

Exploring the Socio-cultural Identity of Secondary Level English Teachers in Nepal: A Narrative Perspective

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Abstract

Teacher identity has become a crucial part and an important aspect of teacher professional development. It has become a significant aspect of research in the present day. This research aims to explore the perspective of how socio-cultural factors and their related identity are constructed within the classroom environment. It mainly focuses on the beliefs, attitudes, and social status that English teachers hold and practice. The teachers for this study were chosen using a purposive sampling procedure. By adopting a qualitative research design, the data was collected from four EFL teachers of the Lalitpur district using semi-structured interviews. The research indicates that EFL teachers assimilate themselves in sociocultural settings to construct their identity. They try to adjust to the specific context and working environment through interaction with others. Moreover, teachers have a vital role in social status, recognition, context, beliefs, and practices, which contribute to their position in society.

Keywords: English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers, teacher identity, teacher professional development, socio-cultural factors

Introduction

Teacher identity has been one of the considerable fields of interest to educational researchers. The concept of research in language teacher identity has gained huge attention (Cheung et al., 2015; De Costa & Norton, 2017; Yuan, 2019) and many researchers are involved in investigating this specific aspect. It is necessary to know how teachers perceive the roles themselves, how they are perceived by others and the competencies that they show in their professional field. There is a great need to understand the concept of teacher identity and the influencing factors, which are critical for creating the appropriate teacher education programs and their implementation in educational policies. The previous studies identified that the “notion of identity is an organizing principle in teachers' jobs and lives” (Maclure, 1993, p. 311) and innovations in a changing policy context requires an awareness of the identity that educators create for themselves (Robinson & McMillan, 2006). Moreover, Identity is the process by which a person can interact with others to gain knowledge (Wenger, 2000). Individuals frequently possess multiple identities and connections, collectively shaping their sense of self. There are several factors influencing the teacher's identity like personal, social, geographical, cultural, and gender and it can be interpreted from one scholar to another. The teacher identity construction is a dynamic process in which people always struggle and change due to both internal and external forces (Zareee & Ghasedi, 2014).

Teacher identity affects the classroom environment, and the diversity of identity of the individual in the classroom can strengthen the classroom community for the benefit of all. Teachers can directly or indirectly influence learners with their identity, thus introducing some characteristics in his/her personality. Teacher identity is the field of teacher education, which has received huge attention in language teacher education in the last decades. While talking about the notion of teacher identity, several questions come to mind, among which are: 'Who is a teacher?', 'How do teachers perceive themselves in terms of their roles, professionalism, career, social status, and cultural practices in teaching? Teacher identity affects the classroom and learning environment along with his/her teaching career. Researchers have endeavored to show how teachers are perceived and viewed differently by various

groups of people, which has further influenced the teacher identity (Mockler, 2004).

When I went through different research studies and articles, I noticed the various hindering factors that affect the teacher's identity like personal factors (Neupane, 2024a, 2024b), history, professional life, and beliefs. Many of the previous researchers were concerned with the theoretical aspect related to teacher identity and there was the literature concerned with the socio-cultural identity of English teachers. Moreover, I did not get many research studies and literature done in this relevant field, especially in classroom practices, teaching cultures, and social status to analyze the socio-cultural identity of teachers in the Nepalese context.

Comparatively speaking, in other words, studies in the Nepalese context related to the socio-cultural identity of English teachers are very limited and have not been extensively explored. Among few studies on identity, Neupane (2023) focuses on the trajectory of identity negotiation of English language teachers while Neupane (2024a) and Neupane and Bhatt (2023) highlight the interplay of sociocultural environment and agency in identity negotiation of English teachers from Nepal. Likewise, Neupane (2024b) discusses the influence of emotion on the identity construction of language teachers. Despite, few other studies that focus on narratives and identities (Neupane & Gnawali, 2023a; Neupane et al., 2022), the concept of guru (Neupane & Gnawali, 2023b), teacher leadership (Neupane, 2021), professional development through ICT (Karki et al., 2024), and teachers' perception on CLIL (Paudel et al., 2024) has been minimally explored in studies within the context of Nepal. Similarly, emotional well-being (Maharjan et al., 2024), the use of GenAI and AI tools in English language teaching and learning (Ghimire et al., 2024), and factors influencing speaking (Sumbul & Neupane, 2024), studies that exclusively focus on the influence of environment on identity in the context of Nepal are also minimal. Even investment in teacher development and identity construction is minimal from the government and professional organizations (Neupane & Joshi, 2022). While these studies have been concerned with the different facets of teacher identity, they have not been concerned much with the area of socio-cultural identity formation concerning private school teachers in the Nepalese context. Therefore, I realized the necessity of carrying out this research study to fill the gap by concerning the views

and opinions of private school teachers and to explore the sociocultural identities and their related factors among secondary-level English level teachers in Nepal.

The purpose of this research study is to explore how English teachers in secondary schools in Nepal narrate their socio-cultural identity, considering their personal and professional experiences. Similarly, it intends to find out the significant factors that affect the socio-cultural identity of English teachers. The following research questions guided this research study:

- How do English teachers construct their socio- cultural identities in secondary-level classrooms?
- What are the significant factors influencing the socio- cultural identity formation of English teachers in secondary classrooms?

The study reflected the characteristics of English teachers related to socio-cultural identity and tried to identify the important factors that shaped the socio- cultural identities of English language teachers in the secondary level classroom. The study would be beneficial to those teachers who are constantly struggling to construct their socio-cultural identity. The research would equally be beneficial to curriculum experts and textbook writers to incorporate the various concepts of teacher identity formation from the personal to the societal context. They can utilize the findings of this study while designing curricula, syllabi and writing textbooks related to teacher identity construction along with socio-cultural identity and characteristics. Similarly, the study is significant to the policymakers to formulate different plans and policies in the field of teacher socio-cultural identity.

Literature Review

The Concept of Teacher Identity and its Construction

Identity refers to the unique traits that each individual has or the shared characteristics among all members of a particular social category or group. Identity is shaped and defined by the aspects with which individuals choose to associate themselves. Identity refers to the goals, values, beliefs, and ideas, which make people, dedicated to themselves and help them to direct their goals and concerns with their lives (Waterman, 2004). The development of identity is vital for uplifting his or her status and achieving success in someone's life. Reflective questions like "Who am I?" and

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"Where am I going in life?" serve as beginning prompts for individuals to view their identity and direction (Anjalmoose & Arumugam, 2018). Teacher identity is characterized as the beliefs, values, and commitments the individual holds toward being a teacher and being a particular type of teacher (Richards, 2023). Teacher identity acts as an organizing factor in their professional decision-making so, it is necessary to support it (Lankveld et al., 2021). The various aspects of teacher identity are: personal beliefs, attitudes toward the profession, teaching philosophy, cultural awareness, content knowledge, feedback, and others' responses that frame the conception of oneself as a teacher (Kroger, 2000 as cited in Poudel, 2017). So, understanding language teacher identity is a vital part of understanding who these teachers are and what they do.

Research on teacher identity has gained significant interest and continued to be central to emerging studies over the past decade (Clarke, 2008). Teacher identity refers to how educators appear to perceive themselves in their profession. Teacher identity construction has extensive literature and covers several topics like social recognition, the application of theory to teaching, theorizing practice, and methods of teaching (Salinas & Ayala, 2018). Teacher identity is influenced by various factors like social, cultural, geographic, experience, skills, subject and pedagogical knowledge, classroom practices and professional development as well as teacher interactions with colleagues and others. Teachers carry certain social values and attitudes in their profession.

It is essential to explore the lived experiences and activities of engaging in social practices to understand the notion of teacher identity and the process of its construction (Wenger, 1998). Additionally, several other factors, including personal histories, social networks and relationships, culture, working conditions, school culture, curriculum, teaching resources, and access to professional development activities, have an impact on influencing teachers' identities (Johnston, 2012). Moreover, English language educators' identities are also shaped by their work in various learning communities (Neupane et al., 2022).

The fact that language teacher educators are aware of how to advance the teaching profession may be the cause of the intense interest in investigating the many facets of language teacher identity (Kumaravadivelu, 2012).

Socio-cultural Theory as the Theoretical Framework

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Teacher identity is shaped through interactions with others, including students and colleagues, from a sociocultural perspective (Reeves, 2009). Similarly, Penuel and Wersch (1995) state that “socio-cultural theory scholars focus on the importance of context and social practice in the development of identities” (p. 84). The socio-cultural theory by Vygotsky puts a great emphasis on meaningful human connection, which is essential for language acquisition, particularly for L2 development (Alkhubiry, 2022). Lev Vygotsky developed the concept of socio-cultural theory as a counterpoint to behaviorism. As stated by Anjalmose and Arumugam (2018), “The socio-cultural approach adds an exploration of how our culture influences how we learn and think” (p. 334). The socio-cultural approach emphasizes how our learning process is shaped by the culture in which we live. Socio-cultural theory even focuses on how the broader cultural and historical setting has shaped the process of interaction. I have integrated this theory into the research study to show the emphasis on social practice and context for the formation of teachers' identities. This theory also helps to create meaningful human connections, which can influence identity. Moreover, socio-cultural theory explores how cultural contexts shape the way individuals learn and think.

Socio-cultural Identity in Teaching

Socio-cultural identity is about the respect and social standing that people perceive in their communities, and the culture they follow or create (Poudel, 2017). Thus, socio-cultural factor plays one of the crucial roles to construct and form the identity of teachers. The socio-cultural identities of teachers play a significant role in forming a good classroom environment along with the means of sharing their life experiences into the real teaching practice. The educators represent a diverse range of social and cultural responsibilities and identities in their context (Duff & Uchida, 1997). They can demonstrate and express their feelings and responsibilities connected with their socio-cultural environment. Identity is the process that “consists of negotiating the meanings of our experience of membership in social communities” (Wenger, 1998, p.145). He further indicates that identity formation takes place through engaging in varied social contexts.

English language teachers bring a variety of cultural traditions, life

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experiences, histories, and cultures into the classroom. The personalities and teaching styles of English language teachers have been influenced and shaped by their social and cultural interactions. So, a teacher's socio-cultural identity influences and concerns their self-conception and how others see them. This can overall influence their self-concept and interactions with students and colleagues (Poudel, 2017). Eleuterio (1997) and Hoelsher (1999) found that classrooms with instructors and students who share cultural identities develop trust and connections, which can help to increase the enthusiasm, motivation and student engagement to learn together.

Previous Studies on Teacher Identity

There are some previous studies which were conducted in the field of teacher identity. Vagan (2011) in his research work on “Towards a Socio-cultural Perspective on Identity Formation in Education” illustrates how a socio-cultural approach to identity formation can illuminate students' self-identities within educational contexts and activities. Similarly, Poudel (2017) in his research study on “Socio-cultural identity of Nepalese English teachers: A Reflexive Approach” shows the vivid identity of the English language teachers of Nepal. In the research study entitled “Socio-cultural Characteristics of English Teachers in a Nepali Hinterland: A Case Study”, Khati (2018) examines the socio-cultural traits of English educators concerning the social and cultural aspects of their surroundings. The main findings of the study showed that English teachers are highly respected for their multiple roles and responsibilities and their contributions to society outside of the classroom. Salinas and Ayala (2018) carried out a research study entitled, “EFL Student- Teachers Identity Construction: A Case Study in Chile” demonstrates that the development of student teachers' professional identity which seems to be dynamic and involves a variety of internal and external factors such as self-concept, the context of their learning, and getting engaged in teaching practice.

Narrative Inquiry as the Research Method

Narrative Inquiry helps the researcher to explore and identify the experiences and context (Dahal et al., 2024), thus leading to a more thorough examination of the data (Kerwin-Boudreau & Butler-Kisber, 2016). Narrative research generally uses stories, field notes, conversations, interviews, and life or personal experiences as the

means for analysis to get significant meaning from it. Narrative Inquiry is a technique for thinking about and analyzing experiences (Clandinin & Huber, 2010). It tries to represent the experience of people in a textual form. Narrative researchers attempt to group the material obtained from the stories into themes or categories to help the reader comprehend the intricacies of the story and the experiences of the characters (Pandey, 2022). So, I have collected the lived experiences and anecdotes of teachers involved in private schools regarding their identity formation during the professional journey.

Methodology of the Study

I used the qualitative research methodology to accomplish this study. I have taken the narrative inquiry as the research method to interpret the findings from the respondents in a descriptive manner. This study was related to secondary English teachers, which mainly explored the socio-cultural identity in the classroom. The required sample consisted of four secondary English teachers from the different private schools of Lalitpur district. To examine the data, I used purposive sampling to select the participants for my research. The data were primarily collected from four English teachers teaching in the Lalitpur district at the secondary level. The data was collected from the semi-structured interview regarding the matter of teachers' socio-cultural identity and its construction. Some of the guiding questions during the interview were family history, personal background, perceiving the culture of language from the family and society members, beliefs about teacher identity based on the socio-cultural context, professional achievement, assimilating in the socio-cultural setting, hindering factors, the difference between the language teachers with other teachers, perceiving target language and its culture.

At first, I established trust and rapport with the teachers so that it may help me to get the depth information during the collection of my data. The respondents were asked to sign a consent form before collecting the data. The participants were assigned pseudonyms to maintain confidentiality. After clarifying the purpose of my research work and getting approval, I took permission to interview four respondents with the help of interview protocol (guiding questions) concerning the construction of teacher identity concerning socio-cultural factors. The interviews were all audio-recorded and transcribed in written means, which can help me with the analysis

process.

First, I read and re-read the whole obtained data (interview transcripts) to become familiar with the information. Then, I sent back the full transcripts to my four participants for member checking so I could be sure that the written data (interview transcripts of the verbatim statements) was correct and that they carried out the ideas and information that they shared during the interview phase. Then, after the member-checking process and acceptance, I noted some of the interesting points and the possible key ideas of the participants through the obtained data. Then, I have identified and labeled some of the important short phrases and words, which can capture the essence of the topic. Then, I descriptively coded them, which helped me further interpret their narratives by referencing the ideas from the various scholars. I have created broader categories of the data to identify the possible key themes obtained from the narratives. Then, I have divided them into several sub-headings, which can enhance the clarity and coherence of the meaning of data. Finally, I derived the major findings and interpreted the data using thematic analysis.

Findings and Discussion

The findings were presented descriptively, based on the thematic analysis and interpretation of the collected data. As it is a narrative research method, the major findings were taken out from the themes obtained from the semi-structured interview to get the results of this research study. These can be presented under the following headings below:

Adjusting to socio-cultural context

The socio-cultural context refers to the direct physical and social environment where individuals live or where events occur. It concerns the individuals and organizations with whom the educators engage and collaborate in their sociocultural activities. It even concerns determining the certain roles and responsibilities of a particular group. Adjusting in the socio-cultural context plays a significant role in constructing the teacher's identity. For example, collaboration among colleagues, interacting with the learners, developing the community of practice, adjusting to the environment, and interactional discourses among the people in the society and classroom (Johnson, 2019). In other words, there is the determining role of context

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and setting in maintaining the teacher's identity.

The teacher should be familiar with the particular situation and try to adjust to the classroom environment. Teachers come to learn to adjust to the norms, roles and culture of the particular social context. To support this, Richa said, “...*obviously, I can assimilate with the culture where I am living. Moreover, I can assimilate in my roles and responsibility for the recognition of myself in the school and community...*” This quote claims that teachers can adjust in particular socio-cultural settings to get fame and recognition in society. It expresses our identity as an individual and a member of society. It signifies a sense of belonging to a particular situation.

The teacher tries to get the connection with the learners and colleagues in the EFL context to develop their professional, social, and cultural identities. They are in the way to connect themselves with the socio-cultural practices and try to negotiate in the teaching and learning process. This allows them to have a wider understanding of the school environment and to view themselves in their various social and cultural roles. They desired to assimilate into the particular setting through the different activities to develop their career as well as to engage mutually with others to have an adjustment to the environment. If we determine with our beliefs and attitudes, then, we can change the status of teachers in society too.

In the same way, Krishna states “*Knowing culture is an asset point for the language teacher. I can adjust in the particular context of my teaching which helps to build my status in the society*”. This line proves that there is a huge influence of everyday contexts, which can determine our position in society. It helps in the process of constructing the professional identity. The context plays a significant role for shaping the teacher's identity. Context leads someone to behave according to the present situation. Teachers interact and participate in the day-to-day school meetings and engage themselves in different activities. They share their stories related to the past reflection regarding the entry and struggling phase of the teaching profession. They further develop the capacity to do something, observe and create the learner's atmosphere as well as construct a good relationship with the pupils and organization or the institution where they work.

Similarly, Bina said:

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If I am familiar with the various socio-cultural factors in terms of beliefs, attitudes, classroom environment, then I can easily assimilate to teach the learners in the classroom. Teacher identity can severely impact the classroom environment if I consider the factors...

It should be noted that identity involves forms of negotiation and familiarizing with the various socio-cultural factors. "Socio-cultural factors shape the distinct identities of EFL teachers, for whom identity is both an individual and social matter" (Khatri, 2018, p. 250). Likewise, Khushi stated, '*Teacher identity can affect the classroom environment if I am properly adjust in the situation where I am living in...*' This line signifies that adjusting in the school environment will lead to building our teacher identity. The data revealed that the adjustment in the socio-cultural context plays an important role in building the identity of the teacher. Teachers learn to adapt to the norms, roles, and culture of the social context in discussion. As an individual and a member of society, it expresses their identity, which means the feeling of belonging to a particular scenario. The socio-cultural context highlights the individuals and institutions with whom the teacher communicates and collaborates (Lave & Wenger, 1991). The findings depicted that the teacher tries to connect with colleagues and learners in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context to develop and enhance their professional, social, and cultural identities (Darling-Hammond, 2006).

Beliefs about teaching and teacher identity

Teacher beliefs form a crucial foundation for their professional identity (Vidovic & Domovic, 2019). There are various beliefs about teachers regarding their profession and connected with their socio-cultural context. We have different social and cultural roles as a teacher, which builds and shapes our identity in society (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). Being a teacher, we have different social and cultural roles, which build, up our identity in society. Teachers' identity shapes and determines the roles of 'who we are'. Teacher identity is one of the important aspects, which has influenced various areas like positioning, belief system, prestige and so on (Beijaard et al., 2004). Teacher beliefs can be treated as the ideas that we have and develop during our profession connecting with the notion of sociocultural context (Nespor,

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1987).

Beliefs develop us to understand the identity construction in our regular practices. *To quote, Richa said 'Teacher has to create his identity in the particular context... It is also a noble profession platform where I can build a common community to share my ideas... and sharing a common understanding'.* This quote proves that context plays a vital role in developing our identity. Practicing among the teacher community like: sharing our teaching ideas and so on has a direct connection to our teacher identity. They are getting the adjustment in the teaching, learning process, and even promoting their identity too.

Similarly, Bina stated that 'Teacher not only shares knowledge but gives positive contribution to them...'. It claims that teachers play a prominent role in making a significant contribution to our society. Another respondent, Khusi said: '...participating with learners from the different communities in the classroom... getting in touch with the learners easily...' This quote states that a teacher community can lead to huge participation and tries to connect the notion of engagement with classroom practice.

The respondents shared that the teacher's beliefs can help to develop the understanding of identity construction in their regular practices. Teachers are even involved in different social and cultural roles to be familiar with the school environment (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). Practicing among the teacher community like sharing our teaching ideas has a direct connection to their identity. It is crucial to note that teacher identity affects the classroom situation because teachers set the tone and classroom teaching cultures. Teacher identity is built up through the recognition and prestige that is given by us in the society and school environment (Beijaard et al., 2004). There are numerous factors affecting the teacher's identity like motivation, academic and social backgrounds, attitudes, and position in society.

Social status of teachers and their responsibilities

There is a crucial role of social recognition and prestige to form the identity of teachers in their environment. They will possess high status and considerable respect from the community members being a teacher. The research study carried out by Khatri (2018) revealed that English teachers are taken as the professionals with the

higher position where they can access with the technology in comparison to other teachers along with their multiple roles and responsibilities. The image and status of teachers can lead to determining their identity, which can raise their positioning in the community. They can be motivated, inspired and further contribute to bring the modification in their teaching strategy. Teachers face different facets of identity in their working environment. The learners and the social environment have maintained their position.

Teachers possess different roles and responsibilities in their careers. There are different good practices that teachers have carried out in his or her teaching. They are actively involved in different social activities and they try to engage others to share a common understanding between them (Beijaard et al., 2004). The classroom discourse and interaction enable or inhibit the expression of teacher identities. English teachers are trying to develop new concepts and insights in their teaching practices and try to involve others to share a common repertoire between them. They are bounded by their responsibilities and actively participate in different social activities and try to engage others to develop a common sense of community.

They are collaborating to share the good practices relating to their teaching and pedagogical implications. They are involved in different types of interactional activities, which promotes them to grow professionally and influence their identity. They are addressing the various cultural backgrounds of learners to teach efficiently in the classroom. Teachers gain huge respect and status in society. The people depending upon the roles that they play on the school premises view them differently. The teaching context and practices help to determine the significant impact on identity construction.

Social status and recognition depend upon several factors including teacher's experience, training, academic qualification, beliefs regarding their profession, gender and ethnic identity, and so on. Bina said: '*... Teachers are given a huge respect by the learners and I can personally act like a motivator, inspirer, collaborator, and change agent to inspire the learners in the process of teaching and learning and to bring the reformation in the society...*' This line states the multiple roles and responsibilities of a language teacher. They can even be considered change agents to

lead society. Teachers deserve a huge status in society. They try to be socially and institutionally organized in their profession. They are further motivated in teaching to contribute something due to the social status and recognition that everyone gives to them in their profession. They try to bring change in society to raise their standard and status.

The respondents agreed that teachers deserve a significant role in the culture. They aim to be institutionally and socially organized in their profession. In teaching, because of the social standing and respect that everyone offers them in their career, they are more inspired to contribute something. In their teaching practices, English teachers try to develop fresh ideas and try to involve others to share a common repertoire between them and to establish social recognition and status in the school and community (Kim, 2021).

Role of teaching context to build their identity

Teachers' identities are framed in a larger context. Everything that has an impact on the teaching and learning process is included in the teaching context like the physical classroom, environment, and so on. There are multiple practices, which teachers apply in the atmosphere according to the varied contexts. People come to learn the values, norms, roles, and culture of the social context. By familiarizing the context of teachers, they are assigned different roles. For example, motivation, gender, family history or background, activities, experience, affiliated institutions, achievements, and educational level. They are the key factors, which can be considered in terms of forming the teacher's identity. They are viewed differently in terms of these factors. To quote this, Khushi said:

My context plays a vital role in shaping my teacher identity. I should be familiar with the school atmosphere and concerns with the different practices in my teaching profession. Umm... Even the family background, institutions, academic qualification, motivation, and teaching experiences matter much...

The teachers are conscious and aware of the teaching context and school atmosphere where they are working. They are explored differently in schools and community environments. Context has great significance in developing the teacher's identity. The teachers belonging to the Nepalese context will differ from the teachers

in the foreign context; teachers teaching in public institutions will be different from those in private institutions, teachers who adopt the in-service training versus untrained teachers and so on. Anything that affects the teaching and learning process involves the context of teaching. The findings demonstrate that the context plays a vital role in shaping the teacher's identity. Motivation, gender, history or background of the family, activities, experience, affiliated institutions, achievements and level of education are key factors that can be greatly affected in terms of teacher identity formation (Beijaard et al., 2004). . Thus, the data revealed the great significance of teaching context to frame the teacher's identity in the school and community environment.

Perceiving the target language and its culture

Without culture, language will not exist. Language plays a determining role in flourishing the culture. Learning the English language means perceiving the English culture and raising cultural awareness. Culture is a determining factor to influences a particular language (Kramsch, 1998). We teach the target language and its culture to our learners so that they can adjust and familiarize themselves with the foreign culture in the coming days.

In this manner, Richa said:

... Language plays a crucial role in communicating with various people around the world. I can learn about the existing culture within the community...I can even share our ideas and thoughts easily with people from different cultural backgrounds...

This signifies that the form of teachers' communication and participation can lead to fostering the growth of a sense of belonging among educators to work together. Richa stated that '*... collaborating and sharing the resource... familiarizing with the foreign culture...*' Teachers try to collaborate with the various teaching resources and try to establish the relationship between language and English culture. Language teachers are different from other subject teachers. The primary goal of teaching English is to promote cultural awareness and familiarity with the target culture. They will perceive the target language positively and be able to deal with the various cultures around the world (Byram, 1997). English teachers can learn the

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cultural norms and values that exist among the groups in the community.

Similarly, Krishna stated: '*... culture affects language by providing the context. Language supports culture by allowing me to create social bonds among people... can even help with cultural awareness.* It should be noted that the English language would create a connection with the foreign culture and develop social relationships among the people. It can even raise cultural awareness relating to the foreign culture that we teach in the classroom. They can develop a social community and share good practices and teaching resources related to teaching and learning as well as raise the cultural consciousness related to the literature (Hall, 2002). This shows that there is a close relationship between the language and its culture and they can be differentiated from other subject teachers. The teachers further deal with the cultural values and norms while teaching the English language in the classroom and they take it positively.

Teachers have various positions and responsibilities in their profession. They are engaged regularly in various social events and aim to engage others and express a shared understanding of them. The data further proves that the teachers hold various kinds of positions and obligations that can influence their work in the classroom. They work together to share the good practices relevant to their teaching and pedagogical consequences with each other. They are interested in various forms of interactive activities that enable them to develop professionally and influence their identity. The findings highlighted that both society and culture are the defining factors that affect the language in discussion. The main aim of an English teacher is to increase cultural understanding and to be acquainted with the target community. English teachers can teach the cultural standards and values that exist among the groups in the community. The English language can build a relationship with foreign cultures and create social relationships between individuals. Furthermore, the teacher builds a social network and shares teaching-related good practices and tools. It often distinguishes them from other subject teachers in the school.

Conclusion

This qualitative study explored the perspective of how secondary-level English teachers narrate their socio-cultural identity, considering their personal and

professional experiences in Nepal. Based on the major findings, it can be concluded that there is a vital role of socio-cultural setting to construct the teachers' identity. It provides a shred of clear evidence about how socio-cultural context and its factors (beliefs, attitudes, and classroom environment) form the teacher's identity. The study's findings highlight the multifaceted nature of teacher identity in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context. The teacher belief system has importantly played a crucial role in influencing identity construction and classroom environment while assimilating in the socio-cultural context plays a significant role in the identity formation of English teachers. Moreover, the teaching context, including several factors like motivation, family history and experience, and gender, is important for the teacher's identity. The educators seek social respect and recognition, inspiring the teachers to develop unique ideas in a meaningful way.

Engaging in collaborative activities, exchanging best teaching practices, and enhancing a sense of responsibility significantly help to contribute to the professional growth of teachers, thereby enhancing their teacher identity. English educators, having a rich cultural understanding and building rapport with the target community, distinguish themselves from other subject teachers. Additionally, the findings revealed that there was an immense impact of daily circumstances that can decide our position in society. The analysis presents more about the significance of teaching context, recognition, and responsibilities of teachers for identity formation. The respondents felt that teachers deserve a big place in the community. Considering the answers to both research questions, the most striking finding from the data was that the teacher's identity has been one of the key factors that can influence the different fields, such as positioning, belief system, prestige, practices, and so on. The study also highlighted the value of the professional activities of various teachers that can lead them to higher status in society. This research study has collected the responses from only four English teachers from the Lalitpur district. Future research should include the diverse perspectives and insights of a wider range of people like public school educators, local stakeholders, and society members to provide a comprehensive understanding of the identity formation of teachers in Nepal.

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