CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASSROOM
PRACTICES: A NARRATIVE INQUIRY

Bharati Prajapati

A Dissertation

Submitted to
School of Education

In partial fulfilment of the requirement for the
Degree of Master of Philosophy in English Language Education

Kathmandu University
Dhulikhel Nepal

March 2023

AN ABSTRACT

of the dissertation of Bharati Prajapati entitled *Culturally Responsive English Language Classroom Practices: A Narrative Inquiry* submitted to fulfill the requirements for the degree of Master of Philosophy in English Language Education, presented on 19 March 2023.

ABSTRACT APPROVED

………………………………….

Assoc. Prof. Tikaram Poudel, PhD

Dissertation Supervisor

Traditional language teaching emphasizes reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Lately, a new way of teaching English includes culture and context. We view culture as the fifth skill of language teaching (Phyak, 2010). There is also an issue of culture whenever we talk about language since they are inseparable entities. But English language educators may need to know if they should teach the student's culture or the culture of the English language. It's also a challenging and significant subject in the language classroom. In that same connection, as a Newari-speaking English teacher working in Bhaktapur, I attempted to find out the English classroom practices that Newari-speaking English teachers use in the classrooms of Bhaktapur.

Bhaktapur is one of the lavish indigenous–ethnic groups of Nepal in terms of culture, literature, and history. It is also one of the reasons I wanted to explore the issue of English language classroom practices, including local culture.

Since my study aimed to explore how the Newari English language learners respond to the language learning process when they are culturally informed, I employed interpretivism as a research paradigm. I was conscious that the ideas are multiple and no interpretation is final as the context shapes the reality. I believe in the fact of people's subjective experiences of the world. Therefore, the interpretive paradigm regulated my study as I explored the lived experiences, stories, and narratives of Newari-speaking English teachers of Bhaktapur. I adopted narrative inquiry as a research method and used the stories of research participants as the data. I interviewed five local Newar English teachers working in Bhaktapur. I recorded their

interviews on my mobile. The recorded interviews were transcribed and generated into different themes in the analysis process. I employed a critical pedagogy theory to see how the Newari-speaking English learners responded to the language learning process when we culturally informed them. To maintain the quality standards, trustworthiness, credibility, privacy, and informed consent were followed as the research ethics.

The study revealed that with familiar culture, the learners were motivated, interested, engaged, anxiety-free, and confident to practice and learn the English language in the classroom. To make the learners active in the language learning process in the English language classroom, the cultural context of the lesson should be familiar to them.

…………………………   19 March 2023

Bharati Prajapati

Degree Candidate

AN ABSTRACT

the dissertation entitled *Culturally Responsive English Language Classroom Practices: A Narrative Inquiry* presented by *Bharati Prajapati* on 19 March 2023.

APPROVED BY

………………………   19 March 2023

Assoc. Prof. Tikaram Poudel, PhD

Dissertation Supervisor

………………………   19 March 2023

Prof. Dhruba Bahadur Karki, PhD

External Examiner

………………………   19 March 2023

Assoc. Prof. Hem Raj Kafle, PhD

Head of Department

………………………   19 March 2023

Prof. Bal Chandra Luitel, PhD

Dean and Chair Research Committee

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

………………………   19 March 2023

Bharati Prajapati

Degree Candidate

DECLARATION

This dissertation is my work and has not been submitted to any other university for consideration for any other degree.

…………………………   19 March 2023

Bharati Prajapati

Degree Candidate

I dedicate this dissertation to my parents, who have been my source of inspiration and gave me the strength to walk in my academic journey, especially to my admirer, who helped me fully to finish this work in its present form. It is an outstanding achievement I completed after being delayed for two years. Those two years of being depressed and wasted my path, I never thought I would be coming back again to finish this degree.

Bharati Prajapati
Degree Candidate

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

As the English textbook comprises learners' non-familiar culture and context, learners are unfocused and uninterested in a language learning activity in the classroom. We can include learners' familiar backgrounds to motivate learners to learn language fruitfully and skillfully. When we have learners' everyday cultural contexts in the classroom, they become active and come to participate in learning the language. Because we cannot teach and learn a language without the local setting in which we are grown up and experienced. Thus, learners' familiar culture and context are inseparable when learning English.

I organize this chapter into three parts. The first part begins with my background and purpose for selecting the research issue of culture–based pedagogy and the usefulness of the learners' culture in the English classroom. Then, I discuss the rationale of the research. After the rationale, I state the problem of my research. It leads to the purpose and questions of the research. The following chapter presents the study's theoretical and methodological aspects, giving a clear roadmap of how I conducted this study. The final part mentions the quality standards to be maintained and the ethical issues I followed in my proposed research.

Background

I worked as an English Language teacher at a higher secondary level for several years in Bhaktapur. To teach students language skills in the English language class, I applied several teaching strategies, including the lecture method, translation method, and communicative teaching method. I realized that those different methods were not helping students internalize language naturally because they failed when I made my students develop writing on a specific topic without my help and guidelines. They were not confident not only in writing but also in speaking. They also needed to improve basic language skills, such as listening and reading. Addressing this very concern of the English language classroom, nearly a year ago, one particular morning around 7:45 of the clock, during tiffin break, we, some of the English language teachers, had a severe sharing while we were waiting for breakfast at the canteen in the premise of Bhadgaun higher secondary school in Bhaktapur itself. And during that time, one of our colleagues claimed that it might be because of the contents included

in the curriculum, which are far away from the students' culture and context. If the topic consists of their culture and familiar context, they may quickly internalize the language skills in the English language. We all agreed with the idea.

And after that incident, we decided that we could change the teaching strategy by including the local culture of Bhaktapur, as we regard the culture as the fifth skill of language teaching (Phyak, 2010, as cited in Suwal, 2012). Culture is also an issue when discussing language since they are inseparable entities. But teachers of English were confused regarding the culture to include while teaching the lessons: the English language's culture or the learners' culture (the innovative culture)? As I had been working at a higher secondary school in Bhaktapur, I was keenly interested in including Newari culture, especially the local culture in Bhaktapur, in my teaching-learning activity because most students were from the Newar Community.

Local Culture in English Language Classroom

Soon after that sharing we, English language teachers, had in the canteen during tiffin break, I decided to change my teaching method. And on that very same day, when I went to my regular class, I tried to teach the lesson by including local culture and bringing the familiar context suitable to the task I had to teach. For that class, I had to teach a lesson, 'The Lost Doll,' a story from the book *Magic of Words*, which is also one of the books we must prepare for 11th graders. Mainly, the story talks about the funeral procession that the SOTO community carried out in their culture in Colombia. It has also talked about the culture of celebrating death anniversaries and baptisms. To help the students connect these cultures to their own, I asked them to write about how they show culture during a funeral procession, mark the anniversary of a death in their community, baptize a new baby, and other things.

When they finished their writing, I asked them to share it with the class. I chose one from each bench. And after they finished their sharing, I learned that most of the students were from the Newar community, on the one hand. On the other hand, a few of them were from mixed communities. I, therefore, decided to include the Newari culture and its context first. If necessary, I would try other cultures, too. Finally, I narrated the story, and when I did it, I mixed the local culture of Bhaktapur and the context of the Newar community as they shared. And I realized the class was in a 'win-win' situation as they came to participate in teaching and learning activities and raised questions about the lesson. Risager (2005, as cited in Prastiwi, 2013)

underscores that in an English language classroom, the teachers can use the culture of the learners during teaching and learning activities of the language.

However, teachers should speak English in the classroom even while including the culture of the students. Because of including the student's own culture in the English classroom, the learners also become motivated to use or practice the language in the English classroom. So, we can encourage the learners to use English in real-life situations. Prastiwi (2013) said that if the teachers use the learners' culture in the English classroom, they learn about their culture. Learning about their culture is learning about their identity (Suwal, 2012). Not only do they know about their culture as their identity, but they also understand the English language since they practice it while relating to their culture in the English classroom. When they describe their culture, they interact with each other in the English language, including teachers in the classroom. Interaction helps them understand and learn the language in the English classroom. Being able to employ the English language is a fundamental skill. The learners learn this essential skill by practising it using their familiar culture. The learners' culture provides sufficient opportunities to practice English in the classroom. When they can use English meaningfully, efficiently, and naturally, they can also get information about the unfamiliar culture. Even if the culture is unknown, they can express themselves using English in the classroom.

Rationale

I went through several studies related to my research. Then I learned that when there is a question of teaching the language to the English learners of a particular cultural group, integrating the culture that belongs to the language learners helps greatly. As per the findings in the related research studies, we can enrich English language teaching activities by integrating the local context and culture the students are familiar with. These thoughts and theories apply to the same level in the context of my Newar community, too.

Regmi (2011) argues that learners understand and learn to use language skills meaningfully when they know the cultural context. Unless they understand the cultural context, they cannot comprehend the language. That's why to make meaningful language learning in English classrooms, local culture, and context also play an essential role. Similarly, Margana (2009) also claims that in the school-based curriculum, we can give place for local culture to play a role in English classrooms since it can help learners to learn the English language easier. We provide learners

with texts from the English culture reflecting native speakers' lives and behaviours. The native speakers' lives and behaviours somehow make learners feel difficult to understand the unknown materials because learners are unaware and have little knowledge of the English language's culture. Therefore, he strongly encourages teachers to incorporate the local culture in English classrooms.

Suwal (2012) also studied English language classrooms in Bhaktapur, where most learners are from Newari-speaking backgrounds. In those English language classrooms of Bhaktapur, he found that the learners become active, motivated, encouraged, and involved in learning activities when we include the learners' culture in the classroom. Because of their involvement in the English language classroom, the classroom becomes interactive in learning language skills in the English language. They also feel connected and joyful to learning activities in English language classrooms because of culture- friendly environment in the classroom.

But this area has not been adequately discussed in the context of the Newari community. My research contributed to the discourse of learning English in indigenous communities, particularly Newari communities. Though my study is close to Suwal, there is a gap as he focused on making English language teaching culture friendly. In contrast, I focused on culturally responsive English language classroom practices.

Problem Statement

I teach the English language in Bhaktapur. In Bhaktapur, most students are from the Newar community, and they find learning English difficult because they feel the contents of course books are far away from their culture and the context with which they are familiar. Understanding the culture of students, the teacher facilitates interactions leading to meaningful conversations (Kramsch, 1993).

However, English language course books bring many cultural practices from the English language, making the students de-motivated as they cannot feel the English culture. In such a case, giving the students enough background in English culture is imperative. Before we talk about the experience of the culture of the English text, we can include the learners' familiar culture that is similar to the culture of the English text in the classroom. We can elicit their experience regarding that culture in the classroom, which helps them relate their culture to the culture of the English text. When the learners are well informed about their culture, it will help them to understand both the English culture and learn the language quickly so that we can

include local arts and architecture, clothing, feast and festivals, foods, mystic music and dance, handicrafts and so on which are already familiar to them. We can include them while learning vocabulary, compositional writing, expressing likes and dislikes, describing places, etc. For example, if the textual exercise asks the learners to write a short paragraph on 'A visit to Torquay' (Doff et al., 2004), they can't write as Torquay is a city they have never been to and seen.

So before they write about Torquay, we can ask them to write about *Bhaktapur Durbar Square, Dattatraya Square,* and *Taumadhi Square* in English. When they become confident in writing about their familiar places, we can ask them to write about the city of Torquay, similarly to what they wrote about their usual places. The only thing they need to do before writing is to collect information about it. Because to write about the city of Torquay, it is necessary to know about its culture. Without including its culture, the writing may be unacceptable. Therefore, it is essential to learn about the culture first while learning the language. Sowden (2007) also says that when we learn English, we should follow its culture as much as possible because the cultural context is part of the English language itself. In this context, this study explores how students respond to the learning process when culturally informed.

Purpose of the Study

The study aimed to explore the response of English language learners of the Newari community to their learning process when they were culturally informed.

Research Questions

- How does contextualization of local culture in English classrooms motivate learners in English language classrooms?
- How does contextualization create a learners' friendly environment?

Delimitation

This research study is my only academic attempt to meet my M.Phil. in English language teaching degree requirements.

I delimited my study only to culturally responsive English language classroom practices in the English classrooms of Bhaktapur, where most of the learners were local Newar. I followed the features of the interpretive paradigm. For this research, I had interviews with five local Newari-speaking teachers of the English language. They worked at one of the renowned local schools in Bhaktapur. My research does

not cover the study of any other cultures. So I cannot insist that it equally applies to different ethnic communities.

Our country is multiethnic, multicultural, multilingual, and multireligious. Bhaktapur is a historical city in Nepal. It has a unique culture as it is a place of an indigenous community, Newars. Newar people speak the Newari language. In Bhaktapur, the majority of the learners are from the Newar community. Cultural differences make Learning English difficult, unproductive, and boring for Newari-speaking learners. Thus, we may incorporate the learners' cultural backgrounds in the classroom to make learning English easier.

When learners imbibe cultural practices and formal functions, they include context and become active, motivated, encouraged, and involved in the learning activity in English classrooms. That's why the learners' familiar culture is helpful for the students in the English classroom. However, it isn't easy to find out classes where only students of Newar ethnicity exist. We might find such a case only in the core areas of Kathmandu Valley, where we can implement it to some extent. If we see it in a broad context, it might be tough to find classrooms where only the learners of Newar ethnicity learn. So while going for implementation, it might not be accessible in our context. So, this research is carried out mainly for academic purposes only.

Chapter Summary

I related the purpose of my study and the statement of the problem with my prior experiences in this chapter. Bhaktapur is a place of an indigenous Newari-speaking community. I am also Newari speaking English language teacher from Bhaktapur. In my classrooms, most learners are from the Newari-speaking community, and they are underperformance in English language classrooms. They need to be more interested and motivated to learn the English language in the classroom. I thus included the learners' familiar culture to ease their understanding of and learning of the English language. When we had a learners-friendly culture in the classroom, the learners became interested, active, and motivated to practice English language activities. Being a Newari-speaking English teacher and an inhabitant of Bhaktapur, I decided to include the local culture of Bhaktapur in the classroom. And I had the learners' culture in my classroom, which was influential in the English language classroom I mentioned above. Later, I discussed the policy review, research gap, and other significances of culture in English teaching, along with the delimitation of my research.

CHAPTER II

THE RELATED LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, I discussed several related themes, theories, and policies, including their definitions. My research follows them as its mainframes. Furthermore, I also discussed some related previous research to find the gap between my study and previous research. While discussing the earlier related research, I found my research is near to the study done by Suwal (2012). My study is different from his study. His study focused on making English language teaching culture-friendly in the Newari context, whereas my study studied culturally responsive English language classroom practices.

Culture in English Language Classrooms in Nepal

The only thing used in the classroom to teach English is a book. We require it from elementary to upper secondary level in state-run schools. However, because of the parents' positive impression of the English language, most government schools also started to adopt the English language as a medium of instruction amidst a crowd of non-governmental English medium schools. Though the teachers used the English language as the medium of instruction in both government and non-government schools, the learners still needed to improve in using the English language. Sijali (2016) sums up that the learners are very poor in English in the Bara district of Nepal. The students of higher secondary level could be better in the English language. They needed help to use their language skills in the English language effectively. And it might be because of the curriculum design for the English language, which is far from the learners' familiar context and culture. Suwal (2012) highlighted that when he reviewed the English textbooks that the Secondary and + 2 levels were following, he didn't find the lessons very culture-friendly from the viewpoint of Newari culture. There were challenges to the meaningful and effective teaching of language in the English language classroom because of the context and culture outside the learners' background.

And the challenge was similar in teaching language in the English language classroom in Bhaktapur, too, where most learners speak Newari. Also, in the English Language classrooms of Bhaktapur, there were many challenges to make teaching more effective, better, easier, and meaningful. One of the challenges was figuring out

how to teach English in the classroom in Bhaktapur. To address this challenge in English language classrooms where most learners were from particular linguistic and cultural communities like the English language classrooms of Bhaktapur. In the English language classrooms of Bhaktapur, there is the majority of Newari- speaking learners. To help the Newari- speaking learners learn the language meaningfully, it would be far more appropriate to include the learners' familiar backgrounds in the English classrooms.

Similarly, Valdes (1990) concedes that culture learning is fundamental to language learning. To learn the language skillfully, we should practice the language skills in the appropriate culture. Without knowing the culture, we cannot understand and practice language skills confidently and naturally because culture motivates learners to practice and use language skills confidently and naturally. Suwal (2012) argues that there will be fewer barriers, and the teaching-learning will take place very smoothly if we teach about the things the learners are familiar with. The children's first language and culture are valuable while learning the additional language because they will enable the learners to progress in the different languages (Crosse, 2007). Therefore, other English language classrooms, where most learners are from a particular linguistic and cultural community, like the English language classroom of Bhaktapur majoring Newari speaking learners, can include the learners' culture and context while teaching in the English language classrooms.

Inherent Connection between Language and Culture

Language is a part of culture. We cannot understand a culture without knowing the language. For example, I clean, *Ma sapha garchhu,* and the like, and these two examples have used two different languages without giving any sensible and accurate meaning. They are the English and Nepali languages. The language is distinct from community to community and country to country.

On the other hand, culture is a language that develops along with language. For example, I clean my room only if it looks messy; *Harek bihana saberai ma pura ghar kuchole sapha garchhu*. These sentences are sensible and meaningful because they have language and a particular cultural context.

Regarding these examples, I understood that language would be meaningful and accurate when we use it with cultural background. Without culture, language cannot function; without language, we cannot share the culture. And like language, culture also differs from community to community and country to country. That's

why language and culture have a shared relationship and are tied together. In other words, we can also say that culture embeds language, and language transfers and passes on culture (Allright & Bailey, as cited in Leveridge, 2004). Therefore, it is unimaginable to understand the culture excluding language, whereas language cannot function appropriately by eliminating culture.

Language is not solely a source of conveying our feelings, thoughts, and ideas to one another; it is a skill one acquires and needs to learn. In a case of a first language, we gain it since the first language acquisition is a natural part of one's everyday life, and there is no need for instruction in acquiring it. According to the behaviourist theory, children have an innate taste tube, a clear mind as a blank white sheet with no previous experiences of the surroundings and the language. While growing up, they gradually interact with society and their environment. Through interaction, they develop their understanding and earn experiences around them because of the innate tube of taste. Those experiences around them go on filling their blank mind. Filling the mind is shaping the mind. And they shape their mind according to the environment they interact with. So that they easily understand and learn things if the things are similar to the shape of their mind (Brown, 2000). As the first language is a birthright, it doesn't require any conscious effort; we acquire it naturally in contact with the environment, which we can understand as its culture.

But the case will be different with English because it is not natural as the first language, so we must learn it. To know the English language skillfully, competently, and confidently, we should include the appropriate cultural context or background of the language used. Because if the teacher teaches the language without talking about the culture in which the language operates, the learners may not learn the language as efficiently as the first language because learning a language is not only about knowing the language (Neff & Rucynski, 2013) and language does not exist without culture. Therefore, we cannot divorce language and culture; teaching language without including the culture is unworkable.

The Usefulness of Culture in English Classroom

Though we teach English as a compulsory curriculum and use it as a tool of instruction from primary to higher secondary level, the learners are not skilful, confident, and proficient yet in using the language skills in English. And it is because of the teaching strategy the English teachers employ in the classrooms. They just read the text to the class as designed in the book and teach exam English. Then they ask

the learners to complete the textual exercises that the unit follows, and then they conclude the lesson. So, because of this kind of situation in the English classroom, the learners are passive, bored, and uninterested in learning a language in the classroom.

And consequently, the learners seem to have a defective competence in using the English language in the classrooms. In other words, they cannot use English in real-life situations. Thus, while teaching language, to motivate the students to learn language meaningfully, we should create an interactive environment in the English language classrooms.

We can include the learners' familiar culture to create an interactive and learner-centred learning environment in English language classrooms. And that culture must be appropriate to the culture of the English text because the language teacher should deal with the cultural context of the text. After all, "culture shapes language" (Holme, 2003, p.22). Similarly, Sun (2013) also states that if we exclude culture, language cannot exist; it is like water with no source or a rootless tree, so it is essential to discuss and understand the culture in the text. After understanding the culture, the teachers should ask the learners to connect it with their experience.

And after then, the teacher should make the learners practice the English language regarding their own cultural experiences and understanding that are similar to the culture of text in the English language. When we discuss the learners' familiar culture in English classrooms, the students become active, encouraged, and interested in learning English. It is always the case in teaching and learning any language, be it the native language or English language. In this view, Holme (2003) concludes that teachers can use learners' cultural contexts in an English classroom. And those learners' familiar contexts help them determine the lesson's designed English cultural contexts.

To determine the exploited English cultural contexts of the lesson, they associate them with their familiar cultural contexts. And then, they understand and learn the language in English language classrooms. Finally, they can use English in real-life scenarios. They can also respond using the English language in unfamiliar contexts, too. The responses they make to unfamiliar contexts are not pre-designed. They are the outcome of the learners' cultural background. Because their cultural background has already shaped them, and the information of their cultural experience, they respond to another culture. So, we can use culture in English classrooms to create a meaningful and fun environment for learning, as it is an integral part of a language.

The Importance of Integrating Local Culture in English Classrooms

I taught English for several years at a higher secondary level in Bhaktapur. I am from the Newar community, and most learners are also from the Newari-speaking background in English language classrooms in Bhaktapur. As language teachers and learners of the English language, we both need to be more confident and competent in using language skills in English language classrooms because we, as English language teachers and learners, have our language and culture. We are Newars. Since the learners have a cultural background utterly different from the English culture of the lesson, the learners have difficulty understanding and learning English quickly. The learners become unproductive and ineffective in English classrooms because they have different culturally based processes of understanding things. In this perspective, DeCapua and Wintergerst (2016) also state –"We often react to situations instinctively and interpret situations based on our cultural "eyes"- that is, our cultural influences and conditioning" (p.10). It shows that if the teachers do not include learners' familiar culture in English language classrooms, it lacks references to learning for learners in English language classrooms.

So, in such a context, teachers can try to make learning language skills in English productive and effective, and they can integrate students' familiar culture into the classrooms. Because of integrating their everyday culture, they get a space to practice the language. When they find the space, they come to participate in the activity and start interacting with each other and the teacher. They become active in their participation as the context is familiar to them. They are eager to speak or write as they know the context. They can interact in the classroom with no hesitation. During the interaction, they correctly practice the language skills that help them understand and learn language skills meaningfully, confidently, and competently in English classrooms. Local culture helps learners understand and learn the language in English language classrooms. Therefore, "Language teaching as lived out in the classroom is always a local phenomenon" (Tudor, 1996, p.210). Teachers must bring learners' culture and English culture into English classrooms because learners learn the English language based on their first language and its culture.

When teachers include learners' first culture in English language classrooms, it helps learners to meet their social needs. Because English culture cannot fulfill their social needs as they are unknown to English culture (Collentine & Freed, 2004). These suggest that integrating the students' culture is vital in meaningful, effective,

and successful language learning in English classrooms. It helps to trigger the learners' minds in connecting the English culture of the text with the learners' already-known culture. When they become able to practice the activity of connecting their culture to the English culture of the text, they can talk and express themselves that they know. To speak is to practice the language during language learning. We believe learners need to know about English culture before learning English. Without understanding the culture, they cannot practice language skills. That's why the learners' culture is essential in English classrooms.

We may also suppose that only the English culture is involved in learning the English language. In that case, it may not facilitate learners to learn English naturally, fluently, and skillfully because the English culture is unfamiliar and unknown. If the thing is far away from their familiarity and outside the prior experience they achieve daily, it also influences learning and understanding the English language. In support of this expression, Renner (1994, as cited in Margana, 2012) says that teachers can support learners in learning English by bringing their experiences around them in English classrooms. They feel comfortable, encouraged, excited, and anxiety-free with their experiences in English language classrooms. So practising learners' culture in English classrooms is much more meaningful. For meaningful language learning in English classrooms, the local culture of learners is one of the significant factors that encourages and motivates them to practice the language and acquire it quickly.

Big C Culture

Recently, it has become more common, popular, and acceptable to talk about culture in an English classroom. We cannot avoid it while learning a language. Keeping culture away in English classrooms is impossible. In every lesson of language, whatever the content is, culture is unavoidably embedded. That's why it is essential to recognize the culture embedded in the study. After identifying the culture imbued in the lesson, we must learn and get information about it first. It enhances meaningful and fruitful learning in language classrooms. We can separate the culture of the task into two general categories: the "Big C" culture and the "Little c" culture. We can also call the "Big C" and the "Little c" cultures c as material and non-material. The "Big C" culture is visible, whereas the "little c" culture is non-visible. Generally, we can find the exploitation of big C culture in the texts designed for traditional English classrooms. In such conventional classrooms, the learners are

passive and entirely depend on the teacher for learning, which only values cognitive education. According to Lessard-Clouston (1997), people used to learn the English language because they wanted to study its literature. Studying literature was the primary medium of learning culture.

Big C culture includes literature, art and architecture, music, history, geography, institutions, etc. When the text in the English language exploits the big C culture, the entire focus will be on the content only. There will be no attention to linguistic features because it aims to teach and learn how to present language aesthetically and artistically. Its main objective is to pass facts, cultural information, and statistical information on institutional structures. It also gives information about the English civilization and strengthens intellectual power, i.e., deep involvement in literature and the arts (Kramsch, 1993). In other words, we include the big C in the English text during teaching and learning the language, directly emphasizing language only. It ignores four language learning skills: listening, reading, speaking, and writing. In this same view, Valdes (1990) also states that there was a common reason for studying a language. It was to enable one to read literature and thus become an intellectual person with a capital 'C. ' Simultaneously, the communicative approach focuses on the four language learning skills equally and significantly.

Little c Culture

In English classrooms, culture is unavoidable and motivates learners to learn the language naturally, fluently, and efficiently. For students to be able to use English naturally and confidently in daily situations, they need to practice it in the classroom. We should create a comfortable, learners' friendly environment while encouraging and motivating them to practice English in the classrooms. Those environments awaken their interest in the learning activity and help them interact in the classroom. Thus, we should include the learners' familiar culture for an interactive and learning-friendly environment in the English classroom. Because of integrating the learners' friendly local culture, the classroom environment becomes interactive, fun, and enjoyable. The significantly included learners' familiar culture, which helps the learners learn language skills, is called "Little c" or "small culture." We can also claim that we should focus on creating an interactive environment in English language classrooms if learning a language is to improve communication skills.

To achieve that objective, teachers should bring the relevant social contexts or little 'c' in the classrooms, also called 'small cultures' (Holliday, 1999 as cited in

Kramsch, 2013, p. 66), of everyday life. According to Kramsch (1993), "Little c" culture focuses on a way of behaving, or a regular, patterned behaviour, habits, and traditional beliefs of a group of people. We call Little c culture 'behaviour culture, which refers to "subjective culture, or the day-to-day features that define a group of people. The nature of this type of culture is psychological, involving attitudes, beliefs, and values of people. Subjective culture also refers to such distinguishing elements as the choice of discourse, style of dress, in-group/ out-group networks, and norms of interactions" (DeCapua & Wintergerst, 2016, p.18). The three p's of culture are present: products, practices, and perspectives. The cultural elements, such as architecture, literature, etc., are 'Products' or the big 'C' culture. The cultural components, such as bowing, shaking hands, etc., are 'Practices' or little 'c,' whereas 'Perspectives' are people's underlying values and beliefs.

To achieve communicative competence in English, we should use the four language learning skills: listening, reading, speaking, and writing. While dealing with these four skills of learning, little 'c' cultural competence is necessary. Because language and culture have a dialectical connection, so, without learning little 'c' culture, learners cannot learn the language effectively and successfully. In other words, when they learn the language, the students should become competent and conscious of its small 'c' contextually appropriate features. More discussions have focused on the significance of cross-cultural sensitivity and intercultural communicative competence regarding this idea. The teachers should not just draw the learners' attention to the facts and big 'C' culture of other cultures in English classrooms, but they should also make it clear that communication is more than just sharing feelings, thoughts, and information. And it is also essential to awaken students' awareness of their little 'c' culture while learning the language. Since it helps the learners interpret and understand the English culture, they would then learn and develop the language to perform it quickly, naturally, and meaningfully.

Theory of Critical Pedagogy as an Analytic Lens

I teach the English language at a higher secondary level in Bhaktapur. In Bhaktapur, most learners are uninterested and inactive in English language classrooms. It may be because of cultural differences. We know that Bhaktapur is the city of an indigenous community of Newars. Its language and culture are unique from the English culture included in the text of English. Without culture, language learning will be like learning how to swim in a dead pond because there will be no single drop

of water in the quiet pond. We must fill the pond with water to learn and enjoy swimming, as water is an indispensable part of learning and enjoying swimming. As the water in the pond is necessary for learning how to swim, in the same manner, culture is an essential part while teaching and learning a language because language carries the culture. Culture corresponds to language (Mahadi & Jafari, 2012).

But, if we teach the language in the English culture imbued in the text, the learners feel bored, uninteresting, ineffective, and unproductive in the English classroom. The English culture will be unfamiliar, inexperienced, and far away from their day-to-day experiences. For the meaningful and justified learning of the language, we should include the familiar culture of learners. They feel comfortable and encouraged to practice English in their own culture. Young (2009) also claims that what a newcomer learns in community practice is, first of all, 'local practices.' So, when we include local culture in the English classroom, the learners are encouraged and interested to learn and practice the language. I am also an English teacher in Bhaktapur, where most learners are from Newari-speaking backgrounds. The learners are passive in learning the language in English classrooms in Bhaktapur. Therefore, to make them active and interested in English language classrooms, I am incredibly interested in including Bhaktapur's culture in English classrooms. As a theoretical framework, I want to use critical pedagogy to study how English language learners respond when we bring local culture into the classroom to teach and learn English.

Critical pedagogy is a teaching philosophy that inspires teachers to encourage learners to evaluate structures of power and unjust exercise of education. Paulo Freire developed that teaching philosophy in his book "Pedagogy of Oppressed" published in the early 1970s after African countries gained independence. Although they gained independence, they still faced many colonial problems, such as economic depression, cultural devastation, language conflicts, social degradation, political instability, and so on. To improve those post-colonial situations, scholars, educators, and writers, like Peter Mclaren, Henry Giroux, bell hooks, Joe Kincheloe, and Ira Shor, also exercised Freire's theory of critical pedagogy as it envisions the collective human development. And Freire also applied his theory as a teaching approach to teach illiterate adults; as a result, he was imprisoned and exiled as a traitor. As critical pedagogy advocates for transformation, emancipation, empowerment, and humanity with the essential help of consciousness, so many other ideas were developed from its spirit, such as racism,

child rights, human rights, feminism, colonialism, post-colonialism, etc., to empower physically, socially, culturally, aesthetically, and economically to all the marginalized, dehumanized, and vulnerable group of the world. So, critical pedagogy has a profound impact on people around the globe working for social change.

Critical pedagogy is best known for its approaches to education. Crawford-Lange (1981) says that education aims to develop critical thinking. We can develop learners' critical thinking by asking them to solve the problems themselves. They first perceive or identify the issues while solving problems. And then they think about or reflect on the problems. And then after they work out or act on the issues. Freire emphasizes that the learning activities must be transformative rather than transmission. And also, critical pedagogy offers pedagogy with a new relationship between teacher, student, and society by distinguishing between traditional education and problem-solving education. Conventional education is also called banking education. Banking education is a traditional teaching method. In traditional classrooms, teachers fill students with knowledge. In this banking education, only educators are active, resourceful, and authoritative, whereas learners are silent recipients in classrooms. They depend on teachers for learning. Consequently, the classroom remains at the bottom of a 'win-lose' situation in learning activity since the banking model of education adores only the needs of teachers, like completion of lessons, checking homework and class work, and so on, by ignoring the needs of learners. So, in opposition to it, critical pedagogy exercises the problem-solving model of education to achieve a "win-win" situation in the English classroom where we should address the needs of both teacher and student.

Freire (1972) states it is democratic when boys and girls participate in a learning activity. While participating in a learning activity in the classroom, they have a discussion that helps them boost their critical power to identify and see how they live in the world. When they become aware of their position, they discover the world themselves. They understand and learn to see their surroundings as changing environments, not static ones, as their reality keeps changing on the way to transformation. While teachers and learners are co-creators of information, the Problem-posing approach allows students to choose their teaching and learning methods. As a result, students respond to instruction differently, and education is improved. And this approach views teachers as problem posers as they create problems in front of the students and make them solve the issues themselves as a part

of their learning. Dewey (1963), an advocate of this approach, asserts that problem-solving and practical-based learning encourages students to become more actively involved in shaping their societal experiences. While relating the learning knowledge in the classroom with their prior experiences and the environment around them, they know to ask questions, and as a result, the knowledge turns transformative. Thus, critical pedagogy offers holistic development of the learners.

Besides its democratic nature, critical pedagogy seeks to provide emancipatory education, and it is empowering, too, to students as it practices dialogic praxis. Critical pedagogy emphasizes thought and deed together, reflection and action, as Freire (1985) advises, since it becomes a simple verbalism when we cut off theory from practice.

Praxis is a way of thinking over what you will do, why you will do it, how you will do it, and how it will come out before you can do it. It incorporates a dynamic engagement between theory and practice. It is an ongoing interaction that involves continuous give and takes and a dialectical back-and-forth teaching of practice by theory and theory by practice. Hence, education becomes transformative in this model of pedagogy. In a traditional classroom, teachers are the most crucial authority figures (Kumaravadivelu, 2003). Their primary responsibility is to impart their knowledge of the subject matter to the students in complete control (Freire, 1972). In opposition to Freire's term "banking method," critical pedagogy offers learning opportunities to students by including a local culture that helps learners to practice the language in the English classrooms. While practising the language with local culture in the classroom, teachers will observe and facilitate their use of English. Even if the discussion is necessary while practising language skills, teachers will discuss it with students as it is a part of learning the language in the classroom.

Critical pedagogy helps me see how students participate in language learning activities after bringing the local culture into the English language classroom. Through Friere's problem-posing model of education, I observed how the educator interacted critically with learners in the classroom. Engaging in critical conversation helped them to identify the issues instead of trying to fix problems they perceived as problematic. It reflected these problems (problem-presenting) and served as the driving force for a process of collectively generated knowledge. We incorporated local culture into teaching and learning the English language to emphasize students' cultural experiences. When the teacher and the students interact with each other and

with the teacher, through this, the students start to perceive each other as knowledge sources. Critical pedagogy tries to move away from courses focused on the teacher and the text by focusing on the students and their contexts. It helped students develop critical minds to be agents of change (Mahmoodarabi & Khodabaksh, 2015). Shor (1996) also identified that one of the essential aspects of critical pedagogy is that teachers should encourage their students to question the status quo to facilitate the process of personal transformation. Students might take charge of their education and develop a critical perspective on their education and society during a crucial discussion in the classroom. They learned how to make decisions both inside and outside of the classroom. Eventually, they could act outside the classroom because they understood how their problems fit into the larger sociopolitical and cultural context. To create active participation of the students in English Language classroom by dialogical engagement and problem-posing model and because of transformative teaching and learning, they could use English in daily lives.

Policy Review

Making meaningful English language learning requires appropriate teaching approaches so that learners can achieve language skills and develop fluency and natural communication. And the teaching approaches should be learner-centred because if the teaching method is learner-centred, learners become more independent in learning the language and thus become autonomous lifelong learners. But unfortunately, many English language teachers still employed traditional methods such as making lectures, note sharing, reading answers, rotting, and grammar-translation methods. However, the English curriculum requires them to practice student-centred communicative techniques. An adequate learning space should help the learners practice their language skills to create a student-centred classroom. But the teachers must make productive and sufficient room for them to practice the English language in the classroom. Because of incompatible curricula designed for English language learning activities in which the contents included are from outside the learners' familiarity. That's why; there is a debate about the culture that should consist of while teaching and learning the English language. Some argued for the traditional or English culture, whereas others argued for the learners' culture.

This argument is still hot in English language classrooms. There has yet to be a clear policy about what culture should we teach in an English classroom. However, there was a policy that tried to address this argument. The National curriculum

framework for school education in Nepal states that education in any country should be within the context of national and local realities, needs, and priorities. Here, it's also essential to consider a balance of the localization of the curriculum and mother tongue learning. Following this need, after Federal Nepal had formed the new constitution, the National Curriculum Framework introduced the new curriculum for grades 11 and 12, focusing on language competencies. Though it focuses on language competencies, the content included in the textbooks is not about the learners' familiarity; thus, it is not helpful and learners- friendly.

Review of Previous Studies

I taught English in Bhaktapur. In Bhaktapur, the majority of learners were from Newari-speaking backgrounds. They were uninterested, passive, and unconfident in English classrooms. So, I attempted to include the learners' familiar culture in English classrooms that would encourage and motivate them to learn language skills in English language classrooms because language learning needs an encouraging and favourable teaching-learning environment. So, we could include the learners' culture to create a bright and promising teaching-learning environment because cultural influences affect English language learning. Following this notion, many studies have supported the issue of integrating local culture, which boosts learning language skills in the English language classroom.

Khan (2016) states that teachers must draw learners' attention in English language classrooms. They can include the learners' familiar culture to motivate them in English language classrooms because it helps them understand English concepts, which assists in fulfilling the learning objectives. Furthermore, he says that including the local context also helps the learners to release the load of learning two unknown components in the English classroom: English culture and the English language. This study shows that teaching a second language should focus on what the learners are interested in rather than what we teach. And if the teachers focus on the student's interests, they become involved in learning activities in English language classrooms. When the students participate in learning activities, the classroom becomes student-centred. Thus, if teachers want to create a learner-oriented classroom and get their students involved in the classroom, they should ask the students to talk about things from their own culture. Similarly, Regmi (2011) also says that the learners' culture and local setting shape them. So, the teachers should include the learners' familiar culture in English classrooms.

When educators include local culture in the classrooms, the learners feel familiar, comfortable, and easy to understand and learn English. To understand and learn to use language skills meaningfully, they should understand the cultural context first. Unless they know the cultural context, they cannot comprehend the language. That's why to make meaningful language learning in English classrooms, local culture and context also play an essential role.

Moreover, there is a debate regarding the culture to include in English classrooms. During the discussion, there are mixed claims about how important the English culture and the culture that English learners bring to the English classrooms. Besides these claims, the intercultural approach also forwards another claim that states that teachers should practice the students' culture in English classrooms to help the learners learn the language successfully, efficiently, meaningfully, and quickly. Unless they are aware of their own culture, they cannot understand English in the English culture because of misunderstandings in culture. So, to avoid cultural misunderstandings in English classrooms while learning the language, students must practice their culture until they can learn English. When they can learn English in their own culture, English teachers can try to get their students to practice English in English culture.

In other words, when we include the learners' culture in the English classroom, it will be helpful to make language learning meaningful and successful because it will operate as reference-providing and reference-developing roles while learning the language. Following the learners' culture, the learners can associate, relate and compare the two cultures. And after clicking, comparing, and associating their own culture with the English culture, they will understand it. They will also be able to learn and use the English language because of the reference-providing and reference-developing nature of culture. It is also a tool for thinking which enables the learners to understand and use the language themselves with the help of their own experiences (Kramsch & Zhu Hua, 2016). So, language learning is experiential, too. The learners can create the concept of learning that we expect them to learn based on their past experiences.

Similarly, in support of the above viewpoints, Margana (2009) also says that in the school-based curriculum, we can give place for local culture to play a role in English classrooms since it can help learners to learn the English language easier. We provide learners with texts of the English culture reflecting native speakers' lives and

behaviours. It makes it difficult for learners to understand the unknown materials because they are unaware and have little knowledge of the culture of English. Therefore, he strongly encourages teachers to incorporate the local culture in English classrooms because students come to the class with enough cultural objects of their familiar culture. Thus, we can attract them into the English classroom by integrating learners' cultural backgrounds. Learners would develop cross-cultural consciousness when integrating local culture into English language classrooms. And that helps them to cope with cross-cultural communication obstacles. In short, we can say that using local culture in English classes makes it easier for students to practice and learn the language.

In this same lane, Gurskya (2020) also believes that we should not practice linguistic forms only while learning the English language. It is also essential for students to understand how they use the English language in different cultures. So that they can understand and use the linguistic forms appropriately. They can take part in intercultural communication. Therefore, it is necessary to use learners' cultural context in the English classroom. That helps learners to develop cultural awareness of English culture too. After they form a cultural understanding of English culture, they can obtain proficiency in intercultural communication of the English language. When we present learners' cultural backgrounds in the English language classroom, learners can participate in interactive classroom activities to practice the language as a communicative process.

Additionally, these activities improve students' cultural attitudes and actions by following the rules of communicating in the English context. Therefore, English teachers should use learners' familiar culture to understand the English culture. Unless the learners understand the context of the language, they cannot learn the language. So, involving the learners' cultures to understand new cultures while teaching English in a classroom is essential.

We believe that the language and culture of the learner affect how they learn English. The way that learners conceptualize English culture depends on their cultural worldviews, assumptions, and preconceptions. Students should be conscious of their familiar conceptualizations to develop conceptualizations of English. Concerning their cultural context, learners explore and understand the English cultural context, which facilitates their practice and learning of the English language quickly and confidently. That's why integrating the learner's culture is helpful to teaching and

learning English meaningfully (DeCapua & Wintergerst, 2016). Therefore, integrating learners' familiar culture helps to make meaningful, successful, fruitful, and effective English language learning.

With this view, Kramsch (1993) has also noted light on the value of introducing local cultural influences into the English classroom. She believes that culture and context are always active in language learning from day one. If learners are uninformed about their culture and the language context, they cannot be good language learners. When learners use their cultural backgrounds while learning English, they can reduce challenges to language learning. The learners can practice the language and earn communicative competence in the English language using their familiar cultural concepts and experiences. She further says that if learners' culture isn't a part of teaching and learning English, they won't be able to learn and use English in a different culture. So, to help them learn and develop competency in English, we can incorporate learners' familiarity in the English classroom.

The familiar culture of learners helps them to conceptualize the English culture by relating, associating, and comparing with their prior experience and understanding. Keeping it in mind, Barfield & Uzarski (2009) have also shared that to make the English classroom participatory and learners' friendly, English teachers should integrate indigenous artifacts and cultural components into the language classroom. Furthermore, in an English classroom, if we include learners' own culture, they feel friendly and become encouraged to learn the English language. Following this view, Suwal (2012) also studied English language classrooms in Bhaktapur, where most learners are from Newari-speaking backgrounds. In those English language classrooms of Bhaktapur, he found that the learners become active, motivated, encouraged, and involved in learning activities when we include the learners' culture in the classroom. Because of their involvement in the English language classroom, the classroom becomes interactive in learning language skills in the English language. They also feel connected and joyful to learning activities in English language classrooms because of culture- friendly environment in the classroom.

Research Gap

From the studies mentioned above, I know that to make a meaningful and successful learning process in English language classrooms, the integration of learners' own culture helps to a great extent. As per the findings in the research

studies, English language classrooms can be encouraged by integrating learners' cultures and contexts. Because of their familiar culture and context, the learners become active, motivated, and encouraged to learn English meaningfully and productively. Therefore, I assume this thought and theory would apply to the same level in the context of my Newari-speaking background, too. But I could not find any research that was/is carried out on culturally responsive English language classroom practices in the Newari context in Bhaktapur except Suwal. Though my study is close to Suwal, there is a gap as he focused on making the English language teaching culture-friendly. In contrast, I focused on culturally responsive English language classroom practices in Bhaktapur.

Conceptual Framework

My research topic is "Culturally responsive English language classroom Practices in Bhaktapur." To conduct this research systematically, I followed the conceptual framework as the frame for my study in which I conducted my research following its steps one after another. It presented different aspects, such as the method of data collecting, the theoretical foundation of the study, the research method I relied on for the research, and the concepts that I employed from the theory of my research. The research base was a qualitative methodology guided by an interpretive paradigm, and I carried out a narrative inquiry for the study. I interviewed Newari-speaking English language teachers to collect the narratives and recorded and transcribed them to maintain authenticity in information. I analyzed the audio records and developed them into themes for meaning making based on the research objective and questions. I used critical pedagogy theory (Freire, 1972) to analyze data.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, I presented the plan in detail for the study, beginning with the methodological foundations developed for this research. I started this chapter with philosophical considerations and research paradigm- interpretive paradigm. And then, I discussed research design- the narrative inquiry following information about research sites, participants, and data-gathering techniques. I also dealt with the data analysis process in this chapter. After that, I discussed the study's quality standards and ethical issues.

Ontology

According to Richards (2003), Ontology is the study of being that focuses on the nature and position of reality. In this study, the reality was the English learners from the Newari community were not learning the language fruitfully, meaningfully, naturally, and productively. They felt bored and uninteresting in the English classroom. We could motivate them by including their comfortable cultural context while learning English in the classroom in the context of Bhaktapur. We could include the learners' familiar cultural artifacts such as foods, clothing, festivals, places, music, dance, etc. When we had their cultural artifacts, such as *Yomari, Samebaji, Ju Ju Dhau, Chhoyala, Durbar Square, Siddhapokhari, Taumadhi Square*, *Hakupatasi, Daura Suruwal,* etc., in the English classroom, they found an appropriate space to practice the language in the classroom. They became motivated, encouraged, enthusiastic and joyful to practice and learn the language in the classroom.

I tried to get different meanings or relative reality from Newari-speaking English teachers' subjective views and experiences as they have their understanding, knowledge, and perception. I interviewed and recorded their narratives from their perspectives. Therefore, my ontological stance is relativist, as there is no single, absolute, or universal truth. Thus, reality is entirely context-based and socially constructed.

Epistemology

In this study, my epistemological stance was subjective as every individual is unique; they construct knowledge by internalizing a process of understanding their surroundings, experiences, and stories (Riessman, 2008). So, epistemology might

differ from individual to individual. We create the world socially and construct realities that vary from individual to individual and from context to situation. Following a narrative method, I found epistemology was rooted in the context of my participants' narratives. Stories emerge from the self and are composed and received in context (Riessman, 2008).

The epistemology of my research lies in the Newari-speaking English teachers' experiences and views regarding their classroom practices in English classrooms in Bhaktapur. I primarily used my experiences as a Newari-speaking English language teacher, the experiences of my research participants, and my interaction with them to find the truth from society. In short, I had an in-depth interview. In that interview, they narrated their experiences and stories of their English language classroom practices in the context of Bhaktapur developed my epistemology.

Axiology

Axiology, for me, refers to the value of people, as every individual is different. Each individual is different and unique, so their thinking and understanding or experiences are undoubtedly different. The participants' awareness, knowledge, and experiences are not value-free but value-laden in this study. So the truth is greatly affected by the individual perceptions and realization of things or the world. As a researcher, I have different values about using students' familiar culture in an English classroom in Bhaktapur, and so does each participant who is Newari-speaking English teacher. Hence, each participant had different perspectives, experiences, and values toward the world.

Interpretive Research Paradigm

I followed an interpretative research paradigm for my research. I planned to use the Interpretative Research Paradigm to undertake my research systematically. Taylor and Medina (2011) state that by learning to "walk in their shoes," "see through their eyes," and "feel their joy or sorrow," one might better understand the culturally distinct "other." I conducted in-depth interviews with the local Newari-speaking English language teachers of Bhaktapur. While taking the interviews, I recorded their narratives or stories on my mobile. I transcribed their recorded narratives or stories. That transcription helped me understand what they did and how they felt about their classroom practices with and without using learners' culture in the English classroom. I constructed the meanings of classroom practices in Bhaktapur using students'

familiar culture. Meanings are explicitly and implicitly present in the narratives of Bhaktapur's local Newari-speaking English language teachers. In doing so, I kept their experiences alive, and their narratives, views, and understandings helped me understand local Newar teachers' English classroom practices in Bhaktapur.

Narrative Inquiry as a Method

I used the Narrative as an approach to an inquiry under qualitative research design. Narrative means "to retell" or "to tell" narratives in detail. According to Creswell (2012), Narrative research helps to examine instructors, students, and educators in educational contexts. Every person in educational settings has a story to share about their experiences since they are all part of it. The use of narrative inquiry enabled the researcher to compose narratives of personal experiences, gather and share tales about people's lives, and characterize the lives of individuals.

In other words, a narrative inquiry technique involved asking one or more people to share their experiences as the researcher investigated their lives. The researcher often recounted or retold this material in a narrative timeline. Ultimately, the narrative creates a joint story by fusing perspectives from the participant's life with those of the researcher (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). A unique type of qualitative research is narrative inquiry. Generally, the emphasis is on accumulating data through telling tales, narrating personal experiences, and delving into the significance of those events for the person (Creswell, 2012).

Furthermore, the main focus of narrative research is to understand the past, present, and envisioned future experiences of one or more people. (Creswell, 2013). As the research design of my study is narrative inquiry, I identified a problem for my research. To study the research problem, I purposefully selected a site and the participants. I interviewed local Newari-speaking English language teachers to learn about their experiences, views, and understanding regarding their classroom practices. During interviews, I established a close relationship with the participants. I made participants feel that their narratives were helpful for my study. I recorded their stories in an audiotape that helped me learn about personal history or previous experiences of Newari-speaking English teachers' classroom practices in the English classrooms of Bhaktapur influenced present and future experiences (Creswell 2012).

Based on the interviews of the Newari-speaking English Language teacher participants of Bhaktapur, I developed a chronological perspective of their experiences. And then, I retold or transcribed the gathered stories or experiences

regarding the classroom practices of the English language classrooms of Bhaktapur. While transcribing, I used their own words and expressions. Data transcription is indispensable in narrative research as it helps create a particular series and indirect connections among thoughts (Creswell, 2012). After transcribing the stories, I coded them into themes and included them as a separate study section. Throughout the study, I associated my classroom practices and the participant's experiences of their classroom practices to discuss how to motivate, encourage and attract students to language learning activities in Bhaktapur's English classrooms. While associating my narratives with the participants' stories, I understood their perspectives on classroom practices and language learning activities using the learners' everyday culture in their English classrooms in Bhaktapur and their benefits to the profession.

Participants Selection

Since this is qualitative research, I must talk to the Newar English teachers in Bhaktapur to find out what they did and thought about their English classroom practices using the learners' familiar cultural context in the classrooms. For this purpose, I chose Bhadgaun Higher Secondary School of Bhaktapur as the location of my study. And the participants for my research were five local Newari-speaking English teachers of Bhaktapur.

I used purposeful sampling in my study. So, I chose the Newari-speaking English teachers and the place, Bhaktapur, to explore the essential phenomena for my proposed research. I purposefully selected my participants. According to Dornyei (2007), the primary objective of sampling is to identify people who could offer deep and different insights into the topic we are studying. Some purposeful sampling best achieves this objective. Therefore, I used purposive sampling in this study since it helped me find the right kind of respondents from whom I got an insight into using the learners' everyday activities in the English language classrooms of Bhaktapur.

However, we could not generalize the findings we obtained from the study in another context. I believed my research methods were under an interpretive paradigm. So, I sought to understand the reality by interviewing the local Newari-speaking English language teachers about the significance of incorporating aspects of the learners' native culture in English language classrooms. I gathered interviews of the participants and interpreted them from their stories and perspectives. Thus, the inquiry was purely explorative and interpretive.

Approaches of Collecting/Generating Information

I used local Newari-speaking English language teachers' narratives during my study to generate information. I recorded the narratives on audiotape on my mobile. I built a close relationship with my research participants, having an informal conversation about classroom practices and language learning activities, including the learners' familiar cultural context in the English language classrooms of Bhaktapur. Before conducting the interviews, I built up a bond of trust with my study participants to capture rich data.

During interviews and casual conversations, the local Newari-speaking English teachers talked about stories and experiences they had lived in their English classrooms. The oral narratives shared by the participants were collected in different connections (most likely): culture in English classrooms, the relationship of language and culture, and the importance of culture in English classrooms. Firstly, I explored the opinion about the integration of culture in English classrooms by asking cross-questions. Then, I moved on to a personal view. I asked the participants to explore their experiences using the culture in English language classrooms, which helped them understand the correlation between language and culture. I also asked them to share the particular event of their classroom practices in which they used culture to help the learners understand and learn the language in English classrooms. I also asked them about the importance of integrating culture into English classrooms. Finally, they shared the English language classroom practices using and without using the learners' culture throughout the data collection. I probed various questions to the participants to lead to the central theme of the study.

The information the participants shared was audio recorded with their permission, and I noted some critical information in the diary. The participants were also informed to verify their responses. I transcribed the audio narratives precisely to maintain their clichés and grammatical mistakes. Then I gave the transcribed texts to the participants to prove their audio in written form at their convenience. I kept the authenticity of the data.

Meaning Making

While writing, I generated the themes. I categorized topics with my research questions using sufficient information from the local Newari-speaking English language teachers' oral narratives and informal conversations. I repeatedly listened to audio-recorded narratives and read the transcribed data of the interviews to ensure I

transcribed the information precisely or not. I transcribed the stories or narratives, maintaining the general ethos and omitting the clichés. I did some coding. The transcription of audio records was revised, analyzed, and subjected to slight revision with the supervisor's consent. Then, I prepared the final tool of interview guidelines. I used different themes to code, including more relevant categories. Then I wrote a story based on the main themes and subthemes from the data.

After categorizing themes and sub-themes, I analyzed them based on thematic and dialogical/performance analysis of Riessman's (2008) narrative inquiry analysis methods. The content of what the informants said with their entire stories helped me to use a thematic analysis. In contrast, the referential meaning of interviews based on classroom context, their discursive patterns, and structures enabled me to use structural narrative analysis. By combining thematic and structural analysis, I captured the real stories making the whole unit of analysis completely coherent. Likewise, dialogical/performance analysis allowed me to see narratives as dialogical processes which viewed stories as social artifacts, the output of English language classroom cultures. My study was mainly about how learners responded to learning language activities after using the learners' culture in English classrooms in Bhaktapur. I was interested in how people react, negotiate, and change their classroom practices in a real English classroom. Reissman's analysis method helped to achieve a fuller interpretation of narratives.

Quality Standards

The quality standard is an instrumental standard that authenticates the research work. Every research needs to maintain specific quality standards, which may differ from paradigm to paradigm. As a qualitative researcher, I followed trustworthiness and authenticity as my quality standards for my research work.

Trustworthiness

Guba and Lincoln (1989) think that a disciplined inquiry process must be acceptable to the public and allow people to make their own decisions about the "compression and rearrangement" process. Similarly, my concern about the quality of qualitative research is related to trustworthiness and authenticity. We can trust the study if it meets four quality standards: credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability (Taylor, 2014). Furthermore, the authenticity of the research included fairness, and the authenticity of ontological, educative, and catalytic kinds provided

quality to the study. In this regard, I followed the path of awareness, opinion, and practice.

The credibility standard assessed the similarity between participants' generated realities and those represented by the researcher (Taylor et al., 2011). In my research, I created special considerations to maintain the natural setting and focused more on collecting data through interviews and informal conversations. I paralleled the validity, which measured the generated realities of the respondents attributed to it. To establish credibility, I gathered narratives of the local Newari-speaking English language teachers' narratives through interviews. I had an informal conversation with them, too. The narratives gathered from the participants were measured to ensure standard quality.

Transferability in qualitative research is the degree of similarities between the researcher and the observers, who read the study later. It is about the usefulness of the research in similar other educational settings. According to Ellis (2004), the use of a story is constantly being tested, but not in the usual way by taking random samples of people who respond. Instead, the readers are the ones who determine whether or not the story spoke to them about their own experience or about the lives of others that they have known. As I shared some stories from my real-world experience to get into the matter, it helped me to get the correct data. Creating a trustworthy situation was also valuable among other stakeholders in similar settings.

The conformability of qualitative research ensured that the conclusions were drawn based on the understandings and experiences of the participants rather than the researcher's aspects and preferences. (Shenton, 2004). To maintain conformability, I tried to gather information in a natural setting, conducting interviews and having informal conversations and interpretations with information rooted in the context and the persons. It helped me confirm the participants' identification and maintain the gathered data's quality.

The dependability addressed the issue directly. It was necessary to keep reporting on/about the details within the study, which did not allow an assisting future researcher to restudy the work and achieve the same findings (Shenton, 2004). Therefore, I focused on the fundamental perspectives of the participants and the actual data obtained from the researcher to maintain dependability. I even made the themes, findings, and findings unaffected by my personal beliefs and attributes.

Authenticity

Authenticity maintained fairness, beneficence, non-munificence, and so on by assuring the research was genuinely evaluated and implacable to social, political, and educational contexts (Shenton, 2004). Following the idea, I collected data by interviewing the participants individually. I had an informal conversation with my participants and got their lived experiences from them. They mentioned their cultural situated-ness and the importance of using learners' culture in English classrooms in their context. Their experiences had linked with the broader sociopolitical aspect they have been living in. But simultaneously, while interpreting, I was cautious not to change the meaning of what the participants meant.

Ethical Considerations

Orb et al. (2001) state that ethics involves doing fair and avoiding damage. By using suitable ethical standards, it is possible to prevent or mitigate harm. Lacking ethical issues in research might create problems regarding the authenticity of the study and the findings. So, ethical considerations for research were as important as the findings. Hence, research is needed to show such behavior while accomplishing research. Any research requires a long association with the research participants. It is imperative when it comes to qualitative research. According to Cohen et al. (2007), "although (research) frequently claimed naturally by being non-interventionist, there are several ethical considerations that surround it." The long association was bound to expose information about the research participants that they would not like to tell otherwise. For example, in the research, I observed how the learners learned English in the classrooms of Bhaktapur when we included the learners' familiar cultural context in the classrooms of Bhaktapur. I convinced the participants that the details of the research sessions would be confidential. However, I fully disclosed my purpose and the nature of the research journey. As a researcher, I used privacy, anonymity, and confidentiality as ethical standards.

Informed Participation

First, I informed my participants about the objective of my study and the process of gathering data for their permission. I gave them complete freedom to decide whether to participate or not. After they agreed to participate in the study, I collected data. I informed the individuals participating in the project that they could leave anytime.

Privacy

I had to give equal respect and value to every participant, and I had to realize that the information provided by the participants was their matter. So I assured them that I would not disclose their information. I was conscious of maintaining privacy without revealing information to the next participant. In school, there were many those like religion, education, ranking, castes, position, and so on that I had to maintain in my research. Therefore, I knew all these things and never tried to interfere with the participants' personal lives. I never tried to violate their privacy.

Anonymity

The principle of anonymity is that the participants' information does not expose their identities. So, to make my narrative more natural, I followed anonymity. I kept the names of my participants, institutions, and teacher participants as pseudo-names. I followed anonymity to acknowledge that the participants were not in that educational setting.

Confidentiality

I maintained confidentiality and the participant's right to privacy in my research. I kept this by putting the names of my participants as pseudo-names. I was conscious that I only used the participants' information for research purposes. In addition, I used the pseudo name of participants, schools, and people that helped me in the teacher narratives to maintain confidentiality.

I was accountable for the ethical treatment of study subjects by collaborators, assistants, students, professors, and employers, who all have comparable responsibilities. I followed ethical concerns, trustworthiness, authenticity, and quality.

Chapter Summary

I described and justified the research methodology in this chapter. I looked at my study through an interpretive paradigm to examine ontological, epistemological, and axiological considerations as my philosophical considerations following the classroom practices of Newari-speaking English teachers in Bhaktapur. Moreover, to explain the purpose of choosing the qualitative research and narrative inquiry approach, I explained how the learners understood and learned the language when we employed the learners' familiar cultural context in the English classrooms in Bhaktapur. I used the local Newar English teachers' narratives and informal conversation as my information-generating method for different backgrounds. In this section, I discussed the research site, the participants, and how I collected and

analyzed the data. Additionally, I followed the quality standards: trustworthiness and authenticity, and ethical standards: privacy, anonymity, and confidentiality, used in this research, which I explained with justifiable reasons in this chapter.

CHAPTER IV

NARRATING ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASSROOM PRACTICES

In this chapter, I discussed how the Newar teachers of English motivated learners in the classroom to help them learn English naturally, confidently, and skillfully. I interviewed Newari-speaking English teachers to understand the classroom practices they used in their classrooms. Based on their experiences, I analyzed English classroom practices they worked out in the classroom. And I developed their experiences into themes through coding and categorizing their shared experiences. As far as possible, I tried to bring the local English language teachers' words they shared with me. I organized this chapter into two sections: thematic analysis and theoretical analysis. In the first section, I used the data I collected to divide the themes into two parts. I also included the excerpts shared by the participants in their interviews to authenticate their views in writing. I analyzed the topics through the lens of critical pedagogy theory in the second part of the writing. I included the excerpts of the participants here while analyzing the thematic analysis with the view.

Contextualization in the English Classroom

I am a Newar English language teacher. I taught it at Bhadgaun Higher Secondary School in Bhaktapur for several years. Bhaktapur inhabits the indigenous Newar community of the Kathmandu Valley and is known for its cultural practices. As the principal inhabitants are Newars in Bhaktapur, most learners in Bhadgaun School are also from the Newar community, and so am I. As an English language teacher, I employed teaching strategies such as lectures, translation, and communicative methods to teach the class language in the English language classroom. However, I realized that those different methods were not helping the learners naturally internalize the English language. They failed when I asked my learners to develop writing on a particular topic without my guidelines and help. They were not only in writing but also not confident in speaking and other language skills. Following this concern, the English language teachers discussed the issue. During the discussion, one of our colleagues claimed that it could be because of the contents included in the curriculum, which are far from the students' culture and context. If the content is about their culture and familiar context, they may quickly internalize the

language skills in the English language. And after that incident, we decided that we could change our teaching strategy and content by including the local culture of Bhaktapur.

I followed Holme (2003), who asserted that learners respond in two distinct ways while learning a popular global language. The learners' age determines them and the objectives they want to achieve. The first reaction addresses contextualizing the English language within the background and culture of the learners. According to Moltz (2010, as cited in Moghaddas, 2013), contextualization is a kind of "deep learning" that occurs when thoughts and concepts from different classes are connected. When it comes to language learning, it means putting the English language into the context of a natural setting to make the students' learning process as practicable as possible. Highlighting the concept of deep learning through contextualization, Bijaya Manandhar, one of my research participants from Bhaktapur, says:

> *Before I begin the lesson, I contextualize it with background information. For example, I only explain the story indirectly in the classroom. Before I explain the story, I talk about different background information and happenings around us related to the story. Then, while explaining the story, I connected all discussed the background and happening to the above-expressed story.*

Mr. Manandhar is a Newar-speaking English language teacher from the same cultural background as his students. His anecdote made us realize that the meaningful activity of learning a language occurs in some context or environment. With understanding the context of the English text, language learning may occur. To understand the context of an English language text, learners must know their familiar context, similar to the context of the English text. Following the learners' everyday context, they learn and understand the language by relating or connecting their background to the context of the English text. According to Holme (2003), hidden messages in a text's cultural framework can influence language learners. Language learners should know these meanings. Therefore, we cannot ignore contextualization cannot in the English classroom. Since it motivates and encourages English learners to learn the language meaningfully, skillfully, and naturally.

Furthermore, for proper natural language learning, the teacher should interact with learners and one learner to another in the classroom. We can engage the learners in classroom interaction by bringing their familiar context. They actively participate

in classroom discussions if the context is known to them. Another participant, Sharan Khyaju, has expressed a similar view. He says:

> *If the things are familiar, they express them in any way. So, for the students from a Newar background, while teaching them the English language, if the contexts are from their Newari background, it will be comfortable for the learners to learn things quickly. Comparatively, including familiar contexts during teaching rather than unfamiliar ones would be better. For example, if we ask the students to describe the family he doesn't live in, they will not be able to do it. But suppose we ask them to tell their family, they can do that. In that case, they will do it without any hesitation, and as it is if we talk about our cultural traditions and background and talking about all those is all about the words which help the students understand the concept of learning. Making the learning happen once the concept is understood is possible. The Newari-speaking learners will soon develop the idea after using the Newari context or background in teaching English. The case will be similar while teaching grammar. Only the difference will there be the medium of the language, which is the English language.*

Sharan Khyaju's anecdote reveals that context is critical while learning English. They would enjoy and develop their interest in learning and develop their interest. This interest enables them to participate in the interaction and be eager and active in learning and practising the language themselves, and finally, they succeed in learning the language. Maristy and Margana (2020) developed a conference paper on Contextualization to Enhance Students' Writing Ability and concluded that using learners' familiar culture helps learners learn tasks meaningfully in English classrooms. And the topics employed to increase learners' writing skills were familiar and applicable to their lives. W engaged the students in class due to using the learners' context and group work to improve their writing abilities.

Moreover, contextualization enhances the effectiveness of language learning in the eyes of both students and educators. However, their writing skills increased. In addition, they could express their thoughts and develop them to relate to the topic and supporting lines. Following Jarvis's (1992) model, he illustrates that students should link the book's contents to their own experiences, using examples and stories and exhibiting a certain amount of awareness of their language experiences. Thus, the language should be taught and learned within the learners' context because they

become more confident and interested in their cultural background. My participants, Bijay Manandhar and Sharan Khyaju, are Newari-speaking English teachers. They taught English at a higher secondary level for several years in Bhaktapur. Newari-speaking English language teachers have shared a similar view regarding using learners' culture in learning activities. When we include the learners' cultural backgrounds in the English classroom, the learners are encouraged and interested in participating in the learning activity without hesitation. They were optimistic about using the learner's cultural context to teach English.

The second participant, Sharan Khyaju, was concerned with integrating the learners' familiar cultural context in the English classroom to make teaching and learning the language meaningful, successful, natural, and skillful. He believes that bringing the learners' familiar cultural context to the English language classroom helps them not only to understand the English text; it also helps them to get the concept of the lesson. When they are clear about the idea of the lesson, the classroom becomes enthusiastic and interactive with the teaching and learning activity process. Then they easily understand and learn to use the English language skills forever. In contrast, Bijaya Manandhar did not talk about the enthusiastic and interactive classroom due to the use of the learners' familiar backgrounds. He also didn't say that to understand the concept of the lesson, the learners' cultural context plays a key role.

Learners' Friendly English Language Classroom

Bhaktapur is an ancient city historically known by Bhadgaun and locally popular by Khowpa. It is famous for its rich art and architecture, fabulous culture, indigenous lifestyle, and the Newari language. And it is best known for its majestic monuments like *Nyatapola*, colorful local festivals such as *Bisket Jatra and Gai Jatra*, and typical foods such as *Baji, Chhoyala, Ju Ju Dhau, Yomari, Aila, Thou*, etc. The city is also hugely popular among students because of its prestigious schools and colleges. They dedicate to well-equipped and cost-effective education with a simple promise where most learners are from the Newar community and less attracted to the learning activity in the English classroom.

As a Newari-speaking Bhaktapur English teacher, I realized the need to contextualize the local culture as a meaningful teaching strategy or new teaching technique for language teaching and learning activities. They help the learners internalize their English language skills without effort and hesitation. When we contextualize local cultures with the culture of the English text in the classroom, the

class becomes encouraged, excited, and participatory in the learning process. Keeping this view in mind, Suwal (2012) says that people love to speak more about themselves, so if the students get the subject matters of their known socio-cultural background, they will be encouraged to speak. Leveridge (2004) concludes that language and culture are connected and that one cannot survive without the other. It is only possible to teach a language by introducing culture. Therefore, I decided to use the learners' familiar culture and background to teach English.

Local culture or context is a strong string that binds people with the place in which they live. In other words, local culture is all that we produce and share as part of our daily lives in the location where we stay or work. So, when we talk about Bhaktapur's local context or culture, we cannot miss enlisting its arts and architecture, clothing, feast and festivals, foods, mystic music and dance, handicrafts, etc., which carry its identity. These are the sources that Newari-speaking English language teachers can include in the English language classrooms of Bhaktapur, which helps to develop the student's language skills in the English language. In this view, Sharan Khyaju, one of the participants of my study, also states:

While teaching, if the contexts are familiar to the students, they would easily participate in a teaching and learning activity. In contrast, they would feel hesitant to participate in the English classroom in an unfamiliar context. For example, when we ask the learners to write about things that are unfamiliar, unseen, and unimagined one and during that time, the students would be unable to write and feel they lack themselves. Even they cannot write the words that describe what we ask them to write. They will also be unable to exercise their imagination power. But if we ask them to write about the things which they have seen, they can quickly write as it says, "If you hear, you forget; if you see, you remember; if you do, you understand," and this explains that if we do things ourselves, we can easily understand it and it will last in our memory for forever.

Similarly, if we ask the students from the Newar background to write in English on the topic of the Newar environment, they can quickly write. For example, if we ask the students from Newar backgrounds to write about Yomari, a Newari food, they can quickly write without hesitation. Not only Yomari, but they can also write quickly about Bisket Jatra because the cultural background is from the learners' experience. Then they would soon

write even in English, just like a saying that only the lord Indra can talk about heaven as he rules it.

We could attract the learners to the meaningful language learning activity; including their culture and relating the lesson with the context around the learner in the English classroom is crucial. Similarly, Ziesing (2001) also strongly linked language fluency and cultural literacy. Therefore, contextualizing or including cultural aspects while learning language enhances the learners' language learning achievements. Another participant, Suman Magaju, also forwards a similar view which echoes:

I would never ask my students to write answers as they like. Instead, I would give them a topic, maybe the name of the place, festival, or food, but their own, which is already familiar to them. And then, I would teach the body of writing with their involvement. They try to write when they become confident and feel like they can write on any other topic, even with an unfamiliar one. Before registering, they collect information about the issue from Google, and the writing will be information copied from the sources. It will be just like a painting that a painter paints by looking at the object, whereas when they write on their familiar topic, the writing will be just like it is all about the things that we do, live, and are around it. And, of course, students would enjoy writing about their personal experiences.

Including the learners' backgrounds would help them learn and use their language skills skillfully. After all, according to Suwal (2012), developing language skills is enhancing listening, reading, writing, and speaking, which we will promote with the help of the fifth skill- culture (source culture) (p.21). Moreover, including learners' familiar materials would create a welcoming, engaging, and meaningful English lesson.

Sharan Khyaju and Suman Magaju were the participants in my study. They were working as the local Newari-speaking English language teachers in Bhaktapur. They talked about the classroom practices that they used while teaching the English language in the classroom. When we read about their classroom experience, we understood the usefulness of including the learners' familiar cultural background in the English classroom. According to them, integrating students' cultures helps create a learning-friendly environment in the classroom. They also say that in an English language classroom, the learners' familiar culture is helpful and resourceful for them

to understand and learn the language. For example, in Bhaktapur, teachers include local foods such as *Yomari, Chatamari, Chhoyala, and Baji* and local festivals like *Bisket Jatra and Gai Jatra* to make them practice English in the classroom. They feel comfortable, motivated, and encouraged to practice English because they are familiar to them. practising English first in everyday culture enables them to use it in non-familiar cultures, too. They cannot learn English meaningfully and productively without practising it in a friendly culture. If they practice language directly in its (a foreign culture) culture, they feel hesitation, uninterested, bored, and unconfident in language learning activities. Practising language in learners' unfamiliar culture will be just a copy of sources like the internet, books, etc. So when the teacher includes these local cultures of Bhaktapur in the English classroom, they get sufficient space, which can be an excellent chance to practice English. If they practice the language skills in their familiar culture, they feel comfortable, anxiety-free, and joyful in the English language classroom.

Critical Pedagogy and Transformative Practices

It is the time of a classless world. However, most schools are still under academic dishonesty because of their traditional classroom practices. In conventional schools, there is a hegemonic formation between educators and learners while performing classroom learning activities. A teacher is a "narrating Subject" (Kanpol, 1999), and the students are "patient, listening objects" (Kanpol, 1999). The teacher narrates the contents without relating the existential experience of the students, so the students feel disconnected and detached from learning the contents. Therefore, the students memorize the narrated contents to perceive or understand the concept of the narrated contents. But learning by heart does not help them to understand clearly and securely, so the learners cannot perform in and out of the classroom because banking teaching is not transformative. Transformative learning is a better understanding through a democratic vision that permits change. Jack Mazirow (2000) defines transformational education as the type of learning that enables us to improve the knowledge frameworks of the world. It also encourages learners to get a more in-depth understanding of others.

Additionally, he says that transformative learning engages the learners in practising the English language with the help of their life experiences, which helps them understand and learn the English language skillfully and confidently. To make learning activities transformative, we should challenge traditional learning practices

by introducing teaching strategies based on critical theory for classroom practice. With this view, Kanpol (1999) also says that critical educator constantly explores proper, reasonable, and fair methods to change an approach. While changing it, they follow the suitable present frame of reference that involves the active engagement of learners in change regarding language classrooms of Bhaktapur. In this cultural city, learning the English language is not taking place meaningfully, efficiently, skillfully, and confidently because of the contents of textbooks which are unfamiliar to the learners. And because of the foreign cultural background of lessons, the learning practices are not helping the learners to acquire English in a transformative form as the classroom learning practices are traditional and stereotypical where only the teacher is active, whereas the learners are passive.

Freire (2000) also states that the teacher is the authority in a traditional classroom, whereas the learners are mere receivers (p.73). To exploit transformative teaching practices, a critical teacher contextualizes the lesson by including the learners' familiar cultural context while teaching the English language because it is customs, not science, that form the human mind and life. (Bruner, 1990). Therefore, the process of contextualization is transformative classroom practice that helps the learners to develop their critical consciousness and through which the learners can ask open-ended questions about their problems by keeping the frame of their familiar culture in mind. After exploring the answers to the questions, they understand and learn to use language meaningfully, efficiently, skillfully, and confidently.

Contextualization as Re-skilling

We can contextualize a lesson in an English language classroom by bringing their cultural backgrounds into the classroom. It re-skills the learners in an English language classroom. While contextualizing by bringing Newari culture into the English classroom, the learners are encouraged to participate in the learning activity. They can also practice English. When the English teacher gets the student's familiar cultural context in the classroom, the students can ask questions about their problems. And they can also practice the activities based on the issues that interfere with language learning in the English classroom. They will develop activities involving the learners' culture to end the problems. They reflect when they practice the language since we encourage the learners to do those activities by contextualizing the issues and bringing their familiarity.

After contextualization, learners become interested and involved in the English classroom, reflecting and practising with their known culture and life experiences. And when they become active in learning activities, they develop their consciousness. After they awaken their consciousness, they understand the circumstance of learning. Following the case, they use their personal experiences to learn the language. While learning English in the classroom, students use the familiar Newari cultural environment they previously learned. Following that, the students will be able to use English both within the classroom and outside of it. Hence, language learning becomes transformative. Freire (2000) opines that learners will never actively participate in a discussion as a process of learning and understanding unless they reveal new information. Thus, we can employ contextualization in the English classroom to learn the language. It challenges traditional classroom practices and allows the teacher and the students to practice the language in the English classroom. Consequently, educators and learners become re-skilled practitioners of English. Moreover, contextualization is re-skilling the students to use the language meaningfullly, naturally, confidently, and skillfully.

Contextualization as Critical Literacy

To teach English joyfully, naturally, confidently, and skillfully, we contextualize the text by including the learners' familiar culture in the classroom. The learners become active, motivated, and encouraged to learn the language when we integrate the learners' culture into the English language classroom. This cultural and contextual integration is social and political, influences people, and leads to social change for better communication (Comber & Simpson, 2001). According to Comber and Simpson, intercommunication occurs in the classroom when the learners can question, explore, or challenge their problems. We should include learners' context or culture to enable the pupils to ask questions and identify or challenge their problems. And this is the classroom practice called critical literacy. According to Freire (1970), essential learning emboldens the questioning power of learners and observes or challenges the power imbalances between teachers and learners through the learning practice. It examines power relationships and facilitates reflection, as well as transformational change and active participation in the classroom. In other words, when we bring the learners' culture into the English language classroom, they feel like getting their lives and experiences into the classroom helps them become self-motivated, encouraged, and active in the English language classroom. And they easily

understand and connect to the English culture of the text with the help of a frame of the learners' own culture. In this line, Norris et al. (2012) say that incorporating learners' familiar topics in the curriculum is significant. The learners can learn English quickly and joyfully if the contents are similar to their situations and experiences. Literacy is a tool for bringing learners' familiar experiences into classrooms. In addition, it can also help students understand problems that are not similar to their own.

Critical learning injects learners to develop their power of questioning for new knowledge. They can analyze and integrate their new learning and their specific cultural background (Kanpol, 1999). According to Kanpol, in the traditional teaching method, the teacher teaches the textbook directly without promoting any classroom learning environment because they think they have to teach the prescribed book only within the time given. They do not care if the students understand or not. Still, in contrast, the teaching and learning method focuses on learner-centred activities that enable them to analyze and integrate ideas for a more profound understanding for meaningful and productive learning, which is possible only after achieving critical literacy. It also engages inactive instructors and learners in an exciting classroom activity that connects their lives to the English text's cultures. Furthermore, it promotes thinking ability in a critical way and group work.

Learners Friendly English Language Classroom as Democratic Classroom

Teachers should create learners-friendly or favorable learning environments in English to make meaningful, skillful, successful, and productive learning. The teacher can include the learners' cultural background to facilitate the learning practice in the English language classroom. According to Holliday (2013), we can learn English in any cultural setting because of its adaptability. Conversely, it suggests that we can regard local culture or the learners' culture as the stumbling block in English language classrooms. However, we can see it as 'the tool of learning a new language for learners (Wutan et al., 2018). According to Vygotsky (1978), every culture behaves as a learning instrument that helps improve a learner's mental function in language learning. This view claims that the learners' familiar culture is the medium to introduce learners to the cultural context of the English language.

Similarly, Suwal (2012) mentions that according to modern philosophy, learners learn better what teachers teach them according to their (learners') own mindset, and their perspective reflects the cultures to which they belong. Therefore, to

create a friendly environment to help the learners understand and learn language skills confidently and naturally. Skillfully, the learners' culture plays a significant role in the English language classroom.

In traditional classroom practices, we consider a teacher as the only accountability (Kumaravadivelu, 2003). A teacher's job is to transfer content information from his mind to the minds of his students (Freire, 1972). Kumaravadivelu and Freire say that the teacher teaches, and the students learn in the traditional or banking method of classroom practices. The learners know nothing, and the educator knows everything, so they are just containers for the teacher to fill. This banking idea of education turns into a depositing act in which the instructor is the depositor, and the pupils are the depositories.

Because of the teachers' act of only depositing, English classrooms lack communication. Authentic language learning cannot happen, especially in the English classroom. So, to create interaction between the teacher and the students, we need a learners'- friendly environment, which we can innovate by bringing the learners' own culture into the classroom. By including the learners' own culture in learning activities in English classrooms, the teachers can pose problems in the classroom. And with the help of the learners' familiar culture, the learners question their problems, and then they understand their difficulties in learning the language. Teachers will make the classroom a democratic place so that students can learn language confidently and skillfully. Teachers and students are involved in dialogical engagement, allowing them to freely discuss in the classroom (Kanpol, 1999). The teacher does not exercise control during dialogical interactions between the educator and learners. Instead, they also learn from the students, and the students also become active in the classroom. Because every learner will be equal, there will be fair, civic participation and cooperative learning in the classroom. They become involved in the teaching and learning activity and develop their critical consciousness, which helps the learners to transform their learning. With this view, Kanpol (1999) also states that critical post-modernism focuses on creating a democratic learning environment in the classroom. Teachers who use critical pedagogy will question the bad parts of individualism and competition to stop hegemony and promote fairness and equality in participation.

Learners' Friendly English Language Classroom as Positive Competition

In traditional disciplinary English language classrooms, the concept of competition in learners focuses only on becoming the star performers of the classroom

by securing the highest grades in the examination. It makes them want to compare themselves to their classmates in each way rather than practising language skills meaningfully and skillfully. And the learners do only the textual exercises with the teacher's help and prepare for the examination by memorizing and repeating. The examination solution book ignores creativity, critical thinking skills, project-based activities, interactive activities, and so on. Similarly, the English language teacher uses the textbook and focuses only on working out textual exercises to prepare the learners for the examination. The teacher ignores whether the learners learn the language and rarely creates a space in the classroom to practice the language. Without practising, we cannot understand and learn English confidently and naturally because 'there is no transformation without action' (Freire, 2000; p.87). Therefore, we may replace the unfamiliar culture in the classroom with the learners' familiar culture to provide a space for language practice in the English classroom. We can ask them to talk about the things they see around their surroundings, food that they eat at their home, places around them that they visit, and the activities people do in their area, etc. They feel comfortable and come to speak anyhow. While practising the English language, they also bring the local terms since it helps them to connect and learn an actual word in the English language. According to Wutun et al. (2018), learning is made more personal by examining cultural information and customs that connect the less well-known cultural background linked with English and its cultures. With familiar culture, the learners become motivated, confident, interested, and engaged as if the classroom is their place to learn and share because the teacher facilitates them to learn by themselves against rote learning, depending on the teacher's lecture and copying the exercises to become the top performer of the classroom.

On the other hand, when we include the cultures of the learner in the English classroom, the learners do not necessarily have to wait for the teachers' answers to complete the text-based exercises. When the learners are interested in the learning activity process, they involve themselves and practice the language skills in the English language with different joyful tasks using their experiences. And when the teacher lets the learners use their experiences in the classroom, they need to reflect upon their experiences. While reproducing, they use their competencies and interact with teachers and peers. Interaction is another way of practising the language that helps learners build their confidence and competency in learning the language. They develop their critical thinking skills, practical skills, collaborative learning, sense of

cooperation, and many others. They enjoy the classroom. They do not compete with each other to become a winner or star performer in the classroom. They focus on practising language skills in the classroom. To support this view, Kanpol (1999) shows how students can compete positively by doing their best in a subject area, not just against someone else.

Unlike the dominant, oppressive mode of the educational model, according to Freire (1970), critical pedagogy can help to liberate individuals from all forms of oppression. We can create a critical dialogue with learners to free them from oppression. While having a crucial conversation, teachers and students learn from one another as friends and co-creators of knowledge. They improve their ability to think critically. And as critical dialogue occurs between learners in collaborative settings, it also supports learners to work in a group developing a sense of cooperation and then co-construct the meaning of reality; that's why critical pedagogy helps maintain positive competition in the classroom.

Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed the classroom practices that the Newari English language teachers introduced in the English language classroom. I divided those classroom practices into different titles and subtitles based on the experiences expressed by the participants. And then, I compared their views to come to the point about using the learners' familiar background in the English language classroom. Finally, I connected them with the theory of critical pedagogy.

CHAPTER V

CREATING LEARNERS FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT THROUGH

CONTEXTUALIZATION

I present the oral interviews I gathered from my participants in this chapter. I interpret the data into different themes: Culturally Responsive Learning Classroom, Autonomous Learning Classroom, Role of the First Language in the English Classroom, and Newari-flavored Learning Practices in the English Classroom.

Culturally Responsive Learning Classroom

I am a Newari English language teacher in Bhaktapur. It is culturally rich and the place of the indigenous Newari community. The majority of learners are from the Newar community. They are not interested in language learning practices in the English classroom. The culture of the English text is unfamiliar to them. To motivate and encourage the Newari-speaking learners to learn the language skillfully, meaningfully, and naturally, we can include learners' cultures, foods, festivals, artifacts, and costumes. When we have *Ihi* (Belbibaha), *Kayatapuja* (Bratabandha), *Yomari, Chatamari, Samayabaji, Aila, Hakupatasi, Pachtale Mandir, Durbar square, Bisket Jatra, Gaijatra* and many others of Bhaktapur, these can create opportunities for learners to practice the English language. They feel comfortable and excited to practice the language using these topics as they are around them (learners) since birth. They can interact and express things quickly because they are well-informed about them. They can practice different grammatical functions and compositional writing such as essays, paragraphs, dialogue, letter-writing, vocabulary practice, etc. First, they practice and develop confidence in using the English language in their culture which can help learners to practice the language easily even in an unfamiliar culture through the association process between two cultures: learners' familiar culture and English culture.

According to Jong and Harper (2005), competent educators of English language learners try to find out more about their learners' cultures and experiences. So that they can plan for and deal with differences between cultures, they look for other opportunities for the learners' behavior in the context of their culture. They avoid forming judgments based on the cultural norms of activity prevalent in their

culture. In this line, the participants of my study also shared similar views. Bijay Manandhar shared his anecdote:

> *English language teachers should relate the context of the text with the learners' familiar context in the classroom. That everyday context should also be usual for them so they can feel quickly and connect to the textual context because of their regular context. In comparison, we cannot include the learners' non-familiar context in English language classrooms that differ from their culture. Non–familiar contexts, like the cultural contexts of Russia and others, may not be helpful for them to understand and learn the English language. For example: - suppose we teach a lesson on the Chhath festival in Bhaktapur. In that case, we can relate it to their experience celebrating Chhath around the Kamalpokhari in Bhaktapur rather than celebrating Chhath in the Terai region. Therefore, for meaningful teaching and learning activities, the contexts should be familiar or around our society, and then only the class would be enjoyable, meaningful, and fruitful.*

According to his anecdote, the Newari-speaking learners get motivated and encouraged to learn the English language if we integrate learners' familiar experiences into the learning material. With everyday experiences, the learners feel easy to connect and help them develop the concept of learning as the experiences around them. For example, if there is a question to write a short paragraph about *Spaghetti*, the learners may need help developing writing. They get confused about what to write as they are not well-informed about it. In this case, we can change the question and make them write about *Yomari* instead. *Yomari* is Newari food. Most learners are from the Newar community, so they become interested and encouraged to write about it as they know how to prepare it, its ingredients, and the proper way to serve it. They can easily practice the English language while writing about *Yomari*. And practising a language means learning a language. So, because of the learners' familiar culture and experiences, they participate in and practice English in the classroom. The usual cultural practices and learners' experiences encourage them to interact with peers. This story aligns with Suwal (2012), who argues that integrating local Newar cultures in English language classrooms makes the Newari learners convenient. They grow more interested in the lessons they get acquainted with. According to him, the learners are encouraged more in learning activities if the contents are compatible with the learners' context.

Similarly, Flores (2017) shared about writing projects such as English Language Development, The Family Writing Project, Families as Writers, etc. Those writing projects were conducted in Arizona, aiming to increase the language proficiency of Spanish-speaking English language learners. In Arizona, they taught the English language using English only in the English language classroom. These writing projects revealed that the participants used their lived experiences and home cultures in their writings. However, second language acquisition literature often emphasizes the culture of the second language itself. The outcomes of these projects indicate that learners' real-world experiences offer a crucial opportunity for language practice in English classrooms. Improving English with unfamiliar cultural practices is not a good experience. As Anzaldua (1999, as cited in Flores, 2017) shares, it feels like he is carving bones when he writes. It feels like he is creating his face, his own heart. The experience of my research participants is not very different. Suman Magaju's anecdote also reveals,

> *While planning the activities as far as possible, it would be better to incorporate familiar backgrounds since the students can quickly participate in language learning classroom practices if the context is normal. And because of everyday context, they learn and understand things easily in no time, but sometimes, we have a lesson to teach which is entirely new for us or outside our familiarity. In such a case, introducing a topic may not be possible to incorporate into students' culture. In such a situation, what we have to do is we have to explain it by relating to similar local contexts and providing its information without changing its culture. We have to teach it in a new presentation.*

Magaju means we can include activities relating to the learners' familiar background in the English classroom. It helps the learners learn the English language quickly. It gives them a chance to practice the language in an English classroom. While practising the language in the familiar culture, they participate actively, ignoring hesitation and fear since they feel interested, connected, and comfortable conceptualizing the topic. In this way, the teacher does not force the learners to learn in the English culture but helps them by relating similar experiences while explaining the English topic. While learning the grammatical functions of the English language, the learners need to practice using the grammatical knowledge of their first language and context. Unless they practice grammatical functions of the English language in

their context, they won't learn how to use those language structures properly and meaningfully in an English context. Ohle (2017) also thinks that we can use local culture to help students learn and interact between teachers and other students to students. Engaging students and helping them enhance their previous experience is something that secondary instructors can do. Learners bring their cultural varieties to the English language classroom, impacting their learning. So, we can include them in the classroom to understand the culture of the text. This support is significant in English classrooms while learning the language. Moreover, English learners are successfully engaged in practising and learning the language in the classroom when we connect the content of the text to their background knowledge (Ramirez, 2017).

According to Moje et al. (2004, as cited in Ramirez, 2017), we can deliberately include the learners' background knowledge in classroom instruction. That deliberate inclusion of their culture in teaching fosters a secure learning environment for learners in English language classrooms. The learners can connect their real-world experiences and academic material and expand on it to gain more in-depth theoretical knowledge. De Jong and Harper (2005) argue that English language learners have a better chance to succeed in learning the English language if they can use their local language and draw on their previous experiences while doing so. Furthermore, they argue that we can teach English in the context of both local and English languages, as well as their cultural context. Using both cultural contexts as fruitful learning situations, the learners can actively engage in language learning practices in English classrooms. It is the one way the students acquire a new language, the secondary English language.

In the anecdote shared above, the two participants agreed that the learners' familiar experiences helped them learn English. It builds strong scaffolding for practising and learning the language, a proper and interactive learning environment. They also claim that we can only understand the English language and culture by understanding the local language and culture. Unless the culture is understood, we cannot learn language meaningfully, skillfully, confidently, and naturally.

Autonomous Learning Classroom

In the traditional English language classroom, students need more opportunities to practice their language skills. Their teachers only ask them to do textual exercises to practice their language skills in the English language classroom. These textual exercises do not help them improve their language skills. Because in

textual exercises, we ask them to do comprehension questions with the help of text, fill in the blanks, do matching activities, and develop compositional writing on a particular topic. When they complete all the activities from the textbook, the teacher reads the correct answers, and the students make corrections if their answers are incorrect. However, while doing compositional writing, they do not enjoy it. They are likely to skip doing those writing activities as they are timid and incapable of expressing things skillfully and naturally in English. Sometimes, they try to compose the writing if the topic is within their lived experiences but still fail to give the compositional writing a proper and meaningful shape. They feel they need help with writing things in the English language. So, to enhance their language competency, they should practice English in the classroom.

The writing topic should be within their surroundings and happening and based on their needs and interests to encourage them to practice the language. When we include the learners' familiar subjects and cravings in the language classroom, they get inspired, active, and intrinsically motivated to learn English in the classroom. They interact with the teacher and start speaking and writing at least a few pages, sharing in the classroom, and cooperating while learning the English language. Jones (2007) also says that if we introduce topics to students that interest them, they are more likely to be motivated. The following anecdote shared by the participant, Shyam Khulimuli, supports this idea:

> When the question is about foreign culture, i.e., unfamiliar to the students in that situation, I contextualize it to bring it within the learning domain of learners. I believe contextualization is a fundamental technique in teaching and learning a language. For example, a question in the textbook asks to write an email about a visit to Washington, D.C. For our students, Washington, D.C., is an unfamiliar place they have never been to, so they can write nothing about it. And in the place of this question, I would ask them to write about a visit to Taumadhi and the things they have seen around it. Then they can register themselves, and we only have to teach them the format of writing an email. So in this way, we can localize the writing content, and because of contextualization and localization, they become active in learning.

According to Khulimuli, learners cannot even write a paragraph in an English language classroom if the teachers ask them to write something they have never experienced. On the other hand, they feel comfortable if we ask them to write

something about their cultural experience. If the learners write an email describing the place around them, they can quickly write about it. Whereas if they need to write about a place that they have heard its name only from different sources and have never been there, they cannot write a single word about it. So, we can include learners' familiar places such as *Taumadhi*, *Siddhapokhari*, *Durbar Square*, *Dattatraya Square*, and so on. It clearly shows that if we teach English in its culture, the learners become passive, uninterested, and worried while learning the language in the classroom. They felt difficulty and hesitation about expressing and describing things in English because they lack accurate information about that topic outside their familiar cultural background.

Similarly, according to Leki (1992) and Mckay (1989) (as cited in Jong &Harper, 2005), English language learners may have difficulty expressing their ideas on particular topics due to cultural restrictions or learners' unfamiliarity with a subject. If we ask them to write about topics from their cultural background, such as foods, local festivals, and so on, they become active, expressive, and motivated in the learning process. They also become ready to practice different activities with their own culture. And they are likely to write at least a few sentences without help from the teacher since they are habitual to those cultural backgrounds. So, if the things are their own, they feel easy, anxiety-free, and comfortable writing and describing the topic. The above-expressed anecdote suggests that to learn English meaningfully, skillfully, and confidently, learners should practice it in their cultural backgrounds, providing sufficient space to practice the language in the English classroom. Because of enough practice, they improve and develop confidence in English. Not only can they use the English language in their own familiar culture, but they can also use it even in the English culture.

Liddicoat (2011) identifies acceptance, adaptation, and integration as the three steps of ethnorelativism. Acceptance is the first step of the process of ethnorelativism. It means that as students get a better awareness of their cultural context, they can learn and respect the existence of other cultural settings. Similarly, adaptation is the second step of ethnorelativism, in which learners can adjust their cultural frame of reference and intentionally embrace the viewpoints of different cultural groups. Integration is the ultimate stage of growth, in which students use their capacity to interpret events within a cultural framework to understand who they are as individuals.

These three stages by Liddicoat (2011) explain the learning stages of the English language. The first stage is acceptance, in which the learners would develop a proper understanding of their cultural context. Unless they are well aware of their cultural context, they will have difficulties in the language learning practices in the English classroom. That's why it is essential to understand their cultural background first, which helps them understand the English cultural contexts based on commonalities and differences between the two cultures. When they develop their understanding of the English cultural contexts, they learn English quickly, comfortably, successfully, and meaningfully. The second stage is known as adaptation. During this stage, the learners connect their cultural frame of reference in which they are habitual and well aware while learning English in the classroom.

The learners are encouraged, motivated, interested, and eager to involve in language learning classroom practices to learn English in the classroom when they use their cultural frame. While participating, they actively interact with the teacher and each other and practice English in the classroom. Because of proper and effective language practice in their cultural contexts, their mental process of understanding the English culture becomes active. Finally, they can adopt the cultural contexts of the English language. In the final stage, integration, they can extend their ability to recognize another cultural context's events, behaviours, and actions through their cultural frame of reference. In this line, another participant of my study, Suman Magaju, also shares a similar anecdote:

> *I would never ask my students to write answers as they like. Instead, I would give them a topic, maybe the name of a place, festival, or food, but their own and already familiar with them. And then, I would teach the body of writing itself with their involvement, and when they become confident and feel like they can write on any other topic, even an unfamiliar one, they try to write. Before registering, they collect information about the subject from Google; the writing will be just a piece of information. It will be just like a painting that a painter paints by looking at the object, whereas when they write on their familiar topic, the writing will be just like it is all about the things we are around it. And, of course, students would enjoy writing based on their experience.*

According to Magaju, learners should first practice English on their familiar topics. They can choose the subjects from their typical background, either the name of

a particular place, food, and festivals such as *Durbar Square*, *Pottery Squa*re, *Dattatraya Square*, *Samaya Baji*, *Thou*, *Dhau*, *Wo*, *Bisket Jatra*, *GaiJatra*, *Yomari Punhi* and so on. Because of their familiarity with the given topic or as they are their own cultural experiences, they become active, interact, and engage in language learning practices in English classrooms. The learners start "talk to learn" (Jong& Harper, 2005; p.102) and discuss each other while learning English in the classroom because the topic for practising the language about their everyday experiences. They keep practising the English language in their familiar cultural contexts unless they can use it even in non-familiar contexts.

In this line, Liddicoat (2011) says that learners must interact with language, culture, and the components of a system to understand how things impact and are affected by one another. He says that learning a language involves figuring out how language and culture integrate into the real life of the student and the English-speaking community's everyday lives. So, without first practising English in familiar cultures, they cannot learn to use it in unfamiliar cultural contexts. For example, suppose they collect information about strange backgrounds, using such as Google, to practice and understand English. In that case, they do not learn new things but make a copy of information from the source, not the student's transformative participation in the learning activity of language (Kramsch & Nolden, 1994 as cited in Liddicoat, 2011). They fail to use the language on their own. They feel hesitant, bored, and humiliated because of having low confidence, inadequate information, and a sense of detachment or being uninformed about a foreign topic. Therefore, practising English language skills in a familiar cultural context helps the learners feel easy, comfortable, and motivated to learn the language skills properly and productively outside their cultural environment. According to Kramsch and Nolden (1994), students learning the English language should engage in "opposing practices." These practices try to move students away from their current linguistic and cultural positions to develop an "intercultural identity" through interaction with another culture. While the learners practice the English language in their cultural environment, they can quickly build their concept of learning. When learning is understood, they can use it in any cultural background. Because when they practice the language through problematizing the learning, they explore their learning difficulties. Once again, they re-practice unless they become clear about the borders between self and others.

Use of the Newari Language in English Language Classroom

Bhaktapur is a city of indigenous Newar communities. It has got its Newari language and unique local culture. And most learners are from the Newari-speaking community in the classrooms of Bhaktapur. They feel difficult, uneasy, uninformed, and unfocused in the English language classroom since the English socio-cultural context is different from the students' socio-cultural environment. Not only is the socio-cultural context different, but the linguistic background is also diverse, and it also matters when we learn English. While learning English, the learners' first language also influences and scaffolds learning the additional language. If one knows their first language well, they can learn English comfortably, productively, and meaningfully. In contrast, if they are unaware of their native language, it interferes with learning English. With this view, the participant of my study, Bijay Manandhar, also states:

> *I always tell my Newari-speaking students that they are one step backwards from me as I know and speak the Newari language well, whereas they don't know how to say it, though it is their mother tongue. They always tell the Nepali language only. If one can't speak even their first language, then let it be other additional languages such as English which is a foreign language for us. While learning a different language, we can't understand a new language easily if we don't know our mother tongue. Let's say if your first language is Nepali, then you have to be good at the Nepali language. For example, ' Gatasaal chiplyo or khasyo' means somebody died last year. The dictionary meaning for 'chiplyo' is slipped, and 'khasyo' is 'fell,' but here in the sentence, it means 'died.' So I think the one who doesn't know the first language well can't learn and understand the additional language easily and quickly; however, they can learn English, but what to do with only one English language? I don't say that English is not necessary. Indeed, it is essential, but today people are forcing their children to focus and learn only English because of the environment, which is crazy for the English language. This environment proves that English is not the language of hundred per cent if we ask our son, 'Babu yetaa uta tyo chhakuliyera syau euta katera ricapi ma hala,' which means dear son, you come here and cut an apple into pieces with a knife and put them in a plate. But the child does not understand it even though it is their mother tongue. And they know when we say the same in*

another way, like 'babu, yahanaautyo knife liyera apple lai cut cut garera
plate ma hala.' It proves that because of the importance of only the English
language, no English, Nepali, or Newari language is good. All three
languages are almost broken down or inoperative. Newari and Nepali
languages are also important, so English is only to understand and is just a
medium of study. And even I, as an English language teacher, would say not to
give more importance to the English language learning the first language first.

The above-stated anecdote expresses that it is imperative to become a master, competent, and skillful in the first language while learning English. The learners can only know the English language meaningfully, skillfully, and confidently if they are aware of the intricacies of their mother tongue. So, we need to use the Newari language in the classroom to help them learn English. In the Newari language, there are multiple meanings of the same word, like *wa* (raindrop), *wa* (paddy), *wa* (come), and *wa* (tooth). As its meaning differs according to our context, English follows similarly.

Then, the learners use their first linguistic experience while learning English. Using their first linguistic experience, they start to discuss, share, and practice the language in the classroom. Therefore, learners should be competent in their first language to learn English. Liddicoat & Scarino (2010) also state - "the past and present always inform our understanding of our particular language and culture, that is, we are at home in our language and culture just as others are, and we are all therefore obliged to recognize the same in others" (p.4). Suppose they are unaware and incompetent in their first language. In that case, they don't understand how the frames of the two languages are the same and how they are different. Because of this, they don't get enough practice in the English language classroom. Without developing meta-awareness in the first language, the learners would be unmotivated, discouraged, and disinterested in practising the language skills in the English language classroom. But suppose they know their first language very well. In that case, they can easily recognize the commonalities and differences between the frames of the two languages, and they can bring familiarity by connecting it with the unknown structure. They practice English in the classroom.

According to Liddicoat and Scarino (2010), in language education, thinking about attitudes and understandings needs to be done in the context of the learner's linguistic and cultural repertoire, including their first and target languages. Values and

experience aren't more apparent through broad exposure to another language and culture. Instead, they become clearer through focused reflection on the culture(s) and language(s) that come from meaningful communication. The anecdote mentioned above also helps us realize that to learn English comfortably. The learners should have mastered their first language, too. With the help of their first language learning experiences, they can engage in language learning practices in English. For example, we will teach 'Giving Direction and asking Direction' in the classroom. While preparing it, we should change foreign places by replacing their familiar places, such as *Suryabinayak*, *Kamalbinayak*, *Bhaktapur Hospital*, *Bhaktapur Buspark*, and so on. When we replace unfamiliar places with local places, they come to participate in language learning practices, and they are encouraged to practice language actively in the classroom. Similarly, another participant, Raju Phelu, expresses the same experience regarding the usefulness of the learners' first language in English language classrooms, and his experience speaks-

> *While giving examples related to the student's linguistic, cultural, or traditional background, they quickly get the meaning because they are familiar with them. They are like them, and familiarity makes them easy and learn soon. Still, the case differs from general examples because they take time to understand while giving unknown examples.*

Exploiting examples while learning English in the classroom is also one of the helpful and practical ways that help the learners understand and learn the language meaningfully and confidently in real-life situations. While giving examples, if they are about the learners' normal linguistic functions, cultural background, and personal experiences, they would soon reflect on them, understand them deeply, and learn things easily and quickly. And they would also become encouraged to try to make the examples in the English language on their own after they get the samples. In this connection, Aguilar (2002) says that we develop communication skills based on how well we can use our first language. So, exploiting examples involving the first language and cultural experiences of English language learners in the classroom helps them understand new things. They connect those examples with the unfamiliar and new ones to ensure their understanding. To make the learners learn the meaning of *Barbeque*, we can say *Chhoila* in Newari, *Kima* is like *Kachhi la*. They understand the meaning of the words in no time.

Moreover, they are motivated to use them in sentences in the classroom. But if the examples are general, the learners take a long time to understand and learn, do not understand things clearly, and remain confused. So, mastery of the learners' first language is essential to learn English naturally. With this view, Liddicoat and Scarino (2010) also state that the experience of another language and the culture connected with that language can help the intercultural language learner improve awareness and understanding of language and culture.

Newari-flavored Learning Practices in English Language Classroom

Bhaktapur is a place of the Newar community. It has got its language and culture. It is rich in art and architectural masterpieces, artistic temples, fabulous festivals and foods, cultural events, and unique music and dance. It is also famous for attractive destinations such as *Bhaktapur Durbar Square*, *Taumadhi Square*, *Nagarkot, Changunarayan* temple, a *five-storied* temple, *fifty-five windows palace*, and so on. As it is a local place of the Newar community, most learners are from Newari- speaking backgrounds. Most of the teachers are also from Newari-speaking backgrounds. When both the teacher and learners share similar linguistic and cultural backgrounds, they feel more accessible and more comfortable engaging in language learning classroom practices in classrooms. They can include their cultural experiences in the learning activity to make successful and meaningful language learning. Because of the familiar cultural background, we attract the learners to the learning process. They are motivated, enthusiastic, active, joyful, and anxiety-free to take part in practising English in the classroom. In a similar line, a Newari-speaking English language teacher, Sharan Khyaju, one of my participants, also shares his experience and that talk-

> *Indeed, I find a difference between teaching Newari-speaking learners and teaching learners from mixed communities. And I find it comfortable to instruct the Newari-speaking students because we are both from Newar backgrounds and share the same culture and language. Because of our similar experiences and culture, it is easier to teach Newari-speaking students. For example, I have a poem, 'Holi,' to teach the eighth graders. While conducting this poem in the classroom, I never teach it directly, simply explaining what the line expresses only, but I always teach it by singing it in tune matched with a Newari folk song on Holi. The melody of that Newari folk song is like Holi ya mela tauchhaya la lyase, and in the same tune, I sing a poem, 'Holi' written*

in English, and the poem goes- Throw the water, color water, Holi festival here. Joyfully children dance and sing. Holi, the colorful festival of spring, friends, relations, all we meet, and so on. And when I sing the poem in this tune, I find the learners enjoy it immensely because they are already familiar with it and are interested in following and repeating it. If they repeat it for few times, then they get it nicely. Instead of relating the poem with this tune, if I associate it with some other songs outside their culture, they may feel difficulty or may not develop their interest in learning it because they are not known to the tune outside their culture. So while teaching, when I relate the lesson with the examples from Newari culture, it is helpful to make my teaching and learning of the English language meaningful, fruitful, and successful. It also helps the students develop the concept of the subject of learning, and when we create the concept of the subject of learning, it would be easier to learn and generalize the thing.

The anecdote mentioned above says that if the teacher and the learners share the same cultural background, they feel more accessible and more comfortable while learning English in the classroom. The teacher can easily understand and recognize the problems of English learners. To address the language learners' issues, the teacher can bring his/her/their background, which offers the learners an invaluable opportunity to engage in learning the English language joyfully and practically. The above-shared example has also talked about one of the classes in which the class attracts learners, immersed and joyfully learning English in the classroom. In that class, the learners practice the text, not how the textbook presents it. They practice and know it by basing and appropriating their familiar reference. The example also expresses that the teacher adopts a Newari folk musical tune which is ever-famous and ever-green in this connection.

Moreover, we can find the use of the typical Newari words while checking the English writing the Newari-speaking learners practised in the classroom. Besides writing, we can also see the practice of the Newari culture-specific terms when we ask them to make examples practising particular grammatical functions in grammar class. So, we can include the learners' everyday culture to help them learn English effectively, comfortably, and naturally. Sabin Khulimuli also says-

There is a flavor of the Newari language when the Newari-speaking students speak and write the English language. For example, they write, 'We eat bhoj'

for 'We have a feast.' I love chhoyala, yomari, kachhila, and bara' instead of writing, 'My favorite foods are roasted spicy meat, steamed dumpling of rice flour with a sweet filling of concentrated sugarcane juice, delicate meat of Newar, etc. However, I think it is a positive influence of the Newari language helping the learners learn English. Thus, we can't avoid it in teaching and learning English.

According to Khulimuli, while practising the language, the learners feel comfortable learning English using the Newari culture-specific words. They practice the language using culture-specific words and understand how to use it effectively in real-life situations. Using Newari words while practising the language is a joyful learning process for Newari-speaking learners. Therefore, we cannot isolate the study of speech and language learning from the learners' everyday culture and context, mainly when learning a foreign language (Romero & Pajaro Manjarres, 2017). In this sense, the Newari language influences learning English because, for Newari-speaking English learners, Newari is a resourceful language that helps them understand how the language functions. With the help of knowledge of the Newari language, the learners learn English.

CHAPTER VI

KEY INSIGHTS

I taught the English language for several years in Bhaktapur. Bhaktapur is a city of the local community of Newars. As a local English language teacher, when I included learners' familiar culture and context during the teaching and learning activity, they became interested, encouraged, motivated, anxiety-free, and active in participating in English language classrooms. Therefore, contextualization is an integral part of learning a language naturally. For formal natural language learning, both the teacher and the students in an English classroom should interact with each other and the teacher. To make the learners active in interaction in the classroom, the context of the lesson should be familiar to them. That's why in an English classroom, contextualization is essential. To learn English meaningfully, effectively, and fruitfully, students must practice it sufficiently. To make the learners practice the language sufficiently, the culture and context of the lesson should be familiar to the learners. Including learners' cultural artifacts makes the contents friendly so they can learn and practice English in the classroom. That's why contextualization is helpful activity while learning English in the classroom.

The meaningful learning activity takes place in some context or background. Without understanding the context of English text, it is impossible to learn the language effectively. So, to understand the context of the text in the English language, the learners should understand their culture first. Following the cultural references of the learners' culture and context, the learners understand the culture of English text and learn the language in the classroom. So that when learning the English language, the learners' knowledge and awareness of their first language and culture scaffold the language learning activities in the English classroom. The learners' familiar experiences help them understand and develop the concept of the unfamiliar culture of English lessons in the classroom. Unless the learners are clear about the new cultural background of the English lesson, they cannot understand and learn English naturally, confidently, and skillfully. Following the familiar experiences, the learners feel easy to connect and develop the concept of English lessons as the experiences are around them as they have seen and experienced by themselves. So, to understand and create a

new cultural image of the lesson, we can include the learners' familiar cultural context in the English language classroom.

The students in an English language classroom become passive, uninterested, unproductive, and incompetent when we teach language within the context of its culture. They feel difficulty, uncomfortable, and worried about expressing and describing things in English because they lack accurate information about the topic outside their familiar cultural background. Even if we force learners to learn the English language in its culture, we can help them by relating their similar experiences while explaining information about the English topic. To learn English meaningfully, skillfully, and confidently, learners should practice the language in their cultural backgrounds, giving them enough chances to practice it in an English classroom. Because of enough language practice, they would improve their confidence in using English in the classroom. They'll be able to use English in their own and the English culture.

With familiar culture, the learners are motivated, interested, engaged, and confident as if the English language classroom is their place to learn and share because the teacher facilitates them to learn by themselves against rote learning, depending on teachers' lecture and copying the exercises to become the top performer of the classroom. In the English language classrooms of Bhaktapur, Newari cultural artifacts are the resourceful source and productive contexts that help the learners for better learning achievement. While the learners practice the language, there should be a topic based on the learners' familiar cultural context in the English classroom. But if the subject is unfamiliar to the learners, they cannot achieve better learning. Therefore, contextualization is essential in English language classrooms. Teaching vocabulary and grammar is also an important part of teaching language. While teaching vocabulary and grammar, the learners understand and learn without hesitatingly if we include the learners' familiar culture. My participants shared that the learners understand and learn the vocabulary in the English language if the teacher associates the complex vocabulary with familiar words of the learners. One of my participants also says-

> It is not only English that we should use while explaining or writing meaning
> for complex vocabulary. If I use only English, very few students will
> understand the lesson. Yet, I would relate to their familiar situations about the

food like chhoyala, Yomari, chhatamari, Dhido, Hakupatasi, Newari lifestyles,

culture, and so on for better understanding.

Similarly, during teaching grammar, the teacher explains how they use grammatical functions in the learners' context. Furthermore, they use the first language while explaining its uses and give examples based on their first language. English is a compulsory subject in government schools in Nepal, whereas it is the primary language of instruction in private schools. However, most of the students have an inferior command of the English language. Due to their unfamiliarity with the text's background and cultural references, they have trouble understanding the lesson. Since language and culture are intertwined, and culture plays a part in language learning, they can't learn English naturally, confidently, meaningfully, and efficiently if they do not understand the cultural background of the English text (Shrestha, 2016). Realizing the relationship between language and culture, the students became more engaged, interested, motivated, and encouraged to practice language learning activities when I included local culture in the English language classrooms. According to my study participants, we can develop a separate curriculum for fruitful and meaningful language learning achievement, including the learners' familiar culture according to their communities. If the textbook is designed consisting of local culture, the learners will get a chance to learn empirically, practically, joyfully, and enthusiastically because they can visit, observe and understand quickly. With this view, one of the participants also shares his experience and says-

I wish this kind of academic program for my classroom. Indeed, it will be

helpful for the students because they can express things if the contexts are

familiar to them, and when they start expressing themselves in the classroom,

it proves that they are learning at least something in the classroom. Because

of this, they stop to feel hesitation in practising language skills. But a separate

curriculum for Bhaktapur only seems quite impossible to introduce because

there are other community students that we have to teach in the class.

This anecdote also expects a separate English language curriculum that should include familiar content for the learners. Because if the contents are based on the learners' familiarity, it will be helpful for them, and they can easily practice the language without any hesitation. They can also express things confidently, enthusiastically, and actively. Moreover, it also says that though the separate

curriculum, including local culture for English, is helpful for the Newari-speaking learners, it is impossible to introduce it because there are students from other communities, too, such as Tamang, Brahmin, Chhetri, Magar, Gurung, Madhesi in the classroom. In such a mixed classroom, we cannot focus on the Newari students only by addressing the Newari cultural context while learning English in the classroom. We must include all the students in learning activities of the language. Besides Newari cultural contexts, we can also include other cultural contexts where the students belong. By incorporating the cultural backgrounds of the Non-Newar students, we can motivate them to participate in English classroom language learning activities. We can encourage them to bring their everyday culture as Newari-speaking students did while learning English in the classroom. Consequently, Non –Newar learners also tend to become active in the language learning activity. In this line, Ram Suwal, my study participant, says:

> *I would encourage them to discuss their culture, which is similar to the Newari culture. I also make them compare Newari culture and their culture to avoid biases in the classroom. And when we discuss the culture of their communities in the classroom, they start to participate in teaching and learning. In this way, I maintain balance in my classroom.*

Thus, it is impractical to integrate only Newari cultural artefacts and practices into the English classrooms where the students are from different cultural communities. We must include non-Newar students in the language learning activity in the classroom as they are also learners. We can consist of them by discussing their respective cultures and Newari cultural contexts because we cannot determine the limit in including cultural contexts while learning a language in the classroom. The important thing is that the cultural contexts should be relevant to the text and helpful for learners to learn English. The appropriate cultural contexts must be from only the Newari community. In the same vein, Bijaya Manandhar, one of my study participants, shares-

> *I would bring context from any background, but that should be related to the lesson. I would also get the contextual events and experiences from literary books such as Jhamak Kumari, Karnali Blues, etc. While reading Jhamak Kumari and Karnali Blues, we can realize the unconditional love the grandmother shows towards Jhamak and the father for his son in the Karnali Blues. Similarly, I also relate the contextual incidents from the newspaper. It*

> *is how I relate contextual backgrounds, events, happenings, and incidents*
> *from different sources.*

According to this narrative, while including the learners' familiar context in the classroom, the context must be only from Newari's background. We can bring the relevant context from sources such as literary books, newspapers, movies, etc. Those cultural backgrounds are also helpful for learners when they learn English in the classroom.

Reflections

Before I joined my Master of Philosophy in English language Education at Kathmandu University, I studied English Literature. As I studied English Language Literature, I found the contents utterly new and fresh in M. Phil in English language Education classrooms at Kathmandu University. Not only were the contents fresh, but they also conducted classes more advanced than previous English Language literature classrooms. Because of the fresh contents and advanced conducting way of classrooms, I was distracted, unmotivated, uninterested, and unfocused in English language Education classrooms which turned me into an unproductive student in all sessions of the courses. I could not improve this situation because of my poor time since I work as an English language teacher at several colleges in Bhaktapur. Even I was not being able to attend regular classes on time. My professors noticed me as I could not become a star performer academically.

I lately submitted assignments and conducted the presentation with improper preparations and preliminary reading. It is how I was a passive learner in M.Phil in English language Education classrooms. However, our professors kept passing encouraging words instead of poor remarks. Though I was a bored and passive learner in the eyes of our professors, I was one of the best teachers for my students in English language classrooms in Bhaktapur. Wrapping a sense of boredom, I completed the first semester of the course.

During the second semester, I slowly developed my interest in the course. I improved myself in the classrooms and became familiar with the academic activities they asked us to fulfil. However, I still needed help and more confidence in my Research Methods. Somehow, I discovered a little confidence and developed a proposal for my dissertation. While fulfilling academic activities, each professor cooperated and encouraged me nicely and kindly. With a series of learning difficulties, I completed my second semester of English language Education.

Comparing my first semester of the M.Phil program, I improved my confidence in classroom performance. The third semester welcomed us, and the whole class enjoyed a lot during the third semester because of improved intimacy and sense of belongingness with the university's teachers, staff, and management. They asked us to develop a dissertation proposal. With the help of my professors, I created a proposal with the research title, 'Culturally Non/responsive English Language Classroom Practices: An Ethnography Inquiry.' And the research committee members accepted it, and I successfully defended my proposal. Because of the urgent situation due to the COVID-19 pandemic, I failed to proceed with my study because there was a lockdown in the country. During the lockdown, each of the services was closed so were schools. My research inquiry was ethnography, so it was impossible to work on it. At the same time, I was also careless and irresponsible about my study. That's why I failed to meet the deadline given by the university.

Following the situation, the university considered us by announcing a chance to Re-registration, and I secured it. Finally, the title of my study changed to 'Culturally Responsive English Language Classroom Practices: A Narrative Inquiry.

REFERENCES

Barfield, S. C., & Uzarski, J. (2009). Integrating indigenous cultures into English language teaching. In *English Teaching Forum* (Vol. 47, No. 1, pp. 2-9).

Beale, J. (2002). Is communicative language teaching a thing of the past? *Babel, 37*(1) 12-16.

Brown, H. D. (2000). *Principles of language learning and teaching* (Vol. 4). Longman.

Byram, M., & K. Risager. (1999). *Language teachers, politics and cultures.* Multilingual Matters.

Byram, M., & Grundy, P. (2002). *Languages for intercultural communication and education, 6: Context and culture in language teaching and learning.* Clevedon, GBR: Multilingual Matters Limited.

Byram, M., & Grundy, P. (2003). *Introduction: Context and culture in language teaching and learning.* Multilingual Matters.

Canagarah, S. (2005). Critical pedagogy in L2 learning and teaching. In. Hinkel(Ed), *Handbook of research in second language teaching and learning* (pp. 931-949). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Campillos, A. B. R. (2010). Dörnyei, Z. (2007). *Research methods in applied linguistics*. Oxford University Press.

Chan, E. Y. M. (2017). Narrative inquiry: A dynamic relationship between culture, language and education. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education (Online)*, *42*(6), 22-34.

Comber, B., & Simpson, A. (2001). *Negotiating critical literacies in classrooms.* Routledge.

Connelly, F. M., & Clandinin, D. J. (1990). Stories of experience and narrative inquiry. *Educational Researcher*, *19*(5), 2-14.

Cohen, L., Manion, L. & Morrison, K. (2011). *Research methods in education* (7[th]ed.). Routledge.

Collentine, J., & Freed, B. F. (2004). Learning context and its effects on second language acquisition: Introduction. *Studies in second language acquisition*, *26*(2), 153-171.

Coperías Aguilar, M. J. (2002). Intercultural communicative competence: A step beyond communicative competence. *ELIA, 3, 85-102*.

Cortazzi, M. (1990). *Cultural and educational expectations in the language.* Cambridge University press.

Crawford-Lange, L. (1981). Redirecting second language curricula: Paulo Freire's contribution. *Foreign Language Annals*, *14*, 257-268.

Creswell, J.W. (1998*). Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions.* Sage Publications.

Creswell, J. W. (2011). *Research design qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (3 ed.). Sage.

Creswell, J. W. (2012). Educational research: planning. *Conducting and Evaluating*, 442- 532.

Crookes, G. (2009). The practicality and relevance of second language critical pedagogy. *Language Teaching 43*(3), 333-348.

Crosse, K. (2007). Introducing English as an additional language to young children: *A Practical handbook*. Paul Chapman Publishing.

Crosse, K. (2007). *Introducing English as an additional language to young children.* Sage Publications.

DeCapua, A., & Wintergerst, A. C. (2016). *Crossing cultures in the language classroom*. University of Michigan Press.

De Jong, E. J., & Harper, C. A. (2005). Preparing mainstream teachers for English-language learners: Is being a good teacher good enough? *Teacher Education Quarterly, 32*(2), 101-124.

Dewey, J. (1963). *How we think: A statement of the relation of reflective thinking to educative process.* D.C. Health.

Doff, A., Jones, C., & Mitchell, K. (1997). meanings into words intermediate student's book*: An integrated course for students of English.* Cambridge University Press.

Dornyei, Z. (2007). *Motivational strategies in language learning*. Cambridge University Press

Ellis, C. (2004). The Ethnographic I: *A methodological novel about autoethnography*. Altamira Press.

Flores, T. T. (2017). Writing the threads of our lives: Stories from a bilingual family writing project. Emerald Publishing Limited.

Freire, P. (1972). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. Penguin Books.

Freire, P. (1985). *The politics of education: Culture, power and liberation.* Greenwood Publishing.

Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y.S. (1989). *Fourth-generation evaluation*. Sage Publications.

Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y.S. (1994). *Competing paradigms in qualitative research*. Sage Publications.

Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1989). *Fourth-generation evaluation*. Sage Publications.

Guba, E. (1994). *Competing paradigm in qualitative research: A handbook of qualitative research.* Sage Publications.

Gurskaya, A. B. (2020). *Intercultural awareness in foreign language teaching*. International University, 110-112.

Gurung, S. (2018). *Looking back my personal journey of learning English: An autoethnographic portrait.* Kathmandu University

Harrison, B. (1990). Culture, literature, and the language classroom. 1990) "Culture and the language classroom" Modern language publications associated with the British council, *TESL Journal,* 45-53.

Holliday, A. (2013). Integrating local culture in English language teaching to enhance learner's emotions to speak English. *International Journal of English Language Teaching, 6*.

Holme, R. (2002). Carrying a baby in the back: Teaching with an awareness of the cultural construction of language. *Language Culture and Curriculum*, *15*(3), 210-223.

Holme, R. (2003). Carrying a baby in the back: Teaching. *Context and Culture in Language Teaching and Learning*, *6*, 18-22.

Jafari, M. S., & Mahadi, T. S. T. (2012). Language and culture. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science, 2*(17), 230.

Jones, L. (2007). *The student-centered classroom.* Cambridge University Press.

Kanpol, B. (1999). *Critical pedagogy: An introduction*. Greenwood Publishing Group.

Kanpol, B. (1999). *Critical pedagogy: teachers lives in a period of crisis: tensions of meaning.* Greenwood Publishing Group, 25-59.

Kanpol, B. (1999). Teachers' lives in a period of crisis: Tensions of meaning. *Critical pedagogy: An Introduction*, 25-59.

Khan, I. A. (2016). Local culture in the foreign language classrooms: An exploratory study of teacher's preparedness in Saudi Arabia. *International Journal of Sciences: Basic and Applied Research*, *25*(1), 99-122.

Kincheloe, J. L. (2007). Critical pedagogy in the twenty-first century. *Critical pedagogy: Where are we now*, 9-42.

Kinchloe, J. L. (2008). *Critical pedagogy primer* (Vol. 1). Peter Lang.

Kramsch, C. (1993). *Context and culture in language teaching*. Oxford University Press.

Kramsch, C. (2013). Culture in foreign language teaching. *Iranian Journal of language teaching research*, *1*(1), 57-78.

Kramsch, C. & Sullivan, P. (1996). Appropriate pedagogy. *ELT Journal, 50*(3), 199-212.

Kramsch, C., & Hua, Z. (2016). Language and culture in ELT. In *The Routledge handbook of English language teaching* (pp. 38-50). Routledge.

Kramsch, C., & Hua, Z. (2016). Language, culture and language teaching. In G. Hall (ED), Routledge handbook of English language teaching (pp.38-50). Routledge.

Kumaravadivelu, B. (2003). *Beyond methods: Macrostrategies for language teaching*. Yale University Press.

Lambert, V., Glacken, M. & McCarron, M. (2011). Employing an ethnographic approach: key characteristics. *Nurse Researcher, 19*(1), 17-24.

Lessard-Clouston, M. (1997). Towards an understanding of culture in L2/FL education. *The Internet TESL Journal*, *3*(5), 12.

Leveridge, A. N. (2004). *The relationship between language and culture and implications for language*. www.tell.net.

Liddicoat, A. J. (2011). *Language teaching and learning from an intercultural perspective*. Routledge.

Liddicoat, A. J., & Scarino, A. (2010). Eliciting the intercultural in foreign language education at school. Testing the Untestable in Language Education, 52-73.

Lincoln, Y. S., LynHam, S. A & Guba. E. G. (2011). Pragmatic controversies, contradictions, and emerging confluences revisited. In N.K. Denzin, & Y.

S.Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research*, (pp. 97-128). Sage Publications.

Mahadi, D. T. S. T., & Jafari, S. M. Ph.D. Student. (2012). Language and Culture. *A Journal on Language and Language Teaching, 26*(1), 255-271.

Mahmoodarabi, M., & Khodabaksh, M. R. (2015). Critical pedagogy: English language teachers' views, experience, and academic degrees. *English Language Teaching* 8(6), p.100.

Margana, M. (2009). Integrating local culture into English teaching and learning process. *Kajian Linguistik dan Sastra*, *21*(2), 123-131.

Maristy, H. S. (2020). Contextualization to enhance students' Writing Ability. In *1st International Conference on Language, Literature, and Arts Education (ICLLAE 2019)* (pp. 196-202). Atlantis Press.

Moghaddas, B. (2013). The effect of contextualization on the Iranian efllearners performance in reading tasks. *International Journal of Educational Science and Research (IJESR), 3*(2), 11-20.

Neff, P., & Rucynski Jr, J. (2013). Tasks for integrating language and culture teaching. *English Teaching Forum 51* (2)12-23.

Norris, K., Lucas, L., & Prudhoe, C. (2012). Examining critical literacy: Preparing preservice teachers to use critical literacy in the early childhood classroom. *Multicultural Education*, *19*(2), 59-62.

Ohle, K. (2017). *Five words: Lessons learned in rural Alaska*. Emerald Publishing Limited.

Orb, A., Eisenhauer, L., & Wynaden, D. (2001). Ethics in qualitative research. *Journal of nursing scholarship*, *33*(1), 93-96.

Phipps, A. M., & Guilherme, M. (Eds.). (2004). *Critical pedagogy: Political approaches to language and intercultural communication*. Multilingual Matters.

Phyak, P. B. (2010). Integrating local culture in the EFL context of Nepal: An ignored agenda. *Education Quaterly*, *1*(1), 1-6.

Pickett, A. (2016). *Theorizing transformative education: An exploration into Marcuse's aesthetic dimension*. New Prairie Press.

Pickett, A. (2016). Theorizing transformative education: An exploration into Marcuse's aesthetic dimension. *Adult Education Research conference,* https://newprairiepress.org/aerc/2016/papers/31

Prastiwi, Y. (2013). Transmitting local cultural knowledge through English as a foreign language (EFL) learning as a means of fostering "Unity in Diversity." *Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, *2*(3), 507.

Ramirez, P. (2017). *Preparing pre-service secondary teachers in Arizona: Using culturally sustaining approaches to learn from diverse secondary English learners*. Emerald Publishing Limited.

Regmi, M. (2011). The role of Local culture and context in English language teaching. Available:*/neltachoutari.wordpress.com/2011/04/01/the-role-of-local-culture-and-context-in-English-language-teaching/*

Richards, K. (2003). *Qualitative inquiry in TESOL*. Macmillan

Riessman, C. K. (2008). *Narrative methods for the human sciences*. Sage.

Royani, M. (2013). The use of local cultural texts for enthusiastic English reading teaching. *The International Journal of Social Sciences, 7*(1), 130-135.

Samuels, A. J. (2018). Exploring culturally responsive pedagogy: Teachers' perspectives on fostering equitable and inclusive classrooms. *Srate Journal*, *27*(1), 22-30.

Shenton, A. K. (2004). Strategies for ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research projects. *Education for Information*, *22*(2), 63-75.

Shor, I. (1996). *When students have power.* The University of Chicago Press.

Shrestha, K. N. (2016). Role of (local) culture in English language teaching. *Journal of NELTA, 21*(1-2), 54-60.

Sijali, K. K. (2016). English language proficiency level of higher secondary level students in Nepal. *Journal of Advanced Academic Research*, *5*(2), 19-51.

Sowden, C. (2007). Culture and the 'good teacher' in the English Language classroom. *ELT Journal, 61*(4), 304-310.

Steven, CH. (2002). *Critical pedagogy on the web: Key terms and concepts related to critical pedagogy and educational theory and practice*. http:// mingo. Info-science. Uiowa.edu/-stevens/cripted/terms.htm

Suwal, K. P. (2012). *Making ELT Culture-friendly in Newar context* [Unpublished dissertation]. Kathmandu University.

Sun, L. (2013). Culture teaching in foreign language teaching. *Theory & Practice in Language Studies*, *3*(2).

Taylor, P. C. & Medina. M. (2011). Educational research paradigms: From positivism to pluralism. *College Research Journal, 1*(1), 1-16.

Taylor, P., & Medina, M. (2011). *Educational research paradigms: From positivism to pluralism*. Sage.

Taylor, P.C. (2014). Contemporary qualitative research: Towards an integrated research perspective. In S.K. Abell, & N. G. Lederman (Eds.), *Handbook on research on science education.* Routledge.

Tudor, L. (1996). *Learner-centeredness as language education.* Cambridge University Press.

Valdes, J. (1990). The inevitability of teaching and learning culture in a foreign language course. *Culture and the Language Classroom*, 20-30.

Vygotsky, L. (1978). *Mind in society*: Harvard University Press.

Wah, Y. L., & Nasri, N. B. M. (2019). A systematic review: The effect of culturally responsive pedagogy on student learning and achievement. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, *9*(5), 588-596.

Wendt, M. (2002). Context, culture and construction: Research implications of theory formation in foreign language methodology. *Language Culture and Curriculum*, *15*(3), 284-297.

Wutun, A. A., Arafah, B., & Yassi, A. H. (2018). Integrating local culture in English language teaching to enhance learners' emotion to speak English. *International Journal of English Language Teaching*, *6*(4), 48-56.

Vogotsky, L. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes Cambridge.* Harvard University Press.

Zeising, M. (2001). Cultural literacy and language fluency. A Paper: Presented in *Celebrations of the 20th Anniversary of the University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce*.

Zhang-Wu, Q. (2017). Culturally and linguistically responsive teaching in practice: A case study of a fourth-grade mainstream classroom teacher. *Journal of Education*, *197*(1), 33-40.

Appendix

(Oral Interviews)

Interviewer: Bharati Prajapati

Interviewee: Bijaya Manandhar (pseudonym)

Date and time: 17th June 2021, 8: 00a.m

Location: Bhadgaun Higher Secondary School, Kamalbinayak, Bhaktapur

Me: Namaste! Sir.

BM: Namaste.

Me: Sir, May I know your name?

BM: I am Bijay Manandhar.

Me: Can you speak the Newari language?

BM: I am Newar myself.

Me: Do you speak the Newari language at home?

BM: Yes, I do. I speak Newari only at home.

> Me: You are a Newari-speaking English language teacher in Bhaktapur, are
> you?

BM: Not strictly English language teacher, umm… yeah, I teach English subjects.

Me: How long have you been teaching English subject in Bhaktapur?

BM: Ummm… I think it's been more than fifteen years.

Me: More than fifteen years, such a long experience you have already collected, and
so by this experience and as you have also known that Bhaktapur is a place of
indigenous Newari people so what is the situation of the classroom in your school in
Bhaktapur? Is it only a classroom of local Newar students or a classroom of mixed
communities?

BM: Yeah, there used to be more Newari-speaking students in the classroom and very
few students from other communities and students from outside the valley comparing
these days' classrooms. These days we are having a mixed classroom of both
students, Newari speaking and the students from different communities, and the
students from outside the valley, too. But for us, all the students, either from the
Newar community or from other communities, we behave and treat them in the same

manner because our job is teaching, and for me, all of the students are the same. I don't teach them about the community to which they belong.

Me: Ok, according to you, I learned that today's classrooms in Bhaktapur are mixed; still, what is the students' majority in the classroom?

BM: Ummm…. Yeah, of course, most students are still from the Newar community as Bhaktapur is a local place of the Newar community, and this is one of the best schools in Bhaktapur. We have seventy percent Newari-speaking students in our classroom.

Me: Who learns quickly, Newari-speaking students or students from other communities?

BM: I think the students from any community learn at the same level; it is not that Newari-speaking students learn quickly and others do not, but one thing I, as an English Subject teacher, have to accept is that the students should use to obtain 24 marks out of 75 total marks and during that situation if some students seemed to be unable to get even 24 spots in the examination and then what I used to do was I used to collect all those weak students, and I would take an extra class for them as preparation, but these days the situation has improved, and it is all because of the craze/whims of English medium instruction. And then, except for Nepali subjects, other subjects such as Science, Social, Economics, and Account almost all the subjects are taught in English medium because students would prefer English medium rather than Nepali medium. And because of the English medium of instruction, the level of students' language skills has been improved today, and the English medium of instruction is helping English teachers, too.

Me: How do you evaluate your students' language competency level?

BM: I use this to evaluate the student's language competency level based on marks they obtain in the examination. Another way to check the students' language competency level is by assigning them writing tasks which are helpful to develop the student language competency level. When I make them write on a particular topic, only a few students can easily write at least two or more pages in no time, whereas some cannot write even two lines. To improve this situation, I collected all those students who failed to write; suppose there are twenty students, and I gathered them in one classroom and then managed an extra class for them in which I did nothing, only made them write on different topics which are familiar for them like sometimes I just asked them to write about their home because they know more about their own homes so that they can write as many things as they can. In this similar teaching fashion, I

continued to make them write for twenty days on different familiar topics. And after twenty days, I found their writing skills improved equally to those already good at writing skills. So, this activity helped me to know that by making them practice language skills regularly, students can improve their language skills.

Me: How do you begin the lesson?

BM: Before I begin the lesson, I would bring backgrounds related to the lesson. For example, if I have a story to teach in the classroom, I will never explain the story directly. Before I explain the story, I talk about different backgrounds and happenings around us related to the story. Then, while explaining the story, I relate all those discussed backgrounds and experiences with the story.

Me: While including contexts with the text, are the contexts around from Bhaktapur only or outside the Bhaktapur, too?

BM: I would bring context from any background, but that should be related to the lesson. I would also bring any contextual events and experiences from the literary books I have gone through. I read novels such as Jhamak Kumari, Karnali Blues, etc. While reading Jhamak Kumari and Karnali Blues, we realize the unconditional love the grandmother shows towards Jhamak and the father for his son in Karnali Blues. Similarly, I also relate the contextual incidents I collected from the newspaper. So, this is how I relate any contextual backgrounds, events, happenings, and incidents that I have collected from different sources because I don't mind learning from any sources.

Me: According to your above-shared experience, it can be understood that for meaningful and fruitful teaching, contextual backgrounds, events, and happenings are essential, and these also help to attract the learners' attention in the classroom. So in the case of your classroom in Bhaktapur, you said most of the students are from the Newar community, and then which contexts would you relate to the text, contexts within the Newar community, or anything else? And in which contexts would the classroom be enjoyable, contexts within the Newar community or from any contexts?

BM: Yeah, while relating the contexts to the text, the contexts should be familiar to the students and as well as it should be habitual for them because if we include the non-familiar contexts or contexts outside the country like Russia, it might not be helpful in teaching and learning activity since the culture outside the country and the culture of students are different. For example, when we have a lesson on the *Chhath* festival to teach in Bhaktapur, and then it is better to relate to the scene celebrating

Chhath around the ponds, just like around the Kamalpokhari in Bhaktapur and Ranipokhari in Kathmandu rather than relating the celebration from Terai region because the learners from Bhaktapur have never seen the scene of people celebrating *Chhath* in Terai region. Therefore, for meaningful teaching and learning activity, the contexts should be familiar or around our society, and then only the class would be enjoyable, meaningful, and fruitful.

Me: Let's talk about the new curriculum that has just been introduced for grade eleven this year. Is it helpful, or is the previous one for the students? What changes are there in the new textbook? And what changes do you expect to see in the new textbook?

BM: I found the new curriculum the same. Yeah, quite changes are there, and the changes are not as expected because the contents in the new textbook are designed only by integrating four language skills that do not sufficiently help the students develop language. Only the changes in new textbooks are a few stories such as The Selfish Giant, God sees the truth, but it waits, and so on for me; these are not new because I had already read them when I was a student and to say the changes in the new textbook are some global burning issues just like Corona included and not much than that. So, it is not much improved than our previous textbook for grade eleven. I expected the connection between the contents between grades ten and eleven, but there is no connection at all between the contents of grades ten and eleven. In grade ten, there are seventy-five total marks; out of seventy-five marks, the pass mark is only twenty-four, so whoever, even the poor learners, can easily pass the examination because four reading passages are asked. Even passages are enough to score pass marks. So, in such a case, when students are upgraded to grade eleven, they might feel difficulty in English because they find no connection between the contents of grades ten and eleven. Most students find the contents in grade eleven entirely new and challenging because even basic language knowledge is sufficient to pass the examination in grade ten. Those students with poor language skills might feel the textbook of grade eleven is challenging, whereas, for the bright ones, it might be like a snap of the fingers. However, as a teacher, having the new curriculum in grade eleven feels good because the courses should be changed in ten or five years because it helps us keep pace with the changeable world.

Me: At present, as we know that in Bhaktapur, too, most of the schools have already started to run classes in English because of the enthusiastic interest of parents and students. And because of the English medium of instruction, students can score good

marks in English subjects in the examination. Still, when they are asked to perform the language skills in the English language in real-life situations and fail to perform so, we can see the gap between the marks and performance. So, to improve this kind of situation in students, can we develop a separate curriculum for English subjects for Bhaktapur only by including local cultures of Bhaktapur because you agreed that teaching and learning language takes place meaningfully and efficiently in familiar culture and context? Will it be helpful for the students to fulfil the gap between the obtained marks in the examination and the performance of language skills in a real-life situation?

BM: I wish and would love this kind of academic program for my classroom, and indeed, it is going to be helpful for the student because they will be able to express things if the contexts are familiar to them and when they start expressing themselves in the classroom, it proves that they are learning at least something in the classroom and because of this they stop to feel hesitation in practising language skills. But a separate curriculum for Bhaktapur only seems quite impossible to introduce because there are other community students that we have to teach in the class.

Me: I am not arguing for other subjects. Instead, I am concerned about the English subject since it is believed that the relationship between language and culture is inseparable. While teaching language it is impossible to teach language without culture. Suppose we teach the English language by including local contexts and cultures familiar to the students. In that case, they will learn English naturally because, with a familiar culture, they can practice it sufficiently. In this way, they can develop their language skills. Because of the sufficient practice of language, they can be able to communicate internationally. Do you agree with this opinion?

BM: Yeah, I agree, too. As I already mentioned above, the practice of language regularly also significantly improves the student's language skills in the English language. When given familiar topics, they are only interested in practising the language. Thus, if the textbook is designed separately for Bhaktapur, including local context and culture, they can get sufficient areas to practice the language. With enough practice, students' language skills develop with natural fluency, and they can be international speakers.

Me: Thank you, sir. It was a pleasure meeting you. I appreciate your time today.

BM: You are most welcome. And thanks to you, too, for allowing me to participate in your interview.

2nd Round Interview

Date and Time: 11th November

Interviewer: It is believed that watching movies and cartoons and listening to music in the English language, and reading novels are also the best learning sources of language. Do you agree with it?

Interviewee: Yes, I do. Because watching movies and reading novels in the English language help the readers be familiar with the cultural and social contexts as both the movies and books, whatever they are, are based on a particular culture. They are the best sources to learn about the culture and the context, and teaching and learning, understanding culture and context, is essential to teaching and learning the language.

Interviewer: Who understands and learns the language quickly, boys or girls?

Interviewee: Comparatively, boys did understand and learn the language quickly even though they were not serious and attentive in the classroom. I think it is because of their familiarity with the context they have by watching movies and listening to music in English. Still, nowadays, girls and boys are equal in learning a second language, and girls have also started to watch movies and listen to music in the English language. And they read books of different genres in the English language, such as stories, novels, and so on.

Interviewer: Can the students develop writing in their way in the English language?

Interviewee: Yeah, they can write, and I think it is because in schools of today, all the subjects except Nepali are taught in the English language, and it is also found that most of the students write what they have memorized but if they are asked to write in their way and then would feel difficulty to develop proper writing naturally.

Interviewer: How do you motivate and help your students in developing writing?

Interviewee: One can't develop writing easily even if one knows the language well. There should be content to develop writing; we can't develop writing. For example, if we ask an American to write about *Gai Jatra* in their language, English because they know it. Still, they cannot write a single sentence because they know nothing about the *Gai Jatra*. For them, *Gaijatra* can be a festival only or the name of a place or others. So before we write, we must be familiar with and clear about the content, and then only they can write something on the topic. In this same manner, if our students are also asked to develop writing as a skill, firstly, we have to make them practice familiar content or context to improve their writing as a skill.

Interviewer: Is there Newari influence or flavour when the Newari-speaking students use the English language?

Interviewee: Yes, there is the Newari influence to some extent, as they are from the Newari background. When they write answers without any help or reference, we can see the influence of their first language in that writing. They write by translating word by word, so sometimes, writing may give unclear meanings, and we need clarification. They barely try to follow Standard English, even at the level of sentence making, and if we go to see sentence by sentence, we will only find the use of the basic structure of sentences. For example, most students write, 'I eat rice.', for 'I have my food.'

Similarly, there are sentences just like 'I cook rice.', 'I carry water. , 'I drink tea.' They barely write, 'I prepare food.' , 'I fetch water. However, some students are also aware of the standard use of the English language because of their reading habit of different books in the English language, and by this habit also, they are found to have improved their English language.

Interviewer: Do you think a relationship exists between the student's first and second language?

Interviewee: Well, I think one should know their first language well to learn the second language. They should know how to use their first language in different situations, and without proper knowledge of the first language, one cannot learn another additional language. That's why I first talk about their respective first language, Newari or Nepali, as my classroom is a mix of both language-speaking students. However, there is the majority of Newari-speaking students. As in the English language, both Newari and Nepali languages also follow the proper rules and structures. In English, a word carries multiple meanings, which depend on the context or situation where it is used. For example: Let's take the verb 'throw,' and the meaning of throw will be different according to its uses in a different context. If we say, 'I throw garbage' here, the meaning of 'throw' differs from another sentence, 'Would you throw a party?'

Similarly, in the case of the 'have' verb, its uses are such as in the sentences like, 'I have many chocolates,' 'I have finished my food,' and 'Have a seat' 'Have food' and in these three sentences, the meaning of 'have' is different in each. And the case is similar in both Newari and Nepali languages. For example, Let's take the word 'wa,' and when we use it as a verb, it gives the meaning as 'come,' and when we say 'wa

syata', then the meaning will be different, and the meanings will be like 'tooth pained,' and one another use of 'wa' is 'wa wola' which means, 'it rained.' Likewise, in the Nepali language also, uses of language are similar as 'Ram gata warsa chiplyo', which means 'Ram died last year, and another use of 'chiplyo' in 'Ram hiloma chiplyo' and the meaning here in this sentence is 'Ram slipped in muddy.' Therefore, context is very important in learning the English language, and without having good knowledge of the first language, one may not be able to learn an additional language.

Interviewer: You believe one should be good at their first language before learning other additional languages. And the case is similar in English language learning also. If so, before we teach and learn the English language, we first have to make them able to use their first language correctly. Is it true?

Interviewee: True. I always tell my Newari-speaking students that they are one step backwards from me as I know and speak the Newari language well, whereas they don't know how to speak the Newari language though it is their mother tongue. They always speak the Nepali language only. If one can't speak even their first language, then let it be other additional languages such as English which is a foreign language for us. While learning a different language, you can't learn and use other languages easily if you don't know your mother tongue.

Let's say if your first language is Nepali, then you have to be good at the Nepali language. For example, 'Gata saal chiplyo or kasyo' means somebody died last year. The dictionary meaning for 'chiplyo' is slipped, and 'khasyo' is 'fell,' but here in the sentence, it means 'died.' So I think the one who doesn't know the Nepali language well can't learn and understand the language easily and quickly; however, they can learn English, but what to do with only one English language? I don't mean to say the English language is not important; of course, it is essential, but if we see today's children who are forced to focus and learn just the English language because of the environment which is crazy for English language and this environment proves that the English language is not the language of hundred percent as if we ask our son, '*Babu yeta aaoo ta, tyo chaku liyer syau yeuta katera ricaapee ma haala'*, which means dear son you come here and cut an apple into pieces with a knife and put them in a plate. But the child does not understand it even though it is their mother tongue. And they understand when we say the same in another way, like 'babu, yahaa aau tyo knife liyera apple laai cut cut garera plate ma hala'. It proves that because of the importance of only the English language, our Nepali and Newari languages are almost broken

down or inoperative. Newari and Nepali languages are also important, so the English language is only for understanding and a medium of study. And even I, as an English language teacher, would say not to give more importance to the English language; learn the first language first.

Interviewer: How do you introduce the problematic vocabulary of the English language in your classroom?

Interviewee: First, I write meaning in the English language, and if it doesn't help them, and then I write meaning in Nepali language and again in the Nepali language also, they don't get once again, I would explain in the way they understand and in most of the situations I use Newari language, too. While teaching slang or contractions, we can talk about some examples from the Nepali language, like for 'kahan jana lageko'; in short, we would say 'ka janla.' When we say 'ka janla, ka janla,' they get confused. Similarly, we can talk about similar examples from the Newari language, too, like 'gana wane tau,' which is a short form of gana wane tanagu', which means kahan jana lageko in Nepali. When we speak quickly, we would say 'gana wane tau'; however, it is also a part of the language. And if we don't use such language in real-life situations, they will disappear in the future. Therefore, we need to use this type of language also in practice only then will it remain for a long.

Interviewer: Will you use the English language only while explaining or introducing the meaning of the difficult English language vocabulary?

Interviewee: Using the English language only is just for maintaining the standard of the teacher of the English language, but understanding is the most important in teaching and learning activity, so for better understanding for the students, it would be better to use the students' familiar language because when we use it, I have found that they feel comfortable and understand quickly. However, I use three languages, English, Nepali, and Newari, while explaining the meaning of the difficult word so that everybody would understand easily in the classroom.

Interviewer: As you shared above, the Bhaktapur classroom has most Newari-speaking students. For them, English is the third language, and because of different cultures, they may need help understanding clearly even if you explain or write things in Nepali. In this situation, what do you do for their easy understanding?

Interviewee: For the Newari-speaking students, most often, I use Newari language and culture to make them learn and understand clearly, and when I use Newari

language and culture to make them learn and understand clearly and explain things in Newari language, they get things quickly and clearly. I never use English to the English language because they do not understand it, and if we want to make them learn and understand, we must use their familiar language and culture in the classroom. While teaching grammar, I always use Nepali because we need to understand the context. Without understanding the context, grammar can't be learned; once it is understood, it will remain forever.

Interviewer: Thank you so much for your participation, sir.

Interviewee: You are most welcome.