

INFLUENCE OF LEARNING ECOLOGY ON STUDENTS' ENGLISH  
LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT: A NARRATIVE INQUIRY

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## AN ABSTRACT

of the dissertation of *Lok Man Rijal* for the degree of *Master of Philosophy in English Language Education* presented on *11 February 2025*, entitled *Influence of Learning Ecology on Students' English Language Development: A Narrative Inquiry*.

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This dissertation explores learning ecology and its influence on students' classroom performance. It further explores the different dimensions of learning ecology and their effects on the performance of learners. School and classroom environments affect students' learning and challenge the school leaders to create a conducive learning environment there. Similarly, home environments also influence students' learning equally. Parents' educational awareness and effective involvement in creating an appropriate learning environment also impact a child's learning achievement.

I applied Bronfenbrenner's Ecological System Theory to understand how it shapes students' learning outcomes, particularly his concept of micro, meso and macro-level ecological factors. I studied how the participants interacted in the inner-school environmental components and outside environmental components and how their learning achievement was affected. With meaningful interactions and field experiences, I explored the different learning ecological dimensions. School-based and home-based learning dimensions have a greater influence on a child's classroom performance. School teachers, authorities, and parents must equally support raising a student's achievement level. Hence, Bronfenbrenner's theory is relevant to this dissertation. I collected information about effective learning ecology from the stories of teacher educators and students' classroom reflections. The information was codified and categorized, and themes were created.

This study explores the influence of learning ecology on students' English language development, focusing on the lived experiences of students and teachers in the Nepali educational context. Through a narrative inquiry approach, the study captures the challenges faced by low-performing students. It highlights the impact of teaching methodologies, classroom practices, family environments, and societal norms on their academic progress. The findings reveal that creating an inclusive and supportive learning ecology rooted in mutual respect, cultural sensitivity, and tailored pedagogies can significantly enhance students' engagement and performance in English language classrooms. This research underscores the need for a paradigm shift in addressing low achievers, advocating for teacher adaptability and parental involvement to foster equitable educational opportunities.

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11 February 2025

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## शोध सार

अंग्रेजीभाषाशिक्षामादर्शनशास्त्रकोस्नातकोत्तरडिग्रीकोलागि लोकमान रिजालकोशोध प्रबन्धको शिर्षक  
"विद्यार्थीहरूको अंग्रेजी भाषा विकासमा सिकाई परिवेशको प्रभाव : एक संकथन "  
२९माघ२०८१माप्रस्तुतगरिएकोथियो।

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यस शोध पत्रले सिकाई परिवेश र विद्यार्थीहरूको कक्षाकोठाको प्रदर्शनमा यसको प्रभावको अन्वेषण गर्दछ। यसले सिक्ने परिवेशका विभिन्न आयामहरू र विद्यार्थीहरूको कक्षागतप्रस्तुतिमा तिनीहरूको प्रभावहरूको थप अन्वेषण गर्दछ। विद्यालय र कक्षाकोठाको वातावरणले विद्यार्थीहरूको सिकाइलाई प्रभाव पार्छ र विद्यालय नेतृत्वहरूलाई त्यहाँ अनुकूल सिकाइ वातावरण सिर्जना गर्न चुनौती दिन्छ। त्यसैगरी घरको वातावरणले पनि विद्यार्थीको सिकाइलाई समान रूपमा प्रभाव पार्छ। अभिभावकको शैक्षिक चेतना र उपयुक्त सिकाइ वातावरण सिर्जना गर्न प्रभावकारी संलग्नताले पनि बालबालिकाको सिकाइ उपलब्धिलाई प्रभाव पार्दछ।

मैले ब्रोनफेनब्रेनरको परिवेशिक प्रणाली सिद्धान्तलाई विद्यार्थीहरूको सिकाई नतिजाहरूलाई कसरी आकार दिन्छ, विशेष गरी माइक्रो, मेसो र म्याक्रो-स्तर पारिस्थितिककारकहरूको अवधारणालाई बुझ्नको लागि लागू गरें। मैले योशोधपत्रका सहभागीहरूले आन्तरिक-विद्यालय वातावरणीय तत्वहरू र बाहिरी वातावरणीय तत्वहरूसँग कसरी अन्तरक्रिया गरे र उनीहरूको सिकाइ उपलब्धि कसरी प्रभावित भयो भन्ने कुराको अध्ययन गरे। शोधपत्र सहभागीहरूसँगको अर्थपूर्ण अन्तरक्रिया र मेरो आफ्नो शिक्षा क्षेत्रको अनुभवहरूको आधारमा मैले सिकाईपरिवेशका विभिन्न आयामहरूको अन्वेषण गरें। विद्यालय-आधारित र घर-आधारित सिकाई आयामहरूले बच्चाको कक्षाकोठाको कार्यसम्पादनमा ठूलो प्रभाव पार्छ। विद्यालयका शिक्षकहरू, अधिकारीहरू र अभिभावकहरूले विद्यार्थीको उपलब्धि स्तर बढाउन समान रूपमा सहयोग गर्नुपर्छ। तसर्थ, ब्रोनफेनब्रेनरको सिद्धान्त यस शोधपत्र सँग सान्दर्भिक छ। मैले शोधपत्रकालागि प्रभावकारी शिक्षणसिकाईका बारेमा शिक्षकहरूका अनुभवहरू र विद्यार्थीहरूको कक्षाकोठाको भोगाइका कथाहरूलाई तथ्यांकको रूपमा सङ्कलन गरें। जम्मा गरिएका तथ्यांकहरूलाई विषय वस्तुको भाव तथानिचोडको आधारमा वर्गीकृत गरियो।

यस अध्ययनले विद्यार्थीहरूको अंग्रेजी भाषाको विकासमा सिकाई परिवेशको प्रभावलाई विद्यार्थी र शिक्षकहरूको जीवित अनुभवहरूमा केन्द्रित हुँदै नेपाली शैक्षिक सन्दर्भमा अन्वेषण गरेको छ। यो अध्ययनले

तुलनात्मकरूपलेकक्षागतप्रस्तुति कमगर्नेविद्यार्थीहरुकोचुनौतीहरुलाईकथासोधपुछ विधिको माध्यमबाट पत्ता लगाउदछ । यस अध्ययनले विद्यार्थीहरुको शैक्षिक उन्नतिमा शिक्षण विधिहरु, कक्षाकोठा अभ्यासहरु, पारिवारिक वातावरण र सामाजिक मूल्यमान्यताहरुको प्रभावलाई विशेषजोडगर्दछ। एसशोधपत्रलेपत्ता लगाएका कुराहरुलेकेवताउछभने पारस्परिक सम्मान, सांस्कृतिक संवेदनशीलता, र अनुकूल अध्यापनविधिमा आधारित समावेशी र सहयोगी सिकाइ वातावरणको सिर्जनाले अंग्रेजी भाषा कक्षाकोठाहरुमा विद्यार्थीहरुको संलग्नता र प्रदर्शनलाई उल्लेखनीय रूपमा वृद्धि गर्दछ। यस अध्ययनले कम उपलब्धि हासिल गर्ने विद्यार्थीहरुलाई सम्बोधन गर्न, शिक्षकको अनुकूलता र समतामूलक शैक्षिक अवसरहरुको पालनपोषण गर्न अभिभावकको संलग्नताको वकालत गर्ने सन्दर्भमा उदाहरणीय परिवर्तनको आवश्यकतालाई जोड दिन्छ।

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२९ माघ २०८१

लोकमान रिजाल  
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This dissertation entitled *Influence of Learning Ecology on Students' English Language Development: A Narrative Inquiry*, presented by Lok Man Rijal on the 11 February 2025.

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## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is my original work, and it has not been submitted for candidature of any other degree at any other university.

.....

11 February 2025

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## DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my honourable parents,  
Beloved wife and my loving children,  
All my language teachers and teacher educators  
From the bottom of my heart.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

ALCP	Assessment of Learner-Centered Practice
BS	Bikram Sambhat
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ELT	English Language Teaching
HLE	Home Literacy Environment
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
SES	Socio Economic Status
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USA	United States of America
WFP	World Food Program

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter begins with my reflection on my research issue, where I briefly highlight why and how the issue of learners' ecology and its challenges in English classes led me to carry out this research. Then, I present the rationale of the study, followed by the problem statement. Thereafter, I set the purpose, and based on that, I set research questions. I explain the delimitations of my study before I conclude this chapter with the structure of the study.

#### **My Journey as an English Teacher**

I have taught English for more than two decades. I have experienced teaching in rural and urban settings from Salyan to Dang in the Midwest of Nepal. I collected my teaching experiences from rural and urban settings of Salyan to Dang. Being an English teacher, I have always faced the challenge of making English language learning effective in the classroom. Sometimes, we teachers declared the school as an English zone, and sometimes, we kept the penalizing system for Nepali-speaking students, and sometimes, we tried by showing them English videos. I even taught English Language structures. In spite of the tremendous efforts, I could not get the expected performance of the students in the English classrooms. I tried a lot by changing my pedagogies and motivating the teachers to be more dedicated and hardworking. But that also could not satisfy me.

Some students were found to be good and progressing a lot in their English classrooms. Their hand writing was good; the language was also clear and creative. They could easily express their thoughts and feelings in English. Some students could express their feelings and thoughts in English but spoke some words in Nepali, which was not so fluent. To my surprise, some students could not make any progress. In spite of my long practice and extra classes with them, their level could not be changed. Their language was so low that I could not make any sense of that. Their communication was also ineffective. They were reluctant to study. They were performing poorly in almost all subjects. It was a big challenge for all of the teachers, including me. I also accepted that some students innately carry learning deficits that cannot be changed.



However, my long teaching experiences proved insufficient when I came across an incident at my school a few years ago.

### **An Incident That Broke My Assumption and Led to This Research**

It took me time to realize that learning is cultural and learning achievement is possible according to the learning ecology of a learner. Young (2014) studies the areas of culture, learning, and specific disciplines of learning and shows the value of understanding one's culture in understanding learners to develop effective instructional strategies. Before the incident, I did not feel that not all learners can achieve the same achievement because their learning ecology is not the same. My following vignette also clarifies this.

*It was 2075 when Gorkha Group Dang launched a new school, and I was assigned as the principal. I was involved in teaching for a long time, and I was successful in every step of my career. I understood my profession well and accepted it. As I had few students in school and I could give enough time to students. I observed there that all students were not able to give equal performance. Most of the students were progressing a lot. But there were three students, Kamal, Shankar and Satakshi (Pseudo Names), who challenged me. They studied in grade eight. In spite of my and my teacher's constant efforts and dedication, they could not perform well in the classrooms. Their hand writing was not comparatively nice. Their language was also very unclear. Communication was also limited. They took tuition classes for a long time, but that did not change their level.*

*I also took their English class tuitions and tried to upgrade their level, but all was in vain.*

*We labeled them learning disability students and did not worry much about them. In the month of Poush, I ran a school hostel for low-performing students, and Kamal, Shankar and Satakshi also came there. But I was startled in the first month. I found their level upgraded. There, I felt I was not doing justice to them. I saw some unexpected changes in them after they were kept in the school hostel and they were given some personal care and love. My attitude towards them, which was that they were arrogant and did not want to change themselves, turned out to be wrong. I saw them working hard in their studies and behaving very politely with teachers, hostel staff and friends. Their interest towards study and participation in classroom activities were found to*

*be very positive. Teachers' care, available reading materials, extra assistance in study from teachers, reading cultures of their peers, teachers' regular counseling, etc. motivated them to study, and their achievement level gradually improved.*

*When I took the responses from teachers about those students, they also expressed their happiness to see changes in them. When I saw their improvement in study and grades, I was interested in speaking with them. I found that they were not fairly treated in classrooms and homes. They had the feeling that everybody ignored and hated them, and it had killed their interest in their studies. But the changing behaviors towards them in hostels and the school staff's care and love had aroused the hope in them that the teachers were not as bad as they expected and they loved them. They were treated as humans in hostels, and the reading routines in the hostel helped them to study well. There, I felt that students were being treated with a preoccupied mind that they could never be changed. I never tried to understand their situation and interest. I realized that I was not working to create a good learning environment for them. I always beat them with a stick at their mistakes. I realized that the problem was actually with my teaching pedagogy and the environment we were giving them, not with the low-performing students. I felt that if adequate reading ecology is created for all students, as Bronfenbrenner's Learning Ecology Theory has mentioned, all students can do better in English language classrooms.*

*Finally, I thought my realization and great learning from the school hostel could also be a meaningful insight to others. I strongly believe that if we avoid our preoccupied mind on the low marks securing students in classrooms and provide them with adequate learning ecology, taking them as fresh learners, it supports us to bring desired changes in our classrooms.*

### **My Research Issue**

This study explores the challenges faced by students in classrooms when learning English. In English classrooms, some students are found not to be so good in their performance. Teachers' efforts also do not seem to move their level. Such students are labeled as low, shy and careless students and treated as handicapped children; they are poorly behaved even by their parents and society. Nobody seems to be concerned about their learning ecology. As a result, these types of students feel

neglected and unwanted and finally engage themselves in criminal activities. No one is bothered to understand their psychology, environment and the situations they are undergoing. This partiality kills their interest in their studies and confidence and makes them feel good for nothing. Such students are not self-motivated either.

Freire (2020) critiques traditional education systems that rely heavily on content transmission rather than fostering purposeful learning. In his seminal work, "Pedagogy of the Oppressed," Freire emphasizes the need for participatory and communicative teaching practices that cater to students' lived realities. Such an approach is essential for addressing the specific needs of low-performing students and encouraging their active engagement in learning.

Similarly, Bronfenbrenner's Learning Ecology Theory underscores the importance of a holistic approach to education. This theory posits that a student's learning is influenced by multiple interconnected systems, including family, school, and community environments (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The absence of synergy among these systems can hinder students' academic progress, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Research by Peterson and Zill (1986) highlights how parental conflicts and adverse family environments significantly affect children's mental health and academic performance. They argue that children from disrupted families often struggle with self-esteem and motivation, factors critical for success in English language classrooms. Addressing these family dynamics is vital for creating a supportive learning ecology and developing their English language.

Additionally, Rueckert (2019) identifies barriers such as poverty, language constraints, and reliance on child labour as critical impediments to education in developing countries. These barriers exacerbate the challenges faced by low achievers, necessitating targeted interventions to bridge the gap in educational outcomes.

Palardy (2015) further explores the role of classroom inequalities in perpetuating achievement gaps. His findings suggest that access to qualified and effective teachers and equitable classroom practices can significantly improve outcomes for marginalized students. Integrating inclusive teaching methods can help overcome systemic biases and foster a sense of belonging among low achievers.

These foundational insights provide a backdrop for this study, emphasizing the need for innovative pedagogical strategies and collaborative efforts between

educators, families, and policymakers to address the multifaceted challenges in English classrooms. This research aims to contribute to the broader discourse on equitable education and effective learning ecologies by understanding and addressing these issues.

### **Rationale of the Study**

From my experience as an English language teacher, I claim that there is no learning if students are not self-motivated and do not get proper learning ecology in English classrooms. The learning outcomes in the classrooms can be raised when students are equally treated with love and care in classrooms and parents show their supportive roles at home. Critiquing the conventional educational system, Freire (2020) appeals to encourage teaching by cultivating the habit of purposeful learning and communication rather than transmitting content. This research can offer insights and learning opportunities to those seeking to change their beliefs and teaching practices to support English language learning for purposeful and productive learning.

The concept of learning ecology is critical for English language learners, teachers, and researchers because it integrates multiple environmental, social, and psychological factors that influence learning. Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, which underpins this research, emphasizes that learning is not confined to classrooms but extends to the learners' interactions within their immediate and broader environments. For English language learners, these interactions often include family influences, classroom dynamics, societal norms, and access to learning resources. Teachers play a pivotal role in creating a conducive learning ecology by adapting pedagogical strategies that address students' diverse needs, particularly those of low-performing students. Researchers are equally interested in this area because understanding these dynamics offers opportunities to develop inclusive teaching methodologies and equitable policies that can significantly enhance learning outcomes.

Prominent educational policies and research have increasingly highlighted the role of learning ecology in achieving better learning outcomes. For instance, Piaget's educational theory underscores the importance of environmental adaptation in cognitive development, suggesting that classroom practices should be aligned with students' unique ecological contexts. Similarly, Khatri et al. (2021) ecological perspective on language teaching in Nepal emphasizes that learning environments must cater to diverse socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. Additionally, as

reviewed by Rana, et al. (2019), Nepal's education policies recognize the potential of integrating ICT and innovative methodologies to foster effective learning ecologies. These studies highlight the need for educational frameworks that consider external factors such as family support, community resources, and cultural expectations, all of which directly impact English language learning.

This research seeks to address gaps in the existing literature by focusing on the narratives of low-performing English language learners and the ecological factors influencing their academic struggles. By applying Bronfenbrenner's framework, this study demonstrates how tailored learning ecologies can transform classroom engagement and outcomes. Highlights of the research include its exploration of teacher adaptability, family involvement, and cultural sensitivity as critical elements in creating supportive learning environments. This narrative inquiry is particularly relevant for policymakers, educators, and researchers aiming to develop strategies that promote equity and inclusion in English language education. By emphasizing the lived experiences of learners and educators, the study offers actionable insights into improving pedagogical practices and fostering environments where all students, regardless of their initial performance levels, can thrive.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The general trend seen among the public and the students falling under the category of low achievers is their [parents'] misunderstanding and teachers' way of defining the level of students without identifying their circumstances. It took me two decades to avoid my misconceptions that some students in each and every class are innately inactive and cannot perform well. In previous years, I did the same. I, being a teacher, just neglected them in the class with the perception that they were academically disabled and I could do nothing to improve them. I hardly asked them, and I never expected any answer from them if asked. Similarly, as an administrator, I frequently called meetings on how to improve students' reading levels and ran various workshops on it, too. However, I always agreed with my teachers that there were few low achievers in each class, and they were found to be low-performing in their studies from their early classes, and their study level could not be raised. We never targeted any program for such students. It was because we heard or read somewhere that students are low in classroom performance by nature, economic factors, genetic heredity, poor diet, etc. (Hoskyn & Swanson, 2019). Parents' investment and their genetic characteristics matter a lot in a child's performance in the classroom and

their achievement in adulthood. They say parents' incapability to invest in children locks their future before they set their tender feet in the classroom. In the same way, Rueckert (2019) also says, "Yet in many developing countries, children's access to education can be limited by numerous factors. Language barriers, gender roles, and reliance on child labor can all stall progress to provide quality education" (p.69). These factors have been blamed as the major factors behind the low performance of children for centuries. Jensen (2009), a veteran educator and brain expert, explains how poverty affects a child's brain and how schools can play a crucial role in improving academic achievement. Another group of scientists, Lichtenstein et al. (2006), show how the under-nutrition of a child affects the child's performance.

Similarly, Barron (2006) shows how learning outside schools shapes learning inside schools and vice versa. So, the stakeholders need to understand how children's learning achievement relates to their outside school activities. The environment the children get at home and in their society affects their learning. Looi et al. (2008) also discuss connecting classrooms with information resources and tools to create a better learning environment. Very few have shown their concern about the circumstances the students are going through and whether our teaching pedagogy is responsible for their poor classroom performance. Aveling and Heron's (1999) keep their view that the centred method has devaluated the students and their autonomy, and further state, "Now, the teachers' knowledge is not sufficient as there is an explosion of new knowledge day by day, but they got the knowledge before 30 years. They are out of date. The teachers should not be controllers but just guides." From it, we are clear that our teaching pedagogy, from teachers' autonomy to students' autonomy, must be transformed. Likewise, we need to understand the circumstances of the students as well. A positive family environment tends to foster the learning of students. It helps to achieve better outcomes in the future. However, an adverse family environment always spoils students' curiosity toward learning and, therefore, results in poor achievement. Umar (2020) presents data that shows that outside factors, including the family environment, influence learning achievement by 64.6%.

Do we know the students' family environment and circumstances before we treat a child, and have we ever tried to find the area of our students' interest and the learning ecology provided to them? Are there other factors that influence a child's learning in English classrooms?

### **Research Purpose**

This study explores the learning ecology and its relation to students' achievement and performance based on the students' and teachers' experiences and narratives. Particularly, the study explores micro, meso, and macro contexts' influence on student learning.

### **Research Questions**

In order to achieve the objective, the following research questions become pertinent.

1. How do teachers and students narrate their understanding, practices and expectations on learning ecology?
2. How do they relate the factors influencing the students' learning performance and achievement?

### **Delimitations**

This research is centred on exploring the challenges and opportunities within learning ecologies that influence low-performing students in English language classrooms. Specifically, it examines the perspectives and experiences of English language teachers and students in school-level contexts. The study focuses on the interplay of factors within the immediate and extended learning environments, as conceptualized in Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory. By emphasizing the micro, meso and exosystem of the theory, this research highlights the roles of teachers, students, parents and classroom practices in shaping learning outcomes.

While the study acknowledges the broader influences of the exosystem and macrosystem, such as societal norms and policy frameworks, it delimits its scope to direct interactions within the classroom, school and home-based environment. Data is gathered through semi-structured interviews with teachers and students to maintain a focused lens on in-school and out-school dynamics. These narratives offer valuable insights into how teaching practices, peer relationships, the classroom and the home environment collectively impact student's performance.

By concentrating on these specific elements of the learning ecology, this study aims to uncover practical strategies for fostering a more inclusive and effective educational setting. It extends to investigating parental roles or home-based learning influences, allowing for a concentrated analysis of school-based factors. The findings are intended to contribute to the broader discourse on educational equity and the

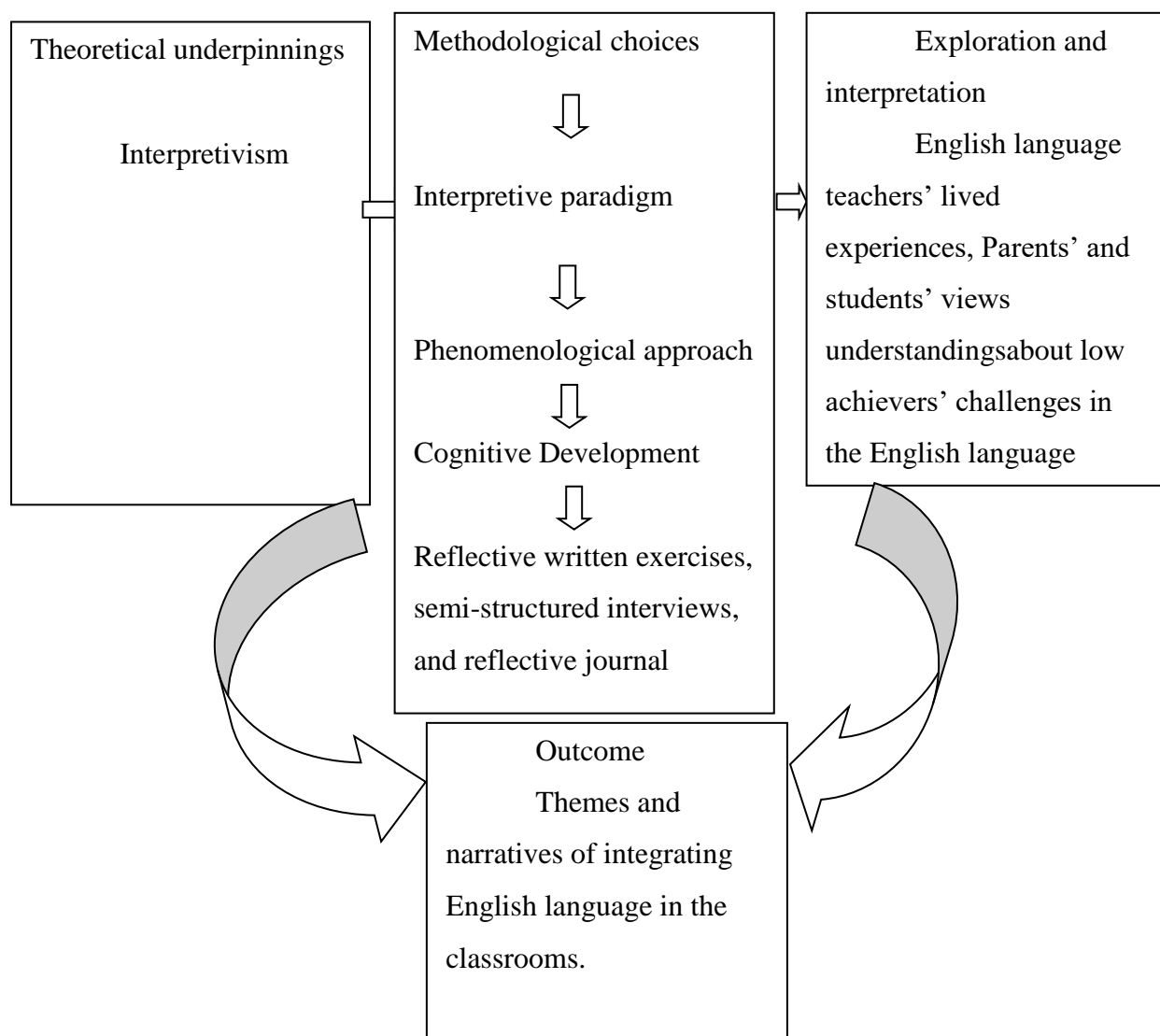
development of pedagogical practices that address the needs of low-performing students in English classrooms.

### Structure of the Report

This dissertation consists of three chapters. The first chapter deals with the introduction of the topic, rationale of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions, and delimitations of the study. The second chapter is a review of related literature, in which where conceptual, theoretical and empirical reviews are presented. Finally, chapter three deals with the methodology section, which includes the research paradigm, philosophical considerations, research method, research site and participants, data generating techniques, data analysis process, quality standards, and ethical considerations.

**Figure 1**

*Conceptual Framework of the Study*





## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This section explores both theoretical and empirical assumptions related to the study. It begins with the concept of teaching the English language in the classrooms and attributes of English. It then discusses the relevance and implication of the English language in relation to English language teaching. Then, it presents some previous research studies with reference to teaching the English language in schools and the teachers' experiences and perceptions of it. Finally, the chapter highlights the research gap and presents the study's conceptual framework.

#### **Conceptualizing Learning Ecology**

Students are learners in the classroom, where teachers are facilitators. Learning means acquiring knowledge and bringing change in their behavior and thoughts. But it is not so easy. Learning is a complex task. It demands certain environments for learning. Learning is psychological. As Hower et al. (2013) noted, "Questions about learning are addressed in virtually all areas of psychology. Therefore, It is surprising that researchers are rarely explicit about what they mean by the term" (p.61). Students cannot learn until and unless they are psychologically ready.

Learning is environmental as well as social. The environment they grow up in and how their peers are there also determine their learning. From the environment, students learn many things. It is also a complex social activity. Perhaps the most striking result of recent research on learning in childhood and adolescence is that very little comes through conscious and deliberate teaching (Walker et al., 2016).

It comes from participation in life. Children learn by watching and imitating the people around them. Psychologists call this observational learning. And they learn by listening to what other people say about how the world works—what psychologists call learning from testimony (Walker et al., 2016, p. 89).

Learning is individual as well. Individually, the learning capacity of students differs in different times and environments. If I talk about myself, I prefer reading in a lonely place and in the early morning. I prefer reading loudly. But I have seen my students preferring to read late at night, even with music. Some read silently. Most of the children's learning is found effective in a proper environment. They copy fast from their parents and friends. Some students are with their critical thinking minds. They

enjoy explorations that contribute to cognitive development. They learn from parents and peers and modify them according to their needs.

Waite-Stupiansky (2022) finds how students adapt to the environments and develop their cognitive ability. Learning is a process, and environmental one. Learning is a process of adaptation to environmental stimuli, involving successive periods of what Piaget called assimilation, accommodation, and equilibration. Social factors have an important role in students' knowledge construction, as children gain knowledge both individually and by observing and acting with others in groups. Peer discussion, which generates cognitive conflict, is seen as a critical factor in cognitive development. Piaget thought that, while the development of cognition had a biological (innate and predetermined) basis, society also had an important role in providing appropriate possibilities for students to develop their cognition.

Wilson et al. (1996) talk about different emerging approaches to learning ecology and present ample examples of teaching and learning in tertiary and community settings. They further illustrate that this approach will raise the level of ecological consciousness and expand the deep understanding of nature for achievement. As students face diversified learning environments and various challenges in higher-level education, online higher education can be the solution to connect students in various contexts (Peters et al., 2021). Eastwood et al. (2020) narrate different challenges in teaching ecology and propose different solutions for effective practices in the educational field. Nielsen et al. (2016) present an article defining learning ecology as the physical, social and cultural context where the learning activity occurs. It also shows learning ecology as parallel with natural ecosystems and discusses its components in the STEM education system.

### **Classroom Learning Ecology**

Classrooms are the places where direct teaching and learning activities take place. Classroom learning ecology refers to the complex interactions between teachers, students, the learning environment and external factors that shape the educational experiences. It emphasizes the dynamic, interconnected nature of the classroom where the physical spaces, pedagogical strategies, students' behaviors and classroom cultures all play a crucial role in the learning process. Key factors influencing classroom ecology include the classroom layout, technological tools, the teachers' pedagogical approaches, and the socio-cultural contexts of the students. A supportive classroom climate, where students feel valued and engaged, is critical for

fostering their learning, as well as the presence of diverse learning materials and resources that cater to different learning styles (Brooks & Brooks, 1999). Moreover, the teachers' ability to adapt to individual students' needs and facilitate meaningful interactions among peers contributes to a positive classroom ecology that promotes deeper learning (Dooly & Sadler, 2013). Thapa et al. (2020) point out that learning ecology in Nepal has been highly influenced by rural-urban disparities in resources, which affect how effectively learners engage themselves with the content being taught. According to Sharma (2020), the learning environment in Nepali classrooms, when designed effectively, enhances the English language skills of students by promoting communicative practices, integrating local contexts with global learning standards, and offering opportunities for authentic language use.

### **Students' Learning Engagements and Learning Performance**

As discussed above, students need a conducive ecology for learning. The more active students participate in the learning process, the more effective their learning will be. For the students to achieve effective learning, high classroom performance is required. Piaget's constructivist theory also believed that children learn best through active exploration and discovery (Waite-Stupiansky, 2022). Students cannot understand until and unless they are active in the classroom activities. However, ensuring that all students perform equally in the classroom is a big challenge for a teacher. Teachers plan various activities in the classrooms, like games, presentations, drama, story sharing, etc., for effective learning. Some students are very active in classroom performances, and they have marvelous classroom achievements as well. But, some students are found to be very shy and hesitant. They are neither interested in games nor in any other activities. As a result, their classroom achievement is also very low. There can be various reasons behind this.

Alami (2016) categorizes the different factors influencing students' learning ecology into four groups. They are student-related factors, teacher-related factors, family-related factors and some other factors such as marriage, health problems, toxic friendships and transportation problems. She explores that student-related factors are more responsible for low academic performance than teacher-related factors.

Philosophers point out more factors influencing students' classroom performance. They point out many reasons, such as medical problems, below average intelligence, specific learning disability, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder,

emotional problems, a poor sociocultural home environment, psychiatric disorders, or even environmental causes etc., behind the low performance of students.

Poudel and Baral (2021) show that the emergence of new foreign languages has changed the situation of foreign language ecology. Learning foreign languages has been established as a conduit towards economic gains and opportunities for employment and education, which has largely contributed to reshaping the ecological relationship among the foreign languages in Nepal.

Awasthi (2003) overviews the teachers' training, trained teachers' numbers and infrastructures of classrooms and says that these factors are also responsible for the students' classroom performances. Miura (2019) explains in the article Overview of Nepal Education Policy in ICT and the Government of Nepal and nongovernment organizations' role in creating a learning environment and ecology, show some hopes of effective learning ecology in the classrooms in the near future.

Prashanti and Ramnarayan (2020) present ten maxims in their paper for fostering a milieu in which student learning can be maximum. Teachers need to be aware of the qualities of a safe learning environment and work on it. So, teachers should facilitate the creation of a positive classroom climate for learning. Teachers who engage students in active learning methods such as group work, problem-solving, and discussions enhance student interest, motivation, and critical thinking skills. Active participation leads to better academic outcomes and a deeper understanding of the material (Hanson & Moser, 2003). Teachers who view their role as educating the whole child rather than merely delivering subject content contribute to a more conducive classroom climate. This perspective encourages the development of social, emotional, and cognitive skills in students (Sankaranarayanan, 2024).

### **Teachers' Role in Making Conducive Learning Ecology**

Teachers have vital roles in the classrooms. Students are learners in the classrooms, and teachers are the facilitators according to the current definition of the teachers. As facilitators, teachers try their best to create an environment where student learning is more effective. They attempt their best to make classroom teaching effective. They seek best to find students' active participation in the classroom, and for that, they practice many things there. Teachers must facilitate the learning of the students to promote deep learning, and they should not only focus on the transmission of knowledge in the classrooms (Tee & Karney, 2007).

Teachers also need to think about the pedagogical methods used in the classrooms and whether they are apt to guide students' interests and promote deep learning. Teachers should be artful in carrying every learner's interest and motivating them towards the instructional framework of learning they have designed. Kalangadan et al. (2015) also discuss the need for artful teaching in the classrooms to amalgam different teaching methods for effective learning in the classrooms. They can accelerate the students' participation in the classrooms.

The school management committee also has a significant role in creating conducive classroom learning ecology. The teachers' roles in the classrooms for students' effective learning and whether they are showing inimical or helpful behaviors in the classrooms should be monitored by the school management committee. For the change, teacher training and counseling should be promoted. The committee can bring various programs like teacher training, student-teacher interactions, socio-psychological counseling, etc., to foster harmonious relationships between teachers and students. Similarly, the school management should guarantee subject teachers and their sufficiency for effective learning ecology (Maifala, 2024).

### **Parents' Role in Effective Learning Ecology**

Akbari (2015) argues that English should be effective even outside the classroom. This means that its role should be increased for the effective learning of English. The more important its role is in society, the more its value increases, and people will be eager to learn it. So they do not feel the immediate need to learn English. The educational system should address such a need. So, Akbari (2015) also discussed the problems in learning English but left the problems of low achievers untouched.

Likewise, some researchers point out the root cause of the problems as lack of English among the parents and students' deformities. Arikan and Bodure (2017) states that parental education and educational awareness have a big impact on students' classroom performance and their learning achievement. Arikan and Bodure (2017) focus on how the family and social environments play an important role in enriching the learning of children in their classrooms. Even in the context of Kathmandu and my district, Dang, children in Kathmandu have a better understanding of the English classrooms than the students in Dang. It is because the parents of Kathmandu and the people there are better educated. Parents, neighbors, shopkeepers, fruit sellers, and even rickshaw pullers knowingly or unknowingly speak English, enriching children's

vocabularies and knowledge from their early stages. Steensel (2006) explores that the home literacy environment (HLE) and socio-economic status (SES) equally affect children's learning. He states

Children's experiences with literacy do not begin with formal reading and writing instruction: most children become acquainted with the nature and functions of written language long before their first day in school through observing and participating in literacy activities in their homes. (p.367)

However, we do not realize this fact, and as a result, we treat all the children in the classroom on the same scale. This blunder we commit in the classroom makes the children with no good HLE, and SES feel that the classroom is not in their favor and they get discouraged everywhere. They think their vocabulary is limited, their pronunciation is not good, and their language structure is incongruent. So, they remain less interactive and active in all classroom activities. Such children require special love and encouragement in the classrooms, which we never realize. As a result, such children turn out to be low achievers, and they are labeled as weak children throughout their school life.

Family peace and a homely environment are equally crucial for a child's academic progress. The academic achievement of a child is highly correlated with the family functioning. Schools are seen seriously taking family function-centered plans to improve a child's academic performance. Hajifoghaha et al. (2018), especially parenting behavior affects the academic achievement of a child in the early stages of education. Parents' support and their time for children determines the progress of their children in school. I think I am not wrong if I say quality parents mean quality education for a child. Quality parents are the parents who can give time to children and support them morally and financially. In the context of quality education, 250 million people are not learning basic skills as a result of poor quality education. Plan International's report says that if we talk about Nepal, over 20 years, Nepal has been successful in the enrolment of children in primary education by 97%, but there are several challenges to tackle. According to UNICEF Nepal,

Issues that persist in education include poor quality and inequity in access, geographical remoteness, gender, and socioeconomic and ethnic differences. Key barriers to enrolment and attendance include poverty, social exclusion, disability, migration, child labor, social norms and gender bias.

However, parents from high families and mainstream families seem to be neglecting their children's education. They cannot give time to their children because of commercial engagements. Very few children are lucky to have mothers with them. Most of the children stay in a hostel. Therefore, they have not had an opportunity to understand family and social values. They do not know moral norms and values. So, they do not know the value of education and lose their interest in studying. Parental involvement refers to their commitment to the time and resources required for the child (Hungu & Mahuro, 2016). Moreover, children from disadvantaged groups are facing inequality and inequity everywhere. Inequality in schools especially originates from classrooms (Palardy, 2015). Along with the emergence of the changing society, our policies and classroom behaviors require to be changed for classroom equity and proper English language development. Exposure to the English language environment at schools and at home is also found to be a factor that contributes to effective English language development.

Likewise, parental conflict is a major barrier to a child's academic excellence. Children are mentally and academically affected by parental conflicts. Children's mental health and academic progress are related to marital disruption and the level of conflict in the family (Peterson & Zill, 1986). They also explore that children living with the same sex after their parents' divorce have been found to have lower effects. From my personal experience, I have found such children have a care-seeking tendency. If such types of children feel neglected in the classrooms, they are seen as the most problematic students in the class. Among the low achievers in my classes, most of their parents live abroad. Some of them are divorced and live separately. And some others are in a high level of family conflict. We have found such students fearing to go in front of a classroom and present something from there. They are comparatively less active in the classrooms.

Therefore, learning is a multifaceted process influenced by psychological, environmental, social, and individual factors, requiring conducive conditions for optimal engagement. Students learn through direct instruction and observation, social interactions, and participation in life, as supported by theories like Piaget's constructivist model and ecological approaches to education. Active learning methods, peer discussions, and adaptable teaching strategies foster cognitive and social development, emphasizing the importance of both individual and collaborative knowledge construction. Challenges such as socioeconomic disparities, parental

influence, and school environments significantly impact learning outcomes, with research highlighting the role of family dynamics, teacher practices, and institutional support in shaping academic success. Addressing these factors demands a holistic approach, including teacher training, classroom equity, and parental involvement, to create a supportive learning ecology (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Epstein & Salinas, 2004; Vygotsky, 1978).

### **Bronfenbrenner's Learning Ecology Theory**

Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, introduced in 1979, emphasizes the dynamic interplay between individuals and their environments in shaping development and learning. Multiple layers of environmental systems influence human development, each interacting with the others. At the centre is the individual, surrounded by the microsystem, which includes immediate settings such as family, school, and peers. The mesosystem represents the interconnections between these microsystems, such as relationships between home and school. The exosystem encompasses external environments that indirectly impact the individual, such as a parent's workplace. The macrosystem includes overarching cultural, societal, and policy influences, while the chronosystem accounts for the dimension of time, reflecting changes in the individual and their environments over time (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

A critical aspect of Bronfenbrenner's theory is its emphasis on reciprocal interactions, or "proximal processes," which he later highlighted in the bioecological model (Krebs, 2009). These interactions, such as a parent teaching a child or a teacher mentoring a student, serve as engines of development, varying in effectiveness depending on the characteristics of the individual, their environment, and the time in which they occur. The theory challenges static views of learning by emphasizing the interconnectedness of personal, social, and structural factors. For instance, cultural expectations in the macrosystem can influence the quality of a teacher-student relationship in the microsystem, demonstrating how nested systems interact to shape learning outcomes.

Bronfenbrenner's work has profoundly influenced educational psychology, policy, and practice. It underscores the importance of considering contextual factors in designing learning environments and interventions. For example, policies supporting family involvement in education reflect an understanding of the mesosystem's role in student success. Similarly, addressing societal inequities in the



macrosystem, such as access to quality education, aligns with the theory's recognition of structural influences on individual learning (Bronfenbrenner, 1979;Krebs, 2009). This ecological perspective encourages a holistic approach to education, emphasizing that effective learning arises from individual effort and supportive and interconnected systems.

Here, Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory provides a robust framework for understanding the interconnected factors that influence human development, making it an excellent lens through which to view this research agenda. By emphasizing the interaction between individuals and their environments—spanning the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem—this theory aligns well with the research's exploration of contextual influences on the participants of this research. For instance, this research examines how family dynamics, educational settings, societal norms, or policy frameworks shape classroom learning behaviors or outcomes. Bronfenbrenner's model offers a structured way to analyze these multilayered interactions. The theory's emphasis on the dynamic interplay between personal experiences and external systems highlights the importance of considering both proximal and distal factors. This perspective enriches the research agenda by ensuring a holistic understanding of developmental processes. The research participants' narratives also show the close interactions among school-related factors, family-related factors and the students-related factors. This connection underscores the value of situating individual behaviors within broader ecological contexts, aligning seamlessly with the goals of the research. Bronfenbrenner's theory is organized into a series of five nested systems or levels. The five main elements of Bronfenbrenner's theory are the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem.

### **Microsystem**

According to Bronfenbrenner, this system falls in the innermost level of the environment in which a person grows up. This level includes the immediate environment in which a child is regularly in contact with family members, friends, relatives and others. They come in contact with the child daily, and their interactions shape the child's nature, thoughts and overall growth. The education a child gets also cannot remain aloof of it. Personal characteristics, including mental abilities, physical attributes, temperament, and personality, also impact a person's development.(Bronfenbrenner, 1979)

### **Mesosystem**

This system is the broader level of Bronfenbrenner's ecological model. In this system theory, a child's development is influenced by the interactions between their family members and the environment outside, such as school, friends, relatives, etc. In this system, how one child's microsystem interacts with another microsystem affects their development. According to this ecological model theory, the interactions between a child's family members and teachers influence their classroom learning and academic performance (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

### **Exosystem**

This ecological model is even broader. This model tells that a child's development is not only affected by the environment in which they are growing. Rather, their development is also affected by the indirect factors that influence the environment. For example, a child's environment and classroom environments can be influenced by government policies, curriculum, parents' ambitions, available resources, social media, etc. (Bronfenbrenner, 1986).

### **Macrosystem**

This model involves the broader society and cultural forces contributing to individual development. According to this theory, our cultures, norms, values, and traditions greatly impact our children. What cultural practices and social beliefs are in practice in our similar community, our child's development is also accordingly. Their thoughts and behaviors are also framed similarly. Sometimes, such development may also vary according to geographical differences and economic status. As a result, their learning and academic performance also go accordingly (Bronfenbrenner, 1994).

### **Chronosystem**

This ecological model is the outermost model in which a child's development is affected along with later life changes. The external factors and circumstances that develop later in our life and change the course of our life fall into it. For example, the pandemic, earthquakes, marriage, divorce, kin's death, etc., are the factors that can change the direction of our lives at any time. These factors also affect our lives and academic performance (Bronfenbrenner, 1986).

Therefore, Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory model is the perfect example of how one's life and academic excellence can be affected by the environment in which a child grows. Rating one's marks or grades on the basis of performance is not justice;

rather, one's environment should also be assessed. Better nurturing and caring of the child is required for better academic performance.

### **Empirical Review**

Empirical studies on learning ecology emphasize the intricate interplay between students' home, school, and societal environments, all of which profoundly impact their academic performance. Researchers have explored various dimensions of learning ecology, with a particular focus on low-performing students in English language classrooms. Stern (1975) identified that challenges in second-language acquisition often arise due to interference from the first language, a problem compounded for low-achieving students. These learners face difficulty reconciling new linguistic forms with existing frameworks, often leading to frustration and disengagement. While this research highlights general linguistic challenges, it lacks a nuanced focus on low achievers, underscoring the need for studies like the present one.

The family environment plays a crucial role in shaping a child's academic performance. As Peterson and Zill (1986) reveal, parental conflicts and adverse home environments significantly affect children's mental health and learning outcomes. Similarly, Steensel (2006) emphasizes the importance of the Home Literacy Environment (HLE) and Socio-Economic Status (SES), noting that early exposure to literacy activities positively correlates with classroom performance. However, children from disadvantaged backgrounds often face barriers such as inadequate resources and limited parental support, leading to lower engagement in English language learning. This disparity highlights the necessity for targeted interventions that address socioeconomic and familial challenges.

The role of school ecology, including teacher practices and peer interactions, has been widely discussed. Palardy (2015) asserts that classroom inequalities perpetuate achievement gaps, with marginalized students often receiving less attention and support. Effective teaching practices, such as active learning and tailored pedagogies, have been shown to significantly enhance student performance (Prashanti & Ramnarayan, 2020). Furthermore, Awasthi (2003) highlights the importance of teacher training and infrastructure in creating equitable learning environments. Despite these findings, many schools continue to overlook the specific needs of low-performing students, leaving them vulnerable to academic failure.

Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory offers a comprehensive framework for understanding the interconnected factors influencing student development. The microsystem, encompassing immediate environments such as family and school, directly affects a child's learning experiences. Interactions within the mesosystem, such as collaborations between parents and teachers, further shape academic outcomes. The exosystem and macrosystem, which include societal norms and policy frameworks, also play critical roles in determining the resources and opportunities available to learners (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). This theoretical approach underscores the need for a holistic perspective when addressing the challenges faced by low achievers.

Cultural and societal factors also contribute to learning disparities. Akbari (2015) argues that English proficiency should extend beyond the classroom, emphasizing its societal value to motivate learners. However, Arikan and Bodure (2017.) identifies sociocultural barriers, such as parental illiteracy and limited exposure to English, as significant obstacles for students from underprivileged backgrounds. In Nepal, children in urban areas often outperform their rural counterparts due to greater access to English-speaking environments and educational resources. These findings highlight the importance of creating inclusive policies that bridge cultural and geographic divides in education.

The psychological well-being of students is another critical factor influencing academic performance. Jensen (2009) explains how poverty-related stress affects cognitive development and classroom behavior, leading to poorer outcomes for disadvantaged students. Similarly, Aveling and Heron's (1999) critique of teacher-centered pedagogy underscores the need for student autonomy and emotional support in learning environments. Schools must adopt a more empathetic approach, recognizing the unique circumstances of each learner to foster a sense of belonging and motivation.

In their examination of the interaction between social class and educational success, Lareau & Weininger (2003) discuss how middle-class children are often socialized in ways that provide them with advantages in school settings. These children typically engage in more structured extracurricular activities and receive greater parental support for academic work. In contrast, students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds often have less access to such resources, impacting their

academic success. This reinforces the need for schools to recognize and adapt to the diverse resources and experiences that students bring with them.

Furthermore, research by Bandura (2001) on self-efficacy underscores the importance of students' belief in their ability to succeed. Low-performing students often face a cycle of failure that erodes their self-efficacy, making it harder for them to engage in academic tasks. Creating an environment that fosters positive self-efficacy can help break this cycle and encourage greater academic involvement. This aligns with the work of Deci and Ryan (1985), whose Self-Determination Theory suggests that student autonomy and intrinsic motivation are crucial for fostering academic success. By providing students with more control over their learning experiences and focusing on intrinsic motivation, teachers can help improve outcomes for low-performing students.

The intersection of identity and academic achievement is also central to understanding low performance in education. Ladson-Billings (1994) emphasizes the role of culturally relevant pedagogy in enhancing the educational experiences of marginalized students. By recognizing and valuing students' cultural backgrounds, teachers can create more engaging and meaningful learning experiences that contribute to higher academic achievement. This highlights the need for pedagogical strategies that connect students' identities to their learning, particularly for those from historically underrepresented or disadvantaged groups.

In summary, existing literature provides valuable insights into the factors influencing learning ecology but often neglects the specific challenges faced by low-performing students. By integrating Bronfenbrenner's ecological framework with contemporary research on familial, societal, psychological, and identity-related influences, this study aims to fill critical gaps. The inclusion of research on self-efficacy, culturally relevant pedagogy, and socio-economic disparities further strengthens the need for a comprehensive approach to improving academic outcomes for low-performing students. These findings will contribute to the development of inclusive teaching practices and policies that address the multifaceted needs of learners, ultimately promoting equity and excellence in English language education. By recognizing and addressing the diverse factors impacting student performance, educators and policymakers can create more effective, supportive, and inclusive learning environments that better serve all students, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

### Gap Analysis

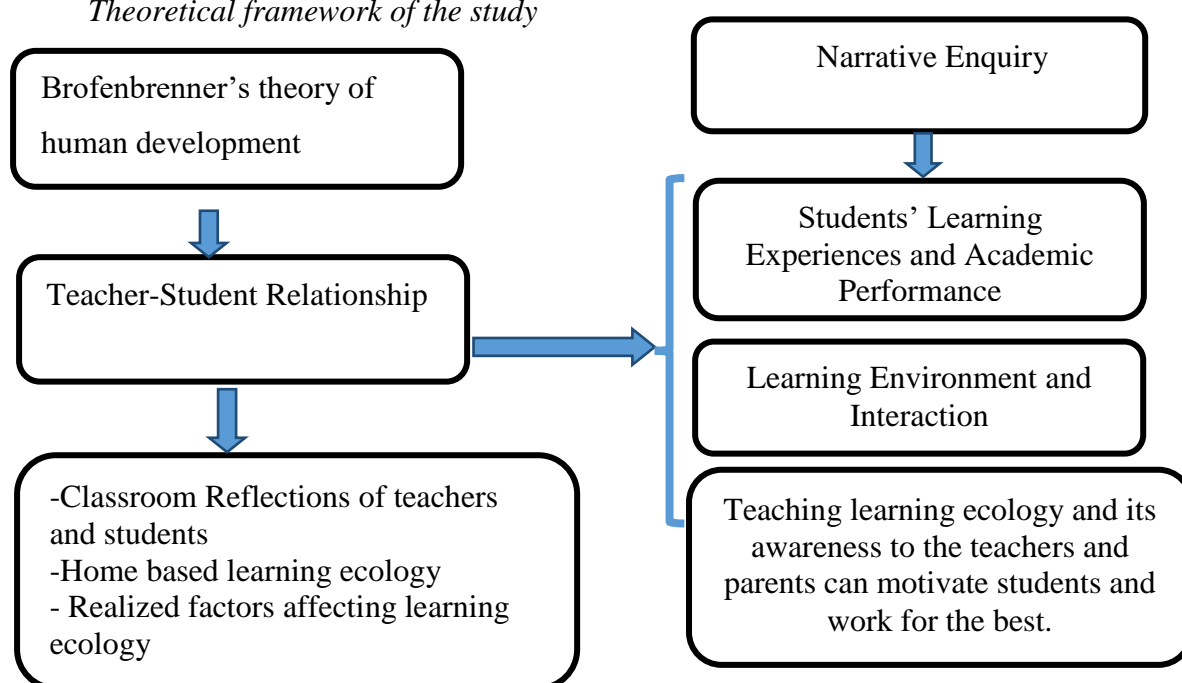
The literature reviewed for this research explores different issues, such as obstacles to learning English and problems that mainly occur due to the effect of the first language reference system on the newly developing foreign language system. Similarly, the review shows some socioeconomic factors as the barriers to low performance for academic excellence. However, some studies have also been done on the challenges of low-performing students in English classrooms. Still, my experience from the English classrooms tells that along with socio-economic cultures and language barriers, proper parenting, partiality in classrooms, and teachers' ignorance of children's circumstances can be the central issue to study for equal academic achievement of all students in the English classrooms. Likewise, the methodology of this research also departs from existing research in that it applies methodologies like classroom experiences and interviews with parents and students to analyze the challenges of low-performing students in English classrooms.

### Conceptual Framework of the Study

The literature that I have analyzed and the gap I have noticed have helped me generate some concepts related to the present study. On the basis of the fundamental assumption and the findings from the review of literature on teaching the English language, this study used the following conceptual framework, which explains the concepts related to this study.

**Figure 2**

*Theoretical framework of the study*



## CHAPTER III

### NARRATIVE INQUIRY AS MY RESEARCH METHOD

#### **Chapter Overview**

In this chapter, I describe the methodological foundations for this research. This chapter begins with the philosophical considerations and research paradigm. Then, it discusses interpretivism and positivism within qualitative research design. Then, it includes information about research sites, participants and data collection techniques. The chapter also presents the data analysis process. It concludes with sections on quality standards used to authenticate my research and ethical considerations considered in my research.

#### **Philosophical Considerations**

Philosophical considerations focus on what the knowledge is and the standpoint of the researcher, providing a thoughtful base in terms of philosophy and the process in which the research was conducted. Willis (2007) defined a holistic belief that paves a path for study as the research paradigm. Richards (2003) says, “The research paradigm tells a researcher about his/her research position and what the implications of these might be” (p.23). So, a research paradigm defines knowledge in terms of existence, nature and process to acquire, which becomes the key proposition in the research process.

In this section, I describe philosophical considerations to present the assumptions that I, as a researcher, am making about my research. Such considerations lead me to choices that are applied to the purpose, design, methodology and methods of the research, as well as to data analysis and interpretation. Under philosophical considerations, ontology, epistemology and axiology are taken into account. Denzin and Lincoln (2011) present ontology, epistemology and methodology as intertwined actions in research. These are determined by the individual's life history, which is shaped on the basis of his or her social, cultural, and economic background. Denzin and Lincoln (2011) further state that ontology, epistemology, and methodology are the outlines that specify the research track.

The philosophical considerations I employed during this study were guided by ontological and epistemological perspectives. It is related to the logical analysis of

knowledge in different disciplines. Therefore, I created my own “theory of reality” and “theory of knowledge” as discussed below:

### **Ontology**

Ontology refers to the ways of being and becoming. It deals with the nature of being or what exists (Neuman, 2016). It informs that there are multiple socially constructed realities (Patton, 2002). Ontologically, I believe that reality and truth are not fixed entities but open to new meanings and experiences in contexts. In my research process and data analysis, I maintain the ontology that there are multiple realities about teachers’ experiences and understanding of the English language in the context of Nepal.

### **Epistemology**

Epistemology refers to the nature of knowledge and how it is produced. Schwandt (1997) defines it as the study of the nature of knowledge and justification. Epistemologically, I generate knowledge about the phenomena of how English language teachers experience integrating low achievers’ challenges in learning the English language and how their experiences shape their understanding. To explore this phenomenon, I used interviews and case studies. The interpretation of such knowledge will be realized as the double hermeneutics as proposed by Smith et al. (2009), which places emphasis on understanding through the vehicle of interpretation. But, the knowledge generated from this study adds to the existing knowledge already in place.

### **Axiology**

Axiology, as a branch of philosophy, deals with the study of values and ethics in research. In this study, axiology underscores the importance of valuing participants’ narratives and their experiences to understand the complexities of learning ecologies. As Lincoln and Guba (1994) argue, the value-laden nature of qualitative research requires researchers to engage deeply with the lived realities of participants, appreciating their perspectives as intrinsic to the knowledge-generation process. This research values the participants’ voices, integrating their reflections to explore the challenges of creating conducive learning environments. The incorporation of reflective journaling aligns with Watson & Woodward (2010), who highlight its potential to deepen understanding and foster meaningful connections between theory and practice. Through journaling, both participants and the researcher engage in continuous introspection, enriching the inquiry process with nuanced



insights. Furthermore, the ethical dimension of axiology is reflected in prioritizing participants' well-being and ensuring authenticity in representing their narratives. According to Schwandt (1997), the interpretive paradigm inherently respects the value systems of participants, recognizing that their experiences shape the contextual truths of the study. By adopting an empathetic and collaborative approach, this research emphasizes the co-construction of knowledge, ensuring that participants' contributions are honored and central to the findings.

### **Interpretivism as a Research Paradigm**

This research explores the challenges of low achievers as experienced and understood by English language teachers in the ELT context of Nepal. This goal fits well with the interpretive perspective. The main focus of the interpretive paradigm is to understand the subjective world of human experience with the belief that reality is subjective and constructed by the individual (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). It believes that the facts interpreted by individuals differ according to the world to which they belong. The world the people are living in shapes their knowledge and the fact. So, the knowledge is subjective (Hammersley, 2013). Creswell also puts forward his idea that researchers need to understand the phenomena and their complexities by reaching the unique context and world to which they belong instead of generalizing them (Creswell, 2014). Within the interpretive paradigm, knowledge is created according to the context in which people belong and their perceptions. The world we live in and its contexts matter a lot when designing the facts (Crotty, 1998). In the research informed by the philosophy, strategies, and intentions of the interpretive research paradigm, the result comes from the interactions between the researcher and the participants as the research progresses (Creswell & Creswell, 2005). The first advantage is that with the different views to look into phenomena, interpretive researchers can not only describe objects, humans or events, but they also need to deeply understand them in a social context. In addition, researchers can also conduct these types of research in a natural setting by utilizing key methodologies such as grounded theory, ethnography, case study or life history to gain insider insights into the research's objectives (Tuli, 2010) to provide more authentic information related to the object of research. Second, by leveraging the key method of an interactive interview, which "allows a researcher to investigate and prompt things that we cannot observe, researchers can probe an interviewee's thoughts, values, prejudices, perceptions, views, feelings and perspectives" (Wellington & Szczerbinski, 2007. p. 217). AsI explore the lived

experiences of English language teachers and interpret those experiences to derive meanings inductively, I have chosen the interpretive paradigm of research. Through the interpretive paradigm, this study explores the subjective and contextual nature of enhancing low achievers' skills. Therefore, the focus is on how teachers construct their ideas on the English language and how their experiences and understanding influence their practice and performance.

### **Narrative Inquiry as a Research Method**

As it is field-based research, I used the qualitative approach to analyze the issue. It employed the stories of the teachers' and the learners' classroom experiences as data concerning effective learning ecology. The idea of narrative inquiry is that stories are collected to understand experience as lived and told through both research and literature. Narrative inquiry is a qualitative research method based on the stories of research participants. Etengoff & Daiute (2013) mentions that records of daily events can be real or originate from the imagination, vignettes of daily life, news reports of events of public interest, and future time.

In other words, narrative inquiry is a thick description of daily events, including the experiences and feelings, which means the production, representation and interpretation of stories experienced by individuals. Lieblich (1998) refers to a "narrative revolution" that was made possible by the decline of an exclusively positivist paradigm for social science research (p.1). Connelly and Clandinin, some years earlier, also commented on this narrative revolution and wrote that, although the idea of narrative inquiry as research methodology is new to the social sciences, it has intellectual roots in the humanities and other fields under the broad heading of narratology (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Gergen (2009) suggests narratives are stories of events placed in a sequential order, which makes meaning to the particular audience. As we undertake this careful delineation of terms, we realize how interwoven narrative ways of thinking about phenomena are with how narrative methodologies emerge. For example, we hear Bruner speaking of narrative ways of knowing when he says, "Telling stories is an astonishing thing. We are a species whose main purpose is to tell each other about the expected and the surprises that upset the expected, and we do that through the stories we tell" (Bruner, 2002, p. 8). While Bruner points us toward narrative as a mode of knowing, Lieblich points us toward the need for narrative inquiry as a methodological response to positivist and

post-positivist paradigms. Connelly and Clandinin link the research methodological turn to ways of thinking about experience. As Connelly and Clandinin point out

It is equally correct to say “inquiry into the narrative” as it is “narrative inquiry”. By this, we mean that narrative is both a phenomenon and a method. Narrative names the structured quality of experience to be studied, and it names the pattern of inquiry for its study. Thus, we say that people by nature lead storied lives and tell stories of those lives, whereas narrative researchers describe such lives, collect and tell stories of them, and write narratives of experience. (Al Dasoqi et al., 2017).

In this connection, my research participants have the lived experiences of being English language learners as well as teachers in their settings. Their experiences in the classrooms, the learning environments they have got there, different practices done by teachers and expectations of the students for a better environment from schools and parents are shared here. I have also used my field notes as the data that I noted in my mobile notes while visiting the fields in this study. I consider my research participants to have a wide range of experiences regarding conducive learning ecology, and their stories are meaningful to this research. Moreover, they have their own stories and experiences of learning since I believe learning could happen not only in academic and classroom settings but also in non-classroom and non-academic settings. I also support Papageorgiou et al., (2017), who state that narrative inquiry provides a researcher with a rich framework based on the stories to examine the lives of the human world. In this context, this research dug out the rich stories of human experiences of learning English ecology framed by English language learners, exploring the different possibilities.

For the validity and tactfulness of the findings, I used methodological combinations, such as narratives and interviews with three teachers and three students. All three teachers were interviewed to explore their experiences, practices, and challenges they found in creating an effective learning ecology for the students. Similarly, three students were interviewed about the learning ecology they found in English and other subjects classrooms and their expectations in schools and at their homes. I have also shared my experiences in the English classrooms.

Thus, this study has incorporated the components of narrative inquiry by implying the narratives of the participants based on their classroom experiences and homes. It is based on the classroom experiences of students and teachers and the

stories they have shared about the influences of learning ecological factors on their English language development. The participants' reflective journals enriched this study and led to deep learning. Reflective journals enable the writer to record events, reflect on those events for the sake of analysis and reassessment, and share insights with other learners (Watson & Woodward, 2010).

### **Research Participants**

As participants, I selected three students and three teachers from the two community schools. They are from the basic level, especially from class eight. The selection was from the same class to bring out the compact experiences that can give the research direction. The participants' interviews were taken and transcribed. As Clandinin and Connelly (2000) noted, there are various kinds of field texts, from photographs, field notes, and conversation transcripts to interview transcripts. For this, I visited Shree Saraswati School Lamahi and Shree Namuna School Deupur Dang [pseudo names] and asked for consent from the respective school administration. Due to ethical considerations, I had several rounds of casual conversations with three female students and three male teachers to understand their respective lifeworlds.

The conversation was open about learning ecology, participants' concepts, practices going on in the classrooms and their challenges. The students expressed their expectations regarding effective learning ecology in schools from teachers, administration and parents at home. They shared their experiences excitedly. The teachers also freely talked about their experiences and the roles they were playing for a conducive learning ecology.

Bhim, Kamal and Hari (pseudo names) are male teachers from two community schools. Kamal and Hari are from the same community school, and Bhim comes from another school. They teach at the basic and secondary levels. Bhim and Hari are English teachers, and Kamal is a science teacher. He teaches both science and math subjects in grade eight.

Mina, Bhawana and Bidhisha (pseudo names) are student participants. They are female students studying in grade eight; Mina is from an English medium class, and Bhawana and Bidhisha are from a Nepali medium class. Mina and Bhawana are from the same community school, and Bidhisha is from another.

### **Data Collection Process**

Data collection is collecting information from relevant sources to answer the research questions. In it, a researcher gathers data by applying various data-collecting strategies like interviews, observations, personally reflective methods, autobiographical works, personal reflections of a researcher, surveys, case studies, etc. (Al Dasoqi et al., 2017). In this study, I collected information through interview sessions and casual conversations during tea and coffee with three teachers and three students. I also employ reflective journals as an information collection strategy. Reflection is a key strategy for a narrative researcher to understand the deeper learning of participants' life worlds (Yadav et al., 2021). Reflections help us make connections between theory and practice and between our previous and current knowledge. Journal has been seen as effective in motivating students to reflect on their learning and improve their writing skills (O'Connell & Dymment, 2006). In this regard, this study uses some of the participants' reflections on their classroom experiences and some reflections on the researcher's visits during the interviews. The collected information requires evidence, and its validity adds to the research work's authenticity.

#### **Interview**

In this study, data were collected from six participants through interviews. Many types of interviews are used for data collection in qualitative research. Consalvo et al. (2025) show four types of interviews used in qualitative research. This study used semi-structured interviews in which a few open-ended questions were also used, and the interviewees were provided enough time for elaboration. A structured format hinders the responses' depth and richness (Bryman et al., 2008).

Two teachers and two students from one of the public schools were interviewed, and a teacher and a student from another public school were interviewed on 'Effective Learning Ecology'. Very few semi-structured questions were asked based on research questions and research issues. Teachers were also asked about their classroom roles in making ecology conducive for students, and students were also asked about their expectations for learning ecology at home. I spent enough time with my participants without interruption to understand their elaborations of experience. I repeated and probed the questions to get inner thoughts and avoid diversions. I have facilitated the interviewees well to recall each and every moment of the classroom learning ecology associating the idea of Riessman (1993), who states, "To encourage

the participants of the study, to inspire them to unfold their narratives, and to tell about important moments of their lives, it is necessary to provide a facilitating context in the research interview” (p. 54). The interviews dug out rich information for the study. The field data have narrowed down my study and given new insight into creating a conducive learning ecology for learners.

### **Reflective Journal**

Reflecting is an activity in which a person thinks back and forth while doing something. In a reflective journal, a writer writes or notes down what they think is noteworthy in the field or remembers the field scene and writes later. It is an effective technique in research writing, too. Farrell (2012) shows how language teachers use reflective writing as a writing strategy for professional writing. This technique strengthens the teacher-student relationship by providing the writers with a record of their experiences and personal progress. Hooks (1994) also puts similar views on a reciprocal relationship between teachers and students and shows how students are empowered by reflective writing techniques. Moon (1999) and Evans (2007) also add that reflective journals take students towards deeper learning. This research work also used the participants’ reflections on their classroom experience as data. The researchers’ reflections in the field have also been duly considered in the study.

The research includes participants’ classroom experiences and reflections on classroom teaching-learning practices, pedagogies, learning environments, and available learning resources in the classrooms. Similarly, the reflections discuss how the school has created a teaching-learning environment and the challenges the participants face. The student participants reflect on learning environments at home. They reflect on how their parents have supported them at home for learning achievement. They provide extra guidance for learning along with different required learning materials, counsel children for study and create a peaceful environment for study by providing separate study rooms. As a researcher, I also share my field visit reflections in the research. I have shared what I found during the visits to schools, such as teachers' and students’ activities seen in the classrooms and outside the classrooms.

### **Data Analysis Process**

Data analysis is a significant task in research in which researchers attempt to certify their thoughts through the voices of the participants. Participants’ narratives function as the evidence for the claim of the study. The narrative data analysis process

basically starts with transcribing as Riessmann (1993) states, data analysis is the unpacking of stories for meaning through narratives. Transcribing the narratives taken through the interviews also makes me legalize it, and while doing so, I visualize an apparent learning ecology for the students in the coming days. This task reminds us of our mistakes and shows us the bright path for further improvement. Al Dasoqi et al., (2017) further mention the data analysis process:

Narrative analysis is a way of understanding experience. It is a collaboration between researcher and participants, over time, in a place or series of places, and in social interactions with milieus. An inquirer enters this matrix in the midst of living and telling, reliving and retelling, the stories of experiences that make up individual and social lives. (p. 20)

Hence, it is apparent that reflexivity is important in narrative inquiry, where the researcher carefully examines the living stories. For analyzing and data generation, Al Dasoqi et al. (2017). mention that a researcher must live with participants' narratives, and document social interaction in the form of field notes and examine artifacts produced in the context and interviews. For this, I sat with the participants individually in a calm and placid place and talked to them iambically so that they would not hesitate to unfold their narratives. They also became emotional, sentimental, and excited when sharing.

After gathering enough information to support my study, I reviewed various articles and journals to interrogate their assumptions, reflections and experiences. I constantly went to my past and present experiences and the experiences of the participants and also compared them with the different experiences shared in the journals. I navigated Bronfenbrenner's five dimensions of learning ecology time and again and tried to locate their experiences in those dimensions. I became sure that learning ecology contains multilayers, and we need to understand them to situate our classroom learners for effective learning.

Al Dasoqi et al.(2017). also talked about 'three-dimensional inquiry space', which constitutes temporal, personal, social and place, which seems important and applicable to my research for data generation and analysis for unpacking hidden, implicit, unclear and not-well-revealed reasons of learning English. In this study process, I have also considered the social aspect to be an important factor for effective learning ecology.

Barkhuizen et al. (2013) stated, "It involves repeated reading of the data, coding and categorization of data extracts, and their reorganization under thematic headings" (p.17). I coded the data from the transcribed hard copy of interviews on the basis of essence-capturing themes following Salanda et al.'s (2014) philosophy of coding; I edited and coded with pseudo names for the participants. I read the conversations intensely and changed into their personal narratives. Then, I started writing by making three themes from codes. After that, I analyzed the themes by catching participants' real stories and analyzing my personal experiences in the field. From the analysis, I drew the data to create my findings.

### **Quality Standards**

I am aware that the research I carry out and the data I gather should maintain quality standards on actual grounds. Keeping this in mind, I used reflexivity, trustworthiness and pedagogical thoughtfulness as quality standards.

#### **Reflexivity**

Reflexivity in research involves a deep self-awareness and the acknowledgment of the researcher's influence on the research process and outcomes. In this study, I integrate personal teaching experiences to contextualize the challenges of learner ecology in English classrooms. The reflective approach, as emphasized by Connelly and Clandinin (2000), helps in living and understanding the narratives of the participants to derive meaning from their lived experiences. I acknowledge the interplay of personal biases and participants' perspectives by maintaining openness and involvement throughout the study, further supported by reflective journaling (Watson & Woodward, 2010). This methodology ensures that the research outcomes are enriched by both the participants' narratives and the researcher's introspections.

#### **Trustworthiness**

The trustworthiness of the study is ensured by employing robust narrative inquiry techniques, including semi-structured interviews and reflective journaling, which allow the researcher to collect authentic and meaningful data from participants. The use of multiple participants from varied backgrounds provides a comprehensive understanding of the phenomena under study. By adhering to ethical principles, such as informed consent and confidentiality, and by validating findings through participant feedback and iterative reflection, the research builds a foundation of credibility and dependability (Bryman et al., 2008). These measures align with the



principles outlined by Creswell (2014), emphasizing the importance of contextualized knowledge construction in qualitative research.

### **Pedagogical Thoughtfulness**

Pedagogical thoughtfulness in the study reflects a commitment to understanding and improving teaching practices to foster equitable learning environments. Teachers' roles are highlighted as central to creating a conducive learning ecology. The narratives reveal that effective teaching involves recognizing students' diverse needs, employing appropriate pedagogies, and fostering supportive relationships (Crick et al., 2007). The study advocates learner-centered approaches and teacher adaptability, resonating with the perspectives of Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, which underscores the multifaceted nature of learning influenced by various environmental factors.

### **Time, Space, and Context**

Time, space and context provide a comprehensive framework for understanding the narratives in this study. Mertova and Webster (2012) argue that narrative inquiry's strength lies in its ability to capture the interwoven nature of these dimensions, offering a holistic perspective on human experiences. This integration was evident in the way participants' stories connected past experiences, current challenges, and future aspirations within the socio-cultural and institutional spaces of their learning ecology.

### ***Time***

Time is a fundamental dimension in narrative inquiry as it reflects the temporal flow of experiences and their implications on meaning-making. According to Mertova and Webster (2012), time in narrative research provides a way to understand events as part of a continuum rather than isolated occurrences. In the context of this study, time was not merely chronological but also reflective, encompassing the past experiences of participants and their influence on current teaching and learning dynamics.

By analyzing the temporal context, I observed that students' and teachers' reflections extended beyond the immediate classroom events. For instance, participants often connected their current learning ecology to earlier educational practices and socio-cultural experiences. Mertova emphasizes this retrospective dimension of time, asserting that "narratives are inherently temporal, as they capture the unfolding of human experience over time" (Mertova & Webster, 2012, p. XX).

Thus, the temporal dimension in this research allowed a nuanced understanding of how past experiences inform present educational practices and expectations for the future.

### ***Space***

Space in narrative inquiry is not limited to physical boundaries but also includes relational and contextual spaces. Mertova & Webster, (2012) highlight that the space where narratives are shared and experienced shapes the meaning and depth of those narratives. In this study, the classroom environment served as a critical space where students' and teachers' narratives intertwined, creating a dynamic learning ecology.

The spatial dynamics of the classroom were explored through narratives describing the physical arrangement, the availability of resources, and the socio-emotional climate. For instance, teachers narrated their struggles with limited ICT facilities, which Mertova identifies as a spatial constraint that impacts the effectiveness of teaching practices (Mertova & Webster, 2012). Furthermore, relational spaces, such as the trust and connection between teachers and students, emerged as significant in shaping learning outcomes. These relational dimensions of space align with Mertova's assertion that "space in narratives extends beyond physicality to include the interplay of relationships and contextual factors" (Mertova & Webster, 2012, p. XX).

### ***Context***

The context in narrative inquiry involves understanding the socio-cultural, institutional, and personal factors that frame the narratives. Mertova & Webster, (2012) describes context as the lens through which narratives gain their meaning, emphasizing the role of situational and broader societal influences in shaping experiences. In this research, the context encompassed the socio-economic backgrounds of students, the institutional policies governing classroom practices, and the personal pedagogical philosophies of teachers.

For example, narratives revealed how socio-economic disparities among students influenced their engagement and participation in learning activities. Teachers' accounts highlighted the challenges of teaching in multilingual classrooms, a contextual complexity that Mertova identifies as critical in understanding the interplay of individual and collective experiences (Mertova & Webster, 2012). This study also considered the broader policy context, including curriculum mandates and

resource allocation, which Mertova underscores as integral to the contextual framework of narrative inquiry.

In conclusion, the dimensions of time, space, and context, as articulated by Mertova, enriched the methodological framework of this research. They allowed for a deeper exploration of the narratives, revealing the complex and multifaceted nature of teaching and learning practices in diverse educational settings. By situating these narratives within their temporal, spatial, and contextual dimensions, this study contributes to a more nuanced understanding of the dynamics of learning ecologies.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Ethical considerations refer to codes of professional conduct for researchers. So, I obtained permission from the participants, the sites, and the related organizations for the research. I maintained the basic research ethics in my research. I acknowledged this while citing others' ideas or words.

### **Informed Consent**

Informed consent is fundamental to ethical research, ensuring participants are fully aware of the study's purpose, procedures, risks, and benefits before agreeing to take part. Participants should voluntarily consent to the research after receiving comprehensive information (Creswell, 2014). In this study, all participants, including students and teachers, are provided with an explanation of the research objectives, their role, and assurances of confidentiality. Consent is documented through signed forms, following guidelines outlined by ethical boards, ensuring that individuals understand their rights, including the option to withdraw at any point without repercussions (Denzin & Lincoln, 2001). In this study, the consent of schools, parents, and students was duly obtained. I wrote a letter to the school asking permission to conduct interviews with students and teachers, and they provided me with three teachers and students for interviews. After permission, I met the interviewees and obtained their consent after explaining my purpose and objectives. I took the parents' phone numbers and asked them for their consent, too. Only after that did I start recording the interviews. This approach respects the dignity and autonomy of all participants, fostering trust and transparency in the research process.

### **Autonomy**

Autonomy refers to the right of participants to make informed, independent decisions about their involvement in the research. It underscores the importance of treating individuals as self-governing agents capable of making choices based on their

values and preferences (Schwandt, 1997). To uphold autonomy, the researcher maintains open communication, clarifies any ambiguities about the study, and provides a non-coercive environment. For example, participants have the liberty to skip questions they are uncomfortable answering or terminate their involvement at any stage. By respecting autonomy, the research aligns with the principles of respect and human dignity, ensuring the agency of all involved.

### **Ethics of Care**

The ethics of care emphasizes empathy, compassion, and responsibility towards participants, especially in educational research where the subjects are often vulnerable populations such as students. This research adopts a participant-centred approach, focusing on their narratives and lived experiences while ensuring their well-being (Connelly & Clandinin, 2000). Careful attention is given to creating a supportive environment during interviews, allowing participants to share openly without fear of judgment. Additionally, the researcher's reflective practices ensure that the narratives are represented authentically, safeguarding against misinterpretation or harm. The ethics of care requires prioritizing the participants' emotional and psychological safety throughout the research process.

### **Confidentiality**

Protecting the privacy of participants is critical in maintaining ethical integrity and fostering trust. Privacy involves safeguarding the personal information of participants and ensuring their identities are not disclosed without explicit permission. In this study, pseudonyms are used to protect identities, and all data is securely stored with restricted access (Richards, 2003). Privacy extends to respecting the boundaries of what participants wish to disclose, ensuring that sensitive information is handled with the utmost discretion. As Guba and Lincoln (1989) argue, confidentiality is a cornerstone of ethical research, and maintaining it not only protects participants but also upholds the credibility of the study.

## CHAPTER IV

### LEARNING ECOLOGY FOR LEARNING ENGAGEMENT: TEACHERS AND STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES

This section delves into the perceptions of students regarding their classroom learning ecology and the critical factors influencing their learning engagement. The chapter defines learning ecology as a multidimensional construct encompassing the interconnected processes, relationships, and experiences within and beyond the classroom that shape students' learning trajectories. It draws on theoretical insights from Jackson (2016), who emphasizes that learning ecologies integrate past, present, and future learning opportunities, fostering development and achievement.

This chapter is organized into several sections. It begins by exploring students' perceptions of classroom practices and teacher-student interactions, highlighting key factors such as teaching styles, teacher consistency, and the availability of supportive reading environments. These perceptions are contextualized through narratives collected during interviews with participants, revealing both challenges and opportunities for enhancing learning outcomes. Subsequently, the chapter examines the role of classroom dynamics in promoting or hindering learning engagement. Drawing on reflective journals and participant interviews, it identifies specific barriers, such as inadequate pedagogical strategies, socio-economic disparities, and limited access to resources. These findings are aligned with Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, which underscores the significance of micro, meso, and macro-level interactions in shaping students' academic experiences.

Finally, the chapter addresses students' expectations for improved learning ecologies. These expectations include greater teacher support, equitable classroom practices, and enhanced parental involvement. The insights gathered underscore the need for a collaborative approach involving educators, families, and policymakers to foster inclusive and effective learning environments. By synthesizing students' narratives with theoretical frameworks and empirical evidence, Chapter IV offers a nuanced understanding of learning ecologies and their impact on student engagement. This analysis provides a foundation for developing actionable strategies to address the challenges faced by low-performing students and to promote equity in English language classrooms.

### Students' Perception of Classroom Learning Ecology

Ecology is a complex term which includes many factors. In the term 'ecology' both inside and outside factors are included. If we talk about learning ecology, it includes a big system in which different components related to teaching and learning, its processes, relationships and interactions among those components, their experiences, etc., fall. Our learning ecology is connected with our past experiences and associated components, and they are designed for future learning. In this regard, Norman (2016) says that our learning ecologies are the means by which we connect and integrate our past and current experiences and learning, and they provide the foundation for future learning. So, an individual's learning ecology comprises their process and set of contexts and interactions that provide them with opportunities and resources for English Language learning, English language development and classroom achievement.

During my interviews with my participants, especially with students, they were found to have blurred ideas of learning ecology connecting with learning environments. Most of them gave responses on learning environments with different understanding. They talked about teachers' teaching styles in the classroom, the irregularity of the teachers, a poor reading environment in the classrooms, etc. One of the student participants, Bhawana could not clearly mention learning ecology since she focused her understanding just on a learning environment: Learning means to teach others what we know, whereas environment means how clean the environment is, how good it is, and the location of the school whether it is in up or down in altitude, like that. Bhawana thinks that teachers, classrooms, interactions with teachers in the classroom, teachers' timing in the classroom, and their behavior fall in the learning ecology. She thinks *learning ecology can be good if teachers are good at teaching students by asking questions and becoming regular in the class.*

Similarly, another participant, Mina, takes the "*Learning environment as teaching students the things that they do not know.*" She says she likes some subjects' classroom environments, but some subjects' classrooms are not good for her. According to her, "*I do not like the classes of English and Health subjects because I do not understand them.*" She blames that "*teachers do not teach focusing on students and they do not do all the exercises given in each chapter.*" She says "*teaching and learning can be effective if the teachers use smart boards in the classrooms for making interactive.*"

In the same way, another student, Bidhisha Chaudhary, from another school Shree Sarashwati School Lamahi, studying in class eight, puts her opinion on the learning environment by connecting with the *cleanliness of the environment, balanced diet, health, good companions, etc.* She says *students need to understand students' circumstances, backgrounds, etc. and teach accordingly.* She has further mentioned physical resources like labs and libraries for maintaining the learning environment.

In this way, the student participants' narratives show that teachers' timing, schools' surroundings, teachers' teaching style and their knowledge about students' background, physical resources in schools, etc., have a deep impact on students' learning. Teachers' timing refers to teachers' punctuality in class. Some teachers go to class late and leave classes early as well. Similarly, some teachers are present in school but do not go to class, which I also found when I visited the school. And some teachers are not regular in school. Because of these types of delays in class and absenteeism, students' learning achievement and classroom environment are affected. Regarding teachers' timing in the classes and its impact on students' learning achievement, Rijal (2014) shows how the teachers' timing in the classroom affects students' learning outcomes. Likewise, for effective learning, outside surroundings should also be supportive. The components like cleanliness, calmness, teachers' support, other outside people's roles, school infrastructures, social media, etc. should also be supportive. Therefore, learning environments always have physical, social (intellectual/psychological), technological and didactic dimensions (e.g. Pieters et al. 1991; Manninen & Pesonen, 1997). As the above narratives have put forward the insight that students' excessive eating of junk food has an impact on their learning, most of the school children are found carrying noodles and biscuits in their tiffin. Along with globalization, students have imitated others' clothing, food, and language cultures, and this has had an adverse effect on their learning. Brooks (2010) shows how globalization has affected the students' clothing, food and language, which have influenced their classroom learning outcomes. In the same way, teachers' teaching pedagogy is also equally responsible for the student's learning effectiveness. They should have knowledge of students' backgrounds. They should have understood the students and their problems. This knowledge helps them to decide the appropriate pedagogy in the classroom. Crick et al. (2007) also keep their view that teachers' personal care of their students, teachers' knowledge of their student's interests and

family backgrounds, teachers' respect for students and praise, teachers- students' relationships, etc., are the key factors for student- centred classroom ecology.

### **Teachers' Perceptions of Classroom Learning Ecology**

Kamal considers learning ecology to be an entire activity of teaching and learning. He says *In my view, this relates to teaching-learning methodology. As a whole, this relates to entire educational activities at school.* Similarly, Hari's opinions Generally, I need to focus on the terms of ecology to convey. *Ecology is an environment where we focus on learning and try to teach, and students are motivated and attempt to learn.* Another teacher participant Bhim keeps his perception of learning ecology broadly and says:

*Teachers can create a conducive learning ecology by managing and handling students' diversity, making learning simple, easy and sustainable. Besides, they should fulfill the objective of the curriculum. Furthermore, they should play the role of an artist. Likewise, students should do their assignments daily. Being ICT-friendly can also boost learning ecology.*

From the above perceptions of the students and teachers, it can be said that students' clarity on learning ecology is blurred, and their focus is on the classroom environment and teachers' teaching pedagogy. Similarly, teachers' narratives show that they are aware of the different ecology stakeholders and their variables. They associate learning ecology with classroom teaching, teachers' teaching style, students' learning, their motivation for learning, students' diversity, curriculum, assignment and use of ICT in the classroom. From this, we can say that learning ecology is complex and contains many things that need to be maintained in a school. It is physical, psychological and social. It has a vital role in students' academic performance and teachers' classroom delivery. According to Brooks et al. (1995), a positive classroom learning environment plays a vital role in students' academic performance and attitudes. There are studies in the science education field which generally show a significant association between classroom environment, achievement, and students' motivation (Aldridge et al., 2000; den Brok et al., 2004; Telli et al., 2006; Wahyudi & Treagust, 2004; Yerdelen, 2013). According to Crick et al. (2007), a good communication environment and relationship between teachers and students are required for a student-centered learning culture.



### Students' Perception of Learning Ecology at Home

This section deals with the students' responses towards the environments they are getting at home. They reflect how their home environmental factors are influencing their classroom performance. They narrate parental relationships, guidance and counseling as the supporting factors and some other factors as the learning barriers. It also shows how different literature has supported the participants' voices.

Similarly, Mina praises her parents for giving her appropriate learning ecology at her. *They provided me with the necessary materials, counseled me on my studies, and gave me a separate room for study.* Bidhisha also raises the issue of the need for parents' care at home. She says *Parents also leave their children to go anywhere free, no objection to anything they eat, malnutrition, involvement in drugs. They have to counsel but do not. It is the parent's responsibility, isn't it?* Bidhisha also shows the need for parents to have a good relationship in a learning environment and says how it affects them when they fight at home. *Their inharmonious relationship pressure troubles us, and they should live harmoniously, speak well and dress well.* She also shares her story of how her grandfather's recent death and the environment after his death had a bad impact on her studies. She further shares one story of her friend and her parents and shows the need for parents' care for children.

*I have one friend. Her parents are very good. They never fight with each other. They never say anything to my friend. They do not put any pressure on her to study, eat, dress, and so on. She is also talented, and she sits with me in class. She has gone on tour now. But we say in youth [Baish], you know, she is a little bit off track in life nowadays. She does not concentrate on her studies. She is in deep thinking, and she does not share anything when I ask. I think if her parents cared for her well ....*

In the same way, another student participant, Bhawana, shares her narratives about the home environment: *It is good enough. I don't go outside. There is a table to study. To guide me, my uncle and aunt come in the evening. They teach me what I don't know.* She further elaborates on how her mother supports her, though her father is not supportive. *I don't know about my father. But my mother is really supportive. My mother always encourages me to read. She promises me that she will support me and provide me and my brother with all the things that we need even if she has to lose everything".*

Bhawana's parents are separated, and she has lived with her mother in her maternal uncle's house since her childhood. On the effects of parents' separation or divorce on academic performance, she says *In the beginning, when I was small, it affected but not now. Because I have heard the news that many mothers are single at present.*

The above narratives of the participants show that family support, parents' adequate care for the children and parents' smooth relationship also play a vital role in a conducive learning ecology. Home environments are also expected to have been good for the effective classroom performance of the students in the English classrooms. Cohen (2006) also discusses how the social and family factors create an effective English learning climate and points out that the social and emotional security of children is required for academic progress. Kulasekara (2015) shows the dominant role of educationists, parents, and policymakers in improving the English learning environment. Seginer (2006) studies parental involvement in education and finds that parents have various roles in children's education. A study done on Canadian ethnic groups shows large effects of home environments on children's academic and mental ability (Coleman et al., 1966; Marjoribanks, 1972).

### **Teachers' Perception of Learning Ecology at Home**

Teachers in the present classrooms are only the facilitators. They can suggest right and wrong things to do or not to do on the basis of their perceptions, but they cannot decide what is wrong or right, or they cannot force any student against their will. So, the definition of modern teachers has changed. Previously, they were authoritative, and their knowledge was everything. Similarly, teaching pedagogies have also changed, along with teachers' roles in classrooms. Learner-centered pedagogies are primarily applied in school; therefore, students and parents are more active than teachers. Parents' roles in children's English language development have been taken as the key factor for the children's academic performance. The environments parents create at home support children's academic performance in school. Nowadays, in social circumstances, the family has a huge and tough responsibility, as it has to take proper care of their health, physical development, overall education, the development of their intellectual affinities, as well as the creation of better moral values and convictions and attitudes, habits to a firm and well behaved cultural relations in the family itself as well as in the society where the child lives (Ceka & Murati, 2016). Therefore, parents make a big contribution to the

development of children's English language skills. The teacher participants of this research also point out this fact.

Bhim, in his experience, divides parents into two groups and says that 40% of the parents are worried about their children's education and play a supportive role at home, whereas 60% of the parents are unaware of their children's education and its status. Bhim says:

*I have found some guardians worried and careful about their children's studies. They guide children to do homework at home. They frequently contact schools and inquire about children. However, more than 60% of guardians don't care about children. They never talk to the class teacher regarding their children's studies.*

Kamal also shares a similar experience that children having parents' consciousness of their education has a positive impact on learning achievement. His narratives of a child whose father is a teacher show how his learning achievement was better. According to him, *we have a student at our school whose father is also a teacher. His child has been doing better and improving in the study because of the supportive role of his father at home.*

Similarly, Hari says that parents' knowledge of their children's interests and parents' education level also play a crucial role in children's education. According to him, *Guardian's role is significant because it depends on their qualification, time management, care, being aware of their needs and interests and trying to know their psychology.* He further explains how parents' frequent visits to the school improve their children's learning achievement. He shares his experience:

*Rare guardians come to school. When they come, I feel very happy because we guide, suggest and motivate our students together, and I have found it very effective. Most of us don't know about the guardians and their background. Many more things are hidden about the reality of students which we don't know. Therefore, it is much easier to point out children's problems and report them to their guardians if the guardians are in school. Most of the things are hidden, and if they visit us, we point out the actual situation and it will be one of good coordination among teachers and guardians. Obviously, learning will be more effective.*

Thus, parents' involvement in children's education is important. Home is the first school of children, and they learn many things from home that are associated

with their behaviours and lives. Many researchers find a strong bond between homes and schools, and parents play a vital role in the development of children and their education (Edwards & Alldred, 2000; Henderson & Berla, 1994; Rockström et al., 2009). As the above narratives show that good cooperation between parents and schools can lead to remarkable academic achievement, many researchers focus on the value of parents' education. Dubow et al. (2009) show how parents' education level and their support for their children at home can have a long-term effect on the children's lives, and it can be easily predicted at the child's early age. Durisic and Bunijevac (2017) show the importance of parental involvement for children's educational success in language development and focus on school-family partnerships by showing six models of parental involvement in the success of children.

### **Students' Experience on Classroom Practices of Learning Ecology in Schools**

As discussed above, learning ecology plays a crucial role in effective learning. To create proper learning ecology, many things can be done. For good English learning ecology in school, the school infrastructures, classroom management, outside environment as well as classroom environment, student selections, appropriate teaching pedagogies, friendly behaviors of teachers, sufficient teaching materials, and so many other teaching learning-associated things should be well understood by the school management committee. The English environment we create matters a lot in the development of children's English language skills. We are responsible for giving them enough exposure to English language practices. Threefold factors of learning ecology school, students and parents are responsible for good learning ecology. Nepal linguist and ELT trainer Vishnu Sing Rai advocates six factors in the ecological approach to L2 teaching-learning (Rai et al., 2021).

If we talk about schools and schools' learning ecology, we can find it satisfactory somewhere and somewhere not. The school's administrative role, teachers' role, and students' role are important for creating a conducive learning ecology in a school. Parents also have an indirect role in this. Kulasekara (2015) and his team have carried out research on the development of learning ecology in general education in Sri Lanka and pointed out the various aspects like physical environment, psychological environment, academic environment, inclusive environment, maintaining school discipline, techno-friendly classroom, students' adequate assessment, etc. to be cared for proper learning ecology (Kulasekara, 2015). Some schools are found not conscious of these sensitive issues. My field visits have also

shown that schools are not so serious and are working to create quality learning ecology in schools.

Bhawana gives her moderate reply in response to her learning ecology in school, ‘neither good nor bad’. She shows teachers’ vital role and further says:

*All the teachers are like friends. Both male and female teachers treat us well. It is something good over here. However, the bad thing is that some teachers come to school but don't come to teach us in the classroom. Our some classes have not been run since the day before yesterday. There are altogether six subjects, but on some days, three subjects haven't been taught because teachers are busy with their tasks.*

Bhawana raises some issues of discipline regarding language [rough language] use of her peers in the classrooms and the need for their personal hygiene and uniform checkups. Teachers should check students’ personal hygiene and control their language. *We shouldn't use rough words while speaking, even when talking to friends. I ask them to check students' uniforms, hair, nails, etc.* She also praises the teachers’ supportive behaviors in the classrooms and their ‘romantic’ way of teaching for better classroom comprehension. *They come and teach us and even write in an exercise book as well. If we don't understand anything, they teach us joyfully.*

Bidhisha responds to the question regarding the learning ecology practices in the classroom very naively. She talks about teachers’ role in the environment-cleaning activities in school and outside. *Our school environment is good, we clean our school environment, and we have planted trees. Our teachers tell us we should not pluck tree leaves and throw them away. It is our environment.*

According to Bidhisha, a school has a role in stopping junk food in school, which adversely affects students’ health and studies. *A balanced diet is good for our health, but we eat junkfood like biscuits, noodles, etc.so far. Our school has recently stopped noodles. It's good for us. If health is not good, how we can study well.* She also says that friends also should be good. Many students have been the victims of drugs. *Friends also should be good. See, our many friends have fallen into drugs, new friends are coming, and their behavior is different. We are reading, but friends are teasing. That is also hampering our study.*

Bidhisha also talks about the teachers’ supportive behavior. *Teachers should also know about their students; one-way understanding is not good. They should know about students' interests. They focus on comparatively weak students. It's*

*good, too. They ask and teach us, but do not use supportive teaching materials. She also talks about school facilities. She expresses her happiness about having gotten into a science lab and temple in school. She says “Recently, we have a science lab in school, we have a temple now, and previously, we did not have any. We came, read and went home. I am interested in reading science in a higher class, but we do not have a science lab. We told the head teacher that we needed it. Now, we have a science lab, but we do not have tools like a microscope. We do not know what to do. We have facilities but not sufficient.”*

Bidhisha raises another important issue on the need for students’ motivation for students. She says, *“Many friends do not come to school regularly. They do not even know how to read books because they do not practice hard. Parents are also not caring about this.”*

Another participant, Mina, talks about the classroom reading environment. She says the reading environment for other subjects is good but not for Health and English. *We don’t have a good learning environment for health and English subjects. I don’t like it. The reason behind this, she says, Teachers aren’t serious about teaching. They don’t pay care to students and do not focus on them. They just come, take attendance, teach us and tell us to do exercise. Sometimes, they tell us to do exercise without teaching. Then they sit on chairs and take a rest.*

Her response towards the school administration is, *“Our school is good. Other teachers are okay. I understand other teachers’ teaching, too. However, I can’t understand the teaching of health and English teachers. Health teacher does not teach us the course book, and the English teacher also does not do all the exercises like grammar. It is lagging behind. Our principal does nothing. Teachers do not teach well, and they should repeat if students do not understand.”*

Along with the teaching style of teachers and their care for students in the classroom, Mina points out the need for student counseling and parents’ meeting in school regularly. *Teachers should study students. They should know where students go and what they do and counsel them accordingly. Time and again, schools should organize parents’ meeting in school.*

From the above interactions of the participants, we can make the point that some teaching-learning practices in the classrooms are satisfactory. Still, there are many things to be done to improve the learning environment in the classroom. Participants point out the need of improvement in teachers’ teaching methodologies,

building some physical resources like science labs and libraries with sufficient reading tools, constant student motivation as well as counseling, and the need for regular parent meetings in classrooms. If these things can be done, learning environments will definitely be better, and it will increase classroom outcomes as well. Cohen, in this regard, says that safe, caring, participatory, and responsive school systems and homes support children in growing up to be healthy democratic citizens (Cohen, 2006). Regarding teachers' role in the classroom for improving learning classroom improvement, Arends & Kilcher (2010) view is that teachers, regardless of their grade levels, are expected to perform three important functions to achieve the attributes of effective teachers. They are to provide leadership to a group of students, to provide direct, face-to-face instruction to students, and to work with colleagues, parents, and others to improve classrooms and schools. Learning organizations are not only for the students but also for the teachers themselves. Teachers provide leadership to their students through planning, motivation and the facilitation of learning. Fraser et al. (1998) also accept that teachers' commitment to their work and their self-efficacy have been decreasing in the present context and show the need for some tasks to be done to motivate the teachers to transmit their skills in students and teachers' relationship.

In the same way, understanding students' backgrounds and applying ample pedagogies for effective learning is quite necessary for the proper learning environment. A deeper understanding of current research is needed in order to challenge misconceptions about learners and learning, to identify common elements of successful programs and to create better ways for teachers to create quality learning contexts (e.g. Putnam & Borko, 2000). Organizing guidance and counselling programs in schools and involving students in such programs will make them realize their potential, get emotional support, and have an incentive to study (Dilag, 2022). Education requires our conscious and planned effort to create a learning atmosphere in which a child can develop self-control, potential, skill, intelligence, spiritual strength and noble character (Maba, 2017).

### **Teachers' Experiences of Classroom Practices**

Having a perception and opinion of learning ecology is one thing, and real classroom performance is another. The classroom ground reality is one thing, and philosophical ideologies are another. For the classroom outcome, classroom components, teachers, students, and environments and their variables should have

smooth reciprocal relationships. For good learning cultures, the interactions between teachers and students in a classroom with various supportive tools are found to be key factors in the Assessment of learner-centred Practices (ALCP) surveys of McCombs (1999). My participants' narratives and the scenes I found during the interviews in schools also point out similar cases.

Hari reflects on his classrooms and shares the story of the diverse students in classrooms, the challenges added by the diversity and how he handles the classroom using different teaching pedagogies. He shows the problem of coordination between teachers and students and shows a problem in parents' care, too. He shares *Therefore, here are mixed students from different backgrounds. Here is such a setting in Community school students' family background, and our efforts are useless due to a lack of coordination between teachers and guardians.*

Hari also shares his experience of his classroom and practices of teaching English in the classroom. He shares his experience of transforming classrooms and teaching-learning with the entry of ICT. *Nowadays, with the use of ICT, interaction with teachers, smart boards, interactive boards, lab, and audio video display, we are trying to motivate our students' language learning.* He also shares his experience of classroom hindrances *sometimes, we think of running class in a smooth way, but different situations hinder it. So, we need to break it. Therefore, we are bus drivers and sometimes we need to turn, or stop and we can't run smoothly.*

Bhim narrates his classroom practices and shows how difficult it is to teach English as a second and third language. *However, we can't teach the English language in English since we don't have that environment. English is not our students' first or second language. It is a third language. They don't speak English. So it is very difficult for them to understand English. I use grammar translation method to teach English.*

He also narrates how he is using ICT in classrooms to improve the learning environment and also shows the problem caused by limited ICT resources. In the same way, another teacher participant, Kamal, shares his experience *"Although we lack many facilities and resources, we are doing our best to maintain a good learning ecology at our school in a student-friendly environment. Students here do not have a sound background as at private schools. Still, we are contributing to our efforts in order to achieve the goal of maintaining good learning ecology using a variety of teaching materials."*



In this way, the teacher participants reflect on their classroom practices of teaching mixed background students, the need to apply different pedagogies to make effective classroom teaching and the story of the previous teaching model and present teaching model. In the present context of classrooms, there are students from different socioeconomic communities, different parental education levels, and students of different interests and cultures. In this context, it is really challenging for a teacher to ensure maximum learning achievement. Sari & Nayir, (2020) conducted research on problems of the teachers' experience in primary classes with diverse cultures and backgrounds and showed various problems like insufficient teaching experience, time and classroom management, discipline, and insufficient foreign language knowledge etc. Similarly, some English teachers are having problems teaching English because they do not have a proper learning ecology in the classroom. English teachers cannot speak in the classroom because students' level is so poor that they do not understand anything. They have to translate everything there. English has been the third language for students, and they do not get a proper English environment either in the classroom or at home because no one speaks English there. Rai et al. (2021) also show a similar experience of English teachers who face multi-linguistic students in the classrooms and shows the barriers to English language teaching as L2 or L3. He elaborates that students can learn the classroom teaching in their mother language better than in the English medium. He says that government policy has also focused on teaching primary children in their mother tongue, and the use of the mother tongue has also made the English classroom environment worse. Similarly, ICT is taken as the dominant tool for enhancing students' interest and motivating them to continue their studies. It has been found very effective in making the classroom interesting, interactive and more comprehensive. Azmi (2017) shows that the use of ICT in a classroom can improve and optimize students' language acquisition, substantially motivate them to continue their learning and stimulate their creativity and passion.

### **Students' Expectations for Conducive Learning Ecology**

Students are the learners. They learn many things from the environment in which they grow up. They come to school and college for knowledge that can prepare them for every facet of life. There are many stakeholders in education schools and colleges. Every stakeholder has a role in creating effective learning ecology in schools. The teachers, students, school administration, parents, and their variables all have an equal role in interacting among them and creating effective learner-centered

environments (Crick et al., 2007). In spite of all these things, students have not expected to learn ecology. The school environment and home environment are not helpful for their learning. Still, students have some expectations for improving the learning environment.

Bhawana expects her teachers to come to the class regularly and also keep discipline in the classroom. *For me, all teachers come to teach us. We shouldn't use rough words while speaking, even to friends. I ask them to check students' uniform, their hair, their nails etc.* She expects teachers' regularity in school. *Coming regularly to school and teaching us is better. Sometimes they come, and sometimes they don't. But the teachers' absence affects us. They support us like our parents. So, if they come regularly, then it is better.* Regarding home environments, she expects parents' care, love, a calm environment, etc.

Mina keeps her expectation that teachers should come to school regularly and they should teach all exercises. They should be friendly and should repeat the chapters time and again if students do not understand. *I think the teachers should teach well, teach grammar, and make sure students understand, give classwork, check assignments, give feedback, and take care of poor students. They should repeat and repeat if students do not understand.* Similarly, she expects home environment should be good, and it is better if there is someone to guide her in study at home. She expects a good relationship between parents for a better learning environment. *I don't know about my father. But my mother is supportive. My mother always says, "Read. I support and provide you and your brother with all the things that you need, even if I need to lose everything... My father got married again. He sometimes comes and asks us if we need money. But I don't like his support.*

Bidhisha also shares her expectations regarding the classroom and home environment for better learning, that good friends are required, and that teachers need to understand students. *Friends should be good. New friends are coming. Good students should be admitted. Nowadays, friends take drugs. Friends tease us while we are reading. Teachers should understand students. We are talented, but teachers should focus on poor students as well.* She also talks about home environment and says *Many of my friends cannot because they do not practice at home. Parents also do not say anything. Every parent has a dream, and my parents also have, but my parents do not say anything. Parents do not stop children from going anywhere and eating*

*anything. They should counsel their children about drugs.* She further says that parents should not fight.

In this way, students' narratives of their expectations for a better learning environment show that stakeholders of the education need to be serious about maintaining discipline in school, understanding students' situation and applying appropriate teaching styles in classrooms, students' self-motivation for study, teachers' regularity in school and parents' appropriate care at home. Discipline of students is important for a good learning environment in the classroom, and principals and teachers in school should strictly monitor students' discipline and environmental knowledge. Similarly, teachers also should have emotions and guts for teaching. Their inner feelings and enthusiasm for teaching have a great role in their classroom performance. In this regard, Zembylas (2007) talks about emotional ecology and pedagogical content knowledge of teachers in teaching, which largely influences the learning outcome. Findings of various studies have provided empirical evidence that students' learning environment perceptions are related to cognitive and affective learning outcomes (Fraser, 1998), such as students' achievements, motivation, metacognition, self-regulation, and achievement goal orientation (Chionh & Fraser, 2009).

### **Teachers' Narration on Challenges for Conducive Learning Ecology**

The teachers in a school want to make maximum learning achievement of their children in a school. For that, they dedicate their time and effort. Despite them, expected improvement is not seen in the students' learning achievement. It is because in learning ecology, there are many components, and their role is equally important. School infrastructures, available teaching resources, students' learning readiness, their motivation for study, parents' support at home and school administrative support, etc., also have a great role in making teachers' efforts fruitful. Teachers need a supportive role from every stakeholder in learning ecology, though hundred percent support is not possible. In my research, teachers indicate the following factors as the challenges for learning ecology in schools.

Hari narrates that parents' rare visits to the school and having no reciprocal communication between parents and teachers regarding students' information are big challenges for teachers. Because of this, much information about students does not reach the teachers or parents, which makes it difficult to handle the students in a proper way. *Rare guardians come to school. Most of us don't know about*

*guardians and their background. Many more things are hidden about the reality of students which we don't know. Therefore, it is much easier to point out children's problems and report them to their guardians if the guardians are in school.*

Hari points out another challenge of teaching in community schools. He shows that *mixed backgrounds of students within the same classroom and having no proper match in government policy, teachers' training, and classroom practices are big challenges for expected learning outcomes.* Similarly, he also focuses on adequate administrative support from administrations as well. He demands *"In my view, difficult subjects should be focused and school should organize training programs for such subjects. We need to make ICT use in classrooms in place of paper and pencil."* Hari, being an English teacher, also shows challenges in English classrooms. He shows that teachers' teaching skills, students' lack of exposure opportunities, and students' poor base are big challenges. *"The challenge lies in skill, implementation and script. From the students' side, there is not any challenge from learning point of view; if the students' base is good, they can't take it as difficult, but Nepali medium learners find it difficult on spelling, pronunciation, and script because of not using day to day communication as well as lack of exposure."*

Bhim also accepts that there is no work without challenge. He points out that students' self-motivation and having fewer working days in schools because of unnecessary vacations are challenges of learning ecology.

*There are some drawbacks to the teaching system. The significant weakness of this system is we have fewer working days. Due to different festivals, rainy vacations, and winter vacations, the school remains closed. We have passed one month Dashain-Tihar vacation, and consequently, students have forgotten what they learnt before the vacation. I had given thirty questions as a vacation assignment. However, even a single student didn't answer them.*

He also shows the need for change in teachers' teaching styles to bring out students' inner talents and says *I mean, the teacher should act as a facilitator but not as an authoritarian figure. They should be able to help students bring out hidden talents and guide them towards a better future.* Finally, Bhim shows an emergency in adding teaching tools in classrooms for an effective learning environment. He shares the story of how he faces challenges in classrooms because of limited resources.

*Regarding teaching tools, we have only one projector in one classroom. I make slides on my laptop, and I sometimes take my students to that room and display*

*some important videos. However, I can't do that most of the time as other teachers also want to do the same. My school hasn't been ICT- friendly yet. Therefore, I prepare lesson plans and teach textbooks.*

Kamal also considers parents' lack of proper care at home and students' negligence towards study to be challenges for expected learning outcomes. *However, some students are seen not paying proper attention towards learning prospect. The possible reasons behind this may be parents' lack of care for their children at home. And negligence of students towards study.* He expresses his happiness with school administration and executive support *Of course, we are getting the full support of both the school administration and parents for improving the learning aspect of our students which is impacting positively on our students for the learning process.*

Kamal basically shows two challenges in creating an effective learning ecology in schools. *Basically, two challenges I have seen are political challenges and inappropriate curriculum. These challenges are challenging the learning environment for the students.* According to him, our curricula do not meet students' interests, and teachers also cannot teach in their own ways because of political issues. Unnecessary leaves, unnecessary political programs and political interference in teachers' work have also affected the learning environment of schools.

The above narrations show that teachers face many challenges in the classroom in order to improve classroom learning. Parents' frequent visits to the school are required so that no information about students can remain secret between teachers and students. Parents' visit helps the teachers take and give detailed information about the students so that both sides' proper care of children can be meaningful in making learning output fruitful. Đurišić et al. (2023) point out that schools need to build partnerships with parents and develop mutual responsibility for the success of children in the education system. This makes parents aware of their responsibility and take care of their children well at home for better academic achievement. Similarly, having no proper match between curriculum policy, classroom pedagogy, and students' interests is also another challenge for the appropriate learning ecology. Curriculum policy intends to produce skilled and local need-based human resources who are more skill-based, but classroom teaching is quite theoretical. As a result, students' interest in learning something practical to life is not met. So, it worsens the learning ecology. Wahlström (2023) shows the need for

an intersection between research on curriculum, concepts of knowledge and teachers' perceptions of their actual teaching to create an appropriate learning environment.

### **Chapter Summary**

Therefore, this section discusses exploring students' perceptions of classroom practices and teacher-student interaction by highlighting key factors such as teaching styles, teachers' classroom consistency, and the availability of supportive reading resources in schools. These perceptions have been contextualized through narratives collected during interviews with participants, revealing both challenges and opportunities for enhancing learning outcomes. It also examined the role of classroom dynamics in promoting or hindering learning engagement. Drawing on reflective journals and participant interviews, it very well-identified specific barriers, such as inadequate pedagogical strategies, socio-economic disparities, and limited access to resources, etc. These findings are aligned with Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, which underscores the significance of micro, meso, and macro-level interactions in shaping students' academic experiences.

The student participants' narratives showed that teachers' timing, schools' surroundings, teachers' teaching style and their knowledge about students' background, physical resources in schools, etc., had a deep impact on their learning. Similarly, their experience of home environments showed that family support, parents' adequate care for the children, parents' smooth relationship also, etc. played a vital role in their learning. The teacher participants reflected on their classroom practices of teaching mixed background students and showed the challenge of applying different pedagogies to make effective classroom teaching. They also pointed out the parents' low awareness level, students' low interest in study and scarcity of teaching resources as the major challenges in teaching mixed background students.

## CHAPTER V

### ANALYZING LEARNING ECOLOGY FOR LEARNERS' LEARNING ENGAGEMENTS

This chapter presents the reflections of teachers and students on classrooms, schools and homes. It illustrates the learning ecologies of students in these three spaces, the supportive environments they are undergoing there, and some literary reviews. The participants have shown both satisfaction and dissatisfaction as a response to these learning ecologies. The studentparticipants point out that teachers and schools have major roles in creating active learning environments in schools and classrooms. Inclusive teaching pedagogies address students' interests and make sufficient available teaching resources and tools in classrooms and schools to support the learning environments. Similarly, chapter five also deals with the different home-based learning ecological factors that play supportive roles in the learning achievement of the children. Parents' educational consciousness level, their concern towards children's education and teachers-parents relationships have a positive impact on students' learning achievement.

#### **Reflections on Learning Achievement: Classroom-based Learning Ecology**

Learners in the classrooms require maximum achievement. For it, they need a classroom environment accordingly. In a calm and child-friendly environment, students can learn well and perform well. Teachers' performance, teaching style, and friendly behaviors play a prominent role in the classroom. Teachers' perceptions of their profession and timing in the classroom are also important for children's good performance. Similarly, students' active participation is also required in the classroom for good achievement. If the students' perceptions of teachers and the classroom subject matter are positive, their classroom participation is high, and it helps to foster good classroom performance. Students' perceptions and thoughts can be positive if their classmates are helpful and they are self-motivated for classroom learning. For better classroom performance, the classroom should be calm and spacious. I present my research participants' classroom reflections here, which also show similar experiences.

Bhawana reflects on her classroom activities and narrates that the teacher's role is greater for students' better performance in class. She shares how teachers'

positive support and friendly behaviors support them in better learning. *She praises the teachers' proper care and teaching pedagogies in the classroom.* Similarly, she feels happy in her fearless classroom environment. *I haven't seen the teachers carrying a stick while coming to teach us except a few.*

Mina also shares her classroom experience, stating that her teachers are traditional and their teaching is improper. *After they enter the classroom, the teacher takes attendance, teaches any lesson and then asks us to do exercise. Sometimes, even without teaching, they order us to do question-answer exercises.* She also reflects on her classroom and gives her feedback to the teachers, *I think the teachers should teach well, teach grammar, make sure students understand, give classwork, check assignments, give feedback, and take care of low performing students.* Her narratives point out that teachers need to know the syllabus and students' interests. A teacher's lesson plan can be incomplete without prior knowledge of students' interests, background and course syllabus. Likewise, a teacher and a student should be dedicated to classroom teaching and learning. Students' timely completion of classwork and home assignments and teachers' timely feedback and appraisals of assignments definitely influence classroom achievements.

These reflections show that teachers' role is crucial in maximizing learning achievements. If the teachers understand the student's backgrounds and interests, it is very comfortable for them to design lesson plans and approach students well in class. Hill and Chin (2018) explain the value of teachers' knowledge of students' needs and interests and their role in predicting instructing steps and students' learning achievement. Students' care and their classroom satisfaction give high learning achievement. Teachers' quality matters a lot in students' achievement. Hanushek & Woessmann (2010) show the significant relationship between teachers' quality and students' achievement. Qualified teachers and their excellent performance in the class encourage the readers to work hard and secure good learning achievement.

The teacher participant, Hari, shares his classroom reflections and focuses on three things. He reflects on how difficult it is to teach in a community school because of the diverse backgrounds of students. *Therefore, there are mixed students from different backgrounds. Here is such a setting in Community school students' family background, and our effort is useless.* According to his reflections, the classrooms are full of students who do not even understand the Nepali language, and it is difficult to teach English, which is the third language in the classroom. Teaching EFL in the



classroom with diverse mother-tongue-speaking students is another big challenge for Hari. He shares his classroom story:

*When I was a student, English was taken a difficult subject. It was taken as a second language. Here, in this school, most of the students are from the Chaudhary community, and I find it difficult to speak the Chaudhary language. Naturally, teaching and learning a second language is more difficult. However, in English medium, it is easier to teach, but in the Nepali medium, it is more challenging.*

Similarly, Hari shares his classroom experience and puts his insight that there is a need for language translations (English into Nepali or students' mother tongue) to bring better classroom achievement. He shares his story of how he was in an illusion in the classrooms this way:

*I taught in Pyuthan as an English teacher. While I was there, I taught English to English, and there was pin-drop silence inside the classroom. I thought I did my best in the classroom, and students were getting my point, but later, I came to know that they were not able to learn; even students asked me to teach in their mother tongue.*

It shows the need for language translation for EFL students' learning achievement in English classrooms.

Bhim also narrates that the language barrier is a major factor influencing students' classroom achievement. He also shows the need for language translation in the classroom.

*However, we can't teach the English language in English since we don't have that environment. English is not the first or second language of our students. It is the third language. They don't speak English. So it is very difficult for them to understand English. I use the grammar translation method to teach English.*

Classrooms contain diverse students. Some students are slow learners, and some students are fast learners in the classroom. Similarly, some students are active and quick, and such students are very interactive in the classrooms. They make quick responses and participate in classroom activities. But some students are shy and reserved. They hardly respond in class, and they are very less active in classroom activities. In the same way, there are disciplined and good listeners in the classrooms. At the same time, some students are hyperactive and bull-natured in the classrooms. They do not listen to the teachers so well in the classrooms. Instead, they create

various hindrances for serious learners in the classroom. Especially in community schools, students are found to be of various races and cultures. According to their cultures, their thoughts and perceptions are also different. Because of the different economic backgrounds, some students are in the class with all the required learning materials, and some come to the classroom with poor looks and very few books. In such cases, finding appropriate teaching techniques to meet the needs and interests of all these types of learners is a big challenge to a teacher. Teachers are expected to be versatile to make such classrooms effective.

Tan and McWilliam (2009) find fresh perspectives and more nuanced understandings of how diverse learners and their teachers negotiate the opportunities and challenges of the New London Group's vision of a multiliteracies approach to literacy and learning. Milner (2009) raises the necessity of next-level education to meet the diverse students' interests and requirements by focusing on the five principles. Gay (2016) focuses on multicultural education as the need to prepare students to be democratic citizens and successful students in a pluralistic society. Therefore, to address the diversity of students in 21<sup>st</sup>-century classrooms, an innovative education system is counted to be developed, and the teacher education system is also expected to be revived.

The same classroom contains multi-lingual students who cannot speak and understand Nepali properly. It is really challenging to teach EFL to such students. The mother tongue of students influences their learning. What they listen to, think about in their language, and express in English. Students also expect translation in the classrooms, as the participants have been told. But this task is not so easy for the teachers. Such transfers sometimes create confusion and misunderstanding.

Bhawana claims that teachers' timing and regularity in the classroom influence their classroom performance. *However, they don't come to teach us regularly. Coming regularly to school and teaching us is better. Sometimes they come, and sometimes don't. But the teachers' absence affects us. They support us like our parents.* Bidhisha also says that teachers' absenteeism affects the classroom learning environment, and it should be reduced by replacing teachers. She shares the story of how her school replaces the absent teachers' classrooms by managing another teacher. *Nowadays, one of the teachers has gone on a tour. The headteacher is attending class in his absence.*

The teacher participant, Bhim, also accepts that various factors influence teachers' regularity in schools and adversely affect students' learning. *There are some drawbacks to teaching system. The significant weakness of this system is we have fewer working days.*

Therefore, teachers' timing in the classrooms and their school regularity greatly affect classroom achievement. Teachers' classroom punctuality and school regularity also deeply impact the teaching and learning outcomes of the classroom. Teachers' timing means teachers' punctuality and regularity in the class. Teachers' good timing helps them lead the course ahead and complete it well. The participants of the research have also pointed out that teachers' absenteeism and classroom irregularity have affected the classroom learning achievement of students. During my visit to the school, I also came across a similar incident there. When I was there, I saw the English teacher about whose absenteeism the students were complaining was sitting in the sun with his colleagues and talking there. Teachers' timing is very important for the students' achievement. Burgess et al.(2023) show how time allocations for different classroom activities during the class practice hour are important and how best the outcome it gives. The more time the teachers give to their students, the better results they are likely to secure in the exam. If the teachers arrive in class on time and teach the class for full hours, the students are likely to do better in their subject. Jez and Wassmer (2015) show that extended teachers' time in the classroom brought better academic achievement for the students.

Similarly, Mina opines that classrooms should be well-equipped with modern technologies. The development of modern technologies and the internet have transformed the present classrooms. They have made classroom teaching and learning very comfortable and effective. Therefore, she says that teachers should use a smart board to *make things clear*. Bidhisha also states that schools should provide the teaching resources required for effective classroom learning. *We didn't have a science lab, temple, or other facilities in the past. However, recently, they have made it possible. Yet, some pieces of equipment, like a microscope, are lacking. They have more to do.*

Hari also accepts that the use of ICT in the classroom influences the students' learning outcomes because it makes classroom teaching comfortable and brings clarity to students. *Nowadays, we are trying to motivate our student's language*

*learning by using ICT, interaction with the teacher, smart board, interactive board, lab, and audio-video display.*

According to Bhim, the use of projectors and other ICT tools in the classroom makes teaching and learning effective. Because of the limited resources, teachers cannot use them in the classrooms, and they have to find their options. *Regarding teaching tools, we have only one projector in one classroom. Most of the time, I can't do that as other teachers also want to do the same. My school hasn't been ICT-friendly yet. Therefore, I prepare lesson plans and teach textbooks.*

Kamal reflects on his classroom and says that different facilities in schools, like science lab and the use of locally available materials to teach students in the classroom, bring good learning outcomes. *We take our students to lab. We use locally available resources to teach learning materials and encourage our students to do the same. Teaching the students using materials is seen as bringing lots of learning outcomes.*

ICT in schools is a buzzword in the present scenario. Most of the schools are seen modernizing their classroom with the use of ICT. This has made teaching and learning activities comfortable and convenient. Using smart boards in the classroom helps the teacher present their teaching content, bring examples with the desired pictures, compare them with others and illustrate them, etc. It gives clarity to students as well. Students are not required to take books and copies in schools; rather, they come with tablets. They receive their home assignments on tablets and submit them through the tablets. Teachers also prepare their slides and present them in the classroom with various supporting videos and pictures so students can easily understand them. Yasin et al.(2023) find the repercussions of ICTs on students' academic performance. Their findings emphasize the importance of incorporating ICT tools and resources into educational settings to enhance learning outcomes. In the narratives of my research participants, we can find both students and teachers demanding ICTs in their classrooms for their effective learning outcomes.

Sufficient teaching materials are required to assist the students in their teaching and learning. They help the students practice what they have learned in the classroom and achieve practical knowledge. Instructional materials have an effective role in teaching and learning processes by providing visual aids, practical experiences, and interactive resources to enhance students' understanding of educational concepts. Instructional resources help the teaching and learning activities by assisting the

teacher with the presentation and transmission of educational content and the achievement of educational objectives whilst aiding the students in acquiring knowledge and profiling different abilities and values. The participants in my research complain about the improper teaching resources in schools. They express to get science labs and projectors in schools but express their sadness to reflect how insufficient they are.

Bidhisha's classroom experience is that students' friendships in the classroom affect their classroom performance. Good friends' friendships have a positive impact on classroom achievement and bad friends' bad achievement.

*Friends circle can impact too. Youths are addicted to drug abuse due to bad companions. It has had bad effects on learners. Recently, new students have joined. We might not have similar interests and behaviours. They tease and mock us while we are reading. This distracts our study.*

Peer circle is one of the major factors influencing learning achievement. Peer circle refers here to the friends of students in the classroom. Students-participants' narratives in the research point out that students' positive friendships bring positive results, and negative friendships bring negative results. Good friends are seriously engaged in study, and they try to encourage their friends to study, and they help their friends in a positive way. Bad friends refer to those students who have less interest in studying and who are engaged in activities that deteriorate the learning environment of the classroom. Such students are possibly engaged in drugs and cigarettes, creating noise and hindrances in classrooms. Such friends disturb others in the classrooms. Therefore, they have a negative role in the classroom achievement of students. The participants of my research stressed the selection of students for admission to the school. The role of peers also has entered increasingly into theoretical analyses of school choice. Parents in schools also have their concerns about the friendships of their children. My experience also shows how parents request the class teachers to keep their children in good peer groups. Hanushek et al.(2003) also show how the peer groups' ability influences classroom achievement. Their research result shows that peer achievement has a positive effect on achievement growth. Peer group influence has a great role in the academic performance of students. If the peer groups are from poor family backgrounds, like broken families, students are likely to have been negatively influenced by peer pressure. In such cases, schools are required to give proper counselling and guidance to their students (Wabukundi, 2016).

Kamal also focuses on the need to bring self-motivating programs into school for a good learning outcome. Students' regular counseling and motivation towards study also affect their classroom achievements. *We have been conducting many teaching and learning practices to foster students' learning achievements. Basically, we focus on the motivational teaching-learning methodology that truly encourages them in the learning aspect*

Bidhisha also narrates that her friends are not self-motivated to study. She says that her friends should try to read themselves. They should read at home too. *Teachers teach them, but they don't have a book-reading culture. They never turn a page and read it at home. How can they learn without touching books?*

So, students should have the willpower to do something from the things they are doing. If they want to do something with their own heart, they can do that and succeed. Teachers' pressure, peer pressure, parents' pressure, etc., cannot lead them to success. Some students are serious about their careers, and they have already set their aims and goals. Such students are hardworking and dedicated to academic achievement. And some other majority of the students are not aware of their career and future. They are lazy and careless in their work. They rarely participate in classroom activities and show hostile behaviors in the classrooms, too. Regular counseling and motivational classes are required for such students to be self-motivated. The teacher and student participants both show the need for such classes for some students in their classrooms. Students may benefit from increased learning motivation via the provision of support and help from guidance counselors as they work to overcome the challenges they confront in their education. Education is a conscious and planned effort to create a learning atmosphere and learning process in such a way that students can actively develop their potential, have self-control, intelligence, skills in society, religious and spiritual strength, and personality and noble character (Maba, 2017).

Both sides' class reflections show that all the activities performed either by the teacher or students have a strong impact on classroom achievement. The reflections of students and teachers show that factors like teachers' quality to understand students and their interests, teachers' classroom timing and regularity, use of teaching materials and ICT in classrooms, inclusive teaching pedagogies, students' peer circles and their self-motivation, etc. help to create learning ecology in the classroom and contribute to the classroom achievement.

### Reflections on Learning Achievement: School-based Learning Ecology

Learners come to school to learn something. Learning is a conscious effort for which a certain environment is required. As learning is psychological, various environmental factors play a pivotal role in learning achievement. Therefore, school and school administration are reported to be clever in maintaining an appropriate school environment for the learners. Students are believed to feel safe and free to learn in their school. There should not be any factors in school that affect their learning. According to the student's needs and interests, schools are required to create conducive environments for effective learning achievement for students. The participants of this research also keep similar views.

Mina shows satisfaction with the school environment but dissatisfaction with some teachers. She is not happy with some teachers' teaching styles. *Our school is good. Other teachers are okay. I understand other teachers' teaching. However, I can't understand the teaching of health and English teachers. Teachers aren't serious about teaching. They don't pay any attention.*

Bidhisha also emphasizes that there are students with diverse abilities, and teachers are supposed to change their classroom teaching pedagogies by understanding students' levels. *Teachers should understand students. Special care and attention should be paid to low-performing students.*

The teacher participant, Bhim, also compares a teacher with an artist and focuses on the fact that teachers need to be versatile and dynamic in their teaching. *Teachers can create a conducive learning ecology by managing and handling students' diversity, making learning simple, easy and sustainable. Furthermore, they should play the role of an artist.*

Therefore, schools are found to develop programs that make teachers inclusive and versatile in their classroom pedagogy to meet the objectives of the national curriculum. Students from various cultures and communities come to school. Not all students have the same learning ability. Therefore, the participants in the research focus on making schools inclusive so that diverse students can perform equally in the classroom. For this, schools are required to train teachers, make school policies and create a similar environment in schools. Beaulieu (2022) also led inclusive teaching practices in her classes with differently abled students, and these had a positive impact. Teachers' training and orientation programs develop teachers professionally and help

in the learning outcome of children Jamal et al.(2024). So, schools must invest in the teachers' training and professional developmental programs.

Teachers are required to be updated with the curriculum and its objectives. Many teachers teach in schools in their own way, and they are unaware of curriculum objectives. As a result, students cannot achieve the expected classroom outcomes. Likewise, today's classrooms are diverse. There are students with various interests and backgrounds. To meet this diversity and make effective classroom outcomes, teachers need to be innovative. For these, all regular training and updates are required by the teachers. Teacher training revives the teachers and helps them to be inclusive in their contents and classroom pedagogies. Subedi (2015) assesses the effectiveness of teacher training programs in Nepal and categorizes their contributions into six dimensions: quality, access, equity, efficiency, teacher development and overall school development.

According to Bidhisha, a school should maintain a clean environment as it influences students' achievement. *The environment in our school is nice. It's clean; garbage truck comes to collect waste every day. We have trees there. Children keep their surroundings neat. We all should care about the environment wherever we are.* A clean school environment with greenery makes schools look beautiful and attractive. It draws students' attention, and psychologically, students feel excited to come to school and study.

Similarly, Bidhisha also emphasizes that schools should focus on the food habits of students. According to her, food influences students' academic performance. *We should avoid consuming junk food, noodles, and biscuits. Our school has banned noodles recently. It is better to eat balanced food.* Junk food stops the brain development of a child and affects learning achievement. Therefore, schools need to educate their children about the harmful effects of junk food on our health.

We know that learning is psychological. We can be psychologically fit to learn when we are physically healthy. For our good health, we need to have good food habits. But students do not have good food habits. They eat junk food, and their parents also cannot maintain a balanced diet at home. For this, a school needs to play a prominent role. Students should be counseled at schools about the adverse effects of junk food on their health, and they should be provided with nutritious food in their tiffins. Nepalese community schools Peter et al. (2021) research also shows how nutritious food improves child development and academic performance of a student.



Here, Bhawana raises two important things: teachers' behaviors and teachers' absenteeism in schools, which have a deep influence on teachers' learning. *All the teachers are like friends. Both male and female teachers treat us well. It is something good over here. However, the bad thing is that some teachers come to school but don't come to teach us in the classroom.*

Kamal also says that a student-friendly environment is required in a school for a child's effective learning, and his school is also trying its best for that. *Although we lack many facilities and resources, we are doing our best to maintain a good learning ecology in a student-friendly environment at our school.* Bhim expresses his anxiety about regular leaves in school, which has affected course completion. *Due to different festivals, rainy vacations, and winter vacations, school remains closed. We have completed one month Dashain- Tihar vacation and consequently, students have forgotten what they learnt before the vacation. I had given thirty questions as a vacation assignment. However, even a single student didn't answer them.*

Mina also stresses that the practice of establishing stress-free environments in schools has a positive influence on English language acquisition. Teachers are not expected to show fear in the classrooms by carrying sticks in the English classrooms. She reflects on her classroom as *I haven't seen the teachers carrying a stick while coming to teach us except a few.*

This shows that a school's focus on a child-friendly environment in which the children can ask questions about the things that they do not know has a deep impact on learning. Child-A friendly environment encourages the students to ask more questions and queries. In such an environment, there is no fear and anxiety in children. They feel safe, and they are self-motivated to study. If a stress-free environment is created in schools, students are open to bringing out their inner talents and participating in every school activity. This type of environment supports students' learning positively.

Learning is a psychological act, and learners are very soft in their hearts. The very small, unfavorable thing may also affect their psychology and heart. Therefore, approaching students and teaching them is a very sensitive activity. School administrations should be careful in creating an appropriate nurturing environment for them. Stress can demotivate students for learning and impact their learning adversely. Teachers' behaviors in schools also matter a lot in a child's academic performance. Teachers' friendly behaviors in schools encourage students to participate in classroom

activities. Students do not hesitate to ask questions and put their queries in the classroom. As a result, students' academic performance improves. Hussain et al. (2024) show the positive impact of positive behavior of teachers on their students' learning.

Child-friendly environment activities play a supportive role in English language development. A stress-free environment helps the child's overall development. Either in the name of discipline or assignment, children should not be kept under stress. In stress-free environments, children can put their queries in front of teachers openly and interact freely. This supports their learning positively, and such learning is natural and perpetual. When they feel safe and supported, they can take risks and think creatively. Stressful factors are not limited to family and social bonding; there are many school-related factors that affect students. Fathiyah (2022) shows six sources of common academic stress in schools in his research and also presents remedies to keep children stress-free.

Bhawana also focuses on the school discipline that cares about students' hygiene, hair, nails and uniform. *We shouldn't use rough words while speaking, even when speaking to friends. I ask them to check students' uniform, their hair, their nail, etc.* Bidhisha also says that schools need to check students' behaviors in schools, give proper advice and maintain discipline. This creates a positive learning environment. *They should convince children and suggest not involving in social problems like drug abuse, alcoholism and others. It is their duty.*

Discipline also has a key role in creating learning ecology in schools. Students do not come to school only to acquire knowledge; rather, they learn good behaviors in school. They learn to take care of personal hygiene, wait for their turn, stand in a queue, speak politely, respect others, etc. Maintenance of these things in schools means keeping students in discipline. Doing this in school also has a positive influence on the student's achievement. According to the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (2020), discipline impacts the learning environment in schools by motivating students in various school activities.

Bidhisha also talks about the school policy to take for the comparatively low achievers of the class. *Teachers should understand students. Special care and attention should be paid to weak students.* Hari does not seem to be satisfied with his school environment. He also says that the school has mixed-background students and that the school policies are not applied to classrooms, which affects the learning

environment. *Here are mixed students from different backgrounds. Here is such a setting in Community school students' family background, and our effort is useless. Education policy whatever formulated and discussed has not been applied to teaching field.* He further focuses on making new plans by school authorities for teachers' training and effective teaching. *However, all the subjects should be focused equally, but in major subjects should be given training for teachers, resources should be available and connect with them and they need to make plans and strategies.* Another teacher participant, Bhim's narrative, is that schools should focus on the objectives of the curriculum and train their teachers accordingly. *Besides, they should fulfil the objective of the curriculum.*

The government of Nepal has implemented various education policies to improve the quality of schools, but the outcome is very low. This is because policies are not implemented in the classrooms. The school administration does not implement and monitor them, and they show numerous challenges and difficulties. In spite of having so many possibilities of educational development and having a long history of educational development in Nepal, budgetary provisions, lower level of awareness, and coordination gap in the inductive action plans for implementation across central, provincial and local level governments of Nepal, irresponsible behaviors of the stakeholders to implement policies in schools, etc. have been the challenges in the implementations of educational policies in Nepal (Shiwakoti, 2022). This definitely affects students' learning achievement.

The availability of different teaching and learning resources in schools also affects the learning outcomes of the students. The participants of this research also complain that limited resources have created difficulties in learning in schools. Bidhisha says that her school has created science labs in schools, but still, some tools are not available. *We didn't have a science lab, temple, or other facilities in the past. However, recently, they have made it possible. And yet, some equipment like microscopes are lacking.* Mina also focuses on how schools should add teaching resources like smart boards. *I think the teachers should use smart boards and make things clear.* The teacher participant Bhim also says that schools should manage more projectors because they have only one projector, which is insufficient. *Regarding teaching tools, we have only one projector in one classroom. However, I usually can't do that as other teachers also want to do.* Another teacher participant stresses that ICT classrooms should be managed in schools for effective teaching and

learning. *Nowadays, there is the use of ICT, and it is not implemented still, we are based on paper and pencil. So, school administration and leadership should give more attention to effective teaching.*

Therefore, for the students to learn effectively, there must be sufficient teaching materials and facilities in the school. There should be good libraries and labs in schools. Libraries provide students with enough books and resources to get the information and knowledge required to the students. Students can go to the science and computer labs to test their classroom knowledge with real-life practice in the labs. It provides them with practical knowledge and improves their classroom achievement. Teachers also feel comfortable teaching with the teaching aids and can easily transmit the knowledge and information to the students by demonstrating practically. Nghitoolwa et al.(2024)exploredthe effective influence on the comprehension, engagement and overall academic performance of students.

Similarly, schools need to organize teachers-parents interactions in schools so that the communication gaps between these two stakeholders of education can be avoided, and their proper communication may give insights to make effective lesson plans by teachers for better learning outcomes. Hari says that parents' visits to schools help teachers to give the right information about students to the parents. *Therefore, it is much easier to point out children's problems and report them to their guardians if the guardians are in school.* Kamal shares the story of how school and parents' mutual efforts in school have had a positive impact on students' learning. *We are getting the full support of both the school administration and parents to improve the learning aspect of our students, which is positively impacting our students' learning process.*

Thus, school-based learning ecology plays a vital role in children's learning achievement. The above participants' narratives and literature have shown how a school is expected to pay attention to different components of learning ecology and their variables in schools like a clean environment, inclusive teaching pedagogies, nutritious tiffin, teachers' behaviors, school discipline, sufficient teaching resources, effective implementation of curriculum objectives, parents' meetings, teachers' training, stress-free environment, etc. school authorities need to realize and work on it for the effective learning achievements of the students. If an appropriate environment is created in schools, teachers as deliverers and students as receivers will both be happy and efficiently work to complete their missions.

### **Reflections on Learning Achievement: Home-based Learning Ecology**

Home is the first school for children. What education and culture they get at home are reflected in school. As children are small and spend most of the time with their parents, the parents are aware of their children's psychology, interests and abilities. So, they need to play their roles accordingly. They are aware of what environment they should create for their children's effective learning and how they can play effective roles at home for their children's better learning achievement.

Home-based learning ecology also plays a vital role in the ecology of English language learning. Home is the first school for children. Family cultures and environments have a deep influence on a child's growth and education. English language environment at home is reported to have a positive influence on English language development in schools. A child plays, laughs, dances, cries, and expresses sorrow in the family environment. Family members try their best to make the child's growth the best with love and care (Naum et al., 2005). So, in this way, it builds a family environment in which we live, laugh, play and develop children. Family education influences a child's education. Educated parents have special support in their child's education. They guide their children at home and support them in home assignments and other activities. The educational level of children in the family depends more on the level of the parent's education, so this factor strongly affects family relationships and the successful development of children (Naum et al., 2005). Educated parents know the value of the influence of family environment on a child's education and create a supportive environment at home. The participants in this research also present their narratives that a supportive family environment has an important influence on their learning achievement.

Mina says that her parents are supportive at home, and they counsel her to be more dedicated to her studies. *You should read and read, though it is quite difficult up to grade 8. It will be much easier in the upper classes. You should score good grades.* According to her, her parents are helping her to create a learning environment at home by providing all the required learning materials and managing separate rooms for her study so that she can study uninterruptedly. *And they are ready to fulfill whatever is needed for my study. For instance, they buy books, copies, and stationery for me. Other things are good at my home. I am allowed to study in a separate room. I can study whatever I like. There is no disturbance.* Teacher participant Hari also narrates that only teachers' effort for a child's educational progress is not enough; parents'

supportive role is also required. Parents' education and their care for their child's needs and interests also influence the child's education. He says:

*Likewise, it is necessary to take care of the parents' side too and support their children. The guardian role plays significance because it depends on their qualification, time management, taking care, being aware of their needs and interests, and trying to know their psychology. These factors play a crucial role in teaching and learning.*

Here, both narratives focus on parents' awareness and how their education gives them insight into the value of education, and they play a supportive role at home in providing an adequate learning environment. Another teacher participant, Kamal, also agrees that parents' education and awareness also have an impact on a child's education and shares the story of a child *we have a student at our school whose father is also a teacher. His child has been doing better and improving in the study because of the supportive role of his father at home. He is smartly improving his studies now.*

Therefore, parents' education is one of the important factors for creating learning education. Educated parents know the value of education, and they create a good learning ecology for their children. Sexton (2005) shows that successful and educated families pass on optimal values, beliefs, and behaviors regarding the importance of education to their children.

Bhawana shares her reflections on her home-based learning environment, saying that her home environment is good and that she gets extra support to study at home. *It is good enough. I don't go outside. There is a table to study. To guide me, uncle and aunt come in the evening. They teach me what I don't know.* According to her, parental support in studying at home has a significant role in a child's learning achievement. Not all children have the same mental ability. Some students are fast and quick learners, and some others are slow learners. Some students, like slow learners, need extra support in study. Teachers and parents are required to give them extra support in school and at home. The participants of this research also point out the need for extra academic support for children at home. They share the story of how parents and relatives help them by teaching them what they do not know. According to them, it improves their learning achievement. Basnyat (2023) explores the role of parental involvement in homeschooling practice and comes to the point that families need to support their children's learning at home because of the circumstances.

She also shares her family story about how her mother is ready to sacrifice for her studies after her father married another woman. : *I don't know about my father. But my mother is really supportive. My mother always says, "Read. I support and provide you and your brother all the things that you need even if I need to lose everything"*. From this narrative, we can say that parents' dedication and sacrifice have great value in a child's learning achievement. Parents are the first teachers of children. They are the sources of learning in childhood. If parents give time to their children, sacrificing their personal work, it makes children psychologically and emotionally strong. Parents need to understand their children's desires, interests, problems and needs. They understand children and fulfil their demands at any cost. For a supportive role in a child's learning, they sacrifice their time, money, desire and personal work. This builds up a strong relationship between parents and children, and this has a positive impact on the learning of a child (Toor, 2018). The participants of the research also report that parents need to dedicate their time and effort to their children's academic progress.

Kamal also shares his experience that school and parent partnership has a very positive impact on the child's academic performance. We are getting *the full support of both the school administration and parents to improve the learning aspect of our students, which is positively impacting our students' learning process*. Another teacher participant, Hari also focuses on the value of teacher-parent coordination and its effect on a child's academic performance. *I think there must be good coordination between parents and teachers to make teaching more fruitful*.

Student participant Mina also seeks parental involvement in her education, and she shows the need for regular parents' meetings in school. *Schools should organize 'Parents' meeting' now and again*.

Another teacher participant, Bhim, shares his experience that the parents who frequently contact school showing their worries towards their children's educational progress, their children are improving their classroom performance, and those parents who do not contact in school, their children are not progressing. *They frequently contact schools and inquire about children. However, more than 60% of guardians don't care about children. They never talk to the class teacher regarding their children's study*.

Similarly, Hari also points out that parents' inability to find time to visit school creates a communication gap between parents and teachers, which is a big problem for effective learning outcomes. According to him:

*Rare guardians come to school. When they come, I feel very happy because we guide, suggest and motivate our students together, and I have found it very effective. Most of us don't know about the guardians and their backgrounds. Many more things are hidden about the reality of students which we don't know. Therefore, it is much easier to point out children's problems and report them to their guardians if the guardians are in school.*

Therefore, the necessity of teachers' and parents' partnerships and coordination for the effective learning of children is felt. This avoids the communication gaps between school authorities and parents, provides enough information about the child, and invites both stakeholders to play a role in the child's learning achievement. The above reflections clearly show that home-based learning ecology has many things to do with children's academic performance. The better the environment they get at home, the better academic performance is possible. So, being the major stakeholders of the children's academic performance, parents should be responsible for creating a conducive learning ecology at home. From the above participants' reflections, the following home-based factors are seen to be affecting students' learning achievement in schools.

School and parents are the dominant stakeholders in a child's learning ecology. Both stakeholders spend maximum time with children, and they have a better understanding of children's comprehensive abilities, psychology, interests, aims, etc. So, their coordination and regular interactions with children have a positive impact on classroom behaviors. They teach them in the classrooms, and parents counsel and guide their children accordingly at home. Brisk (2000) focuses on the partnerships between schools and parents, which can contribute to creating positive impacts on learning and their role in complementing each other.

Parents' time management for children is very important. They should manage time to understand their children, their interests and their needs. Parents are busy in their work and do not have time to listen and understand them. It does not support the children in their learning. Hsin(2009) shows the value of parents' timing in children's academic progress. Parents' proper timing builds up self-confidence in children, and



psychologically, they are strong too. This positively supports children's classroom performance.

Another important thing Bidhisha's narratives point out is that proper food at home should be provided for good academic performance in schools. *Children wish to live in a small family and peaceful environment and have sufficient food to eat.*

Teacher participant Kamal also focuses on the food of children and says that nutritious food should be provided to the children at home because it affects their learning achievement. *This affects the teaching-learning aspect of the students to some extent. They lack nutritious food, that hampers their health, and ultimately, it hampers their learning aspect, too.*

Food helps the physical and mental growth of a child. Learning is a mental activity and for effective learning, mental health is extremely important. For mental health, proper nutritious food is required, as the participants of this research have stated above. Therefore, nutrition plays a key role in promoting overall mental health, particularly for developing children. Fishmen et al. (2024) explore the association between adolescents' eating habits and mental health and suggest healthy food habits for mental well-being.

Bidhisha reflects on her home experiences, saying that a peaceful environment at home and parents' smooth relationships support the children in studying at home. *Parents must not quarrel at home since children are depressed and under pressure from parents.* She repeats that parental conflict has adverse effects on the study of children and raises a question: *You might have experienced how parents' quarrel affects children's studies. How can children focus on their study when their parents constantly fight and disrupt peace?*

Bhawans also shares her experience of how parental conflict and separation affected her studies and how she managed herself later. *In the beginning, when I was small it affected me but not now. Because I have heard the news that many mothers are single nowadays.*

So, parental relationship matters in the mental development of a child. My observations in my school also show that parents' have good relationships and take care of children well. They come to receive and drop children at school. Such children are calm and have positive thinking. Many researches have also shown that parental conflict affects the mental development of a child, and such children are upset and restless. They get irritated by small things. Such children's academic performance is

also not so good. In their research, Sarrazin (2008) shows the lifelong devastating effects of parental conflicts on children's well-being. Mauki et al.(2018) find a significant relationship between parents' relationship and children's academic excellence.

Many pieces of research have shown that the family environment has a great role in early childhood education. The environment in a child's family and the community in which they are living have a big impact on the learning ecology. If family members and community children have a habit of reading, they will definitely develop their habit of reading books. According to the family systems theory, the family is composed of several subsystems, which are interconnected and mutually constrained to make the whole family function well, and the better the coordination of the family system, the better the psychological shape and academic performance of the members (Miller, 1985). Combined with the peer group effect theory, peer group interaction conveys social norms, values, knowledge, and skills, and positive or negative peer relationships affect the participants' learning attitude, self-expectation, and cognitive development (Winkler, 1975).

To sum up, home-based learning ecology plays a significant role in the learning achievement of a child. The above narratives of the participants and discussions also show that parents' education and awareness, their support in creating an English environment at home, parents' communications in English and regular contact with teachers, parents' timing to the children at home, parental relationships at home, the community environments in which children are living, the food items provided to the children at homes, etc. are the home- based learning ecological factors influencing English language development of a child. So, all the stakeholders of education are seen to be aware of these factors and playing a responsible role in the child's academic achievement.

### **Chapter Summary**

The above discussion shows the participants' both satisfaction and dissatisfaction towards the learning ecology they are undergoing. Both participants have raised prominent voices for creating a conducive learning ecology from parents' sides, school sides, teachers' sides and students sides. Inclusive teaching pedagogies address students' interests and sufficient available teaching resources and tools in classrooms and schools supports the teaching-learning environments of the students and teachers. The home-based learning ecological factors play supportive roles in the

learning achievement of the children. Parents' educational consciousness level, their concern towards children's education and teachers-parents relationships have a positive impact on creating suitable reading environment at homes. Both sides' class reflections show that all the activities performed either by the teacher or students have a strong impact on classroom achievement. The reflections of students and teachers show that factors like teachers' quality to understand students and their interests, teachers' classroom timing and regularity, use of teaching materials and ICT in classrooms, inclusive teaching pedagogies, students' peer circles and their self-motivation, etc. help to create learning ecology in the classroom and contribute to the classroom achievement.

In the same ways, effective school-based learning ecology can be maintained if clean environment, inclusive teaching pedagogies, nutritious tiffin, teachers' behaviors, school discipline, sufficient teaching resources, effective implementation of curriculum objectives, parents' regular meetings, teachers' training, stress-free environment for students and teachers, etc. are guaranteed by the school authorities.

## CHAPTER VI

### DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS WITH THEORETICAL REFERENTS

This chapter interprets the findings of the study within the framework of Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory. Each of the five levels, microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem, is analyzed to highlight the interconnected factors influencing students' English language development. The narratives of participants, including teachers Bhim, Kamal, and Hari, and students Mina, Bhawana, and Bidhisha (all pseudonyms), are intertwined with theoretical insights and empirical references to underscore the complex interplay of learning ecology on academic achievement and English language development. These narratives illuminate the necessity of creating a nurturing environment for low-performing students, thereby aligning with Bronfenbrenner's assertion that development is a product of dynamic interactions between individuals and their environments (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The study of children and their classroom achievement without evaluating and analyzing the students' interactions with the environment around them is incomplete. How the different components of environments have influenced and impacted the student's thoughts and mental ability are to be counted in the analysis.

#### **Microsystem: The Immediate Environment**

The microsystem represents the immediate settings that students interact with daily, such as family, peers, and classrooms. These environments significantly shape their academic and social development. According to it, a student's learning outcomes differ on the basis of the student's interactions with his family members, friends and the neighbors because their nature, thoughts and mental abilities are shaped by those environmental factors and the student's interactions with them. Personal characteristics, including cognitive abilities, physical attributes, temperament, and personality, also impact a person's development and later classroom performance as well. (Bronfenbrenner, 1979)

Mina's reflections capture the essence of supportive classroom dynamics. She focuses on the need for teachers' positive support and inclusive teaching pedagogy within the classrooms. Similarly, Bhawana points out that teachers' classroom regularity and active classroom roles positively support the classroom performance of

a child. This aligns with Vygotsky's (1978) emphasis on the role of guided interaction in cognitive development.

Family environments also play a crucial role. Bhawana shared that her parents' limited educational background hindered her access to learning resources. However, the emotional support they provided acted as a buffer against academic stress. Studies by Peterson and Zill (1986) corroborate this, showing that positive familial interactions promote better academic outcomes. Peer relationships further influenced the participants. Bidhisha described how studying with friends in group activities helped her understand challenging concepts. This finding supports Piaget's theory of peer collaboration as a critical factor in cognitive development (Waite-Stupiansky, 2022).

### **Mesosystem: Connections between Microsystems**

The mesosystem examines the interactions between a student's microsystems, such as home and school. Effective communication between parents and teachers emerged as a recurring theme in this study. Bhim observed, *"When I meet with parents to discuss their child's progress, it fosters mutual accountability and encourages students to stay focused."* This finding is echoed in Epstein and Salinas's (2004) model of school-family partnerships, which highlights the importance of collaborative practices.

Participants also highlighted the role of extracurricular activities in bridging different microsystems. Kamal recounted how organizing a science fair encouraged students' families to engage with the school, creating a unified community around education. Bidhisha also highlights that parents need to counsel their children and play a role in connecting them with society. Research by Poudel and Baral (2021) emphasizes that such initiatives strengthen mesosystem interactions, benefiting student engagement and academic performance.

### **Exosystem: Indirect Influences**

The exosystem encompasses external environments that indirectly affect students, such as parental occupations and societal policies. Hari noted the impact of parents working abroad, observing, *"Students with absentee parents often lack supervision and support at home, which affects their learning."* This aligns with findings by Rueckert (2019), who identifies migration as a significant barrier to consistent parental involvement in education.

Policy frameworks and resource allocation also emerged as critical factors. Bhim highlighted the inadequacies of rural school funding, stating, “*Limited resources mean fewer opportunities for students to explore beyond textbooks.*” Bidhisha narrates that parental conflict adversely affects a child's learning. Bhawana also reflects on how her father's second marriage hindered her educational journey. The connection between resource scarcity and academic underachievement is well-documented by Looi et al. (2008), who advocates for the equitable distribution of educational resources to address systemic disparities.

### **Macrosystem: Societal and Cultural Norms**

The macrosystem includes cultural values, societal norms, and economic conditions that influence educational practices. Bhawana's narrative sheds light on societal attitudes toward gender roles in education. She remarked, “*In our village, girls are often expected to prioritize household responsibilities over studies.*” This cultural expectation aligns with findings by Palardy (2015), who identified systemic biases as significant barriers to equitable education.

Socioeconomic disparities also surfaced as influential factors. Mina's experience in an English-medium school contrasted sharply with Bidhisha's struggles in a Nepali-medium setting. Mina attributed her linguistic advantage to her parents' higher socioeconomic status, echoing Steensel's (2006) findings on the impact of home literacy environments and socioeconomic status on academic performance. Bhim also reflects on how unnecessary frequent school holiday systems have hampered the students' learning. Hari also shares similar experiences, stating that community schools have very complex settings in which teaching and learning are very critical.

### **Chronosystem: Time and Change**

The chronosystem considers the dimension of time, including historical events and life transitions, in shaping students' learning experiences. The COVID-19 pandemic emerged as a pivotal chronosystem factor. Bhawana shared, “*During the lockdown, we had no access to online classes, and it felt like our education came to a standstill.*” This reflects findings by Rana et al. (2019), who noted that digital inequities during the pandemic disproportionately affected students in rural areas. In Nepal, the COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted the English language development of children, particularly due to school closures and the shift to online learning. Many children, especially from urban areas, faced challenges in accessing

the necessary technologies and constant internet connections. This lack of access led to the interruptions of classroom practices and the development of English language skills. As a result, many children experience delays in their language development, especially in terms of speaking and listening skills, which are often nurtured through in-person communication (Shrestha, 2021).

Participants also discussed the long-term impact of shifting educational policies. Hari highlighted the gradual adoption of technology in classrooms, stating, “Integrating ICT tools has been transformative, but rural schools still lag behind.” Such technological advancements underscore the evolving nature of educational ecosystems, as discussed by Peters et al. (2021).

### **Chapter Summary**

Hence, this chapter underscores the interconnectedness of Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems theory in shaping students’ learning experiences and academic outcomes of language development. The participants’ narratives reveal that fostering a supportive learning ecology requires addressing challenges at every level, from enhancing classroom dynamics to addressing societal inequities for English language development. By adopting a holistic approach that incorporates familial support, school-community collaboration, and equitable policy interventions, educators and policymakers can create environments where all students, regardless of their backgrounds, can thrive. This study reaffirms Bronfenbrenner’s assertion that learning is a dynamic process influenced by the synergy of multiple ecological systems.

## CHAPTER VII

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

This section moves forward with my changed perceptions of learning ecology, unlike my previous assumptions that learning ecology has many dimensions and should be taken as multi-disciplinary and intra-disciplinary subjects. Approaching children and teaching them is a sensitive task and should be handled artistically and carefully. It should be done in the mutual responsibility among its stakeholders. The concluding section of this chapter makes a point that understanding learning ecology involves recognizing the interplay of multiple dimensions that influence a student's educational journey. Collectively, these dimensions emphasize the need for a holistic approach to understanding learning ecology. Effective collaboration among schools, teachers, and families can create a robust support system that nurtures students' academic and personal growth. Similarly, the following sections focus on the different roles of school leaders, teachers, students and parents in creating effective learning ecology. The process of conducting this research has deepened my commitment to fostering inclusive pedagogies and ecologies that honor students' diverse contexts and potentials. It has also reinforced the need for educators and researchers to critically evaluate their practices and embrace a reflective and empathetic approach.

#### **My Key Insights**

When I began this research, I felt that teachers are the major stakeholders of education in creating a learning environment for students. My perception was that teachers' classroom pedagogies are solely responsible for the low learning achievement of students. As Hanushek & Woessmann (2010) and Hill and Chin (2018) show the relationship between teachers' quality and students' learning achievement, I did not find so in my research. I found more factors related to effective learning achievement. As Wabukundi (2016) shows family backgrounds, Maba (2017) focuses on students' self-motivation, Nghitoolwa et al. (2024) highlight teaching and learning resources in schools, Naum et al. (2005) show parental relationships, etc. also equally important factors for students' performance. I perceived the lack of student progress as primarily a result of their inherent capabilities, teacher's methodologies, or socioeconomic factors such as poverty or parental support, family background and students' self-motivation as the multi-layered factors affecting students' classroom



performance and learning achievement. However, I often overlooked how interconnected factors like the home environment, societal expectations, and individual psychological needs create a more complex, multilayered system influencing learning.

Through deeper exploration, I understand that learning ecology extends beyond isolated classroom interventions. It is a comprehensive interplay of micro (family and peers), meso (school and community), and macro (cultural and societal norms) systems, as posited by Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory. For example, I found that students labeled as "weak" were often products of neglectful educational practices and familial indifference. When placed in an environment that fostered care, understanding, and consistency, these students exhibited significant improvement, highlighting the power of a nurturing learning ecology.

My newfound understanding also sheds light on the biases entrenched in traditional teaching methodologies. I realized that treating students as homogeneous entities neglects their unique circumstances and the specific challenges they face. This oversight perpetuates the cycle of low achievement for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. The experiences of students and teachers I am engaged with further emphasize that addressing these issues requires recognizing students' psychological, social, and cultural realities rather than focusing solely on classroom performance.

Finally, I now see that creating an effective learning ecology involves shared responsibility among teachers, parents, and the broader community. It requires collaborative efforts to build supportive environments both at school and at home. This understanding reframes my approach to student development as one that emphasizes the holistic integration of various factors influencing their learning trajectory, moving away from attributing failures to innate ability or isolated variables.

### **Conclusion**

Understanding learning ecology involves recognizing the interplay of multiple dimensions that influence a student's educational journey. At the school level, fostering an environment that prioritizes equitable access to resources, teacher training, and holistic policies is vital. Schools must ensure that infrastructure and administrative support are aligned with creating inclusive and dynamic learning spaces. Equally important is the cultivation of positive relationships among teachers,

students, and administrators, which can serve as a foundation for addressing diverse learning needs and fostering an engaging academic culture.

Classroom practices are a critical element of learning ecology, shaping daily interactions and learning experiences. Teachers' approaches, including interactive methods, personalized attention, and adaptability to student diversity, significantly impact student outcomes. Effective classroom learning ecology hinges on fostering an inclusive atmosphere where students feel valued and supported. Pedagogical strategies that promote active engagement, critical thinking, and collaboration contribute to the development of a rich educational environment where all students are motivated to participate and succeed.

The role of the home environment in a child's learning ecology cannot be understated. Supportive family dynamics, parental involvement, and emotional security lay the groundwork for a child's academic success. Parents' understanding of their child's educational needs, coupled with active communication with schools, ensures a seamless bridge between home and academic life. Addressing issues like familial conflict and socio-economic challenges can help mitigate barriers to learning, creating a nurturing backdrop for students' educational achievements.

Collectively, these dimensions emphasize the need for a holistic approach to understanding learning ecology. Effective collaboration among schools, teachers, and families can create a robust support system that nurtures students' academic and personal growth. By addressing challenges in each dimension, educators and stakeholders can ensure that learning environments are equitable, engaging, and conducive to the development of all learners, particularly those facing unique challenges.

### **Implications**

Headteachers are responsible for creating and nurturing an inclusive learning environment. This involves addressing the diverse needs of students and ensuring that teachers are adequately supported with resources, training, and a positive school culture that values all learners. They must also oversee the equitable distribution of attention and care to avoid neglecting low-achieving students, fostering an environment of equity and inclusion.

Teachers play a pivotal role in shaping the classroom ecology. They can adapt their pedagogical practices to cater to the unique needs of each student, particularly those who struggle academically. Building strong, supportive relationships with

students, employing diverse teaching methods, and integrating knowledge of students' family and social contexts into classroom strategies can significantly enhance learning outcomes. Researchers have the task of continuing to explore the complexities of learning ecology and its impact on student achievement. They may focus on under-researched areas, such as the experiences of low-achieving students and effective interventions, providing data-driven recommendations for teaching practices and policy.

Trainers are instrumental in equipping teachers with the skills necessary to foster effective learning ecologies. This includes training on inclusive teaching practices, classroom management, and the use of innovative tools to address diverse learning needs. Trainers must emphasize the importance of empathy and understanding in education.

Policymakers must develop and implement policies addressing systemic barriers to effective learning. This includes funding for teacher training, improving school infrastructure, and creating frameworks that prioritize students' psychological and emotional well-being alongside academic achievement.

Parents are key contributors to a child's learning ecology. It is crucial to provide a stable, supportive home environment and actively engage with their child's education. Parents must also work closely with teachers to understand and support their child's learning needs, ensuring consistency between home and school environments.

### **My Reflections**

Over the course of this research journey, my understanding of learning ecology and the dimensions of research methodology has undergone a profound transformation. Initially, my perception of learning ecology was narrow and focused predominantly on the classroom environment. However, through theoretical insights and my fieldwork, I have come to appreciate that learning ecology encompasses a far more dynamic and multifaceted interplay of psychological, social, cultural, and environmental factors.

The concept of learning ecology now resonates with me as a holistic framework that integrates learners' interactions with their surroundings, including family, peers, educators, and institutional practices. This expanded understanding was especially shaped by the realization that students' achievements are deeply embedded in their unique microsystems, mesosystems, and beyond, as articulated in

Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory. Observing the marked behavioural and academic improvements in students like Mina, Bhawana, and Bidhisha when their learning environments were nurtured with care and empathy illuminated the critical role of a supportive ecology in learning.

My shift in understanding was also informed by the methodological depth required in this narrative inquiry. Initially, I viewed methodology as a straightforward means to gather data. However, engaging with interpretivism and the narrative method revealed how essential it is to contextualize participants' lived experiences within their socio-cultural realities. Conducting interviews and encouraging reflective journaling brought me closer to the emotional and cognitive dimensions of learning, allowing me to interpret their experiences not as isolated data points but as parts of a larger story about systemic and interpersonal dynamics.

This journey also challenged my own biases as an educator and researcher. Reflecting on my earlier assumptions about low-performing students, I realized how much they were shaped by conventional deficit perspectives. Seeing these students thrive when provided with a more inclusive and nurturing environment underscored the importance of addressing inequities in learning opportunities and moving away from preoccupied notions of students' abilities.

The process of conducting this research has deepened my commitment to fostering inclusive pedagogies and ecologies that honour students' diverse contexts and potentials. It has also reinforced the need for educators and researchers to critically evaluate their practices and embrace a reflective and empathetic approach. This shift in perspective, informed by both personal experience and methodological rigour, has enriched my understanding of the complex interplay between ecology and learning and the transformative power of thoughtful inquiry.

Finally, my reflections on this study show me that research work has to be led minutely, and for this, we need to narrow down the topic and research methodology and its tools accordingly. I realized that a case study on one of my participants would have brought more insights instead of taking interviews with many participants.

### **Chapter Summary**

After this research work, my perceptions towards learning ecology and its variables have totally changed. Now I see that an effective learning ecology involves shared responsibility among teachers, parents, and the broader community. It requires collaborative efforts to build supportive environments both at schools and at homes.

Similarly, these dimensions emphasize the need for a holistic approach to understanding learning ecology. Effective collaboration among schools, teachers, and families can frame a strong support system that nurtures students' academic and personal growth. For this head teachers can address the diverse needs of students and make the teachers strong by adequately supporting them with resources, training, and a positive school culture that values all learners. Teachers can play vital role in adapting their pedagogical practices to cater to the unique needs of each student, particularly those who struggle academically. Researchers may continue the task of exploring the complexities of learning ecology and its impact on students' achievement. Parents are key contributors to a child's learning ecology and therefore, they can provide a stable, supportive home environment and actively engage with their child's education. In overall, the study has given me a great insights of research pedagogies along with methodologies.

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## ANNEXES

## Annex One

## Interview Transcription and Essence-based Coding -1 (Teacher-Participant)

## Transcription 1

Participant's Name: **Yub Raj Acharya**

Place: **Lamahi**

Date: November 22, 2024

Learning Ecology in the School [An Interview with Mr. **Yub Raj Acharya**]

**Lok Man.** Sir, Namaste. Myself **Lok Man Bajal**, a researcher of M. **Phill**, programme at Kathmandu University under the topic Learning Ecology in the School. Could I please ask you some questions remaining under the same topic?

**Yub Raj.** Of course, I am **Yub Raj Acharya**; a lower secondary teacher at **Aadarsh Model School, Lamahi** Dang.

**Lok Man.** Sir, which subject do you teach at your school?

**Yub Raj.** I teach mathematics and science at my school.

**Lok man.** Have you heard about learning ecology?

**Yub Raj.** Yes, sir.

**Lok Man.** Sir, what is learning ecology in your view?

**Yub Raj.** In my view, this relates to teaching learning methodology. As a whole, this relates to an entire educational activities at school.

**Lok Man.** Sir, could you please let me know what sort of learning ecology has been maintained at your school?

**Yub Raj.** Yes, sir. Our school is a community school run by Government of Nepal where there is a big number of students from poor background. Although we lack many facilities and resources, we are doing our best to maintain a good learning ecology at our school in a student friendly environment. Students

here do not have a sound background as at private school. Still, we are contributed in our efforts in order to achieve the goal maintaining good learning ecology using a varieties of teaching materials.

**Lok Man.** Sir, you have stressed the poor economic background of the students. Does this affect to teaching learning aspect of the students?

**Yub Raj.** Yes, sir. This affects to teaching learning aspect of the students to some extent. Because they lack nutritious food that hampers their health and ultimately it hampers their learning aspect, too.

**Lok Man.** You have told that you have been using teaching materials, too. What sorts of teaching materials have you been using at school?

**Yub Raj.** Yes, sir. We take our students to lab. We use locally available resources in teaching learning materials and also encourage our students for the same.

**Lok Man.** What difference do you find in the students in learning achievement; using teaching materials and not using teaching materials?

**Yub Raj.** Teaching the students using materials is seen bringing lots of learning outcome whereas, not using them is seen bringing little outcome, sir.

**Lok Man.** what kinds of teaching practices are you conducting to foster the learning outcome of students at school, sir? And, are they going through those practices?

**Yub Raj.** We have been conducting many teaching learning practices to foster the learning achievements of the students. Basically, we focus the motivational teaching learning methodology that truly encourages them in learning aspect. However, some

students are seen not paying proper attention towards learning prospect.

**Lok Man.** What may be the possible reasons of not paying proper attention towards learning that is seen on some remaining students?

**Yub Raj.** The possible reasons behind this may be lack of care of parents to their children at home. And, negligence of students towards study.

**Lok Man.** What kind of role is the school administration playing to fostering learning aspect of students at your school?

**Yub Raj.** Of course, we are getting the full support of both the school administration and parents for improving the learning aspect of our students that is impacting positively to our students for learning process.

**Lok Man.** Have you expected anything additional for enhancing the learning aspect of students from the school administration?

**Yub Raj.** Nothing special, sir as we are getting the entire support of both the school administration as well as the chairman of the school who is very supportive for this.

**Lok Man.** What kind of role can the parents play for improving the learning process of the students in your opinion?

**Yub Raj.** There is a big role of parents for improving the learning process of the students which they can play because family is the first school of every student. Family and community are the two components where the students do

have a direct and indirect relationship where they live, grow and communicate.

**Lok Man.** Do you have any story of a student whose learning is influenced by the role of parents?

**Yub Raj.** Of course, we have a student at our school whose father is also a teacher. His child has been doing better and improving in the study because of the supportive role of his father at home. He is smartly improving to the study now, too.

**Lok Man.** We teachers have to create and maintain a very sound learning environment in the class. Could you please tell me what kind of environment have you created and maintained in the class for a sound learning process?

**Yub Raj.** Yes, that's right. Our ultimate goal is to make a student socially fit contributing in social change in the future. We are filling in the different qualities in the students to make them social beings.

**Lok Man.** What kinds of challenges have you seen in learning environment of the students?

**Yub Raj.** Basically, two challenges I have seen which are political challenge and inappropriate curriculum. These are challenging the learning environment of the students.

**Lok Man.** Thank you very much for your support and valuable insights, sir.

**Yub Raj.** It's my pleasure to be with you. Thank you to you, too for providing this opportunity to share my words.

The End

## Annex Two

## Interview Transcription and Essence-based Coding -2 (Teacher-Participant)

**Lok:** Sir Namaste! I am Lok Man Rijal. I am a student of Kathmandu University, M.Phil. Presently I am writing research paper on 'Learning Ecology'. On this topic I want to get your opinion. Are you ready?

**Hari:** Yeah, I am ready. What I feel I try my best.

**Lok:** What is your opinion on learning ecology?

**Hari:** Generally, I need to focus on ecology term to convey. Ecology means such environment where we focus on learning and try to teach and motivate students to attempt to learn.

**Lok:** (Yeah) Sir, please introduce your school.

**Hari:** I am a teacher. Recently I am teaching in Shree Aadarsh Namuna Secondary school in Lamahi where you have visited.

**Lok:** There is no doubt Sarashwati Ma. Vi. is one of the reputed school in Lamahi Municipality. What about teaching environment in this school for effective students learning? Could you please tell me about learning ecology?

**Hari:** This school is community school. Umm ..., I have observed community school and private school differences in teaching practice model. Even in our school most of the students are admitted from private school especially from class 7, 8, 9 and 10 in English medium boarding based. There is no doubt exchange of students even in boarding school. Therefore, here are mix students from different background. Here is such setting in Community school students' family background and our effort is

useless due to lack of coordination among between teacher and guardian. Parents are not taking care. Education policy whatever formulated and discussion that has not applied in teaching field because it is still not connected in real environment. Though we practice a lot

**Lok:** Do you think home environment affect effective learning?

**Hari:** Obviously, we give proper guidance and even care our students. Likewise, it is necessary to take care from parents' side too and supportive their children. Guardian role plays significance because it depends on their qualification, time manage, take care, aware about their need, interest, and try to know their psychology. These factors play crucial role in teaching and learning. Even we managed a lot of things in order to teach students. I think there must be good coordination between parents and teacher to make teaching more fruitful.

**Lok:** Right sir, you are English teacher. In your classroom while teaching what sort of environment created for making teaching learning more effective?

**Hari:** When I was student English was taken very difficult subject. It was taken second language. Here, in this school most of the students are chaudhary community even I feel difficult to speak in chaudhary language. Naturally, teaching and learning second language is more difficult. However, in English medium it is easier to teach but in Nepali medium it is more challenging. According to my experience, at the beginning I taught in Pyuthan as an English teacher. While I was there I taught English to English and there was

pin drop silence inside the classroom. I thought, I did my best in the classroom and students were getting my point but later I came to know through them were not able learn even students talked with me to teach in their mother tongue.

Nowadays, use of ICT, interaction with teacher, smart board, interactive board, lab, audio video display we are trying to motivate our students language learning.

**Lok:** Have you used such practice in classroom?

**Hari:** Umm we are trying. Sometimes, we think to run class in smooth way, but different situation hindrance it. So, we need to break it. Therefore, we are bus driver sometimes we need turn, stop and can't run smoothly.

**Lok:** Ok sir. For learning practice what do you find the role of administration in your school practice of ecology?

**Hari:** I think you want to talk school administration role for creating conducive ecology. In my view difficult subjects should be focused and school should organize training programs for such subjects. However, all the subjects should be focused equally but major subject there should be given training for teacher, resources should be available and connect with them and need to make plan and strategy. Nowadays, there is use of ICT and it is not implement still we are based on paper and pencil. So, school administration and leadership should given more attention for effective teaching.

**Lok:** As an English teacher what sort of challenge have you faced?

**Hari:** This question had read many times challenge ELT in Nepal while we were learning English. English can be

taken as L2 or second language. The challenge lies in skill, implement and script. From students' side it can't be taken any challenge from learning point of view if students base are well they can't take as difficult but Nepali medium learner for them second language feel difficult on spelling, pronunciation, script because of not using day to day their communication as well as lack of exposure. For example, they feel easier Hindi rather than English because of use and watch in media.

**Lok:** Ok sir, at the end what role do you expect from guardian for effective learning?

**Hari:** Very nice question sir. Rare guardians come to school. When they come I feel very happy because we guide, suggest and motivate to our some students together and I have found it very effective. Most of us don't know about guardian, their background. Many more things are hidden about the reality of students which we don't know. Therefore, it is very easier to point out children's problem and report to their guardian if the guardians are in school. Most of the things are hidden and if they visit us we point out actual situation of them and it will be one of the good coordination among teacher and guardians. Obviously learning will be more effective.

**Lok:** Thank you sir for considering your valuable time.

## Annex Three

## Interview Transcription and Essence-based Coding -3 (Teacher-Participant)

Teacher Participant: Bhim Bahadur Kunwar

Date: 24 November, 2024

Place: Lamahi

Lokman: Namaste, sir, I am Lokman Rijal.

Currently, I am doing research on 'Learning Ecology' for my Mphil paper. Having been sure that your insights would be fruitful, I have decided to take an interview with you. I hope you are ready.

Bhim: Yes sir. I am.

Lokman: First of all, would you mind introducing yourself?

Bhim: My name is Bhim. I am an English teacher of Shree Khim Bahadur Shah Ma vi Lamahi, Dang.

Lokman: As an English teacher, what kind of classroom environment do you think, helps students learn effectively?

Bhim: Teachers can create conducive learning ecology by managing and handling students' diversity, making learning simple, easy and sustainable. Besides, they should fulfil the objective of curriculum. Furthermore, they should play the role of an artist. Likewise, students should do their assignments daily. ICT friendly can also boost learning ecology.

Lokman: What could be the role of a teacher as an artist? Could you clarify it a bit better?

Bhim: I mean teacher should act as a facilitator but not as an authoritarian. He/she should be able to help students to bring out hidden talents and guide them towards better future. By realizing students' dream, desires, interests, age, maturity, he/she should teach students. Teacher should enter classroom being prepared.

Lokman: As an English teacher, what practices and techniques have you been practising in your classroom to make your teaching learning process effective?

Bhim: Being an English teacher, my job is to enable students to speak and write English accurately, and fluently. In order to achieve this, I teach them clearly, preparing well. However, we can't teach English language in

English since we don't have that environment. English is not first or second language of our students. It is third language. They don't speak English. So, it is very difficult for them to understand English. I use grammar translation method to teach English.

Lokman: What teaching aids / tools do you use in teaching learning activities?

Bhim: Regarding teaching tools, we have only one projector in one classroom. I make slides in my personal computer laptop, and I sometimes take my students in to that room and display some important videos. However, most of the time, I can't do that as other teachers also want to do the same. My school hasn't been ICT friendly yet. Therefore, I prepare lesson plan and teach textbook.

Lokman: What kind of challenges have you seen in making teaching learning process more effective?

Bhim: It seems normal. There are some drawbacks in teaching system. The significant weakness of this system is we have less working days. Due to different festivals, rainy vacations, winter vacation, school remain closed. We have passed 1 month Dashain-Tihar vacation and consequently students have forgotten what they learnt before the vacation. I had given thirty question as vacation assignment, however, even a single student didn't do it.

No work is free from challenges. We all have to work together to solve them.

Lokman: Sir, What roles have the guardian been playing so far?

Bhim: I have found some guardians worried and careful about their children's study. They guide children to do homework at home. They frequently contact school and inquire about children. However, more than 60% guardians don't care children. They never talk to class teacher regarding their children's study.

Lokman: Thank you sir. I am really grateful to you for your opinions. Thank you.

## Annex Four

## Interview Transcription and Essence-based Coding -4 (Student-Participant)

Lok: Mina Ji, welcome to our conversation.

Mina: Thank you Sir.

Lokman: First of all, please kindly introduce yourself.

Mina: My name is Binita Khanal. I am a student of grade 8. My class teacher's name is .....Chaudhary.

Lokman: What is your school's name?

Mina: My school's name is Shree Aadarsh Ma Vi Deupur Dang.

Lokman: Do you belong to Nepali medium group or English medium?

Mina: English medium, sir.

Lokman: That's nice. Let me ask you what learning ecology is.

Mina: It is making environment to teach things that students have not learnt.

Lokman: Please tell me about the learning environment of your school.

Mina: We don't have got learning environment regarding 'Health and English' subjects. I don't like it.

Lokman: Oh, would you mind telling me the reasons behind this?

Mina: Teachers aren't serious about teaching. They don't pay attention seriously.

Lokman: That means, they don't teach deeply, do they? And, do you know why they are so careless?

Mina: But, we don't know and care it sir.

Lokman: In order to make students understand clearly, what sort of teaching learning activities do the teachers conduct in the classroom?

Mina: After he/she enters the classroom, the teacher takes attendance, teaches any lesson and then asks us to do exercise. Sometimes, even without teaching he/she orders us to do question-answer exercise.

Lokman: Really? What about other activities?

Mina: Others. Just like, after we have done, she just sits on the chair and takes rest. That's all.

Lokman: And, what do you expect from your teachers to do in the classroom.

Mina: I think, the teachers should teach well, teach grammar, make sure students understand, give classwork, check assignments, give feedbacks, and take care of poor students.

Lokman: During classroom teaching, what other activities should be conducted? What things can enhance learners' learning outcome? Let's say you use internet, don't you? You can also learn from it. What other things do you expect from teachers?

Mina: I think the teachers should use smartboard and make things clear.

Lokman: It sounds good. You think it does better. And What has your school administration done to make you understand more clearly?

Mina: Our school is good. Other teachers are okay. I understand other teachers' teaching too. However, I can't understand Health and English teachers' teaching. Health teacher has not taught course further. It is lagging behind.

Lokman: And, why do you think Health and English are so tough?

Mina: Teachers don't teach well. They should make concept clear.

Lokman: Oh, yes. Doesn't your principal say anything on it?

Mina: He does nothing.

Lokman: Haven't you ever complained with principal.

Mina: Not yet.

Lokman: Do the students come to school regularly? And, can you read lessons easily? Or what are the factors behind not being able to read the texts?

Mina: Teachers should help us to memorise points taught and assist poor students sitting beside them.

Lokman: What is the study environment at your home?

Mina: Its good.

## Annex Five

## Interview Transcription and Essence-based Coding -5 (Student-Participant)

Lokman: Namaste, it's me Lokman Rijal. Currently, I have been doing research in Mphil from Kathmandu University. I am about to conduct a study related to students's learning ecology. I am going to ask some questions to you. Are you ready?

Bhawana: Sure.

Lokman: First, introduce yourself.

Bhawana: My name is Barsha B.C. I read in grade 8. I am very happy to get chance to share my ideas to you.

Lokman: What class do you read in? and where and in which section?

Bhawana: I study in grade eight section E' in Adarsh Secondary School which is located in Deupur, Lamaha.

Lokman: Which medium do you study in? Nepali or English?

Bhawana: Nepali medium

Lokman: Since you are studying in grade eight, I would like to ask you a question. Have you ever heard 'Learning Ecology'?

Bhawana: No.

Lokman: It means learning environment for effective learning. We are doing under it. Do you understand what is learning environment?

Bhawana: Learning means to teach others what we know whereas environment means how clean the environment is, how good it is, and the location of the school whether it is in up or down in altitude. Like that.

Lokman: Yeah! Since you are studying in grade eight, what kind of environment do you have here?

Bhawana: It is medium, neither good nor bad.

Lokman: Ok. What are the good and bad aspects here, then?

Bhawana: All the teachers are like friends. The both male and female teachers treat us in good way. It is something good over here. However, the bad thing is that some teachers come to school but don't come to teach us in the classroom. Our some

classes has not been run from the day before yesterday. There are altogether six subjects but from some days three subjects haven't been taught because teachers are busy in their own tasks.

Lokman: In your opinion, what do you think, what kind of environment should be there to study?

Bhawana: For me, all teachers would have come to teach us. We shouldn't use rough words while speaking even to friends. I say to check students' uniform, their hair, their nail etc.

Lokman: While teaching what kind of environment your teachers have been creating to make learning environment.

Bhawana: They come and teach us and even write in copy as well. If we don't understand anything, they teach us romantically. I haven't seen the teachers carrying a stick while coming to teach us except a few. However, they don't come to teach us regularly.

Lokman: What do you think the teachers should do to make it even better?

Bhawana: Coming regularly at school and teaching us is better. Sometimes they come and sometimes don't. There is holiday on Saturday for us. But the teachers' absence affects us. They support us like our own parents. So, if they come regularly then it is better.

Lokman: Do you have any expectations from school's side?

Bhawana: No.

Lokman: What kind of environment do you have at home to study?

Bhawana: It is good enough. I don't go outside. There is a table to study. To guide me, uncle and aunt come in the evening. They teach me what I don't know.

Lokman: How supportive are your parents in study?

Bhawana: I don't know about my father. But my mother is really supportive. My mother always says "Read. I support and

provide you and your brother all the things that you need even if I need to lose everything".

Lokman: Why did you say, "I don't know about my father?"

Bhawana: My father got married again. He sometimes comes and asks us if we need money. But I don't like this and his support.

Lokman: Does your parents' separation affect you in study?

Bhawana: In the beginning, when I was small it affected but not now. Because I

have heard the news that many mothers are single at present.

Lokman: What do you expect, what kind of environment would be there at home?

Bhawana: It is good. What it is, it is good. Lokman: Do you have any suggestions regarding 'learning ecology'?

Bhawana: I have a dream to become someone and to do something because I want to show my father by being someone. There are people who had and have negative thinking about my mother. For those, I want to show.

Lokman: Thank you. Ok.

## Annex Six

## Interview Transcription and Essence-based Coding -6 (Student-Participant)

Lokman: Do you think you could introduce yourself?

Bidhisha: Namaste, my name is Binisha Chaudhary. I study in grade 8 and my school's name is Shree Khim Bahadur Shah Ma Vi Lamaji Dang.

Lokman: Do you have English or Nepali medium or both in your school?

Bidhisha: We have Nepali medium, sir.

Lokman: And, how old are you?

Bidhisha: 14

Lokman: Have you got any idea about learning ecology? What do you think learning ecology is like?

Bidhisha: It's good. Environment in our school is nice. It's clean; garbage truck comes to collect waste every day. We have trees there. Children keep surroundings neat. We all should care environment wherever we are.

Lokman: What sort of environment is suitable and helpful in learning things?

Bidhisha: Cleanliness and balanced diet. Our neighbouring village isn't clean enough.

Lokman: Do you think it is difficult to learn unless the environment is clean?

Bidhisha: Yes, it is.

Lokman: You said earlier about balanced diet. What sort of food is likely to boost study?

Bidhisha: We should avoid consuming junk food, noodles, ~~vegetables~~. Our school has banned noodles recently. It is better to eat balanced food.

Lokman: You mean environment affects study too, don't you?

Bidhisha: Of course, yes. How can we learn if the environment is not good enough.

Lokman: What other things make you understand lessons taught? Can you understand what teachers have taught?

Bidhisha: Friends circle can impact too. Youths are addicted to drug abuse due to bad companions. It has had bad effects

upon learners. Recently, new students have joined. We might not have similar interests and behaviours. They tease and mock at us while we are reading. This distracts our study.

Lokman: That is to say companions must be sound isn't it? And what else help you understand more clearly?

Bidhisha: Teachers should understand students too. Special care and attention should be paid to weak students.

Lokman: You said about weak and talented students in the classroom. Whom do your teachers care more?

Bidhisha: Weak students. They care both. However special care is given to the weak. I belong to talent group.

Lokman: That sounds good, doesn't it? You raised the issue of teachers. What efforts have they made to make subjects much easier and simple?

Bidhisha: They are trying their best. We didn't have science lab, temple and other facilities in the past. However, recently they have made it possible. And yet, some equipments like microscope are lacking. They have more to do yet.

Lokman: Oh, learning instruments, equipments are not available? Do your teachers prepare teaching aids and use them while teaching?

Bidhisha: Yes, they do.

Lokman: What kind of?

Bidhisha: Most of the students in our school can't read the texts. They can read Nepali let alone English.

Lokman: Why do you think they can't read the texts?

Bidhisha: They don't try to read. Teachers teach them but they don't have book reading culture. They never turn a page and read it at home. How can they learn without touching book. I think parents don't care children either. They have dreams of their children and send them to school, but don't care at all.

Lokman: You mean guardians'd better care their children at home, don't you? What is that care like?

Bidhisha: Yes. They should convince children and suggest not involving in social problems like drug abuse,

alcoholism and others. It is their duty. Lokman: Have you found any friends consuming drugs like that?

Bidhisha: I don't know. Perhaps there are. They do not share. They keep it secret.

Lokman: Oh, and what else should be done to make children's study better?

Bidhisha: Parents must not quarrel at home. Since children are depressed and under pressure of parents. Children wish to live in a small family and peaceful environment and have sufficient food to eat. Lately, my grandfather passed away. I have sound environment at my home.

Lokman: Whose quarrel? Isn't study good if parents quarrel?

Bidhisha: You might have experienced how parents quarrel affects children's study. How can children focus on their study when their parents constantly fight and disrupt peace?

Lokman: It means there should be sound environment at home. How did your grandpa's demise affect your study?

Bidhisha: It affected little. People frequently came at night.

Lokman: I am so sad to hear it. And how have your teachers support you? What roles have they played so far?

Bidhisha: They are doing well. They try to make me understand things much more clearly. Much responsibility goes to us. We should try to understand what they teach. Nowadays, one of the teachers has gone on a tour. Headteacher is attending class in his absence.

Lokman: Thank you so much for your time.