TRAJECTORY OF IDENTITY NEGOTIATION OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE
TEACHERS: A NARRATIVE INQUIRY

Bharat Prasad Neupane

A Thesis

Submitted to
School of Education

in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in English Language Education

Kathmandu University
Dhulikhel, Nepal

August 2023

AN ABSTRACT

of the PhD thesis of Bharat Prasad Neupane presented to Kathmandu University School of Education on 13 August 2023, entitled *Trajectory of Identity Negotiation of English Language Teachers from Nepal: A Narrative Inquiry.*

Approved by

…………………..……………   …..………………………………..

Prof. Jai Raj Awasthi, PhD   Prof. Laxman Gnawali, PhD

Thesis Supervisor   Thesis Supervisor

Teacher professional identity as a thriving area of research and a reflexive process provides a lens to examine teachers' professional development journey critically. A review of relevant studies revealed that teacher identity research mainly focused on teacher education programs, short-term training, practicum, and engagement in teachers' communities of practice leaving aside the life history of teachers, particularly the influence of personal and professional space in their identity development. This study reports the trajectory of identity negotiation of secondary-level English language teachers from public schools in Kathmandu Valley, Nepal. For this purpose, in-depth interviews and informal conversations were conducted with four participants to generate their life histories which were later interpreted and restoried.

The thematic interpretation of teachers' lived realities emerged with four significant themes influencing the trajectory of identity construction of English language teachers: beliefs, emotions, imagined identity and investing, and sociocultural environment and agency. During the identity construction process, participants' journey was influenced by cognitive engagement, sociocultural background, and emotional experiences with the mutual influence of these broad categories among each other. But specifically, the four categories – beliefs, emotions, imagined identity, and the sociocultural environment – influenced the trajectory of teacher identity. The mutual interaction and influence of these categories among each other are evident. The study revealed the impact of micro, meso, and macro level sociocultural environment on teacher belief, whereas beliefs also influenced their behaviour and pedagogical choices that determined their identity. When affective

aspects like vulnerability, though generally considered a negative emotion, motivated teachers to invest in learning and thereby negotiation of identity, positive emotions that emerged from students' success and achievement gave satisfaction and a sense of self-esteem as a teacher. Likewise, imagination and imagined identity that teachers constructed about themselves influenced their investing and negotiation of identity. Besides, teachers also formed their identities through the interaction between the sociocultural environment and their agency, though teachers had limited space to influence their environment, particularly at the macro level. Finally, the study presents a framework of the trajectory of identity negotiation of English language teachers and its implication on teacher education, practicum, training, and future research.

……………………..   13 August 2023

Bharat Prasad Neupane

Degree Candidate

This thesis entitled *Trajectory of Identity Negotiation of English Language Teachers from Nepal: A Narrative Inquiry* is presented by Bharat Prasad Neupane on 13 August 2023.

<div align="center">APPROVED BY</div>

……………………..   13 August 2023

Prof. Jai Raj Awasthi, PhD

Thesis Supervisor

……………………..   13 August 2023

Prof. Laxman Gnawali, PhD

Thesis Supervisor

……………………..   13 August 2023

External Examiner

Prof. Anirudra Thapa, PhD

                                                             13 August 2023

External Examiner

Prof. Utami Widiati, PhD

……………………..   13 August 2023

Assoc. Prof. Hem Raj Kafle, PhD

Head of Department

……………………..   13 August 2023

Prof. Bal Chandra Luitel, PhD

Dean/ Chair of the Research Committee

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

…………………………   13 August 2023

Bharat Prasad Neupane

Degree Candidate

DEDICATION

To my beloved mother,

my father, my role model,

my caring life partner,

and inquisitive son,

and

gurus

both known and unknown

who guided me in the journey of life

who inspired the quest for truth

to create an inclusive and just society.

DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis entitled *Trajectory of Identity Negotiation of English Language Teachers from Nepal: A Narrative Inquiry* has not been submitted or published as part of any other degree candidacy.

……………………..   13 August 2023

Bharat Prasad Neupane

Degree Candidate

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

journey. Thanks are due to Assoc. Prof. Hem Raj Kafle, Head of the Department. Prof. Kafle has been a wonderful colleague, guide, listener, and moral support during this journey. My PhD colleagues and batchmates, Mr. Siddhartha Dhungana and Ms. Bidhya Pokharel, also contributed to my journey by being critical friends, particularly during the proposal development and qualifying paper writing phase.

I sincerely thank Prof. Bal Chandra Luitel, Dean, School of Education, for his encouragement and support. I also sincerely thank Prof. Bijay KC and Prof. Devi Prasad Bidari, Dean, School of Management, for helping me win the university's faculty research grant.

I'm indebted to my beloved wife and son for their constant moral support and encouragement. Also, I would like to remember my mother and father. The learning environment they provided during my childhood and the encouragement for education always motivated me to achieve new milestones in my academic endeavours. I express sincere gratitude to my beloved father and mother for their blessings!

Bharat Prasad Neupane

Degree Candidate

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS

APF   Armed Police Force

B.Ed.   Bachelor of Education

BA   Bachelor of Arts

BELTA   Bangladesh English Language Teachers' Association

CDC   Curriculum Development Centre

CEHRD   Center for Education and Human Resource Development

DEO   District Education Office

ECD   Early Childhood Development

EFL   English as a Foreign Language

ELE   English Language Education

ELT   English Language Teaching

EMI   English as a Medium of Instruction

ERO   Education Review Office

IATEFL   International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign
            Language

ICT   Information, Communication and Technology

LLB   Bachelor of Law

LTI   Language Teacher Identity

M.Ed.   Master of Education

MA   Master of Arts

MPhil   Master of Philosophy

NASA   National Assessment for Students' Achievement

NCED   National Centre for Educational Development

NELTA   Nepal English Language Teachers' Association

NEST   Native English Speaker Teacher

NNEST   Nonnative English Speaker Teacher

PhD   Doctor of Philosophy

SEE   Secondary Education Examination

SLC   School Leaving Certificate

TCSOL   Teaching Chinese to the Speakers of Other Language

TESOL   Teaching English to the Speakers of Other Language

TOT	Training of the Trainers
TSC	Teacher Service Commission
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In the introduction section, I present the research agenda after setting the scene by referring to Robert Frost's poem "The Road Not Taken." In this poem, the poet indicates how agency can tremendously impact our life. The lines are equally relevant to teachers' lives, too. I relate Robert Frost's lines with the vignettes of my life stories to set the scene for my research agenda. Then I conceptualize teacher professional identity by referring to ancient scriptures, mythical stories from East and West, and recent developments in the area. After that, I establish the need for research on teacher professional identity in the context of Nepal in the rationale of the study. Then, I problematize the issue in the statement of the problem, followed by the purpose of the study, research questions, delimitation, and the chapter summary.

Personal Motivation to Venture into this Research

Two roads diverged in a wood, and I –

I took the one less traveled by,

And that has made all the difference.

-Robert Frost, "The Road Not Taken"

This poem by Robert Frost has been interpreted in multiple ways. But I interpret and understand that this stanza mainly deals with the choice/decision one takes during critical moments of conflict and dilemma and its impact on our lives. Amidst the influence of sociopolitical and sociocultural circumstances, our agency also plays a vital role in influencing who we become and are becoming. I also feel that I'm essentially the product of negotiation between my environment and my decisions in critical moments of life. Reflecting on my personal and professional journey, I find my childhood environment, my schooling, critical incidents during my teenage years and the formative phase of my career, and my response to them have had a significant impact on my identity as an English teacher and teacher educator which motivated me to explore the trajectory of identity negotiation of English language teachers in Nepal.

Childhood Environment

I spent my childhood in Kaligandaki Rural Municipality – 05, Beltari, Syangja. I completed my school level of education from there. Kaligandaki 'A'

hydroelectricity project was under construction during that time. As it was the largest hydroelectricity project in Nepal back then, with its capacity of producing 144 MW of electricity, Nepali engineers and contractors were not prepared to complete such a mega project. Therefore, foreign contractors, consultants, senior engineers, heavy equipment mechanics, and administrators were working on that project, and the demography of senior employees and technicians mainly comprised of nationals from the United Kingdom (UK), the United States of America (USA), Japan, Italy, and Germany, among others. Due to this, the English language was used as a lingua franca to communicate among employees of different nationalities. As English was used as a lingua franca, those locals with communicative competence in English received better jobs with handsome salaries compared to non-English speakers, which impressed me immensely in developing my interest in English. Job prospects and the possibility of high earnings motivated me to learn English from childhood.

English Teacher During my School

I completed my preprimary level of education at home from my guru. Guru was loving and caring. His style of teaching children through motivation was popular in the locality, and children from relatively well-off families used to take education at home. I prefer to use the term *guru* for him instead of teacher because he was above the general notion of a teacher. Eastern wisdom tradition considers the *guru* as an embodiment of God in human form. The guru was an architect of my childhood, my mentor, my moral support, and to some extent, a guardian. So, I have massive respect for him. From him, I learned English, the Nepali alphabet, and the *Gayatri Mantra,* among others. Gayatri Mantra is one of the oldest and most powerful mantras according to Hindu religious beliefs that is recorded in Rig Veda and Upanishad. Learning from him was like getting an education at *Gurukula* in ancient Hindu tradition. After completing my preprimary level of education at home, I joined a primary school situated in the village. But for my lower secondary and secondary level of education, I had to climb a hill walking on foot for almost an hour to get there. My lower secondary and secondary education bears significance in what I have become now. During that stage, I was heavily influenced by a young and dynamic English language teacher and idealized him as my role model. Mainly, I was impressed by his fluency, vocabulary, and his near-to-native English speaker accent. Hence, despite widespread pressure from family members to join science, I joined

English literature after my School Leaving Certificate (SLC). Time and context changed; however, my aspiration to be an English teacher remained constant.

Critical Incidents During my Teenage

Given lines from Robert Frost's poem "The Road Not Taken" best represent my life's journey. I believed, and still believe that to make a difference or positive transformation during life, one needs to travel a less travelled or challenging road. By choice and fate, the road I travelled always remained difficult. While reflecting on life's course, I find that critical incidents that I experienced during my teenage, right after the completion of my SLC, played the most prominent role in shaping who I am today. Those incidents raised questions about my being and becoming and compelled me to ponder over my identity as an individual. Those critical incidents range from a motorbike accident, critical illness, and my father's untimely demise, followed by an acute financial crisis and family disintegration.

Those incidents caused alienation, frustration, and a kind of depression, so I resorted to spirituality to overcome it. During that time, I was primarily involved in two different sects of spirituality, namely *Manokranti* and Osho. I started meditation and extensive reading of philosophical, spiritual, and literary texts mainly written in English and participated in yoga, reiki, and psycho-cybernetics training. Extensive reading of spiritual and philosophical books and spiritual practice caused a paradigm shift in my life by converting a previously freaked out into a responsible, studious, and determined person. With a changed worldview and perspective, I experienced myself with an entirely different personality. Reflecting on those traumatic experiences and their impact on my temperament and behaviour and redefinition of my identity as an individual, I am motivated to ponder upon the trajectory of identity negotiation exploring life narratives.

Beginning of the Career: A Hamletian Dilemma

In Shakespeare's famous drama "Hamlet," the main character Hamlet falls into a prolonged dilemma regarding whether to take revenge against his uncle for killing his father, Claudius, which is popularly known as the Hamletian dilemma. Even I have undergone a situation where I was left indecisive for a long time, which I would like to metaphorise as the Hamletian dilemma. After completing my master's in English literature, I joined one of the prestigious schools in Kathmandu, Nepal, as an English teacher. But due to a lack of teaching experience and pedagogical content knowledge, I used to get extremely nervous in class. My survival strategy during the

initial days of my career was to mug up the whole lesson and bank it up in the classroom. Once, out of nervousness, I mispronounced /shih-KAH-goh/ as /chih-KAH-goh/, for which the entire class burst into laughter. I blushed and sweated all over. I felt embarrassed to the extent that I thought of quitting school.

That night I was left in a prolonged dilemma about whether to continue teaching or quit, but finally, I was determined to continue. However, my determination did not last long. After nine months, I tendered my resignation as an English language teacher and flew to the UK for further studies, mainly to improve my communication skills. My disposition to the English environment in the UK for three years contributed immensely to improving my oral communication and my career as an English language teacher and now as a teacher educator. My journey of personal and professional transformation and reconstruction of identities and my curiosity about the trajectories of identity negotiation of English language teachers primarily stimulated me to venture into this research. From my personal and professional story, I realized that identity construction is a complex process where the involvement of different layers of contextual realities, situatedness, educational environment, and personal efforts play a crucial role. By exploring the journey of other teachers and myself, I would like to unpack the trajectory of identity negotiation of English language teachers that would provide valuable insights into professional development and identity construction.

Teacher in Ancient Wisdom Tradition from East and West

Exploration of related literature on ancient wisdom tradition – ancient tales, philosophies, and scriptures – from East and West revealed the genesis of teacher identity in Hindu scriptures like Vedas, Upanishads and Gita, Confucian, and Plato's philosophy. Ancient texts like *Rg Veda, Yajurveda, Katha Upanishad, and Gita* present the concept of *Guru Shishya Parampara* and the role of the *guru* in imparting knowledge to shishya (disciple). In the Vedic and Upanishadic wisdom tradition of *Guru Shishya Parampara*, the *guru* is considered a teacher of the Vedas. Through question-answer or dialogue, the *guru* imparts *shishya* the depth of spiritual and philosophical knowledge. Since the *guru* was the repository of ultimate spiritual and philosophical wisdom and right action, guru's role was indispensable for knowledge dissemination through dialogue and lived examples (Mlecko, 1982). In Gurukula, the *guru* extended the wholistic education for a child for his overall development, where *shishya* remained utmost obedient and surrendered himself to the guru, considering

him next to God (Medipally & Mrunalini, 2020). Mlecko (1982) argues that the *guru* is the immediate incarnate exemplar in life. He is an inspirational source who reveals the meaning of life to *shishya*. Even the etymological meaning of guru in pan-Indian Sanskrit refers to clusters of meaning beyond that of the English translation "teacher." In Sanskrit, "gu" means "ignorance," and "ru" means "dispeller." Therefore, etymologically guru refers to the dispeller of ignorance. In *Bhagwad Gita*, the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna where Krishna (guru) guides Arjuna (an obedient shishya) where Krishna is the embodiment of God in human form (Medipally & Mrunalini, 2020).

The concept of a teacher in the ancient wisdom tradition of Plato and Confucius is quite different. Plato, through Socrates, presents the educational goal as the exploration of truth through knowledge (Shim, 2008), and the teacher's role is to investigate with students (Beck, 1985). Shim (2008) argues that in the allegory of the cave, the prisoner who receives true wisdom after coming out of the cave feels pity for other prisoners who are constrained in the darkness and goes down to them. He does not infuse knowledge into prisoners' minds but instead motivates them to contemplate reality by showing the right direction. Through the allegory of the cave, Plato presents the role of teachers who lead learners from ignorance to truth. Major three points raised in the allegory of the cave can be linked to teachers: 1) teachers need to sympathize those who are still in the darkness of ignorance and teachers should guide students from ignorance to enlightenment based on their own experience, 2) teachers' role is to correct students misdirected views instead of indoctrinating them, and 3) the process of leading learners towards enlightenment should be gradual. According to Beck (1985) Socrates believed that the role of teachers is to coinvestigate with students through dialogue instead of directly imparting knowledge.

Confucius considered learning as realizing one's good nature. According to Hall and Ames (1987), Confucian philosophy presents a modelling relationship between teacher and disciples in which the disciple strives to attune and harmonize his behaviours with his teacher. Therefore, teachers' responsibility is to preach what is good or right and demonstrate directly through their lives so that the learners emulate it to become a man of character.

Gramsci and Freire have contributed immensely to education from different viewpoints, so understanding how they have conceptualized teachers is pertinent.

Gramsci (1975) has forwarded the notion of the traditional and organic intellectual in prison notebooks. Gramsci presents teachers as traditional intellectuals and claims that schools and colleges, like churches and courts, work being complicit with mainstream ideology forwarded by the ruling class. But an intellectual – even traditional – who joins the political party of a social group can associate and transform as an organic intellectual of the same group, that is political intellectual of the same group and binds oneself with that group carrying forward the representative voices of the group he represents. As a member of a particular social group and a political party, organic intellectual does the intellectual function to educate and lead civil society more organically than the state does (Gramsci, 1971). In *Prison Notebook Volume I*, Gramsci passes criticism against Italian universities and their professors for not being involved in organic function; instead, he appraises German type of seminars where professors are surrounded by many aspirants who wish to climb the seat of university chair. There is no permanent intellectual hierarchy between university professors and students where students struggle against the shortcomings of university life and the pedagogic and scientific (sometimes even moral) mediocrity of the official teachers (Gramsci, 1975). He argued that teachers should not give lectures but instead focus on discussions and dialogues to investigate problems where all the students have equal participation, and all of them equally contribute, in which everybody, including the teacher, is simultaneously teacher and student.

Influenced by Gramsci, Freire (1993) in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* argued that the educational approach hitherto was predominantly a banking method where knowledge was considered a gift bestowed by the knowledgeable teacher to those whom they considered ignorant – a characteristic of ideology for oppression – that negates knowledge as a process of inquiry. Critiquing the banking system of education and the teacher as the transmitter of knowledge, Freire proposed a problem-posing approach to education where students reflect on their existential reality, which develops students' power to perceive their existential reality critically. In problem-posing education, teachers initiate dialogues to unveil truth which is an indispensable act of cognition that makes students critical thinkers. So, unlike the traditional banking method, teachers adopt critical pedagogy through the dialogic process of teaching-learning, where the teacher himself learns. In this joint venture, teachers and students grow together; both teach each other, mediated by the world, by the cognizable objects. So, teachers are co-investigators in dialogue with students. In

problem-posing education, teachers are presented as co-creators of knowledge who generate knowledge together with students. Though teacher professional identity is not directly discussed in ancient literature, the roles assigned to teachers, such as role models, motivators, and instructors who engage students in the dialogic process to lead them from ignorance to truth, conceptualize teacher identity. However, teacher professional identity has recently received wider attention and research on different dimensions of teacher identity is thriving.

Teacher Professional Identity in Contemporary Literature

There has recently been extensive study on teachers, teacher education, professional development, and identity construction, particularly on teachers' being and becoming. Focusing on the effectiveness of education and teacher development Danielewicz (2001) argues:

> If we need teachers who effectively educate (a fundamental requirement for any optimism about the future), then we need to know how the best teachers became themselves. What makes someone a good teacher is not a methodology or even ideology. It requires engagement with identity, the way individuals conceive of themselves, so that teaching is a state of being, not merely ways of acting or behaving (p. 3).

Danielewicz's concept of education highlights growth and transformation, not just the development of culture but of teachers' becoming. Danielewicz emphasises the importance of knowing the teacher's becoming. Singh and Richards (2006) reaffirm the idea of becoming when they argue: "Teacher-learning involves discovering more about the skills and knowledge of language teaching and what it means to be a language teacher. Identity seems to play a special role in teaching compared to other professions" (P. 155). Therefore, the act of learning is also the act of negotiating and constructing identity.

Current literature reveals heterogeneous concepts and definitions of teacher professional identity. The notion of teacher identity is derived from the idea of identity developed in the sociological and political context. Norton (2013) defines identity as "how a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how the relationship is constructed across time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future" (p. 4). In other words, identity can be understood as belonging or your commonality with a particular group of people and what differentiates you from others (Weeks, 1990). Identical definition in the context of

teaching is evident when teacher identity is considered as how teachers position themselves and their work, how their colleagues and others position them, and how they connect with communities of practice (Block, 2015). Pennington (2015) presents teacher identity as "a construct, mental image or model of what being a teacher means" (P. 17) that directs teachers' practices and actions in specific acts of teacher identity. Likewise, Gee (2000) considers identity as "being recognized as a certain 'kind of person,' identity is connected not to internal states but to performances in society" (p. 99). When Gee stresses the sociality of identity construction, Varghese et al. (2005) highlight its transformative nature while defining identity as "…transformational, transformative, context-bound, and constructed, maintained, and negotiated via language and discourse" (p. 21). From all these definitions, one can infer that teacher identity is individual, social, performative, experiential, constructed, negotiated, maintained, and transformed through language and discourse across time and space.

Recognizing the multifaceted nature of identity, Varghese et al. (2005) maintained that in order to comprehend the concept of teacher identity, one must acknowledge and understand both 'identity-in-practice' and 'identity-in-discourse'. Identity-in-practice concerns how a teacher engages in action with specific communities of practice and identifies or disidentifies with the group, whereas identity-in-discourse mainly focuses on how identity and agency are constructed discursively. Besides this, professional identity is historically investigated and analyzed mainly from three perspectives: psychological or developmental, sociocultural, and post-structural (Davey, 2013). Drawing the sociocultural framework that takes a constructivist stance (Norton, 2000), I consider that identity is fluid, complex, contradictory, multiple, situated, and contextually negotiated (Morgan, 2004; Richards, 2017; Varghese et al., 2005). Postcolonial theorists like Bhabha (1994) and Hall (1992, 1997) deconstruct the essentialist notion of identity by drawing poststructuralist theory and present it as in the process of 'becoming' stressing the fact that identity is "not an essence' but a "positioning" (p. 226) in sociocultural and historical context.

Language Teacher Identity: Sociocultural and Post-structural Perspective

Varghese et al. (2005) argue that adopting multiple theoretical approaches enhances our comprehension of the process and context associated with identity negotiation. In this study, I adopt sociocultural and post-structural perspectives to

explore identity. To analyze the identity-in-practice and identity-in-discourse, I have drawn sociocultural and post-structural theories from constructivist orientation, namely Norton's investing that draws Pierre Bourdieu's notion of *habitus*, *field,* and *cultural capital,* and Wenger's notion of *communities of practice.* Current literature shows that sociocultural theories of learning have been utilized frequently to explore language teacher identity in applied linguistics and second language acquisition research (Norton & Toohey, 2011). According to Johnson (2006), sociocultural theories situate learning in physical and social contexts distributed across the tools, activities, and persons involved, which adds additional challenges for language teacher researchers to look at sites of teacher learning beyond visible and formal teacher professional development activities such as workshops, seminars, formal course-works, formal professional networking sites, and classroom activities among others.

Personal, professional, and ideological issues can influence English language teachers' professional development and identity construction. Synthesizing various concepts on language teacher identity from different academicians in the field, Barkhuizen (2017) argues:

> Language teacher identities (LTIs) are cognitive, social, emotional, ideological, and historical – they are both inside the teacher and outside in the social material and technological world. LTIs are being and doing, feeling and imagining, and storying. They are struggle and harmony: they are contested and resisted by self and others. They are core and peripheral, personal and professional, they are dynamic, multiple, hybrid, and they are foregrounded and backgrounded. And LTIs change, short term and over time – discursively in social interaction with teacher educators, learners, teachers, administrators, and the wider community, and in material interaction with spaces, places, and objects in classrooms, institutions, and online (P. 4).

Barkhuizen's definition indicates that authoring English language teacher identity is a complex process that is influenced by personal, professional, social, and ideological factors. Richards (2006) reaffirms Barkhuizen's notion when he argues that the concept of teacher professional identity is not assuming or assigning a label; instead, it is constructed and negotiated through actions and practices. Norton (2013) suggests that identity is constructed in practice in institutions as familiar as home, school, and workplaces; even available materials and symbolic resources may influence us, and

vice versa. Because of this, there was a considerable shift in the 1960s and 1970s in language curriculum from the study of linguistic forms, grammatical structures, and phonological features that largely based on teacher modelling, explanation, and drilling to communicative and task-based approaches to teaching language emphasizing communication and collaboration to develop four skills – listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In addition, the advancement of technology and availability of a range of multimedia tools has led teachers beyond lesson plans, classroom learning, and traditional instructional materials and engage students in communication-led autonomous learning (Kiely, 2015).

The Rationale of the Study

In the context of technological advancement, widespread availability of resources, autonomous and independent learning mediated by technology, and ever-increasing expectation of students from teachers, the exploration of teacher professional identity is crucial, and this equally applies in the context of Nepal, too. Beijaard et al. (2000) claimed that "teachers' perception of their own professional identity affects their efficacy and professional development as well as their ability and willingness to cope with educational changes and to implement innovations in their own teaching practice" (p. 750). It is pertinent to map the teacher's professional identity to develop and implement an appropriate curriculum in the changed context (Han, 2017). Research on teacher identity development has relevance in teacher preparation as it shows the direction for teacher educators and mentors to conceptualize and implement teacher support programs in schools (Beijaard et al., 2004).

Highlighting the peculiar nuances of English language teaching and English teachers' responsibility Nunan (2017) argues:

> Language teachers have a unique relationship to their subject because it is both the medium and the content of instruction. Identifying oneself or being identified by others as a less than competent user of the language they are teaching can pose professional challenges that are somewhat different from those faced by, say, a teacher of Mathematics, who is teaching the subject in a language other than her first (pp. 165-166).

As argued by Nunan, I have also experienced the challenge of teaching English during the formative phase of my career. As I did not have enough exposure and practice in speaking English during my schooling and university education, I did not have

fluency in English. Nepali language, my mother tongue, was used in my school as a medium of instruction. Even in university, non-English subjects were taught in Nepali. Because of that, I did not have enough exposure to the communicative environment. Even the mode of delivery in English classes at universities was predominantly one-way lectures. This classroom environment negatively influenced my identity construction as a teacher. When I started teaching in a publicly acclaimed and well-established private school where English was used as the medium of instruction, I could not perform well. My inability to speak fluently heavily impacted my performance as a teacher. Neither could I deliver the content well nor adequately manage the class engaging students in different rewarding activities. Due to this, I ultimately tendered my resignation from the school to travel to one of the inner circle (Kachru, 1990) countries to improve my communication skills.

Furthermore, the advancement of technology and globalization has narrowed the world as a global village. Due to this, English has been spreading as the language of media, politics, international trade, spirituality, education, and many more. With the increasing impact of the English language as a lingua franca and medium of instruction in schools, colleges, and universities, the number of English language teachers is expanding from the inner circle to the outer and expanding circle (Kachru, 1990). And "the issue of language teacher identity is particularly salient for the teacher who is not a native of the second or foreign language being taught" (Nunan, 2017, p. 165). When English is taught globally, research on English language teachers' professional development and identity construction sheds light on the complexities of learning to teach English (Braine, 2010). Beijaard et al. (2000) note that "teachers' perceptions of their own professional identity affect their efficacy and professional development" (p. 750); identities shape their commitment to teaching and the roles they play as English language teachers.

Nguyen (2009) asserts that educational institutions are highly concerned with providing support to teachers to fit into and adjust to the changing dynamics of the teaching-learning environment. But in the context of Nepal, it is very unlikely to happen. However, to provide support, institutions should first understand the needs of their teachers. Being specific to English language teaching, Varghese et al. (2005) argued: "in order to understand language teaching and learning, we need to understand teachers; and in order to understand teachers, we need to have a clearer sense of who they are: the professional, cultural, political, and individual identities

which they claim, or which are assigned to them" (p. 22). To understand teachers' backgrounds, beliefs, values, teaching philosophies, emotional experiences, and social, political, ideological and policy impact on them; exploration of their lived experience is critical.

Teaching learning context and their teachers during schooling and teacher education influence teachers' behaviours. Gautam (2018) argues that in most cases, teachers copy their teachers' teaching styles and classroom behaviours. Gautam substantiates this argument by referencing the lived experiences of the formative phase of his career. Mainly Gautam adopted the techniques and principles of the teachers with whom he was impressed the most. Even I echo a similar kind of experience though I'm not in the novice stage of my career. As a teacher educator at a university of repute from Nepal, I follow and implement some techniques I learned from my senior gurus during my PhD coursework. Specifically, I employ jigsaw reading, frequently ask questions to encourage students to communicate and interact, make students write post-class and post-semester reflections on Moodle, and include at least one video resource in a class. Besides, I use task-based teaching-learning methods regularly to improve students' four skills, particularly reading, writing, speaking, and listening. As young students often copy their teachers' teaching styles, like others, even English language teachers must understand how they perceive themselves as teachers and what teaching style they adopt. Schools and colleges can also invest in repairing teachers' identities by engaging them in different activities and lifelong learning opportunities. According to Pennington (2015), teacher identity affects their role as a teacher in the classroom and their instructional approaches. It also involves teachers' positioning themselves in front of students and colleagues and interacting with students, colleagues, and the teaching fraternity. Hence, exploring the complexities of identity negotiation among English language teachers is imperative.

Besides, our teacher recruitment policy of the Teacher Service Commission (TSC) allows English literature graduates to attend teacher license examinations and enter into teaching without proper pedagogical content knowledge and skills, curriculum design, and child psychology (temporary provision due to the shortage of trained teachers). And the majority of the teachers in private schools are English literature graduates who develop their pedagogical and classroom management skills after joining teaching (Gautam, 2018). However, the Faculty of Education's products are also not spared criticism. Gautam (2001) argues that practicum students are not

provided with enough on-campus preparation opportunities, adequate corrective feedback, and exposure. Besides, the knowledge and skills developed in the class during teacher education programs are not adequately transferred to the school classroom by the graduates, and they seem less confident due to inadequate exposure. Gautam's research indicates that teacher education programs and practicums should be revamped as per the need of the changing context. Though Gautam's (2001) study is quite old, even recent studies reaffirm the findings of Gautam (2001). Referring to the findings of a research study conducted by the Faculty of Education, Gautam (2018) stressed that the institution is required to revamp its curriculum and offer innovative and creative courses to meet the expectation and needs of the 21st century. However, Gautam does not critically pinpoint what that innovative and creative course would be which could address the needs of 21st-century learners. All these studies on teacher education programs, the status of English language teachers, and the practicum experience of prospective English language teachers and their findings reinforce the need for identity exploration of English language teachers as it could provide new insights on teacher education, practicum, and professional development needs of English language teachers in the changed context.

To prepare English language teachers, five different universities in Nepal offer bachelor and master-level teacher education programs (Neupane & Joshi, 2022). Prospective teachers are required to complete M.Ed. in English and take a license or complete a Master of Arts in English or literature and pass the license examination to join secondary-level English language teaching. The licensing system is designed to uphold the teachers' national standards. The Teacher Service Commission (TSC) was founded and given the authority to choose teachers for tenured posts. During their tenure, teachers were provided National Center for Educational Development (NCED) led in-service training for secondary-level English teachers. These training programs were primarily intended to provide hands-on knowledge and experience on "subject knowledge, child-centered and active learning, inclusive education, formative assessment and differentiation to meet the learning needs of every student" (Nepal Ministry of Education, 2016, p. 26). However, NCED does not exist now, and the responsibility of teacher development is under the scope of the Center for Education and Human Resource Development (CEHRD). CEHRD provides training of trainers (TOT) and in-service TPD training services through its provincial-level branches. However, CEHRD, like NCED, cannot fulfil its responsibility to train an adequate

number of teachers nationwide due to the lack of enough resources. In my recent conversation on the training and development of the teachers, one of the office bearers at CEHRD noted that due to the lack of enough resources, particularly budget, CEHRD is unable to cater its services as per the needs. However, local governments are also taking the initiative for teacher development through their wings relating to education.

Data shows that more than seventy percent of the total budget for education goes toward paying teachers' salaries, according to Neupane and Joshi (2022), while teacher development receives the least funding. Though some training opportunities are offered to in-service teachers on child-centered and activity-based learning, the least transfer of that knowledge and skills to the classroom is evident. According to Neupane and Dhungana (2021), favourable learning environments, professional development opportunities, reflection, peer observation, and democratic school culture are crucial for a teacher to emerge as a leader and perform well. As teacher identity provides valuable insights on the complexity of learning environment for teachers and students' and its influence on students' learning outcome, I employ a life history approach to narrative generation to explore the trajectory of identity negotiation. Particularly, the issues of culture, learning environment, and learning opportunities at home and school get embedded in teachers' lived experiences, that enlightens teacher educators and policymakers with first-hand information on the learning environment at different context levels and make plans and policies for their professional development accordingly.

Statement of the Problem

Education, in general, and teacher professional development, are given the least priority in Nepal, which is reflected in the low budget allocated to the education sector, which varies from roughly 11 to 13 percent of the national budget in the last five years. Almost seventy percent of the budget goes toward paying teachers' salaries, with teacher development receiving the smallest share (Neupane & Joshi, 2022). Though five universities provide education programs, and many national, provincial, and municipal bodies and private institutions provide development opportunities, the service is still inadequate. English language teachers, mostly in private and, in some cases, in public schools, are teaching without taking formal teacher education programs and training. The institutions and government agencies are incapable of fulfilling the requirement of training and development of teachers.

Hence, the picture of education in Nepal in general, and English language education in particular, is still bleak.

When I reflected on the history of teacher development, I discovered that the basic Teacher Training Center was established in Kathmandu back in 1948; however, it didn't gain momentum until the College of Education was founded in 1956 with the intention of establishing teacher education programs for aspiring secondary and lower secondary teachers (Gautam, 2018). Later, with the establishment of the Institute of Education under Tribhuvan University (TU), it was responsible for conducting in-service and pre-service teacher education programs (Awasthi, 2003). Then hundreds of pre-service and in-service teachers were trained and educated by the Institute of Education, which was later converted into the School of Education, TU.

However many institutions currently offer teacher education and professional training programs, but they are incapable of meeting the nation's needs. Still, there are a lot of untrained English teachers working in high schools though there is a mandatory provision of a license to get into teaching up to the secondary level. Keeping in view the bleak picture of education in general and English language teaching in particular, Awasthi (2003) recommended formulating a definite policy for teachers' professional development for quality enhancement. Even Joshi et al. (2018) have explored the strategies employed by English language teachers from Nepal for their professional development and have recommended continuing professional development needs, as noted by Awasthi (2003).

The bleak picture of English language education in Nepal is represented by Tin (2014) in her ethnographic study of the English language classroom in Nepal. Her study revealed that the pedagogical approach did not match the textbook requirements. Though the textbook demanded a lot of interaction and classwork, the strategy employed was predominantly lecture-based (Tin, 2014). Though the findings of just a class cannot be generalized, this reflects a lot about the classroom culture and practices of most of the schools in Nepal. The lived experience of many Nepali teachers currently teaching at the secondary level echoes the findings of Tin (2014).

While focusing on the research on teacher professional development and identity negotiation, significant research has recently been conducted in contexts other than Nepal. For instance, Djoudir (2019) found that the formation of language instructors' professional identities involves a dynamic interplay and negotiation between imagined, practised, and future identities. Before entering the teaching

profession, novice instructors created imagined identities by identifying with ideal people from their sociocultural backgrounds, such as parents, family members, and society. Even the emotional support they received from the administration and colleagues helped them develop their identity. Tasdemir's (2021) exploration of early career teachers' identities reaffirms the findings of Djoudir (2019).

Likewise, Martin (2017), investigating mid-career English language teachers, showed that administrative support, motivating environment and students' performance, and the exercise of personal agency played a pivotal role in their identity construction. Even Castañeda (2011) argued that identity is not influenced only by personal but sociocultural, ideological, and political factors. Hersi (2018) also reaffirmed that sociocultural and contextual factors influence language teacher identity from their investigation of non-native English language teachers from Saudi Arabia. Besides, Hafsa (2019) explored online teachers' identity development through the teacher education program. The review of these studies revealed that there is still a paucity of research on beliefs, emotions, imagined identity and investing, and the interplay of sociocultural environment and agency in the identity construction of English language teachers in contexts other than Nepal.

Among a few reflections on teacher development and identity construction in Nepal, Gnawali (2013) focused on the reciprocity of the development of professional associations and English language teachers through engagement in communities of practice. Gautam (2018), in his autoethnographic inquiry as a teacher educator at a university in Nepal, presented his transformative journey with critical observation on pedagogy, curriculum and training programs offered in the context of Nepal. Likewise, when Dhungana (2022) focused on the self-initiated dimension of professional development of English language teachers with a focus on socio-cognitive conjectures, Pokhrel (2022) primarily highlighted the reflective practices and its role in the identity transformation of female teachers from Nepal.

To my knowledge, even though few studies (Barkhuizen, 2016; Castaneda, 2011; Djoudir, 2019) have been conducted on the identity construction of English language teachers with a focus on the role of imagination, imagined community, and imagined identity along with social, cultural, and ideological aspects as well as agency influencing English language teachers' identity negotiation, the study is minimal. At the same time, such studies are almost nonexistent in Nepal. Even in the international context, to my knowledge, no study focused on the life history of

English language teachers to develop the trajectory of identity negotiation. Because of this, some critical questions about English language teachers' identity construction are unanswered. To what extent are English language teachers invested in language and other professional development practices? How does the imagined identity of learners impact their investment in identity construction? How do some dominant ideologies, beliefs, and different systematic patterns (policies, norms, institutional rules) influence the identity of English teachers? How do they struggle to develop themselves and exercise agency? These are some of the still unanswered critical questions that this thesis attempts to answer. Through the exploration of lived experiences of four English language teachers over a long time, the study demonstrates the influence of sociocultural aspects in their identity negotiation.

The vignettes from my life story show the complexity of identity construction where the childhood house environment, schooling, teacher education program, teachers, motivation and dreams, learners/teachers' attempts, and resource availability also heavily impact English language teachers' identity negotiation. As these micro, meso, and macro environmental factors, dreams, and my efforts in investing in my identity have influenced the identity construction as a teacher educator; I would like to explore identity negotiation of secondary-level English language teachers from Nepal. The paucity of research that unpacks how environmental factors, personal motivation, and investment impact teachers' identity is evident in Nepal. Hence, this research focuses on the complexity of identity negotiation among English language teachers, particularly the trajectory of identity construction.

Purpose of the Study

This study aims to explore the lived experience of secondary-level English language teachers at public schools in Nepal to develop the trajectory of identity negotiation. Specifically, the study depicts how beliefs, emotions, and imagined identities are constructed with the interplay of different sociocultural environments and agencies and their resultant influence on identity construction.

Research Questions

The following overarching question becomes pertinent to understand the identity negotiation of secondary-level English language teachers from public schools in Nepal.

1. What is the trajectory of identity negotiation of secondary-level English language teachers from community schools in Nepal?

As English language teachers' identity trajectory is influenced by many personal, professional, cultural, and ideological factors, this overarching question leads to the following specific questions for interrogating teacher identity.

a. How do beliefs and emotions shape the identity of secondary-level English language teachers?

b. How does imagined identity contribute to the identity development of English language teachers?

c. How do sociocultural environment and agency influence the identity negotiation of English language teachers?

Delimitation of the Study

Teacher professional identity is an emerging area of research with the potential to explore it from multiple perspectives and approaches. An extensive literature review showed that identity is explored mainly from psychological, sociocultural, and post-structural perspectives. However, in this study, I explore the identity construction of English language teachers from sociocultural and post-structural perspectives. In other words, this study investigates sociocultural and discursive construction of language teachers' identities. In doing so, I explore the life narratives, mainly focusing on beliefs, emotions, imagination and imagined identity, the interplay between sociocultural environment and agency, and their influence on the identity construction of secondary-level English language teachers from Nepal. I have explored and reported the lived experience of secondary level English language teachers from public schools in Nepal narratively in this research. Hence, the study's findings cannot be generalized to a larger audience on a global scale. However, the results can be implacable in similar contexts across the countries.

Overview of the Thesis

In the introduction section, I tried contextualizing my research agenda and expressing my positionality as a researcher, the gap in existing research, the questions that guided my research study, and the contribution of this research study to teacher development. Now in this overview section, I briefly present the overall structure of the thesis as a signposting. The following section briefly presents the overview of the thematic discussion on the issue of identity and the thematic synthesis of the empirical studies on identity negotiation. In Chapter II, titled "Delving into Teacher Professional Identity," I define teacher professional identity from the poststructural and sociocultural lens and thematic discussion on teacher identity. Also, I present the

thematic synthesis of different empirical articles along with the thematic discussion focusing on the research questions.

In Chapter III, I briefly outline different perspectives and approaches to language learning and identity development and present the relevance of sociocultural and poststructural theories to substantiate this study, particularly Norton's theory of investing and Wenger's notion of communities of practice. I also briefly discuss Bourdieu's concepts of *habitus*, *field*, and *cultural capital* as Norton builds his theory of investing by borrowing ideas from Bourdieu. In Chapter IV, I discuss how I conduct research remaining under the interpretive and critical paradigm of the research and the relevance of narrative inquiry as my research method.

I answer the three specific research questions in chapters V, VI, and VII. When I discuss how teachers' beliefs and emotions influence the identity negotiation of English language teachers from Nepal in chapter V, chapter VI highlights teachers' imagined identity and their investment in imagined identity and its role in their identity construction. In Chapter VII, I present the interplay of sociocultural environment and agency in the identity construction of English language teachers. In the concluding chapter, I offer a framework of the trajectory of identity negotiation of English language teachers as a synthesis of chapters V, VI, and VII, followed by implication and reflection. Thus, I organize the thesis into eight chapters.

CHAPTER II

DELVING INTO TEACHER PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY

This chapter presents a thematic and empirical review of the literature critically. First, I begin with the definition of identity given by scholars from diverse perspectives, such as identity-in-practice and identity-in-discourse tradition, particularly from sociocultural and post-structural perspectives. Then, I discuss different thematic categories and the findings relating to themes such as imagination, imagined community and identity, structure and agency and learning environment that influence the identity construction of English language teachers, along with the review of empirical studies. This chapter mainly critically reviews thematic issues and empirical articles concerning the research questions in the introduction section.

Defining Teacher Identity

A review of related literature revealed two broad approaches to defining teacher professional identity: identity-in-practice and identity-in-discourse. These two approaches focus on how identity is constructed through practice and discourse. Defining teacher identity from one direction would be incomplete as both perspectives are complementary rather than dichotomous. Hence, I define identity from both perspectives. The social theory of learning propounded by Wenger (1998) envisioned how identity is constructed and negotiated through engagement in communities of practice:

> As trajectories, our identities incorporate the past and the future in the very process of negotiating the present. They give significance to events. …They provide a context in which to determine what, among all things that are potentially significant, actually becomes significant learning (p. 155).

Wenger emphasizes the negotiation of identity through engagement in different temporal sequences.

Reaffirming Wenger's notion of identity construction through practice, Danielewicz (2001) argues that identity construction requires engagement in communities of practice; it's not just a state of being but rather a process of becoming whereby individuals define themselves and are perceived or defined by others as teachers. Hence, the critical question is knowing the process of becoming and how the process can be made smooth. From these definitions, it becomes evident that identity

is not a state of being but a state of becoming, a constant process of negotiation of identity through activities and engagement in communities of practice. Hall et al. (2006), highlighting the usage-based conception of language development, note that one can develop a language using cultural tools through collaborative engagement with others in activities. They also stress the individual differences in access to participation and use of cultural tools in terms of their social and cultural positioning that largely influence their learning and identity.

Poststructuralist theorists (such as Weedon, 1997) define identity as multiple, changing, contested, and relentlessly negotiated in inequitable power relations (Norton, 2014). Hall (2000) asserts that identity is not something that already exists; instead, it is emergent and the result of the production of negotiation. Hall defines identity as situational that shifts from context to context; it is a fluid and unfinished process. Poststructuralists consider teacher identity relational, situated, negotiated, enacted, multiple, adaptive, transformational, and transitional (Danielewicz, 2001; Miller, 2009). Teng (2019) reinforces that identity is inherently negotiable, adaptive, flexible, and conflicted. Taking reference to Bakhtinian dialogism, Hallman (2015) conceptualizes teacher identity as a negotiation between "self" and "other" that is always in the process of becoming. Gee (2000) defines teacher identity as how they perceive themselves as teachers and how others see them. Gee has forwarded the four distinct types of identity: nature identity (N-Identity), institutional identity (I-Identity), discourse identity (D-Identity), and affinity identity (A-Identity).

N-Identity refers to a teacher's characteristic features that define them as a certain kind of person over whom they do not have control. For instance, specific remarkable physical attributes of a teacher come under N-Identity. I-Identity concerns the identity we receive through our position in a society or an institution. D-Identity is constructed in our conversation with others. It is related to how we present ourselves to others and how others perceive us in interaction. And A-Identity is developed from our participation in communities of practice. During the practices, we associate with particular affinity groups and create shared culture, whereas we dissociate from others. And this affiliation with an affinity group and differentiation from others constructs our identity. Luehmann (2007) sums up the characteristics of identity construction that identity is socially constituted, which is in the process of becoming. Identity is multifarious and is formed through the interpretation and narration of experiences. As teachers construct, reconstruct, and transform their identities through

constant ongoing negotiation in different development activities and social relationships, both terms identity construction and negotiation are used interchangeably.

Discourse, Subjectivity, and Identity

Language, discourse, subjectivity, and identity are interrelated, influencing each other. Norton (2013) notes that "work on identity offers the field of language learning a comprehensive theory that integrates the individual language learner and the larger social world" (p. 2). Norton (2013) highlights how diverse subject positions are offered by a well-developed theory of identity for language teachers and students to speak from and how sometimes students and teachers from underprivileged subject positions can appropriate more desirable identities with regard to the target language communities. According to O'Neill (2020), with language, professionals create phenomena and events that construct their expertise, which results in how identities, roles, and responsibilities are enacted and understood in interactions in different contexts.

Language plays a prominent role in the construction of our subjectivity and identity. Poststructuralist feminist scholar Weedon (1997) has foregrounded the crucial role language can play in analyzing the individual and the social relationship. She stresses the dual role language plays: defining institutional practices and constructing our sense of ourselves – our *subjectivity*. Language defines not only different forms of social organizations and their practices but also their social and political consequences are defined and contested (Weedon, 1997). Also, our sense of subjectivity and identity is constructed through language. The etymological root of the term *subjectivity* is subject, referring to the fact that identity must be understood in relational terms: that identity is subject to a set of relationships (individual in a powerful position) and subject to a set of relationships (individual in a reduced power position). Weedon's conception of subject and *subjectivity* deconstructs the essentialist notion of identity that the individual has a unique, fixed, and coherent core and forwards the post-structural concept that identity is diverse, dynamic, contradictory, and shifting over historical and social space. In other words, *subjectivity* is discursively constructed and socially and historically embedded. Norton (2013) argues that identity is constituted in and through language by extending the poststructural concept of identity. Norton adds:

> Every time language learners speak, read or write the target language, they are not only exchanging information with members of the target language community, they are also organizing and reorganizing a sense of who they are and how they relate to the social world. As such, they are engaged in identity construction and negotiation (p. 3-4).

The poststructural observation about subjectivity supports the theorization of how education contributes to individual and social transformation. According to Norton (2014), the poststructural conceptualization of subjectivity as dynamic, fragmented, shifting and in the process of becoming indicates that language teachers do not remain stagnant in particular subject positions forever. Instead, though some social structures and environments constraint teachers from opportunities to interact in communities of practice to develop themselves with different language skills, pedagogical content knowledge, curriculum designing opportunities, and other disciplinary know-how, other contexts and practices may bestow with an enhanced set of possibilities for interaction in learning communities and exercise their agencies.

Sociocultural Environment, Agency, and Identity

Teacher agency is defined as their capacity to exercise free will and act autonomously amidst sociocultural and institutional constraints (Priestley et al., 2013). However, teacher agency has been a contested terrain with diverse and conflicting concepts and definitions. Teachers use language and discourse as tools to mediate between sociocultural constraints and the exercise of their agency. Evans (2015) notes that language is a 'double-edged sword' that mediates the boundary between 'us and them', whether sociocultural or geographical. The same language can also liberate identity by offering possibilities to cross barriers and boundaries. Goodwin (1994) reinforces the idea by exploring the dynamic processes and interactional nature of being and becoming a professional and belonging to a professional community of practice. Bakhtin's (1981) notion of dialogism and self-authorship corroborates the idea of Goodwin. Bakhtin considers the self as a continuing project of creative authorship that is influenced, but not constrained, by these discourses. Bakhtin's concept of discourse acknowledges the possibility of self-authorship despite the limitations posed by social discourses that can position people inequitably. Bakhtin (1986) argues that thoughts, experiences, words, and texts intermingle in a meaningful way which should not be overlooked as they are fundamental to understanding our being and becoming in relation to others.

Pennington and Richards (2016) note that "Since teachers' social and interactional contexts and experiences are varied and subject to change with new student populations and job requirements in different educational settings, some aspects of teacher identity will always be in flux" (p. 5). Likewise, teachers always require negotiating and adjusting in response to new contexts when teaching in a new course or level, new school or place/country, and new student group. Such adjustments instigate identity evolution over time (Pennington & Richards, 2016). Miller (2009) stresses:

> the negotiation of teachers' professional identities is…powerfully influenced by contextual factors outside of the teachers themselves and their preservice education. …[t]he identity resources of the teachers may be tested against conditions that challenge and conflict with their backgrounds, skills, social memberships, use of language, beliefs, values, knowledge, attitudes, and so on. Negotiating those challenges forms part of the dynamic of professional identity development (p. 175).

While negotiating in such difficult circumstances, how teachers assert their decision and adjust in such context is the concern of researchers in exploring the mediational role of agency in constructing identity. Norton and Toohey (2011) assert that identity researchers must concentrate on how social practices and institutional conditioning influence individuals and how individuals influence and shape social and institutional structures through innovative ways.

Second language learning theorists also discuss how power affects second language learners' and teachers' access to learning processes. Sometimes certain teachers are denied access to the target language community and opportunities to practice reading, writing, speaking, and listening, the fundamental process of acquiring a second language (Norton, 2014; Norton & Toohey, 2011). Therefore, according to Norton (2014), second language learning theorists are concerned with how power is distributed in both formal and informal language learning sites because it affects teachers' opportunities to negotiate learning opportunities with target language speakers and thereby construct new identities. Some identity positions may limit learners from possibilities for exercising agency to negotiating new identities, which is the concern of poststructuralist theorists. Learners' ability to alter identity positions may open up enhanced set of possibilities to acquire language. So, there can be two-way influence of identity and agency: enhanced identity positions may enable

teachers to exercise agency and autonomy, and agency may also influence identity construction.

Beliefs, Emotions, and Identities

The impact of emotion on teachers' professional development and identity construction has not been explored much in the context of English language teaching. However, according to Lemarchand-Chauvin and Tardieu (2018), pre-service teachers have long been seeking emotional support to address their emotional upheavals, though not heard by the educational authorities and have not been researched much. Some questions, like how to deal with the fear of getting into the classroom, how to deal with the anger that may arise out of the students' disruptive behaviours, and how to deal with happy moments that occur from success and sadness one may feel due to failure, are unanswered. Reis (2015) also reaffirmed that English language teachers' emotional aspects were not given much prominent space in training and development activities. Emotions have mainly been ignored, considering them subjective, irrational, female and challenging to capture. Benesch (2012) argues that "emotions seem to factor into teaching and learning so it would be useful to understand them better" (p. 133).

Traditionally emotion was considered a cognitive, personal, and subjective concept. But Vygotsky (1998) believes that cognition and emotion are interconnected and are the two subcomponents of consciousness. He argued that:

> Thought is not begotten by thought; it is engendered by motivation, i.e., by our desires and needs, our interests and emotions. Behind every thought, there is an affective-volitional tendency, which holds the answer to the last "why" in the analysis of thinking. A true and full understanding of another's thought is possible only when we understand its affective–volitional basis (p. 252).

Vygotsky notes the interconnected nature of cognition and emotion: one influencing the other. Referring to Vygotsky's sociocultural theory of learning, Reis (2015) stresses that cognition and emotion should not be considered dialectical components; instead, they cannot be detached as one induces the other.

Teachers undergo both positive as well as negative affective experiences, and both do impact their careers. However, negative emotions, mainly anxiety, fear, sadness, shame, guilt, and boredom, are found to have primarily focused on existing research. But recently, researchers have been directing on the positive personality factors and personal feelings such as love, happiness, enjoyment, belonging, empathy,

gratitude, satisfaction, spirituality, and mindfulness, among others and their influence on teachers' sense of well-being (Prior, 2019). Knowing teachers' emotions is crucial because it enables them to make teaching-learning meaningful and enjoyable. Exploration of emotion, according to Prior (2019), helps "examine how positive emotions may shape individuals' sense of autonomy and personal agency as well as their motivations, attitudes, identities, and social relationships" (p. 65). Day (2012) argues that understanding and managing emotions within themselves and others enhances teaching-learning management. Thus, teachers' emotions are inextricably linked to their professional practice.

The model teacher myth – flawless, authoritative, and always efficient – still prevalent among teachers has hindered understanding emotions. Due to the influence of the model teacher myth, teachers tend to hide their feelings from their students and colleagues to conceal their potential weaknesses and vulnerability (Hargreaves, 2000). According to Lemarchand-Chauvin and Tardieu (2018), experienced and expert teachers tend to share their emotions less than beginners. Expert teachers are found to have shared their feelings with their family members instead of colleagues, thinking that sharing emotions would mean admitting weaknesses. Hence, sharing of emotion in teaching is avoided due to stereotypical beliefs teachers carry of themselves about their identity.

A literature review on emotion and identity revealed different types of positive and negative emotions teachers experience, their responses to emotional situations, and the impact of emotion on identity construction. Lemarchand-Chauvin and Tardieu (2018) note that Aristotle has listed anger, pity, fear, and desire, associating these with pleasure or pain. Descartes has discussed mainly six emotions: love, joy, admiration, desire, hate and sadness, and he has distinguished these as primary and secondary emotions. By being specific to the teaching profession, Lemarchand-Chauvin and Tardieu (2018) list frustration, annoyance (anger), strain (fear), elation (joy), depression (sadness) and shame as some of the emotional experiences of teachers. Likewise, Teng (2020) discusses vulnerability as an emotional state that English language teachers undergo. According to Lasky (2005), vulnerability is a multifaceted emotional experience that individuals may confront in numerous settings, or fear or apprehension that one's judgements could be erroneous, hazardous, or self-defeating.

The fundamental question is how to adequately respond to these emotions for the smooth development of English language teachers. Beginners share both positive

as well as negative emotional experiences – victories and failures – and are eager to get advice from their colleagues, which is considered positively as a will to develop, an essential step for professional identity construction, and therefore valued by the professional community (Lemarchand-Chauvin & Tardieu, 2018). Emotional development should be a fundamental component of the training of language teachers, write Lemarchand-Chauvin and Tardieu (2018). In fact, English language teachers must cope with their own and pupils' emotions on a regular basis, whether they are pre-service or in-service teachers. Fried (2011) argues that emotion regulation is essential to teacher education, whether done through breathing exercises or reflective activities. Reis (2015) notes that to grow as professionals, English language teachers require relentless opportunities to externalize and give voice to their thoughts and emotions. Proper identification, validation, and understanding of emotion may positively transform English language teachers' personal and professional lives. Therefore, English language teachers must explore and share their professional insecurities and find ways to respond to their feelings and anxieties to make it a catalyst for positive transformation.

Exploration of the role of emotions in the identity construction of English language teachers is a recent phenomenon, and very few studies have been conducted in the area. Li (2020) explored the narratives of two Chinese English language teachers, focusing on how beliefs and emotions contributed to their professional identity construction. Research results showed that native/nonnative speakerism had a powerful influence in shaping teachers' beliefs and emotions related to teaching and learning English, due to which these teachers kept on seeking approval on their pronunciation from their colleagues abroad. Furthermore, native/nonnative discourse that put nonnative teachers in a disadvantageous position caused distant relationships of one participant with his students and colleagues. Because of that, he had to put additional effort into preparing for his classroom instruction and developing a caring relationship with students and their parents to prove his potential. He felt highly vulnerable being a nonnative speaker of English.

Likewise, Yuan and Lee (2016) explored how Ming, a student teacher, dealt with contradictory emotions while doing his practicum at a private boarding school in a suburb of Beijing by drawing his lived narratives. The findings indicated that the negative feelings he experienced during the practicum challenged his beliefs as a teacher, while positive emotions that he derived from his students' success and

recognition contributed positively to his identity construction as an English teacher. However, due to constraints from the mentor's side and the contextual factors in school, his negative emotions gradually escalated, posing a severe hindrance to identity construction. Professional learning atmosphere, sociocultural environment, and emotion heavily influenced teachers' identity construction. Swearingen (2019), examining nonnative English speaker teachers' language teacher identity development in graduate-level Teaching English to Speakers of Other Language (TESOL) programs in the USA, Canada, and Australia, identified the emotional glue or affective responses in language teachers' identity development, among other factors. Regarding emotion and identity, the researcher found that affect has transformative power in language teacher identity development. Swearingen's (2019) investigation revealed that "While negative emotions may constrain identity development, positive emotions stimulated through reflection on alternative discourse, opportunities to enact identities through student teaching, and supportive networks seemed to impact identity formation positively" (p. 10).

Imagined Communities and Imagined Identities

According to Norton (2013), "Imagined communities refer to groups of people, not immediately tangible and accessible, with whom we connect through the power of the imagination" (p. 8). Teachers interact with many communities that are concrete, and their existence can be felt directly. These communities include workplaces, educational institutions, neighbourhoods, colleagues, and social, cultural, and religious organizations. We not only get connected with these immediate communities and the people but also with imagined communities and people relating to those communities. Anderson (1991), who conceptualized *imagined communities,* argues that the concept of a nation is an imagined community. Even though people living in the country never know all the people living, no matter how tiny the country is, they all have the concept of their country in their imagination and identify themselves with the nation. Without ever meeting but possibly with the hope of doing so, we develop a feeling of connection and affinity when we imagine ourselves connected to someone over time and place. Wenger (1998) suggests that we not only belong to the community by directly getting involved in communities of practice – in his term *engagement* – but also through imagination, we create communities. Through imagination, teachers can transcend temporal and spatial communities.

In teacher development and identity construction, the focus is on how affiliation in such imagined communities beyond temporal and spatial boundaries enhances the trajectory of becoming a teacher. These imagined communities are not less natural than the communities we engage in everyday practice, and they can have a massive impact on teachers' current actions and investments (Norton, 2013). The concept of learning as identity underscores learning as a process of becoming. And during the development process, teachers may identify themselves in a particular position or with a specific identity in future, not just past (Kiely, 2015). Kiely (2015) notes that becoming is driven by the imagination: teachers' identity is shaped by what those teachers imagine themselves to become in future. As theoretical constructs, Norton (2014) contends that imagined communities and imagined identities help to comprehend identity since language learners' concerns for the future are fundamental to their identities as individuals.

A review of empirical studies on imagined identities showed how imagined identity mediated teachers to invest in realizing their imagined identities and ultimately establish themselves as English teachers. Barkhuizen (2016) investigated the imagined identity of a pre-service English teacher named Sela and her negotiation of identity in teacher education and practicum over nine years. Sela, an immigrant in Tonga island, who wanted to work with the adult immigrant groups from her community to improve their English communication, ended up becoming an English teacher in a wealthy school where white students predominated. The article shows how Sela negotiated her identity through investment in different temporal and spatial locations and gained linguistic capital that ultimately ended up with a different identity than she had imagined nine years before.

Sung (2019) presents a case study of an undergraduate student, Liam's English language learning experience, mainly his investment in realizing his imagined identity in future. Liam's stories depicted that his differential investments in learning English across contexts are mediated by the likelihood of yielding good capital as a return on the investments. His selective and strategic investment is influenced and shaped by his agency in response to contextual situations and his craving for membership in imagined communities and imagined identities associated with a cosmopolitan lifestyle in the projected future. Ubaidillah et al. (2020) have also shown identical results in their investigation of the imagined identity of a pre-service teacher named Andy studying at a private university in Indonesia through his past learning

experiences. Andy's past learning experience, particularly his imagination or portrayal of future identity, was a catalyst in sustained language learning that heavily influenced his identity construction. Liu (2014), however, presents a contrastive result investigating his autobiographical narratives and showing how his identity with English has formed, transformed, and reconstructed. The critical investigation of his own story revealed that his desire for high status in the future led him to develop English competency. Yet, he felt an identity crisis as he was acquainted with an unequivocal postcolonial linguistic discourse that positions two languages differently.

Macro Factors: Gender, Race, and Ideology

Empirical studies of teacher identity showed that macro sociocultural factors such as gender, race, ideology, and discourse heavily influence the identity construction of English language teachers. Many empirical articles focused on this theme. Charles (2019), for instance, exploring native Black English language teaching (ELT) professionals teaching in South Korea revealed the influence of race on pedagogical approaches that Black teachers adopt and its effect on identity. Self-identified Black native speakers' lived experiences revealed that they saw themselves as cultural ambassadors for the intersections of race and culture in Western society. Students in Korea found the culturally responsive pedagogy and portrayal of the cultural variety and other components of the English-speaking community in class fulfilling, which positively impacted Black teachers' identity construction. However, Choe and Seo (2021) have come up with a contrastive result in exploring the intersection between race and ideology in the identity construction of English language teachers in Korea. An analysis of autobiographical narratives posted on YouTube by nine black teachers of English showed that Black teachers were victims of racial prejudice and discrimination. Initially, Black teachers were stunned to experience the bias but realized that preference for White skin is not just a Korean phenomenon. Due to the pervasive racist ideology, they could not position themselves as legitimate English teachers. They realized that the Korean concept of native speakers does not include people of colour, no matter how effective they are. Their pronunciation was taken cautiously by the students. They realized that the racial and ethnic homogeneity and racist ideology prevalent in ELT were the reasons for discrimination.

Another study conducted by Kayi-Aydar (2015) examining the life experiences of Jenelle, a non-native speaker of Spanish, demonstrates how Jenelle

shifted her identity from Spanish to English as a second language teacher. Jenelle's story revealed the "complex interplay among competence, classroom practice, membership, race, and power in the process of identity construction" (p. 138). Jenelle's status as a non-native speaker and ethnic identity as a white American denied the legitimacy of access to practice, making her unable to construct her identity as a Spanish teacher. There were white speakers of Spanish (such as Spain and Argentina), but she focused on her immediate community in the class where there were nonwhite Spanish speakers with whom she could not identify and get legitimate access; hence, ultimately, she gave up teaching Spanish and became English as a second language teacher.

Another factor intertwining with race and ethnicity is native/nonnative ideology. Fan and de Jong (2019), in their investigation of a Chinese language teacher's experience in the US, focused on how a potential English teacher navigated her identity while enrolled in a TESOL program there before deciding to teach Chinese to Speakers of Other Language (TCSOL). Wan, a competent TCSOL and English as a foreign language (EFL) teacher in China, gradually lost confidence in teaching English after internalizing native/nonnative ideology and started viewing herself as an unqualified English teacher and finally ended up becoming a TCSOL teacher. Likewise, Teng (2020) presents how native speakers of English are privileged in China with higher payment and better housing. Native/non-native ideology perfectly operates in China, leading nonnative English teachers to underprivileged positions. Chinese teachers struggle to establish authority and agency by engaging in conferences, seminars, research, and other development activities. The researcher also showed that authority and vulnerability are not mutually exclusive, rather they are interdependent in establishing agency and thereby construction of identity.

Discourse on gender and sexuality is another factor that influences English language teachers' identity construction. Lin et al. (2020) explored how a queer EFL teacher negotiated her professional self in Thailand. The queer teacher exercised her agency by opening up a discourse on critical issues adopting critical pedagogy in a socially heterosexual-dominated setting with the unmarked presence of sexuality. Xiong and Li (2020), drawing on poststructural feminist discourse, shed light on a female teacher's reconstruction, renegotiation, and reconciliation of her professional and gendered identity across personal and professional space. "By connecting her personal lived experiences with professional discourses and sociocultural contexts, the

research has discussed the hegemonic expressions of gender roles that oppress female teachers" (Xiong & Li, 2020). Simon-Maeda (2004) reaffirms the hegemonic influence of gendered discourses and social inequalities on English language teachers' identity construction and proposes alternative empowering discourse.

Communities of Practice and Identity

Participation in various activities within professional communities significantly impacts English language teachers' identities. For instance, Tsui (2007) investigated the intricate process of identity development by examining the actual teaching experience of an EFL teacher in the People's Republic of China named Minfang. Minfang's stories revealed that "reifying oneself and having oneself reified as a member of a community constitutes an important aspect of identification. The legitimate access to practice and the competence so developed constitutes another crucial dimension of identity formation" (p. 678). Liu and Xu (2013) expose the trajectory of identity construction of an EFL teacher, Feng, from the People's Republic of China and recommends refining the communities of practice theory. Feng's stories during the reform context reveal that it is essential for teachers to negotiate their identities to adapt to changing contexts in the workplace. However, the learning trajectory is two-way, where various power relations shape and reshape teachers' identities. The research also implicates for recognition of socialness, bi-directionality, and the influence of power in learning in communities of practice. Nguyen and Dao (2019), investigating the five prospective English language teachers doing applied linguistics/TESOL at an Australian university, found that those prospective teachers were initially influenced by NNEST/NEST ideology and were consequently disillusioned by it. Engagement in new communities of practice in an Australian university challenged their initial understanding of themselves as qualified teachers with new realization, and then with the means of engagement in the communities, they developed new identities as competent teachers. They also experienced the positive impact of identity exploration through reflective narrative in constructing their identities.

In contrast, Trent's (2012) exploration of a group of early career English language teachers experience showed that their engagement in communities of practice, their relationship with colleagues, and their positioning by the school in different discourses and the wider educational environment impacted their decision about whether to continue teaching career or not. Sudarwati et al. (2022), exploring

the identity construction of an Indonesian EFL student with a physical disability through classroom participation, portrayed that the participant continually transformed herself for self-survival amidst the increasing competition amongst colleagues in communities of practice. From this, it can be inferred that those capable of transforming themselves to adapt to changing contexts survive in teaching-learning.

Chien (2018) explored the Taiwanese elementary school English language teachers' identity construction after a series of training sessions and reflections among the learning communities. Participants considered reflective practice supportive of their identity construction. They also received experiential learning through reflective practice, peer assistance, professional dialogue, teaching observation, workshops, and study groups. Reflection was considered rewarding in English language teachers' identity construction. Unlike previous studies, Motteram (2016) investigated how membership and belonging in communities of practice (teacher association/IATEFL) impacted the English language teachers' identity negotiation. The article showed that using digital technologies to reach out to the broader communities of teachers enabled teacher associations to achieve their objective of serving all their members and engaging members in different activities to have a stronger voice in the ELT community.

Teacher Education and Identity

Teacher education is another pertinent subject that came out of the empirical assessment of literature published on English language teachers' professional identity. However, very few papers were on the influence of teacher education in the English language teachers' identity negotiation. For instance, Macías Villegas et al. (2020) examined the student teachers' identity construction in a teacher education program in Colombia through a sociocultural lens. Researchers primarily sought to comprehend and describe the identity construction process of a group of student teachers in an undergraduate English language teacher education program at a public university in Columbia. They evidenced that student teachers' identity construction began with identity conflict at the beginning of the teacher education program that played the role of a tension initiator. However, student teachers utilized different opportunities to engage and interact with members of the teachers' community, teaching practicum, and teacher education curriculum that helped develop their identity gradually. Finally, the concluding time-framed events designed in the program helped resolve their initial

tensions. Student teachers recognized themselves as English teachers and became aware of different opportunities available for professional development.

However, Prabjandee (2020) showed contrastive results in his exploration of the five-year undergraduate teacher education program's influence on pre-service teachers' identity construction. The results show that identity construction is complex, multifaced, and dispersed in teacher education programs. The framework of experience in teacher education did not allow students to enact identity construction, and the role of teacher education in fostering identity construction is mostly passive. The opportunities students received were fragmented, requiring them to connect the dots for their identity construction.

Learning Environment

The learning environment is another crucial component that impacts identity development. Three of the many empirical articles I shortlisted for review were on the learning environment and its impact on identity construction. Serna-Gutiérrez and Mora-Pablo (2018) explored the critical incidents that transnational student-teachers in central Mexico underwent and their influence on their professional identity as English teachers. These students' learning experiences while studying for their Bachelor of Arts (BA) in TESOL degree in the United States and their time spent practising teaching substantially impacted how they taught and, in turn, how they identified as English teachers. But initially, linguistic capital was pivotal in selecting English language teaching as a profession. The same linguistic capital inspired them to choose the BA TESOL program. They were inspired to enter the English language teaching profession by the nature of the program as well as other events.

Likewise, Mirzaee and Aliakbari (2018) explored the identity construction process of an Iranian EFL teacher using a life history approach focusing on the critical events that he underwent. Their study indicates that participants' identities are socially formed and confined, with little room for expressing their agency. The researchers contend that teacher agency is exerted in a trained manner that develops over the course of teachers' years of apprenticeship. However, Xie and Dong (2020) have investigated the identity evolution and the factors contributing to the identity crisis of three EFL teachers in a higher vocational college in China. Results indicate that these teachers went through the honeymoon period (early in their careers), confusion and dilemmas (mid-career), and identity crisis (late in their careers) as a result of their interactions with micro-level personal factors, meso-level institutional factors, and

macro-level social and ideological factors. The study demonstrates that even seasoned educators can face identity crises, necessitating ongoing scaffolding for identity growth through various developmental activities. A good learning environment in different context level – micro, meso, and macro – is essential for teachers to maintain high commitment to teaching.

Institutional Constraints

Another prominent theme that emerged from the empirical review is related to institutional constraints and their impact on the identity construction of teachers. For instance, Wang (2020) explored how five first-year EFL teachers constructed their professional identities. The research emerged with three key themes: constraints from institutional norms, institutional structures, and external social contexts. Regarding limitations from institutional structure, participants found large class sizes, heavy workload, and examination-centered teaching-learning influencing their identities. Regarding constraints from institutional norms, unsympathetic supervisors/leaders, inflexible curriculum, and non-helpful senior staff were found to affect their professional identity. Their pedagogical practices were mismatched with the institutional norms that constrained their identity. And third, regarding constraints from sociocultural context, inside and outside institutional power had damaging consequences of destabilizing or undermining their English language teaching.

Chapter Summary

The review of relevant literature on identity revealed that identity construction mainly occurs through engagement in communities of practice and through discourse. When teachers engage in communities and discursive practices, they negotiate their identity. Particularly sociocultural and poststructural theorists consider identity as shifting, multiple, and in the process of becoming.

The interaction between different levels of context (micro, meso, and macro) and the teachers' agency influence identity construction. Besides these, beliefs, values, emotional experiences, imagination, and imagined identity also affect teachers' becoming. The review results showed that though there are few studies on the influence of teacher education, practicum, and training on identity development in the global context, the paucity of longitudinal research focusing on life history that stresses beliefs, emotions, imagined identity, and agency is evident. In the context of Nepal, to my knowledge, such studies are nonexistent, establishing a need for further research. So the analysis of secondary-level English language teachers' trajectory of

identity negotiation focusing on beliefs, emotions, imagination, and the interaction between sociocultural environment and agency in constructing identity will have a noble contribution in the global and local context.

CHAPTER III

THEORETICAL REVIEW

In this chapter, I present a brief sketch of how learning approaches and theories of identity construction have shifted from developmental psychological theory to sociocultural and poststructural perspectives. I argue how these theories and philosophies are appropriate for this research. Passing a brief critique on developmental psychology and its role in learning and identity research, I present the rationale behind framing learning and identity development from sociocultural and poststructural perspectives. In the sociocultural theory of learning, I primarily discuss Wenger's notion of communities of practice and Norton's concept of investing, and also I briefly discuss Bourdieu's formulation of *habitus*, *capital*, and *field* as primary theoretical referents.

Perspectives and Approaches on Language Learning and Identity Development

Learning approaches and theories of identity development have long been studied from the perspective of psychological theories (Fox, 2000). The concept of identity has mainly been explored from developmental psychology, sociocultural, and poststructural analysis frameworks. Traditionally the language learning theories and approaches were dominated by psychological and cognitive perspectives that predominantly perceived individuals as having "an essential, unique, fixed, and coherent core" (Darvin & Norton, 2018, p. 1). Norton Peirce (1995) notes that "the personality of the individual has been described as introverted or extroverted, inhibited or uninhibited, field dependent or field independent" (p. 10) in Krashen's notion of affective filter. In his conception of the affective filter, Krashen considers motivation as a variable independent of social context (Krashen, 1981), whereas Spolsky (1989) regards the individual and the social as inextricably intertwined. Krashen views self-confidence as an innate quality of language learners, whereas Gardner (1989) contends that self-confidence results from success in the context of learning a second language. Poststructuralist theorists like Bakhtin (1981, 1984, 1986) argue that language is not independent of the speakers and their speaking context; instead, utterances are situated in the context where speakers try to create meaning from the conversation with others. Commenting on Bakhtin's dialogism, Norton and Toohey (2011) maintain that "While structural theories might see language learning

as a gradual individual process of internalizing the set of rules, structures, and vocabularies of a standard language, Bakhtin saw language learning as a process of struggling to use language to participate in specific speech communities" (p. 416). Likewise, Walsh (1991) maintains that

> Language is more than a mode of communication, or a system composed of rules, vocabulary, and meaning; it is an active medium of social practice through which people construct, define, and struggle over meanings in dialogue with and in relation to others. And because language exists within a larger structural context, this practice is, in part, positioned and shaped by the ongoing relations of power that exist between and among individuals (p. 32).

Like Walsh (1991), even Vygotsky considers learning a social practice. Vygotsky (1978) considered language as a symbolic tool and proposed that children achieve "increasing control over the mediational means made available by their culture, including language for interpersonal (social interaction) and intrapersonal (thinking)" relation. During the process, they develop language and the resources and tools available. Norton and Toohey (2011) reaffirm those ideas by noting the social process of learning and the cultural and historical situatedness of the learners in which they involve in practice employing cultural tools available, including language, to develop the behaviours required for participating. In so doing, they change themselves, the activities, and the tools used.

According to Darvin and Norton (2018), the power dynamics between language learners and target language speakers are frequently ignored in traditional language learning research, where learners are categorized into simple categories like motivated or unmotivated, introverted or extroverted, inhibited or uninhibited. Norton (2013) maintains that "poststructuralist theories of identity are liberating not only in destabilizing essentialist notion of identity but in challenging dominant theories of knowledge and text while providing powerful conceptual tools that help to expose the partiality of claims to truth" (p. 5). The notion of agency that poststructuralist theory introduced acknowledges students and teachers' capacity to challenge and resist the dominant ideologies and structures as well as essentialized identities.

Besides, "whereas traditional psycholinguistics views language as a conveyor of an already formed thought, sociocultural theory views language as a tool of the mind, a tool that contributes to cognitive development and is constitutive of thought" (Silva, 2013, p. 41). Day et al. (2006) note that the concept of identity can be best

analyzed by employing the interpretive framework of the self. Day acknowledges the critique and movement away from the psychological notion of self as stable to a more complex conception of self that appreciates multiple, fragmented, and unstable nature of self that an individual might possess. These multiple selves influence the complex and dynamic process of identity construction and reconstruction that is influenced by external social and contextual forces during personal and professional life experiences of English language teachers (Giovanelli, 2015).

Therefore, language learning and its context are inextricably linked: the learner and the context influence each other in their growth. Silva (2013) maintains that "Language learning and the identities of learners should be understood as a relation of mutual engagement because learners are not only learning a linguistic system; they are learning a diverse set of sociocultural practices, often best understood in the context of wider relations of power" (p. 38).

As opposed to developmental psychology, communities of practice as a social theory of learning adds a new dimension to learning theory with its notion of social and situated practices. Communities of practice theory appreciate the social nature of learning rooted in and inspired by social theory and anthropology (Giddens, 1984; Lave, 1988; Vygotsky, 1978). Communities of practice theory align with the systems tradition that community of practice is a social system developed out of the network of many other communities of practice (Wenger, 2010). Lave and Wenger (1991) proposed that the situated learning theory has a widespread influence on social learning theory with its principal element of communities of practice that envision the learning that takes place through individual learners' participation with other members in shared activities. Situated learning thus draws our attention to the learning processes that occur in mundane everyday practices as well as workplaces and other informal settings in different communities of practices of the participants through social interaction (Fox, 2000). During the process of participation and social interaction individual and social constitute each other. As I explore how teachers construct their identity in their interaction with the communities of practice, individual and social merge together.

Wenger's Notion of Communities of Practice

As one of the social theories of learning, communities of practice refer to the community of practitioners involved in a joint enterprise. Wenger et al. (2002) define communities of practice as "groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems,

or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis" (p. 4). Eckert (2006) defines communities of practice as "a collection of people who engage on an ongoing basis in some common endeavour" (p. 1). Communities of practice function as a living curriculum (Wenger, 2011) for the teachers and learners for professional development and identity construction.

Communities of practice are not confined to formal settings and organizational structures; instead, they develop connections across geographic and administrative boundaries (Wenger, 2011). As the world has become complex with the emergence of new technologies, particularly the internet and social media, locations of communities of practice have expanded beyond geographical limitations, unlike traditional societies, and teachers have started communicating with people and resources in multiple locations, that has expanded the scope of communities of practice (Wenger, 2010). Through the sharing of practice by like-minded but unique professionals, teachers grow their professional knowledge as well as the identity of members of communities. Morley (2016) notes that community members develop their practices and identities through prolonged engagement in communities of practice between seasoned practitioners and novices. Hence, there is a two-way influence in communities of practice: the practice influences participants, and the participants also reform communities and their practices. Through constant engagement, teachers as practitioners build a shared toolkit of materials, stories, and resources (Wenger, 2011).

Teachers gain a sense of who they are and engage in a consistent process of becoming during the participation and meaning-negotiation process in communities of practice. The communities of practice framework, According to Wenger (1998), narrows its focus in two directions while focusing on the construction of identity: it examines the person and the becoming from social perspectives and also extends the focus beyond immediate communities of practice drawing attention to the broader possibilities, social structures, and identification, particularly the issue of participation and non-participation and inclusion and exclusion. Identity in communities of practice is characterized as a negotiated experience, community membership, learning trajectory, intersection of multiple memberships, and connection to the local and the global (Wenger, 1998). In other words, teachers define identity through participation and the ways they reify themselves, through membership and familiarity and

unfamiliarity, through the lifelong trajectory of learning, through reconciliation of various forms of membership into one identity, and finally through negotiating local ways of belonging to global and broader styles and discourses. Teachers' trajectory of learning in past, present and future are interlocked through interaction between past and future manifested in current practices that constitute identity (Wenger, 1998).

Our identity is formed by a mixture of our participation and non-participation and our peripheral and marginal status within our learning communities. Wenger (1998) maintains that our location in a social landscape, what we regard and disregard, with whom we attempt to build connections, and how we engage and channel our energies construct our identity. Non-participation results from our disinterestedness and boredom on the one hand; on the other, it can also be a source of freedom and privacy. These participants find their identity outside their institution and probably outside communities of practice. Hence, peripherality and marginality result in a mixture of both participation and non-participation. According to Wenger (2010), "Meaningful learning in social contexts requires both participation and reification to be in interplay. Artefacts without participation do not carry their meaning; and participation without artefacts is fleeting, unanchored, and uncoordinated" (p. 1). In communities of practice, teachers construct and negotiate their identity through participation and reification through their engagement as three modes of belonging: engagement, imagination, and alignment.

Modes of Belonging

Understanding three distinct modes of belonging is essential to understand the processes of learning and identity formation in communities of practice. According to Wenger (2010), "Learning can be viewed as a journey through landscapes of practice. Through engagement, but also imagination and alignment, our identities come to reflect the landscapes in which we live and our experience of it" (p. 5). After a prolonged engagement in communities of practice, participants "accumulate memories, competencies, key formative events, stories, and relationships to people and places. It also provides directions, aspirations, and projected images of oneself that guide the shaping of the trajectory going forward" (p. 5). Engagement is a very common practice of participation in communities of practice, whereas imagination encourages participants to find out alternatives beyond immediate contexts and in the projected future, while alignment relates to the significance of having a connection

with wider professional communities, their norms, values, and institutional policies (Morley, 2016; Wenger, 2010).

Engagement

Engagement is the most immediate relation as one of the modes of belonging to communities of practice. Participants engage in different activities, be it alone or together with other members, doing things, working together, interacting, using various tools and artefacts, and producing them (Wenger, 2010). Wenger (2010) argues that through engagement, participants get access to direct experience of regimes of competence: be it an experience of competence or incompetence, and participation or non-participation. Teachers invest their time, effort, and knowledge in communities of practice through engagement and work with their colleagues, students, administration, and researchers that shape and reshape their professional identities (Banegas et al., 2013; Davies, 2013). Wenger (1998) presents engagement having the combination of threefold processes that include: "the ongoing negotiation of meaning," "the formation of trajectories," and "the unfolding of histories of practice" (p. 174).

For meaningful learning through engagement in communities of practice, participants require authentic and adequate access to the practice's participative and reificative dimensions. Wenger (1998) maintains that participation relates to having access to and involvement with other participants in communities of practice during the engagement. In addition, engagement also refers to the ability and legitimacy to contribute to the pursuit of common initiative, the formulation of shared practices, and the negotiation of meaning. Reification requires that all reificative tools, such as symbols, language, documents, and the like, are available to the users throughout the engagement. Engagement is a unique setting for identity and learning because of this dual access to participation and reification. The learning process is impossible if participation and reification are not accessible.

The engagement that gets bounded in the situated practice may look like a limitation, but it is a vital resource that enables the negotiation of meaning and feasible identities (Wenger, 1998). During our engagement, "we both adopt and contribute to shaping the relations of accountability by which we define our actions as competent" (Wenger, 1998, p. 175). According to Wenger (1998), the engagement constructs and reconstructs practices, communities, participants' identities, and the artefacts employed through mutual interaction and participation. This makes

engagement an intriguing component of power because it allows us to negotiate our actions and impact the context in which we may forge and experience a feeling of competence in our identities. Summing up, engagement is a shared activity that accumulates a history of experience and the trajectory of interaction that shapes relations and identities.

Imagination

The term imagination in communities of practice stresses the creative process of generating new images and of developing new relationships across time and space that bears the potential to constitute the self (Wenger, 1998). Wenger (1998) maintains that imagination does not suggest that the aspect of identity we develop through imagination is less real or insignificant than that of the aspect of identity constructed based on mutual engagement. Instead, imagination focuses on creating self and imaginings of the world that transcend immediate engagement. Wenger (2010) maintains that during the engagement process, we construct a picture of the world or focus on viewing it from diverse perspectives and exploring new possibilities for the future. Through imagination, we develop a relation of identification and nonidentification that are as critical as those obtained from engagement.

Imagination transcends the immediate temporal, spatial, and social space and bestows us with boundless possibilities. Wenger (1998) notes that as a mode of belonging, imagination plays a delicate act of identity formation through "participation and non-participation, inside and outside, the actual and the possible, the doable and the unreachable, the meaningful and the meaningless" (p. 178). Participants' identities are affected by the images they construct of their positions in the future. They may use their imagination to develop a picture of broader connections (Wenger, 1998). Wenger (1998) maintains that through imagination, we find out place in the world and history and explore other perspectives and possibilities. Through the means of imagination, we can see how our experiences relate to larger historical patterns and linkages, see potential new developments and alternatives, and imagine potential futures.

Through the means of imagination, communities are created. Wenger (1998) exemplifies that two people travelling on the same train and reading the same newspapers may find some connection in their shared history reading the article. They can also connect by assuming they are familiar people because they have the same taste and appetite regarding the reading resources, common characteristics, and

experiences. Common taste and readership develop a community as they find themselves belonging. Not only this, but through imagination, one finds the present as a continuation of history, common roots, and shared heritage. However, this creative potential of imagination rests upon social interaction and experiences; it is not the production of mere personal fantasies and dreams. Therefore, imagination involves the social world, instead of the withdrawal from social reality, to develop and expand the scope of realities and identities.

For imagination to become a resource of identity construction, one mode of belonging requires certain conditions to be fulfilled. Wenger (1998) notes that participants should be able to pause, disengage, and then move back and view the engagement through the eyes of an outsider. Participants are required to have the ability to explore, take risks, and develop heterogeneous connections. Participants should be able to be in someone else's shoes, share stories, develop models, and reify patterns.

Alignment

For effective engagement in communities of practice, aligning with contextual realities such as following the laws, getting involved in coordinated activities, and communicating intentions well is highly critical (Wenger, 2010). Wenger (2010) notes that alignment does not merely refer to passive compliance to the authority, norms, and laws; it is not just a one-way process of submitting to the prescriptions of the authorities and rules; instead, it is a two-way process where actions, interpretations, perspectives, and contexts are coordinated to have a desired outcome. Through the process of alignment, identification is possible. Participants' application of specific methods instead of others, abiding by or rejecting moral codes, passively following the norms, or rejecting or influencing them for betterment all involve identification. By referencing the claim processors, Wenger (1998) maintains that their practices of complying with the directives of the institution are a part of the alignment. Claim processors also try to maintain the neatness and tidiness of their desks and dress up as per the norms of the institution whenever a visit is announced.

Like imagination, as a mode of belonging, alignment is not limited to mutual engagement. According to Wenger (1998), alignment extends the implication of our actions by coordinating diverse spaces, localities, points of view, and competencies. For instance, different entities like government agencies, scientific practices, forms of art, religious beliefs, trends, political and societal movements, educational guidelines,

and business organizations all offer extensive systems of styles and ways of communicating, which allow us to feel like part of a group by aligning our actions, abilities, and goals towards specific objectives. Alignment is not only about directing and controlling energy but also about power. It involves the power to direct one's own energy towards alignment and the ability to inspire or demand alignment from others (Wenger, 1998). Alignment extends beyond engagement, such as abiding by the institution's law, submitting to reified institutional norms and requirements, following trends, and contributing to the institution's targets. These forms of alignment do not require engagement in communities of practice, but this mode of belonging defines their identity.

Alignment necessitates the potential to coordinate perspectives and activities to channel energies for a common goal. Wenger (1998) argues that the "challenge of alignment is to connect local efforts to broader styles and discourses in ways that allow learners to invest their energy in them" (p. 186). Alignment is not always empowering; it can sometimes be disempowering and lead people towards vulnerable situations. Wenger (1998) maintains that alignment can become "an unquestioning allegiance that makes us vulnerable to all kinds of delusion and abuse. It can be coerced via threat or violence, thereby separating as much as it coordinates" (p. 181). Furthermore, alignment can be "a prescriptive process that removes from communities their ability to act on their understanding and to negotiate their place in the larger scheme of things. It can be a confrontation of conflicting interests that leaves some all-powerful and others powerless. It can be a violation of our sense of self that crushes our identity" (p. 181).

Summarizing the Modes of Belonging

Summing up, though the three modes of belonging – engagement, imagination, and alignment – are diverse, these modes of belonging are not mutually exclusive. Wenger (1998) notes that a community can be constituted of all three modes of belonging but in different ratios, and the variation in the proportion consequences communities with distinct qualities.

When the influence of modes of belonging changes from one mode to the next, the community changes its character. But as depicted in figure 1, there is a mutual influence of one mode to another mode of belonging. Wenger (2010) maintains that as there are trade-offs between different ways of belonging, it is

Figure 1:

Modes of Belonging
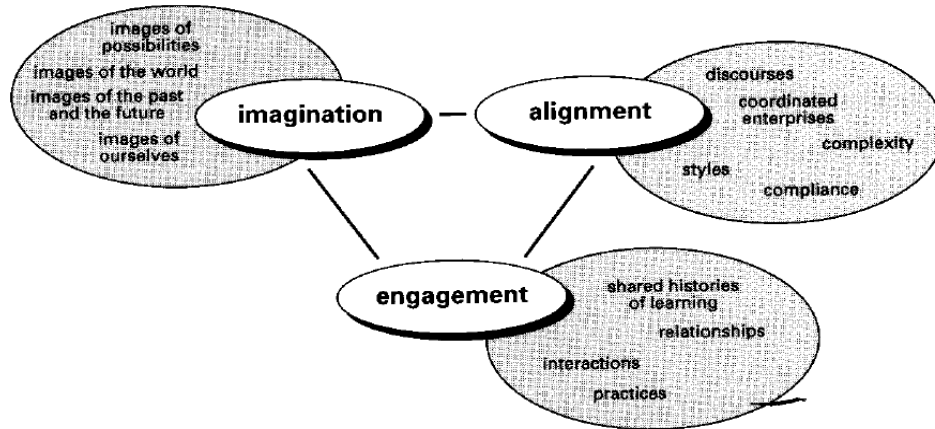
Note. Adapted from Wenger (1998)

meaningless to think of one mode as better than another with regard to enhancing learning and constructing identities.

Identification and Negotiability

In identity negotiation in communities of practice, identification relates to the forms of membership, whereas negotiability relates to the ownership of meaning (Wenger, 1998). Wenger (1998) maintains that concepts like commitment, affinity, inclusion and exclusion, differentiation, allegiance, and stories of identity best describe identification. Whereas negotiability is best described by the phrases access to information, formulating institutional policies, defining individuals' duties and rights, maintaining shared standards, sharing possibilities, argumentation, casting votes, and challenging boundaries. Further details of identification and negotiability and how it works in identity construction are presented below.

Identification

Identification relates to our active engagement in negotiation processes and what others do to us. Wenger (2010) argues that sometimes it results in participation and non-participation. Both participation and non-participation influence our identity construction. Our identity is constituted of what we are and what we are not (Wenger, 1998). Wenger (1998) notes that "identification is not merely a subjective experience; it is socially organized" (p. 192). As a social practice, we invest ourselves in practice, and at the same time, in our relationship with others. Through this process, we achieve the lived sense of our identity, making identification a two-way interaction process.

Like identification, other modes of belonging, such as imagination and alignment, influence the identification process. Wenger (1998) notes that through imagination, participants develop a sense of affinity and, thus, the identity of participants. But imagination can also lead to the reaction of dissociation and consequently create an identity of non-participation. Imagination takes us beyond immediate engagement in communities of practice being a significant source of identification. Here identification is possible because of the kind of picture of the world and image of the future participants create for them. Alignment as another mode of identification is evident with the participants' relations of authority and submission. As alignment directs our actions, it ultimately influences our identities.

Negotiability

Negotiability relates to the potential and legitimacy to contribute to, own responsibility for, and influence the meaning that matters within communities of practice (Trent & DeCoursey, 2011; Wenger, 1998). According to Wenger (1998), negotiability is influenced by the "ownership of meaning – that is, the degree to which we can make use of, affect, control, modify, or in general, assert as ours the meanings that we negotiate" (p. 200). During an engagement in communities of practice, some participants influence production, whereas others adopt meaning. Thus, it depicts the uneven ownership of meaning. Peripheral engagement in the negotiation of meaning results in marginality and inability to learn, thereby failing to construct the desired identity. According to Wenger (1998), while mutual involvement can be a means of distributing ownership of meaning, it can also be a means of denying negotiability, which can lead to non-participation. Besides, "Members whose contributions are never adopted develop an identity of non-participation that progressively marginalizes them" (p. 203).

Likewise, imagination and alignment also influence the negotiation of meaning. Wenger (1998) proposed that stories are easily appropriated because they allow people to actively engage their imagination and become immersed in the events, characters, and circumstances described. Wenger posits that stories have the ability to transport an individual's experience into the situations being described and make them feel as though they are participating in the events themselves. As a result, stories can become integrated into an individual's sense of identity and be remembered as a personal experience rather than simply as information. Similarly, through alignment, shared ownership of meaning can be reached through motivating, persuading,

negotiating, and authorizing. Besides compliance with norms and rules, violence, agreement, and submission can also enforce alignment but with minimal regard to negotiability.

Concluding Thoughts on Communities of Practice

As our identities are constituted of processes of identification and negotiation through three different modes of belonging – engagement, imagination, and alignment – communities and economies of meaning are the prime aspect of social interaction through which we negotiate our identities. Wenger (1998) posits that by considering both power and belonging in relation to identity, communities of practice offer a complex perspective on how social surroundings shape a person's identity. He states that the ability to identify and negotiate different aspects of one's identity allows for a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between an individual and their social environment. But Wenger's framework has also been criticized for not adequately theorizing the issues of resistance and conflict (Clarke, 2008; Creese, 2005). Trent and Gao (2009) note that it does not sufficiently address how individuals address the issue of marginality and the resultant impact of such response on the identity construction of the participants. Fox (2000) adds that though Wenger presents a detailed account of communities of practice, the theory does not adequately address the issue of unequal power relations and its consequences on identity formation. Even the issue of boundaries seems tricky. Wenger (2010) argues that learning, as the end-result of practice, develops boundaries, not because members wish to exclude others but because sharing the history of learning ends up differentiating those who participated in practice from those who did not. Wenger (1998) notes that participants venture into new territories when they encounter new practices. The boundary of communities of practice manifests there as a lack of competence or subtleties of the enterprise as that community has defined it.

In this study, as I aim to explore the identity negotiation of secondary-level English language teachers in their learning communities and wider sociocultural environment, engagement, imagination and alignment provide analytical tools to analyse how imagination, engagement in communities of practice, and alignment with specific policies and activities. However, as Wenger's concept of imagination does not adequately discuss investing in imagined identity and its influence on identity negotiation, Norton's concept of investment also becomes pertinent to this research.

Norton's Concept of Investment

Norton's theory of investing borrows ideas primarily from Bourdieu's concept of *habitus*, *field* and *cultural capital* and Wenger's notion of *communities of practice*. Norton's approach to investing derives critical insights and complements Wenger's *communities of practice*. Moreover, the sociocultural notion of investment complements the psychological construct of motivation. Darvin and Norton (2018) define investment as the "commitment to the goals, practices, and identities that constitute the learning process and that are continually negotiated in different social relationships and structures of power" (p. 2). By critiquing the notion of motivation, Darvin and Norton (2018) argue that "learners can be highly motivated to learn a language but may not necessarily be invested in the language learning practices of a given classroom" (p. 2). The primary concern of investment is that instead of asking whether learners are motivated or not, it focuses on whether they are invested in language and literacy practices. Investment, as a theoretical tool, enables teachers and researchers to explore the situations where social interactions occur. Besides, it also helps to explore how social relations of power permits or restraints from opportunities for language learners to practice speaking, reading, writing, and listening.

According to Darvin and Norton (2018), "Investment became a means to examine how language learning expanded both symbolic and material resources, and how English language learners were able to access and participate in contexts usually dominated by native English speakers" (p. 2). Besides, the concept of investment perceives that language learners are situated in a complex social history with multiple desires. As language learners communicate with the target population, they continually modify their sense of who they are and how they connect to their social setting in addition to exchanging information with them. So, the investment in the target language is also the investment in their identity that constantly changes across time and space ((Norton, 2000, 2013; Norton Peirce, 1995).

Influence of Bourdieu on Investment

Inspired by Bourdieu's (1977, 1984, 1991) notion of *habitus*, *field,* and *cultural capital,* Norton developed the concept of investment to signal how relationships of language learners to the target language community are constructed socially and historically and learners' ambivalent desire to learn and practice the target language. When language learners invest in a target language, they do so with the expectation of acquiring a more comprehensive range of symbolic resources

(friendship, language, education) and material resources (capital, real estate, money), which is hitherto unattainable that will, in turn, increase their cultural capital and social power (Norton, 2008, 2013; Norton Peirce, 1995). According to Bourdieu and Passerson (1977), cultural capital refers to the knowledge, modes of thought, and credentials that characterizes different groups, communities, and classes. In some sociocultural settings, some types of cultural capital have a higher market value (currency) than others (Norton & Toohey, 2011; Silva, 2013). In order to have full access to participate in particular communities of practice, participants (learners) should have acquired appropriate cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1977), that is, educational resources and other assets deemed necessary to participate in specific communities of practice.

According to Bourdieu (1986), capital is the power that transcends the economic, cultural, and social spheres. He uses the term "economic capital" to describe money, assets, and real estate; "social capital" to describe relationships of power and influence; and "cultural capital" to describe knowledge, credentials, and appreciation for certain artistic forms. Darvin and Norton (2015) note that ideological structures influence the worth of different forms of capital. However, the value of this capital is continually negotiated and renegotiated in diverse fields or sites of struggle (Wenger, 2010). Bourdieu (1987) argues that once different types of capital are "perceived and recognized as legitimate" (p. 4), they take the form of symbolic capital. From this conceptualization, it becomes evident that capital is fluid and dynamic, subject to, but not essentially controlled by, the dominant ideologies of particular fields or groups (Darvin & Norton, 2015). Darvin and Norton (2015) argue that "a more fluid conception of capital that recognizes how its value shifts across spaces enable a greater understanding of how learners gain or lose power as they lead increasingly mobile lives" (p. 42). Furthermore, "As learners move fluidly across spaces, ideologies collude and compete, shaping learner identities and restructuring opportunities to listen, speak, read, and write, both on and offline" (Darvin & Norton, 2018, p. 4), during which the participants' economic, social, and cultural capital transforms across time and spaces.

Imagined Communities and Imagined Identities

Drawing on the concept of Anderson's (1991) imagined communities, Lave and Wenger's (1991) and Wenger's (1998) imagination, and Markus and Nurius's (1986) possible selves that deal with the relationship between motivation and

behaviour, Norton developed the concept of imagined communities and imagined identities with a focus on English language learning. Norton (2008) argues that "for many language learners, the community is one of the imaginations – a desired community that offers possibilities for an enhanced range of identity options in the future. To some extent, the community may also be a reconstruction of past communities and historically constituted relationships. In essence, an imagined community assumes an imagined identity, and a learner's investment in the target language must be understood within this context" (p. 4). For Wenger, imagination is both an individual as well as a social process. Wenger (1998) defined imagination as "a process of expanding our self by transcending our time and space and creating new images of the world and ourselves" (p. 176). Imagination connects the individual's experiences in different social contexts and her sense of place in that social context.

The concept of imagined community was borrowed and applied in second language acquisition by Norton (2001), who mainly focused on the association between imagined communities and imagined identities. Anderson (1991), for the first time, coined the term *imagined communities*. He defined nation-states as imagined communities because "the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion" (p. 6). Thus, people in their imagination develop a sense of belonging with fellow citizens across time and space whom they have not met even once. According to Norton (2013), in language learning, concentration on such imagined communities allows us to explore how language learners' affiliation with imagined communities affects their learning trajectories. Norton (2013) claims that "These imagined communities are no less real than the ones in which learners have daily engagement and might even have a stronger impact on their current actions and investment" (p. 8). An imagined community can be an aspired community for many language learners, providing them with opportunities for a wider range of future identity options (Norton, 2010; Norton & Gao, 2008). According to Norton and Gao (2008), "The community may also be, to some extent, a reconstruction of past communities and historically constituted relationships" (p. 114).

According to Norton (2011), imagined communities can be as diverse as those from public professionals to immediate teachers from English language classrooms. Language learners may be influenced by the images of the communities they aspire to join in future, which will have a larger influence on their current learning and

investment though they are not members or do not have an affiliation with such communities at present (Norton, 2001). Such communities can represent a learner's dream which she wants to join at a certain point in future (Kanno, 2003). Norton (2010) sums up, "an imagined community assumes an imagined identity and a learner's investment in the target language must be understood within this context" (p. 356).

Ideology, Structure, and Agency

Apart from the imagined community and imagined identity, ideology, structure, and agency are other crucial components of the construct of investment. Along with these components, the issue of discourse and power is implicitly drawn. According to Darvin and Norton (2015), ideologies refer to "dominant ways of thinking that organize and stabilize societies while simultaneously determining modes of inclusion and exclusion" (p. 72). Dominant ideologies in the form of common sense influence the choices people make, and the repeated actions influenced by such common sense turn into practices. Ideologies operate and are maintained through the exercise of power, hegemonic consent, and the repetition of practices (Darvin & Norton, 2018; Norton, 2015). In the context of language learning, ideologies privilege the English language, and in some contexts, even language policies formulated by the governments reproduce such ideologies (Darvin & Norton, 2018; Norton, 2015), resulting in marginalized local languages.

Ideology is a very significant construct to explore how power operates through discourse. Ideology "as a normative set of ideas" (Darvin & Norton, 2015, p. 43) is constructed and reconstructed by the symbolic and world-structuring power that imposes and inculcates ideologies for the construction of reality (Bourdieu, 1987). According to Darvin and Norton (2015), understanding how ideologies exercise power helps us understand power dynamics in social interactions and how these power structures permit or disallow participation in certain social fields where these events occur. In order to investigate the dynamics between social interactions and systemic patterns of control at micro, meso, and macro levels, the lens of ideology integrated within the concept of investment is used.

Finding the operation of ideologies is a challenging task. According to Darvin and Norton (2017), ideologies can influence people's thoughts and actions in ways that may not be immediately visible, and individuals may hold certain ideologies both knowingly and unknowingly. Darvin and Norton (2015) argue that ideologies can

shape an individual's habits and ways of thinking, making certain ideas and relationships appear normal and obvious. Such normative behaviour is achieved by structuring the habitus. Through habitus, an internalized system shaped by ideologies, people construct the meaning of the world and their relationships (Darvin & Norton, 2015). Therefore, examining the constructed and normative set of dispositions and convictions is critical. However, exercising reflexivity and exploring the operation of ideology is very challenging "as ideological mechanisms become increasingly invisible in the twenty-first century" (Darvin & Norton, 2015, p. 8).

Another crucial component that identity researchers need to understand is the issue of structure and agency. Darvin and Norton (2017) suggest that an individual's social background can influence their habits and ways of thinking (habitus), but also, individuals may have desires that may either align with or go against this disposition. Sometimes learners resist and question such hegemonic ideologies and exercise their agency to realize their existing and imagined identities by investing and divesting them from social as well as classroom practices. Darvin and Norton (2015) argue that by examining the larger societal and cultural factors, one can understand how ideologies shape an individual's dispositions, social position, and their ability to express themselves. They argue that ideologies can influence how individuals think and behave, impacting their opportunities and access to resources. However, the authors also recognize that individuals have agency and that they have the ability to make choices that can impact their learning experiences. Darvin and Norton suggest that individuals can invest in their learning in ways that allow them to acquire new knowledge, skills, and resources that can be used to challenge and resist the dominant practices and ways of thinking that are prevalent in different fields, rather than simply reproducing the status quo. Norton and Toohey (2011) argue that "identity researchers must account for not only how structural conditions and social practices place individuals, but also how individuals struggle to situate themselves in the contexts in which they find themselves" (p. 427). Darvin and Norton (2015) claim that identity issues have been influenced by the issues of structure and agency that need to be investigated by identity researchers in this complex, fluid, and diverse world.

Imagination has enormous potential to reconstruct learners' identities. Darvin and Norton (2015) maintain that "Imagination allows learners to re-envision how things are as how they want them to be" (p. 46). In other words, language learners' current and desired membership in the projected future in an imagined community

influences their agency, affecting the learning trajectories, motivation, investment, and resistance during English language learning (Pavlenko & Norton, 2007). Darvin and Norton (2015) argue that individuals desire to belong to a specific group or community and to identify with a particular identity. This desire can be used to gain advantages or to resist certain positions. By recognizing that they can make choices and assert their identities, individuals can negotiate the symbolic value or prestige that comes with specific identities, change their relationships with power, and challenge normative ways of thinking. By doing so, individuals can claim the right to express themselves and to be heard.

Concluding Thoughts on Investing

As a theoretical construct, investing presents the intersection between ideology, capital, and identity. Ideology as a structuring structure shapes the dispositions of learners and teachers. However, learners and teachers invest themselves in their imagined identities in future, exercising their agency to gain symbolic and material resources and power. So, investing should be understood as a complex intersection between ideology, capital, and identity. The intricate relationship between access to interaction in the sociocultural environment and the material resources and individual effort to gain such resources is another crucial factor influencing individuals and social structures. Hence, the concept of power and accessibility is another vital component of investment.

Chapter Summary

In conclusion, language teacher identity is mainly studied from developmental psychology, sociocultural, and post-structural perspectives. However, language teacher identity has mainly been studied from sociocultural and post-structural perspectives lately. Identity-in-practice and identity-in-discourse are the two main approaches to defining and studying identity, and I adopt both approaches. I especially employ Wenger's communities of practice and Norton's investing as theoretical referents that focus on social, cultural, historical, and contextual influences on the identity construction of English language teachers from Nepal. As I explore the trajectory of identity negotiation of English language teachers investigating their life history, focusing on their temporal, social, and contextual details, communities of practice of Wenger and the concept of investing by Norton adequately unpack how beliefs, emotion, imagined identity and investing, and the influence of sociocultural

and ideological factors contribute to identity negotiation of English language teachers from Nepal.

CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, I present the paradigmatic framework of the research, research methodology, tools that I adopt to co-construct stories of my participants, quality standards, and ethical considerations. I contextualize the research method by quoting Leslie Marmon Silko's lines from her seminal novel *Ceremony*. First, I briefly discuss the multiparadigmatic framework of the research and its nuances and why I conducted the study under this paradigm. Then, I present the philosophical considerations I uphold, particularly ontology, epistemology, and axiology. Research philosophy is followed by a narrative inquiry as a research design and tools and techniques I employ to collect stories. Finally, the quality standards I have maintained and the ethical concerns I have acknowledged during my research are presented. In addition, the rationale behind selecting the method and its interrelation with the philosophical, epistemological, and axiological assumptions is presented in this chapter.

Philosophical Consideration

Research philosophy provides a broader worldview of the research and its components: ontology, epistemology, axiology, and methodology. Kim (2016) notes that philosophy does not reflect the preexisting truth; instead, like art, it brings truth into being. In this section, I present the epistemological process that my participants and I undergo while trying to understand and theorize the lived experience of my research participants. I also present the truth value of my findings in the spectrum of objectivism and subjectivism and how values and assumptions my participants and I hold influence this epistemic journey. Additionally, I am concerned with how these considerations impact my methodology and how they shape my overall research philosophy. Denzin and Lincoln (2011) term these beliefs an "interpretive framework" or a "paradigm" (p. 13) that informs the broader picture of how a researcher perceives and analyzes the research phenomena. In this section, I present my ontological, epistemological, and axiological assumptions and the research paradigm, the multiparadigmatic framework that guided my research.

Ontology

Ontology is concerned with the nature of reality. Lincoln (1992), separating traditional qualitative methods from the constructivist approach to research, notes that

"realities are constructed entities" (p. 379), stressing the subjective nature of its epistemology. Morgan and Smircich (1980), being particular in the context of social science and education, present "reality as a social construction" (p. 492). As participants and I co-constructed the lived reality of the participants, reality became a discursive construction presented through narratives. Herman and Vervaeck (2005) argue that "narrative never provides a perfect copy of the reality constituting its subject" (p. 14). Given ideas on ontology means that reality is relative, multiple, and unfinished, which is in the process of construction and reconstruction. As Herman and Vervaeck (2005) noted, the construction of the meaning of experiences of English language teachers is subjective, interpretive, multiple, and value-laden. The interpretive paradigm becomes pertinent to this study because of this ontological value and the phenomenon's nature. The subjectivist epistemology I hold makes the interpretive paradigm relevant to this research. Besides, the opportunities for self-reflection and revelation of misguided assumptions empowered us by enabling us to get rid of such faulty assumptions through self-critiquing. For instance, during our conversation, Kumari realized and admitted that her approach to dealing with students was inappropriate, and there are many such instances. Story generation and interpretation are achieved through multiple interactions and cognitive engagement with participants (Nguyen, 2019). The interpretive knowledge on the trajectory of identity negotiation of English language teachers from Nepal is produced through sustained interaction, getting engrossed with the participants (Taylor & Medina, 2011). Hence, the study's findings are the co-construction of the meaning of participants' experiences in the research.

Epistemology

Epistemology relates to the process of knowing or how knowledge is constructed. This research is primarily grounded on the epistemological assumption that people understand and interpret experiences through the means of stories. Like many research scholars, I assumed that exploring and analysing English language teachers' narratives would enable me to grasp their lived experiences (Bruner, 1987; Connelly & Clandinin, 2005). Morgan and Smircich (1980) represent "man as a social constructor, the symbol creator" (p. 492), which means knowledge and realities are constructed through the interaction of participants in a particular sociocultural context that is represented through language.

Stories of participants' lived experiences are created and recreated through interviews and informal conversations and then negotiated during the interpretation process; because of that, I assume that the final report of the research does not necessarily reflect the preexisting reality. Participants first interpret and make sense of their experiences during story development then those interpreted experiences are further analyzed and co-constructed by participants and me as the interlocutor (Savin-Baden & Niekerk, 2007). As I immersed myself in the participants' life as a researcher during the story generation and interpretation process, the co-constructed knowledge about the participants' experiences is value-laden, interpretive, and relative. Denzin (1997) notes that narrative writing becomes complex because of the "real" and its representation of text, the influence of text and the author, the textual representation of stories, and the intentional meanings of the subjects or participants. The stories and the interpretation of the stories are co-constructed in sustained interaction with the participants.

Axiology

Axiology relates to the values that we hold that have a direct influence on research. Hence, bringing forth the values that shape my research is pertinent. In qualitative research, as the knowledge that I derived by getting immersed with the participants is value-laden, it is relevant to bring forth the values I uphold as a researcher. As a researcher, I have provided due respect for the participants' privacy. In addition, I have given due consideration to goodwill and no harm as a researcher (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). Furthermore, participants carried their own beliefs and values as teachers and individuals that are given due respect. Besides, I am engrossed in sociocultural values, being born and raised in a brahmin family like my participants, which influenced the interpretation of the stories. Hence, the process and findings of the research are value-laden.

However, while exploring the academic journey of research participants and myself, we underwent a lot of reflection and self-reflection. While reflecting on past experiences and current practices and their meanings, there were opportunities for self-critiquing and getting rid of distorted assumptions and hegemonic ideologies. Hence, though the research does not directly seek to address the issues of injustice through social transformation, participants and I were concerned with whose interests were being served by the existing values, assumptions, social relations, policies, and practices (Taylor & Medina, 2011). In educational research, the critical paradigm is

primarily concerned with critiquing existing beliefs and values for positive change; hence, the critical paradigm is also considered a transformative paradigm. The critical paradigm becomes relevant as I reflect upon my beliefs and values relating to education and try to empower and transform myself. Further, reflection on life narratives bears the potential for participants' transformation.

Research Method: Narrative Inquiry

Narrative inquiry is an emerging research method in teacher education in general and English language teacher education in particular. Mainly narrative inquiry predominates the English language teachers' identity research. As I aim to explore educational experience as lived to find out the identity negotiation of English language teachers, narrative inquiry is an appropriate method. In this section, I discuss narrative inquiry as a research method, the relevance of narrative inquiry in identity research, participant selection, story generation approach, interpretation of the stories, and report writing.

Relevance of Narrative Inquiry

Highlighting the importance of stories in human life, Silko (2006) mentions: "You don't have anything if you don't have stories" in her widely acknowledged novel *Ceremony*. Human beings are storytelling creatures who explain their and others' doings through narratives of past, present and imagined future experiences. According to Kramp (2004), stories "assist humans to make life experiences meaningful. Stories preserve our memories, prompt our reflections, connect us to our past and present, and assist us to envision our future" (p. 107). Barkhuizen (2016b) argues that "Experiences become narratives when we tell them to an audience, and narratives become part of narrative inquiry when they are examined for research purposes or generated to report the findings of an inquiry" (p. 4). According to Webster and Mertova (2007), narratives allow teachers and researchers to present experiences holistically with their complex situatedness. Narrative inquiry is concerned with analyzing, interpreting, critiquing, and presenting stories we live by, be it individual storied life or myths surrounding us. As noted by Connelly and Clandinin (1990), in education, narrative inquiry brings "educational experience as lived" (p. 3). As people live storied lives and narrate the stories of such lives, the primary responsibility of the researcher in narrative inquiry is to present such lived experiences with their meaning, during which even the researcher becomes part of the

meaning-making process where they construct and reconstruct a shared narrative through inquiry (Barkhuizen et al., 2014; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990).

Narratives occur in specific sociocultural contexts with three main commonplaces: temporality, sociality, and place, constituting the concept of narrative inquiry. These commonplaces, always in the process of becoming or transitioning, distinguish narrative inquiry from other methodologies (Clandinin & Huber, 2010; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Clandinin et al., 2007). Contextual factors embedded in participants' narratives make narrative data rich and complex. As Connelly and Clandinin (1990) noted, data collection methods ranging from field notes of the shared experience to in-depth interviews, journals, and other sources make it rich. The methods of data collection and the richness of data that comes from the storied life of participants make it an appropriate research process in education. In addition, different academic praxis that narrative inquiry brings forth can serve as a model for academics.

Narrative Inquiry and Teacher Identity

Barkhuizen (2016b) notes that "Identities are constructed within social relationships between people" (p. 6), and their beliefs, assumptions, expectations, and attitudes in the communities of practice, be it local or international, connected through digital tools influence and shape their identity. Apart from these, social structures of different forms, such as institutions, cultural practices, law, and larger policies, influence us. In the educational context, various micro, meso and macro contexts, such as the working environment in the school, syllabus, school culture, classroom practices, academic policies, national curriculum, and language policy, influence the identity negotiation of English language teachers. However, teachers can also exercise their agency. Therefore, there is not just a one-way influence of social structures upon teachers; teachers can also discursively influence and reconstruct social structures through storytelling. Barkhuizen (2016b) argues that "Stories enable us to represent our experiences including our identities, but they also, in the telling, re-shape those experiences and identities" (p. 6). This constructivist, sociocultural and post-structural notion of identity formation, as opposed to essentializing tendency, is appropriate to my research. Therefore, I adopt narrative inquiry to explore how English language teachers construct identities through storytelling and social interaction.

Specific to English language teaching and learning, teachers engage in and spend most of their time in activities inside and outside the learning community and

society. Despite its limitations, Barkhuizen et al. (2014) argue that narrative inquiry is the only method that provides access to language teaching and learning as lived experiences over a prolonged period and in diverse contexts and settings. Because of this, teacher identity is a widely discussed theme in narrative inquiry research of English language teaching and learning. Block (2002) asserts that "prolonged contact with an L2 and a new and different cultural setting causes irreversible destabilization of the individual's sense of self" (p. 2). As narrative inquiry is employed to explore the life stories/histories of English language teachers in different contexts and settings to identify the being and becoming of English language teachers, narrative inquiry is appropriate for this research. Because of this, the third wave of sociolinguistic narrative research has primarily focused on narrative and identity (Vásquez, 2011). According to Bamberg (2006), this new turn on narrative research considers narrative a social practice with growing analytic attention bestowed to contexts in which narratives occur. This kind of narrative research focuses on how language learners or teachers construct their identity across time and contexts by employing the life history/story approach of narrative generation (Coffey & Street, 2008). So, I would also like to take the life stories of English language teachers from Nepal to explore the complexity of identity negotiation.

Participants

Most often, narrative inquiry involves a minimal number of research participants (Riessman, 1993), sometimes just one, primarily in the case of the life history approach, with an in-depth and prolonged period of story generation (Polkinghorne, 1995). In life history approach of narrative inquiry, instead of number, prolonged engagement is crucial. However, in this research study, four secondary-level English language teachers from public schools in Kathmandu Valley, Nepal, having at least seven to ten years of teaching experience, are purposively selected as research participants. I have chosen research participants purposively based on the specifically defined criteria: teachers having at least one education degree, either Master of Education (M.Ed.) or Master of Philosophy (MPhil), currently teaching secondary-level students in public schools in Nepal and having at least seven to 10 years of teaching experience. However, before deciding on the four participants who met my criteria, I had a primary level of conversation with seven participants. Out of those seven participants, four participants who best fit the selected criteria were selected. Experienced teachers are purposively selected as research participants as

they achieve a certain level of maturity, gain ample experience, and attain a certain level of identity construction during this stage.

Along with teachers' stories, I have also included my lived experiences wherever relevant. In the brief description of the participants, they are described with specific attributes like "disciplinarian," "caring teacher," and others, which is done solely based on the interpretation of their stories. Table 1 presents a glimpse of each participant at a glance, followed by a description of the participants' educational background, family environment and educational qualifications and experiences.

Table 1

A brief overview of the participants

S. N.	Participants	Teaching experience	Gender	Contextual Background
1.	Kumari	Ten years	Female	Born and brought up in a culturally diverse social context in the hilly eastern part of Nepal
2.	Nita	Ten years	Female	Born and brought up in an upper-middle-class family on the outskirt of Kathmandu Valley
3.	Binesh	thirteen years	Male	Born and brought up in a middle-class family in the hilly eastern part of Nepal
4.	Surya	Ten years	Male	Born and brought up in a family dependent on agriculture in a hilly midwestern part of Nepal

Kumari: A Disciplinarian

Kumari currently works as a secondary-level English language teacher in a public school in Kathmandu Valley in a tenure-track position. She has more than ten years of English language teaching experience at the secondary level. Kumari started her teaching career at a private school in the Valley. Later, she was selected as a secondary-level English language teacher through Teacher Service Commission (TSC) examination. Her stories revealed that she is a strong disciplinarian. During her basic level of education, Kumari was educated in a very strict discipline that influenced her current behaviours. Like her teacher, she is also a firm disciplinarian.

Kumari was born and raised in a middle-class family in the hilly eastern region of Nepal. She was born in a hospital in eastern Nepal as a premature baby. She was born in seven months, so her parents struggled greatly for her survival. After completing pre-schooling at home, Kumari started her basic level of education at the age of four in a public school near her house. However, she had to climb a hill for almost an hour to reach the school during secondary education. Though her parents were not highly educated, they knew the importance of education. Mainly her father believed that girls should be educated and be independent. Hence, her father always encouraged her to study well. Kumari used to bag the second position during her school education, proving that her education foundation was solid. After completing her School Leaving Certificate (SLC), Kumari went to Kathmandu Valley and studied there. She is a passionate teacher and teacher educator.

Nita: A Caring Teacher

Nita works as a tenure-track secondary-level English language teacher in a public school in Kathmandu Valley. She has been working for more than ten years at the secondary level. Nita started her career at a private school in Kathmandu Valley. Later, she switched to public school, getting selected through the TSC examination. Nita's lived reality revealed that she is a loving and caring teacher. Nita counsels and motivates her students to better performance. Nita was born and raised in an upper-middle-class joint family on the outskirt of Kathmandu Valley.

Nita completed her schooling at different schools situated in the Valley. As a member of an upper-middle-class family with a sound economic base, she got an opportunity to study in private schools in the Valley, which developed a solid foundation in her English. Her highly educated family background provided her with an excellent learning environment. Nita's grandfather and father are government employees, whereas her mother is a housewife. Her family supported her a lot in her education. Even her mother used to visit the school regularly and take updates on her performance. Nita was blessed with an excellent learning environment at home.

Binesh: A Workaholic

Binesh works as a tenure-track secondary-level English language teacher at a public school in Kathmandu Valley. He has been engaged in language teaching for more than thirteen years. Before getting selected as a secondary-level English teacher through the TSC examination, Binesh taught at primary, secondary, and higher education levels. Binesh started his career as a secondary-level English language

teacher at a public school in his village, where he completed his SLC. Binesh was born and raised in a rural village in the eastern hills of Nepal. Untouched by any modern infrastructure, the village was situated within 14 to 16 hours of walking distance from district headquarters. Binesh completed his secondary education at a public school in the village. The demography of the village was composed of the Chhetri community, a privilege ethnic group in the context of Nepal. He was brought up in a highly educated family. His grandfather contributed a lot to establishing the school from where he completed his SLC. His father used to work as a Sanskrit teacher in the same school. His father and mother always encouraged and sometimes pressured him for education. Binesh was brought up in an excellent learning environment.

Surya: A Motivator

Currently, Surya works as a tenure track secondary-level English language teacher in a public school in Kathmandu Valley. He has been teaching for more than ten years at the secondary level. Surya has completed his M.Ed. in English and Bachelor of Law (LLB) with first division from a reputed university in Nepal. Before getting selected for tenure-track secondary-level English language teacher in a public school in the Valley, Surya taught at different private schools for different levels. Surya was born and raised in a middle-class family in a rural village in the midwestern hills of Nepal. He currently resides in Kathmandu Valley. He belongs to a family with agricultural background with seven siblings. Though his parents were not highly educated, they knew the importance of education. Therefore, family members always motivated him to study. The motivating but resource-scarce environment of his education influenced him a lot. Surya loves motivating and counselling students for their bright future. He is a good motivator.

Story Generation and Data Collection

These four participants' lived stories were developed by conducting in-depth interviews (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Mishler, 1986) and informal conversations to explore the storied life of these teachers, which are most common in language teaching and learning research (Barkhuizen et al., 2014). First, I collected my participants' stories through informal conversation to elicit accounts of the participants' different life episodes, such as childhood, basic education, secondary education, university education, and teaching experience, as described in Annex I. Then, open-ended questions were asked to elicit stories during story generation, as

stated by Hollway and Jefferson (2000). For further details, participants were requested to include incidents as examples. After asking the major pre-set questions (Richards, 2003) as depicted in the Appendix, follow-up probing questions relating to specific incidents were asked to elicit further details about the incident. During the interview process, as noted by Savin-Baden and Niekerk (2007), I patiently listened to the participants' stories and actively participated in the story generation acknowledging the mutual co-constructed nature of the stories (Sfard & Prusak, 2005). As experiences are recorded and shared in the form of stories, interviews and informal conversations remain the most appropriate tools to elicit participants' experiences.

While conversing, I was aware not to distract participants from the flow of their story telling. However, sometimes I asked questions in between to dig out more essential details and examples of some of the crucial incidents. Thus, the participants and I co-constructed the life stories (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009) of the learning experiences of these four English language teachers. I recorded the interview and informal conversation by taking consent from the participants. And even those oral consents were recorded. After that, I transcribed and translated those data for the further process of interpretation and meaning-making.

Interpretation and Meaning Making

Everything we develop through the interaction between participants and interlocutors in narrative inquiry cannot be considered analyzable stories. Toolan's (1988) minimalist definition of a story as "a perceived sequence of nonrandomly connected events" (p. 7) and Labov's (2006) definition of the temporally ordered sequence of two clauses are drawn while selecting stories for analysis. Using tales as research data or as a tool for data analysis and disseminating the results, as Barkhuizen (2014) stated, narrative inquiry combines storytelling with research. Concerning the data analysis, Polkinghorne (1995) clearly shows the distinction between the analysis of narratives and narrative analysis. The first refers to a meaning-making process where narratives are coded, categorized, thematized, and presented in research reports. In contrast, narrative analysis employs a narrative framework to analyze data that consists of events, stories, observation notes, and reflections and present it as a coherent story.

Barkhuizen (2011) claims that thematic approaches (analysis of narrative) have been predominantly employed in TESOL in the past and even at present because

the paradigmatic analysis is also considered an academically valid method. However, his concept of narrative knowledging, where he includes the whole process from narrative generation, transcribing, and translating to the analysis of stories and final appreciation by the readers as the narrative knowledging process, blurs this traditional dichotomy. Even Menard-Warwick (2011), in their five-step process of narrative analysis, consider the thematic analysis as the first stage of narrative analysis, which somehow dismantles this rigid dichotomy.

The way Barkhuizen (2011) presents the concept of narrative knowledging, I consider the narrative analysis process from the stage of generating the story, transcribing, translating, coding the data, and presenting the themes in the narrative report. However, I have employed Saldana's (2016) first-cycle and second-cycle coding processes to interpret the transcripts. In the first cycle coding process, I have mainly used descriptive, in vivo, affective, and value coding, which is relevant to coding the identity categories in my research questions. During the first coding cycle, each participant's transcript is placed in a separate table and coded using the selected coding approach (see sample coding sheet in Appendix). During the process, anecdotes that are relevant to research questions were highlighted. Then codes and highlighted anecdotes from all the participants relevant to each research question were categorized that thematized in the second-cycle coding process. These categories and themes were then connected with findings in the previous studies and theoretical categories. Afterwards, the summaries of themes accompanied by excerpts from the transcripts (McAlpine, 2016) were presented in the report in logical sequence in narrative form. Annex III and IV exemplify the coding and categorizing process.

Quality Standards

The qualitative research approach has its quality standards, unlike the quantitative approach, which focuses on validity and reliability. In the qualitative approach, we use quality standards like credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, verisimilitude, and transparency. In narrative research, quality standard is mainly concerned with research being grounded and well supported by the narratives of the participants (Webster & Mertova, 2007). Research situation of a qualitative approach, the researcher being part of the researched world, the collection of already interpreted data, the researcher as a research tool, and the focus on the process than the outcome in research significantly affect quality standards (Cohen et al., 2018). Cohen et al. (2018) note that the basis of qualitative research lies in

maintaining quality is minimizing biases while framing the interview questions and then in different stages of the research as a researcher.

Some factors contribute to quality and worth in qualitative research. For example, Tracy (2020) stressed selecting a worthy topic that has long been overlooked or misunderstood, and the study or investigation of the issue also potentially promotes transformation. Further, rigour is established by using enough time and effort in the field, employing an appropriate interview procedure, and utilizing other tools efficiently. As stated by Tracy, aspects like a worthy topic, rigour, credibility, ethical research practice and sincerity contribute to ensuring quality in research. However, in narrative inquiry, following quality standards remains the most pertinent.

Commonplaces: Temporality, Sociality, and Place

Even though participants develop stories while drawing meaning from their experiences, they are not individual productions in narrative research. Rather social, cultural, and historical contexts and the relationship between the narrator and the interlocutor (Barkhuizen, 2011; Pavlenko, 2007) influence narrative production. In narrative research, stories are not just collected; instead, the interlocutor actively participates in their construction (Riessman, 2008). During narrative construction, as noted by Connelly and Clandinin (2006), researchers must think narratively, be it during the storying or re-storying process, paying careful attention to commonplaces of narrative inquiry. Restorying the stories should carefully unfold people, places, and things; personal and social aspects of researchers and the participants; and the places in temporal sequence. As a researcher, I have embraced the commonplaces of temporality, sociality, and place as the guiding principle during the construction and reconstruction of the narratives.

Transferability

Transferability is one of the significant quality standards of qualitative research that refers to the quality of research findings to be transferred from one study context to the next or the appropriateness of findings to be used to predict another similar context (Tracy, 2020). In other words, the results of the issues under investigation have applicability in another setting (Webster & Mertova, 2007). Thus, unlike generalizability, transferability refers to the possibility of using research findings in other contexts. The rigorous process I applied while conducting research

has maintained the quality standard of transferability. The findings are applicable to different similar contexts, too.

Transparency

As a quality standard in research, transparency relates to sincerity, honesty, and openness of the methodologies and approaches used. As Tracy (2020) noted, the researcher should clearly describe how the research was carried out, including the problems faced during the process and how those hindrances were overcome. As a researcher, I have invested utmost effort to be transparent about methods, tools, methodologies applied, any problems faced during the research, and the strategies used to address those issues. During the research process, I changed the research topic and questions that I clearly stated in the reflection section.

Verisimilitude

The findings or conclusions of narrative research do not possess the quality of certainty; instead, they bear plausibility. And here, plausibility, as noted by Webster and Mertova (2007), concerns the research being well supported by data, making it more authentic and closer to reality. Barkhuizen et al. (2014) also stress that arguments establish the truth with the procedures of creating formal and empirical proofs. Further authenticity is materialized when the researcher shows that the story is told honestly and thoughtfully. Likewise, when readers' experience echoes with the research report or the report provides new insight, such qualities help establish the quality of verisimilitude in narrative research. As a researcher I have tried to support the argument by the narratives of the participants and as far as possible maximum space for the participants voice is given so as to maintain the quality of verisimilitude.

Pedagogical Thoughtfulness

In every teaching-learning activity and educational research work, the primary concern is maximising students learning. And teachers and researchers are involved in the reflective activity to grow, change, and deepen their practices. Further, as a researcher, I will maintain interpretative intelligence, practical moral intuitiveness, sensitivity, and care for the participants (Manen, 2008). All these values are strictly maintained. I concentrated on my ways of teaching-learning in the past and the present while interpreting participants' pedagogical activities. Students remained at the centre during the whole process of research. The pedagogical implication always remained the guiding principle during the research journey. In the final section of the study, I have presented the implications of the research in curriculum development,

teacher development, and pedagogical approaches, among others. During the whole process, pedagogical thoughtfulness has remained one of the guiding principles of the study.

Reflexivity

Kim (2016) defines reflexivity as the process of involving the researchers' critical reflection relating to the research process, including the factors influencing the research planning and the findings and the role the researcher played during the research process. So, reflexivity enhances the quality and validity of the research, acknowledging the limitations of the method and knowledge produced. Foley (2002) explains four different types of reflexivity, such as "confessional, theoretical, textual, and deconstructive" (p. 473) but lacks an ethical one. Therefore, Guillemin and Gillam (2004) proposed ethical reflexivity as "a helpful conceptual tool for understanding the nature of ethics in qualitative research and how ethical research practice can be achieved" (p. 263). In this research, I have also made explicit the ethical dillemmas I underwent and how I handled such ethical dilemmas through the reflexive process.

<div align="center">

Ethical Consideration

</div>

Ethics concerns the issues of moral conduct during the research process; in other words, ethics relates to values that researchers should uphold during the research process. "Narrative researchers elicit, co-construct, interpret, and, in their telling, represent participants' account of lived and imagined personal experiences. These practices come with complex ethical, ideological, and emotional responsibilities" (Barkhuizen, 2011, p. 339). As I immersed with the participants during the sustained process of story generation, I came across the participants' very intimate personal and emotional realms. As a researcher reporting their emotional and private experiences with anonymity was a challenge that I have accomplished by acknowledging ethical practice and representing those incidents, ensuring anonymity. As a narrative inquirer, I have entered "into the areas so private, personal, and intimate that they are rarely – if ever – breached in the study of SLA" (Pavlenko, 2001, p. 167). Therefore, the ethical issues pertinent during qualitative research range from permission, confidentiality, transparency, ownership, and data control.

Additionally, using gender, race, colour, and (dis)ability-neutral language and maintaining humility, anonymity, and privacy, among others, is essential (Cohen et al., 2018; Tracy, 2020). However, contextual factors like social, institutional, and

cultural values may also influence ethical issues (Cohen et al., 2018). Being respectful, humble, empathetic, and profoundly humane, acknowledging differences caused by different sociocultural upbringings, were treated cautiously with due respect. Following strategies I employed during the research process helped me maintain ethical standards as a qualitative researcher.

Informed Consent

It is essential to take consent from the participants and inform them in advance of the process, purpose, and possible outcome of the research and its further implication (Tracy, 2020). Hence, I informed the participants of my research areas, their voluntary participation, and the freedom to withdraw from the research process anytime they were disinterested. I also prepared a written consent form with all the relevant research information and made participants sign it. I also clearly documented in the consent form the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants and the personal and professional issues to assure them of ethical practices.

Privacy

As a narrative inquirer, I intimately worked with my participants during the story construction and interpretation of the stories. Because of this, there was a maximum possibility of invading participants' privacy. So, I tread consciously and cautiously during the story development, interpretation of the stories, and finally, during the production of the research report and its dissemination (Cohen et al., 2018). As (Tracy, 2020) noted, some practical approaches, such as assigning pseudonyms to participants, keeping data in password-protected mode, and deleting data safely after research completion, are strictly maintained. During the interview process, I cautiously took the interview, not venturing into the entirely private realms of the participants.

Confidentiality and Anonymity

A significant factor in maintaining participants' right to privacy is confidentiality, which means not disclosing information relating to participants. During the interview, participants revealed very serious personal, professional, and relational issues that are kept confidential. Besides, I have maintained the anonymity of the participants assigning pseudo names in the research report (Cohen et al., 2018). Information related to the geographical location of the participants and institutions they worked in is cautiously handled in the description hiding their identity. Thus, participants' right to privacy is maintained through confidentiality and anonymity.

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented a broader research worldview or paradigmatic standpoint that influenced my research process. The interpretive paradigm I uphold is influenced by the nature of the phenomena I investigated. As participants' narratives of their lived experiences were interpreted and reinterpreted during the research process, interpretivism became relevant to this research study. That also becomes compatible with my ontological standpoint of truth as relative, subjective, multiple, and unfinished, and the epistemological assumption of the co-constructed nature of reality constructed in the mutual interaction of researcher and participants in particular sociocultural and historical contexts. In addition, as I tried to unfold the ideological issues and the operation of power through discourse, the critical paradigm became relevant. The ontological and epistemological standpoints and the narrative research method I employed correlate with my approach to studying teacher professional identity from sociocultural and poststructural perspectives.

CHAPTER V

BELIEFS, EMOTIONS, AND IDENTITIES

This chapter answers the first research question concerning how beliefs and emotions influence the identity construction of secondary-level English language teachers from Nepal, mainly how the sociocultural environment they are disposed to influence their beliefs and how such beliefs ultimately influence their behaviour and identity construction. Besides beliefs, the chapter also discusses teachers' emotional experiences and the influence of emotion on identity negotiation. The chapter also presents the relationship between beliefs and emotions and their resultant impact on the identity construction of English language teachers.

Teachers' Beliefs and Identities

Beliefs primarily concern what teachers consider to be true in the context of English language teaching. When we look at the language teaching discourse, we find that significant beliefs that influence teaching-learning and identity construction of English language teachers relate to native/nonnative speakerism. Primarily, English language teachers believe they should have fluency and a near-native tone. Teachers internalize native and non-native discourse that privileges native speakers and feel vulnerable as English language teachers, which heavily influences their identity construction. Teachers also hold other beliefs relating to an ideal teacher, the purpose of education, students' assessment, the role of teachers, the nature of the curriculum, and many others that directly affect their behaviour. Kumari, for instance, believed that the foundation of English should be made from the basic level. This belief motivated her to take the class in grade three, utilizing local resources available despite her appointment as a secondary-level English language teacher. Through her sincere effort, she was able to transform students' language skills. As teachers' beliefs influence their behaviour, pedagogical approaches, and day-to-day decision-making, paying careful attention to their beliefs is pertinent. Li (2020), through his exploration of the lived narratives of two Chinese English language teachers, revealed that belief in native non-native speakerism heavily influenced their behaviour and their level of confidence and, thereby, identity construction.

The findings of Li (2020) correlate with Bourdieu's notion of habitus. Hence, drawing Bourdieu's concept of habitus at this juncture would be appropriate as it

discusses "how the outer social world and inner self shape each other (Maton, 2008). Referring to Bourdieu, Maton (2008) argues that habitus is the property of social actors, individuals, groups, or institutions, consisting of structured and structuring structures. Habitus is "structured by one's past and present circumstances such as family upbringing and educational experience. It is structuring in that one's habitus helps to shape one's present and future practices"(Maton, 2008, p. 51). Habitus is formed by existing conditions and generated by practices, beliefs, perceptions, and feelings according to its structure. From this, it becomes evident that disposition to particular communities of practice and environment influences our thoughts, beliefs and habits; meanwhile, habitus also impacts the field or environment. Thus, individual and social constitute each other.

Teaching-Learning Environment and Teachers' Beliefs

Analysis of the narratives of English language teachers revealed that their disposition to specific environments, whether during schooling, teacher education, or practicum, influenced teachers' beliefs. In contrast, beliefs also influenced the teaching-learning environment and the pedagogical approaches that English language teachers adopted. Participants' narratives revealed the two-way influence of the teaching-learning environment and beliefs, as Maton (2008) argued. Kumari, for instance, shared her lived reality about how her disposition to a strict teaching-learning environment in a public school shaped her belief in dealing with students and discipline. She believes students should be dealt with according to their nurturing environment at home. She believes that as students in public school do not come from an excellent nurturing environment, they should be treated accordingly. When I asked Kumari how she spends her usual day in school, she replied:

> *I do everything a teacher needs to do, including what to say (laughter). I do counselling, record keeping, reward students, and sometimes punish them. I'm not against giving punishment to students. Because when I balance punishment and reward, a child develops accordingly. As a teacher, I have realized that in public schools, we don't get such students who can be guided without punishment. We can not keep our students on track only through counselling. We don't have that level of students. Because some students are picked up from the street to the classroom, If we do not deal with students according to their nurturing environment at their home, we cannot keep them on track and enhance their learning.*

Kumari believes that students should be treated according to their nurturing environment, without which maintaining students' discipline and enhancing their learning is impossible. And this conviction emerged out of her long teaching experience in different public schools. These days she treats her students as per her conviction utilizing both punishment and reward according to the situation. However, she did not reveal whether she was talking about corporeal punishment or what. Kumari also shared another incident about how her disposition to specific environments influenced her beliefs. While teaching at a private school in Kathmandu Valley during the formative phase of her career, she had an opportunity to participate in a training program. In the training program, she met teachers and trainers who could speak English fluently with a good accent. She shared the conviction she developed after participating in the training program that "*improving English is also about improving speaking in English.*" So, after that, she started investing in improving her communication skills, mainly speaking. These lived realities of Kumari revealed how disposition to certain kinds of learning environments influences teachers' beliefs and behaviours.

Surya's lived reality also reaffirmed the learning environment's influence on beliefs. While studying at the primary level in his village, Surya was taught by a teacher who always motivated students to learn through rewards and encouragement. Surya's teacher never said you couldn't do to his students; instead, he always encouraged them, saying, "We Can" [emphasis added]. This kind of learning environment and the life story of the primary teacher always positively motivated him with the belief that anything is possible in life. He developed a positive outlook towards life. He shared:

> *Another thing is that we can achieve anything in life. He has taught us that "We Can" [emphasis added]. He never said this is difficult, and it cannot be done, or something like that. Despite the lack of foundational infrastructure, he developed one school in his initiation. He collected 50/60 students and started primary school. He made us believe from his life experiences that there is opportunity in every problem/difficulty.*

That teacher had turned almost impossible things into reality through his initiation. Running one school on personal initiative without proper infrastructure was a challenging task. He accomplished that. His positive dealing with students with rewards and inspirational lived reality influenced Surya. He developed a positive

outlook and beliefs towards life. So, when Surya deals with his students at present, he always tries to inspire and motivate them. He never discourages students. He is a good motivator cum English language teacher.

Similarly, Nita also shared how the teaching-learning environment influenced teachers' beliefs. Nita claimed that before she started teaching in a public school in Kathmandu Valley, she believed that public school teachers were not serious enough about improving the student's performance. Because of the negligence of teachers and administration, the performance of the public school is deteriorating. But after joining a public school and having a better idea about the environment, her perception and belief about teaching-learning changed. She claimed:

> *If students do not perform well, we blame teachers. Even the public blame teachers for not teaching well. That's outsiders' belief, a surface understanding. You know things better when you go into the field and understand them in detail. While looking from the outside, I had a similar belief that teachers don't teach well in public schools because of which quality of the public school is deteriorating. I'm not saying this because I'm working in a public school, nor I'm defending myself; this is what I felt and realized after joining a government school.*

This anecdote justifies how Nita's initial beliefs relating to teaching-learning, the quality of public schools, and teachers have changed after joining a public school and understanding its environment better. In addition, her perception of students in public schools has changed. After entering a public school in Kathmandu Valley, she realized that the major challenge of public schools is the quality of students, not teachers. Most public school students' demography comprises child labourers, household workers, and orphans. Even within a class, there is diversity in terms of age; because of that, aged students easily influence younger ones. Young students quickly imitate the lousy behaviour of seniors. Because of these, students in public schools are underperforming. As students do not have a good home learning environment and suffer from different problems, she keeps counselling them. Listening to the stories of students, Nita's beliefs on public school, teachers teaching there, and students have changed. She claimed:

> *While doing counselling, students openly share their stories. Listening to their stories, I realized how privileged I was. Even after such hurdles, students have come to study, which is excellent. In that sense, my perception has changed. I*

don't blame students now. Because of their learning environment at home,
they are having trouble. Some students are cunning, and they lie. That's
obvious. But most of the students are studying despite massive hardship.

Changed beliefs relating to students in public school have also changed her dealing
with students. Whenever students underperform, Nita tries to know the reason behind
the performance. She doesn't take incidents at their face value; instead, she attempts
to understand the undercurrents to handle the situation better. So, the stories of all
these participants reiterate that disposition to a certain kind of environment, be it as a
language learner or teacher, influenced beliefs and, thereby, their behaviour.

Teachers' Beliefs and Pedagogical Approaches

Teachers' beliefs as structuring structure (Maton, 2008) influenced the
pedagogical approaches of English language teachers. Surya's stories justified how
beliefs influenced by the teaching-learning environment at school influenced his
pedagogical approaches. Surya believed storytelling is a vital classroom strategy for
teachers to motivate students, develop language competence, and trigger their
imagination and creativity. Surya shared:

Mostly I use storytelling to motivate students. When we tell stories, students
get excited. I ask them about the lessons learned from the characters and
setting. I believe storytelling is a powerful means by which we can teach moral
lessons, motivate students, develop language, enhance their imaginative
power, and get ideas to solve difficult circumstances. Through the storytelling
approach, we can achieve many objectives. And for language teachers, it's the
most crucial component.

He considered storytelling one of the crucial components of pedagogical approaches
in English language teaching. This belief has influenced his classroom teaching-
learning practices. He keeps including motivational speeches and biographies of
successful personalities such as Bill Gates, Malala, Elon Musk, and many others.
Hence, he is simultaneously a teacher, motivator, and career counsellor. This is how
his beliefs have influenced his pedagogical approaches and, thereby, his identity as a
teacher. Besides that, to motivate students and concentrate on studying, Surya also
talks about mindfulness and success stories. He added: *Telling stories, I try to bring*
their attention to me. For classroom management, motivation, and encouragement of
students, I get ideas from speeches and videos of great personalities and sometimes
use such videos in classroom teaching-learning practice. Storytelling has not only

been a means to control and manage students but also a tool to encourage and motivate them.

Similarly, Nita shared her beliefs on teaching English in public schools, the positive impact of appreciation and motivation on students, and how her belief has influenced her pedagogical approaches. She believes that teaching English at public schools is most challenging, particularly in those schools where the Nepali language is employed as a medium of instruction. Public schools have massive diversity among students in terms of their language proficiency, age group, and level of competence, due to which teaching English is challenging. She believes that when underperforming students are encouraged during their better performance, they get highly motivated and perform better. This belief has influenced her pedagogical approaches and her classroom behaviours. She shared:

> *Every time I can't apply new methods and technologies. I teach all the students in general. I know the level of students. Good students catch up with the ideas. For weak students, I separate them and keep them at the front so I can give extra assignments according to their level. When these underperforming students learn new things, they get highly motivated. Their way of presentation and speaking gets changed drastically. That's a very satisfying moment. We should arouse positive feelings in them that they can do. We should never say, "You can't do it."*

Nita encourages underperforming students saying, "*You can do it*." She never discourages them. She believes separating students in terms of their levels and providing individual care positively impacts underperforming students and boosts their confidence. Therefore, she behaves with underperforming students accordingly. Even Binesh shared how his grammar teaching approach is influenced by his belief shaped by his disposition to specific learning environments during his schooling. During his school education, Binesh was highly influenced by the teaching-learning approach adopted by Mr Surendra, an English teacher. Mr Surendra adopted a deductive approach to teaching grammar in which he used to dictate rules first and then let students make sentences accordingly. Binesh stressed: *While talking about grammar teaching, now we prefer the inductive method of teaching. But I still use the deductive method used by Mr Surendra. I believe the easiest and most appropriate way of teaching is the deductive one.* He believes that the deductive method of

teaching grammar is the most suitable, and he still applies that. So, his role model greatly influenced his pedagogical choices, particularly in teaching grammar.

Teachers' Beliefs and Professional Choices

Besides pedagogical choices, belief also impacted the selection of the profession and decision-making of the teachers. Surya had already developed his career in a private school as an English teacher. However, Surya thought his contribution would be immensely valued as students in public schools are from the lower middle class and lower-class families, requiring teachers' support the most. With this thought, he shifted to public school teaching. Surya claimed:

After teaching for a while in private school, I thought that instead of teaching in private school, I should teach in public school. In public schools, there are students from lower-middle class and lower-class families in terms of their economic status. If I'm able to bring positive change in them, they will remember lifelong. With this motive, I was looking for a public school. Another reason for joining public school was that I wanted to work in a tenure-track position for financial security and stability.

As Surya claimed, one of the reasons for joining as a secondary-level English language teacher in a public school was financial security, whereas another reason was his belief that he could contribute the most to transforming public school students' lives. If students from the lower middle class and lower class are supported to bring transformation in their careers, they will value Surya's contribution as a teacher the most. These beliefs motivated Surya to join English language teaching in a public school.

Nita also expressed how her belief about mathematics and English subjects regarding their level of complexity and her potential to excel influenced her choice of subject in higher education. However, her belief did not affect her career choice as an English language teacher. Nita's stories revealed that her belief that mathematics is complex influenced her to select English as a major subject in higher education. She confessed: *"When I reflect now, I did not do mathematics thinking that it is difficult. Reflecting on her past, she now realizes that math was not as difficult as she had thought."* Because of her belief that math is complex, her interest in higher education shifted to English. She chose English as her major subject in higher education, which led her to be an English language teacher. Binesh's story also reaffirmed his belief's influence on his subject choice and his profession as an English language teacher.

When I inquired about why he chose English as a major subject in higher education and ultimately joined English language teaching, he answered that his belief in the prospects of English and economic capital influenced him to join the profession. He also believed that "*teaching was a respectable profession,*" "*English teachers were rare*," and "*there was a good scope of English.*" He joined English language teaching because of all these convictions on cultural capital and future prospects. All these stories revealed that teachers' beliefs massively influenced their professional choice.

Paap Laagchha Ni Course Nasakda [Course Incompletion is a Sin]

Teachers' behaviours or actions, mainly how responsible or irresponsible teachers are in their profession, can be determined by their beliefs regarding their profession. Binesh shared his belief and how that belief has influenced his professionalism or professional behaviours. His belief that "*paap laagchha ni course nasakda*" [course incompletion is a sin] indicates the influence of belief on his punctuality, dedication, and responsible feeling towards his profession. His sincerity towards his profession became evident when he revealed:

> *Once when I could not finish the course on time, I invited students on Saturday. Not completing the course is a sin, so I wanted to course taking extra classes on Saturday. But students replied that the school is not open on Saturday. So, I invited them to a pine bush near the school. Students came there, and I taught them the whole day under the shade of the pine tree. Sometimes I even go to students' houses to support them.*

From the anecdote of Binesh, it became evident how his belief in teaching influenced his behaviours. Binesh was ready to teach students even on Saturday under the pine shade outside the school. His belief was the reason behind his dedication and sincerity in teaching. The story of Binesh reinforced the findings of Li (2020). Though Li (2020) discussed how belief in native non-native speakerism influenced the behaviours of English language teachers in the context of China, stories of Binesh relating to belief influencing behaviour reaffirmed his findings. Besides, the belief of Binesh on teacher professional development and the saturation of teachers have positively affected his development activities. Though Binesh struggled a lot to materialize his dream of becoming a secondary-level English language teacher, he has now realized that the teaching profession has lost its initial value and charm. In addition, he hasn't found anything challenging or promising to make teaching-learning exciting. He confessed: *There is nothing new here. As I thought I could be*

spoiled by working here for a long time in such an environment, I have started an
international association and networking. Because of the fear that he could be spoiled
working at a public school for a long time in the existing environment, Binesh started
an international collaboration and exchange program for his professional growth. So,
his behaviours are influenced by his beliefs. Besides, his beliefs on integrated
curriculum and English as a medium of instruction (EMI) is that though the integrated
curriculum is essential, the component of English is very insignificant, and his efforts
are directed towards increasing the English components.

Binesh also found numerous challenges in the implementation of EMI. Binesh
believes language should not be a barrier to children's cognitive development. He
claimed:

> *I see a big problem in English as a medium of instruction (EMI). Because of*
> *this, students' thinking process has not developed well. Students with good*
> *backgrounds can cope with EMI, but for others, when they can't have good*
> *input in English and speak another mother tongue at home, students can be*
> *defunct. Students have become thoughtless. I'm exploring further in this area.*

His belief that EMI is hampering students' cognitive development has impacted his
exploration of EMI. Binesh is involved in a national project relating to EMI and is
engaged in research activities in the area. His beliefs shaped his actions and interests.
Binesh also noted his conversation with the principal of his school and his alignment
with his opinion. He shared:

> *One day our school principal said during our conversation that what I did or*
> *achieved does not have any meaning; instead, how many people's lives I have*
> *been able to transform is significant. That's why I want to do something for*
> *others instead of just looking at myself. I studied. I learned. But what is the*
> *meaning of my knowledge if I'm unable to transform someone's life using it?*

This kind of thought always inspires Binesh to contribute to society. He always gets
motivated to contribute to students' learning because of such beliefs in the meaning of
life and knowledge.

Nita's stories also reinforced how beliefs influence behaviour. Nita noted that
because of her belief that her friends might have studied hard, she used to get the
motivation to engage in learning activities sincerely at home, leading her to achieve
good results despite her irregularities in classroom learning. Kumari also noted that
regarding the implementation of training into daily classroom practice, teachers'

beliefs and ideologies relating to training activity and its influence on understanding influenced teachers' behaviour regarding whether to implement knowledge and skills learned or not. Her claim also reinforced and substantiated the fact that teachers' belief has a massive influence on their behaviours and, thereby, identity construction as English language teachers.

Was it the Right Decision to Join Teaching?

The participants' lived realities revealed that teachers' disposition to a particular learning environment influenced and shaped their beliefs and pedagogical and professional choices. However, after teaching for a long time, whether they still hold the same belief, optimism, and commitment to teaching is a critical question. This question draws on the belief and emotional experiences they have undergone from the teacher education phase to their teaching career. Reflecting on his learning phase, particularly his M.Ed. in ELT, Binesh shared his beliefs on curriculum and the feeling he developed based on beliefs. He believed that their curriculum did not match the contextual need. He expressed dissatisfaction towards the nature of the curriculum offered in M.Ed. He shared:

> *During my MEd, courses like psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, language conflict, neurolinguistics, grammar theory, and generative grammar, among others, were offered. But these courses did not have much relevance in the teaching-learning context. So, we raised questions about the relevance of such courses. We requested our teachers to include 100 marks fiction paper. Still, they did not offer a literature course. But suddenly, a course titled Teaching Literature was offered in the second year. Without teaching any literary genre, the Teaching Literature course was offered. It was absurd. So, many students did a double degree, particularly Master of Arts (MA), feeling disadvantaged. I also joined an online MA course at Indira Gandhi University. I had an inferior feeling.*

The nature of the curriculum and the course offered mismatched with the contextual need. After graduation, they had to join teaching the secondary level course, which was dominated by literature, but in the teacher education course, the literary portion was almost zero. He believes that when the course is titled English Language Teaching, it automatically becomes narrow. He still feels lacking because of the kind of curriculum he studied, without the literature portion. He has a sort of disadvantaged feeling.

I questioned how he felt being an English language teacher during our conversation. In my question of if he had any wow moments in his career, Binesh replied, "*Sometimes I ponder upon my life and question myself was it the right decision to join teaching. You were asking me if I had any wow moments. Forget about the wow moments. There is no satisfaction in life.*" Sharing his dissatisfaction towards the teaching profession, Binesh revealed that teachers in Nepal are in challenging situations. Binesh believes that when "*teaching and learning are given high importance,*" probably teachers "*can impact or improve school education a little more*"; otherwise, he is not "*much optimistic about Nepal's school education.*" Binesh believes that teaching is a hopeless profession. He further added:

> *If you search, you will find that most people don't want to be teachers because there is no security or career growth. I'm just an exception. You cannot generalize just by looking at my condition. It would be best to see teachers like Ms Kalpana, a senior to me. She has already served more than 21 years as a teacher. Now she is hardly able to control grade 10/11 classes. What did she achieve?*

His questions were mainly concerned with professional stability, opportunity, financial security, teachers' professional development, and self-esteem. Because of the negligence of the education sector from the side of the Government of Nepal, the teaching profession has lost its charm. Though Binesh initially wanted to be an English teacher, idealized his teachers as role models and kept investing, after 13 years of teaching, he realized that teaching is a hopeless profession. Binesh is disillusioned now and no longer holds earlier beliefs, hope, and optimism. Now Binesh has an inferior feeling towards his career. And the factors that made him feel inferior were none other than the negligence of the education sector from society and the government. He stressed:

> *Bureaucracy has wholly dominated us. You are in the university and have a certain academic freedom. But in the case of schoolteachers, we can't change even commas and full stops. There is no teacher autonomy. Even institution is controlled by social forces. If you are compatible with social forces (mainly political actors), you can breathe long; otherwise, you can't breathe well. You will be secluded within the teachers' community and society. Teachers' life is not easy. It's tough.*

He believes that bureaucracy controls everything from course design, examination pattern, and policy design and implementation. Teachers lack the privilege to exercise their agency. Instead, political and social forces exert huge pressure upon teachers and school administration, making the teaching profession challenging.

However, Surya is still overwhelmed and satisfied with his profession. He is happy believing he is engaged in a noble profession that benefits thousands of students. He shared:

> I'm happy that I'm influencing students and contributing to their lives. Through my service to humanity, thousands of students benefit from learning. With this conviction, I feel so happy and satisfied. I also believe that I'm able to contribute to making their living. I have told students that If I can give the right direction to thousands of students and improve their lives, and if those thousands of students contribute to transforming the lives of thousands of others, the world will change positively. For that, I begin with myself. To transform the world, we need to start with ourselves. I give this message to students as well.

From this anecdote, it becomes evident that Surya is not diverted from his initial intention or dream of joining the teaching profession. Surya was influenced by the contribution of his primary teacher and developed his vision to give back to society through teaching. He is still committed to providing service to humanity and contributing to transforming society through education. He is satisfied with his profession as an English language teacher.

Teaching-Learning Environment, Beliefs, and Behaviors

Analysis of lived reality of my research participants revealed the triangular relationship between the teaching-learning environment teachers are disposed to, their belief, and their behaviour as teachers and learners. These three components influenced one another. The triangular relationship between these components is presented in figure 2.

As shown in the figure, disposition to certain kinds of family environments, the teaching-learning environment at school, teachers, curriculum, and working environment influenced teachers' beliefs. Teachers' beliefs can relate to the effectiveness of curriculum, pedagogy, and professional choice. In turn, teachers' beliefs also influenced the learning environment. There is a two-way influence between teachers' beliefs and the teaching-learning environment. In addition,

teachers' beliefs also influenced their behaviours, particularly pedagogical choices, their dealing with students and students' performance.

Figure 2:

Interaction between Sociocultural Environment, Beliefs, and Behaviours.
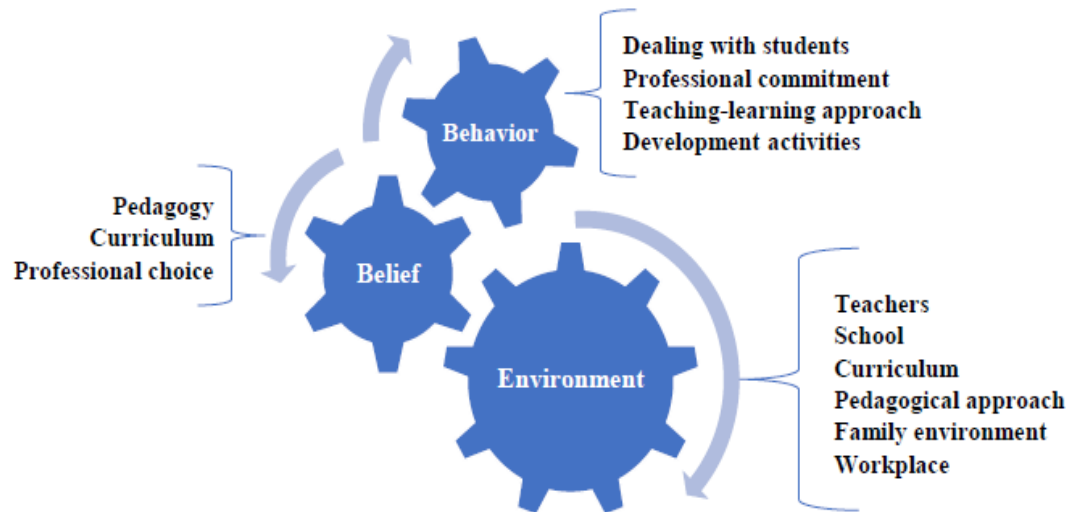
In turn, behaviours also influenced teachers' beliefs. Therefore, as presented in the figure, a triangular relationship exists between environment, beliefs, and behaviours, each influencing the other. Teachers negotiate and construct their identities in this interplay of environment, beliefs, and behaviours.

Emotional Experiences and Identities: A Roller Coaster Ride

Like belief, teachers' emotional experience during their teaching-learning journey was another crucial factor that influenced identity construction. All the participants shared how teachers underwent different positive and negative emotional situations and how such experiences influenced them. Primarily teachers shared positive emotional experiences such as happiness and satisfaction that emerged out of attachment with students, school and administration, compliments from students, administrators and parents, and students' success. In addition, participants also underwent sad and depressing moments and vulnerable situations. As noted by Nita, as a roller coaster ride, positive, happy, and exciting moments to negative emotional experiences like sadness, dissatisfaction, and humiliation contributed to what participants have become now.

Will I Survive in English Language Teaching or Not?

Vulnerability emerged as a significant motif in the story of Binesh. Apart from Binesh, Kumari also shared her vulnerable situation during the formative phase of her

teaching career. Lived story of Binesh reflected how vulnerability had been a major motivating factor for his development and success as a student and a teacher. Though vulnerability is commonly considered a negative emotion, affecting identity construction negatively, the story of Binesh reflected vulnerability as a motivating factor. Binesh shared how the vulnerable situation he experienced due to fear of job opportunities in future motivated him to invest in his education. He argued: "*I always used to get scared of job opportunities in future. And that fear of opportunity always motivated me to work hard. This is how I completed my academic journey up to my master's in 2001.*" As Binesh had witnessed a lived example of a teacher who could earn well during his schooling, Binesh believed that being an English teacher, he could have good economic and symbolic capital that always motivated him to invest in English language learning. But at the same time, Binesh was also scared of not having good opportunities if he didn't do well in the teacher education courses. His belief, dreams for the future, and vulnerability inspired him to study well and complete his M.Ed. in English with good grades. Though Binesh completed his M.Ed. in English with good grades, a big question about his potential to teach English emerged. After a visit to one of the publicly acclaimed private schools in Kathmandu Valley during the formative phase of his career, Binesh realized that he didn't have language fluency equal to that of grade three students. Binesh confessed:

> *I had M.Ed., but teaching in grade three was a challenge. If literature and social were given, I would probably teach. But teaching functional English was tough. I didn't have the fluency to use the communicative language teaching method the course envisioned. During my visit to Universe Secondary School, I found a grade three student far better than myself in terms of his communicative competence, mainly speaking. In class, English was the only medium of instruction; courses were so good that he had an excellent disposition to English speaking environment. But for us, English was just a subject. We didn't immerse ourselves in English.*

Though Binesh had taught up to the secondary level in a public school in his village, he experienced a survival threat in Kathmandu. Mainly his speaking was not as par the expected level. Binesh himself revealed that it was a "shocking moment" and suffered from a "survival threat."

Binesh revealed his vulnerability through his story relating to the interview process for the primary-level Vice Principal's post he had applied for. His response to

the interviewer during the interview in question regarding the expected salary showed his vulnerability during that time. He confessed:

> *Later, they talked about salary. In their question about the expected salary, I replied that I was not expecting much wages. I just require an amount that is enough for my survival. That was a moment in my life. So, they gave me enough amount for my survival. Then I started working there as a Vice Principal. Though I was just a Vice Principal, I had to take the whole responsibility of the school as Principal.*

Binesh was so vulnerable that he could not even claim his salary strongly. He was ready to teach in whatever amount they offered. And his vulnerability was induced by the lack of communication skills. Being an English teacher, Binesh required a certain level of speaking skills, but as his communication competence was not good, Binesh joined as a Vice Principal in a pre-primary school situated on the outskirt of Kathmandu Valley. After teaching for a few years, Binesh realized that developing a career in teaching at a private school was challenging. He underwent an *"economic crisis plus the question of sustainability"* in that pre-primary school. Hence, when Binesh received an opportunity to teach in a college situated in that area, he switched to college. However, as it was a small community college where Binesh didn't see the possibility of a tenure track position, the question of sustainability bothered him again. His existential reality as a teacher challenged his belief that he developed seeing his teacher during childhood, the dream of having good economic and symbolic capital as an English teacher. Binesh started feeling vulnerable. Stories of Binesh echoed the findings of Yuan and Lee (2016) relating to their exploration of how negative emotions a student teacher experienced during practicum in the People's Republic of China challenged his belief about the teacher.

Binesh chose the English language teaching profession, getting inspired by his teacher as his teacher had good economic, cultural, and social capital. Aspiring for a better future, he joined English language learning and, thereby, the teaching profession. But due to inefficient communication skills, struggle for job opportunities, and the question of sustainability in the teaching profession, Binesh felt vulnerable during the formative phase of his career. But the same vulnerability motivated him to struggle and finally establish himself as a tenure-track secondary-level English language teacher. Wenger (1998) relates vulnerability with alignment that when employees are not aligned with the norms, values, and ideologies of the communities

of practice, it may lead participants to vulnerable situations. Wenger's use of the term vulnerability has a negative connotation. However, in the context of Binesh, he felt vulnerable because of the questions about his beliefs, expectations, and dreams for the future. In addition, vulnerability is also rooted in inefficient communication skills. Instead of having a negative impact, vulnerability emerged as a motivating factor to engage in development activities, because of which Binesh was able to achieve his dreams for the future.

Though Kumari didn't experience vulnerability due to the issue of sustainability, inefficient communication skills led Kumari to a vulnerable position during the formative phase of her career. Kumari shared that during her schooling, she could speak in broken English. Though Kumari could improve her writing during her intermediate, she didn't get an opportunity to enhance her oral communication skills. However, after starting a teaching career in a private school in Kathmandu Valley, she improved her communication skills a little. However, her communication was just satisfactory. Kumari confessed:

> *When I joined a school for teaching, I improved my verbal communication a little. But after joining White Palace School for training and finding students communicating with each other, I realized that my English competency did not equal grade two students in White Palace. That's what I felt.*

Because of her inadequate speaking fluency and belief that her speaking was below par, Kumari hesitated to speak with senior teachers in her school. She worked as a primary teacher during the formative phase of her career. While teaching at the primary-level, Kumari hesitated to speak with grade nine/ten students. She confessed:

> *During the start of my career, English was given high priority. At that time, I used to feel guilty because I did not have good communication skills. For almost six months, I wondered whether I would survive in English language teaching. As I wanted to improve my oral communication, I got help from self-help books, wrote some sample sentences in a copy, and memorized them to speak in class the next day. That was the condition of my oral communication. I feel that during the formative phase of my career, I was in a very vulnerable position.*

Kumari's vulnerable emotional experience was mainly concerned with her inadequate oral communication skills, which led her to prepare well in advance and get into the class. Kumari's continuous efforts on a personal level to improve her verbal

communication and disposition to an excellent English-speaking environment in a private school as a teacher gradually enhanced her oral communication skills. Even in the case of Kumari, vulnerability has emerged as a motivating factor that positively contributed to the identity construction of Kumari as an English language teacher. Unlike Lave and Wenger's (1991) notion, where they relate vulnerability with practitioners' nonalignment with the community's norms and values, it is more related to the teachers' communicative competence in the context of English language teaching in Nepal. And unlike Wenger's notion of vulnerability that is associated with the negative consequence of it, in the case of my participants, vulnerable emotional experience has contributed as a motivating factor for their professional development and identity construction.

Emotional Attachment with Students, Colleagues, and School

Another crucial factor contributing to self-esteem and a sense of identity is an emotional attachment with students, colleagues, and school in general. Kumari shared an emotional moment when students and parents burst into tears during her farewell from a public school in the eastern hills to Kathmandu Valley. Kumari struggled to bring transformation in that public school during her tenure and also underwent an emotional roller coaster ride, as noted by Nita. Kumari expressed that the *"whole tenure was an emotional moment, emotional and memorable moment."* During the interview, I noticed her being emotional while sharing her story. While Kumari shared her work experience in that school, I cross-questioned her, *"Why do you think such an emotional bond developed with students and parents?"* She responded to my question this way:

> *I think teaching quality was the main reason for that. Students were able to get the desired teaching-learning quality. Mainly students' and parents' expectations were met. Next, I treated students in a friendly and caring environment. They were taught with love and kindness in a new environment.*

As noted by Kumari, the love and kindness, the caring environment, and the quality of teaching-learning were the main reasons behind developing suitable attachment among students, teachers, and parents. And students and parents expressed their affection, love, care, and worries through tears. Such moments made Kumari realize that she had given a good impression as a teacher and that students and parents were satisfied with her, particularly her way of teaching. It was a moment of self-reflection as an English teacher for Kumari. Surya's experience of the farewell of students and

his farewell from his previous public school resonated with the experiences of Kumari. Surya confessed farewell as an oxymoron experience, *"a bit memorable, a bit bitter."*

Anita's stories also revealed how a positive learning environment and intimate relationship with students, colleagues, staff, and school administration encouraged her to continue working in a school for a long. After working for a few years, Nita's parents pressured her to quit the job, saying it could hamper her performance in M.Ed. Still, she continued working there because of the intimate relationship she had developed with everyone. Nita shared:

> *I had developed such an intimate relationship with students that I could not resign. Plus, the working environment there was very supportive. So, I continued working and teaching concurrently. The working environment was so enjoyable. Even the English environment there helped improve my fluency. Because of that, I thoroughly enjoyed working there. Though there used to be a rush while going to school, I could not leave my job. Probably because of my good attachment to students and colleagues, I could not resign. I was in love with my job.*

The attachment to students, colleagues, staff, and administration created a pleasing environment in the school. Nita thoroughly enjoyed working in her previous school. Because of that, Nita could not resign from school, despite being pressured to balance work and study. Students ' assignments reflected the excellent bond between Nita and her students. Nita revealed that when students were assigned to write an essay on "My Favorite Teacher," almost 90 percent reported her name. Because of all these positive emotional experiences, she enjoyed teaching. Nita expressed her emotional attachment: "*first workplace is like first love; that's what I feel."* Because of an emotional attachment to school, despite heavy work pressure, Nita could not resign. The lived experience of all these participants revealed that emotional connection with students, colleagues, and administration motivated teachers to continue working in the same institution for a long as teachers felt happy and satisfied working in such a pleasing environment.

Compliment, Appreciation, and Satisfaction

Another crucial factor that emerged from participants' stories is positive compliments and appreciation from students, parents, teachers, administration, and

the satisfaction participants experienced. Nita shared how students' appreciation of her efforts publicly in a farewell program satisfied her. Nita revealed:

> *A few days back, there was a farewell program for grade 10 students. During the program, in a farewell speech, one of the students from grade 10 said, "I want to personally give thanks to Nita madam for supporting, scolding, beating, and for everything because of which we are able to complete SLC successfully." That was such a satisfying moment. I had goosebumps while listening to him.*

Nita noted that, though teaching is a demanding profession, such appreciating moments gave satisfaction. Sometimes even guardians appreciated the efforts that encouraged her to engage in teaching. She also received positive compliments while she was teaching at a private school. After receiving feedback about her fast speaking and conscious effort to improve it, Nita received commendations from the guardians of the students. The student's guardians told Nita that she *"started speaking slowly, and teaching improved drastically."* Nita revealed that the first compliment she received in teaching made her extremely happy and confident. Nita also received another praise after the completion of the Parents' Day function. The district administrative officer, colleagues, and guardians complimented that *"government schools can be changed drastically having teachers like her."* Such compliments and appreciation aroused happy feelings that motivated Nita and other participants to engage in diverse activities and give their best.

Though Kumari's story does not relate to her workplace, she also shared moments of happiness and satisfaction as a student. But such moments encouraged her to study sincerely, contributing to what she has become. Kumari revealed:

> *Our school used to conduct a prize distribution ceremony annually at the end of the academic session. In that event, prizes were distributed to position holders inviting them and their parents to the stage. I mostly used to go to the stage with my father to receive rewards. Every year I received the prizes in front of my father. That was the happiest and most satisfying moment of my primary education.*

As a teacher, Kumari now recalls those incidents as the most satisfying moments of her schooling. Such incidents always motivated her to concentrate on education and grab the position during her schooling. Kumari mentioned that she was *"neither first nor third"* during school.

Students' Success and Satisfaction

Nita and Surya's stories revealed the students' success and the satisfaction it gave them. Sharing her teaching experience at her current public school, Nita revealed how her efforts improved a poor student and enabled him to complete SLC successfully. She shared:

> Let me share with you one incident. There was one student in grade 10 with poor handwriting. He did not even have a basic understanding of English. Fifteen days before SLC, he had asked me the spelling of "verb." At that time, we were taking additional classes for their SLC. I had a great challenge in improving his writing and his English. I supported him a lot. Fortunately, he passed the SLC examination. Making him pass SLC was an outstanding achievement, and I was delighted with his result.

The student who had an inadequate understanding and skills of the English language and an impoverished vocabulary was able to complete SLC because of her efforts, which made Nita happy and satisfied. His result also aroused confidence and self-actualization of her potential as an English language teacher. Nita's stories resonated with the findings of Yuan and Lee (2016) that students' success and recognition positively contributed to identity construction as an English language teacher.

Surya's lived reality as an English language teacher also resonated with the stories of Nita concerning students' success and its positive influence on teachers' satisfaction. Surya shared the happiest moment of his career:

> The happiest moment in my teaching career was when I guided one visually impaired student in grade seven to write an essay to participate in a global competition. It was an international essay writing competition for physically disadvantaged students. The competition was to write an essay titled Our Future, Our World. My student won the competition and went to Canada to receive a prize worth 5000 dollars. I felt so happy that the student I guided won the global essay competition. It was the happiest moment of my career.

Student achievement gave Surya a sense of accomplishment and self-actualization of his potential. He was so satisfied with his student's achievement. Stories of both Nita and Surya reinforced that students' achievement increases happiness and satisfaction as well as the confidence of the teachers.

Sad and Depressing Moments

As a roller coaster ride claimed by Nita, participants not only underwent positive, happy, and satisfying emotional experiences but also lived with depressing, sad, and vulnerable situations as teachers. Highlighting the tragic and unfortunate moments she underwent, Nita shared the disruptive behaviour of a student and the emotional experience she endured. When she caught one student using a mobile phone in the classroom, Nita seized the phone and warned that using a mobile phone in the classroom is not entertained. But that day, the student stood up and shouted at her. Nita confessed:

> *To see him shouting at me, I literally cried. No other students had reacted that way previously. He said why do you always scold us? Why don't you listen to us, and blah blah? My tendency was that even though I scolded anyone in the group, I used to call them to my office and deal psychologically to avoid negative impressions. But that day, I could not control myself in class and cry.*

Nita revealed that the student who showed untoward behaviour was an aggressive type of student. Probably he had been to school that day with pre-plan. But the next day, that student came to the office and apologized. However, it was just a formality, and he didn't seem to have realized his mistake.

Apart from students' disruptive behaviour, Nita revealed that bias from senior colleagues, denial of involvement in crucial decision-making from administration, and misrepresentation by senior colleagues in their discourses, hurt her. Nita expressed that there were such instances:

> *Sometimes administration didn't let us know the crucial things. I felt bias from the administration and senior colleagues in many cases. But I tried to counsel and pacify myself that people are not the same; they have different understandings, and I should not take it negatively.*

Nita felt unhappy when she was not engaged in crucial decision-making and experienced bias on many occasions. She used to counsel and pacify herself at such moments. Despite hard work and dedication, when administrators and senior colleagues didn't appreciate her or sometimes when she was humiliated for minor mistakes, Nita felt like quitting the job. She confessed:

> *I never compromised on my responsibility. I still do not compromise on my work. But still, when my work was not recognized, I felt bad. Despite working hard all the time, humiliating teachers in mass when one mistake is committed*

> *is bad. Therefore, I felt like if there is no respect, why continue the job? I had*
> *that kind of feeling.*

Humiliating experience that Nita underwent while working at a private school made her think of quitting the job. She considered it one of her bad experiences during her teaching career.

Like Nita, Surya also expressed a bitter experience he underwent during the teacher selection process when he applied for the post of basic-level English language teacher. Surya heard from one of the selection committee members that though he had performed better, they could not select him due to political pressure. He revealed:

> *I heard a selection committee member saying that though I had performed*
> *better, they could not select me due to political reasons. After listening to*
> *them, I felt very bad. I felt like nothing is fair in this country. That was one of*
> *the most painful moments in my life. When I found my community and teachers*
> *biased toward me, I developed a kind of udasibhawana/bitrishna [distraction]*
> *towards them.*

Political biases during the teacher selection process made him undergo a painful experience. But also, at the same time, he became determined to prove himself, which motivated him to study sincerely during his M.Ed. and complete it with a good score. Stories of Nita and Surya revealed that though they underwent bitter and painful experiences due to bias, these experiences gave mixed results. While Nita felt like quitting the job due to discrimination from colleagues, Surya developed a determination to prove himself after the painful experience of rejection during the selection process due to political reasons. The impact of emotional experiences depended on how teachers responded to such sad moments. Still, as claimed by Swearingen (2019), my participants' stories revealed that negative emotions somehow constrained their identity development.

Chapter Summary

Analysis of the storied life of English language teachers from Nepal revealed that teachers' beliefs are influenced by their disposition to a particular economic, sociocultural and classroom learning environment. Teachers' beliefs also influence the teaching-learning environment, teachers' behaviours, and pedagogical choices. Thus, there is a two-way influence between teachers' cognition and environment. Teachers' stories also reflected the impact of their beliefs on career choices. Teachers' beliefs, mainly concerned with curriculum, education, teachers, pedagogical

approaches, and assessment and evaluation, also influenced students' achievement and their identity as teachers.

Teachers' beliefs are also interrelated with the emotional experiences they undergo. Stories of the participants revealed that when their beliefs in teaching-learning careers and their dream about the future as English teachers were not affirmed by their immediate existential realities, they felt vulnerable. However, vulnerability, though usually considered a negative emotion, has turned out to be a motivating factor in the context of my research participants. When English language teachers felt vulnerable, they invested themselves well in teacher education during student life and professional development during their careers to materialize their dreams. The vulnerability of teachers is mainly concerned with their inadequate communication skills and struggle for stable job opportunities and sustainability. Apart from vulnerability, positive emotional experiences like happiness and satisfaction emerged from positive relationships and attachment with students, colleagues, and school, as well as positive compliments and appreciation from students and parents motivated them to engage in their profession sincerely. In addition, students' success gave satisfaction and happiness to teachers. However, teachers also underwent sad and depressing moments during their careers, which negatively affected their identity as teachers. As noted by Nita, as a roller coaster ride, teachers underwent different emotional experiences that influenced their professional development and identity construction directly and indirectly.

CHAPTER VI

IMAGINED IDENTITY AND INVESTING

In this chapter, I answer the second research question about how imagination and imagined identity influenced my research participants' investing and identity construction as English language teachers. The first part of this section concerns the factors that triggered participants' imagination to become a certain kind of person and how that imagination influenced their career choice or the professional community they wanted to engage in the projected future. At the same time, the second part of the section concerns my participants' investment or engagement in teaching-learning and development activities that ultimately enabled them to be what they have become now. In addition, this section deals with how English language teachers are harvesting the fruit of their investment in imagined identity. While dealing with these issues, I also relate the lived reality of my participants with my experiences through the reflexive process; mainly, I connect my imagined identity and dreams for the future to my participants' experiences.

Imagined Identity and its Influence on Career Choice

A rigorous study of four English language teachers' story and my lived experience as an English language teacher drawn through the reflexive process revealed that imagination and dream for the future that student teachers develop during their schooling or teacher education course heavily influence their identities. Once they imagine being a certain kind of person, they keep investing in materializing that dream. Wenger (1998) defines imagination as a factor that expands our 'self' by transcending time and space and developing new possibilities for ourselves and the world. The concept of imagined identity and investing is theorized by Norton (2000, 2015). According to Norton (2008), an imagined community is a desired community that provides possibilities for an enhanced range of identity options in future, and these imagined communities provide imagined identities. In the context of English language learning, teacher development, and identity construction in Nepal, the professional community that teachers imagined themselves to join and their engagement to acquire the required skills should be understood as their investment to enter or have access to desired community or materialize imagined identities. It is also

about the creative process of generating new images and developing new relations. Imagined identity is also concerned with the teachers' dreams for the future.

Better Job Prospects and Earning

A rigorous analysis of the participants' stories revealed that their dream for a better future, particularly job prospects, was the primary motivation behind choosing English in the higher study as their major subject. And their investment and commitment to English language learning should be understood as their deep desire to materialize that dream. One of my participants, for instance, Binesh, who was born and brought up in the hilly region of eastern Nepal, studied in a school in his village. He was born and brought up in a hinterland in the eastern hills of Nepal, and surviving there, getting engaged in subsistence farming was very tough. But during his basic level of education, Binesh saw an English teacher who could earn better through additional classes compared to other teachers. From his primary education, Binesh imagined that he could have a better future after studying English. Focusing on his motivation to learn English, Binesh revealed that: *there was a good scope of English. As a worst-case scenario, though you didn't get a job, you could earn a lot by taking tuition classes*. These lines indicate that he studied English because he could have sustainability in his life and a better future after gaining good economic capital. Hence, the dream for the future (Kanno, 2003) to join the communities of English language teachers was one of the reasons for joining English language learning.

Binesh also compared the income of an English language teacher with his father. Though his father was a teacher teaching Sanskrit in the same school, he used to engage in agricultural activities. However, the English teacher could make his life only through his income of salary and additional classes. The English teacher was popular in that locality. Children from well-to-do families would take tuition (extra) classes for English from the English language teacher. Binesh added:

> *Surendra sir was famous for tuition classes. From classes six and seven, children from relatively well-to-do families used to go to Mr Surendra for tuition classes. English language of his son and daughter – Sudhir and Sushila – was perfect. Madam was beautiful, without any cracks in her hand. His wife was a housewife. Though my father was a teacher in the same school, he used to engage in agricultural activities. I used to imagine that if anyone's life is successful and happy, his life should be like that of Mr Surendra. I had idealized his life as successful. He was a migrant staying in a rented house.*

Out of 12 hours, he used to take eight hours of tuition classes. And there in the village, people used to talk about the income of Surendra sir and the scope of English language teaching. I decided early enough to major in English after my School Leaving Certificate (SLC).

Binesh witnessed that the linguistic capital of Mr Surendra enabled him to attain good economic capital that heavily influenced Binesh. Besides, Mr Surendra had good cultural capital, and because of that, Binesh idealized him as a role model and wanted to be like Mr Surendra, an English teacher. Furthermore, he compares his family with the family of Surendra sir. His family, particularly his father, used to engage in agricultural activities despite being a teacher, but Surendra sir used to engage in additional classes of English and earned a lot. The economic capital of Surendra sir influenced Binesh to be an English teacher. The sensory details that Binesh employed to describe Surendra sir's wife, "hands without cracks," symbolise a happy and prosperous life. He also compared the living conditions of Surendra sir and his father and idealized Surendra sir's life as comfortable, prosperous, and successful. The stories of Binesh echoed the stories of an undergraduate student Liam's case study conducted by Sung (2019). The way Liam invested in studying English with his dream of yielding good social and economic capital, Binesh was also lured by the desire to yield good capital as a return on the investment. Besides, Binesh was impressed with his writing/handwriting, dress-up, and the glow on his teacher's face. As idealized during that time, being influenced by government ideology – *dui santan Ishwar ko bardan* – Surendra sir had a son and a daughter. Binesh was highly impressed with him and his family and idealized him as a role model. Binesh's identification with Surendra sir was possible as he saw a living example of the good life before him. His identification was more socially organized than a mere subjective experience. The imagined community (Anderson, 1991) that Binesh wanted to join was the community of English language teachers. Binesh developed a sense of belongingness with English language teachers and started investing in his dreams. According to Norton (2013), imagined communities influenced language learners' affiliation with the communities of practice and their learning trajectories. The lived experience of Binesh reaffirmed the notion of imagined community forwarded by Norton (2013).

Surya's stories are identical to the lived reality of Binesh. The possibility of better job opportunities influenced him to choose English as a major subject during

his higher education. He was also influenced by his father's suggestion to do English instead of other subjects. But his father's advice to study English was directed towards better job prospects in future. Besides, Surya was also self-motivated to learn a foreign language and developed an interest in learning English from childhood. His father used to inspire him to do English and say, "*if you are able to do good in English, you will have many opportunities.*" He added, "*Instead of doing other subjects, I thought that English had good scope. If I do a master's with an English major, I will have a better future. To brighten my future career, I chose English as a major in Education.*" Surya's motivation behind doing English in higher education is identical to Binesh. Surya and Binesh imagined a better future after graduating with an English major in Education.

Though Nita's stories behind majoring in English in education faculty are not different from those of Binesh and Surya, her educational background is slightly different. Binesh and Surya were born and brought up in resource-scarce remote hilly regions of Nepal, whereas Nita was born and brought up in the outskirt of the Kathmandu Valley, and she had access to a better school and educational environment. During her basic education, she received an opportunity to study in a private school in the Valley, where students were taught in a highly caring and supportive environment. The learning environment at the Heavenly Care School shaped her interest in English. The school set the foundation of her English and transformed her to some extent. She claimed: "*Two years of study developed an interest in English. I started understanding communication, and my English became better. So, I also started focusing on English because wherever we excel, we concentrate on that.*" As Nita mentioned, her competence in English gave her hope that she would excel in English. The good economic capital of Nita's family provided access to a private school with an excellent English learning environment. Even though Norton's (2013) notion of power concerns the language learners' accessibility or inaccessibility to practice English with native English speakers, in the context of Nepal, where English is spoken as a second/foreign language, the concept of power relates with the accessibility to good English environment, not necessarily native English speakers. As Norton's theory of investing was developed in the Canadian context, where the population is dominated by immigrants from different parts of the world, her notion of power and access doesn't adequately apply in the context of Nepal.

However, because of Nita's accessibility to study in a private school where EMI was used, she developed language proficiency and an interest in English. Besides, even Nita's father had an impression that she could do better in English than in other subjects and that she could establish herself in teaching. Nita reiterated that, *while choosing English as my major subject after SLC, I thought I was good in English and could excel in this subject more than others*. Nita's stories revealed that the linguistic capital she developed during her schooling influenced the choice of English as a major subject in her higher studies and career as an English teacher. Serna-Gutiérrez and Mora-Pablo (2018), in their exploration of critical incidents of transnational students in central Mexico, revealed that the linguistic capital of the students influenced their choice of subject and, thereby, their career as English teachers. Nita's stories reaffirmed Serna-Gutiérrez and Mora-Pablo's (2018) findings. In addition, participants' stories also showed that economic capital and better job prospects were other reasons for choosing English as a major subject and English language teaching career.

Another participant, Kumari, also underwent a similar experience. Kumari reaffirmed the prospects for future and better job opportunities as the motivation behind joining English in higher education. Kumari had a high commitment and fervour in English from the very childhood. Though she didn't think of becoming an English teacher, she wanted to improve it at any cost. Kumari narrated:

> *From childhood, even primary school, my commitment to English was very high. Though I did not think of becoming an English teacher, I wanted to improve my English at any cost. I tried to make it perfect.*

The anecdote revealed that she had a dream to develop her English. For that, she chose English as a major after her SLC. Besides, English teachers could have better job opportunities than graduates of other subjects in Nepal. Career prospects, employability, and the worldwide influence of English were other factors that motivated her to join English language teaching. Kumari claimed:

> *The worldwide market of English also determined my choice. English is a powerful language. As a language, English has dominated the world. Next, better possibilities of job opportunities for English graduates and also to be a global citizen as the world is converted into a global village; I was motivated to be an English teacher.*

Though her perception of English as the dominant and influential language and the supremacy of English as a global language seems to be influenced by the monolingual western ideology, better job prospects for English graduates in the context of Nepal cannot be denied. As the language learning ideologies privilege the English language over other languages (Darvin & Norton, 2018; Norton, 2015), Kumari represents the hegemonic influence of English in her choice of English. Kumari's alignment with dominant language ideologies influenced her identity construction, as argued by Wenger (2010). Still, the scope of English and employability she claimed is approved from her lived reality. She claimed:

> *Most of my colleagues who studied population, sociology, and other subjects were/are unemployed. But I was employed only after an intermediate level of education. The reason is the English language. As the English language had been the reason for employability in most of the private schools in Nepal, it automatically motivated me.*

Kumari's lived reality also approved the better job prospects for English graduates. All these anecdotes from four participants somehow relate to my childhood story, triggering me to draw my lived reality through the reflexive process.

During my childhood, the largest hydroelectricity project of that time, with its capacity of generating 144 MW of electricity, was under construction near my village. And there, the contractors and engineers were from around the globe. People from the United States, the United Kingdom, Italy, Japan, India, and many other countries were working there. And there English was used as a lingua franca to communicate among the senior level employees. Some of the people, particularly supervisors, used to work as both supervisors and translators. Supervisors had to translate the instruction given in English by foreign engineers and contractors into Nepali to convey the message to junior employees. As English was used as a lingua franca, those having command over English were paid high compared to those who could not speak English. Besides, those with command over English, particularly fluency in speaking skills, had a better possibility of getting a job. From that, I realized that the English language would enable us to have good economic capital and a high chance of employability in future. Hence, I thought of taking English as a major subject after SLC. Better job prospects were one reason for joining English in higher education. My lived stories revealed that my future dreams of learning English are constructed from my relationship with the target language community and are socially and historically constructed and

negotiated (Bourdieu, 1977, 1991). As noted by Bourdieu (1991), my desire to invest in English language learning was motivated by my expectation of acquiring economic capital and material resources in future.

Avoiding Mathematics

Though Binesh, Surya and Kumari were motivated to join English at higher level because of the inspiration from their teachers, family, or personal interest, one of the reasons for joining English, in Nita's case, was avoiding mathematics. Nita was disposed to a good English language learning environment during her primary level of education. Hence, her desire to learn English was developed socially and historically because of her disposition to a suitable target language learning environment (Bourdieu, 1977). Because of that, she had a good base of English. After SLC, Nita realized she could excel in English and have better job prospects. Also, she wanted to avoid mathematics as she found it complex and gradually lost interest in mathematics. When I asked Nita why she joined English in her higher education, Nita replied, "*I took education with the English major because I wanted to get rid of mathematics.*" Also, her parents and teachers suggested that she could perform well in English as she had developed a good foundation. Father's suggestion was more guided by his conviction that Nita could earn good material resources and economic capital (Bourdieu, 1977, 1991) if she invested in English language learning.

Nita's story aligned with one of my reasons for joining English. I was good in English during my schooling and was quite impressed with my English teacher and idealized him as my role model. So, I wanted to be like him in future. Another reason for joining English was to avoid mathematics. Despite massive pressure from family and relatives to join science or Engineering, I chose English. I didn't join engineering because I wanted to avoid mathematics. After science and engineering, English was considered another good subject with broader scope and job prospects. On top of that, I had already dreamt of becoming an English teacher.

Choosing Language Teaching as a Career

The stories of Binesh and Surya reflected that they were somehow clear regarding their career from childhood. They studied English because they wanted to be an English teacher in future. Still, the commitment of Binesh and Surya to English language teaching developed after they joined the teacher education program. However, Nita and Kumari were not confident enough regarding their career. Only after entering the teaching practicum and working as an English teacher for a few

years did Nita decide to develop a teaching career. Whereas Kumari was confident about developing teaching as a career only after teaching for a few years as an English teacher and getting engaged in a training program titled Child Centered Level 1 funded by the school she was working. As Tsui (2007) noted, the legitimate access and opportunities to practice in learning communities and the competence so developed enhanced the identity construction of Nita and Kumari as English language teachers.

Unlike Nita and Kumari, Binesh was somehow clear about his teaching career from childhood. As he was influenced by the social, cultural, and economic capital (Bourdieu, 1991) of English language teachers, he was oriented towards education from childhood. Being a teacher was a kind of inbuilt concept. He clarified:

> *From the very childhood, I had an orientation towards education. Being a teacher was a kind of inbuilt concept. As teachers were among the few educated people in the village, people used to go to teachers' houses to solve day-to-day problems. They were leaders in the village. Even my father himself was a teacher. Because of this, while studying in grades 9 and 10, I taught at lower levels voluntarily. In addition, I studied intermediate in education, and there was a practicum as the course requirement. During the practicum, the more you teach, the better score you can get. While visiting relatives' houses, I also went to school and taught. This is how I guess; I became an informal teacher.*

His engagement in teaching, though informally, during his schooling and teacher education course showed his commitment to teaching. Norton (2008) noted that language learners invest in the target language to acquire symbolic, cultural, and material resources. Influenced by English language teachers' social and material resources, Binesh invested in English language learning and teaching from a young age.

Furthermore, even during his teacher education course, Binesh was motivated to concentrate on his study because of his desire to have a better future or gain good economic capital (Bourdieu, 1977, 1991). Binesh narrated:

> *I studied well at Bhadrapur Campus. For three years, we never attended any functions; I didn't watch football even a day. I didn't even watch a movie. I was sure that if I didn't do well, I would have to go to the village and look after cattle; that was the pressure. Returning to the village in the hinterland*

> *and living in that agrarian society would be difficult. With this feeling, I*
> *worked hard.*

These lines indicate that living in that remote, hilly region of eastern Nepal, getting engaged in subsistence farming would be difficult. He could not imagine himself doing agriculture. He could only imagine investing well in education and working as an English teacher to have a better future. Sung (2019) also presents a similar story of an English teacher named Liam from the People's Republic of China. Like Binesh, Liam's investment in English language learning was motivated by yielding good capital as a return on the investment.

The informal teaching that Binesh started during his schooling continued until he did his university teacher education course. He narrated:

> *I used to go to that school and teach there during my bachelor's education. As*
> *I developed an attachment with the teachers, they suggested the headmaster*
> *invite me to teach there as I had already gained popularity. But to join*
> *teaching formally, I had to go through the formal procedure of teacher*
> *selection like application for the job, shortlisting, written examination, and*
> *interview. I successfully completed the formal process, and in 2058 BS, I*
> *became the government of Nepal's secondary-level English teacher on a*
> *contract basis.*

These anecdotes indicate that as his family was engaged in teaching, as teachers had good cultural and social capital and were influencing the village, and as they had better life compared to other ordinary villagers, Binesh decided that he would do teaching in future. Because of that, probably consciously and unconsciously, his activities were oriented towards teaching. During his intermediate and bachelor level education, while in the village, he used to go to school and teach. Because of this, he gained popularity and won the trust of the teachers that Binesh could teach. So, when there was a vacancy in school, teachers invited him to teach as a secondary-level English teacher after the transfer of Mr Surendra, an English teacher.

Though Binesh had a commitment to teaching and used to engage in teaching from the very beginning, informally though; Kumari was not committed to teaching in the beginning. She was devoted to improving English, but not language teaching. Initially, Kumari started teaching just for survival in Kathmandu after the completion of her intermediate level in humanities faculty with an English major. The living expense was high as she lived in Kathmandu with her two siblings. And Kumari

realized that her father had heavy financial pressure. Because of that, she started teaching at Kids Heaven School in the Valley to support her father. During her teaching career, Kumari received an opportunity to participate in a training course titled Child Centered Level 1 as a participant. After the training, she realized that teaching could be a promising career. Kumari claimed:

> *From that training, I realized that a teaching career is fun. I should engage in teaching. As I enjoyed teaching, I switched from Humanities to English language education faculty with a bachelor's degree to develop my career in teaching. I did my B.Ed. from Mahendra Ratna Campus, Tahachal. If I had not received an opportunity for training at Kids Heaven School, I would not learn much about teaching and not get motivated to the profession.*

As Kumari mentioned, the training opportunity she received became her career's turning point. The access to training and the competence she developed enhanced her identity construction as a teacher (Tsui, 2007), encouraging her to join a teaching career. There she witnessed grade two students speaking fluently. Even trainers motivated them psychologically. Kumari mentioned:

> *I got motivation from there. I felt that I could do it. Even trainers from there treated us psychologically that if these five years kids with no linguistic competence in English can improve, why can't you? You can do it. In such a way, they positively motivated us. That training was not merely a training but a foundation of our career. That's what I feel now. I developed a positive outlook toward an English language teaching career from there.*

Kumari saw professional teachers and competent students in that School. She realized that teaching could be a promising career, and she could be like one of them in future. She was motivated to teach, and her commitment to teaching is reflected in switching from humanities to education faculty. Kumari's switching to the education faculty was inspired by her desire to expand the self with the expectation of acquiring a more comprehensive range of symbolic and material resources that is hitherto unattainable (Norton, 2008, 2013).

Though Kumari developed a commitment to teaching only after joining teaching and getting an opportunity for training, the story of Surya is quite different. Like Binesh, Surya developed an interest in teaching the English language from childhood. Surya mentioned that he was impressed with his basic-level teacher, who used to encourage students by giving rewards and encouragement for their success

and positively motivating students for education. From childhood, he was impressed by his teachers' commitment to improving students' education. Despite the school's minimal salary and resource-scarce environment, the teacher used to buy goods to motivate students by using his pocket money. His positive motivation, teaching style, inspiration and service to others greatly impressed him. Surya recalls the lasting impression of his teacher this way:

> *The teacher who taught me during my childhood did not have a huge salary. Even the school was not resourceful. Still, he used to buy things for students from his pocket money…. His lifestyle taught us that instead of just focusing on earning, we should also contribute through the service of others.*

Getting inspired by the contribution of his primary-level teacher, Surya wanted to be a role model in society from childhood. He reiterated, *" From childhood, I had a dream to be a role model, being a secondary-level English teacher. To fulfil that dream, I started teaching grade nine and ten students.*" Surya's stories indicated that the reason for engaging in teaching is to give back to society. During the engagement in the basic level of schooling, Surya oriented himself towards a new possibility (Wenger, 2010): serving the community through teaching in future. And these images Surya constructed for his future have influenced his identity as an English language teacher.

During his schooling, Surya found most of the English teachers authoritative and taught English without considering the level of the students. He realized that English could be taught differently, better than the existing teaching-learning approach. He mentioned:

> *During my study, when I found most of the teachers not listening to students, presenting themselves as the authority, and teaching English in a complex manner, I wanted to contribute to the field of English language education. I found most of the teachers not listening to students' concerns. I had a conviction that I could teach students remaining within their level. So, I joined teaching.*

His stories revealed that Surya wanted to join English language teaching with noble intentions. On the one hand, Surya was inspired by his teacher at the primary level; on the other, he was not satisfied with the pedagogical approaches of his teachers during his schooling. This identification and disidentification with certain teachers have a lot to do with his identity negotiation. And this identification is socially organized

through his learning experience in school (Wenger, 1998). Besides, as students of grades 9 and 10 are like soft clay whom he could positively contribute to in shaping their future, Surya joined secondary level English language teaching, despite many options available for teaching. He reaffirmed:

> *I teach students from grades nine to twelve. I don't take classes for university-level students. My dream is to have some impact on students' life. As I could contribute to students of this level well and they would remember me throughout their life, I chose to teach secondary-level students.*

Surya was impressed with the lived experience of his primary-level teacher, who had established a school in the village and taught them. The teacher was so caring and loving that he used to spend his money to buy things for students to motivate them towards learning through rewards for their success. Surya had a conviction that he could contribute to society through teaching. Surya noted:

> *During my childhood education, our locality had a shortage of teachers. Most of the teachers did not teach well. To see that, I felt like I should be a good teacher in future. I had a conviction that I would teach students differently. I can make them understand the subject matter well. From the very childhood, I had the ambition to be a good teacher.*

So, the shortage of teachers during that time and the pedagogical approaches the available teachers adopted motivated him to join teaching. He had a dream to be an icon and a role model. He claimed: *I wanted to be a role model, a hero. From the very childhood, I had a dream of being a secondary-level English teacher.* Surya's lived reality behind joining English language teaching aligns with the lived reality of Binesh. My story behind joining English language teaching is not contrary to Binesh and Surya. I joined teaching, getting inspired by my English teacher during my secondary education.

I completed my secondary education at a public school in the Syangja district. During my study in grade nine, there was a teacher named Ram sir. He was smart and fluent in English, and even his tone was near-native. I liked his way of teaching, his tone, and his personality. Hence, I had idealized him as my role model and wanted to be like Ram sir in future. After SLC though there was widespread pressure from family to join science or engineering, I joined humanities with an English major as I had aspired to be an English teacher. The participants' stories are identical to the findings of Ubaidillah et al. (2020) and Barkhuizen (2016a), who showed the impact

of imagination and imagined identity on the identity construction of English language teachers from Indonesia and New Zealand, respectively.

Investing in Imagined Identity

Analysis of the lived experience of all these English language teachers, along with my story, showed that the participants were motivated to be English language teachers from the very beginning, during schooling and the beginning phase of their teaching career. However, Darvin and Norton (2018) note that only motivation is insufficient to convert the imagined identity into reality. Instead, teachers require a high commitment to their desired goals, practices, and identities that influence and shape the whole learning process of continuous negotiation in different social relationships and structures of power. Besides motivation, teachers should be invested in the practices in their learning communities. Hence, imagined identity and investing are complementary concepts (Norton, 2008, 2013). In this light, teachers' sincere engagement in learning and development activities should be considered investing in their desired goal or dream for the future and their imagined identity. Stories of the participants' sincere engagement in teacher education and practicum, teaching-learning activities, training and development, reflection and feedback, the resultant impact on networking, and other opportunities they received as return on the investment should be understood as harvesting the return. Even Wenger (2010) maintains that teachers get access to direct experience of the regime of competence through engagement. Teachers invest their time, effort and knowledge in their learning communities and shape and reshape their professional identity through continuous negotiation. So, the engagement of participants in different development activities like teacher education and practicum, training programs, observation, reflection, and many other activities, are considered as investing in their imagined identity or dream for the future.

Teacher Education and Practicum

All the participants shared the lived story of their sincere engagement in teacher education programs and practicum, which was their investment in imagined identity (Norton, 2015), without which getting a job opportunity and constructing an identity as an English teacher would not be possible. Nita, for instance, had already developed the foundation of education in her higher secondary courses like psychology, the foundation of education, and assessment and evaluation. During plus two levels of education, the Nepali language was used as a medium of instruction in

some of the courses, but Nita and those students with a good foundation of English requested teachers to separate groups and teach them using EMI. Nita's story indicates her craving for and competence in English. Wenger (1998) noted that her identification with students having competence in English and differentiation with those students willing to study in Nepali medium defines her identity. Even as a learner, she aligned herself with the English group and attempted to negotiate her identity as a competent student in English. She received a fifty per cent scholarship at the bachelor's level as she had completed schooling with first division. Nita developed foundational knowledge of teaching methodology, phonetics and phonology, and other pedagogical content knowledge in Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.). Not only pedagogical approaches and their application but also foundational knowledge that is required in a teacher were developed during the bachelor level of education. Nita's stories revealed that B. Ed. level of education transformed her pedagogical approaches. She shared:

> *I came to know multiple techniques of teaching during my bachelor's. Probably I would apply only the lecture method if I had not done Bachelor in Education. I learned about different pedagogical approaches to teaching and their application. During the practicum, I applied whatever I learned in class. Teachers used to observe our class and give feedback. It was learning by doing kind of experience.*

Theoretical learning of different pedagogical approaches in university classrooms during teacher education and its application during practicum transformed Nita's pedagogical approaches. Nita negotiated her identity by utilizing various opportunities to engage and interact in teacher education and practicum, as Macías Villegas et al. (2020) argued. Teachers during teacher education programs and the overall learning environment contributed as the dispeller of ignorance as presented by Plato in Allegory of the Cave (Mlecko, 1982) as Nita learned many pedagogical content knowledge and skills required to join teaching.

During the practicum, Nita developed lesson plans and taught accordingly. Practicum experience also motivated her to join teaching. When I asked Nita why you joined teaching, she replied that during her bachelor there was 45 days practicum as a requirement of the course, which increased her confidence that she could teach. Practicum was one of the reasons for joining teaching. The teaching practicum has

positively influenced her in selecting teaching as a career. In my question, was practicum a life-changing moment, Nita replied:

> *I would not say life-changing. But practicum increased my confidence. Before that, I was not able to face mass. In the practicum, I taught basic-level students in a public school. There the dress code was sari. Wearing a sari and teaching in a school to basic level students gave me a kind of positive feeling that I have become a teacher; I can teach. Because of that practicum experience, I was confident to apply for teaching.*

Practicum allowed her to apply pedagogical content knowledge in the classroom. Practicum experience also increased her positive feelings towards teaching and boosted her confidence to apply for a basic-level English teacher job.

Similarly, engagement during teacher education has contributed a lot to improving reading, writing, and confidence of Binesh. Binesh was so dedicated to his education that he took three-hour additional classes from his teachers on weekends. Apart from engaging in regular activities, Binesh and his colleagues started taking voluntary classes for junior students during their bachelor's degree education. Binesh claimed: "*We first-year students started taking tuition classes of compulsory English, linguistics, and grammar to our colleagues that improved my reading and writing.*" Besides, 45 days long induction program at the university, where Binesh developed many lesson plans and other teaching materials and then micro-teaching, he participated as a student teacher at the secondary level was an excellent learning opportunity. Binesh shared:

> *I have still preserved those lesson plans that I prepared during practice teaching. When I look back to those lesson plans and reference materials – audio, video, charts, figures, and many others – I feel that we really worked hard to develop good resources. Lal Prasad sir guided us so well in developing teaching resources for a 45-day-long induction program.*

During the engagement in practicum, Binesh developed different teaching resources as a reificative process, in the words of Wenger (1998). Because of the meaningful engagement and reification (Lave & Wenger, 1991) in teacher education and practicum and successful completion on time, and as there were no other teachers completing bachelor's in English language education from his village, Binesh got an opportunity to teach as a secondary level English language teacher. He could harvest the return on his investment right after completing his bachelor's degree and at the

beginning of his master's level of education. Binesh started teaching as a secondary-level English language teacher in a school in the hilly eastern region from where he completed his SLC.

Surya also showed high commitment to his teacher education program at the bachelor's and master's levels. After completing the bachelor's level, Surya started teaching in one of the private schools in Kathmandu Valley. But while doing his master, Surya used to work in the daytime and study in the evening. The learning environment was good where veteran language education teachers used to teach. Surya completed his Master of Education with first division. He was a Nepal topper in the foundation of education, for which he received felicitation from the exam center of the university. As the return on investment (Darvin & Norton, 2018) and symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1977), Surya received the award and recognition that defined his identity as a competent English language learner.

Teaching Experience

Lived stories of my research participants showed that they developed pedagogical skills and confidence after joining teaching. When Nita and Kumari started teaching right after the beginning of the teacher education program at the bachelor's level, Surya and Binesh began their career after the completion of their bachelor's in education. Kumari started her professional career at a private school named Kids Heaven (pseudonym) in Kathmandu Valley. Through her teaching experience, she realized how institutional norms, ideology, and the principal's working style determine teaching-learning and the teachers' overall development. According to Wenger (1998), teachers engage in identity work through this kind of compliance and alignment and nonalignment with the institution's norms, values, ideologies, and directives.

While teaching at Kids Heaven, Kumari received an opportunity to participate in a training program titled Child Centered Level 1, where Kumari received an opportunity to develop teaching skills. However, Kumari could not apply the skills she learned because she was not provided with any teaching resources. Therefore, Kumari decided to resign from Kids Heaven School. After that, she applied to Readers Heaven, where she was provided with all the resources required. Within six months, Kumari performed so well that she transformed one of the challenging classes into a good class and bagged the best teacher award, a symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1977). After teaching experience at Kids Heaven, training opportunities,

and teaching at Readers Heaven, Kumari developed the skills required as a good teacher. Kumari claimed: "*When I was teaching at Readers Heaven School, I achieved the best teacher award. At that time, I had already improved my language proficiency. I had developed a certain level of English standard.*" As Wenger (1998, 2010) noted, these lines indicate that through engagement in teaching learning and training programs, Kumari had developed different tools and artefacts (language proficiency and pedagogical skills) essential to teaching the English language. She achieved an award for positively converting one of the most problematic classes and improving the students' performance as a class teacher. Teaching experience enhanced her teaching as well as communication skills.

The way Kumari shared her experience of how her teaching career enhanced her communication skill, mainly speaking, even the stories of Surya's lived reality reaffirm and validate her experience. After completing her B.Ed. from Tribhuvan University in 2065 BS, he started teaching in a private school in Kathmandu Valley, which helped him develop confidence. Surya mentioned:

> *After the completion of my B.Ed. in 2065 BS, I started teaching at a boarding school as an English and Social Studies teacher. It was Kalyan Secondary School situated at Dhapakhel. I worked there as a basic-level teacher for two years. Two years of teaching was a great learning experience for me. As I had completed my SLC from a government school that adopted Nepali as a medium of instruction, teaching in a private school that employed EMI was not easy. There I taught New Nepal English Reader and Social Studies in English medium. During that time, I used to prepare for hours to teach. With hard work, I developed confidence.*

Being disposed to the school environment at a public school where the Nepali language was used as a medium of instruction, teaching in English was challenging. But with hard work and dedication, Surya was able to develop confidence and establish himself as a teacher. He got opportunities to negotiate knowledge. During his schooling, Surya used to rote time adverbs and structures of the tense, but as a teacher, he prepared so well that he learned the application part of the tense and different grammatical structures. Surya narrated:

> *I used to memorize structures and time adverbs during my learning period, but later, when I started teaching, I learned its application. For example, when I began teaching, I first used to tell students to write daily routines and then*

> *find structures there. This is how I started teaching the application of the tense*
> *instead of just giving forms and time adverbs. I also began searching books to*
> *explore new techniques for teaching.*

Working as a teacher, Surya negotiated new techniques for teaching grammar. During his engagement in teaching-learning, Surya developed, negotiated, and adopted new knowledge (Wenger, 1998) and teaching-learning approaches to grammar. At the same time, he started exploring books with innovative pedagogical approaches and refined teaching-learning practices. Surya revealed:

> *During my college education, I only learned the patterns of grammar. But I*
> *didn't know how to properly apply those patterns or grammar structures.*
> *When I started teaching, I learned the implementation aspect of grammar. For*
> *instance, I knew only the structures of voice during my school and college*
> *days; I knew that there is active and passive voice. I learned how to convert*
> *active voice into passive and vice versa. But I was not clear about where to*
> *apply active and passive voice. After I started teaching, I learned where to use*
> *which voice and how the change in voice influences the meaning of a sentence.*
> *The same applied to tense structures as well.*

These anecdotes indicate that through engagement in teaching-learning, Surya developed confidence, negotiated knowledge, and refined his pedagogical practices (Wenger, 1998). Teaching was a great learning opportunity for him.

Binesh also reinforced how teaching experience at different levels and socio-cultural contexts enhanced his pedagogical, social, and political sensibility and helped him grow as a teacher. After completing his bachelor's and beginning his Master of Education, Binesh started his teaching career at the school in the village from where Binesh completed his SLC. Binesh also gathered teaching experience at private schools in Kathmandu Valley and the village. Binesh shared:

> *My village was in a remote area. During my teaching, I was involved in social*
> *work apart from teaching. I contributed to improvising the walking trail with*
> *the support of the Nepal Army. I made a local curriculum. Seeing my work,*
> *local politicians were jealous and scared of me. It was a challenge for them. I*
> *used to write letters to the district education office requesting funds to make*
> *school buildings. I bought computers and solar and started operating*
> *computers and printers through solar energy as there was no electricity in the*

village. I started intervention to enhance students' communication skills with the support of my colleagues.

During his stay in the village, Binesh developed coordination, communication, and negotiation skills as he initiated intervention in the social and educational sectors. Binesh mentioned: "*When I returned from village to Kathmandu, I had better political and social sensibility. I also gathered a good experience. I developed pedagogical clarity. Due to this, I was confident enough.*" Within five to seven years of teaching experience, Surya developed his competence to intervene in teacher training and development.

Binesh started intervention in teacher training establishing a training institution in collaboration with his colleagues and offering training to primary-level English teachers in different areas like teaching poetry, grammar teaching, and activity-based teaching-learning, among others. He shared his experience:

> *Till then, I had gathered a long experience. I also realized that now I can intervene in teacher training. We, like-minded friends, planned to train primary-level students in teaching grammar, poetry, drama, and activity-based teaching-learning. We started travelling to different parts of the country and offered training. We reached Gorkha's remote village to the hills of Taplejung. Concurrently we did publicity of our institution that we were running in Bagbazaar, Kathmandu. We were running training programs and other services through that institute. I was doing both classroom teaching-learning and training. I enhanced both concurrently.*

The teaching experience boosted his confidence with the knowledge and practice of different pedagogical approaches and enhanced Binesh to be a teacher trainer. Binesh and his colleagues started travelling to other parts of the country and provided training to English language teachers. The knowledge and skills Binesh developed during teaching-learning established him as a competent teacher and trainer. Because of that, despite the widespread political pressure to select other teachers, Binesh was chosen for the post of secondary-level English language teacher. His selection out of eight English teachers through different rounds of examination – written tests, classroom observation, and interview – proved his competence as an English language teacher. Binesh heard that though there was massive pressure on the chair of the teacher selection committee to choose another teacher, they selected Binesh because of his outstanding performance during the selection process. He narrated:

They selected me after many rounds of examinations: written exam, class observation, and interview. I was chosen as a secondary-level English language teacher at Birendra Secondary School(pseudonym) in 2067 BS on a contract basis. After joining the school, I heard from the head teacher that there was massive political pressure to appoint another teacher. But the head sir rejected that pressure outright because no other teachers were as competent as me. I was tired of working from morning to evening and engaging in training and development, so I applied here as a secondary-level English language teacher. Until I joined, I had specialised in training and secondary-level English language teaching.

Despite political pressure to select another teacher, his selection as a secondary-level English language teacher proves his competence. On top of that, Binesh had already established himself in teacher training. Engagement in teaching-learning enhanced his teaching-learning skills, and he started harvesting a return on investment.

Nita also shared her experience of how engagement in teaching helped her to grow as an English teacher. Nita started teaching at that school right after the beginning of the teacher education course at the bachelor level. It was a great learning opportunity for her as she developed fluency in speaking with an accent and many classroom management skills. Nita shared:

Right after my bachelor's level education began, I started teaching at Mahalaxmi Academy near my house. It was an English medium school, and it is still. As I joined teaching at a very young age and was enthusiastic about learning, I improved my oral communication, particularly fluency and accent. Besides, I learned about classroom-related problems, children's issues, and ways to tackle them. While preparing for teaching, I learned from grammar to vocabulary. That made me realize, probably, I did not study well during my schooling. Even while teaching students at the basic level, I came to learn a lot. As I had to learn first and make students learn while teaching, my teaching career enormously contributed to my learning. I felt like I was learning all those grammar structures afresh. Moreover, I also developed daily life skills like critical thinking and problem-solving. I think that I developed maturity while working there. While studying English in the education faculty and working as a teacher, I felt that both supported each other.

Nita admitted that working as an English teacher in an English medium school was a great learning experience. She received opportunities to negotiate (Wenger, 1998) her accent to pedagogical content knowledge and classroom management skills to soft skills like problem-solving and critical thinking. As Nita was studying bachelor's in education with an English major and wanted to be a teacher in future, both teaching and learning contributed to each other.

Even though her teaching career hampered her education, particularly her score in the first year, she gradually became habituated and able to balance work and study. Working as a teacher was an opportunity for learning and its application into practice. Nita stressed: "*During working time, every day was like a new learning opportunity. I applied whatever I studied during my teaching to support my study. I consider teaching as a plus point.*" As noted by Nita, teaching was an opportunity to implement theoretical and pedagogical content knowledge into practice. Nita's teaching engagement positively contributed to enhancing learning. In addition, the teaching career was also an opportunity for self-evaluation and to develop her interest in language teaching. She claimed:

> *I know language teaching is not an easy task. But I kept on learning by doing. I realized that I had not studied English in depth during my schooling. But when I started teaching, I had to understand it in-depth. So, teaching helped in my learning. Also, I developed an interest in English language teaching.*

As claimed by Nita, the more she learned, the more interest she developed in English language teaching. Teaching was an experiential learning opportunity – learning by doing – for her. Though teaching English was challenging for her initially, gradually, she developed confidence and was able to balance work and study, and both contributed to each other immensely.

Training Opportunity

Apart from engagement in teacher education and teaching-learning, participants have invested in their imagined identity and dream for the future (Norton, 2008) through the training opportunity they received. The training opportunities were influential in developing teaching-learning skills and solving immediate problems. Some training programs were very effective and precious as they provided life-learning experiences. Nita shared a unique training opportunity on positive parenting that she received while working at Lalita High School (pseudonyms):

After coming to Lalita High School, the same year I joined this school, I received an opportunity to participate in a training program from the Resource Center of the Patan area. The training program was hosted by SOS and organized by CEBIS. The resource centre approached me for a five-day residential training on Positive Parenting held at Hotel View Vrikuti. It was a training for the trainers (TOT) program on positive parenting. After receiving the training, participants were supposed to provide trainings and cascade their skills in training programs organized by CEBIS. After TOT, they managed training programs in which I facilitated almost nine training sessions for the guardians of different schools. I also provided a three-hour training session to my school's parents, which was a new learning experience. The training was basically on life skill development. The training was a great learning opportunity through which I learned how we treat children and how they should be. From the training, I realized that we expect a lot from children; we treat them as grown-ups. We do not realize that they are kids, and we should treat them according to their age level. I learned great lessons from the training, and it also transformed my behaviours, particularly in dealing with students. While providing training to parents from different schools, I also learned a lot from them. It was one of the most precious life-learning experiences that is worth sharing.

This training on positive parenting opened new opportunities to contribute as a trainer to parents of different schools and opened up possibilities for negotiating Nita's ways of dealing with students. After the training, Nita realized she was doing injustice to children by dealing with them as grownups. Nita admitted her weaknesses and changed her approach to dealing with students. Because of the opportunity to engage in a training program, Nita could negotiate, modify, and transform (Wenger, 1998) her ways of dealing with students. Chien's (2018) exploration of how Taiwanese English language teachers constructed their identities after a series of training and other development activities resemble Nita's stories. Likewise, Binesh also expressed gratitude for receiving the training of trainers (TOT) opportunity from the British Council. He acknowledged it as a great learning opportunity.

Even Kumari expressed how the training provided opportunities to negotiate learning and impact students' engagement and learning outcomes. However, Nita is also critical of how training programs are offered without proper need assessment and

acknowledgement of teaching contexts. Kumari acknowledged the second phase of TPD training on using Information, Communication, and Technology (ICT) that NCED organized during the lockdown of Covid-19. She noted:

> *The second phase of training conducted during the lockdown of COVID-19 was focused on ICT. In that training, there was a proper balance between using conventional ICT tools and new developments in ICT. Because of that, I found it to be somehow effective. Through training, I learned using Google Classroom and blogs in teaching-learning. The skills I developed are transferred to the classroom to make teaching-learning effective.*

As the training on the use of ICT was offered during the time of the COVID-19 pandemic, it became highly relevant. Google Classroom and blogs were highly effective tools for taking classes and disseminating resources. Most of the students studying in grades 11 and 12 were working, so they could not take the whole class. But platforms like Google classroom and blogs helped them to remain updated. The training brought positive transformation in teaching-learning. Students became ICT-friendly. The training also supported teachers searching for recent teaching resources, designing new teaching materials, and many other ways.

Besides, Kumari also shared "absurd" training experiences and her critical observations on training programs offered by National Centre for Educational Development (NCED). Based on her lived experiences, Kumari claimed that most of the training programs Kumari attended were not provided keeping in view the needs of the teachers; instead, they were offered based on the trainers' assumptions. Because of the top-down approach adopted, training programs turned out to be ineffective. She argued:

> *One of the reasons for training programs being ineffective is the teachers' mentality. Teachers do not want to leave their comfort zone; they don't want to change themselves. Next, the training programs are not context-appropriate. Most trainings are designed based on trainers' assumptions, not based on the classroom needs. If we want to bring transformation in teaching-learning and students' learning outcomes, we need to change the training patterns.*

From Kumari's experience, it becomes evident that the problem lay not only in how training was offered but also in the teachers' unwillingness to leave their comfort zone. In addition, the skills developed in training were not transferred to the

classroom. Because of that, training could not bring substantive changes in students' learning outcomes. Besides, training conducted after the need assessment does have a more considerable impact; however, most training programs were conducted without proper need assessment in Nepal. While sending teachers from the school to participate in training, teachers were picked randomly. Therefore, the problem lies in the whole mechanism of training activity. Kumari remarked:

> *In training, teachers are sent randomly. Whoever is closer to the head teacher is sent for training. I think the whole system has been dysfunctional; the entire system has been a failure. Besides, teachers and trainers should first have an attitude to change themselves to bring transformation. Moreover, the lack is evident even in the training syllabus. I think that training is provided for the sake of training. After my transfer to Kathmandu Valley, I attended the first phase of TPD training. While attending training, I could not find the relevance of it. I felt like why I came for training. I mean, training was not practical. Neither I learned new knowledge nor developed any new skills. It was utterly absurd.*

Kumari found that the problem in training occurred from syllabus design to problem identification, participants selection, ways of delivery, and participants' and trainers' unwillingness to come out of their comfort zone. As the problem occurred on a multidimensional scale, the whole system became dysfunctional. Kumari's experiences reaffirm the claims made by Gautam (2018) relating to the ineffectiveness of training programs.

Despite rampant lapses and the requirement for reformation of modalities and curriculum of training programs, it helped teachers develop teaching-learning skills and enhance students' learning outcomes. Contrary to Kumari's experiences, Surya's lived reality revealed that the training programs expanded the opportunities for networking and public relation. As noted by Bourdieu (1991), engagement in communities of practice enabled participants to develop cultural, economic, and social capital that further enhanced their accessibility to the regime of competence and learning opportunities. Though training programs were not flawless and could not skip criticism, participants still learned new insights from the training. Surya admitted:

> *I received an opportunity for training. Also, I started working in the scout, which developed my networking and public relation. I got the chance to meet*

many professionals in training and scout programs. Seeing them, I realized that there is a career in teaching. I should involve in teaching as I can contribute to society through teaching. I can establish myself as a professional and be renowned by engaging in teaching-learning.

Surya wanted to involve in teaching, no doubt. But participation in training and Scout programs further reinforced his dream to be a teacher. After attending training, he realized that one could also establish himself as a professional and contribute to society through teaching. In addition, Surya also learned different classroom management and student-centric teaching-learning opportunities during TPD training offered by NCED. He learned about various games and group activities like Gallery Work, Strip Story, and many others. Surya Shared:

I had an opportunity to attend a TPD training offered by NCED, where we were taught about Gallery Work. Gallery Work is a teambuilding activity in which students jointly read any topic and develop figures, draw main points, and graphs on a chart paper. When they finish their work, they paste it on the wall, and another group gives critical feedback. Another game that I learned is Stripe Story. In Stripe Story, a story is broken down into parts, and then students are allowed to arrange paragraphs and sentences into a logical sequence to develop a complete story. These are some of the activities that I learned in NCED training. Later, when I used these techniques in my class, I found students actively participating in these activities.

These training programs offered by NCED provided opportunities to network and socialization, as well as enhanced pedagogical skills and classroom management. Teachers learned different activities relating to student-centred teaching and learning. Apart from NCED, even District Education Office (DEO) led training has been fruitful in developing Surya as an English teacher. Those training concentrated mainly on glitches faced by teachers, students' learning issues, and ways to tackle them. Surya mentioned:

District Education Office (DEO) runs training programs focusing on teachers' problems, students' learning issues, and ways to tackle those issues. During the training, they also showcase a model of dealing with different chapters in which teachers feel problems. From that also, I have learned a lot.

The training focused on the problems teachers face in day-to-day teaching-learning, and teaching skills positively contributed to teachers. The model of teaching that

trainers showcased has been fruitful. From the participants' stories, it became evident that most training programs are conducted based on the trainers' assumptions and without proper need assessment, resulting in training being less impactful. But those training programs focused on contextual and teachers' needs with appropriate need assessment before the training are impactful. As noted by Kumari, reformation in the whole training system, including needs assessment, delivery, syllabus, monitoring, and cascading the knowledge and skills after the training, is required to make the training programs impactful.

Engagement in Observation, Reflection, and Feedback

Mutual support, observation, reflection, and feedback have been instrumental in transforming English language teachers' teaching practices, as Nita, Binesh, and Surya mentioned. Though Kumari has not shared much about the influence of reflection and feedback, I have learned from observation of my colleagues' classes and feedback from parents, students, administrators, and colleagues during my school and tertiary education. Observation, reflection and feedback emerged as crucial components in teacher development and identity construction, as noted by Chien (2018a). For instance, after joining the public school in Kathmandu Valley, Binesh got an opportunity to visit different US schools and participate in two-month-long courses there. During his visit to the USA, Binesh observed teaching-learning approaches practised there and learned about the pedagogical approaches adopted in the USA. Through observation, Binesh developed new insights into teaching-learning. Besides that, Binesh initiated an exchange program and invited friends as volunteer teachers from the USA and Israel. The observation has been instrumental in updating new teaching-learning approaches for Binesh. He mentioned: "*When volunteer teachers were teaching in Nepal, I observed their classes; they also observed me teaching in my class.* By engaging in exchange programs, observation, reflection, and feedback, Binesh kept updating his pedagogical approaches.

Nita narrated one incident that she underwent during the beginning of her career in which she received feedback from a parent regarding her teaching practice. She revealed:

> *I started my career as a basic-level English language teacher at Mahalaxmi Academy, situated in Lubhu. During those days, I was not mature enough. But still, I had confidence that I could teach. So, every day was a learning phase for me. As you noted, I used to speak a little faster at the beginning of my*

teaching career. I realized this when a guardian talked to the principal about this matter. It was just the first month of my teaching. At that time, I used to teach classes two to five. A parent of a grade three student, who was my friend's aunt and knew me very well, came to complain about my teaching. She reported that her child could not understand me as I spoke too fast. That made me realize that I was dealing with kids and not talking to my friends.

When the parent came to the office with a complaint, the principal invited Nita to the office and suggested her to speak slowly as students could not grasp her. The principal took comments from the guardian positively and gave her constructive suggestion to slow down. Later, even the principal observed her class and confirmed that Nita had a problem, as remarked by the parent. She shared: "*After the complaint, the principal came to my class to observe my teaching. After the observation, he informed me that I spoke fast and suggested me to speak slowly.*" After the principal's observation and feedback on her speaking, Nita realized she might have spoken fast due to inadequate preparation. Nervousness might have led her to speak quickly. Therefore, Nita started preparing well before getting into the classroom. She also became mindful of her ways of speaking, and ultimately, she improved her speaking habits. Nita admitted the positive impact of the principal's observation and feedback on her class and said, "*such incidents and activities helped me a lot*" to improve my teaching-learning practices. Reflection and feedback helped Nita to negotiate her teaching-learning practices. Nita also shared how she improved her teaching through observation, reflection, and feedback during her teaching practice. She admitted her improvement through peer teaching, reflection, and feedback during teaching practice.

Surya also shared his experience collaborating with colleagues, particularly in English language teaching, to solve problems and share new insights. Mainly during question paper development, teachers sit together and discuss their question sets, get insights from others, and provide feedback to colleagues. Surya revealed:

During the finalization of the question papers, English teachers from basic and secondary levels sit together and check questions. We review the papers, give critical feedback, and take feedback from them. When basic-school teachers face problems, I provide feedback to solve the issues. They also share their experience. This is how we learn from each other.

Surya's lived experience is that reflection, feedback and sharing among colleagues are instrumental to teacher professional development and negotiation of identity. Though

Kumari didn't share much about observation, reflection, and feedback, the other three participants and I have experienced learning through these development activities. Through engagement in different development activities in communities of practice (Wenger, 1998), teachers invested in their imagined identity to gain desired capital in future (Darvin & Norton, 2018; Norton, 2008).

Return on the Investment: Subject Experts

Stories of all these participants revealed that sincere engagement and investment in teacher education and communities of practice through observation, reflection, and feedback during their teaching career and engagement in training and development activities transformed participants' identities from private school teachers to the secondary-level English teacher at public school, teacher trainer, curriculum developer, and subject experts. Teachers' engagement and investment in materializing their dream for the future (Norton, 2013) has led them beyond what they had initially imagined being. The same applied to me as well. Though I began my career as a secondary-level English language teacher at a private school, my engagement in teaching-learning, further education, and engagement in different development activities led me to be a teacher educator at a reputed university in Nepal. Though I was influenced by my secondary-level English teacher during my secondary level education and had idealized him as my role model and wanted to be like him in future, the more I invested in my education and development activities, the better possibilities I saw and grabbed those opportunities and finally became teacher educator. I ended up being a different person than what I had imagined initially. However, though I'm engaged in a tertiary level of education, particularly teacher education, my dream to be a successful teacher remained constant. In the case of my participants, though they have achieved better opportunities and reached greater heights than they had imagined initially, they are engaged in the profession they aspired to engage in.

Nita shared that she developed professional competence and maturity after long engagement in teacher education, teaching practice, engagement in teaching-learning activities, and reflection and sharing in communities of practice. Then when there was an opportunity for public school teaching through the TSC examination, Nita appeared for the exam and was finally selected on a competitive basis. Out of ten shortlisted candidates, Nita could remain in the second position on a merit basis after the written examination and interview process. She considers her selection as a

secondary-level public school English language teacher a "*great achievement*" and a "*turning point*" in her career. Nita shared:

> *Ten candidates were shortlisted for the interview through a written*
> *examination for seven teachers required in Lalitpur. For the reserved quota of*
> *two female teachers, five were shortlisted. But after the interview, I was*
> *selected in the open quota for the second position on a merit basis. Though*
> *she had no privilege of additional points based on her experience working in a*
> *private school, she was selected. However, other public-school teachers*
> *working on a contract basis could earn points. Still, I was selected in the*
> *second rank. So, it was my outstanding achievement. I felt like, without any*
> *privilege, I was selected. It was a turning point in my career.*

As Nita had already worked at a private school as a secondary-level English language teacher for a long time, she could be selected through the TSC examination on her first attempt. She credited her teaching experience for this achievement. Nita noted:

> *I was selected through the TSC examination due to my teaching experience.*
> *During teaching, I got an opportunity to apply the theoretical knowledge I had*
> *received through teacher education. Teaching was a learning-by-doing kind of*
> *experience which supported me professionally to become what I have become*
> *today.*

As teaching-learning was an opportunity to implement her pedagogical content knowledge and learning by doing kind of experience, Nita was able to be selected through the TSC examination. The investment she made through teacher education and engagement in teaching learning and other development activities is harvested as a secondary-level English language teacher in a public school in Nepal.

Apart from her new identity as a tenure track secondary-level English language teacher in a public school in Nepal, Nita has also developed professional maturity because of her prolonged engagement in teaching-learning and other development activities. She noted:

> *I think now I have achieved professional maturity. Previously I was a bit*
> *emotional; I used to react to students quickly. But these days, even though*
> *students react, I try to explore why they behave the way they behave. In the*
> *past, sometimes I used to counter-react to students' reactions. But these days,*
> *instead of responding quickly, I try to think of their friends' circle, family, and*

different circumstances that led them to react that way and treat them accordingly.

Her professional maturity is evident in her ways of dealing with students' problems. Instead of promptly reacting to students' issues, she now explores the reason behind the problem and tries to find a long-term solution. Grade nine first girl's deteriorating education and her response to it to solve the problem denotes how professionally mature Nita has been. Nita shared:

A few days ago, I heard about the affair of grade nine's first girl whose study was gradually degrading. One student shared about his love affair with her. In the past, I used to invite students to my office and scold them in such incidents taking it negatively. A few days back, I called her to my office and inquired about her study and the reason behind her deteriorating education. The girl straightly talked about her affairs which affected her study. In the past, I used to call parents and inform them about such incidents. But these days, I counsel students myself. After counselling, the student expressed her commitment to improving her study, and her dedication is reflected in her performance. Through this incident, I realized that students' issues can be addressed through counselling. I developed this confidence. Engaging in such incidents, I have gained professional maturity.

This incident reflects that Nita is not only an English language teacher but also a counsellor. Nita has transformed her dealing with students due to her long engagement in teaching-learning practices, and now she has achieved professional maturity.

Because of professional competence and maturity, Nita won the Curriculum Development Centre's (CDC) trust and started engaging herself in curriculum evaluation and material development as an English subject expert. She maintained:

The Curriculum Development Center (CDC) officer invited me to do textbook-related work. First, he called me and assigned me as a reviewer of an English text for grade six. He had assigned me to review a few chapters. So, my teammates and I read the book thoroughly and gave feedback. The second time, right after the lockdown, we received another responsibility to review grade four and seven English textbooks. I'm listed in CDC's roster as a member of the panel of subject experts.

Apart from contributing to CDC as a reviewer and material developer as a subject Expert in English, Nita has also contributed to TV teaching and different activities of the Nepal English Language Teachers' Association (NELTA). All these engagements have helped her network with the professional community and receive other professional responsibilities, thereby constructing her identity as an English subject expert.

Kumari has also achieved different responsibilities from District Education Office (DEO) and different resource centres. She received an invitation as a resource person for the Training of the Trainers (TOT) programs. Kumari shared:

> *I used to train teachers in TOT programs, and those trainees were supposed to cascade their knowledge and skills through their resource centres as trainers. This kind of engagement enhanced my career as a professional teacher. Those two years in the village were the most crucial moments of my professional life, where I achieved the opportunity to implement my professional vision and received many development opportunities.*

Apart from TOT, Kumari also received an invitation for TPD training as one of the trainers. Kumari contributed a lot to the transformation of education during her two years teaching career as a tenure-track secondary-level English language teacher in a public school situated in her birthplace. Kumari was facilitated and rewarded for her contribution. She noted:

> *During my stay in the village, I was rewarded for whatever I contributed. Mahila Shashaktikaran Samuha [Women Empowerment Group] organized a felicitation program. They gave all respect for my contribution, which strongly motivated me to advance in my professional career. Working at the village in a public school was the most crucial moment of my professional career, in which I achieved a lot.*

Due to Kumari's contribution to transforming education in the public school in her village, the local community acknowledged her contribution by felicitating her. Kumari developed good cultural capital as a return on her sincere investment in teaching-learning and other academic activities like conducting the SLC exams smoothly, improving students learning and others. Similarly, Binesh has also received many opportunities to contribute as an expert through the National Assessment for Students' Achievement (NASA) and the Education Review Office (ERO). He initially developed research skills through his engagement in research activities at NASA and

ERO. Binesh also implements the outcome of those research activities in teacher training. Besides, as an expert, Binesh has been involved in a national project of integrated curriculum. Through engagement in communities of practice and investing in their imagined identity, all the participants except Surya became teacher trainers, curriculum designers, and subject experts. They achieved beyond what they had initially imagined. Stories of Nita, Kumari and Binesh reaffirmed the findings of Barkhuizen (2016a), where he presents how Sela, an immigrant from the Pacific Island of Tonga, initially imagined being an English language teacher of adults in her community and finally ended up being an English language teacher in a school where students from a privileged white community study, a different identity than she had initially imagined.

Chapter Summary

Stories of English language teachers' schooling, their learning environment at home and school, teacher education and practicum, and training and development opportunities that the participants received revealed how they initially dreamed of becoming a certain kind of person and started investing in it. Lived experiences of the participants indicated that imagination and imagined identity influenced the identity construction of English language teachers. Their imagination is triggered by the sociocultural environment and the teachers who taught them. In addition, family environment and economic condition also influenced their choices. Once teachers imagined becoming a certain kind of person, they engaged in development activities with a desire to possess the required skills and knowledge to have legitimate access to the desired community. However, though they dreamed of becoming a certain kind of person in the projected future, they became different from what they had imagined initially. To conclude, imagination and imagined identity greatly influenced English language teachers' identity development in the context of Nepal.

CHAPTER VII

SOCIOCULTURAL ENVIRONMENT AND AGENCY

In this chapter, I report the answer to the third research question related to the interaction between social structure and agency in the identity construction of English language teachers from Nepal. This chapter presents different layers of context – micro, meso, and macro – that range from the intimate family environment to the influence of learning environment at schools and colleges, work environment, and macro level, cultural, policy and national political factors influencing teachers' identity construction. The chapter presents how participants have developed the behaviours required to participate in sociocultural activities through engagement in social practices and historical situatedness, as noted by Norton and Toohey (2011). The chapter also illustrates how English language teachers exercise agency despite the constraints from different layers of contextual realities. First, the chapter discusses sociocultural conditioning and then presents how teachers interacted and negotiated with the context, exercising agency and negotiating their identities. Participants have learned and developed their identities through their mundane practices in everyday life, educational institutions, and workplaces (Fox, 2000). During the interaction process, participants and the communities of practice have constituted each other. As a living curriculum (Wenger, 2011), participants have developed themselves through engagement in different communities of practice such as family, university, and workplaces, which this chapter presents.

My Parents had a Dream to Educate Us

All the participants' stories revealed the massive influence of the family environment during childhood in constructing their identities. As Wenger (1998) maintained, participants' alignment with the directives and norms of the family influenced their learning and identities. For instance, Surya, raised in a lower-middle-class family dependent on subsistence farming in the eastern hills of Nepal, received good support from the family. Though his parents were not highly educated, they knew the importance of education and tried their best to provide quality education to their children. His parents had a dream to educate their children. Surya noted:

> *My parents always encouraged us to education. Though my parents did not*
> *receive educational opportunities, they used to say that we needed to complete*

at least a university education. They believed that education was the most crucial aspect of our life. They keep encouraging us till now. My parents had a dream to educate us; to fulfil their dreams, we studied sincerely. They provided us with an excellent environment to study at home. They supported us and, as far as possible, provided all the resources required for our education.

Despite being born and raised in a lower-middle-class family with an average economic base, his parents' consciousness of the importance of education and their full support encouraged Surya to dedicate himself to his education. Parents had a dream to educate them, and they sincerely honoured their parents' dreams and their struggle to invest in their children's education. Parents provided all the required resources for their education.

Another participant, Kumari, who was born and raised in a lower-middle-class family in a rural village in the eastern hills of Nepal, shared the identical lived reality relating to family support in her education. Although Kumari was born in a culturally diverse community, she was raised in a "*strict and typical brahmin environment.*" Here with the phrase strict and typical brahmin environment, Kumari is trying to mean that education was given prime importance in the family. Kumari elaborated:

Though Chhetri and Brahmin dominated my village, the Rai community populated the neighbouring villages, and the Rai language and culture greatly influenced the surrounding. However, we were brought up in a strict and typical Brahmin environment. Our parents always pressurized us for education and provided the environment required for that. In that sense, though my parents were just literate, they were completely aware of the importance of education.

In Nepal's context, the Brahmin community prioritized education, and her family could not remain untouched. She was raised in a rigorous Brahminical environment, and her parents provided all the support required for her education. Despite being just literate, her parents knew the importance of education and provided their children with the necessary resources. Kumari added:

He sacrificed a lot for our education. He used to tell us the importance of education and always motivated us. From the beginning, he believed daughters should be educated and enter the government service. Being guided and encouraged by his philosophy, we studied accordingly. Though my

parents were not well educated, they were aware of the importance of

education and provided us with good schooling and education.

Nepal's bureaucracy and education sector is almost dominated by employees from communities influenced by Brahmin tradition. Getting a higher degree and joining a government job has been a norm in brahmin culture. She could not remain untouched by those familial and cultural norms. Brahmin ideologies that privilege education has a hegemonic influence on her learning in the form of the family norm. As a structured and structuring structure (Maton, 2008), Brahmin cultural ideology has influenced the actions and motivations of Kumari's parents. Kumari's parents and her ways of thinking and behaviour were controlled, organized and stabilized by the brahmin ideology that privileges education over other activities (Darvin & Norton, 2015). Kumari's lived reality reaffirmed the findings of Fan and de Jong (2019) and Teng (2020) relating to the influence of ideology on teachers' behaviours. Kumari's parents sacrificed a lot for their children's education as they wanted their children, particularly daughters, to join government service. Apart from providing schooling for education, though Kumari's father was not highly educated, he could support Kumari in junior classes. Kumari acknowledged that despite a lack of "*higher education, he was very good at mathematics*" and encouraged and assisted Kumari during her basic education. Besides, Kumari also received good support from brothers, cousin-brothers, and other family members.

Binesh also shared a similar kind of supportive learning environment during his childhood that contributed to his learning, though he also used to engage in household chores at times. During harvesting season, his parents used to involve in agricultural activities, and his primary responsibilities were cooking and cleaning dishes. As his mother had taught the measurement of water, salt, and other spices, Binesh could easily cook. Binesh stressed that sometimes he "*used to go home during tiffin break and wash dishes.*" Though Binesh engaged in household activities, his struggles in front of his colleagues were insignificant. As his classmates had to pay 40 rupees as tuition fees during their secondary education, they used to carry loads from the city as porters to pay their tuition fees. Binesh claimed:

Almost 50 per cent of our colleagues used to work as porters to pay off their

tuition fees. They used to carry bhari [loads] from Dharan. During that time,

we used to pay 40 rupees as tuition fees, which was a high amount for our

colleagues. They used to remain absent for 4/5 days every month to carry

loads from Dharan. They used to get paid one rupee a KG. After carrying a 40 KG load, they used to earn 40 rupees to pay tuition fees. They were compelled to remain absent to pay tuition fees.

Binesh compares his economic condition with his colleagues' condition during his secondary-level education. Though he had to do family chores and look after livestock, he didn't have to carry loads. His father regularly paid tuition fees for his education from his salary. As Wenger (1998) mentioned, Binesh defined himself by differentiating himself from other friends who used to carry loads to pay tuition fees. Binesh constructed his identity as a learner through the process of differentiation. Comparatively, Binesh received a better learning environment at home. He completed his secondary level of education at a public school in the village that was established on his grandfather's initiative.

Though his grandfather was not highly educated, he knew the importance of education and took the initiative to establish a school in the village. All his family members were educated: his father received matriculation, and his uncle was a university graduate now working as a headmaster in a school. Binesh acknowledged that his father and mother "*used to encourage*" him to education. Though his mother was "*illiterate,*" she knew the "*importance of education*" and always encouraged him to learn. Besides, as there were no other schools in nearby villages, children from his relatives, particularly cousins, used to stay in his house for education, which made an excellent learning environment at home. He stressed: "*As there were no other schools in neighbouring villages, people from far away, particularly my maternal uncle's sons and other relatives, used to stay in our house for education.*" Because of this, Binesh was always encouraged to education; therefore, he completed his schooling with a relatively good score. He belongs to the Thapa Chhetri community that privileged education and job, which obviously influenced his education. Binesh claimed:

Our village is situated in a slightly tilted hilly area of eastern Nepal where 50 to 60 houses from the Thapa Chhetri community are settled. There was an excellent academic culture in our village. People were motivated to education primarily for job opportunities. We did not have much fertile land, and the primary source of income was the job. From the time of dad, our economy was dependent on the job. Probably because of this kind of mentality, with full family support, I completed my school level of education in the village.

His lines indicate that Binesh had "*full family support*" for his education. As noted by Kumari, Binesh's principal motivation for education was to get a good job in the future. Besides, the sociocultural background in which Binesh was brought up and the dominant ideology that it upheld influenced the choices and practices of Binesh and his parents as a norm and common sense (Darvin & Norton, 2015). The sociocultural background that privileged education was highly supportive of the education of Binesh.

Nita's family background is quite identical to that of Binesh. Nita also belonged to the Chhetri community; her parents were in government service. Born and brought up on the outskirt of Kathmandu Valley, Nita received an excellent learning environment and opportunities to study at private English medium schools. Both father and grandfather served as government employees in different capacities. Regarding economic conditions, Nita never faced any hurdles and did not have to do anything except read during her schooling. She claimed:

> *The environment to study at home was perfect. Sometimes we were scolded for not focusing on study. We did not have any problems at home. We were blessed with that. The environment was perfect. All three siblings got an opportunity to study in private schools.*

The opportunities Nita received to study at private schools with English medium of instruction helped her improve her English. She was blessed with a good learning environment and family support for her education. Nita added:

> *As both grandfather and father were government employees, we had no problems. There was an excellent environment to study at home. Dad used to support us a lot in learning. But we used to get scared of him in case of study. He used to watch us. Mother used to visit our school and get feedback on our studies regularly. We were threatened that our father and mother would come to school and complain or punish us if we did not study well. Therefore, we used to get scared.*

This anecdote indicates how privileged Nita was regarding her study. Neither was there any financial pressure at home, nor she had to engage in any household chores. She received the opportunity to study in a private school, and her parents regularly took updates of Nita visiting her school, creating an excellent learning environment. Nita's family's good economic capital (Bourdieu, 1977) provided access to an ideal learning environment. Stories of all these participants proved that parental support and

a good learning environment during schooling were instrumental in who they are now. Besides, the familial norms influenced by brahmin cultural practices and ideologies positively influenced their learning engagement. As Kayi-Aydar (2015) revealed in her research how ethnic identity influenced the identity construction of English language teachers, the cultural background of my research participants also influenced the priorities they provided on education and teaching-learning engagement of participants, thereby, their identity construction as teachers.

Economic Condition and Accessibility

Within parental support and the learning environment at family, another factor influencing is the economic condition and the accessibility it provides for education. Stories of Nita revealed that belonging to a family with good financial capital (Bourdieu, 1984), she had the privilege of learning at a private school with a quality education that employed English as a medium of instruction. The good economic capital of her family provided her access (Bourdieu, 1991) to quality education in private school. Kumari also noted that she belonged to a "*middle-class family*" and never experienced hurdles caused by economic factors during her schooling. However, after completing her school education and beginning her bachelor's degree, she experienced financial constraints to maintain her living in Kathmandu Valley. Because of that, she had to start teaching due to economic reasons. Kumari confessed:

> *After beginning my bachelor's degree education, I started my teaching career. The reason for beginning teaching was a financial need. As I came from a village, I had the challenge of maintaining my living by working. My brother also came to Kathmandu for higher education, so my parents faced financial pressure. We required additional economic sources to fulfil the need. Hence, I started teaching.*

Kumari's stories about the beginning of her career revealed that she initially joined teaching to support the family as her parents faced a financial crunch after the arrival of other siblings to Kathmandu for higher studies.

In his lived reality, Binesh also indicated the economic condition of his family and how it influenced his learning activities. The sensory details he used about his school education revealed his family's financial status. Binesh shared:

> *We used to carry our books in our hands. We did not have bags. Mostly we used to collect books from senior students because of the shortage of money. Our school used to be dusty as it was made from mud. At that time, Peace*

> *Corps volunteers used to teach in our school. Mary Center, who passed away*
> *recently, had established one building through her donation, and we used to*
> *study in that building.*

This anecdote reveals not only the physical infrastructure and learning environment at school but also the economic condition of Binesh. The sensory details of *"carry our books in our hand"* and the lived reality of collecting *"books from seniors"* clearly depicted the economic condition of Binesh. His use of the pronunciation "we" indicates that most of his colleagues' lived reality was identical. Another incident he endured on the last day of SLC struck his mind with class consciousness and accessibility. After completing SLC, some of his colleagues went to the city on the same day to watch a movie and buy a few books. But Binesh had to carry loads on his back and return to his village. The incident was very upsetting to him. He compared himself with those colleagues and realized that "*economic factor is also determinant in one's life*," without economic capital, one cannot access quality education. As Bourdieu (1986) noted, Binesh realized how financial capital could provide power and access to quality education.

Though the economic condition of his family was not sound, it was not as severe as many of his colleagues. Many of his colleagues used to go to the city to carry loads as porters to pay tuition fees. But as Binesh's father was working as a basic-level teacher, his father used to pay tuition fees out of his salary. However, in his stories of university education, Binesh revealed that Biensh and his friend used to buy "*potato and green leaves*" most of the time as those vegetables were comparatively cheaper. Even on his menu, there used to be only one item, particularly rice and vegetable, in most cases. During his M.Ed. study in Kirtipur also, Binesh struggled a lot. When most of his friends used to concentrate on their studies, Binesh was compelled to take tuition classes for survival. Binesh claimed:

> *During my M.Ed. I used to go for additional classes. I taught home tuition to*
> *two grade 11 students, which gave me confidence. I taught a major English*
> *course, and students completed the subject successfully. Thus, I gradually*
> *developed confidence that I could teach.*

Binesh shared that due to a lack of sound economic capital, he was compelled to take home tuition, which hampered his education. Binesh could not secure a good score as that of his colleagues. Despite that, because of the teaching experience, Binesh developed confidence so that he was capable of working as a teacher. Like Kumari,

even Binesh joined teaching because of the economic constraints during his higher education. Though Darvin and Norton (2018) presented the concept of power as language learners' accessibility to the target community and native English speakers where learners could practice communication, the concept of power and access in the context of Nepal relates to economic condition and affordance to a good learning environment. The concept of power that Norton developed through her study of language learners in the immigrant context of Canada does not adequately address Nepal's contextual reality. In addition, Norton's concept of power is influenced by the monolingual ideology that privileges native speakers of English.

Learning Environment at School

The learning environment during schooling and university education emerged as another prominent factor influencing English language teachers' professional development and identity construction. Vygotsky (1978) considered learning as a social practice. In line with Vygotsky, participants have also shared their experience of the influence of the learning environment at school. Sharing his experience during schooling, Binesh claimed that the learning environment was not good; to substantiate his claim, he referred to absenteeism and the massive dropout rate of students. Binesh claimed:

> *The school's educational environment was not that good. Many of our colleagues dropped out of school from grade five to grade 10. The ones who reached grade 10 were very minimum. Out of 21, only four of us completed intermediate (plus two), only two completed bachelor, and I am the only one to achieve master's level.*

This anecdote indicates that there were many issues in schooling, due to which the pass rate was extremely minimal. Binesh believed that it was because of the absence of a conducive learning environment: neither the pass rate of the students was reasonable nor could students develop a good foundation of education. The impact of lack of good foundation is reflected even in their bachelor's and master's results.

Besides, the physical environment at school was terrible. The school building was made up of mud, and the floor used to be extremely dusty. Even the desk benches were covered in dust. Highlighting the physical environment, Binesh shared that "*there used to be dust on the floor of the classroom.*" On top of that, "*classrooms were dark,*" where "*teachers used to write on the blackboard using chalk,*" and even "*classrooms were not furnished well.*" Regarding teaching-learning, Binesh claimed

that "*learning was not given priority*" and that "*nobody enquired about the absenteeism of the students*." Besides, classes rarely occurred after the tiffin break due to a shortage of teachers. The fact that Binesh used to study in a building made out of a Peace Corps volunteer donation indicates the government's inadequate investment in education. Binesh added that *"corporeal punishment was rampant"* during his schooling. Binesh also *"doesn't know if teachers were given any development opportunities and mentoring relating to pedagogical approaches and classroom management."* Stories of Binesh indicated that poor performance of students mainly occurred because the teaching-learning environment in school was not good: grammar translation and rote memorization of stories was the method adopted by teachers. Binesh still remembers his teacher teaching him grammar during his basic level of education. He narrated:

> I remember studying the tense in Nepali as chhu, chhau, chhan chhas [time adverbs in Nepali] as simple present tense. We learned this way. Teachers used to tell these time adverbs and say sentences that come with these time adverbs are simple present. I remember memorizing the tense in Nepali. I also remember rote learning some vocabulary.

This anecdote revealed that Binesh learned English, particularly the grammar portion, in Nepali. Besides, rote memorization of spelling and translation of word meaning into Nepali was heavily employed. Mainly deductive method and Nepali medium of instruction were used in grammar teaching. And because of the influence of school-level education, Binesh prefers the deductive method of grammar teaching instead of the inductive approach. As noted by Norton and Toohey (2011), the sociocultural environment during Binesh's education influenced his pedagogical choices and classroom behaviours. Participation of Binesh in his classroom activities as a student consequently shaped his actions as a teacher.

Sharing her learning environment during primary school, Nita noted that her study at a private school in Lalitpur set the foundation of her English. Nita found a highly positive learning environment in that school where students were encouraged to speak English. Though she had trouble communicating in English initially, she gradually got habituated. Nita noted:

> The school was declared an English-speaking zone. We had to speak in English all the time in school. During the first few months, I found it challenging to cope with the environment. Even volunteer teachers from the

UK used to teach there. When they used to speak to me, I used to look at their faces and guess what they meant during the beginning days. I hardly used to understand them. But gradually, I got accustomed to the new environment. I started understanding them and was able to communicate in English. The school was outstanding.

Nita credited Care Top (pseudonym) for setting the foundation of her English language competence. The school was declared an "English-speaking zone" where she received an opportunity to practice communication with native English speakers. Nita confessed that in the beginning, she had difficulty understanding the tone of native speakers, so she used to guess by looking at their faces, but gradually she got accustomed to their communication and was able to interact with them. She shared one incident where she could not understand the concept because of the language barrier. Nita confessed that initially, she "*hardly used to understand the concept*" and *" had made all the mistakes that time."* Because of that, the volunteer teacher invited Nita to the principal's office and taught her the concept of nouns with utmost love and care, which impressed her a lot. However, Nita struggled to understand the teacher because of the language barrier. She noted:

Due to the language barrier, I understood only half of the words. I was not capable of understanding everything. I understood from what she wrote and from her facial expression. I understood the gist of what she wanted to say. When we faced difficulty understanding her, she used to deal with us individually. From that, I realized that such individual care in teaching is also possible. That's what I realized.

The individual care and support to students, which is highly crucial in learning, was provided to students during her primary school. But the English-speaking zone and the native English speakers' teaching had somehow hindered her cognitive development initially. However, she got accustomed to the environment gradually. Nita considered that the learning environment in that school established the foundation of her communication skills in English.

In addition, Nita also received good exposure during her basic level of education, which was crucial in setting the foundation of her English. Nita acknowledged:

We were allowed to conduct assemblies. We were the senior class. The school was up to four, and it was gradually growing every year. We were given much

> *responsibility. There were many good things which I can't even explain. The teachers' behaviour and caring nature were highly remarkable.*

The loving and caring environment and exposure to conducting different events, such as assembly, boosted Nita's confidence. She acknowledged that her study at Care Top was a cornerstone in setting the foundation of her communication skills. As noted by Darvin and Norton (2018), access to sociocultural interaction with native English speakers helped Nita expand her linguistic capital. The economic prosperity of Nita's family provided access to an excellent language-learning environment that enabled her to set the foundation of English.

However, Surya's learning experience is quite different from Nita's. Nita was privileged to access a good learning environment, being born and raised in an upper-middle-class family in Kathmandu Valley. But Surya's lived reality is quite different. Born and raised in a middle-class family in a remote village in the mid-western hills of Nepal, Surya did not have access to a good learning environment. Though there was a recently established primary school near his village, it did not have its own building or study classrooms. Surya used to study on the open ground under the sun. Even textbooks were not available. Only two teachers used to teach all the students. Reflecting on his primary level of education, Surya confessed:

> *Near my house, there was a recently established primary school. But the school did not have buildings and classrooms to take classes. We used to study on the open ground under the sun. There were only two teachers back then. I joined the primary level of education in the year of establishment of that school in 2049 BS. At that time, we used to study on the ground, and even textbooks were not available.*

The learning environment of Surya during the primary level of education was horrible. Only two teachers taught Surya during his primary level of education. The teaching-learning environment was like grade teaching; even students from different levels were kept together and taught due to the shortage of teachers. Stressing the teaching-learning approaches during the basic level of education, Surya revealed:

> *Mostly teachers used to make us write to improve our handwriting. Their focus was on writing, particularly handwriting. As there were five classes and only two teachers, they used writing to engage students in activities. At that time, there was a new trend in teaching and learning. Even the curriculum was recently changed. However, we did not get a chance to study according to*

the latest trend. Mostly we used to do self-study and peer learning. This is how we self-improved ourselves and moved ahead in education.

Surya's anecdote revealed that the shortage of teachers influenced the teaching-learning approaches of the teachers. Teachers were compelled to engage students by giving them writing assignments. Though the teaching-learning practice and the curricula were changed in the post-democratic period, Surya could not experience that change. Because of the resource-scarce environment, Surya engaged in self-study and peer learning. Surya improved his education through personal and peer efforts. However, after a few years, buildings were made, and textbooks were made available.

Surya received a better learning environment during his secondary level compared to his primary level. Surya studied in a supportive learning environment. Even society provided the utmost support to schools though few political problems hindered teaching-learning as it was the decade of Maoist conflict in Nepal. Surya revealed:

I studied in a very supportive environment. Even from society, there was good support for the school. We were many students during secondary. The only problem was that classes were irregular, the school used to get closed abruptly, and teachers were not able to present in the classroom on time because of the Maoist conflict.

Apart from the negative influence of the Maoist conflict, particularly the school's abrupt closure, the teaching-learning environment was good. In terms of learning opportunities, Surya considered the secondary level of education as the golden period of his life. Surya developed the foundation of reading and writing skills during his secondary education. He acknowledged that teachers taught them "*skills to write an answer to the questions during the secondary level.*" He received opportunities to develop oral communication skills as "*teachers started bringing audio tapes and made listening practice.*" Surya also engaged himself in speaking in front of his colleagues during assembly, participated in role-play, and "*practised describing maps and charts.*" However, the learning environment was dominated mainly by rote learning that entirely relied on textbooks and teachers' notes. Surya revealed:

Regarding the availability of resources, we could get only textbooks. There were no extra books and reference materials available. Even the library facility was not there in the school. We did not tend to search for new books.

> *Generally, we used to read textbooks and notes provided by teachers and*
> *search notes prepared by teachers and read.*

The reliance on textbooks and resources provided by teachers was influenced by the evaluation system of that time. As summative evaluation was in practice, students engaged in rote memorization of textbooks and notes; however, the tendency to read additional reference materials was lacking.

Similarly, Kumari also studied in a public school situated in a rural village in the eastern hills of Nepal. She completed her primary education in a strict environment at a school near her house. Head sir, who was also an English teacher, used to maintain strong discipline. He was an excellent teacher with whom Kumari was highly impressed. She shared:

> *The most important aspect of head sir was discipline. He used to maintain*
> *strong discipline in school. I'm pretty impressed with his way of maintaining*
> *discipline. I think his approach to maintaining discipline was appropriate at*
> *that time. Regarding his English, his grammar and vocabulary were strong.*
> *He used to teach so well that he would not leave any topic unless all the*
> *students understood it. I'm pretty impressed with the kind of spirit of the head*
> *teacher.*

As Kumari had the chance to study with a great English teacher, she developed a good foundation. Besides, Kumari was influenced by his style of maintaining discipline, even by corporal punishment. Kumari noted that the head teacher and other teachers pressurized them to study through punishment and threats. Kumari confessed:

> *Teachers never told us we would be this or that if we studied well. But they*
> *used to say to us you need to learn this at any cost; otherwise, you will get*
> *punishment. They used to give firm orders to accomplish the tasks, but we*
> *were unaware of why we were doing that. We used to study because we*
> *wanted to avoid punishment.*

During schooling, students had no orientation about the importance of education, prospects, and career choices. Students were not motivated to study; instead, they were pressurized. Because of that, Kumari could not think of what she wanted to become. Till she joined her bachelor, Kumari was not sure of her career. The way Kumari reflected on how she performed well because of pressure and punishment, I can also relate this to my lived reality. I used to complete reading and writing assignments because I used to get scared of my teachers. As most of the teachers were

from my village, mostly my father's friends and relatives, I was afraid that they would inform my father if I didn't complete the assignments. Instead of motivation, I finished my basic level of education with a good result due to fear of punishment.

Focusing on the teaching-learning resources, Kumari noted that classrooms were not equipped with ICT facilities. Though there used to be a listening test during the SLC examination, students were not provided with the opportunities to practice listening. Kumari highlighted:

> *Even in SLC, there used to be a listening test. However, as we did not have a well ICT facilitated classroom, we could not do listening practice well. We also lacked other teaching-learning resources. For listening, teachers used to read the script related to listening to engage in listening practice. The reading practice used to be a lot. But writing was lacking. Probably because of that, we were poor in writing. I improved my writing skills only after joining a bachelor's in education program.*

There was also a lack of other resources required to make teaching-learning effective. Mostly teachers used to engage students in reading; however, Kumari could not develop writing in English as writing practice rarely occurred. The anecdote revealed how the language learning environment influenced her language skills development. Like Kumari, all other participants' stories revealed that the learning environment during schooling heavily influenced their competence and, thereby, their interest and identity development. Through engagement in sociocultural environment and classroom activities, participants have gained access to the direct experience of the regime of competence (Wenger, 2010) that influenced their development and identity construction.

Learning Environment During Teacher Education

Like the learning environment during schooling, even the environment during teacher education influenced teacher development and identity construction. Through engagement in communities of practice in the teacher education program at the university, participants got access to the skills (Wenger, 2010) required to join the community of English language learners. The stories of Kumari revealed how the learning environment influenced and shaped her learning and development. During her teacher education, Kumari engaged in literary activities organized in the college that enhanced her interest in creative writing and writing skills. She revealed that *"the literary programs that occurred in the college somehow supported"* her literary

journey. Kumari *"kept writing poems, stories, and gazals and shared"* her writeups in those programs. Kumari accumulated competencies in creative writing skills through prolonged engagement in creative writing practice, as Wenger (2010) noted. She has written over 100 poems and other writeups that could be published as a book. Apart from a positive learning environment, Kumari shared the dark side of her college education. Particularly during her intermediate level of education, as a large number of students compared to available seats were kept in one section, Kumari often had to take classes standing at a corner in the classroom. She confessed that "*sometimes, due to unavailability of seats, students used to take class standing at the corner while at times students used to peep through the window."* Kumari revealed that she *"has experienced taking class standing at the corner of the classroom"* due to the lack of required physical infrastructure. Kumari's lived reality reaffirmed the findings of Wang (2020) that the constraints from institutional structure, particularly large class size, the higher number of students, and the mismatch between the curriculum and the pedagogical approaches adopted influenced her learning.

However, during her bachelor level of education teaching-learning environment was comparatively better than intermediate. Kumari revealed that she thoroughly enjoyed the curriculum during her bachelor's education. Kumari noted:

> *Probably the college was solely established to produce teachers, and I found subjects and teaching learning approaches better. As I was determined to develop my career in education, I enjoyed the curriculum. Classes were conducted regularly, and students were given enough opportunities to practice. I also received good exposure.*

As Kumari was already determined to become a teacher, she enjoyed the curriculum she learned during her bachelor's level education. The teaching-learning environment during her bachelor's was comparatively better. Besides, she learned a lot as students were given good exposure and practicum opportunities.

The learning experience of Binesh during his teacher education course contrasts with the experience of Kumari. As Binesh studied in one of the teacher education colleges in the eastern hills of Nepal, he didn't receive a good learning environment there. There used to be quarrels and gang fights in college, and tussles used to get started through "*politics and love affairs*." The learning environment was not conducive. Students used to get divided into two student unions and fought on different issues. Binesh also felt that mainly students from well-off families used to

study humanities, and students from underprivileged backgrounds studied education. Binesh revealed:

> *Students from well-off backgrounds used to study humanities, and the underprivileged used to study education, and they used to look down upon us. I didn't get any clue about what subject to study. Now I think that I should not have studied education. I could study humanities with an English major. I don't know why I studied education. Students from humanities mainly studied English literature and economics in the morning shift. Even the teachers were good there. But the environment and human resources in education were not good. Out of hundreds, only seven students passed the exam.*

Binesh regrets doing education. In comparison to humanities, the learning environment in education was worse. Neither the learning environment during the daytime was good, nor were quality teachers in education. Because of that, the result of education was worse: out of hundreds of students, only seven passed. The primary reason for the devastating result was the learning environment and the negligence of the professors. Binesh revealed that the professor responsible for teaching "grammar and syntax" taught a maximum of 15 days a year and abruptly said that the 100 marks course was over. There was utter negligence from teachers. Despite such an environment, Binesh regularly completed his intermediate and bachelor level of education through his efforts. Binesh was amongst the best of the best students. Through investment in teacher education programs and relationships with others as a social practice, Binesh developed a sense of his identity as a competent student (Wenger, 1998). Despite an unfavourable learning environment, Binesh was able to complete his B.Ed. courses successfully through personal efforts.

Like Binesh, Surya also shared that despite utter negligence from the side of college administration and teachers, he completed his bachelor's through his "*self and peer learning*" efforts. Surya's stories substantiated the findings of Wang (2020) relating to constraints from institutional norms that influenced the identity construction of teachers. In addition, politics had an adverse influence on the teaching-learning environment. Teachers used to remain absent rampantly, classes were irregular, and courses were left incomplete. Maximus number of holidays impacted their learning: summer vacation, winter vacation, and festival holidays. Despite the negligence of teachers and administration, those who studied with

personal efforts completed their education successfully, and Surya was among the few who regularly completed the course.

Influence of Teachers

Another factor that influenced the identity negotiation of English language teachers is the teachers who taught them during schooling and teacher education programs in the university. Wenger (2010) maintains that during engagement in communities of practice, that is, during schooling and teacher education programs, participants construct their images, locate and orient themselves from different perspectives and explore new possibilities for the future. During engagement, participants identified and disidentified themselves with their teachers, influencing their identity as teachers (Wenger, 1998).   Lived stories of Binesh, for instance, revealed that his way of teaching grammar was influenced by the deductive method adopted by his English teacher during his basic level of education. His English teacher highly influenced Binesh, and he still uses some of his teachers' pedagogical approaches. Surya's stories also reaffirmed the experiences of Binesh that teachers' pedagogical choices are influenced by their teachers. Surya acknowledged that his teacher used to teach through "Khel Bidhi" [teaching students through games] during his basic level of education, which he still uses in his teaching-learning. In addition, being influenced by his teacher, Surya has adopted motivation as a technique to encourage his students to learn. He revealed:

> *I always give positive encouragement. I say, "You can do it." In the*
> *classroom, I never get irritated. I listen to students' problems; I go close to*
> *them. Listen to their problems and try to address them. I learned the*
> *importance of positive guidance from my primary-level teacher.*

The primary level teacher was a living example of a good teacher who taught them with motivation and encouragement. Not only that, but the teacher also established a primary school through his initiation. Surya's teachers' lived stories, and the pedagogical approaches the teacher adopted highly influenced him. Surya aligned (Wenger, 1998) his teaching styles and behaviours with his teacher at the basic education level, which influenced and shaped his identity.

 In contrast, Surya felt that how his teachers taught writing essays during the secondary level of education was not appropriate for secondary-level students. During secondary education, Surya was made to practice free writing essays by his English teacher without providing any guidelines. Surya used to find free writing complex;

because of this, either he used to rote memorize essays given by teachers or ended up with failure to write good essays. The pedagogical approach adopted by his teachers to teach writing made him realize some fault in it. So, while teaching writing, instead of making students practice free writing, he focuses much on guided writing. Surya shared his insights:

> *So instead of free writing, we need to begin with guided writing and gradually lead them to free writing. We need to give them an easy topic so they feel comfortable writing essays. Students may not know about the nuclear weapon and global warming. We need to understand students' standards and backgrounds. We ask questions haphazardly above the students' standards without considering them. Because of that, students start cheating and copying.*

Surya developed this insight by experiencing the faulty approach his secondary-level English language teachers adopted. Now, while making students write on any topic, Surya gives guidelines, provides information related to the issues, and then only makes students develop essays based on the given information. Even though Surya was not directly influenced to adopt the teaching techniques, his teacher's approach and his experience taught him a great lesson regarding pedagogical approaches to teaching writing. Surya disidentified himself from his teacher and adopted a new pedagogical approach. Surya rejected the pedagogical approaches adopted by his teacher to have the desired outcome and identified himself as a certain kind of teacher (Wenger, 2010). Thus, through both identification and nonidentification (Wenger, 1998) with his teachers, Surya projected his identity.

Kumari also shared the influence of teachers on her pedagogical approaches as well as teaching-learning activities of her. Kumari's stories revealed that her "*teachers in primary and secondary education motivated*" her to join English in higher studies and be an English language teacher. She recalled how a population teacher motivated her to engage in creative writing through different innovative approaches. Kumari recalled:

> *He used to make us write stories, poems, and essays to enhance our creative writing. He taught us how to develop stories out of our life journeys. That's how he guided us. As I was inclined to literary writing initially, I never returned empty-handed in inter-school competitions. Teachers used to send my*

creative writing to the newspapers published by district headquarters. I got an
opportunity to get published.

The creative writing environment and the techniques applied by the teacher to engage students in creative writing encouraged Kumari to actively engage in writing though she had already developed an interest in creative writing. Because of the motivation from his teacher, she participated in competitions and published her poems in various newspapers. Even during university education, one teacher taught her paragraph construction, engaging students to collect information relating to the topic, which Kumari liked so much. She noted:

In B.Ed., our teachers had taught us to write a paragraph about our
classroom innovatively. First, sir gave topic on board. Afterwards, students
were suggested to say something about the classroom in words and phrases,
turn by turn. When he collected an ample number of ideas from students,
around 25/40 words and phrases, he proposed to write a paragraph based on
those ideas. After getting those clues, even those who could not write before
started writing paragraphs well. All of us could compose a section within a
short span of time. I still use that technique in essay writing.

The guided writing approach that the teacher applied in the classroom has influenced her strategies for teaching writing. The writing technique that Kumari's teacher adopted turned out to be an excellent pedagogical approach that has helped her students write essays. Kumari also recalled another teacher from the eastern hills of Nepal, teaching methods, materials, and academic writing, who set the foundation of her writing. Kumari revealed she "*uses the techniques learned from him*" even today.

Another linguistics teacher who taught language utilizing linguistic composition in the classroom as a learning resource influenced her so much. Kumari shared:

In B.Ed. first year, there was a young teacher who taught us linguistics. While
teaching language, he used to give us context-specific examples to clarify the
content. For instance, while dealing with dialect, he used to make five students
from diverse groups speak and employ their words, sentences, and ways of
communicating as examples. His way of giving examples was innovative.

The teacher's teaching approach was practical because he utilized resources available to him in the immediate context. He could bring examples from his surroundings so students could easily understand him. Unlike the banking method (Freire, 1993) of

education as critiqued by Freire, his way of teaching was to co-investigate with students by engaging students in the learning process (Beck, 1985; Mlecko, 1982) as noted in the ancient wisdom tradition from East and West. His approach to teaching was efficient in a resource-scarce environment.

Apart from this, Kumari's dealing with students, particularly controlling and keeping them in strong discipline, is influenced by her head teacher, who taught her during the basic level of her education. One incident of dealing with a student's disruptive behaviours and keeping him in firm discipline during the early phase of Kumari's career showed how her teacher influenced Kumari. She confessed:

> *First, I did counsel him. But as counselling did not work, I talked to the principal about that student's disruptive behaviours allowed me to take any measures required to improve his deteriorating education. Still, for a few days, I tried counselling, talked to his parents, and took advice from subject teachers. However, nothing worked. Still, he kept on continuing with unexpected disruptive behaviours as before. As none of the attempts worked, I relied on corporal punishment and shaming the child to improve him. One day I took him to the garden, opened his tie, made a tail out of it, and offered him grass to eat. Then, I left him in the garden for a whole day, telling him to graze there. I don't know whether I did right or wrong, but after that punishment, he promised me that he would improve his education and requested me not to give such punishment. I told him that if he did not improve his education, his parents would not keep him in the house, and even the school would expel him. At that time, I was immature and not professionally sound. But after that incident, he promised to continue his study like grade three and requested me not to give such punishment. But after that, he gradually improved his education and finally secured a second position. His behaviours and studies were back to normal. I heard that he completed his schooling with a good score and joined medicine.*

This story revealed how strong disciplinarian Kumari was and how authoritarian she could be in improving students' behaviours. But now, as an experienced teacher, Kumari regrets that she should not have punished him harshly. Though the punishment was harsh, it gave a positive result. Kumari confessed that she gave severe punishment because she did not have long teaching experience; hence, she relied on physical punishment. Now Kumari has realized that she should not have

been given such severe punishment. Kumari could have used other means to deal with him. Even though she doesn't use corporeal punishment and doesn't become as harsh as that, she still maintains strong discipline. Her behaviours align with and resemble the strong disciplinarian nature of the head teacher during her primary education.

Influence of Workplace Environment

All participants' stories indicated that the workplace environment influenced teaching-learning, pedagogical approaches, and teachers' performance as they learned different skills during their engagement in the workplace. Participants' engagement in learning communities constructed and reconstructed their practices, artefacts, pedagogical approaches, and identities (Wenger, 1998). Binesh revealed that *"while working with native English speakers,"* he developed confidence. After working for two years with them, Binesh grew up as a teacher and *"started working with full confidence."* Surya also shared an identical story of developing himself while working in a private school in Kathmandu Valley. The English language environment in the private school helped him build fluency and boost his confidence. Surya shared:

> *During my master's level education, I started teaching in one of the private schools in Kathmandu Valley. While teaching at a private school, I learned a lot. There I used to teach English and Social Studies. During my teaching, I learned things I had not learned during my university education. I improved my vocabulary. I also enhanced my oral communication as I worked in English speaking environment.*

This anecdote revealed that during his engagement in the workplace, Surya learned new things and developed communication skills. Particularly disposition to English speaking environment at school helped him improve his vocabulary and fluency in oral communication. During his teaching career, Surya *"was motivated all the time to update and study new books and experiment with new approaches to teaching."*

Nita also shared how a supportive learning environment motivated teachers to engage in development activities. A friendly and supportive working environment working with teachers of the same age group encouraged Nita to read extra reading materials. She shared:

> *When anybody used to bring any proposal to do something, everyone would support it. There was a very motivating working environment. The first principal was highly motivating. He has left a lasting impression. He encouraged us in every meeting, saying we are the change makers. We can do*

something. That used to give a positive feeling towards work. Even friends

were of similar kinds. For instance, when we used to buy a book, we used to

circulate that among group members. We used to recommend books to read.

The motivating principal and caring and supportive colleagues created a positive

learning environment at school. The principal's motivation always gave positive

feelings towards the profession that encouraged them to work with full commitment.

Encouragement from colleagues and recommendations to read new books and

newspaper columns created a conducive learning environment. Because of the

supportive learning environment, Nita completed both her bachelor's and master's

levels of education while working in that school. The reason behind working in that

school for long was the excellent working environment. She also had the privilege of

flexible working time during her M.Ed. education.

Despite having a lot of good memories, she also possessed a few unpleasant

experiences teaching in a private school. Once, her senior colleague criticized and

blamed basic-level teachers for doing nothing. Though the criticism was not directly

intended for Nita, the incident made her realize that people are unfair. When

sometimes senior teachers created discourse *"highlighting negative sides and*

neglecting positive efforts," Nita *"felt like quitting the job."* Nita's stories reaffirmed

the findings of Trent (2012) that teachers' relationship with their colleagues and the

representation of them by their colleagues and administration impacted the decision of

whether to continue teaching or quit the profession. Though Nita didn't quit teaching,

she felt bad seeing her colleagues represent teachers negatively in their discourses.

Besides this, Nita mostly has good learning experiences while working at a private

school. Though there were minor issues, the overall learning environment in her first

workplace was good. But after joining a public school on a tenure track position as a

secondary-level English teacher, Nita started missing the learning environment at the

previous school. Nita shared an awkward incident she experienced at public school

when she tried to motivate her colleagues for training and development. One of her

colleagues straightly responded that "*he doesn't need training.*" Apart from one or

two teachers, Nita found no other teachers engaged in training and development

activities. Because of that, Nita *"prefers to stay alone and do her work."*

When I asked about the learning environment at the public school where

Kumari works now, she responded that it is "homely." There is a good relationship

among colleagues, and if any problem, conflict, or misunderstanding arises, they sit

together and discuss the issue to take that conflict to a logical conclusion. There is an excellent collegial relationship among colleagues. However, in terms of professional development and learning among colleagues, Kumari claimed that *"professional sharing is lacking."* She added, "*Our relationship is fine; everything is good. But professional sharing culture has not been developed."* Concerning other physical environments, also Kumari has disillusioned with public schools in Kathmandu Valley. Initially, she thought that the school would be good. But after arriving at the Valley, Kumari found classes run in "tin ko tahara" [huts of corrugated zinc]. Even the teaching-learning environment was not satisfactory. Here Kumari experienced a gap between her expectation and reality.

While reflecting on her teaching experience, Kumari shared how the teaching environment influenced teachers' performance and pedagogical choices. Highlighting the influence of the working environment on teachers' performance, she noted that as she was not provided with the required resources to transfer the training to the classroom, Kumari resigned from Kids Heaven. After the Child-Centered Level 1 training, she wanted to bring transformation in teaching-learning from the basic level, but she was not provided with the required resources by the administration. Kumari claimed that *"when the authority of the school does not take initiation, obviously teachers face difficulty."* An unsupportive environment constrained (Wang, 2020) her identity construction, though she received training. Kumari changed the school because of the hurdles she faced in attaining teaching resources. However, when she joined another private school, she was provided with all the resources required. She also transformed the teaching-learning environment, due to which she received the best teacher award from the school. Institutional support turned out to be a boon in constructing her identity as the best teacher at the school.

After a few years of working at a private school, Kumari joined APF School (a school run by the Armed Police Force). The teaching-learning environment at APF School was quite different. In that school, EMI was not given much priority. The school was well-resourced with all the required teaching-learning resources, which made a good teaching-learning environment. At the same time, the demographic composition of the classroom was diverse in terms of students' level and linguistic and cultural background that heavily influenced the teaching-learning approaches. Kumari confessed:

The teaching-learning environment at APF School was good. EMI was not prioritized in that school because the composition of students was multilingual, multicultural and from diverse backgrounds. There was a massive gap in students' understanding and competence in English. As those conflict-victim students were recently brought from home to school, we had to handle them with utmost care. We were not supposed to scold them even for their mistakes. We had to deal with them both as parents and teachers. Next, if EMI were used, students' understanding and cognitive development would be hampered. That's why we had to balance ourselves. The philosophy that language should not be a barrier to learning guided the school. Therefore, the language was used accordingly to facilitate their learning.

This anecdote from Kumari revealed that heterogeneity among students in terms of their linguistic competence, students' background, and their level of understanding influenced the pedagogical approaches of Kumari. Kumari noted that the classroom environment heavily influenced teachers' dealing with the students and the use of language. In APF School, the students were from *"conflict victim families who lost their parents."* Because of that, she *"was supposed to be very sincere and sensitive while dealing with them."*

Changed Context and Crisis of Identity

Engagement in learning and working context enhanced participants' professional development and sometimes posed a threat to teachers' development, leading to identity crises. The mismatch between the pedagogical content knowledge and the context influenced their performance, requiring negotiation and adjustment of their practices. According to Wenger (2010), this mismatch occurs because of the sharing of the history of learning that ends up differentiating those who participated in practice from those who did not. When participants enter new contexts, they enter new territories with a different history of practice. And the lack of competence demarcates the boundaries in communities of practice. Nita shared that after joining the public school as a secondary-level English teacher on a tenure track position, she felt like She was in a *"completely new environment,"* and *"it took a long time to adjust to the new environment."* She confessed that in the beginning phase of her career at public school, she *"struggled a lot to adjust to the new environment."* Stories of Nita reaffirmed the findings of Neupane et al. (2022) that teachers experience a crisis of identity in a changed context, and those capable of negotiating,

developing and adjusting in the changed context survive in teaching. After working for a while, Nita learned her colleagues' habits and the new working style, which helped her adjust gradually in public school. After working for a while, she got accustomed to the subtleties of the enterprise (Wenger, 1998) that the public school had defined.

Binesh also shared the impact of the new learning environment and how the new environment posed a crisis on his identity as a competent student teacher. During his education at B.Ed., Binesh came across new people with different levels of competence. Initially, he had a mindset that he was an excellent student teacher. But after seeing the fluency of student teachers working at a British School in the eastern hills, he realized his limitations. Then Binesh started reading novels to improve his English, began publishing a monthly magazine, and many more. Binesh shared:

> There was a highly competitive environment during my bachelor's. Teachers from a British School used to study on our campus. Their communication skills were superb. They were near-native speakers. But as we were educated in a rural village, we could hardly speak English. Even their writing was excellent. Due to this, they were the centre of attraction even to teachers. There was a kind of identity crisis in us.

Based on his previous result, Binesh used to perceive himself as a competent student, and even teachers used to acknowledge him. But as he joined B.Ed., he came across other students who were far better than him, mainly because their communication skill was excellent; they were the centre of attraction. Because of that, he struggled a lot to improve his communication skills. Binesh confessed his limitation:

> That time we realized how fluent English other people had. How far people have learnt already. We felt we were the best students, but we knew our limitations after their arrival. They could speak so fluently, their writing was far better than ours, and they could write in cursive, but we never knew cursive handwriting before that.

After meeting new students with better linguistic competence, Binesh experienced a crisis of identity as a competent student teacher, so he started developing communication skills and negotiating his identity. Realizing the limitation of knowledge and skills opened the door for negotiating skills through development activities.

Binesh also shared how the changed curriculum posed a crisis on his identity as an English language teacher. Binesh revealed that the changed national curriculum posed a crisis of identity. He feels less confident while teaching a new English language curriculum in grades 11 and 12 and mainly summarizes the content. Binesh confessed:

> *In grade 12 new course is introduced. It's new to both students and me. So, I'm not confident enough in grades 11 and 12, like grade 9 and 10 classes. In grade 12, I got a bit scared. Its content dominated course. So, there I try to summarize chapters and critically appreciate them.*

This anecdote from Binesh indicates how the new curriculum posed a crisis in teachers' identity. Teachers neither performed the same when the curriculum was changed nor their teaching method remained constant. All these anecdotes from the participants revealed that the modified curriculum, working context, and level of students influenced the teaching-learning approaches and teachers' performance. Stories of all the participants reaffirmed the findings of Neupane et al. (2022) and Liu and Xu (2013) that teachers are required to shift and adjust their identities to adapt to the changed workplace context.

Social Environment Influencing Learning

The teaching-learning environment at family and the university and the larger sociocultural environment, geographical structure, and different social situations and emergencies influenced teachers' development and identity construction. Focusing on his village's geographical landscape and fertility, Surya shared how his village's infertile and barren geographical structure influenced him to engage in learning. During his childhood, the economic condition of the family was not sound. His parents were involved in agricultural activities, but the return from agriculture was minimal. Hence, Surya did not see the future in agriculture in his village, which motivated him to study and then engage in the service sector in the city. Surya confessed:

> *My family's economic condition was not that good during my schooling time. Because of that, I was challenged to do something for my family. I had acknowledged that responsibility. But I was not hopeful of agricultural activities. I was not convinced I could make a living doing agriculture because the land in our village was not fertile. I had no hope of the development of our village as it was very remote. This kind of environment always motivated me to*

study well to establish myself in Kathmandu or any other developed city in any

part of the country. Education was the only option left for me.

Looking at the geographical structure and the family's struggle in agriculture, Surya was convinced that he could not depend on the subsistence farming that his father was doing. To skip this living condition and gain economic capital, the only option Surya could see was to invest in learning and find an ideal job in the city. Neither Surya saw the possibility of development of his village nor any hope in subsistence farming. Even my stories of the influence of the social environment in my village during the construction of the "Kali Gandaki A" hydroelectricity project in deciding to do English in higher study echoes the story of Surya and Binesh. Seeing better job prospects and earnings from those villagers who could speak English in my social surroundings, I decided to do English after SLC. Among many prominent factors that influenced my identity negotiation as an English teacher, social environment is one.

Highlighting how the changed social context influenced learning, Binesh shared that when he went to the city to learn, he *"started watching different television channels. Most of the programs were in English, and even the introduction of computers during that time increased the importance and necessity of English."* Such development not only helped him improve his communication but also motivated him to develop his language skills in English. With the increased *"use of multimedia, audiovisual tools, television, computers, and other gadgets, the access to English had been improved,"* which helped develop language skills. The changed social context and new territories of communities of practice provided Binesh with new tools, subtleties (Wenger, 1998), and better opportunities to learn and develop his English language. In addition, the changed context with the introduction of new technologies and media increased the value of the English language, which motivated Binesh to invest in language learning.

The introduction of new technology, on the one hand, enhanced teaching-learning; on the other, different circumstances like COVID-19 adversely impacted the teachers' performance and students' achievement. After arriving at her current school, Kumari gradually made progress in student achievement. But the progress could not last long because of the worldwide pandemic outbreak. She revealed:

After my arrival here, students gradually improved and maintained their level,

but the pandemic posed a break. As an ELT teacher, I was supposed to focus

on language and content. After the commencement of online classes, I

concentrated on clarifying and making them understand the content. During online classes, we could not give direct feedback to students. While comparing the teaching-learning before and after the pandemic, a vast difference in teaching is found, affecting the students' learning.

The outbreak of the pandemic heavily affected the effectiveness of teaching-learning, reducing the students' achievement. As an English teacher, Kumari was supposed to focus on content and language; however, in online classes, she could not focus much on language. Kumari mainly concentrated on clarifying the content. She also witnessed a gradual decline in students' performance. As a teacher educator, I also have a similar experience that the pandemic has affected the effectiveness of teaching-learning and student achievement. All the participants' lived stories revealed that geographical structure and the larger social environment influenced teachers' professional development and identity construction. As teachers lack the competence and subtilities in the changed communities (Wenger, 1998), they face an identity crisis. However, participants constructed their identities and adapted to the changed context through meaningful engagement, negotiation, and acquisition of the norms and skills required to adjust to new communities of practice (Neupane et al., 2022).

National Politics: The Lost Generation of Nepal

All the participants learned and developed their careers during the most volatile temporal and social environment in Nepal. Due to the democratic movement of 1990, also known as "People's Movement I," the Maoist movement, and the ultimate struggle of seven party alliance and the Maoists against the monarchy during "People's Movement II," the teaching-learning environment was heavily influenced. The frequent nationwide strike, conflict, ambush on the road, and other political events during decade long Maoist battle adversely impacted the teaching-learning environment in Nepal. The lived reality of my participants also could not remain untouched by the effects of the volatile political situation in Nepal. As noted by Giovanelli (2015), external social and contextual forces during participants' personal and professional life experiences influenced their teaching-learning and, thereby, their development and identity construction. Reflecting on the impact of the Maoist movement during university education, Binesh declared that he *"belonged to the lost generation of Nepal."* He believed that his "dark time" started right after the beginning of his college life, the beginning period of the Maoist movement. During the Maoist movement, many teachers were killed for not providing "chanda"

[financial support] and blaming them for spying against the Maoists. Schools were often made shelters by both Maoists and the Nepal Army, ambushes were placed on the road, and nationwide strikes were frequently announced that adversely impacted the learning environment in the country. Other participants' stories and my lived experience also reaffirmed that we belong to the lost generation of Nepal.

Though other participants and I do not have much memory of the democratic movement of 1990, the stories of Binesh depicted political influence on the teaching-learning environment during his schooling. Reflecting on his school education, Binesh noted that *"teachers were active politicians during that time."* One of his teachers had come to school with a black hand band tied on his arms as a symbol of revolt. Teachers were actively participating in political activities during that time. Reflection of a political tussle in the village was evident even in school. Most of the people from privileged families were democrats, and the underprivileged were communists, and there used to be tussles in the village on various issues. Binesh confessed:

> *The ideology of the Nepali Congress influenced my family. But there was a domination of communists. Most underprivileged people were communists, and few elites were Nepali Congress supporters. So, there used to be tussles in the village that used to get reflected even in school.*

As political tussles used to get reflected in school, it hampered the teaching-learning environment. In addition, teachers themselves were actively engaged in politics. Binesh revealed that teachers *"used to teach in the daytime and do politics in the evening."* Teachers were transferred due to political reasons. Politics heavily influenced the teaching-learning environment during the democratic movement period of 1990. While teaching poems or stories about social issues, teachers used to bring references to injustice and discrimination and tried brainwashing students. The political colour of teachers used to get reflected in their teaching-learning practices in the classroom. As organic intellectuals (Gramsci, 1975), teachers used to draw the issues of injustice, discrimination, and domination from the social context, relate them with the chapter and advocate for social transformation, inclusion, and equity (Freire, 1970) which influenced Binesh.

During his basic level of education, Binesh experienced the influence of the democratic movement of 1990 on the teaching-learning environment of the school. The Maoist movement had already started during his teacher education course at the university. Because of continuous movements, strikes, bloodshed, and other incidents,

there was a kind of mass frustration which used to get reflected even in university. Binesh shared that he joined M.Ed. in the same year *"students set fire in the department."* He believed *"it was a very depressing moment, and people had lost optimism towards life."* Living in the village was risky due to the Maoist movement, and there was no job opportunity. The overall national politics and the frustration it brought used to get reflected in the university.

After completion of his university education, during his teaching career as well, the Maoist movement continued. It was the heyday of the Maoist movement during 2009/2010. According to Binesh, the Maoist movement was at its peak during his career-making phase. He revealed that the Maoist conflict posed an existential crisis. Binesh had just started teaching in a teacher education college in a village on the outskirt of Kathmandu Valley, where he witnessed the fight between the Maoists and the police force. Binesh shared:

> *During that time, the Maoist conflict was at its peak. That movement fueled my existential crisis. During the career-making phase of my life, the Maoist conflict was going on in Nepal. There was job scarcity and an economic crunch. During that time, Maoists attacked Panauti and Dhulikhel at once. That night I heard the Maoists and police firing each other. The next day in the morning, I saw the devastated spot. I became helpless and frustrated after witnessing that war in Dhulikhel and Panauti.*

After witnessing the devastating war, Binesh felt insecure about staying in Dhulikhel; therefore, he left the job. During the economic crisis and job scarcity, Binesh resigned from the post. After a few months, though Binesh received the opportunity to lead the public school from where he completed his SLC, Binesh could not dare go to the village due to insecurity. At the same time, a vacancy was announced for the principal's position in a school funded by a Dutch national. Instead of going to the village, Binesh considered applying to the school in Kathmandu Valley. He claimed:

> *As the Maoist movement was at its peak and my village was highly affected by the conflict, I preferred working in Kathmandu Valley instead of going to the village. Though I did not have any threat on a personal level, it was uncertain how long school could run well. In the village, there used to be frequent banda and strikes. But Kathmandu was comparatively safer.*

Due to professional and physical security reasons, instead of going to the village, Binesh stayed in Kathmandu Valley. The Valley was comparatively safer, and he also thought that his job would be sustainable in the Valley.

Though the Kathmandu Valley was comparatively safe, the villages nearby Kathmandu were highly affected by the Maoist conflict. Surya shared that *"teachers denied going to remote villages of the hilly region"* during the Maoist battle. In addition, *"Even if they go, they wouldn't stay there for long. Teachers used to get threats from Maoists."* Mostly, teachers were asked for financial support by Maoists, and if they were not provided with financial support as per their demand, teachers were tortured and sometimes killed. Because of this, teachers were scared of going to remote areas to teach. Surya revealed:

> As teachers were scared of Maoists, even teachers were not regular in school. Primarily there used to be Nepal banda [nationwide strike]. As the conflict reached its climax, Nepal Army and Maoist guerillas used to visit our school, which often scared us.

For school children, the social environment was horrifying. On the one hand, rampant Nepal banda [nationwide strike] called by Maoists used to disturb classes; on the other, frequent visit to his school by the Nepal Army and Maoist guerillas scared Surya to go to school. Surya didn't know the exact reason, but his ideal teacher, who taught during his primary education and established a primary school, "*was later killed by the Maoists during the conflict time.*" Unfortunately, during the last years of his basic level of education, *"there was a heavy influence of the Maoist movement"* in his area. Surya revealed:

> My village and its surroundings were declared as conflict-affected areas. At that time, Maoists also conducted a program at our school. Because of that, we feared going to school. We feared that Maoists could abduct us to join their underground armed force. Because of that reason, we were unwilling to go to school. Even to participate in extracurricular activities, as we had to go to other schools, we lost interest due to security reasons.

There was widespread fear of Maoists luring and abducting students to engage them in their underground armed forces in conflict-affected areas. Because of that, parents did not allow their children to travel outside the village. Children were even scared of going to school because they could not feel secure even at school, as Maoists visited the school frequently.

After completing grade 10, Surya had to walk around one hour's distance to study in grades 11 and 12. Surya wanted to go to Kathmandu Valley for his higher studies, but he could not leave the village because Maoists had denied them to go out without their permission. Maoist could blame villagers for spying against them and torture them mercilessly. Surya confessed:

> *For higher education, I had to walk one hour from my house. At that time, we were not in a condition to go out of the village for schooling because of the Maoist conflict. They pressured us not to go out of the village to get education. If we came to Kathmandu Valley for education, Maoists could torture us, blaming "suraki gareko" [spying against the Maoists]. While studying in the village, we didn't have more options except doing either Nepali or English.*

Surya and his family were scared of the Maoist threat, so they couldn't think of leaving the village to study grades 11 and 12. But in the village, only two subjects were offered: Nepali and English as optional/major subjects. Surya chose English as the major subject for his higher education. The political scenario influenced his choice of major subjects in higher education, which naturally influenced his career and identity as an English teacher. His study in grades 11 and 12 could not remain fearless. He revealed that the conflict was as usual. Surya used to get scared to go to school because *"the ambush could be placed on the way."* Therefore, being irregular in class was natural. Surya shared:

> *During our education in 11 and 12, the conflict was as usual. There could be an ambush placed on the way. Because of fear, I used to be irregular in class. During that time, teachers used to teach very well. I used to study books related to education and the English language to improve my learning. I felt that I should study well and could do something in life by studying hard.*

Despite all these hurdles, Surya focused on his education because he thought he had the only option to get established through education. Surya didn't see other better opportunities for the future. Hence, Surya continued his education despite all the challenges.

Like Surya, Kumari shared how political instability and tussle influenced her education. After completing SLC, Kumari joined a college in Kathmandu Valley for her intermediate education. Though she came to the Valley searching for a good learning environment, her college's educational environment was unsatisfactory. As

the time was the heyday of People's Movement II in 2008/2009, there used to be frequent protest programs in the college. Kumari revealed:

> *Though I tried my best, my intermediate education could not remain satisfactory because of the conflict going on in the country. That period was the climax of conflict in the country that was reflected in our college, too. Student unions always used to engage in protest; there used to be a tussle and tear gas in the college. Therefore, we couldn't take classes regularly.*

As student unions were actively organizing protest programs against the monarchy, they used to cancel classes and take students to participate in the movement; due to this, the college premise turned into a battleground. As Kumari had completed her grade 10 at a very young age, she required personal care and support for her education. In contrast, classes were cancelled abruptly for different reasons that hampered her education. She shared:

> *Though our class timing was from 11 AM to 4 PM, there used to be only two or three classes. Maximum, we could study three courses out of five. Other classes used to get hampered due to literary programs, political programs, conflicts, and protests. Student leaders visited our classes and forced students to participate in protest programs.*

Student unions used to engage young students in protest programs by cancelling their classes. Because of that, the teaching-learning environment was heavily influenced. Sometimes, the college premise used to turn into a battlefield as students hurled stones against the police force, and the police fired tear gas against the students. Participants' stories revealed that as the movements and protests hampered all these participants' education during the formative phase of their careers and as they could not invest freely in their education and employment, they considered themselves to belong to the lost generation of Nepal.

Policy Influence

Apart from political issues, as macro factors that influenced the teaching and learning of participants, the language policies, national curriculum, and evaluation system also adversely impacted participants' development. For instance, Kumari noted that more than a hundred students were taught within a class during her schooling. Because of a shortage of teachers, many students were kept in one classroom. Kumari explained:

> *My school used to have 100 to 110 students, but there were regularly 90 to 95*
> *students present. But classes were taken in a large hall. Now I realize many*
> *students were taught in a class because of Darbandi [teachers' quota] issues.*
> *As arranging teachers from niji shrot [the school's local sources] was*
> *difficult, they taught us in a group.*

During Kumari's secondary education, classes remained ineffective because of the lack of clear-cut policy of the government relating to teacher and student ratio. Neither government provided the required number of teachers according to the standard teacher-student ratio set by the government, nor could the school generate its resources locally and hire teachers. Insufficient investment from the side of government was a significant reason for the shortage of teachers (Neupane & Joshi, 2022) that adversely impacted the teaching-learning environment at school. Kumari's stories reinforced the findings of Wang (2020) that the large class size and exam focused teaching-learning influenced the identity construction of teachers.

Another macro factor that influenced teaching-learning was the haphazard implementation of EMI. As Kumari completed her schooling in public school, where Nepali was employed as the medium of instruction, she experienced trouble understanding the subject matter when teachers at her college used EMI. Kumari revealed:

> *In the second year of intermediate, our English teacher was not good. Even*
> *his tone was difficult to understand. Sitting in the classroom was like just*
> *taking notes provided by the teacher. As I studied in a public school where*
> *Nepali was used as a medium of instruction, it was not easy to understand the*
> *content when EMI was used. On top of that, a faint voice and a large number*
> *of students in the class added difficulty.*

As Kumari had studied in a public school where Nepali was used as the medium of instruction, her linguistic competence was not so good, and even she was not habituated to classes where EMI was employed. EMI adversely impacted Kumari's understanding of the course content. As the language policy advocated mother tongue education, all the public schools used Nepali as a medium of instruction during that time. But in colleges, particularly in English classes, teachers preferred a monolingual approach instead of code-switching or translanguaging. The monolingual ideology that privileges the English language (Darvin & Norton, 2018; Norton, 2015) over the

local languages influenced the teaching-learning practices of English language teacher educators.

When Kumari shared the impact of EMI that influenced her learning, Surya revealed the impact of EMI on his students. Surya shared how students from the Newar community who used Newari as their first language faced difficulty understanding his lectures and how better students translated his lectures into Newari to their colleagues. From that, Surya felt the importance of mother tongue education. He revealed:

> *While teaching in a school in Kathmandu Valley during the initial days of my career, I realized how language could impact learning. Why education in our mother tongue is essential. Students used to feel odd to speak to us. They hardly used to talk in English. Mostly they used to communicate in Newari. They hesitated to ask teachers questions because of the language barrier. They maintained a gap with teachers. I had the challenge of making them communicate with teachers and encouraging them to ask questions. So, we teachers used to discuss among us to find ways to make them communicate with teachers.*

When students stopped communicating, asking questions, and maintaining a gap with teachers, Surya and his colleagues worried that students' cognitive development could be hampered, and they used to discuss among teachers to find ways to make students communicate with teachers. The monolingual ideology that privileges English over other languages influenced the school's language policy and even parents so much that everybody preferred EMI (Darvin & Norton, 2018; Norton, 2015). But nobody cared about how EMI was hampering the development of children. The adverse impact of EMI was evident in the classroom.

Apart from this, the national curriculum and the summative assessment scheme it adopted for students' evaluation influenced the teachers' pedagogical approaches and learning patterns of the students. Focusing on the adverse impact of summative assessment, Surya revealed:

> *Overall, our teachers employed teacher centred approach. Teachers never used projects, creative writing, and other activities as we do now. During my bachelor's degree, even terminal examinations were not taken. At Tribhuvan University, there used to be just an annual board exam. No matter what you*

> *did before, if you could do well in these yearly exams, that would define your performance.*

Because of this kind of summative evaluation, teachers preferred to give lectures and provide notes on chapters instead of motivating students to engage in different projects, assignments, and other student-centered activities. Students became dependent on rote memorization of chapter summaries and notes provided by teachers, which hampered students' creativity. Surya revealed that he became largely reliant on additional support materials like guess papers, guidebooks, and notes provided by the teachers. Surya could guess possible questions that could be asked in annual exams by analyzing the patterns of old questions. The exams were becoming mechanical and ritualized.

Focusing on how national policy influenced teacher education programs, Binesh shared that though teacher education curriculum didn't have any default, as policy allowed the poorest students, who were not eligible to join other programs, to join teacher education, it influenced the quality of B.Ed. There were very liberal criteria for admission because of that B.Ed. graduates, mainly those majoring in English, were incapable of teaching at the secondary level. As a large pool of poor students could influence the overall teaching-learning environment in the classroom, Binesh suggested that students join BA and do a one-year B.Ed. later. As Binesh was working in a teacher education college as a part-time teacher educator in the morning, he convinced the administration to scrap B.Ed. programs, and persuaded students who had joined B.Ed. program to switch to the Bachelor of Arts (BA) in English. All these anecdotes revealed that due to the implementation of *"absurd policies that were formulated without proper study,"* the education system and students' cognitive development were hampered. These macro policies heavily influenced the development and identity construction of teachers.

Teachers' Initiatives

Despite the widespread influence of micro factors: family environment and economic condition of the family; meso factors: learning environment at school and university, teachers, and workplace environment; and macro factors: larger social environment, national politics, and policies, there is also intervention and resistance against the hegemonic ideologies and norms (Darvin & Norton, 2017) from the side of teachers that influenced teaching-learning environment, professional development, and identity construction. Lived experiences of the participants revealed that they

influenced the learning environment, workplace culture, and evaluation system and played a crucial role in their personal development despite an unsupportive environment at times. Teachers' initiative played a pivotal role in transforming the teaching-learning environment and professional development, thereby constructing their identities.

Zeal to Move Ahead

Reflecting on the learning environment at the village during his schooling Binesh noted that despite the resource-scarce environment and unavailability of resources because of his *"zeal to move ahead"* and *"hunger for progress,"* he was able to complete his schooling with good grades. His zeal for education and hunger for progress is substantiated by the incident when Binesh lied to the secretary of the village development committee, saying that his father wanted him to buy a Chudamadi Grammar book and father would pay him when he brought the book. As his father denied his request for a grammar book, Binesh lied to get it. Binesh confessed:

> During my grade eight education, I wanted to buy a Chudamadi Grammar book as Surendra sir had suggested us buy one. At that time, the price of the book was 195 rupees. I had requested my dad to buy that book, but dad used to say that I could buy the book during SLC. However, I wanted to prepare early on. One day I saw the village development committee secretary going to district headquarters for his official purpose. That day I lied to him that my father wanted him to buy a Chudamadi Grammar book and that he would pay when the secretary returned. By lying to the secretary, I got the book.

The anecdote revealed the daring act of Binesh for the improvement of his English language. His request to the secretary to bring Chudamadi Gautam's grammar book without his father's approval during that age indicates how enthusiastic Binesh was in improving his English. Binesh exercised his agency by resisting (Norton & Toohey, 2011) his father's suggestion to buy the Chudamadi Gautam grammar book during SLC and invested in learning from grade nine.

Binesh did not get a good learning environment even during his university education. Particularly at the intermediate level, Binesh found that most of the teachers were careless, and 98 per cent of the students used to fail exams. Binesh shared:

Most of the teachers were not good. Almost 98 percent of the students used to fail exams. But from home, there was pressure to pass the exam. Dad had told me that If I failed, he would not invest in my education. So that kind of threat from home and an impoverished educational environment in college motivated me to self-study. I had to complete the exam at any cost successfully.

Despite the widespread failure of students, Binesh passed the exam through self-study. His poor economic background and family pressure made Binesh commit to his study. Binesh performed his agency in a schooled way as part of a social construct. The stories of Binesh reinforced the findings of Mirzaee and Aliakbari (2018) that participants' identities are socially constructed and constrained with limited space to exercise personal agency. They indicated that agency is exercised in a schooled way. Binesh's commitment to education because of environmental forces and parental pressure reaffirmed the findings of Mirzaee and Aliakbari (2018). In addition, even during his bachelor's level education, Binesh used to visit the library and keep reading when his colleagues used to engage in different extracurricular activities and events at the university. Binesh added that *"as books were not easily available"* in his area, he *"came to Kathmandu in a night bus to buy books worth 22 thousand that include books related to pedagogy and curriculum and many more."* This is how, despite many challenges, Binesh completed his education through personal efforts, as he had the zeal to move ahead.

Kumari also shared her experience of how she took crucial steps for the betterment of her education. After the completion of her third year, Kumari had been to her village to teach in the school from where she had completed her primary level of education due to her father's pressure. But after teaching for a few months, Kumari realized that her English was deteriorating due to the absence of a good teaching-learning environment at school. Because of that, Kumari tendered her resignation and moved to Kathmandu. Kumari revealed:

Here in Kathmandu, I had worked in a good system in a private school, but my English deteriorated after going to the village. I felt like teaching in the village for a long could hamper my career. After teaching for seven to eight months, denying the request of my father, mother, and principal, I tendered my resignation and came to Kathmandu.

Kumari's resignation without consultation with anyone was motivated by her zeal for education. Kumari could not remain in the village because the learning environment

was not good. Kumari thought staying in the village for a long time meant deteriorating her education. Kumari also shared her effort during the preparation for the TSC examination. As Kumari was working in a school in Kathmandu Valley and at the same time doing her master, she didn't have much time to prepare for exams. Despite all this, Kumari studied late at night and during students' extra-curricular activities. Because of such efforts and struggles, Kumari was selected for the government job. Despite all the hardship and lack of time, Kumari managed time to study and was chosen as a tenure-track secondary-level English language teacher.

Like Binesh, Surya also shared how he overcame hurdles he experienced during his schooling through personal initiatives. Surya shared that the teaching-learning environment in school was unsatisfactory as teachers adopted traditional lecture-based teaching-learning approaches and prioritized rote memorization. However, Surya improved his education through personal efforts and less reliance on teachers and school education. Surya's stories revealed that he *"used to do self-study, not relying only on the efforts made by the school."* In addition, the *"competitive environment within the classroom…to grab first, second and third position"* motivated Surya to study well. The agency Surya performed for the betterment of his education was influenced by the environment he studied. Besides, when Surya started learning English, good English teachers were lacking. Yet, these hurdles could not discourage Surya from performing well. Because of his "self-study" and efforts to *"create an environment to study extra books…studying English was convenient."* Though many students failed in English, Surya completed it successfully because of his efforts and rigorous self-study at home. Nita's stories reaffirmed Surya's experience of success through personal effort and self-study. As Nita worked as a teacher during her university education, she could not regularly attend classes; still, she could get good grades because of personal efforts. The lived experience of the participants revealed that there is a two-way influence between agency and environment. In addition, even agency can be performed in a schooled way through the influence of the environment at times.

Teachers' Efforts and Students' Learning Outcome

Like teachers' initiation to enhance learning at home and school, participants lived experiences revealed that teacher agency played a more significant role in improving the teaching-learning environment and teachers' professional development. Highlighting teachers' role in enhancing the learning environment, Binesh shared his

experience that he "*used to make students practice listening, do extensive reading, and many other activities during his teaching in a public school in his village.*" As his initiatives to improve the students' learning was beyond the institution's traditional teaching-learning and working culture, his colleagues started criticizing Binesh because the new working culture added more responsibilities to teachers, compelling them to break the cocoon of their comfort zone. Binesh also shared another initiative he took regarding students' assessment despite the lack of support from his colleagues. Binesh said that the old generation of teachers lacked the tendency to develop as they reached saturation. But Binesh had the will to do something new. He shared one incident of an oral test where no teachers took an interest in taking it even though teachers were supposed to do that. So, he took the oral examination of the students taking support from students as volunteers. Binesh shared that when he was taking verbal tests, some of his colleagues questioned, "*sir, why you are taking the unnecessary burden.*" Despite a lack of a collegial environment, Binesh took the initiative to enhance his students' language skills.

Kumari also shared her lived reality of how newly appointed teachers selected through the TSC examination took the initiative for improvement in teaching-learning activities in public schools. Kumari aligned and identified herself with TSC-selected teachers as they had a common approach to the selection process, a similar appetite for reformation and similar experiences (Wenger, 1998). Parents had great expectations from new TSC-recruited teachers. Besides, these new teachers also had the zeal to bring transformation. As a result, they initiated extra classes and took the initiative to add learning resources. Kumari shared:

> *We, young teachers, started running extra classes from grade six to 10. We brought changes even in Early Childhood Development (ECD), bringing resource materials, having a child-friendly setup of the classroom and teaching resources. We planned to transform from ECD to grade six and from grade six to grade 10. For the reformation of education, we generated resources by collecting 100 rupees per student.*

As there was a lack of resources, Kumari and her colleagues generated resources by collecting 100 rupees per student. Apart from this, they also started classroom supervision, peer learning, feedback, and sharing, which also helped in enhancing students learning achievement. Kumari revealed that "*changes were evident after their initiative within three months. The learning achievement of students was*

increasing. Even slow learners were developing a positive attitude to learning." Additional classes, the addition of learning resources, and the teacher's professional development activities through observation, peer feedback, and sharing enhanced the students' learning outcomes. Besides, Kumari also discussed with the head teacher to establish a sophisticated library, ICT lab, science lab, and computer lab, and they started offering courses on the computer. Thus, Kumari and newly appointed teachers, through the TSC examination, instead of just engaging in communities of practice and adopting the working patterns, influenced and took ownership of meaning by affecting and modifying the existing working patterns (Wenger, 1998).

Surya also shared his initiatives to enhance students' creativity and productivity. During the beginning days of his career, typically, students were given readymade essays to the probable essay topics that could be asked in SLC so that students could rote memorize essays which killed students' creativity and writing skills. In contrast, Surya started giving students guidelines and made students practice guided writing. Before making students write, Surya used to provide some points, make students collect content relating to the essay through brainstorming and then write the essay, which made essay writing convenient and enhanced students' creativity and skills. After Surya's initiation, students also started writing articles independently. They could write on any topic. Surya's efforts enhanced students' creative writing potential. For writing answers to the questions as well, Surya made students practice writing as per the guidelines and specification grids. Surya shared:

> *Instead of asking questions given in the book, I used to develop questions myself so that students had to be creative and think differently. Even I used to follow the specification grid. Instead of the old pattern of asking questions from the book, I started developing innovative and new practices.*

Surya's efforts in designing questions that demand creativity instead of using only questions in the book compelled students to think and answer questions creatively in their ways. All these anecdotes from the teachers revealed that despite the unfavourable learning environment in school, teachers' initiative for their professional development and enhancement of the teaching-learning environment positively influenced the students' learning achievement.

Teachers' Efforts in Improving Evaluation System

Besides the teaching-learning environment and students' learning outcomes, teachers' initiatives have also positively transformed the examination system. The

lived reality of Binesh showed how unnecessary processes and layers of examination impacted students and how he changed such practices. Binesh shared an incident that occurred while he was teaching in a public school in his village. The incident was related to the adverse impact of the send-up examination. During that time, public schools used to take send-up exams to select students to appear in SLC. Those students who could complete the send-up exam were allowed to appear SLC examination during that time. But the send-up examination used to be so tough that most of the students used to fail. However, send-up was just the local practice, not the mandatory exam set by the examination board.

One day while Binesh was checking send-up exam papers, he saw an older man in ragged clothes approaching his house. The man was carrying a sack on his back. His outfits vividly indicated that he was a farmer from a remote village. The man came to Binesh and pledged a favour to his daughter during the send-up examination so that his daughter would complete the send-up successfully and he would be able to find a suitable bridegroom for her. With this, the older man offered around 10 KG of raw peanuts to Binesh with a request for a favour. This incident touched Binesh as he had never experienced such an incident before. The incident made Binesh ponder over the send-up examination. Binesh revealed:

> That incident made me ponder over our evaluation system and students'
> future. If the send-up exam leads students to a crisis of not getting a suitable
> bridegroom or directing them to a suicidal stage, let's break the norm of
> taking a send-up exam before SLC. Though I was not the head teacher, the
> head teacher used to listen to me. So, I took the initiative to invite the chair of
> the School Management Committee in consultation with the head teacher for a
> meeting to discuss the issue. In the meeting, I briefed the incident and
> proposed cancelling the send-up examination so all students could appear in
> the SLC examination.

Binesh took the initiative to break the tradition of taking a send-up examination before SLC. Some teachers opposed his proposal, but the school finally cancelled the send-up tradition.

The way Binesh broke the tradition of send-up examination, even Kumari took a significant risk to improve the fairness and quality of the SEE examination in her centre. Through her story, Kumari revealed the malpractices in SEE examination conduction in one of the eastern hills and how she improved it. In the beginning days

of her career as a tenure track secondary-level English language teacher, Kumari was offered the responsibility of Kendradhakshya [exam superintendent] by the District Education Office (DEO), and Kumari also received the training. After the training, she attended the orientation program and returned to her exam centre with resource materials and security. The centre was challenging because parents used to pressurize and sometimes physically assault teachers if the students were not allowed to cheat. Because of that district education officer had *"assured of full support and suggested her to conduct examination strictly with full confidence."*

On the first day of the examination, she told security personnel not to allow parents to enter the school compound. She conducted the examination on the first day fairly in *"a very strict environment."* The invigilators collected *"a large number of guidebooks, guess papers, notes, cheats, and reference materials brought by the students."* They *"destroyed all those materials in fire"* right after the examination. As Kumari had conducted the examination fairly, she received a call from the resource person in her area to pressurize her to let students cheat in the examination. Kumari confessed:

> *On the very day of the English examination, I received a call from a resource person in that area inquiring about the examination. He also asked why the examination was tight. I replied that whether I conduct the exam tight or loose is under my jurisdiction. I asked for his introduction, and he replied that he was a resource person and suggested me avoid conducting examinations strictly. I also replied that I would run the examination under all the rules, regulations, guidelines, and defined responsibilities of the District Education Office. I also clearly told him not to interfere in my business. Afterwards, I learned that even a resource person's son was attending an examination in the same centre.*

Kumari's stories indicated that the parents and those responsible for improving the education system contributed to the deteriorating examination system. But Kumari struggled against the malpractices to maintain quality and fairness in the Secondary Education Examination (SEE). That evening Kumari received frequent phone calls and messages requesting to conduct the examination loosely. As Kumari ignored all the requests, *"very rude messages were sent,"* threatening that she would be physically assaulted if she did not liberally conduct the examination.

Kumari reported all the phone calls, threats from the parents, the resource person, and the examination conduction to the district education officer. The next day district education officer sent the police force to her house for her security. When Kumari reached school, a large crowd of parents and even young boys with sticks and household weapons were at the gate. Kumari entered the school without paying attention to their activities and conducted the examination as she did on the first day. As most students considered math a complex subject, they could not do well as they were not allowed to cheat. So many parents reached her home to pressurize her to resign from the responsibility of Kendradhakshya [exam superintendent]. Kumari confessed:

> *As students did not do well in mathematics, parents reached my home to pressurize me to resign from Kendradhakshya [exam superintendent]. My parents were so scared after that. That day I took parents to the school and had a meeting. I convinced them that fair examination enhances the quality of education and how their children benefit from it. I convinced them that my initiation would positively contribute to the education of their children though they immediately failed one examination. After an hour-long conversation, they were convinced, and finally, they apologized for what they did and suggested I conduct an examination in whatever manner I was running.*

Kumari was able to conduct the examination fairly and systematically by convincing parents. Though Kumari was updating everything to the district education officer regularly, he was also minutely observing the developments in the centre. After completing the SEE examination, When Kumari reached the District Education Office to drop the report and answer sheets, she was rewarded for conducting the examination smoothly in such a challenging centre. Kumari revealed:

> *When I reached the District Education Office to drop off answer sheets, I was nominated and awarded the best Kendradhakshya [exam superintendent] certificate. That day all the Kendradhakshya [exam superintendent] from different centres told me that running the examination was a great challenge in my area.*

Kumari had set the trend of conducting SEE examinations. She claimed the district examination officer *"appreciated my efforts in setting the trend, and I was awarded the district's best Kendradhakshya [exam superintendent]."* Kumari developed the cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1991) through the smooth conduction of the examination.

Instead of adopting and submitting the norms of the exam centre, Kumari influenced the norms (Wenger, 1998) and set new trends in conducting SEE examinations in the area that asserted her identity as a sincere and committed teacher. Kumari and Binesh contributed to improving the examination tradition through personal initiatives. From the stories of participants, mixed results relating to agency emerged. On the one hand, teachers can influence the learning environment, pedagogical approaches, and assessment system through personal effort; on the other, even agency can be performed in a schooled way because of the years of engagement in teaching, as noted by Mirzaee and Aliakbari (2018). This discussion indicated a two-way influence between social structure and agency, with limited space for teachers to exercise their agency.

### Chapter Summary: Interaction Between Environment and Agency

Analysis of the participants' lived stories revealed a two-way influence between sociocultural factors belonging to micro, meso and macro contexts and the teacher agency. As presented in the figure, micro factors like the family environment, particularly support from parents and educational environment, economic condition and accessibility heavily impacted English teachers' interest and learning achievement. Participants' stories revealed that a good learning environment family provided played a pivotal role in what they have become today. Binesh and Nita's parents were educated and always motivated them to education. Whereas though the parents of Surya and Kumari were not educated, they knew the importance of education and provided all the support they required. Their parents always motivated them to education. Besides, economic conditions influenced the accessibility of good education and resources. As Nita belonged to a comparatively well-off family, she had access to good education with EMI and a good learning environment at the private school. While family environment and economic conditions primarily nfluenced teachers' development during their schooling, teachers also impacted the environment at the micro level.

At the meso level, participants were influenced by the learning environment at school, teacher education curriculum, and learning opportunities they received during teacher education, teachers, changed context, and workplace environment. For instance, Nita had a significant influence on the English language learning environment during her basic level of education, which set the foundation as well as interest in English; because of that, later, Nita chose English as a major subject during

her higher education that led her to be an English teacher. Besides, teachers have also influenced participants a lot. For instance, Binesh was highly influenced by the economic capital his English teacher gained through additional classes. Because of that, Binesh wanted to be like his teacher. Apart from these, teachers have also influenced participants' pedagogical choices and behaviours. Besides, participants have also affected the teaching-learning environment and development activities, particularly in the workplace. Though participants faced a crisis of identity in changed learning and working context, they negotiated their identities by engaging in learning and development activities and through interaction.

Figure 3:

Interplay between Sociocultural Environment and Agency.
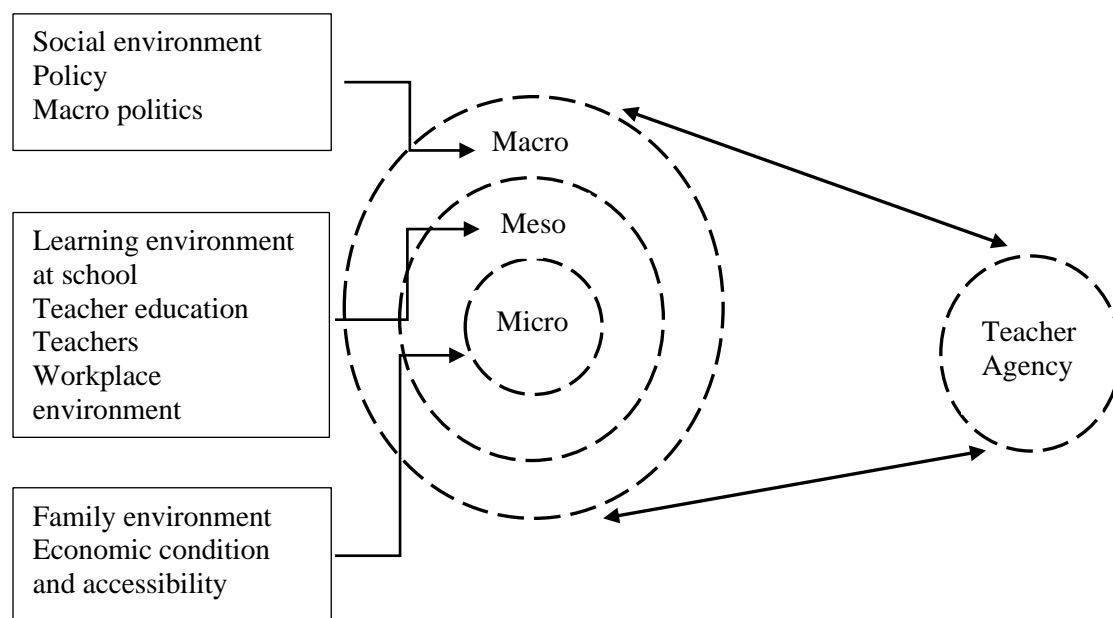
Likewise, in a macro context, education policy, national politics, and social environment have also impacted the development of teachers. Politics heavily influenced them during schooling, teacher education, or working as a teacher. As all the participants experienced fourteen-year-long Maoist conflict during their education and teaching career, the politics heavily influenced their education and working opportunities that shaped their identities. However, though their stories showed the influence of macro context, the impact of teacher agency on politics and policy is very nominal. Participants have improved their learning through their personal initiatives despite having a very unfavourable learning environment. They have also positively impacted students' learning outcomes and evaluation systems. Thus, there is a two-

way interaction between contextual factors at a different level and teacher agency: one influencing the other and growing together.
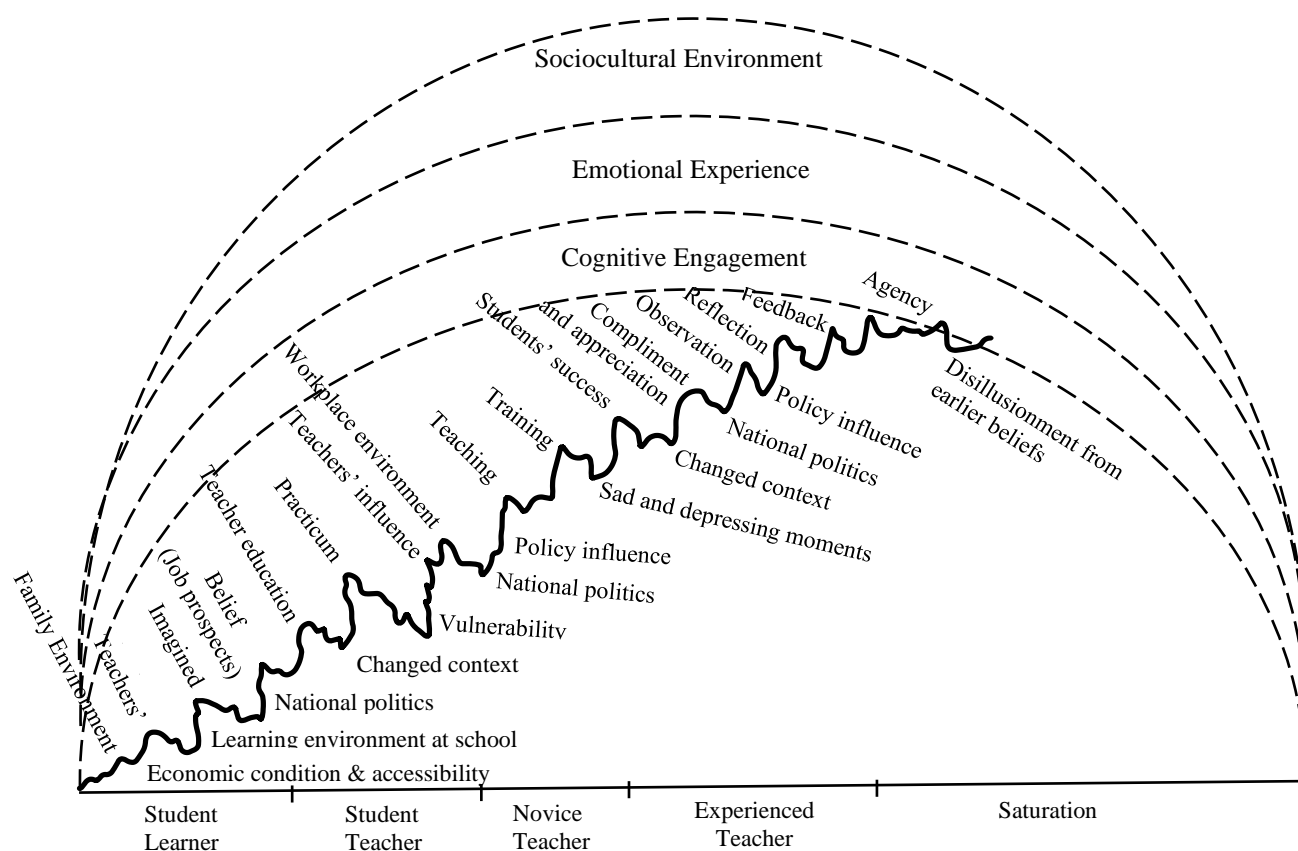
CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION, IMPLICATION, AND REFLECTION

This chapter presents the trajectory of identity negotiation of English language teachers in the context of public schools in Kathmandu Valley. This chapter covers the lived journey of my participants from primary-level schooling to university education, teaching practicum, and teaching experiences at different schools. During the participants' learning trajectories, how the sociocultural environment influenced them, how they influenced the environment exercising their agency, and how teachers grew in the interplay between environment and agency is presented. After presenting the trajectory of English language teachers in a figure and its elaboration, I present the implication of the trajectory of identity negotiation in teacher professional development, followed by my reflection, particularly the transformative experience I underwent as a teacher educator and researcher.

English Language Teachers' Identity Trajectory

Synthesis of four English language teachers' lived realities relating to professional development and identity construction emerged with the trajectory of identity negotiation. Though studies on identity construction have been emerging recently, a paucity of research on identity construction that focuses on the influence of teachers' beliefs, emotions, imagined identity, and sociocultural environment is evident. The previous studies mainly focused on short-term programs, training, and other development activities, with the least focus on sociocultural aspects of identity negotiation of English language teachers. However, this study explored the life history of English language teachers and developed the trajectory of their identity negotiation, focusing on beliefs, emotions, imagined identity and investing, and sociocultural environment and agency. The trajectory of identity negotiation emerged as a synthesis of the research study. The trajectory mainly presents how English language teachers negotiated their identities through the interaction of different aspects of development, such as sociocultural environment, emotional experiences, and cognitive engagement. The findings of the study showed that these three aspects mainly influenced the identity negotiation of English language teachers, as presented in Figure 4.

Figure 4:

Trajectory of Identity Negotiation of English Language Teachers

Sociocultural Environment

Emotional Experience

Cognitive Engagement

Agency

Feedback

Reflection

Observation

Compliment and appreciation

Students' success

Disillusionment from earlier beliefs

Policy influence

National politics

Changed context

Sad and depressing moments

Workplace environment

Teachers' influence

Training

Teaching

Practicum

Teacher education

Belief (Job prospects)

Imagined Teachers'

Family Environment

Policy influence

National politics

Vulnerability

Changed context

National politics

Learning environment at school

Economic condition & accessibility

| Student Learner | Student Teacher | Novice Teacher | Experienced Teacher | Saturation |

This figure synthesises teachers' lived experiences and the factors influencing identity negotiation. To my knowledge, as the least number of past literature focused on the trajectory of identity construction of English language teachers, this study contributes to the existing body of knowledge in the context of English language teachers' professional identity. As shown in the figure, different aspects like cognitive engagement, emotional experiences and sociocultural environment have mainly influenced the identity construction of English language teachers during the stage of a student learner, student teacher, novice teacher, and experienced teacher and teacher educator. And these different factors, like emotional experience, cognitive engagement, and sociocultural environment, influence each other.

Specifically, during schooling, different aspects like the family environment, the economic capital and accessibility influence learning. Besides, the learning environment at school remains another crucial factor influencing student learners' learning outcomes. During schooling, prospective teachers imagine themselves like certain teachers, affecting their investing and teaching-learning styles. Even teachers'

behaviours align with the behaviours of their teachers. The family and teaching-learning environment also heavily influences their choice of major subject in higher education, naturally influencing their career choice later. When the family environment, teachers, imagined identity and belief in career prospects and economic gain in future positively impacted English language teachers' identity construction, factors like inappropriate learning environment at school, except in the case of Nita, financial condition, and national politics adversely impact their learning. Despite that, participants are capable of achieving good results through personal efforts.

Teacher education programs and practicum remain other influencing factors in the identity construction of English language teachers. Student teachers, like their schooling, are heavily influenced by their teachers during this stage. Teachers impact the pedagogical choices and behaviours of student teachers. Besides, the good curriculum, learning environment, and practicum during teacher education positively influenced them. However, the changed context poses questions about participants' identity as student teachers and their understanding of themselves, particularly their competence level. In addition, the volatile national political scenario reflected in the university environment adversely impacted teaching and learning. The perceived vulnerability, mainly due to inefficient language fluency, economic issues, and inefficient skills as a teacher and the doubt it creates regarding establishing in the profession, positively contributes by encouraging student teachers to invest in their imagined identity. Though vulnerability is commonly perceived negative emotion, it can also positively contribute to the identity construction of teachers.

In their novice stage, though a short period in their professional development phase, mainly positive workplace environment, teaching experience they gained, training opportunities, and students' success and satisfaction increase commitment to the profession. The teaching experience also helps teachers boost their language proficiency, mainly speaking, which highly contributes to them as teachers. However, teachers' sad and depressing moments sometimes pose a crisis in their identity, compelling them to think about resigning from the job. Teachers may counsel and pacify themselves in such painful moments and continue working.

Though teachers are usually in the most vulnerable situation during the novice stage of their career, even experienced teachers are not spared from the identity crisis. In the changed context, mainly due to the change in curriculum, English teachers are found to have lost their confidence. Even rampant political and policy influence with

little space for teachers to exercise their agency adversely impacts teachers. Still, teachers exercise their agency by engaging in different observations, reflection, and feedback and improving their teaching-learning practices despite the unfavourable learning environment at the workspace. Though teachers initially idealize the profession seeing the possibility of earning cultural and economic capital, the changed context may compel them to reflect and question their earlier beliefs. A participant, Binesh, is disillusioned by the earlier beliefs that influenced him to be an English language teacher, and now he asks, *"Was it the right decision to join English language teaching?"* Hence, the teachers' perception of themselves and the profession may change in the changed context. With the changed teaching-learning and sociocultural environment, participants and their earlier beliefs and behaviours have changed, influencing their identity construction, approving the sociocultural and poststructural notion of identity that it is unstable, fragmented, and in the constant process of becoming. The trajectory of identity negotiation presented in the figure represents the unstable and fluctuating nature of identity.

Implication

This study has implications mainly on teacher education, practicum, in-service training, and language policy and its practical implementation. Participants' stories indicated that the liberal criteria that allowed underperformers to join teacher education programs promoted inefficient students to enter into teacher education. The students' backgrounds impacted the teaching-learning environment during teacher education and their performance as teachers. The participants' stories indicated that entry requirements in teacher education programs should be rigorous. Besides, the content knowledge and the language skills that student teachers develop during teacher education do not suffice the contextual needs. The top-down curriculum design approach that loosely connects with contextual realities has remained the main problem. Even content delivery does not match the contextual realities. This research study indicates that overhauling the teacher education curriculum is very urgent. In addition, though teaching practicum has remained useful, more feedback, observation, and reflection are required to develop confidence and adequate skills before entering the teaching profession.

The findings also indicate requirements in reframing the training curriculum, input process, cascading knowledge and skills, and follow-up after the training to confirm whether the knowledge and skills are transferred to the classroom. The

findings of the study indicated that the current practice of in-service training offered by CEHRD is inadequate to cater to the teachers' needs. Mainly the problem lies in its curriculum, which is primarily based on assumptions rather than based on teachers' needs identified after the rigorous need analysis. Even the selection of resource persons is based on personal networks than on their areas of expertise. In addition, the inefficient mechanism to follow up and ensure whether the targeted beneficiaries are taking advantage of in-service training has made training programs ineffective. Therefore, a mechanism to follow up training is required for its effectiveness.

Regarding language policy, findings showed that although education policy envisions using national and local languages to make the teaching-learning process effective, EMI has been used without proper preparation, adversely impacting the students' cognitive development. Therefore, the findings of the study implicate the need for groundwork preparation before implementing EMI in both private and public schools in Nepal. In addition, keeping in view the multilingual and multicultural context, adopting codeswitching and a multilingual approach to teaching is required to make the learning process effective.

The study also has implications for further research in teacher professional development and identity construction. As most of the research focuses on short-term programs, teacher education, practicum and engagement in professional communities, more studies focusing on participants' life history could give more insights into continuing professional development and identity construction. This study adopted sociocultural and post-structural perspectives while studying teacher professional identity following the life history approach of narrative inquiry. As most of the studies are conducted using narrative methods, exploration of identity through the mixed method and other qualitative approaches could also be an added advantage.

Reflection

My formal Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) journey started in 2020 Fall; however, I had begun preparing the groundwork for it around a year before. I started consulting with professors inside and outside the university. While working at Kathmandu University School of Management as an assistant professor of English and Communication during the beginning phase of my PhD, I was looking for a thematic area that could be somehow related to my workplace requirement. Therefore, my reading started with intercultural communication. However, my colleagues at the School of Management suggested that I work on a thematic area relevant to

management education to develop my space in the school. Concurrently, I also started thinking about the school and department from where I would complete my PhD. As the Department of Language Education School of Education could be the right place for me to conduct PhD, I also started thinking about the thematic and methodological areas that could be compatible with the nature of the research conducted in the department. Then I thought of conducting a rhetorical analysis of the discourse on university leadership published in the mainstream newspapers, journals, and convocation speeches of the Vice Chancellors from different universities in Nepal. In consultation with Associate Professor Hem Raj Kafle, I developed a proposal titled "Ontology of University Leadership in Nepal: A Rhetorical Analysis." I applied for the PhD and presented the proposal, and finally, I was selected as a PhD Candidate.

However, as I had completed my MPhil in English from the Humanities and Social Science Department, I had to do some fundamental courses of education, altogether five courses with three credits each. During my coursework, I learned different theoretical and philosophical assumptions of learning and education, pedagogical approaches in ELT, research methodologies, and enhanced soft skills required in a teacher. Then my interest shifted gradually, and I started exploring thematic areas more aligned with English language education (ELE). On top of that, professors at the School of Education, particularly Laxman Gnawali and Jai Raj Awasthi, suggested conducting research in one of the major thematic areas of ELE. As a result of my changing interest and suggestions from professors, I developed a proposal titled "Identity Transformation of English Language Teachers from Nepal: A Narrative Inquiry." When I reached this stage, I was almost immersed in the issues of ELE. I was already well versed in different pedagogical approaches that range from grammar-translation to post-method pedagogy, teacher professional development, discourses on transformative learning, research trends in ELE, qualitative research methods, language policy, and critical pedagogy, among others. I defended my proposal within a year of my PhD journey.

After the approval of the proposal from the research committee, supervisors were assigned. After that, Prof. Awasthi and Prof. Gnawali started forwarding the abundance of PDF books and other resources related to my area. The more I became acquainted with different theoretical and methodological underpinnings in ELE research, the more interested I became. I published four research articles and wrote two qualifying papers, one thematic and the next methodological qualifying paper.

These qualifying papers and other research conducted enhanced my academic writing skills. Within this period, I attended seven conferences as a presenter and numerous others as a participant. I also started an international network and collaboration by joining different professional organizations such as STAR Scholars Network, IATEFL, Bangladesh English Language Teachers' Association (BELTA) and many others. I also started contributing as a reviewer in many international journals, which enhanced my international collaboration.

After successfully defending my qualifying papers in the second year, I started working on my thesis. In between, I collected two/three rounds of data from my research participants. The thematic and methodological insights I developed during my journey of qualifying paper writing and the themes that emerged from the data indicated that my proposal would not be that much relevant to my thesis development. The proposal was appropriate only to finalize my thematic and methodological concentration. Later, I decided to change even the theories. Though initially, I had included knowledge and human interest of Habermas and the transformative theory of Mezirow as theoretical referents in my proposal, eventually, I found Norton's theory of investment and Wenger's concept of communities of practice more relevant to my research. As Bourdieu highly inspired Norton's concept of investment, obviously Norton's theory drew Bourdieu's concept of habitus, capital, and field. In addition, my research questions also emerged from the stories of my research participants. Therefore, I changed even my research questions. Thus, I conducted my research by adopting an inductive research approach.

The rigorous study, reflection, and continuous consultation with and feedback from the supervisors and colleagues made my PhD journey a transformative process. During this journey, I somehow transformed my pedagogical approaches, developed pedagogical content knowledge, enhanced my research skills, and boosted my visibility with the professional community nationally and internationally through different digital platforms. I also underwent emotional upheaval during my PhD journey. During my second year of the PhD journey, almost two/three times, thoughts of quitting PhD emerged in my mind. I also somehow experienced anxiety. Due to this, I almost stopped reading and writing for about three months. As presented in research findings, mainly sociocultural environment, cognitive engagement, and emotional experiences contributed to becoming who I am today. As noted by Nita, one of my research participants, my research journey remained a roller coaster ride

with moments of happiness and satisfaction to frustration and vulnerability as a researcher. Despite all these upheavals, I finally completed my PhD within the time frame of the university. On both personal and professional levels, my PhD journey has contributed immensely. I have experienced a profound level of transformation. PhD experience has given me a sense that I still have to learn a lot; the research journey has just started.

Regarding my further contribution to my field, I would like to continue researching the teacher professional development and identity construction sector. Now I aim to develop a framework for continuing professional development through the lens of teacher identity. As very few research studies are conducted through the life history approach of narrative inquiry, my focus would be to develop a framework of professional development and identity construction through the holistic approach adopting cognitive, affective, and sociocultural perspectives. Though this project sounds ambitious, it's not unattainable. In addition, as a teacher educator and researcher, I will continue the teaching-learning and professional development of teachers. Now I feel that my responsibility remains in coordinating with government bodies and contributing to the policy development of teachers' continuing professional development, unlike the current practice of providing in-service training to teachers. My exploration and contribution to teacher professional development and identity construction will continue. Drawing Robert Frost's lines, I conclude my reflection that I have miles to go before I sleep.

REFERENCES

Anderson, B. (1991). *Imagined communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*. Verso.

Awasthi, J. R. (2003). Teacher education with special reference to English language teaching in Nepal. *Journal of NELTA*, *8*(1–2), 17–28.

Bakhtin, M. M. (1981). *The dialogic imagination: Four essays*. University of Texas Press.

Bakhtin, M. M. (1984). *Problems of Dostoevsky's poetics*. University of Minnesota Press.

Bakhtin, M. M. (1986). The problem of speech genres. In C. Emerson & M. Holquist (Eds.), *Speech genres and other late essays* (pp. 60–102). University of Texas Press.

Bamberg, M. (2006). Stories: Big or small - Why do we care? *Narrative Inquiry*, *16*(1), 139–147. https://doi.org/10.1075/ni.16.1.18bam

Banegas, D., Pavese, A., Velazquez, A., & Velez, S. M. (2013). Teacher professional development through collaborative action research: Impact on foreign English-language teaching and learning. *Educational Action Research*, *21*(2), 185–201. https://doi.org/10.1080/09650792.2013.789717

Barkhuizen, G. (2011). Narrative knowledging in TESOL. *TESOL Quarterly*, *45*(3), 391–414. https://doi.org/10.5054/tq.2011.261888

Barkhuizen, G. (2016a). A short story approach to analyzing teacher (imagined) identities over time. *TESOL Quarterly*, *50*(3), 655–683. https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.311

Barkhuizen, G. (2016b). Narrative approaches to exploring language, identity and power in language teacher education. *RELC Journal*, *47*(1), 25–42. https://doi.org/10.1177/0033688216631222

Barkhuizen, G. (2017). Language teacher identity research. In *Reflections on language teacher identity research* (pp. 1–11). Routledge.

Barkhuizen, G., Benson, P., & Chik, A. (2014). *Narrative inquiry in language teaching and learning research*. Routledge.

Beck, R. H. (1985). Plato's Views on Teaching. *Educational Theory*, *35*(2), 119–134.

Beijaard, D., Meijer, P. c., & Verloop, N. (2004). Reconsidering research on teachers'

professional identity. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *20*(2), 107–128. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2003.07.001

Beijaard, D., Verloop, N., & Vermunt, J. D. (2000). Teachers' perceptions of professional identity: An exploratory study from a personal knowledge perspective. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *16*(7), 749–767. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0742-051X(00)00023-8

Benesch, S. (2012). *Considering emotions in critical English language teaching*. Routledge.

Bhabha, H. K. (1994). *The location of culture*. Routledge.

Block, D. (2002). Destabilized identities and cosmopolitanism across language and cultural borders: two case studies. *Hong Kong Journal of Applied Linguistics*, *7*(2), 1–19. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ669708

Block, D. (2015). Becoming a language teacher: constraints and negotiations in the emergence of new identities. *Bellaterra Journal of Teaching and Learning Language and Literature*, *8*(3), 9–26. https://doi.org/10.5565/rev/jtl3.648

Bourdieu, P. (1977). The economics of linguistic exchanges. *Social Science Information*, *16*(6), 645–668. https://doi.org/10.1177/053901847701600601

Bourdieu, P. (1984). *Distinction: A social critique of the judgment of taste*. Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Bourdieu, P. (1986). The forms of capital. In J. G. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of theory and research for the sociology of education* (pp. 241–258). Greenwood Press.

Bourdieu, P. (1987). What makes a social class? On the theoretical and practical existence of groups. *Berkeley Journal of Sociology*, *32*, 1–17. https://www.jstor.org/stable/41035356#metadata_info_tab_contents

Bourdieu, P. (1991). *Language and symbolic power*. Polity Press.

Bourdieu, P., & Passerson, J. C. (1977). *Reproduction in education, society, and culture*. SAGE Publication Ltd.

Braine, G. (2010). *Nonnative speaker English teachers: research, pedagogy, and professional growth*.

Bruner, J. (1987). Life as narrative. *Social Research*, *54*(1), 11–32. https://www.jstor.org/stable/40970444

Castañeda, J. A. F. (2011). *Teacher identity construction: Exploring the nature of becoming a primary school language teacher*.[Unpublished doctoral thesis].

University of Newcastle. https://theses.ncl.ac.uk/jspui/handle/10443/1326

Charles, Q. D. (2019). Black teachers of English in South Korea: Constructing identities as a native English speaker and English language teaching professional. *TESOL Journal*, *10*(4), 1–16. https://doi.org/10.1002/tesj.478

Chien, C. W. (2018a). Fostering elementary school English teachers' professional identity through artifacts of practice. *Reflective Practice*, *19*(4), 557–572. https://doi.org/10.1080/14623943.2018.1538952

Chien, C. W. (2018b). Influence of training on Taiwanese elementary school English teachers' professional identity construction. *Research Papers in Education*, *34*(4), 499–520. https://doi.org/10.1080/02671522.2018.1493740

Choe, H., & Seo, Y. (2021). Negotiating teacher identity: Experiences of Black teachers of English in Korean ELT. *English Today*, *37*(3), 148–155. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0266078419000531

Clandinin, D. J., & Huber, J. (2010). Narrative inquiry. In *International encyclopedia of education* (pp. 436–441). Elsevier Ltd.

Clandinin, D. J., Pushor, D., & Orr, A. M. (2007). Navigating sites for narrative inquiry. *Journal of Teacher Education*, *58*(1), 21–35. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487106296218

Clarke, M. (2008). *Language teacher identities: Co-constructing discourse and community*. Multilingual Matters.

Coffey, S., & Street, B. (2008). Narrative and identity in the "language learning project." *Modern Language Journal*, *92*(3), 452–464. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.2008.00757.x

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2018). *Research methods in education*. Routledge.

Connelly, F. M., & Clandinin, D. J. (1990). Stories of experience and narrative inquiry. *Educational Researcher*, *19*(5), 2–14. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X019005002

Connelly, F. M., & Clandinin, D. J. (2006). Narrative inquiry. In J. L. Green, G. Camilli, & P. B. Elmore (Eds.), *Handbook of complementary methods in education research* (pp. 477–488). American Educational Research Association.

Creese, A. (2005). Mediating allegations of racism in a multiethnic London school: What speech communities and communities of practice can tell us about discourse and power. In D. Barton & K. Tusting (Eds.), *Beyond Communities of*

Practice (pp. 55–76). Cambridge University Press.

Danielewicz, J. (2001). *Teaching Selves: Identity, Pedagogy, and Teacher Education* (A. R. Tom (ed.)). State University of New York Press.

Darvin, R., & Norton, B. (2015). Identity and a model of investment in applied linguistics. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, *35*, 36–56. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0267190514000191

Darvin, R., & Norton, B. (2017). Language, identity, and investment in the twenty-first century. In T. McCarty & S. May (Eds.), *Language policy and political issues in education* (pp. 45–57). Springer International Publishing.

Darvin, R., & Norton, B. (2018). Identity , investment , and TESOL. In *The TESOL Encyclopedia of English Language Teaching* (pp. 1–9). John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Davey, R. (2013). *The professional identity of teacher educators*. Routledge.

Davies, T. (2013). Incorporating creativity into teachers practice and self-concept of professional identity. *Journal of Educational Change*, *14*, 51–71. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10833-012-9192-3

Day, C. (2012). New lives of teachers. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, *39*(1), 7–26. https://www.jstor.org/stable/23479560

Day, C., Kington, A., Stobart, G., & Sammons, P. (2006). The perosnal and professional selves of teachers: Stable and unstable identities. *British Educational Research Journal*, *32*(4), 601–616. https://doi.org/10.1080/01411920600775316

Denzin, N. K. (1997). *Interpretive ethnography: Ethnographic practices for the 21st century*. SAGE Publications Ltd.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2011). Introduction: The discipline and practice of qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 1–20). SAGE Publications Ltd.

Dhungana, S. (2022). *Self-initiated dimension of English language teachers' professional development: A narrative inquiry* [Unpublished doctoral thesis]. Kathmandu University.

Djoudir, L. (2019). *The quest for teacher identity: A qualitative study of professional identity construction of novice English teachers in Algeria* [Unpublished doctoral thesis]. Canterbury Christ Church University. https://www.proquest.com/openview/8bac1a4c9d33919a99ea4887a518e9bd/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=18750&diss=y

Eckert, P. (2006). Communities of practice. In *Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics* (pp. 683–685). Elsevier. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/B0-08-044854-2/01276-1

Evans, D. (2015). Introduction. In D. Evans (Ed.), *Language and identity: Discourse in the world* (pp. 3–14). Bloomsbury Academic.

Fan, F., & de Jong, E. J. (2019). Exploring professional identities of nonnative-English-speaking teachers in the United States: A narrative case study. *TESOL Journal*, *10*(4), 1–17. https://doi.org/10.1002/tesj.495

Foley, D. E. (2002). Critical ethnography: The reflexive turn. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, *15*(4), 469–490. https://doi.org/10.1080/09518390210145534

Fox, S. (2000). Communities of practice, Foucault and actor-network therory. *Journal of Management Studies*, *37*(6), 853–868. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-6486.00207

Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. Continuum.

Fried, L. (2011). Teaching teachers about emotion regulation in the classroom. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, *36*(3), 117–127. http://dx.doi.org/10.14221/ajte.2011v36n3.1

Gardner, R. C. (1989). Attitudes and motivation. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, *1988*(9), 135–148. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0267190500000854

Gautam, G. R. (2001). Practice learning: A learning experience or a meaningless ritual? *Shikshak Journal*.

Gautam, G. R. (2018). *Becoming and being an English education professional: an autoethnographic inquiry from Gurukum Sankskrit education to English language teacher education* [Unpublished doctoral thesis]. Kathmandu University.

Gee, J. P. (2000). Chapter 3: Identity as an analytic lens for research in education. *Review of Research in Education*, *25*(1), 99–125. https://doi.org/10.3102/0091732x025001099

Giddens, A. (1984). *The constitution of society: Outline of the theory of structuration*. University of California Press.

Giovanelli, M. (2015). Becoming an English language teacher: Linguistic knowledge, anxieties and the shifting sense of identity. *Language and Education*, *29*(5), 416–429. https://doi.org/10.1080/09500782.2015.1031677

Gnawali, L. (2013). *English language teacher development through professional associations: The NELTA way* [Unpublished doctoral thesis]. Kathmandu University. http://103.69.125.248:8080/xmlui/bitstream/handle/123456789/75/PhD Thesis of Laxman Gnawali.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

Goodwin, C. (1994). Professional vision. *American Anthropologist*, *96*(3), 606–633. https://doi.org/10.1525/aa.1994.96.3.02a00100

Gramsci, A. (1971). *Selections from Prison notebooks*. ElecBook.

Gramsci, A. (1975). *Antonio Gramsci prison notebooks volume II*. Columbia University Press. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203625521.

Guillemin, M., & Gillam, L. (2004). Ethics, reflexivity, and "ethically important moments" in research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, *10*(2), 261–280. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F1077800403262360

Hafsa, S. F. (2019). Investigating teachers ' identity development in a hybrid course to prepare online teachers [University of Rochester]. In *ProQuest Dissertations and Theses*. https://www.proquest.com/openview/23dd14fa208b22e3bfad9c3acac17454/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=18750&diss=y

Hall, D. L., & Ames, R. T. (1987). *Thinking Through Confucius*. State University of New York Press.

Hall, J. K., Cheng, A., & Carlson, M. T. (2006). Reconceptualizing multicompetence as a theory of language knowledge. *Applied Linguistics*, *27*(2), 220–240. https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/aml013

Hall, S. (1992). New ethnicities. In J. Donald & A. Rattansi (Eds.), *Race, culture and difference* (pp. 252–259). SAGE Publications Ltd.

Hall, S. (1997). *Representation: Cultural representations and signifying practices*. SAGE Publications Ltd.

Hall, S. (2000). Foreword. In *Elusive culture: Schooling, race, and identity in global times* (pp. ix–xii). State University of New York Press.

Hallman, H. L. (2015). Teacher identity as dialogic response: A bakhtinian perspective. In Y. L. Cheung, S. Ben Said, & K. Park (Eds.), *Advances and current trends in language teacher identity research* (pp. 3–15). Routledge.

Han, I. (2017). Conceptualisation of English teachers' professional identity and comprehension of its dynamics. *Teachers and Teaching*, *23*(5), 549–569.

https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2016.1206525

Hargreaves, A. (2000). Mixed emotions: Teachers' perceptions of their interactions with students. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *16*(8), 811–826. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0742-051X(00)00028-7

Herman, L., & Vervaeck, B. (2005). *Handbook of narrative analysis*. University of Nebraska Press.

Hersi, M. (2018). *Teachers' professional identity construction: A narrative inquiry of non-native English speaking teachers in Saudi Arabia* [Unpublished doctoral thesis]. The University of New Mexico. http://cyber.usask.ca/login?url=https://search.proquest.com/docview/208844858 7?accountid=14739&bdid=6508&_bd=Od2CNnhTYRhnu04ouTdeyshsg04%3D

Hollway, W., & Jefferson, T. (2000). *Doing qualitative research differently: Free association, narrative and the interview method*. SAGE Publications Ltd.

Johnson, K. E. (2006). The sociocultural turn and its challenges for second language teacher education. *TESOL Quarterly*, *40*(1), 235–257. https://doi.org/10.4337/9781783470662.00017

Joshi, K. D., Gnawali, L., & Dixon, M. (2018). Experience of professional development strategies: Context of Nepalese EFL teachers. *Pakistan Journal of Education*, *35*(2), 53–78.

Kachru, B. B. (1990). Englishes and applied linguistics. *World Englishes*, *9*(1), 3–20. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-971X.1990.tb00683.x

Kanno, Y. (2003). Imagined communities, school visions, and the education of bilingual students in Japan. *Journal of Language, Identity & Education*, *2*(4), 385–300. https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327701JLIE0204_4

Kayi-Aydar, H. (2015). Multiple identities, negotiations, and agency across time and space: A narrative inquiry of a foreign language teacher candidate. *Critical Inquiry in Language Studies*, *12*(2), 137–160. https://doi.org/10.1080/15427587.2015.1032076

Kiely, R. (2015). English language teacher identity: A framework for teacher learning and professional development. In D. Evans (Ed.), *Language and identity: Discourse in the world* (pp. 207–228). Bloomsbury Academic.

Kim, J. H. (2016). *Understanding narrative inquiry: The crafting and analysis of stories as research*. SAGE Publication Ltd.

Kivunja, C., & Kuyini, A. B. (2017). Understanding and applying research paradigms

in educational contexts. *International Journal of Higher Education*, *6*(5), 26–41. https://doi.org/10.5430/ijhe.v6n5p26

Kramp, M. K. (2004). Exploring life and experience through narrative inquiry. In K. DeMarrais & S. D. Lapan (Eds.), *Foundations for research: Methods of inquiry in education and the social sciences* (pp. 103–122). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Krashen, S. (1981). *Second language acquisition and second language learning*. Oxford: Pergamon.

Kvale, S., & Brinkmann, S. (2009). *Interview: Learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing*. SAGE Publications Ltd.

Labov, W. (2006). The transformation of experience in narrative. In A. Jaworski & N. Coupland (Eds.), *The discourse reader* (pp. 214–226). Routledge.

Lasky, S. (2005). A sociocultural approach to understanding teacher identity, agency and professional vulnerability in a context of secondary school reform. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *21*(8), 899–916. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2005.06.003

Lave, J. (1988). *Cognition in practice: Mind, mathematics, and culture in everyday life*. Cambridge University Press.

Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*. Cambridge University Press.

Lemarchand-Chauvin, M. C., & Tardieu, C. (2018). Teachers' emotions and professional identity development: Implications for second language teacher education. In *Emotions in second language teaching* (pp. 425–443). Springer.

Li, W. (2020). Unpacking the complexities of teacher identity: Narratives of two Chinese teachers of English in China. *Language Teaching Research*, *26*(4), 1–19. https://doi.org/10.1177/1362168820910955

Lin, H., Trakulkasemsuk, W., & Zilli, P. J. (2020). When queer meets teacher: A narrative inquiry of the lived experience of a teacher of English as a foreign language. *Sexuality and Culture*, *24*(4), 1064–1081. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12119-020-09748-y

Lincoln, Y. S. (1992). Sympathetic connections between qualitative methods and health research. *Qualitative Health Research*, *2*(4), 375–391. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F104973239200200402

Liu, W. (2014). Living with a foreign tongue: An autobiographical narrative inquiry

into identity in a foreign language. *Alberta Journal of Educational Research*, *60*(2), 264–278. https://doi.org/10.11575/ajer.v60i2.55803

Liu, Y., & Xu, Y. (2013). The trajectory of learning in a teacher community of practice: A narrative inquiry of a language teacher's identity in the workplace. *Research Papers in Education*, *28*(2), 176–195. https://doi.org/10.1080/02671522.2011.610899

Luehmann, A. L. (2007). Identity development as a lens to science teacher preparation. *Science Education*, *91*(5), 822–839. https://doi.org/10.1002/sce.20209

Macías Villegas, D. F., Hernández Varona, W., & Sánchez Gutiérrez, A. (2020). Student teachers' identity construction: A socially-constructed narrative in a second language teacher education program. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *91*, 1–10. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2020.103055

Markus, H., & Nurius, P. (1986). Possible selves. *American Psychologist*, *41*(9), 954–969. https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/0003-066X.41.9.954

Martin, D. R. (2017). *Investigating English language teacher identity trajectories at mid-career* [Unpublished doctoral thesis]. Washington State University. https://research-libraries-www.gz-booming.com/xmlui/handle/2376/12936

Maton, K. (2008). Habitus. In M. Grenfell (Ed.), *Pierre Bourdieu: Key concepts* (pp. 49–66). Acumen Publishing Limited.

McAlpine, L. (2016). Why might you use narrative methodology? A story about narrative. *Eesti Haridusteaduste Ajakiri. Estonian Journal of Education*, *4*(1), 32–57. https://doi.org/10.12697/eha.2016.4.1.02b

Medipally, R., & Mrunalini, T. (2020). Connotation Of Guru & Shishya In Bhagwad Gita. In M. Chaudhary, S. S. Boora, M. Chand, & V. Aggarwal (Eds.), *Universal welfare and the eternal philosophy of Bhagavad Gita* (pp. 29–37). Bharti Publications.

Menard-Warwick, J. (2011). A methodological reflection on the process of narrative analysis: Alienation and identity in the life histories of English language teachers. *TESOL Quarterly*, *45*(3), 564–574. https://doi.org/10.5054/tq.2010.256798

Miller, J. (2009). Teacher identity. In B. Anne & R. J. C. (Eds.), *Cambridge guide to second language teacher education* (pp. 172–181). Cambridge University Press.

Mirzaee, A., & Aliakbari, M. (2018). They now respect me and send me to the best

schools!: Identity construction of an Iranian EFL teacher. *Critical Inquiry in Language Studies*, *15*(1), 21–42. https://doi.org/10.1080/15427587.2017.1327794

Mlecko, J. D. (1982). The Guru in Hindu tradition. *BRILL*, *29*(1), 33–61. http://www.jstor.org/stable/3269931

Morgan, B. (2004). Teacher identity as pedagogy: Towards a field-internal conceptualisation in bilingual and second language education. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, *7*(2–3), 172–188. https://doi.org/10.1080/13670050408667807

Morgan, G., & Smircich, L. (1980). The case for qualitative research. *Academy of Management*, *5*(4), 491–500. https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.1980.4288947

Morley, D. (2016). Applying Wenger's communities of practice theory to placement learning. *Nurse Education Today*, *39*(February 2016), 161–162. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2016.02.007

Motteram, G. (2016). Membership, belonging, and identity in the twenty-first century. *ELT Journal*, *70*(2), 150–159. https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccw001

Nepal Ministry of Education. (2016). *School sector development plan 2016/17-2022/23*.

Neupane, B. P., & Dhungana, S. (2021). Pathways to teacher leadership among English as foreign language teachers in Nepal's public schools. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Perspectives in Higher Education*, *6*(1), 102–122. https://doi.org/10.32674/jimphe.v6i1.2673

Neupane, B. P., Gnawali, L., & Kafle, H. R. (2022). Narratives and identities: A critical review of empirical studies from 2004 to 2022. *Teflin Journal*, *33*(2), 330–348. http://dx.doi.org/10.15639/teflinjournal.v33i2/330-348

Neupane, B. P., & Joshi, D. N. (2022). Perspectives on teacher education in South Asia: A comparative review. *The Harvest*, *1*(1), 1–14. https://doi.org/10.3126/harvest.v1i1.44333

Nguyen, H. T. (2009). An inquiry-based practicum model: What knowledge, practices, and relationships typify empowering teaching and learning experiences for student teachers, cooperating teachers and college supervisors? *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *25*(5), 655–662. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2008.10.001

Nguyen, T. T. L. (2019). Selection of research paradigms in English language teaching: Personal reflections and future directions. *The 2nd Annual*

International Conference on Language and Literature (AICLL 2019), 1–19. https://doi.org/10.18502/kss.v3i19.4826

Nguyen, X. N. C. M., & Dao, P. (2019). Identity exploration and development in TESOL teacher education: A three-dimensional space narrative inquiry perspective. *TESOL Journal*, *10*(4). https://doi.org/10.1002/tesj.492

Norton, B. (2000). *Identity and language learning: Gender, ethnicity and educational change*. Longman.

Norton, B. (2001). Non-participation, imagined communities, and the language classroom. In M. Breen (Ed.), *Learner contributions to language learning: New directions in research* (pp. 156–171). Pearson Education.

Norton, B. (2008). Identity, language learning, and critical pedagogies. In *Encyclopedia of Language and Education* (2nd Editio, pp. 329–341). Springer Science+ Business Media LLC.

Norton, B. (2010). Language and identity. In N. H. Hornberger & S. L. McKay (Eds.), *Sociolinguistics and language education* (pp. 349–369). Multilingual Matters.

Norton, B. (2011). Identity. In J. Simpson (Ed.), *The routledge handbook of applied linguistics* (pp. 318–330). Routledge.

Norton, B. (2013). *Identity and language learning: Extending the conversation*. Multilingual Matters.

Norton, B. (2014). Identity and poststructuralist theory in SLA. In S. Mercer & M. Williams (Eds.), *Multiple perspectives on the self in SLA* (pp. 59–71). Multilingual Matters.

Norton, B. (2015). Identity, investment, and faces of English internationally. *Chinese Journal of Applied Linguistics*, *38*(4), 375–391. https://doi.org/10.1515/cjal-2015-0025

Norton, B., & Gao, Y. (2008). Identity, investment, and Chinese learners of English. *Journal of Asian Pacific Communication*, *18*(1), 109–120. https://doi.org/10.1075/japc.18.1.07nor

Norton, B., & Toohey, K. (2011). Identity, language learning, and social change. *Language Teaching*, *44*(4), 412–446. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444811000309

Norton Peirce, B. (1995). Social identity, investment, and language learning. *TESOL Quarterly*, *29*(1), 9–31. https://doi.org/10.2307/3587803

Nunan, D. (2017). Language teacher identity in teacher education. In *Reflections on*

language teacher identity research (pp. 164–169). Routledge.

O'Neill, F. (2020). *The intercultural professional*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Pavlenko, A. (2001). How am I to become a woman in an American vein? Transformations of gender performance in second language learning. In A. Pavlenko, A. Blackledge, I. Piller, & M. Teutsch-Dwyer (Eds.), *Multilingualism, second language learning, and gender* (pp. 33–174). Mouton de Gruyter.

Pavlenko, A. (2007). Autobiographic narratives as data in applied linguistics. *Applied Linguistics*, *28*(2), 163–188. https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/amm008

Pavlenko, A., & Norton, B. (2007). Imagined communities , identity , and English language learning. In J. Cummins & C. Davidson (Eds.), *International handbook of English language teaching* (pp. 669–680). Springer.

Pennington, M. C. (2015). Teacher identity in TESOL: a frames perspective. In Y. L. Cheung, S. Ben Said, & K. Park (Eds.), *Advances and current trends in language teacher identity research* (pp. 16–30). Routledge.

Pennington, M. C., & Richards, J. C. (2016). Teacher identity in language teaching: Integrating personal, contextual, and professional factors. *RELC Journal*, *47*(1), 5–23. https://doi.org/10.1177/0033688216631219

Pokhrel, V. (2022). *Exploring English teachers' journey of change and identity construction*. Kathmandu University.

Polkinghorne, D. E. (1995). Narrative configuration in qualitative analysis. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, *8*(1), 5–23. https://doi.org/10.1080/0951839950080103

Prabjandee, D. (2020). Narratives of learning to become English teachers in Thailand: Developing identity through a teacher education program. *Teacher Development*, *24*(1), 71–87. https://doi.org/10.1080/13664530.2019.1699155

Priestley, M., Biesta, G., & Robinson, S. (2013). Teachers as 'agents of change': Teacher agency and emerging models of curriculum. In M. Priestley & G. Biesta (Eds.), *Reinventing the curriculum: New trends in curriculum policy and practice* (pp. 187–206). Bloomsbury Academic.

Prior, M. T. (2019). Researching emotion in LTE. In G. Barkhuizen (Ed.), *Qualitative research topics in language teacher education* (pp. 63–69). Routledge.

Reis, D. S. (2015). Making sense of emotions in NNESTs' professional identities and agency. In Y. L. Cheung, S. Ben Said, & K. Park (Eds.), *Advances and current trends in language teacher identity research* (pp. 31–43). Routledge.

Richards, J. C. (2017). Identity in second language teacher education. In G. Barkhuizen (Ed.), *Reflections on language teacher identity research* (pp. 139–144). Routledge.

Richards, K. (2003). *Qualitative inquiry in TESOL*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Richards, K. (2006). *Language and professional identity : aspects of collaborative interaction*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Riessman, C. K. (1993). *Narrative analysis*. SAGE Publications Ltd.

Riessman, C. K. (2008). *Narrative methods for the human sciences*. SAGE Publications Ltd.

Saldana, J. (2016). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*. SAGE Publication Ltd.

Savin-Baden, M., & Niekerk, L. V. (2007). Narrative inquiry: Theory and practice. *Journal of Geography in Higher Education*, *31*(3), 459–472. https://doi.org/10.1080/03098260601071324

Serna-Gutiérrez, J. I. O., & Mora-Pablo, I. (2018). Critical incidents of transnational student-teachers in central Mexico. *Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, *20*(1), 137–150. https://doi.org/10.15446/profile.v20n1.62860

Sfard, A., & Prusak, A. (2005). Telling identities: In search of an analytic tool for investigating learning as a culturally shaped activity. *Educational Researcher*, *34*(4), 14–22. https://doi.org/10.3102%2F0013189X034004014

Shim, S. H. (2008). A philosophical investigation of the role of teachers: A synthesis of Plato, Confucius, Buber, and Freire. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *24*(3), 515–535. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2007.09.014

Silko, L. M. (2006). *Ceremony*. Penguin Classics.

Silva, J. F. S. (2013). *The construction of english teacher identity in Brazil: A study in Mato Grosso do Sul*. UFSC. https://repositorio.ufsc.br/handle/123456789/122768

Simon-Maeda, A. (2004). The complex construction of professional identities: Female EFL educators in Japan speak out. *TESOL Quarterly*, *38*(3), 405–436. https://doi.org/10.2307/3588347

Singh, G., & Richards, J. C. (2006). Teaching and learning in the language teacher education course room: A critical sociocultural perspective. *RELC Journal*, *37*(2), 150–175. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0033688206067426

Spolsky, B. (1989). *Conditions for second language learning*. Oxford University

Press.

Sudarwati, E., Widiati, U., Ubaidillah, M. F., Prasetyoningsih, L., & Sulistiyo, U. (2022). A narrative inquiry into identity construction and classroom participation of an EFL student with a physical disability: Evidence from Indonesia. *The Qualitative Report*, *27*(6), 1534–1556. https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2022.5174

Sung, C. C. M. (2019). Investments and identities across contexts: A case study of a Hong Kong undergraduate student's L2 learning experiences. *Journal of Language, Identity and Education*, *18*(3), 1–14. https://doi.org/10.1080/15348458.2018.1552149

Swearingen, A. J. (2019). Nonnative-English-speaking teacher candidates' language teacher identity development in graduate TESOL preparation programs: A review of the literature. *TESOL Journal*, *10*(4), 1–15. https://doi.org/10.1002/tesj.494

Tasdemir, H. (2021). *A narrative inquiry into early career English language teacher identities* [Unpublished doctoral thesis]. Middle East Technical University. https://open.metu.edu.tr/bitstream/handle/11511/89571/12626287.pdf

Taylor, P. C., & Medina, M. (2011). Educational research paradigm: From positivism to pluralism. *College Research Journal*, *1*(1), 9–23. http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.11937/36608

Teng, F. (2019). *Autonomy, agency, and identity in teaching and learning English as a foreign language*. Springer.

Teng, F. (2020). Understanding TEFL teacher identity: Agency, authority, and vulnerability. *TESOL Journal*, *11*(3), 1–7. https://doi.org/10.1002/tesj.511

Tin, T. B. (2014). A look into the local pedagogy of an English language classroom in Nepal. *Language Teaching Research*, *18*(3), 397–417. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F1362168813510387

Toolan, M. J. (1988). *Narrative: A critical linguistic introduction*. Routledge.

Tracy, S. J. (2020). *Qualitative research methods*. Wiley Blackwell.

Trent, J. (2012). Becoming a teacher: The identity construction experiences of beginning English language teachers in Hong Kong. *Australian Educational Researcher*, *39*(3), 363–383. https://doi.org/10.1007/s13384-012-0067-7

Trent, J., & DeCoursey, M. (2011). Crossing boundaries and constructing identities: The experiences of early career mainland Chinese English language teachers in

Hong Kong. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*, *39*(1), 65–78. https://doi.org/10.1080/1359866X.2010.540893

Trent, J., & Gao, X. (2009). "At least I'm the type of teacher I want to be": Second-career English language teachers' identity formation in Hong Kong secondary schools. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*, *37*(3), 253–270. https://doi.org/10.1080/13598660903052449

Tsui, A. B. M. (2007). Complexities of identity formation: A narrative inquiry of an EFL teacher. *TESOL Quarterly*, *41*(4), 657–680. https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1545-7249.2007.tb00098.x

Ubaidillah, M. F., Mustofa, M., Khotimah, K., Ismiatun, F., Anwar, K., & Rahmawati, H. (2020). "My past language learning is irritating, but not for my future teaching career!": A look at one male preservice teacher's teacher identity construction. *The New English Teacher*, *14*(1), 43–55.

Varghese, M., Morgan, B., Johnston, B., & Johnson, K. A. (2005). Theorizing language teacher identity: Three perspectives and beyond. *Journal of Language, Identity & Education*, *4*(1), 21–44. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327701jlie0401_2

Vásquez, C. (2011). TESOL, teacher identity, and the need for "small story" research. *TESOL Quarterly*, *45*(3), 535–545. https://doi.org/10.5054/tq.2011.256800

Vigotsky, L. (1998). *Thought and language* (A. Kozulin (ed.)). The Mit Press.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society*. Harvard University Press.

Walsh, C. E. (1991). *Pedagogy and the struggle for voice: Issues of language, power, and schooling for Puerto Ricans*. OISE Press.

Wang, P. (2020). Too many constraints: Five first-year EFL teachers' professional identity construction. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, *44*(2), 180–199. https://doi.org/10.1080/02619768.2020.1758662

Webster, L., & Mertova, P. (2007). *Using narrative inquiry as a research method: An introduction to using critical event narrative analysis in research on learning and teaching*. Routledge.

Weedon, C. (1997). *Feminist practice and poststructuralist theory*. Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

Weeks, J. (1990). The value of difference. In J. Rutherford (Ed.), *Identity: community, culture, difference* (pp. 89–100). Lawrence & Wishart.

Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning, and identity*. Cambridge University Press.

Wenger, E. (2010). Communities of practice and social learning systems: The career of a concept. *Social Learning Systems and Communities of Practice*, 179–198. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-84996-133-2_11

Wenger, E. (2011). *Communities of practice: A brief introduction*. University of Oregon. https://scholarsbank.uoregon.edu/xmlui/handle/1794/11736

Wenger, E., McDermott, R., & Synder, W. M. (2002). *Cultivating communities of practice: A guide to managing knowledge*. Harvard Business School Press.

Xie, J., & Dong, J. (2020). To leave or not to leave: A narrative inquiry of Chinese EFL teachers' identity evolution. *Open Access Library Journal*, *07*(12), 1–20. https://doi.org/10.4236/oalib.1107021

Xiong, T., & Li, Q. (2020). "I can't have my cake and eat it too": A narrative inquiry of a Chinese female teacher's gendered identity. *International Journal of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education*, *7*(4), 95–109. https://doi.org/10.20431/2349-0381.0704010

Yuan, R., & Lee, I. (2016). 'I need to be strong and competent': A narrative inquiry of a student-teacher's emotions and identities in teaching practicum. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice*, *22*(7), 819–841. https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2016.1185819

APPENDICES

Annex I: Conversation Guidelines

As my purpose was to understand the trajectories of identity construction of secondary level English language teachers from Nepal, I planned to employ the life history approach of narrative inquiry. As life history approach could provide opportunities to understand teachers personal as well as professional journey, understanding the process of identity construction is possible. Hence, I planned to take interview of my research participants' life history dividing it into different episodes. The episode could be:

1. Introduction: Personal introduction, family background, environment at family, place the participant was born and brought up, demographic situation, cultural background

2. School Education:

   a. Primary education (with focus on temporality – any feature of the time – sociality – school environment, students circle, teaching-learning, and place – school

   b. Lower Secondary education: (with focus on temporality – any feature of the time – sociality – school environment, students circle, family environment, teaching-learning environment, teachers, and place – school

   c. Secondary education: (with focus on temporality – any feature of the time – sociality – school environment, students circle, family environment, teaching-learning environment, teachers – and place – school

3. College Education: temporality, sociality – college environment, friends circle, family support, teaching-learning environment, teachers, and place

4. Early Part of the Career: What kind of school, your experience, environment, how you used to teach, how supportive was school, your development activities,

5. Later part of the career: teaching learning approach, environment, development activities, overall perception of the career

Annex II: Thematically Informed Questions for Interview:

1. Why did you join English language teaching? What motivated you the most?

2. Could you please narrate your major ups and downs as an English teacher? Any moments where you felt bad/vulnerable and very happy/excited during your career?

3. How do you spend your usual day in school? What you do? Can you please elaborate in detail?

4. How do you actually teach? What is your approach? Can you please give few examples?

5. How is your relationship with your colleagues? What kind of relationship have you maintained with them?

6. How do you narrate your relationship with the students? Any memorable incidents with them, positive or negative?

7. Could you please reflect on major professional development journey that contributed to becoming what you have become today?

Annex III: Transcribed Data

B: First, I would like to thank you for being part of my research. Let me tell you some of the issue related to ethical consideration. The stories that I take from you relating to your professional journey will be kept confidential. And all the information and your experiences will be used only for research purpose. After the analysis of the story as well I'll give you the analysis. If you think that your intended meaning is distorted in analysis, I'll correct that. Or you can also change.

Next data will be protected in computer with password protection. And after the completion of research project all the data will be deleted. Therefore, everything that you say will be used only for research, the information will not be shared with anyone. Regarding language use, you can use language of your comfort. But I prefer you to use Nepali language as it's our mother tongue. Because we can express our feelings or stories in first language better than second language. In that sense you can use first language. Later, I'll transcribe and translate your interview into English. With this let me tell you the research area. The proposed topic of my research is "Identity Transformation of English Language teachers from Nepal: A Narrative Inquiry." Particularly I would like to explore the process of identity transformation of English language teachers in the context of Nepal. Identity refers to how they

present/project themselves and how others perceive them. Mainly I would explore how were English teachers in the begging phase of their career and through development process how they have evolved as English teachers. From this I would like to develop a kind of living theory.

From you basically I'll looking forward to hearing your lived experiences. From what stage you begin to teach, how personal and professional aspects affected your career. So, let's begin with where you were born, in what kind of family, which village, in what kind of socio-economic condition you were grown up, how was the teaching learning environment? Let's begin.

B: Could you please introduce yourself first?

S: Thank you so much for making me part of your research. First let me introduce myself. My name is Surya [pseudonym]. I was born in [address deleted not to reveal his identity]. There I was born. Now I live in Dhapakhel 24, Lalitpur Sub-Metropolitan City temporarily. I have completed M. Ed. in ELT.   At the same time, I have also completed LLB. This is my academics. I am working here at [School's Name deleted to maintain anonymity] since 2072 as a secondary level English teacher. This is my introduction.

I was born in 2043 Poush 14 BS at [home address]. I was born in a middle-class family in the hilly area of Nepal. My father mother both worked in the field. That means our major source of income was agriculture. Our family is very big. WE are five sisters and two brothers. Altogether 9 in the family. I'm the eldest son, but I have elder sisters. My sisters used to take me to school. In 2049 I started my education from grade one. That time there was a teacher, who was later killed in People's Movement led by Maoists, named Samik lal Waiba [pseudonym]. In his own initiation, he had established one primary school near our village, but secondary school was in an hours' walking distance. He established one primary school near our village. While teaching in class Waiba sir always used to reward us by giving chocolates during our success. I still remember him teaching us. We were compelled to study outside on the ground because building was not made, yet. He used to have only book. We used to drill. He used to read, and we followed him. This is how we did our primary level of education. There was a subject called Mahendra Mala, later Mero Nepali book was introduced. There from grade three or four we started Active English. Before that he taught us English alphabets, Nepali alphabets and barhakhari. I completed 1,2, 3, and 4 from that primary school. there were just two teachers and

55/60 students doing primary level of education. It was very difficult for teachers to teach all the students at a time. So, they used to give us reading, writing, and drawing assignments mostly in school. But didn't study systematically with full teachers' guidance in primary level. There was no schedule for different subjects. Two teachers used to move around five classes. In class five I became third at Navodaya Primary School which was in 15 minutes walking distance. But for lower secondary I had to go to Bhairav Secondary School [pseudonym] which was in half an hour walking distance. It was a newly established school. There I joined in grade 6. There were 50 students in my class. That was the only high school in our locality where students from 4/5 other primary school used to come to study in lower secondary level. There competition was tough. But unfortunately, when I joined lower secondary (in grade six) in 2056 there was heavy influence of Maoist movement. It was declared as conflict affected area. That time Maoists also conducted a program at our school. Because of that we feared going to school. We were scared that any time they could abduct us to join their underground army. Because of that reason, we were unwilling to go to school. Even to take part in extra-curricular activities we had to go to other schools. That's why we had lost interest in that as well due to security reason. As I was only son of my family, even my mother denied sending me to participate in such programs. There was one English teacher, who taught us the structures of grammar. Even he used to give example of them. There used to be spelling contest. In which possible 600 to 700 words' list were given. WE used to do rote memorization of those words. Our English gradually improved because of such activities. We were also hardworking. WE used to do self-study, not relying only on the efforts made by school. That time there was competitive environment even within the classroom. Among ten of us there was a huge competition to grab first second and third position. There were no good resources in school. As teachers were scared of Maoists even teachers were not regular in school. Mostly there used to be Nepal Bandha. As conflict reached in climax, frequently army and Maoist guerrilla used to visit our school which used to scare us a lot. In such circumstance also from seven to eight I became third. Even in eight I was third. In grade nine I became fourth. I completed SLC in 2059 BS from Bhairav Secondary School in second division. Though I had secured good score in English in Send Up I did not secure good score in SLC. Despite having other options, my family did not let me to go out because of the Maoists' conflict. So, one hours' distance from our house there was a higher

secondary school named Manakamana Higher Secondary School [pseudonym] during that time, now its Manakamana Multiple Campus. I completed plus two majoring English. We were 10/12 students majoring English there during that time. Our colleagues were excited during their plus two. I was class third there in grade 11. In 12 I became second. But in aggregate I was first. While studying there as well the conflict situation was as usual. There could be ambush placed on the way. Definitely, we used to be irregular in class. Yet during that time teachers used to teach very well. During that time, I studied the books related to education, related to English. I had a kind of feeling that we should read and by studying we can do something in life. After completing plus two I came to Mahendra Ratna Campus, Tahachal for higher education. That time after the 2062/63 BS Peoples' Movement II, peace was established in the country as Maoists came to the mainstream multiparty democratic system. From Mahendra Ratna Campus I completed my Bachelors' Degree Majoring in English. After the completing of B.ED. in 2065 I started teaching at a boarding school as an English and social teacher. There I used to teach English and Social Studies. It was Kalika Secondary School [pseudonym] at [address deleted to maintain anonymity]. I worked there as a lower secondary level teacher for two years. Within two years I got opportunity to learn from students. Being a SLC graduate from public School, teaching in a boarding/private English medium school was not easy. There I taught New Nepal English Reader, Social Studies in English medium. During that time, I used to prepare for hours to teach. With that I developed confidence. I developed confidence that I can do something in teaching, I can convince/ make students understand the content. It was evident from the students' perception towards me, their performance, and the impression I had left in them that I can teach. I had a great desire to study at central campus Tribhuvan University. But that desire is not fulfilled. As I had to work in the daytime and study in morning, I looked for a college to do Master in the morning or evening. I head from someone that in Shikshya Campus M. Ed. classes are run in the evening. I also heard that teachers from central campus teach over there. As I knew that teachers like Hemanti Rawal, Mukunda Bhandari, Ashok Waiba, Binod Adhikari [all pseudonym of teachers] sir teach over there I joined evening class at Shikshya Campus. From 7 am to 3:20 pm I used to take at least seven classes. Then I used to go to Shikshya Campus. In that campus, class used to start from 4:20 PM. To 8 PM in the evening. I had to manage my time to study very cautiously. From there I completed my M. Ed. in ELT with 68 percent

score. I was the Nepal top of foundation of education. And I'm awarded for that by an organization named TESON. I was given something Bajracharya Award from exam office Balkhu. In 2068, Magh 8 I started teaching at Machhapuchchhre Secondary School, Lagankhel. There we were 29/30 people competing for one post. I was selected in the first place as an English teacher. Then I started teaching there. That time I was not given class ten's regular/compulsory English. I was given only tuition classes. In tuition classes, I taught students keeping in mind their level of understanding. While doing so I achieved a success that all the students passed English. Mostly students in community schools find English difficult and many students fail. But as I was able to make all the students pass English, I was rewarded with one thousand rupees. Then continuously for two years I taught there. During that time, I explored how low performing students can pass examination. That time I had to do research in master second year. In my research I explored on how integration of ICT can positively impact the learning. That time there was one organization named OLE Open Learning Exchange that had introduced one program titled one laptop per child project in Lalitpur in one school. I conducted research related to this program. After that in 2071 I was selected through written exam for a tenure-track lower secondary English teacher, but I was not selected in second round, that is in interview. From 2071 I started working as a lower secondary English teacher at Birendra Secondary School [address deleted for anonymity]. I taught there for 17 months. After that, in 2072 Poush 9, I joined Tilak Secondary School as a secondary level English teacher in a tenure track position. Since then, I have been working here. It's my fifth year working at this school. In five years, I have taught English as well as computer as well. I have also taught health. What I feel is the teacher who taught me in my lower level, who taught me alphabets giving me rewards in my success, I was really impressed from him. During my study when I found most of the teachers not listening to students, presenting themselves as the authority, teaching English making it very complex, I wanted to do something in the field of English language education. I found them not listening to students. I had conviction that we can teach students remaining in their level. So, I came to teaching. How can we simplify language learning, how can we positively motivate them convincing that it's just a language and we can easily convey our message through this; it's not difficult language. With full confidence of changing the landscape of English language teaching I joined this profession. I don't want to see my students telling me that I don't understand the way I teach. How I can

bring positive change in their life. How can in the context of globalization, we can make them adapt and give new knowledge, we are engaged in teaching. Still, we are not able to integrate technology in language development. We are not able to provide required number of textbooks and reference materials on time. Still through only textbook how can we improve pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, how to make sentences and how communicative functions can be developed and how we can use English in day-to-day function is our major concern. Students have also given positive response from their side. Our exam is paper-pencil test. Even in these exams almost all the students pass successfully. From that also I get satisfaction that I'm capable, I can do, I have big responsibility. If I'm able to provide positive influence up to the students, their future will be good. This kind of concept has worked as a guidance for me to involve in teaching. This is my story.

B: Thank you so much. You have given your background in very minute details, more than I had expected. In your story you highlighted one incident in your primary level of education. That your teachers used to motivate students with positive rewards by giving chocolates which inspired you. Can you please tell me in detail his approaches of teaching, dealing with students? And also, if it has influenced your teaching, or is projected in your class, can you please tell me with example.

S: The teachers who taught me during my childhood, did not have huge salary. And he did not have right to spend the school's resources. But he used to buy things to students from his own pocket money. On the one hand he used to inspire students to come to school with rewards indirectly, which we understood later. We could not forget his style of teaching never, that inspired us to do something good in life. His lifestyle taught us that instead of just focusing on earning, we can do something through the service of others. In my case I present myself as their elder brother so that they could share their problems, ethos, and pathos to me without hesitation. This is how I behave in class. This is one of the positive aspects that I learned from him. When you present yourself as a friend or brother, students also behave with you accordingly. We should not create gap. From my experience also I found that if we create gap with students, they stop sharing their problems. They can't express. Another thing is we can achieve anything in life. He has taught us that "WE Can'" He never said that this is difficult, it cannot be done or something like that. He developed one school in his own initiation where there was no foundation. He collected 50/60 students and started primary school. He taught us from his life experiences that there

is opportunity in every problem/difficulty. I learned from him to provide individual care. If we have any student who is having financial problem, we can manage scholarship. I write on students copy good, very good, excellent so that it motivates them. Instead of giving chocolates I write positive motivating and encouraging remarks after checking their copies/assignments each time. Students count ticks, such positive comments, which also motivates them to learn. This helps students to develop positive attitude toward teachers and that subject. While marking students how can we give as many tick marks as possible, but we also need to be conscious that it should not be unfair and illogical. In their creative writing instead of giving low marks (one two out of 10) how can we give high marks and motivate them. I learned all these from my teacher, and I apply all this to my students as well. I always give positive encouragement, I say, "You can do it." Even in class I never get irritated. I listen to students' problems; I go close to them. Listen their problem and try to address them. I learned the importance of positive guidance from that teacher.

B: During your schooling, the time of Maoist insurgency, you said that there could be ambush on your way, there was possibility getting trapped in crossfire. There was high impact of Maoist conflict in the remote areas of Lalitpur. In such demotivating environment as well, how was you able to motivate yourself and continue your education?

S: I belong to lower middle-class family. During my schooling time economic condition of our family was not that much good. Because I had a challenge to do something to my family or do government job. I had acknowledged that responsibility. Apart from that I was not hopeful of agricultural activities. I was convinced that doing agricultural I could make my life because in our area the land is not fertile. There was no hope for development of our village. I could not think of doing any innovative work in village and sustain there. There is not much possibility of development as a lot of investment is required for it. This kind of environment used to always motivate me to study well in order to establish myself in Kathmandu or any other developed cities in any part of the world. Education was the only option for me. Even my father used to inspire me to study a lot. He used to say, "If you are able to do good in English you will have a lot of opportunities." In addition, I had great interest and inclination towards English because I used to find English easy than Nepali language. While speaking in English or presenting in English in class, I used to get self-motivated thinking that I'm also able to speak foreign language. But that time the

situation was adverse. Despite all the adversity, due to my consciousness about my future and my career, I continued my education. Giving continuity to my education resulted into success now. If I had dropped my education during the time of crisis/civil war, I would not be in this place. A lot of my friends dropped education. Many of them also failed. But I never failed any exam. Because of that I was inspired/ or motivated to continue my education. In my academic journey I always remained successful. That also motivated me. Because of this I'm established as an English teacher.

B: You have mixed two things together in your story: one you said that you are self-motivated, I had great interest in English language subject from the very beginning; next, father used to inspire to study English. Can you please be a bit focused on what was the triggering part of self-motivation.

S: We had the compulsion of studying plus two in the village. we didn't have opportunity to study science or management in the city. There was only one college in our village where only English and Nepali was offered. That time I had to continue my education. And in your academic journey, your parents' suggestion becomes significant. In our family discussion further education, my father suggested me to study English. According to him, I could have better opportunity when I graduate in English language program. On the one hand my father suggested me to study English, on the other I also used to find English easy. Besides there was no option to study other subject except English. When I didn't have other better options than studying English, I continued studying English. In teenage guardian's role is really important. They provide tuition fees and provide support in many ways. When they say you study English, it has a lot of possibility, definitely that influences. I could also understand the importance of English language during that stage of the student life. My father also said that its good and I also found it easy, so I thought of making career in English. I had no other better option as well. So, my choice of the career as an English teacher is the combination of all three: parents' guidance, my interest and having no better option that studying English in village.

When I started studying English, I faced a lot of challenges. For instance, we did not have good English teacher in the first place. But as I was motivated to study English, these hurdles didn't discourage me. If I had failed in any level, probably I could be demotivated. But I used to do a lot of self-studies. I could create environment to study extra books. Because of this also studying English was convenient.

B: While studying in School there was compulsory English subject. But after coming to university, you studied English as a major subject. How your teachers used to teach English? In what kind of activities, they used to engage you? What was the approach?

S: Mostly our teachers used to deliver course content through lecture method. They used to give us summary. They used to tell summary and we used to write that. At home we used to try to rote memorize that summary. They used to tell us to write answer to any question in exam from that summary. We didn't specifically study answer for each question. Teachers used to give us note, so we were mainly dependent on the teachers' note till plus two. In bachelor's degree, they stopped giving notes. They used to tell us to read books. They used to explain the chapters and write important points relating to the chapter on the board, which we used to jot down in our copy. Overall, our teachers employed teacher centered approach. Teachers never used projects, creative writing, and other activities the way we do now. During bachelor's degree, even terminal examinations were not taken. In Tribhuvan university, there used to be just annual board exam. No matter what you did before, if you were able to do good in these annual exams, that would define your performance. That time we used to read textbooks, other additional support materials like guess papers and guidebooks and notes provided by teachers. Moreover, we also used to prepare for examinations going through the old question papers – its anthology (Old is Gold) – which was available in market. We used to practice old questions before we attempt final examination. This is how we used to prepare exam. We did not have any other options except this.

B: You came from very challenging environment, even teaching-learning environment in school and even college was not good. Yet, after coming to school teaching in secondary level, you have performed exceptionally well. You have given hundred percent result most of the case. How is it possible?

S: When I used to do content delivery to my students, I have brought little bit of change. When I studied that time, it was teacher centered. But in my teaching, I started using student centered teaching-learning engaging student's maximum time. I focused on engagement, study, and activities (ESA). First, I make students familiarize with the content, make them ponder into it, then they used to ask me. I also used to make students engage in peer learning, facilitate in new vocabularies. While teaching I use maximus materials. Maximum time I teach them how to write answer, how to find answers in reading comprehension passages. I teach them skills or ways. When

students learn the skills, they easily pass exam. During that time there used to be 40 marks reading comprehension passage, I used to focus reading comprehension passage while teaching. They used to do little bit of creative writing and grammar. That time there used to be questions to select out of three in grammar. Sometimes they could give correct answer through guess. This is how by engaging students in different activities and making them practice multiple sets of questions which helped them a lot. On top of that, I used to take weekly test exams apart from terminal exams to reduce exam phobia. This is how by actively familiarizing students with our exam trend I was able to give good result. During that time, making students pass the SLC exam was a challenge. There used to be 80/90 students. We used to take extra class for one- or two-months during exam. During that time, we used to completely concentrate students in their learning by taking exams and letting them practice possible questions. This is how we were able to achieve success.

B: You have shared some of your personal and professional story. Could you please add how did you grow as a teacher by engaging in different professional development opportunities? How was the professional development environment in your first school and how have you come up to here?

S: I got opportunity to teach in schools in the city. Fortunately, the best part of teaching in the city is that whichever school I taught, they have very long history ranging from 70 to 80 years. There I was motivated all the time to update and study new books and experiment new approaches to teaching. I believed in teamwork. For professional growth and development, I have attended many training opportunities provided by the NELTA. I have attended workshops and international conferences, district level trainings. For four to five years, I have continuously engaged in such trainings and conferences. I used to learn from colleagues in those programs and implement new knowledge and skills in teaching learning. During this time, I studied books written by foreign writers and watched videos. I keep watching Ted Talk. I have also taken radio trainings offered by Shaikshik Janasakti Bikas Kendra. I have studied about using video resources in the class and involved in trainings.

I believed that English teachers should have fluency in English like native speakers, his pronunciation should also be good, he should be capable. So, I also studied some books written by Chetan Bhagat; I regularly started reading English Newspapers like Himalayan Times, The Kathmandu Post, listening to BBC programs and these days I keep reading books written by foreign writers in English. I watch speeches of Bill

Gates, Malala, and other motivational speaker to learn how we can serve others and establish as a professional. I'm also inspired to serve others through such videos and biographies of successful personalities.

B: Sir talked about watching Ted Talk, speeches, motivational videos. How do you use such resources in classroom teaching and learning?

S: In classroom to motivate students, to make them active listeners, to motivate them in reading, concentrate them in the study, making learning easy, I take reference of mindfulness, motivation, mind concentration. Telling stories, I try to bring their attention to me. To manage classroom, motivate and encourage students, I get ideas from such speeches and videos and use them in classroom practice.

B: You said that you use ted Talk and other videos for classroom management. Can you please mention one classroom management strategy that you have employed, any activity or even that has brought change in students' behavior.

S: Mostly I use storytelling to motivate students. When we tell stories students get excited. I ask them the lesson learned from the characters and setting. I believe that story telling is a powerful means from which we can teach moral lessons, we can motivate them, can develop language, enhance their imaginative power, get ideas to solve overall difficult circumstances. This is an approach through which we can achieve many objectives, and for language teacher its most crucial component.

B: You have shared many things that range from use of videos to new ways of teaching using ICT tool among others. Being self-motivated and self-guided teacher and getting at this stage, how do you feel being an English teacher.

S: I feel I'm overwhelmed. I'm satisfied. Whatever I have done, I'm satisfied with that. I start taking class from 6 am in the morning and I remain in class till 6 PM. During this time, I have never felt tired, uncomfortable, or uneasy. Every day I feel like I'm doing everything for myself. I feel so happy that I'm influencing students, contributing to make their life. It's my service to humanity through which thousands of students are getting benefited, learned. Believing this I feel happy and satisfied. I also believe that I'm able to contribute to make their life. I have told students that If I'm able to give right direction to thousands of students, and if their life becomes better, and if those thousands of students contribute to transforming the life of other many thousands of students the whole world will transform positively. For that I begin myself. I believe that to transform the world we need to begin from ourselves. I give this message to students as well. I could go to different professions, get good

opportunities in abroad, but keeping aside all those possibilities, I have remained in this country, in this place to do something. And to transform the society, we can motivate students, the soft clay. I don't take class in bachelor's degree because the importance of teacher lies in teenage. In that teenage we can mold and give shape or direction to them. Accordingly, students can think of university education and career. Because of that as I can have a role of facilitator, mentor, a guardian as an established teacher, I teach students of grade 9 to 12. I'm involved only in this level. I don't take classes to university level students. My dream is to have some impact in students' life and these students remember you throughout the life than as a university teacher. That's why I have given importance to this level.

B: Thank you so much for sharing your story well. We will meet in next interview. Thank you.

S: Thank you.

Annex IV: Sample Coding Sheet

FIRST PHASE OF DATA		
Personal Background		
Interview Questions	**Data (raw responses)**	**Codes**
I: First could you please briefly tell your personal background with focus on where you were born, brought up, your family background, surrounding environment, demographic, cultural and family environment.	B: I'm Binesh [pseudonym]. I was born in […] District. But now its province number one. I was born in southern part of […] District, […] Municipality in 2037 BS. I completed my schooling from there up to grade ten. My school was very close to my house. Luckily my father used to teach at that school. He was a Sanskrit teacher. That time Sanskrit language was an optional subject up to middle school (lower secondary). The school was very close. I don't have much	Born in eastern hilly region of Nepal, current province number 1, rural municipality, born in 2037 BS, completed education up to grade 10 from village, school very close from home, father taught Sanskrit at same school, Sanskrit as an optional school up to middle school, not much vivid images of childhood, dad had very good attachment with the school

Let's begin with this.	vivid images of my childhood. But school was nearby and as my dad had very good attachment to that school…**(personal background)**	**(personal background)**
I: Before going to school let's talk about your family background. How many members were there in the family, how was the village, what was the demography.	B: Oh yes. The place I was born was a remote area, a very remote area in terms of infrastructures. But my granddad was very much committed to education. **(geographical structure/ locality)**	Very remote, no modern infrastructure, however, his grandfather was very committed to education **(geographical structure/ locality)**
I: How far is it from district head quarter?	B: It's sixteen kosh far from my village. Its remote area, very remote area. To reach district head quarter, Phidim, we had to walk on foot from 14 to 16 hours. Even to reach to Dhankuta, Regional headquarter, we had to walk upto 14 to 16 hours. It was sort of secluded land. In 1997 BS my granddad came to Kathmandu, capital city of Nepal. That time there was no transportation. So, he had to walk on foot for 16 days to reach Kathmandu. By coming to Kathmandu, he took a consent to establish a pre-primary school from Mohan Samsher, the then prime minister of Nepal. The	Village sixteen kosh away from district headquarter, very remote (continuous emphasis on it), 14 to 16 hours walking distance from district headquarter, same with regional headquarter (Dhankuta), hinterland, secluded, granddad came to Kathmandu in 1997 BS, had to walk for 16 days to reach Kathmandu, took consent to establish primary school from Rana Prime Minister Mohan Shemsher Rana, School established in 2003 BS,

	school was established in 2003 BS, but formal education started from 2007. I'm connecting this because education was given high priority from my granddad's time in my family. My dad completed Matrics in 2027. My dad worked as a schoolteacher. My uncle completed bachelor's in education in 2038 BS from Tribhuvan University. My uncle was a head teacher. I'm the youngest family member in my family. The eldest child in my family is my sister. She got married after completing her SLC. After that she could not continue her education. My elder brother completed bachelor level of education, Mailo Dai did not study because of various hurdles, unfortunately he passed away recently. My dad and my mother used to encourage me for education. Though my mother was illiterate, she knew the importance of education. So, she used to encourage me for education. In that village we were 50/60 houses from Thapa Chhetri family in a slightly tilted hilly area. In our village there was academic culture. People were motivated to	formal education only in 2007 BS, this establishes how much priority education was given in his family from Granddad's time, Granddad completed metrics in 2027 BS, uncle completed Bachelor's Degree from TU in 2038 BS, uncle worked as a head teacher, youngest member of the family, sister is eldest, she got married after her SLC, she didn't continue education afterward, elder brother completed bachelor, encouraging father and mother, mother illiterate, yet she encouraged him for education, 50/60 households of Thapa chhetri clan, good academic culture in village, motivation for education was job opportunities, no fertile land, job as main source of income, **(family environment/ economic condition/ family support for education)**

	education primarily for getting job opportunities. We did not have much fertile land. And main source of income was job. From the time of dad our economy was dependent on job. Probably because this kind of mentality, with full family support, I completed my school education from there. **(family environment/economic condition/ family support for education)**	
I: How many siblings were there in your family?	D: We were three brothers and one sister. I'm the youngest one. As there were no other schools' nearby people from far away, particularly my maternal uncle's son and other relatives used to stay in our house for education. So, home environment for education was excellent. I feel that the students studying at Saint Xavier's may not get as good environment as we received in our home. **educational environment at home**	6 members in the family, he is youngest, no other schools nearby, relatives particularly cousins used to stay in his house for education, excellent **educational environment at home**, as good environment as St. Xavier students get
I: You said that your academic environment was excellent during your childhood, can you please	D: In our school exams used to be competitive, still it is. We always desired to be first, second, or try to secure first division in SLC. I remember I did not study grade one and two. I just went to school	Competitive exams in school, always attempted to secure good position: first second or third, jumped the class from pre-school to grade three,

remember any incident or situation, or explain with example.	from pre-school. As teachers realized that I could do good even higher level, I was directly enrolled in grade three. That time, without knowing school's attendance system and school's process, I had reached in grade three. Only after enrollment in grade three, I knew about attendance system, assembly and many more. I became class second in grade three. Up to grade five there used to be students only from that school, but after six, students from other schools also joined there. Till grade 5 number of students used to be less. But after six it used to increase as students from neighboring primary schools used to join our school for lower secondary and secondary education. Mainly students used to come from other areas of [district deleted to maintain anonymity] and from some parts of Dhankuta. They used to come to our village and stay there for education. We used to do group study. Five six students used to come to our house to study. They used to eat in my house, and our study used to go up to 12 midnight. One day	class second in grade three, after five students from other primary schools joined his school, even from neighboring district, stay in his village and study, his village was center for education, engage in combined (group study), friends visited his house and studied up to 12 midnight, studied hard in grade six not to let students from other school become first, he became first, (**influence of norms/ competitive environment** motivated him to study well) Educational environment at school was not that much good, many colleagues dropped school, very few reached grade 10, out of 21 four completed intermediate exam (plus two), two completed bachelor, only

	my causion (uncles' son), who is just two years senior, said Dinesh we need to maintain the prestige of our school and we should not let students from other schools to be first in grade six. That would be a kind of insult of us, as well as defame of the school. that event ignited me a lot. He was very good in mathematics, he used to teach me as well. That incident gave me a good turn in my career. When I reflect that incident now, I feel that I studied well that time. I became first in six. **influence of norms/competitive environment** But after that I never became first. But in grade six, to maintain the prestige of school, I really worked hard. I think I had ethical mindset. Neither I had become first before, nor I became first ever after sex grade. One student who came from another school was excellent. When I reflect now, I think that I was over smart because my father was a teacher, even from neighborhood there were teachers. They loved us so much. Because of that we did not study much in school. To be honest, educational	one (he) completed master's degree. [Reflection: probably his **family environment** motivated him to complete master's degree]

	environment in school was not that much good. Many of our colleagues dropped school from grade five to grade 10. The ones who reached grade 10 were very minimum. Out of 21 only 4 of us completed intermediate exam (plus two), only two completed bachelors and I am the only one to complete masters. **(family environment influencing learning**)	

Primary Level of Education		
Interview Questions	**Data (Raw Responses)**	**Codes**
I: Ok fine we will come to this point later. Now can you please specifically focus on your primary level of education with focus on learning environment at home, teaching learning at school, friends circle among others.	D: I did primary education in a local school which was situated in a 15-minute walking distance from my home. By listening to school's bell, I used to go to school. On the way we used to say namaste to everyone who come across us – kaka, badi ba – whoever we meet. We used to carry our books on our hand, we didn't use to have bags. Mostly we used to collect books from senior students because of the shortage of money. Our school used to be dusty made from mud. That time Peace Corps volunteers used to teach in our school. Mary	Primary school from village, situated in 15 minutes walking distance, he could hear the school bell at home, carry books on hand, school full of dust **(sensory details of poverty)**, Peace Corps Volunteer taught at school, Mary Center donated some

Center, who passed recently, had made one building and we used to study in that building. But that was made from mud. **(sensory details of poverty)**

But she never taught me. She used to teach senior students. Her English was excellent. She was an excellent English language educator. Now I have realized that she used to teach students from 6 to 10. But we studied in a building made by her. There used to be dust on the floor of the classroom. Bench were made by fixing logs on the floor digging in the floor. Classrooms were dark. Teachers used to write on black board using chalk. Our classrooms were not furnished. **(Physical infrastructure in school)**

Every Sunday our teachers used to tell stories. Education was based on oral tradition. All the teachers used to come to class and tell stories mostly. I don't remember studying math during primary. On the way to school there was a police post. On police post a gate keeper, policeman,

amount to construct a building, he used to study on that building made out of mud, she taught for grade 6 to 10, never got chance to study from her, heard that she was an excellent English language educator, bench desk used to be full of dust, bench and desk were made out of logs fixing on the flood, classrooms were dark and dusty, teachers used chalk, classrooms not furnished well, **(Physical infrastructure in school)**

learning was not in much priority in school, nobody enquired about absenteeism of students, sometimes chocolates and copies distributed in school for motivation, play football, make football out of ragged shocks, doesn't remember of staying in school after tiffin break, shortage of teachers **(Learning Environment at school)**

	always used to hold me and rub his beard on my cheek. Because of that I missed many classes. I don't know why he did that. There learning was not given priority. Nobody used to enquire about absenteeism of students. We were given chocolates that cost 25 paisa, which we used to call sitali mithai. Sometimes we used to get copies as well. I used to play football. We used to make footballs out of worn shocks. We mostly used to go to school and play football. After tiffin, I don't remember studying in school. there was shortage of teachers. **(Learning Environment at school)**	
I: What was the exact way of teaching? Can you please tell one incident?	D: All the sir and miss used to work hard. Even my father used to get busy in his own work. He was so busy. He used to teach mathematics in grade one/two and in four he used to teach Sanskrit language. Umesh Trital sir also used to work hard at home. In class he used to sit at front and tell us to read ourselves. Sir miss used to pull our ears so much. Punish us so much. Even though I was comparatively better, I used to get a lot of punishment. Let's	Rampant corporeal punishment, teacher were more concentrated in their own work at home, teachers neve developed themselves[**Reflection: corporeal punishment** was heavily used, no teacher development and monitoring of how teaching learning occurred]

	forget others. **corporeal punishment**	
I: Do you remember how your English teachers used to teach in your primary level?	D: I don't have memory of English teacher teaching us in primary. Because we did not have English teacher in primary, so far, I remember. But from grade seven Surendra sir used to teach us. Govinda Kafle, unfortunately he passed away, used to teach in grade 10. I don't remember other English teachers. I don't have memory of English teachers before grade 6. I don't think I studied English before that. I might have studied, but there was not assigned teacher who could speak English was not there. Mary Center used to teach for higher level, above grade 6. Even volunteers, uncle and thulo buwa's sons used to teach. I remember studying tense in neapli as chhu chhau chhan chhas simple present tense. We studied this way. Teachers used to say this is called simple present in English. I remember memorizing tense in Nepali. Also, I remember remembering (memorizing) some vocabulary. **learning environment**	no memory of English teachers teaching in primary, no proper English teachers in primary level, remembers learning English from Surendra sir in grade seven, Govinda Kafle taught in grade 10, no memory of English teachers before grade 7, at least no assigned teacher for English who could speak in English, Mary Center and other volunteers from village used to teach, rote memorization and grammar translation was the method of learning, English was taught in Nepali, **learning environment** village was poverty stricken barren dry land, incident of interpreting phrase in lahure's jacket indicates level of students, his mathematics was very

	I remember one embarrassing moment. Once one lahure had returned to our village from abroad. He was the only one lahure in our village. Our village is poverty-stricken village. It's a barren dry land. In lahure's jacket "see you" was written. One teacher asked me "what does this means Binesh?" He was a Nepali teacher, but his English was also good. I replied see you as "hera." Then he said even a first boy doesn't know the meaning of see you. See you mean feri vetaula. That's what he had said. I don't remember studying English before 6/7. But luckily math was very strong.	strong [**Reflection**: influence of **language learning environment**]
I: Why that incident was embarrassing?	D: Embarrassing because all my colleagues as well as teachers used to regard me a vibrant student. I was first in grade 6. I had maintained the prestige of our school, because of which I was popular in school. But as I could not answer such minor thing, I was embarrassed. I had zeal to do something. Even after being in such remote area, we were hungry for progress. We had zeal to move ahead. **(agency)** I don't remember	Embarrassed of that incident, he was regarded as vibrant student, popular in school, had zeal to do something, hunger for progress, zeal to move ahead, has very dim memory of primary level [Reflection: zeal to do sign of **agency**, despite all the difficulty, poverty, he had zeal to do something]

	primary level education, but after that I can tell a lot.	

Annex V: Glimpse of Developing Categories Out of Codes
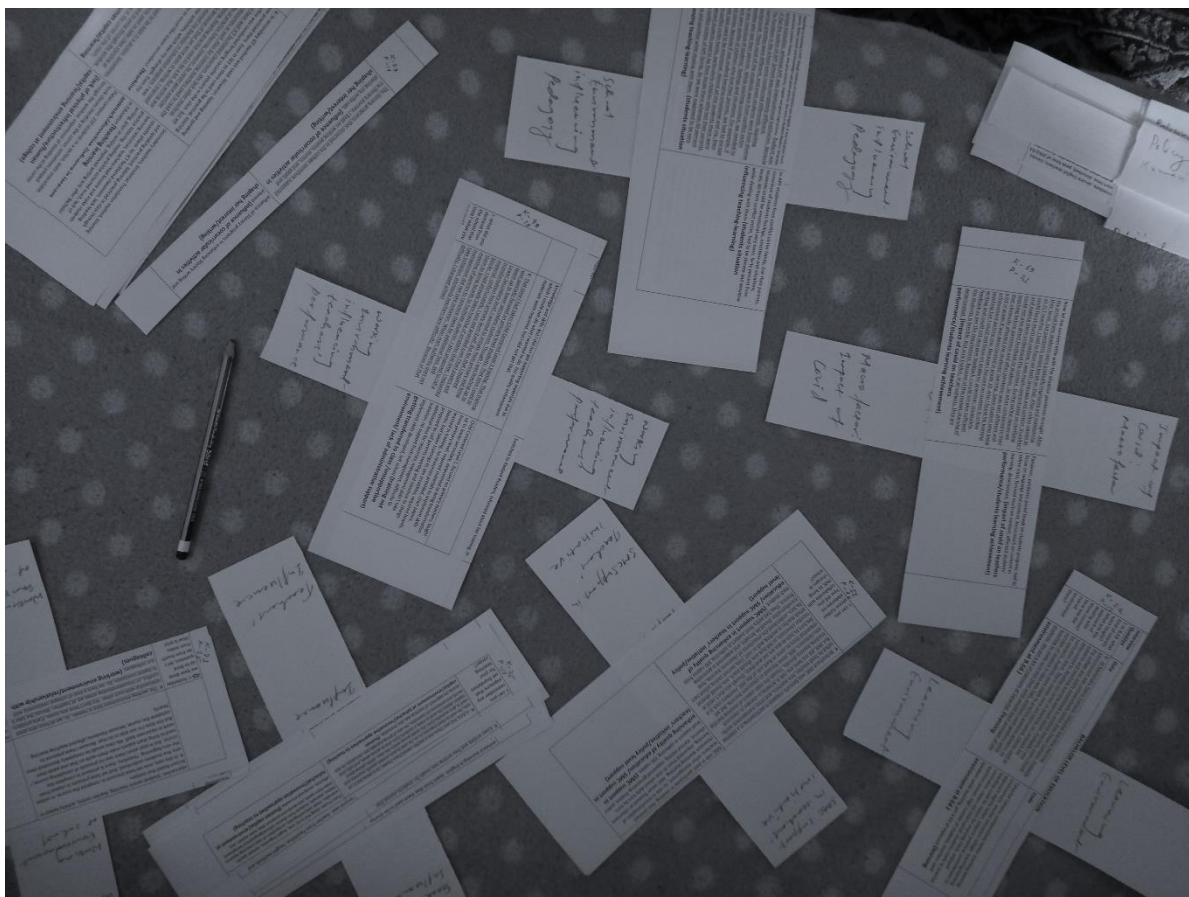
Annex VI: List of Categories Prepared to Develop Themes

Binesh:
(I) Influence of politics
(II) Policy issues
(III) Economic condition and accessibility
(IV) Learning environment at school/college
(V) Changed working/Learning context (challenges)
(VI) Family environment
(VII) Workplace environment
(VIII) Social environment influencing learning
(IX) Students' evaluation/test vs Agency
(X) Learning environment vs Agency
(XI) Workplace environment vs Agency

(II) Nwita:
(I) Working environment at school
(II) Learning environment at school
(III) Students level and output
(IV) Students' level influencing pedagogy
(V) Changed work context (difficulty to adjust)
(VI) Influence of teachers
(VII) Influence of colleagues in joining teaching (learning envi...)
(IX) New workplace culture vs agency
(X) Learning environment vs agency
(XI) Gender role influencing development

(III) Suryn:
(I) Political influence
(II) Policy
(III) Influence of teacher
(IV) Working environment
(V) Learning environment (school/college)
(VI) Family environment
(VII) School environment vs agency
(VIII) Workplace environment vs agency
(IX) Initiative for professional development

(IV) Kumar:
(I) Family environment
(II) Working environment at school
(III) Learning environment at school college
(IV) Teachers' influence
(V) SMC support in teachers' initiative (work environ...)
(VI) Work environment influencing teachers' performance
(X) Impact of covid: Macro factor
(XI) School environment influencing pedagogy
(XII) Political influence
(XIII) Policy
(XIV) Learning environment vs agency
(X) Teachers' intervention on educat... transformation (exam, school,)