans they use.
Students started sharing.

Fieldnotes From My Time with Jaisvi

Abraham was blessed by God. God blessed him saying his generation would expand around the world. One of his sons went to India and taught Yoga to all the Indians.

P. 264 Q. Ans - Reached to all students
 Parents' meeting - s₁ talked about
 Project work - s₂
 Regular work - s₃
 Meeting on Saturday, if their parents know - s₄

Checked the assignment of those who submitted. Gave them suggestions to improve.

s₁ - Excuse me maam
 T - Immediately rushed towards her
 Student stood up.
 Teacher tapped ^{5th floor, Omkar Building, New Baneshwor, Kathmandu, Nepal} on her ~~shoulder~~ ^{on her shoulder}

Ummah: A group of people gathered by Allah. They are expected for the goodish word benevolence.

Jews believe that Yoga was invented by them.

The universal human abilities embedded in our DNA are morality, art, spirituality and creativity.

Jaisvi had slides, power point presentations but she always take one folder in her hands which she turns time and again and explain from there.

Encouraged students to bring book.

Q. Ans session
 What do muslim believe
 what do the Chinese believe
 yellow river → people believed

MOTIF Absent Students
 Dinted to know the reason for absence personally

Aspekshya
 sonukh - What happened to sonukh.
 s - He hurt his leg while playing basketball.
 T - I have to talk to you all today.

Humility

Abraham
 - In the bible
 old & new testament
 God directed them after the birth of Jesus

Koran Tora
 Abraham is mentioned.
 since they belong to different religion, they're their own perception.

MOTIF Education Abroad Date: _____

Hindus nativists
 They believe in was Mahasishi Bharadwaj who invented rockets and aeroplanes.
 vishwamitra not only invented but also used missiles.
 Dismissed about missiles (Arrows)

Acharya Kanad was the father of atomic theory.

The Mahabharata accurately describes nuclear weapons

Talked about Gayatri mantra
 3 Mandala in Rig Beda
 in one Mandala, there is Gayatri Mantra

Appendix V

Lesson Plan Developed by Me

Date-

Duration: (6 periods)

Class:

Subject: **English**

Lesson / content / topic: To Daffodils

Content specification: Reading

Outcomes:

On the completion of this lesson the students will be able to:

1. Tell about the poet and the background of the poem.
2. Read the poem with correct rhymes.
3. Find the rhyming pattern of the poem.
4. Pronounce new words and learn their meanings.
5. Answer the questions related to the poem.
6. Will be able to create the poem of the same pattern

Soft Skills:

collaborative learning
develop sense of self-esteem
develop critical thinking skills
develop creative writing skills

Materials

Google sites, note book, course book and other reference books, chart papers

Components	Activities
Engagement	<p>Day-1 (40 minutes)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The teacher involves students in a short warming up activity of creating funny poems of just two lines (5 to 10 minutes) 2. She talks little bit about the poet and the poem. (5 minutes) 3. She asks them to collect short information about the poet giving the reference book to collect the information (for two groups) and the background of the poem (for two groups). (20 minutes)

Exploration	<p>Day-2 (40 minutes)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The teacher asks students to share their findings in a few words. They will do this group wise. 2. Teacher asks some students to read the poem aloud and others to underline the new words they find in the poem. (10 minutes) 3. She asks them to find out the rhyming pattern of the poem. (5 minutes) 4. She divides the students in four different groups to discuss one stanza for a group. (15) 5. She asks them to write their understanding from the discussion. (5 minutes)
Explanation	<p>Day-3 (40 minutes)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The teacher asks the students to share their understanding from the previous discussion. 2. The teacher adds on the information related to the poem as well as the poet. 3. She helps them to understand the poem more clearly by adding points if they have missed any... 4. The teacher assigns students with some exercises from the book.
Elaboration	<p>Day-4 and 5 (80 minutes)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The teacher asks Group 1 to write the poet's biography in the chart paper. Group 2 are supposed to write the summary of the poem in the chart paper. Group 3 writes the other poem of the poet in the chart paper and Group 4 creates their own poem by doing the parallel writing. 2. The teacher asks the students to read the poem again and discuss the question related to the text. 3. She encourages students to do the exercises given in the book as home assignments.
Evaluation	<p>Day- 6 (40 minutes)</p> <p>The teacher asks students to present the work done on Day-4 and checks if the students' presentations show the development of their creative and critical thinking or not. Students are asked to display the chart papers that they prepared in their group.</p> <p>She checks the answer of the questions related to the text and provides feedback.</p> <p>She checks the pronunciation of the students while reading the poem and asks them to read the given meaning of the new words.</p> <p>Also, she provides corrective feedback on their presentations and other assignments.</p>

Weekly Lesson Plan for Grade 12 English by Jaisvi

	Day	Topic	Activities	Objectives
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Date- October 11 to 14	Sunday			
	Monday	The Awakening Age	-Reciting the poem -Interpreting and Analyzing it Discussion of Sonnet	-To make Ss understand about the Nigerian civil war - Introducing Sonnet
	Tuesday	Exercise from the text and beyond the text	Discussion / Interaction with the Ss Class assignment	-Vocabulary -to Make the Ss --Understand the content -To enhance language capacity -
	Wednesday	Knowledge and Wisdom	Paraphrasing activities Explaining Knowledge and wisdom Video presentation	Oral Presentation
	Thursday	Knowledge and wisdom	Explaining the text PPT presentation	
	Friday	Exercise discussion	-Explaining difficult questions -Finding New vocabularies	Written Assignment

Lesson Plan Developed by Pragati

Incorporating Critical Thinking Skills into EFL Classroom

Level: Lower Secondary/Secondary

Time: 1 hour 30 minutes

Resources: laptop, Internet Power Point Slide, a fable, SEEI Approach examples, Bloom's Taxonomy activity

Objectives: By the end of the session, the participants will have:

- a. made themselves familiar with different approaches of teaching critical thinking.

b. developed various techniques of using critical thinking skills in English language class.

Procedures

1. Ask the participants what they know about 21st century skills. Demonstrate a slide having it and discuss.
2. Then, elicit their interpretation about critical thinking and its importance in our teaching.
3. Share the definition of critical thinking by ‘*Foundation for Critical Thinking: <http://criticalthinking.org>*’. Also, discuss what can teachers do?
4. Introduce ‘SEEI Approach to Critical Thinking’ (**PN1**). Demonstrate examples and involve them into practice.
5. Again, ask them what do they know about Bloom’s Taxonomy and introduce it using a picture, examples etc.
6. Involve the participants in Bloom’s Taxonomy activity (**PN2**). For this, let them write the appropriate cognitive domain--level of thinking--in each blank. After the completion of this activity, let them reflect on this activity.
7. Similarly, involve them into a fable (**PN3**). Use naturalreaders.com to read this short story.
Let them listen to the fable. Then, ask them to write a sentence or two to describe the lesson or moral of the story. Also, discuss how can we expand on this activity in one of our classes?
8. Discuss some other activities that promote critical thinking skills.
9. Finally, demonstrate questionnaires and let them reflect themselves about creative writing.

Incorporating Critical Thinking Skills into EFL Classroom

Level: Lower Secondary/Secondary

Time: 1 hour 30 minutes

Resources: Power Point Slide, a fable, laptop, internet

Objectives: By the end of the session, the participants will have:

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Participants’ Notes

PN1 SEEI Approach to Critical Thinking

The SEEI approach is one way to bring critical thinking into your classroom. It is especially good to use when helping students understand a word or an important concept.

SEEI means:

State - State the definition in your own words

Elaborate - Elaborate on the definition by adding more detail

Exemplify - Exemplify by giving a concrete example

Illustrate - Illustrate the definition by drawing a picture or using a metaphor

PN2. Bloom's Taxonomy Activity

Write the appropriate cognitive domain--level of thinking--in each blank. The first one is done for you.

Levels of Thinking:

Remembering Understanding Applying Analyzing Evaluating Creating

1. Remembering : Students will respond to simple yes/no questions with short answers, making sure to use the correct auxiliary verb. E.g., Do you ride your bike to school? *Yes, I do.*
2. _____: Students will ask 5 or more questions of each other using accurate tag questions and responses. E.g., You like ice cream, don't you? *Yes, I do.* (Students continue to practice tag questions in pairs.)
3. _____: Students will identify and correct errors in tag questions in a sample audio conversation.
4. _____: Students will respond to tag questions posed by the teacher about themselves and each other (based on knowledge that they already have of each other). E.g., Carlos, you have a white dog, don't you? *Yes, I do.*
5. _____: Students will compare yes/no and tag questions and explain differences in grammar and meaning.
6. _____: Students will write and perform a role play in which they use tag questions effectively and in new ways.

PN3 Fable: The Milkmaid and Her Pail

Patty the Milkmaid was going to market carrying her milk in a pail on her head. As she went along she began calculating what she would do with the money she would get for the milk.

"I'll buy some chickens from Farmer Brown," said she, "and they will lay eggs each morning, which I will sell to the parson's wife. With the money that I get from the sale of these eggs I'll buy myself a beautiful new dress and shoes."

"When I go to market, won't all the young men come up and speak to me! My friends will be so jealous; but I don't care. I shall just look at them and toss my head like this."

As she spoke she tossed her head back, the pail fell off it, and all the milk was spilt. So she had to go home and tell her mother what had occurred.

"Ah, my child," said the mother, "Do not count your chickens before they are hatched."

What is the moral of the story?

Lesson Plan by Jaisvi

Weekly lesson plan grade 12 English

	Day	Topic	Activities	Objectives
Date- October 11 to 14	Sunday			
	Monday	The Awakening Age	-Reciting the poem -Interpreting and Analyzing it Discussion of Sonnet	-To make Ss understand about the Nigerian civil war - Introducing Sonnet
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	Wednesday	Knowledge and Wisdom	Paraphrasing activities Explaining Knowledge and wisdom Video presentation	Oral Presentation
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	Friday	Exercise discussion	-Explaining difficult questions -Finding New vocabularies	Written Assignment

Photo Gallery



Myself Giving Training to English Teachers at Kavre



Myself Attending the NELTA Conference



Presenting at the NELTA Conference



Visiting Schools in the UK

Interacting with International Students



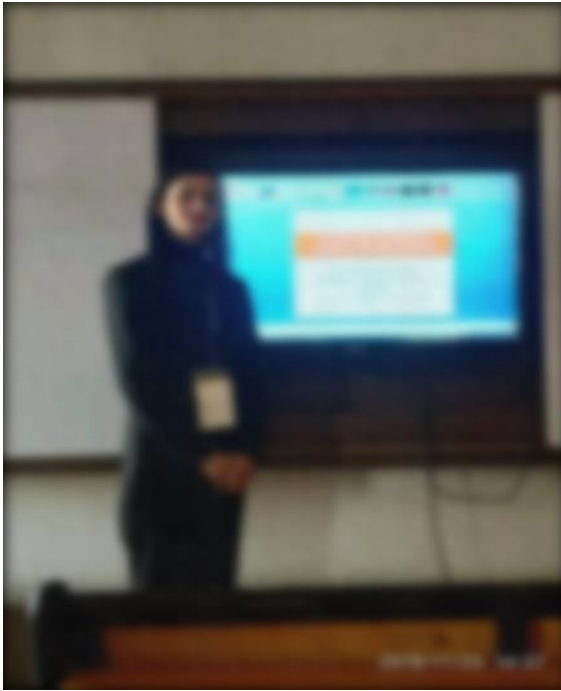
Model of the Birth of Christ at Jaisvi's Church



Jaisvi's Faith and Her Husband's Faith: Christianity and Hinduism Together



Jaisvi with Her Students During the One Act Play



Pragati as a Presenter



Pragati as a Trainee



Pragati as a Project Coordinator of her Students

one teacher who used to give us less homework. She used to focus more on our understanding and our creativity in each and every topic. Also in the online mode she used to carry out different activities and quizzes that helped us to be clear on that particular topic. Her main motto everytime was to make us clear and understand. She used to be really frank and friendly with us. She also used to give chances to other students rather than calling repeatedly the same person.

in teaching. The one think I liked about her was she didn't force us to copy anything any creative writing. She used to just guide us and tell us the way how to write the answers. She used to try her best to make us understand each and every chapter. She was only the one teacher who used to give us less homework. She used to focus more on our understanding and our creativity in each and every topic. Also in the online mode she used to carry out different activities and quizzes that ↓ ped us to be clear on that particular

Students' Reflection about Pragati

MEMO

When I was teaching at lower secondary level, I found the students struggling on creative writing. The problem was that they didn't seem interested to start their writing. As a teacher, I prepared lessons and activities to help my students develop their creative writing skill. I involved my students in free writing activities. I also conducted review sessions after exams to help them further. Despite these efforts, their writing lacked adequate content and had other issues. But, when I conducted an action research identifying their real problems, I could see drastic change in their writing. I used the ^{different} strategies to support on planning and organizing the ideas. After this incident, I always try to find out the competency level of students and plan accordingly.

Sample of Pragati's Reflection

Appendix VI

Some leading questions for the interview

1. Who are you? What do you want yourself to be called as?
2. How do you want people to perceive you as an individual?
3. What do you remember when you enter your inner self and see yourself?
4. For how long are you in teaching profession?
5. Did you become teacher by your will? Tell something about how you thought of becoming a teacher.
6. How did you become English teacher? Is there any particular story related to that?
7. When I say English, what comes in your mind?
8. How do you take English as a subject?
9. Can you tell me something about your upbringing? May be about your family and background? How was your neighbourhood? How supportive were your parents regarding your education, your economic background, culture and religion you follow? About your faith in God.
10. How were you as a student in school and as an English student in your higher education?
11. Is there any pains and pleasures that you have faced being the student of English?
12. As an English teacher, did you face 'Otherness' in schools you taught? If yes, in what ways?
13. Tell me the story about your identity construction: as a daughter, daughter-in-law, wife, as an English teacher?
14. How do you take yourself as an English teacher? Do you accept that you are a professional English teacher?

15. What steps have you taken to make yourself a professional English teacher?
16. Tell me something about your teaching strategies, methods and techniques?
17. How have you documented your teaching? (teaching portfolio, critical incidents, anecdotes)
18. Did you ever face hatred from anyone? In family for some reasons, in your profession for being weird/strange teacher (who is different than others in her teaching style)
19. How did you become a teacher educator? How do you take yourself as a teacher educator?
20. Can you tell me about your point of transformation? Or say, a shift that came in your life? (in your personal /professional life)
21. How do you take yourself as a person and as a professional? Do they overlap sometimes?
22. What do you think is your major success as a teacher?
23. When you reflect your past life and see you in this place now, as an English teacher, what do you get in your mind and to whom do you want to give the credit? Especially thinking about people who led you to this position...
24. Can you explain little more about your identity shift? (Unmarried to married, teacher to a professional teacher, teacher to teacher educator/trainer...)
25. When you have to compare yourself to one of the religious character of your religion, whom do you want to compare your life with and why? Can you link this characters' life with your developmental stages in teaching profession?
26. Did you face any challenges as a female? What about being a female English teacher? Have you experienced any feelings of otherness?

Appendix VII

Biographies of the Participants by the Virtue of My Memory

Mishri didi

Mishri didi was the brilliant tailor of the whole village. I used to cherish the moment Mishri didi was there in our home to stitch new clothes for my mother, myself, and even my brothers. Mishri didi used to spend two or three days a year in our house, but that would be the best time ever because she used to make lots of jokes about her family members and sometimes about our neighbours. Sometimes, she used to burst into laughter in such a loud voice that everybody on the way to our home would stop and say, “When Mishri didi is there, there is always happiness around.” Indeed, Mishri didi was the source of happiness. I, too, remember Mishri didi sharing her situations and bursting into tears. Whenever people talked about Mishri didi, the happiest person ever, I would think of her tears and see her miseries even in her laughter.

Dhana

Dhana is Mishri didi’s granddaughter, Dhana used to be poorly treated in her school and she was forbidden to enter the school. Due to the untouchability prevailed in the society Dhana had to face people’s hatred every day. She felt ashamed in front of her classmates and teachers as she was called by her caste (damini), not by her name (Dhana). Finally, she left the school. Dhana used to help Mishri didi by carrying the little black *kal* (sewing machine), which was Mishri didi’s friend for years and years. Mishri didi used to say that Dhana was so helpful that she would cook rice out of *chaamal* (rice) that Mishri didi gets from people’s homes every day as a reward for sewing clothes. Children of Dhana’s age would carry school bags but Dhana would carry *kal* and would learn the stitching skills.

Mr. Aalok

Mr. Aalok was an English teacher who was very strict. Everybody was scared of him that they neither dared to ask a question nor spoke a single word in his class. He was indeed a strange personality with a smart look but a monster-like behaviour. When Mr. Aalok was in class, nobody would ask to repeat what he said. They would instead hold the question in their mind till the class ended. Mr. Aalok used to come to the class, asked to turn page numbers bla bla and bla, and he used to read out what was written there. Then, he would ask students to do exercise, and that was the usual trend. He was not lesser than a monster. He used to hit students with a very thin stick on their calf, which would give the scar for a week, and that was the punishment given for not being able to understand English grammar.

Mr. Prabhu

Mr. Prabhu was an English teacher with very friendly behaviour. He made students understand that English could be full of fun. All the students would enjoy English taught by him. Since he used to be friendly and talkative, students could easily interact with him. Students would enjoy his jokes, the movie he showed though students had to write a review later. Also, the grammar class, the literature, the writing class, and the speaking class all became interesting when they were taught by Mr. Prabhu. His way of explaining the stories, his smile and his way of motivating students made students' perspective different towards English teachers. They found that Angreji teachers could be friendly and teaching-oriented.

Ms. Marian

It is often found that teachers are the ones who inspire students. Teacher Marian used to be distinctive and used to show her students the correct ways to live life. She was unique and used to inspire others to be unique in terms of achieving

success. She used to inspire her students saying that they have to make a difference. She used to understand students' problem of being a daydreamer. She would easily bring students out of that state by encouraging them to demonstrate what they were dreaming about. That would sometime give opportunities for students to demonstrate their inventive ideas. As she was the science teacher, she would make them go out of the class and enjoy nature and they would enjoy her class.

Nayan Sir

Nayan sir was my English teacher in the Highschool. He used to appreciate my efforts in English class. He was also the one who offered me for the job of English teacher at his school. He has a big hand in making me the responsible teacher. In my immature behaviours, he used to scold me and would show the right way. He not only developed me as a responsible teacher but also encouraged me to work hard for getting good results.

Ms. Bina

Ms. Bina is my teacher colleague who is also a preschool coordinator in the school where we work as teachers. She and I had an opportunity to go to the United Kingdom together. During my visit to different schools in the United Kingdom, she was the one to give me the company not only in visiting schools but also to do some important projects regarding the students and teachers collaboration with the international schools.

Barun

Barun was a little boy whose mother died when he was one and half years old. His father did not return from abroad though we informed him about his wife's (Barun's mother) death. So, there was no one to take care of Barun. My husband and I looked after him. Barun would only express his feelings with signs but would not speak. He did not speak at all until he was three years old. Gradually, he started

cherishing his world with me and other children. At the present, he is a lovely teenager who is enjoying his life.

Mr. Alan and Ms. Amie

Mr. Alan is my friend from England. He is the senior pastor of the Baptist church. Ms. Amie is Mr. Alan's wife. Mr. Alan and her wife Amie come to see us in Nepal and we visit England to see them. We have good friendship that they call us family in Nepal. Alan helped me to get in contact with some schools in England that gave me the opportunity to visit those schools and to do some project works related to international collaborations that added to my professional growth.

Mr. Laxmiram from Diva Swapna

Mr. Laxmiram is the character of Diva Swapna by Gijubhai Bhadeka. the new teacher, brought about different trends in his class. Even though the students were wild and could not cope on the first day, they gradually built intimacy with their teacher. This helped Mr. Laxmiram to apply many fruitful methods of teaching. With fun, he used to make his class engage in learning. Accepting all the criticisms from his colleague teachers, the head teacher and even the Education officer, he kept on struggling in such a tough environment. He never thought of quitting his job, nor did he take those sharp things spoken towards him as obstacles. He remained very optimistic and counted his students' progress.

Magdalene from the Bible

Mary Magdalene is a character from the bible who lived her life full of devil attacks Magdalene was unaware of her demon-possessed life. When Magdalene knew about Jesus, she gave her life to her. I believe that Magdalene was not in a normal situation and was full of stress and despair. She lived the demon-possessed life for long and that she was seeking something that would change her way of living where

she found Jesus in her life. From that time on, she became the follower of Jesus and followed him until his resurrection.

Christian from *The Pilgrim's Progress*

Christian is the main character of *The Pilgrim's Progress* by John Bunyan. When Christian hears of Celestial City which is the heaven, he is ready to go for it. He asks his wife, Christiana and his children to come with him, but they think it is not right and that he is mentally ill and may recover. Christian tries to convince them but cannot do so. Then without persuading them further, he leaves home. Along with Christian's determination to fetch the Celestial City, he convinces his neighbours 'Obstinate' and 'Pliable' to give him the company where 'Obstinate' refuses, and 'Pliable' agrees. Though he agrees, he gets discouraged by their fall into a muddy pit called 'The slough of Despond'. Christian sinks due to his burden. Later, he faces many challenges on the way to the celestial city. Also, he met some helping hands which lead him to his destination. The journey he made could be the inspiration for many people.

The Poems

Before the Research	After the Research
Will I be able to write my story and yours? The story of ups and downs Fullness and emptiness Will I be able to bring out my secret to the world? Your secret as a story to myself Will I be able to bring out my joys and sorrows? Your mourning and dancing Will I evoke my inner self and yours? Making it my story, giving it a breathe, giving it an existence?	I now wrote our stories, Yours and mine Your ups and downs My pleasure and pain Your black and white moment I brought out my secret Your secret out to this world Our joys and sorrows Our mourning and dancing As a stream of water As a fire, hot and scary Yes, I gave breathe to my story Yes, I gave existence to your story