

RESEARCH ARTICLE



## TEACHING, TECHNOLOGY, AND TRANSFORMATION: EXPLORING TEACHER IDENTITY THROUGH DISCOURSE AND DEVELOPMENT NARRATIVES IN NEPAL

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### ABSTRACT

Through a narrative and discourse lens, this study explores secondary English teachers' engagement in professional development (TPD) initiatives in semi-urban Nepal. It investigates how teachers construct professional meaning and identity via their experiences with workshops, technology, peer learning, and classroom action research. Employing a qualitative narrative inquiry design, data were collected through semi-structured interviews and a focus group discussion with four purposively selected English teachers from public secondary schools in Butwal Sub-Metropolitan City, Nepal. Thematic analysis revealed five core areas that shape teacher development: workshops and formal training, collaborative learning, technology and AI integration, classroom teaching strategies, and personal academic activities, such as reading and research. Teachers valued collaborative peer practices and technology use as transformative, highlighting the limitations of top-down PD models and the lack of institutional follow-up. The discourse embedded in their narratives illustrates how they negotiate professional roles, pedagogical authority, and technological agency. The study emphasizes the importance of framing teacher development as training and a dialogic and situated discourse shaped by institutional, technological, and socio-cultural dynamics. It recommends that policy initiatives integrate teacher narratives as discursive evidence to design more effective and inclusive PD models. The study contributes to understanding grassroots teacher development in resource-limited settings and how discourse and narrative shape professional identity. It also holds implications for teacher education programs and researchers interested in educational discourse and professional identity construction.

### Introduction

Educationists, policymakers, and administrators agree that in-service teachers' professional development is essential for successfully implementing the curriculum and for the benefit of their students' learning (Cirocki & Farrell, 2019; O'Dwyer & Atli, 2015). The advent of technology in education has heightened the interest in professional development (TPD) for in-service teachers, who can update themselves with new knowledge and experience, which they later effectively implement in their classrooms (Rouhani, 2024; Salifu et al., 2024). However, although TPD is considered essential, there is not always agreement on its effective implementation (Dierendonck et al., 2024).

Many teachers perceive TPD as a top-down process, imposed by school administrations as an excessively prescriptive one-size-fits-all model, where outside experts are invited to impose certain ideas without their actual classroom knowledge (Qazi & Pachler, 2024). Although these professional development programs usually benefit some administration-set goals (Supratiningsih et al., 2020), teachers' experiences, classroom procedures, and activities that address students' learning needs are often ignored (Taddese & Rao, 2022). As a result, despite the teachers' presence in the training sessions, they consider this top-down approach ineffective. These challenges related to teacher professional development (TPD) are further heightened in the Nepalese English language teaching (ELT) context, where little is explored about effective opportunities and the perceptions of secondary English teachers regarding these initiatives (Paudel et al., 2024; Sah, 2022; Saud,

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2023). While teacher professional development (TPD) has been widely explored in educational research, much of the existing literature tends to focus on Western contexts or higher education settings. Consequently, there remains a significant gap in understanding how TPD unfolds in less-studied regions such as Nepal, particularly within the secondary school sector. The educational landscape of Nepal presents unique challenges and opportunities for TPD due to socio-economic disparities, infrastructural limitations, and variations in teacher preparation programs. Given these contextual complexities, exploring TPD among Nepali secondary English teachers offers valuable insights into the realities faced by educators working in resource-constrained environments.

As a methodological approach, the use of narrative inquiry provides a novel perspective to examine teachers' lived experiences. Narrative inquiry emphasizes the importance of personal stories and subjective experiences in understanding professional identity, motivation, and growth. In contrast to more quantitative approaches that focus on statistical trends, narrative inquiry allows for an in-depth exploration of how teachers make sense of their professional development journeys within their socio-cultural contexts.

Against this backdrop, the present study aims to address the research gap by investigating the experiences of secondary English teachers in Nepal regarding their engagement with TPD initiatives. Specifically, this research seeks to answer two key questions: (i) How do Nepali secondary English teachers participate in TPD training and related activities? (ii) How do they perceive the impact of these experiences on their professional growth? This study contributes to a more nuanced understanding of TPD in developing countries by addressing these questions. It highlights the significance of contextual and individual factors in shaping teachers' professional trajectories. Ultimately, the findings of this research are expected to inform policymakers, educational leaders, and teacher educators in designing more effective, context-sensitive TPD programs that align with the needs and realities of teachers in Nepal.

### **Teacher Professional Development: A Review of Literature**

As a process, teacher professional development enhances educators' knowledge, skills, and attitudes to improve students' learning (B. L. Bhandari & Bhandari, 2024). Rapid technological changes and the proliferation of teaching and learning resources have transformed English language teaching and learning, creating opportunities and challenges for teachers to adapt and succeed in a continually growing academia. Teachers' professional development refers to continuous learning and training activities that enhance their pedagogical skills to facilitate student learning (Goodyear, 2017; Nkundabakura et al., 2024). Updating and reshaping language teachers' existing knowledge, beliefs, professional ethics, classroom practices, and reflective abilities is crucial to effective teacher professional development (TPD). In the dynamic field of language education, evolving pedagogical trends, technological advancements, and diverse student needs demand that teachers consistently refine their competencies. Professional development is not merely about attending workshops but involves a continuous process of acquiring new theoretical insights, reflecting on classroom experiences, and integrating innovative approaches into teaching practices. Without regular updates to their professional repertoire, teachers risk stagnating, negatively affecting their instructional effectiveness and their students' learning engagement.

Furthermore, TPD plays a significant role in enhancing teachers' self-confidence and professional adaptability. Exposure to new ideas, collaborative learning opportunities, and reflective practice allows teachers to better respond to the changing educational landscape and diverse learner profiles. For language teachers, who often navigate multicultural classrooms and varying student proficiency levels, professional development equips them with the strategies to address these complexities effectively. Additionally, TPD fosters teachers' ability to cater to their professional needs, whether improving language proficiency, adopting innovative teaching tools, or exploring learner-centered methodologies. Ultimately, continuous professional development contributes to improved student learning outcomes, as well-prepared and confident teachers are better positioned to create engaging, effective, and inclusive learning environments (Alshahrani & Khasawneh, 2024; Malm, 2009). This process goes beyond simply imposing fresh language teaching theories, methodologies, and teaching material on teachers (Guan & Huang, 2013).

Professional development programs provide ongoing support and follow-up activities, crucial for long-lasting improvements in teaching and learning (Asterhan & Lefstein, 2024). Professional development training,

seminars, and conferences motivate teachers in their profession and increase the chances of teacher retention. This helps keep instructors in the teaching profession longer (Worth & Van den Brande, 2020). Similarly, Randel et al. (2016) found that sharing and interactions during professional development programs help instructors update themselves with modern pedagogical approaches and technology to facilitate students' learning and achieve educational goals. More specifically, continuous professional development offers English language teachers a practical and effective way to enhance their skills and improve their teaching practices (Dogan & Kirkgoz, 2022). However, to enhance student learning and maximize educational benefits, it is essential for all stakeholders to collaboratively mitigate the challenges related to resource availability, program quality, and administrative support.

Organizations such as the Centre for Education and Human Resource Development (CEHRD) (earlier known as the National Centre for Educational Development (NCED)), the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology (MOEST), the Nepal English Language Teachers' Association (NELTA), etc., organize both long and short-term teacher training and development programs in Nepal (Dhungana & Gnawali, 2023). Participation in professional learning activities and the adoption of collaborative pedagogical approaches significantly contribute to the professional growth of teachers (Joshi et al., 2018). Teachers' professional development occurs through both formal and informal experiences. "Most formal professional development experiences come from within an educational institution and are usually labeled in-service training." (Cirocki & Farrell, 2019, p. 3). They aim to enhance the existing teachers with updated pedagogical skills for institutional benefits (Mahara, 2024; Osamwonyi, 2016). Teachers gain these experiences from sessions delivered through workshops, webinars, seminars, conferences, or presentations. These sessions often focus on introducing or exploring new teaching methodologies, effective classroom management techniques, educational technology, or classroom-based research in formal settings (Koloszár et al., 2024). In-service teacher development can have positive effects, such as updating knowledge about pedagogical practice and evaluation techniques, encouraging collegiality, and collectively addressing classroom-related issues and material production.

Self-directed initiatives, professional workshops, and peer-supported learning are pivotal methods for teacher professional development (Joshi et al., 2018). Further, Acharya (2019) underscores the efficacy of activity-based training in boosting teachers' confidence and process skills, enhancing their beliefs about teaching and learning. In a similar line, Barahona et al. (2024) prioritized EFL teachers' engagement in pedagogical practices and professional programs, educational discourse, and reinforced the importance of shared activities in skill enhancement. In this line, Gee et al. (1995) define discourse as interacting, valuing, and using things in particular contexts and at specific times, to display and recognize a particular social identity. Lap et al. (2024) highlighted activities like feedback exchange, classroom observations, and reflective practices as key components of collaborative professional development efforts, enabling instructors to improve their pedagogical approaches. Professional organizations foster cooperation for shared learning and continuous growth among educators to enhance each other's professional development (Nguyen & Hong, 2025). Therefore, these studies affirm that fostering a collaborative culture through formal and informal sessions for instructors is essential for professional development. Along with enhancing classroom teaching, peer interactions, and shared learning experiences, building a supportive professional network among teachers, educators, administrators, and other concerned stakeholders is essential.

Although several studies have investigated teacher professional development (TPD), secondary schools in Nepal lack many TPD activities (Poudel, 2024). Moreover, despite the growing global emphasis on teacher professional development (TPD), research that delves into the specific experiences and challenges faced by secondary-level English teachers in Nepal remains scarce. While existing studies contribute insights into general TPD practices, they often present fragmented findings, focusing on isolated workshops, formal training sessions, or institutional initiatives, without considering the broader socio-cultural and educational landscape in which Nepalese teachers operate. Nepal's unique linguistic diversity, varying resource availability between urban and rural schools, and the shifting demands of English language education create a context where TPD cannot be viewed in isolation from the realities of teachers' professional lives. Consequently, there is a pressing need for research that integrates these contextual nuances to understand better how TPD unfolds within the Nepalese ELT environment.

This study seeks to address this gap by investigating the professional development experiences of secondary English teachers in Nepal, focusing on their perceptions of how TPD initiatives contribute to enhancing their pedagogical competence. Unlike previous studies that have narrowly examined formal training programs, this research adopts a more holistic approach, exploring formal and informal TPD avenues, including workshops, peer collaboration, self-directed learning, and reflective practices. By doing so, the study captures teachers' engagement with TPD and uncovers how socio-cultural factors, institutional support, and personal agency influence their professional growth. More specifically, the research responds to the question: How do English teachers in Nepal enhance their pedagogical skills amidst the contextual challenges they face? The findings aim to inform policymakers, educators, and stakeholders in developing more contextually relevant and sustainable TPD frameworks that empower teachers to meet the evolving demands of English language teaching in Nepal.

## **Materials and Methods**

### **Research Design**

In this narrative inquiry study, we explored English language teachers' perceptions and practices about teachers' professional development that are recorded as stories (Dahal et al., 2024). Meanwhile, Barkhuizen (2022) claimed that narrative inquiry as a research method is employed to delve deep into the participants' lived experiences; to explore the meaning they make of those experiences, and that the researchers can be an integral part of that inquiry process. The unit of analysis for this study is based on English language teachers' lived stories about their opportunities for professional development.

### **Research Participants**

The selection of participants in this study was guided by the principle of purposive sampling, which ensures that individuals with specific knowledge and experience relevant to the research objectives are included. Four English language teachers were purposefully chosen from two community schools within Butwal Sub-Metropolitan City in Rupandehi district, Nepal. This location was selected to represent a typical urban setting where secondary-level English teaching occurs within Nepal's public education system. The participants, two males and two females, were selected to maintain gender diversity and provide a balanced perspective on the research topic. Each teacher possessed at least five years of teaching experience, ensuring sufficient professional exposure to reflect meaningfully on their engagement with professional development (TPD) activities.

Additionally, the inclusion criteria emphasized teachers with adequate technological literacy and an active interest in enhancing their professional competence. This requirement aligns with the evolving demands of English language teaching, where digital tools and online resources increasingly influence teaching practices. Given the study's focus on understanding how teachers perceive and engage with TPD within the Nepalese secondary school context, selecting teachers motivated to develop professionally was essential. By concentrating on experienced educators with technological awareness, the study ensured that participants could provide rich, context-specific insights into their professional learning experiences, challenges, and growth. This purposive approach offers a nuanced understanding of how English teachers navigate TPD opportunities within the constraints and possibilities of Nepal's public school system.

### **Instruments**

The study utilized two primary qualitative data collection methods: semi-structured interviews and a focus group discussion, which provided in-depth and contextually rich insights into teachers' professional development experiences. Semi-structured interviews were particularly effective in capturing personal narratives, offering participants the flexibility to express their views and experiences in detail. The interviews were conducted in Nepali, the participants' preferred language, to ensure they could communicate comfortably and naturally. To respect participants' schedules, interviews were arranged at times and locations convenient for them. Female participants opted to share their experiences within the familiar setting of their schools after teaching hours, which created a comfortable environment for reflection. In

contrast, the male participants were more flexible, preferring to participate even during holidays, demonstrating their motivation to engage in the research process.

The focus group discussion complemented the interviews by creating a space for collaborative dialogue among the participants. It allowed teachers to exchange perspectives, challenge each other's viewpoints, and collectively reflect on shared experiences regarding professional development. This interaction enriched the data by highlighting commonalities and differences in how teachers experience and perceive TPD. The focus group also served as a means of triangulation, validating the individual narratives obtained through interviews and enhancing the credibility of the research findings. All interviews and the focus group discussion were recorded using mobile phones to ensure the accuracy of data capture. Combining personal storytelling with group interaction, this methodological approach offered a comprehensive understanding of the professional development landscape for secondary English teachers in Nepal.

**Data Analysis**

Qualitative research requires precisely interpreting participants’ experiences (Widora et al., 2025). The study performed the Thematic Analysis (TA) to systematically evaluate the qualitative data and dig deeper into the research phenomena (Braun & Clarke, 2006). We reviewed the recordings multiple times, transcribed and translated the most pertinent narratives into English. We familiarized ourselves with the data, generated initial codes, searched for themes, reviewed themes, defined and named them, and finally reported the results. We assigned pseudonyms to each participant to maintain their confidentiality and obtained oral consent from them to uphold research ethics.

**Results and Discussion**

**Teacher Development through Workshop and Training**

Professional development training supports teachers in upgrading their teaching skills and methods to solve learner-related problems and technological and instructional issues in a real classroom (Nkundabakura et al., 2024; Rahman et al., 2020). Our participants shared their opinions and experiences of their involvement in TPD opportunities. Bikash asserted, "My school organizes at least two yearly teacher training sessions and workshops. These sessions helped me think differently about my teaching practices." Similarly, Dipesh stated, "By attending workshops, seminars, and training at my school and sometimes other schools, I have learned to solve learner-related problems." The participants also shared that their participation in training and seminars organized by the Education Training Center (ETC), Rupandehi, provided them with a platform for professional development. Their interactions in the training and workshops have helped to enhance the teaching quality (Creemers et al., 2012; Kennedy, 2016). The authors claimed workshops, seminars, and training update teachers on recent methodological, technological, and instructional issues in real classrooms.

Besides government organizations, the Nepal English Language Teachers’ Association (NELTA) provides platforms through teacher training sessions, workshops, seminars, and conferences where English teachers exchange their ideas, experiences, and research findings. Asha stated, "As a native teacher, I attended an English teachers’ workshop at the NELTA conference in 2021. It was a great learning opportunity for me as a teacher." Bikash and Bipana shared similar experiences about the opportunities they got through NELTA. Bikash mentioned, "I learned technical and interpersonal skills, as well as the use of IT apps and social media through workshops and training." Similarly, Bipana stated, "I participated in two workshops in two consecutive years where I learned to work with colleagues, speak in front of the masses, and use the projector for presentations in my classroom." Professional organizations like NELTA have been enhancing the professionalism of English teachers in Nepal for more than three decades (Awasthi, 2007; Gnawali, 2016; Shakir et al., 2019).

|                       | Sub-Theme             | Source                           | Contribution to PD  |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| Institutional Support | School-Based Training | Training organized at the school | Provides routine exposure to new teaching methods and collaboration at the beginning of each academic session |

|                                   |                        |   |  |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------|---|--|
| External Professional Development | Government Initiatives | Training/workshops organized by Education Training Center (ETC) | Provides formal PD training on curriculum, syllabus, and government-endorsed pedagogy                        |
|                                   | Professional Networks  | Training/conferences organized by NELTA                         | Provides national and international exposure; encourages sharing of best practices, research, and innovation |

**Table 1.** Teacher development through workshops and training

Thus, English teachers benefit from the TPD training sessions and workshops organized by different organizations, including their own employing institutions. This critical reflection of the teachers on their beliefs and experiences in English language teaching led to their professional transformation (Mezirow, 1991). They not only develop the teachers' professionalism, but these sessions also expand their professional development through a community of like-minded professionals in the network.

### Professionalism through Collaborative Learning

Collaborative practice is a vital component of teachers' professional development, enabling teachers' continuous learning, reflection, and improvement in language teaching through peer engagement and shared activities (Banegas et al., 2013; Chatmaneeungcharoen, 2025). The participants shared their experiences in their own ways. In this context, Bikash stated, "When the government prescribes a new course, our school organizes an orientation program where we discuss different teaching methods. We are also asked to prepare lesson plans and organize micro-teaching before we start the course for the students. Aasha and Dipesh also shared similar experiences. They have been learning about real classroom situations and practical ways of implementing new skills and classroom strategies from their colleagues since they learned technology skills. Aasha stated, "Even during holidays, we (Aasha and her colleagues) chat on Messenger or WhatsApp, and share information if we learn any new classroom technique. And if there are large files, we share them via email." Their collaboration experience is in harmony with Annamalai et al. (2024), who state that language teachers collaborate in learning through sharing classroom strategies, and using technology tools like Messenger, WhatsApp, or email to exchange ideas and required teaching materials.

Group discussions, conferences, and seminars are good platforms for language teachers to enhance their pedagogical skills. Teachers attend conferences, webinars, and seminars to share their classroom experiences, get feedback, and improve their teaching and learning collaboratively (Mani, 2024; Tran et al., 2024). Bipana shared her experience of attending a conference, "I learned to speak in front of a mass when I attended a NELTA conference first as a participant and then a presenter of my action research with a colleague". Dipesh also stated, "During the Covid-19 pandemic, we attended a webinar organized by an international organization...I forgot the name now.... This inspired us to work together for more effective teaching". However, schools have weak and irregular post-training monitoring and supervision (Usiere et al., 2024). The participants' experiences reflected that a lack of monitoring and supervision has weakened the effects of learning outcomes that teachers bring from conferences or seminars. Asha mentioned, "We got a forum to communicate with our colleagues and subject experts, develop team spirit, and discover new ideas through group discussion". Bikash stated, "I started co-teaching with a colleague to improve weak students' writing skills when we returned from an ELT conference last year. However, we have not continued it this year because our school did not organize training. His narratives align with Erawan (2015), who explored that if there is no regular supervision and monitoring after the training, it lacks the solidity of lifelong learning.

The participants experienced improved team spirit through creative professional development workshops and seminars, and by fostering social capital (Acai et al., 2016; Burns, 2017). The participants' reflections revealed that professional training, seminars, webinars, or workshops reenergize and motivate English language teachers to use more updated methods. This finding corroborates the idea of Wenger (1999), who states that learning is a process of identity construction through participation in professional communities. However, their professional development could be more applicable if there were regular follow-up sessions.

## Advancement of Technology and AI in Teaching and Learning

Integrating technology and AI tools has become an essential part of everyday teaching and learning activities, and without these skills, one cannot sustain this profession. Introducing pedagogical technology and AI tools in English language teaching has empowered teachers with knowledge and skills in teaching the English language (Umar, 2024). Technological tools have changed the way of teaching and strengthened teachers' performance. In this regard, Dipesh stated:

At the beginning of my teaching career, I only used the chalk-and-talk method. But, after getting exposure to technological tools in TPD training, I started using a projector, smart board, and digital board. These tools have supported me in improving my classroom performance and enhancing my active pedagogical activities.

Dipesh's experience reveals that the integration of technology like projectors and digital boards not only improves teachers' techno-pedagogical knowledge and skills but also boosts their classroom performance and confidence (Al-Sindi et al., 2023; Napitupulu et al., 2025). Moreover, these tools support the teachers in developing students' presentation skills and help them learn in collaborative contexts (Rahayu & Makmur, 2024). When incorporated skillfully, presentation tools such as projectors, smart boards, and digital boards act as facilitators in teaching the English language (Jelyani et al., 2014).

AI-driven platforms empower English language teachers to develop digital learning materials and lesson delivery (Almuhanna, 2024). Moreover, the versatile features of AI, such as *ChatGPT*, *Copilot*, *Smart School*, *Gemini*, *Poe*, *DeepSeek*, etc., encourage teachers in lesson designing, smart class presentation, and evaluation. In support of this, Asha stated:

My brother taught me to use technology tools and applications to learn English. I now use ChatGPT, YouTube Summarizer, Copilot, Gemini, Quizzes, and Poe to create the lesson and presentation. These AI tools have supported me in the smart classroom presentation and quick evaluation of the students".

Similarly, Bikash stated, "I have learned to use AI tools such as Canva, ChatGPT, and text-to-speech tools for lesson planning, class presentation designing, and summarizing the lesson". This reveals that AI-driven tools are versatile supporting tools for teachers (Arvin et al., 2023). In addition to formal training, language teachers are motivated to update themselves to use AI tools and applications to enhance their pedagogical skills. Furthermore, the versatile features of AI tools support teachers in their professional enrichment (Fathi et al., 2025). These technologies and AI tools support teachers in creating interactive presentations integrated with their lessons and evaluations.

Technology and AI tools enable teachers to address students' learning needs and develop their language skills while enhancing their literacy in technology (Fathi et al., 2025). In this line, Dipesh expressed, "I have also learned to use AI tools such as *Text-to-Speech*, *Audio dictionary*, and *ELSA Speak* for developing students' listening and speaking skills". Similarly, Bikash stated, "I use *Duolingo* for developing students' listening and speaking skills. Moreover, this tool helps me to encourage my students to learn autonomously". Likewise, Bipana stated, "My updated knowledge of using technology and some AI tools has enhanced my confidence. Using TED-Ed and Poe effectively develops students' listening and speaking skills. Asha also shared a similar experience regarding using AI and technology tools in her classrooms. She stated, "I frequently use *Rewordify*, *Grammarly*, and *Hemingway* tools for practicing students' reading and writing skills, and this has encouraged me to learn more about these tools and use them in my class. The above experiences of the participants reveal that the availability of and accessibility to these AI-driven tools and applications create opportunities for teachers to enhance their professional development.

## Enhancement of Teaching Strategies and Skills

Teacher professional development (TPD) training equips teachers with essential skills, pedagogical knowledge, and strategies to ensure effective teaching and professional growth. The TPD training enhances teachers'

proficiency, making it easier to apply methodological knowledge and solve classroom problems (Salifu et al., 2024). Asha stated, "Through training sessions, workshops, and seminars organized by our school, NELTA, and some other organizations, I learned some innovative approaches to teaching, such as technology-integrated language teaching, project work, fieldwork, and presentations". TPD training promotes creative teaching strategies and helps achieve curricular objectives (Cho & Rathbun, 2013).

Students benefit from innovative teaching approaches, methods, and strategies (Sivarajah et al., 2019). Bipana shared her lived experience of her class, "Earlier, I used to give lectures only by explaining the content. But now, I have changed my way. My students engage in tasks or projects and present their findings. They learn English without being much aware of it." Similarly, Bikash shared, "I used to make my students memorize the contents for the examinations. However, I've changed now. I encourage my students to discuss, share their ideas, and solve problems, helping each other. I also help them with tasks when needed." Bipana and Bikash both benefited from TPD, fostering their pedagogical skills. On the contrary, Dipesh shared a different story. He stated, "Despite my effort to engage all the students, I feel exhausted because of the noise they produce, and their distraction from things other than the course." This indicates that student-centered innovative teaching approaches and methods are not good or bad; teachers need to be trained to use them for effective language teaching.

The advent of technology has proliferated pedagogical shifts, so teachers and students benefit from the ample supply of online resources (Ali, 2019). Technology has supported teachers in teaching pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary, and in evaluating students' tasks more conveniently and accurately. Bikash, highlighting his experience teaching pronunciation, stated, "I download native speakers' speeches, trim them as needed, and use them in teaching pronunciation. Along with my students, I have also improved my pronunciation." Dipesh shared a similar success story with technology in his class: "Now I use Grammarly to improve my writing before I provide any information to the students, administration, or public. It has helped me a lot in teaching."

Regarding another advantage of technology in teaching English, Bipana shared, "Since I learned to use the Google Classroom in a TPD session, I have been using it to upload study materials and evaluate students' tasks. I can even do all these from home." The participants' experiences are consistent with Chen and Tsai (2021), who state that technology integration in English language teaching reflects an innovative student-centered pedagogy. Teacher professional development enhances English language teachers' skills, enabling them to design lesson plans, implement them, and evaluate students, considering the learners' needs, interests, and learning capacity. In addition, ICT training sessions boost teachers' pedagogical efficiency.

### Extensive Reading and Action Research

Extensive reading and classroom research equip language teachers with essential content knowledge, enable them to identify and address classroom issues, and improve student learning (Aguye & Berlie, 2024; Doromal, 2024). They help teachers achieve educational goals. Extensive reading fosters language development and cultural awareness by engaging language teachers in independent reading of many self-selected materials in the second language (L. P. Bhandari & Bhusal, 2020; Yang et al., 2024). Such reading supports teachers in interpreting situations or things from multiple perspectives, which helps them deal with learners with diverse capabilities. The participants shared their narratives:

- |               |   |
|---------------|---|
| <b>Dipesh</b> | : For the last six months, I spent at least an hour in the library every day. I enjoy reading novels and stories. I have improved my vocabulary, spelling, and grammar. |
| <b>Aasha</b>  | : After 4 p.m., I use the computer in the lab. I read online resources like newspapers and recent events.   |
| <b>Bikash</b> | : I often read action research reports and articles from the journals in the library. I have learned to search for research articles on Google Scholar                  |
| <b>Bipana</b> | I borrowed some books from the library. I don't have time to spend in the library after school because of my small child. So, I sometimes read them at bedtime.         |



The participants' narratives indicate that self-directed reading improves English teachers' language aspects, language skills, and rhetoric (Durán Bautista & Rendón Marulanda, 2018). They conveniently chose printed and online resources and enhanced their content, pedagogical, and technological knowledge and skills. Classroom action research also plays an important role in teacher professional development by enhancing teachers' skills in revealing classroom problems and searching for solutions to these problems. As Feekery (2024) states, teachers collaboratively explore change in the existing situation through reflective, flexible, and practice-focused means.

All four participants asserted that they needed to conduct one classroom action research and submit it to the school, so they attended a TPD training organized by the Education Training Center (ETC). However, they also revealed that their research work was unsatisfactory because of the lack of effective supervision and monitoring. Aasha stated, "My students were not competent in speaking, though they were okay with other skills. So, I did an intervention in my own usual teaching strategy. I implemented pair/group work and presentations for students to describe pictures. It helped a lot." Similarly, Bikash and Aasha conducted action research to develop creativity in writing skills by employing paragraph writing, story writing, biography writing, etc. It helped students improve their creativity in writing. Action research contributed to improving the quality of instruction. The participants' experience is in harmony with the study of Nhan (2020), which states that classroom action research enables English language teachers to delve deep into students' learning challenges and help them overcome them.

In a similar line to the findings of L. P. Bhandari (2022) that the participants' reflections suggest that their participation in institutional as well as personal engagement in TPD enriched their capacity to bridge what they experienced at the site with their academic studies and gain greater self-awareness, clarify their values, and become more open to experiential differences rather than reflexively imposing their beliefs on teaching the English language

## Discussion

The findings of this study reinforce the notion that teacher professional development (TPD) is a critical mechanism for enhancing English language teaching practices, particularly in resource-constrained and evolving educational contexts like Nepal. Teachers who actively engaged in TPD activities demonstrated increased confidence in their pedagogical practices and greater flexibility in addressing the diverse needs of their students. This aligns with prior research emphasizing that TPD provides teachers with the necessary tools to manage classroom challenges more effectively (Rahmat et al., 2023). Exposure to innovative teaching methodologies, technology integration, and student-centered approaches through workshops and training allowed teachers to adapt to modern educational demands, ultimately improving student engagement and learning outcomes.

Moreover, the study underscores the positive impact of collaborative professional development formats, such as peer learning, group discussions, and co-teaching, on fostering a supportive and reflective teaching environment. This aligns with the social constructivist view that professional learning is most effective within collaborative communities (Rahardi et al., 2024). Participants acknowledged that learning from peers and engaging in co-teaching practices enhanced their problem-solving abilities, expanded their repertoire of instructional techniques, and promoted a culture of continuous learning. Such collaborative environments improved teachers' technical competencies and contributed to building collegiality and shared responsibility in educational institutions.

However, despite these benefits, the research also highlights structural weaknesses in implementing TPD initiatives. A significant concern raised by participants was the lack of systematic follow-up, monitoring, and evaluation mechanisms to assess the long-term effectiveness of TPD programs. This finding resonates with existing literature, which argues that without post-training evaluation and sustained support, the impact of TPD initiatives often diminishes over time (Kurniawan et al., 2024). Teachers expressed that while they gained new knowledge and skills during training, the absence of structured feedback and supervision limited their ability to apply and sustain these innovations in real classroom settings.

Additionally, the findings reveal the need for context-specific TPD programs tailored to the challenges of the Nepalese ELT context. Many participants emphasized that generic training often overlooks the unique socio-cultural, linguistic, and infrastructural challenges faced by teachers in different regions. Therefore, future TPD initiatives should incorporate localized content, practical classroom demonstrations, and continuous mentoring to ensure that professional development translates into meaningful and sustainable classroom improvements. Addressing these gaps would enhance the long-term impact of TPD programs and support the broader goal of improving English language education in Nepal.

## Conclusions

The findings suggest that teacher professional development involvement provides the necessary foundation for English language teachers to facilitate their teaching activity and constructively respond to their students' needs and the challenges of the Nepalese English language teaching context. This study shows that TPD programs enhance English teachers' professional competencies by providing innovative instructional strategies, technological skills, and collaborative learning opportunities. Various professional development activities, including workshops, seminars, training sessions, and discourse organized by educational institutions and professional organizations such as NELTA and education training centers, were found helpful in refining teachers' pedagogical strategies, problem-solving skills, and technological skills. Furthermore, collaborative learning strategies, such as peer/group work and co-teaching, fostered teamwork and continuous professional development. However, the study also highlights that the absence of systematic post-training evaluation and supervision restricted the long-term effects of these initiatives.

This study indicates the significance of extensive reading and action research in enhancing English language teachers' professional development. These findings resonate with Musaie et al. (2025), who discovered that reading comprehension texts could offer deeper insights into using formulaic language in testing contexts and teacher professional development. Engaging with academic literature, novels, and digital resources enriches teachers' linguistic proficiency and pedagogical knowledge, while classroom-based action research enables them to identify and address student learning problems efficiently. Despite these benefits, several challenges, such as inadequate post-training support, limited resources, and a top-down approach to TPD programs, restrict teachers from fully integrating newly learned knowledge into their real classrooms. This study emphasizes the importance of ongoing mentorship and institutional support and the necessity of developing institutional AI policies and implementing bottom-up digital training models to ensure effective English language teaching. The findings can contribute to the existing literature on teacher professional development and professional identity construction through collaborative practices. The study contributes to understanding grassroots teacher development in resource-limited settings and how discourse and narrative shape professional identity. It also provides essential insights for policymakers, administrators, and educators in designing more effective professional development programs. Finally, this study suggests cross-cultural comparison with urban schools or generational comparison of teachers' professional development narratives.

## Declaration of Conflicting Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest concerning the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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