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Shyam Bahadur Pandey
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Multilingual Writers' Perceptions and Use of L1 in a U.S. Composition Class: A Case
Study of Nepalese Students

By Shyam Bahadur Pandey

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts
in
Teaching English as a Second Language

Minnesota State University, Mankato

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This thesis paper has been examined and approved.

Examining Committee:

Dr. Sarah Henderson Lee, Chairperson

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Abstract

This thesis shares a qualitative study of multilingual student writers' perceptions and attitudes toward the use of L1 (i.e., Nepali) in L2 (i.e., English) writing. The research questions include: 1) What are Nepalese students' attitudes toward using their L1 in a first-year composition class in the U.S.? and 2) How do Nepalese undergraduate students in a U.S. composition class use their L1 for the research writing process? A case study research design was adopted to shed light on the lived experiences multilingual writers in U.S. university writing programs. Nepalese students were recruited from two multilingual sections of English 101 Composition at Minnesota State University, Mankato, and nine participants consented. The data collection process spanned one academic semester, and data sources included a questionnaire, an interview, and written artifacts. Recursive content analysis was employed for data analysis. Data sources were transcribed and coded using MAXQDA12 software. Emerging themes from the data analysis include: L2 writing in a cross-cultural context, L1 use in L2 research writing, and multilingual writers' identities. Findings, including participants' perception of their L1 as an L2 writing resource and participants' use of L1 at various stages of the L2 writing process, inform current and future writing instructors' ability to better meet the needs of multilingual writers.

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Dedication

For Mom, Krishna Kumari Pandey, and Dad, Padam Bahadur Pandey

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April 2017

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

Background Information

Though second language (L2) writing does not have a very long history, recent studies show that it is gaining drastic attention in various forms (Fujieda, 2006). The number of books written, scholarly journals, conference presentations, independent research studies, and increasing focus on writing by standardized tests of English proficiency (such as the IELTS, TOEFL, and PTE) all reflect the acknowledgment of the importance of L2 writing. Matsuda and Hammill (2014) note that while historically, U.S. college composition courses have been designed for the monolingual native users of a dominant variety of English who come from the same or similar cultural background, currently writing classes in the U.S. are multilingual by default. In response, there has been a growing recognition of the complexity of academic writing over the last couple of decades, including an attention to issues related to learners and the contexts within which they learn to write (Morton, Storch, & Thompson, 2015). For the same reason, many U.S. universities have separate sections for L2 writers. For the same reason, many U.S. universities offer separate composition sections for L2 writers in attempts to better meet the needs of the growing international student population.

Recent studies show that the number of international students in the U.S. has been increasing steadily. In 2015-2016, there was increase of 7% over the prior academic year in the number of international students in the U.S.; more specifically, 1,043,839 international students studied at U.S. colleges and universities in 2015-2016, and among them, the biggest number (427,313) of students were undergraduate (Institute of

International Education [IIE], 2016). When the number of multilingual students increases, they pose more challenges related to their diverse linguistic backgrounds (Horner, Lu, Royster, & Trimbur, 2011). Horner et al. (2011) further mentions, [a] growing number of U.S. teachers and scholars of writing recognize that traditional ways of understanding and responding to language differences are inadequate to the fact on the ground. Language use in our classrooms, our communities, the nation, and the world has always been multilingual rather than monolingual. (p. 303)

Multilingual students' challenges and concerns cannot be addressed with monolingual disposition and teaching approaches. The above-stated statistic of international students, in itself, is a huge factor for recalibrating the teaching of writing in a country. In addition, in the context of the internationalization of higher education, an even bigger concern is how to make all writing classrooms more inclusive and more democratic.

Among the large number of students studying in the U.S., South Asian countries appear in the statistical data on the top quite frequently; among them, Nepal occupies a surprisingly high rank. As per data from the IIE (2016), Nepal was in the 17th largest sender of international students, and 7th among Asian countries even though it is a tiny nation compared to other origins. The Nepalese student population is the fourth largest group in Minnesota State University, Mankato, out of 95 countries after Saudi Arabia, India, and the Republic of Korea (MNSU, 2016). Nepal is a newly developing country with a diverse, multilingual, and multiethnic population (Daniloff-Merrill, 2010). Nepali is used by roughly half of the population as their first language (L1) in Nepal.

Students from Nepal have added to the diversity of L2 writing classrooms, both introducing new challenges and new potentials. At MNSU, there are three types of writing courses that are targeted to the L2 writers: English for Academic Purpose 136 Introduction to Composition for Multilingual Writers, English 101 Composition (for Multilingual Writers), and English 100 Introduction to Composition. All the multilingual students are required to take English 101 composition; it is their choice, however, whether or not they enroll in a multilingual section. Like in other classes, these students have diversified the English 101 composition classrooms. When these students start their composition courses, they face numerous challenges because the more heterogeneous the class is, the more complicated issues may become due to dissimilar socio-economic, educational, and personal backgrounds of multilingual writers. Additionally, L2 writers' presence in U.S. institutions is not a very straightforward story anymore.

The challenges that Nepalese students have brought to MNSU's L2 writing courses align with their distinctive challenges and identities as multilingual writers. For instance, while these students perform fairly well in writing, in general, they struggle with assignments focusing on academic research. One of the major assignments in the multilingual ENG 101 composition class in MNSU is the research essay assignment (see Appendix E) for which the students need to collect the primary data and write the whole essay with a comprehensive involvement of the writing skills. As the syllabus of these courses show, this assignment carries the highest weight. The challenges faced by most Nepali students in this course indicates that certain groups of students face more challenges with certain aspects of any assignment; this has broader implications about the diversification of L2 students.

More importantly, Nepalese students bring a unique background because of the diverse linguistic upbringing that they carry with them. The recent census reported that the 123 languages used within Nepal vary by contexts (Sharma & Phyak, 2017). While writing, English can be someone's second or additional language. Therefore, all the students who come to the U.S. colleges and universities do not share the same context. Nepalese students' first language can be any out of these several ethnic languages. The case is similar with culture, including perception. While these students are in writing classes in the U.S. context, it is treacherous to generalize that all these students perceive and use their L1 while writing in English in the same vein.

Despite such mounting recognition of the prominence and necessity of L2 writing, writing, like in other South Asian contexts, is still not a focus in Nepalese school settings; rather, it is either non-existent or takes a back seat (Pandey, 2012). Primary, secondary, and post-secondary school English education continue to focus integrating four language skills (i.e., reading, writing, listening, and speaking). More specifically, secondary school education has allocated 25 percent for listening and speaking skills, but writing still does not receive any separate attention yet (Ministry of Education, 2007). As reflected in the recent Nepalese education guidelines, there is not much focus on communication through writing, though students show their literacy skills through their grade level examinations. The Nepalese teachers are not involved in designing their teaching curriculum or syllabus; instead, they play the role of implementing the curriculum or syllabus, which is designed by some other higher institutional agencies. While doing so, they employ their own teaching approach either using English as a medium of instruction or Nepali. If they chose English as a medium of classroom instruction, the teaching writing skills is

integrated with other language skills, but in fact not all the language teachers opt to teach English in Nepal.

Though extensive research studies have been carried out in the last few decades on the issue of the L1 and L2 connection in regards to academic writing in English as a foreign language (EFL) contexts, the results of such studies are varied (Weijen, Bergh, Rijlaarsdam, & Sanders, 2009). Several of the studies have also begun to emphasize the significant role of L1 while composing in L2 from the 1980s and 1990s (Akyel, 1994). With the advent of latest technologies and changing time itself, the local and global linguistic confrontations always go in newer forms, which is why it is not wise to observe the current challenges of the composition classes based on the decade-old studies which were focused on different groups of multilingual writers. Additionally, Conner (2011) mentions multiliteracies, which claim that meaning is constructed in increasingly multimodal ways and, as a result, “the old pedagogies of a formal, standard, written national languages are not appropriate to describe language differences (cultural, regional, technical, professional) and multimodal meaning channels” (p. 16). In this connection, the Nepalese students’ case can help make the current framework of the multilingual literature stronger by examining the underrepresented Nepalese writers’ unique perception and tendencies. Pandey (2012) further advocates, “with the rich multilingual histories and present in South Asia, writing practices in English here can be instructive to scholars and teachers in the U.S. (elsewhere), where there is a growing interest in World Englishes and cross-language relations in composition” (p. 337). Since each language is within a distinctive national, geographic, and cultural context, we cannot ignore the uniqueness that Nepalese L2 writers bring in the U.S. writing classroom.

On the other hand, the idea of studying Nepalese L2 writers' rhetorical convention compared with their L1 convention is still germane in the Nepalese English language teaching context. By investigating the L1-L2 relationship of Nepalese writers in a U.S. first-year composition classroom context, the benefits of this study are twofold. First, it provides useful evidence to U.S. composition teachers to understand the uniqueness of the Nepalese L2 writers and the multilingual writers' other distinctiveness, in general, so that the L2 writers perform well to meet the expectations of academic writing in the U.S. context. Second, this study also remains crucial for EFL and English as a second language (ESL) teachers so that they know the wider context and value of teaching/learning writing to their students.

There is a necessity to demystify the notion of considering high L2 proficiency the only means to measure the L2 writers' writing proficiency. Kobayashi & Rennert (2002) speak in the same vein and contend the importance of such studies: "It is important for teachers in both EFL and ESL contexts to find out about their students' background, particularly in terms of what kind of literacy training they have received" (p. 108). In this juncture, Canagarajah (2016) asserts that it is a "deficient identification when we consider that learners of English are bringing with them proficiencies in other languages. They bring many linguistic and educational resources from their repertoires that these labels don't acknowledge" (p. 2). Interestingly, Keck (2014) argues in the same vein in that they knowledge that each multilingual student has needs to be acknowledged as a resource for writing rather than a language problem or deficit. So, language is only one out of many semiotic resources that goes into text construction and literate interaction. If teachers design pedagogies based on students' L2 proficiencies, teachers

might unconsciously suggest a message that writing proficiency is determined by learners' L2 awareness of how they can compose (Canagarajah, 2016).

Statement of Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to investigate the Nepalese undergraduate students' perception and use of their L1 in their L2 writing process, especially while writing their research essay in a U.S. university's first-year-composition classroom context. As specified above, though this study is focused on the Nepalese students particularly, each research participant carries a unique scenario because they come from diverse linguistic and societal context within Nepal. Additionally, in spite of the diverse research studies centered on multilingual writers' perception and use, some questions are still unreciprocated in regards to Nepalese L2 writers who have been studying in the first-year composition courses in the U.S. context. The two primary research questions of this study are as follows:

- 1) What are Nepalese students' attitudes toward using their L1 in a first-year composition class in the U.S.?
- 2) How do Nepalese undergraduate students in a U.S. composition class use their L1 for the research writing process?

As it is detailed in the background information above, there is a need to understand the diverse nature of L2 writing population so that the instructional pedagogies are shaped enough to be inclusive and embrace the heterogeneous nature of the multilingual writers' composition class, which would also inform the teachers of EFL and ESL contexts to better prepare their student writers for the U.S. academic expectations. According to Hirose (2006), rhetorical patterns are not fixed, as has been

taken for granted, but rather they reflect diverse factors involved in writing. She opines, “it is inevitable that L2 writing researchers develop multiple explanations for the complex relationship between L1 and L2 writing” (p. 142). Developing such explanations benefit writing teachers, however, as Canagarajah (2016) states, the “[c]urrent practice in many institutions of walking the instructors through rhetorical traditions or composition movements is insufficient” (p. 266). He further reports that there is a need for good pedagogical models as many erudite scholars have recently observed. Furthermore, my personal involvements with the multilingual writers are no less intriguing.

In my first year at MNSU, I worked at the Writing Center and served students with very different linguistic backgrounds and skills, as well as students with different levels of knowledge and confidence. Serving students from across the disciplines, I confronted how often international students are required to switch their perception and expression across their L1 and L2. As a writing tutor, I used to ask very blunt questions, “what does it mean?”; “why do you think so?”; and “how is it possible?” At that time, I recognized that there were some moments students that it was felt easy to write in English, and other moments when they felt more comfortable in their L1. I also realized multilingual affordances benefitted the multilingual writers because they could see their writing topics from multiple angles and they could be more aware of the issues associated with their topics. Learning about such confrontations sparked my research interests focused multilingual classes and writers. After a semester of my first year, I also started working as an ESL Liaison at the Writing Center, which provided opportunities to visit the multilingual classes of MNSU, talk about the Writing Center and closely liaise with faculty and teaching assistants whenever any multilingual students would confront

difficulties in their writing assignments. During this journey, I experienced many students who were good at comprehending the reading texts in English, expressing ideas in their L1 but struggling with L2 writing assignments.

Of these students, a large population was from Nepal. I could see some international student writers transitioning quite well, while others struggled in different phases of their writing. Even concerns among Nepalese writers would vary a lot in terms of difficulty at different phases of the writing process. I, being Nepali, used to have sympathy for those who struggled in writing. Every Nepalese student's concerns used to affect me differently, though I did not disclose my surprise in front of them. Some used to prefer using Nepali during our tutoring sessions whereas others preferred speaking English like other international students would. These writers visited the Writing Center with neither specifically only higher-order concerns nor only specific parts of their writings; they would visit for a variety of reasons and concerns related to individual need. Then, my invigoration grew further to know what has been investigated so far centering on multilingual writers' writing tendencies.

When I reviewed the literature on L2 writing, I did not see much research carried out focusing on diverse populations and writing in L1 versus L2, especially on Nepalese writers. Therefore, the Nepalese population seems underrepresented in the current literature. Ortega & Carson (2010) stress to diversify the research studies by saying, "L2 writing theories would be strengthened considerably if the research community could expand the focus of inquiry to include underrepresented populations of second, foreign, and heritage-writers with deferring degrees of literacy in L1 and L2" (p. 62). There is a need to expand the focus of research inquiry so that researchers will help build the L2

writing theory to a more heightened level that addresses students' needs; and since Nepalese student population represent a significant and unique group, there is an urgency to investigate this group of writers, especially. I remember Daniloff-Merrill (2010) who concurred, “[a]s an underrepresented group in the L2 writing literature, more studies need to be conducted that focus on Nepalese L2 writers and on the use of Nenglish” (p. 253). Having all these experiences, and a research gap regarding Nepalese writers, I was activated into conducting this research study centering on the Nepalese students' perceptions on the use of their L1 in the L2 writing process. Nepalese writers confront varied challenges like other nationalities' students in various part of their writing, which led me to ask a question: Why do they not struggle in the same phase and prefer the same type of tutoring? Their diverse rhetorical tendencies and tutoring preferences also indicated to me that there are some genuine reasons which are yet to be investigated.

Though I personally had seen some Nepalese multilingual writers switching to their L1 while explaining something about their writing to me, I became more interested in knowing how they used their L1 use in their writing process, particularly how they perceived the use of their L1 while writing in English. There can be faulty assumptions to the question, “Why do [writers] not struggle in the same phase and prefer the same type of tutoring?”; there can be myriad issues going on when writers use their L1 while writing in their L2. More interestingly, Nepalese student writers carry a unique representation stemming from a linguistically and culturally diverse society. Therefore, I realized it is important to investigate Nepalese writers' attitudes toward their L1 use while they started writing in other languages.

Knowing what roles L1 plays while writing in L2 by the multilingual writers in U.S. university context is important because, according to Jarratt, Losh, & Puente (2006), “students whose diverse language backgrounds go unacknowledged in first-year composition classes by virtue of their competence with academic English” may detract mastering the academic English (p. 24). They suggest future researchers investigate how bilingual and biliterate students compose and what resources they draw upon in responding to the demands of writing English in academic settings.

The above-stated paragraphs highlighted the Nepalese student writers’ experiences in the U.S. context and my personal connection with them. Writing is an embedded skill within educational, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds in different Nepalese educational contexts, yet these contexts are divergent and writers often struggle to fully understand how they compose their writing using their language educational, cultural, and linguistic experiences. According to Pandey (2012), “[i]n almost all South Asian universities and colleges, students are almost wholly assessed on their written examinations, usually held at the end of each academic year, but writing instruction is either non-existent or takes the back seat” (p. 332). Stemming from such limited writing education contexts, it is obvious that the Nepalese students struggle writing in numerous stages in U.S. academic institutions because even understanding the most general aspects of writing may be new to them depending on how they were taught and what they experienced in Nepal.

Limitations of the Study

The first primary limitation of this study is the limited number of participants. It is true that having a larger sample would have yielded different results. Nepalese

multilingual learners are not confined to English for the first-year English 101 composition course only; they can be found in other contexts, such EAP 136 Introduction to Composition for Multilingual Writers, and English 100 Introduction to Composition in this university and may be in other universities, though not very many responded to the invitation to participate. Having a larger sample population would have made the research participants' responses diverse, and it would have helped maintain the inter-rater reliability and derive more accurate interpretation.

The second limitation of this study pertains to not having diverse data samples. Though the data of this study are triangulated from three different sources: a questionnaire, written artifacts, and interviews, the central focus of the study was limited to investigate whether the Nepalese participants employed their L1 in the research essay writing assignment. Had there been other more genre specific writing assignments—such as a literacy narrative, cause and effect, or argumentative essay writing assignment—diverse written artifacts would have given more in-depth results. Additionally, having the similar data samples written in their L1 would have helped more with analyzing the correlation of L1 use in L2 writing. If that was the case, the nature of the interview would also have been modified to investigate whether the extent of L1 use was more in certain writing assignments than others. Having L1 genre samples would also give additional room to analyze the writing assignments structurally, such as whether the research participants employed their L1 more in the introduction, body paragraphs, or conclusion of certain writing assignment.

The third limitation of the study relates to the time length of the study. Usually in such qualitative research studies, researchers incorporate longer periods to investigate

participants' writing tendencies. For instance, in case of the this study, it would have been better if these participants' writing tendencies were studied following their basic writing experience to the first-year composition assignment writing experiences. If that is not the case with some of the participants, involving more assignments would have yielded different results.

Chapter Organization of the Thesis

This thesis is comprised of five chapters. The next chapter reviews existing literature related to the topic of this study. The Second Chapter firstly starts with a discussion of the nexus between first and second language writing highlighting the historical overview of L2 writing, different perspectives on L1 and L2 writing, features of L2 writers, and the use of L1 and L2 writing. Secondly, the chapter looks at the issues of L2 writing, such as culture and writing and perceptions of L2 writers. While talking about their perceptions, Nepalese L2 writers' context is also discussed relating it with contrastive rhetoric. Finally, the chapter reviews literature on multilingual writers' identities associating it with the Nepalese L2 writers.

Chapter Three focuses on the methodology of this study. More specifically, it vignettes the research setting and participants, data collection, and data analysis of the qualitative study. Chapter Four presents and discusses the study's findings. The findings are guided by the two major research questions set at the beginning of the study. The discussion of the results extends with three major emerging themes: L2 writing in a cross-cultural context; L1 use in L2 research writing; and multilingual writers' identities. Additionally, Chapter Five concludes with the pedagogical implications, further studies, and coda.

Chapter Conclusion

In this chapter, I presented the background information of the study stating my position, context of the study, and the general scenario of Nepali education and societal context. Next, starting with the two primary research questions, I rationalized why my study makes some significance, contextualizing with my experience working with the Nepalese student population at MNSU. Finally, I presented the organization of my thesis. In the next chapter I will review the current literature related to L1-L2 connection, multilingual writers, culture, and identity, which will help me find the gap in current realm of knowledge.

CHAPTER II

Literature Review

This chapter reviews some of the existing literature on topics related to the second language (L2) writers' writing issues. More specifically, the topics that have been explored here are firstly, the first language (L1) and L2 writing connection, including the history of L2 writing, perspectives on L1 and L2 writing, characteristics of L2 writers, and the use of L1 in L2 writing incorporating the translational approach of writing. It is believed that exploring such macro-level issues helps finding the gap in current literature from a broader perspective. Secondly, the chapter looks at issues related to the L2 writing, such as the culture and language, culture and writing, perceptions of L2 writers, contrastive rhetoric (CA) and Nepalese L2 writers' context, and identity construction in L2 writing along with a short review of social identity theory. The examination of such micro areas has helped in identifying the gap that the current study should attempt to fill, and it has informed the current study about the existing scenarios in the field of L2 writers' context pertaining to L1s' role in L2 writing process especially in the research writing process.

L1 and L2 Writing Connection

To better understand the relationship between L1 and L2 writing, it is pivotal to observe how L2 writing revolved around history, how multiple scholars perceive the L1 and L2 writing, what makes the L2 writing or writers unique, and what research studies have been carried out in regards L2 writers' utilization of L1 while writing L2.

Historical overview of L2 writing. Because of the dominance of the audiolingual approach during the mid-twentieth century, writing did not get much attention in the field of second-language studies, which is why L2 writing does not have a cherished history. The historical existence of L2 writing began in the 1960s focusing more on the pedagogical approaches but it did not receive attention in the literature until 1990s (Leki, 1992; Matsuda, 2010). Instead of considering writing as a creative thoughtful process, it was considered a mere representation of the orthographic form of speech until mid-twentieth century. The international students, whose English was either a second or additional language, began to enroll in the U.S. institutions in late twentieth century but the educators paid a little attention to the importance of teaching writing in English (Fujieda, 2006). Since its inception in 1949, the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) started recognizing the L2 instruction as a significant issue through its annual meetings. Gradually, L2 writing issues began to shift from composition studies to second-language writing studies (Matsuda, 2011). Because of the political appropriateness and educational policies, the L2 writers are labeled by different terminologies throughout the history including, English as a second language (ESL), limited English proficient (LEP), English as a foreign language (EFL), English language learners (ELL), English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), bilingual, nonnative English speakers (NNES), L2, generation 1.5, and multilinguals (Cox, 2010). Later, the pedagogical accounts and other empirical studies contributed to recognizing L2 from a disciplinary to an interdisciplinary field of inquiry within the fields of TESOL, applied linguistics, and composition studies.

As little attention was put on the pedagogical investigations, it is quite

challenging to specify how writing was taught in L2 writing setting in the past. As Fujieda (2006) states, the prescriptive writing instruction was adapted to L2 writers in controlled pattern practice condition to master the target language structure. Since then, there has been significant progress in terms of pedagogical practices in writing; instead of just stressing on the structural exercises of paragraphs, like sentence level practice. Such pedagogical practice of syntactic structure to paragraph creation helped yield the emergence of “CR” whose primary focus has been on the cultural influence on L2 writers’ rhetorical conventions (Fujieda, 2006; Kaplan, 1966). CR insists that L2 writers’ writing patterns are culturally impacted and comprise unique models which native English readers have complications in understanding. Kaplan’s (1966) study remained a milestone progression to help establish L2 writing as a disciplinary division. Henkel (2002) argues, “[c]ontrastive rhetoric has had so much influence on the evolution of L2 writing instruction and teacher training that today, it would be practically impossible to find a book on methods for teaching L2 composition” (p. 6). CR has helped develop the knowledge in several domains important in the teaching of writing. Additionally, as a result of professionalization of ESL from the period between 1940s and 1966, the disciplinary division was created (Matsuda, 2005). After undergoing various pedagogical and epistemological shifts, now L2 writing has become an interdisciplinary field of inquiry with its own body of knowledge about the nature of L2 writing and writing instruction. The CCCC (2014) foregrounds, in regards to L2 writing and writers, that “second language writers have become an integral part of writing course and programs.”

Even though reviewing the historical development of L2 writing provided an opportunity to observe its historical emergence of L2 writing and an idea of how L2

writing used to be viewed in the past, it does not suffice to say how the current composition students perceive their L1 use in L2 writing. The L2 writers are also named as multilingual writers now.

Perspectives on L1 and L2 writing. According to Matsuda & Hammill (2014), to some extent, the L1 and L2 writers' writing tendencies are similar to each other. Although it can be treacherous to view these similarities with a single eye, L1 writers also struggle with similar sets of issues that the L2 writers do, such as especially the speakers of non-dominant varieties of English—African American English (AAE) and Appalachian English. Multiple scholars have argued that writers go through the same struggles while working on academic writing and they have similar experiences despite their monolingual or multilingual backgrounds. Both L1 and L2 writers' content knowledge and cultural understanding can be adversely diverse. Both of these writers may exploit their diverse linguistic and cultural resources and construct their rhetorical features with the help of word choice, idioms, sentence structures, and paragraph structuring (Matsuda & Hammill, 2014).

While the L1 and L2 writers share some common ground, the dichotomy between these two groups of writers has given excessive attention to various writing scholars. In their book, *Teaching ESL Composition: Purpose, Process, and Practice*, Ferris and Hedgcock (2005) affirm that one of the primary features that distinguishes L1 and L2 writers is the prior experiences that they bring to the composition classroom, be it background knowledge or strategic proficiency, such as dealing with the topic/text, reaction to the activities inside the classroom, and/or preparation to write. L1 and L2 writers are also different to each other in terms of their expectations about the structural

properties and rhetorical functions of texts. Advocating CR, Conner (1996) reiterates that each language possesses a unique rhetorical convention and since language and writing are cultural phenomena, L2 writers put themselves in a distinctive identity. Such pertinent issues help shape the perspectives of L1 and L2 writers differently that results in seeing one another's writing as structurally lax and dull (Ferris & Hedgcock, 2005). Ferris & Hedgcock (2005) further propose that teachers cannot assume that all writers from any linguistic or cultural background will experience the same sort of challenges in L2.

To summarize, while working on any academic writing piece, there are multiple issues that situate L1 and L2 writers in similar conditions. Even the monolingual L1 writers may have to go across and struggle with similar sets of challenges and experiences that bring them close to L2 writers. However, scholars have also discovered that since the L2 writers come from diverse background, their prior experiences put them in unique situation than the L1 writers. The second assertion justifies more why we need more research studies carried out focusing on the under representative group of writers.

Characteristics of L2 writers. Second language writers are the ones who have been writing in a language, which is other than their native language. What makes the L2 writers' writing unique then? There can be myriad issues making L2 writers distinct, such as heterogeneous populations in terms of linguistic, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds. The other features can be language proficiency, literacy, educational attainment, attitude, formal instruction, and target subject matter (Ferris & Hedgcock, 2005). For instance, people sometimes opt the target subject matters and majors based on their local and societal priorities. Another common tendency can be L2 writers' production of possible sentence-level errors, which might have been influenced by their L1 knowledge, but this

is not the case with the monolingual writers. Ferris & Hedcock (2005) further concur that many L2 writers can have very little or no experience with the rhetorical conventions of writing in English-speaking discourse communities but this is not an issue for monolingual writers. Additionally, L2 writers may not carry the similar educational background as L1 writers do, such as providing peer feedback, viewing the issue of plagiarism, practicing personal writing, and considering teacher feedback.

Based on the immigration status, L2 writers of U.S. college composition can be characterized into two different categories: international L2 writers and U.S. resident writers (Matsuda & Hammill, 2014). According to Matsuda and Hammill (2014), the international student writers are those who hold student (F-1) or exchange (J-1) visas, and the U.S. resident writers are the ones who are permanent residents, refugees, and naturalized and native-born citizens. The resident writers can further be divided into early arrivals and late arrivals. This categorization does not always accurately capture the diverse features of the L2 writers, though, as their exposure and needs differ widely. Compared to resident student writers, international student writers tend to have less exposure to English and utilize their metalinguistic awareness and re-construct the sentence structure. The educational background of the international L2 writers is very diverse; some of the international L2 writers might have lived in English-dominant contexts, some might have attended the English-medium schools, and some others might have just studied English as a subject.

Since L2 writers have very diverse educational and linguistic backgrounds, their English language proficiency is also heterogeneous. Consequently, “L2 writing [becomes] strategically, rhetorically, and linguistically different in important ways from

L1 writing" (Silva, 1993, p. 696). Such divergence allows L2 writers presenting in very a unique situation. When we look at the mixed writing class of L1 and L2 writers, some L2 writers may not feel comfortable asserting themselves because of the prior social roles they had been assigned (Matsuda & Hammill, 2010). Therefore, it is crucial for L1 and L2 composition teachers to understand that there are fundamental characteristics that make the L2 writers different, so that they could appreciate the uniqueness of the learners with whom they work during the composition courses.

In sum, L2 writers come from a very wide and heterogeneous population, which challenges scholars to give a very lucid definition. We can broadly categorize L2 writers of U.S. college composition into two categories based on their immigration status, but this classification does not justify the specific case of some other L2 writers because of the contextual diversity of the international students. Furthermore, the international L2 writers come from two different and diverse contexts: EFL and ESL. According to Reichelt, Lefkowitz, Rinnert, & Schultz (2012), there are few fundamental features that make ELF writers different than ESL in terms of environments, learner characteristics, English language (EL) exposure, and pedagogical trends. The categorization of EFL setting again is pretty broad. For instance, Japan, Iran, and Nepal are listed into EFL context and when the students from these countries enroll into the U.S. colleges/universities, we cannot expect them to have similar writing tendencies because of their dissimilar educational and cultural backgrounds. Therefore, this study investigates the issues related to Nepalese EFL L2 writers' unique issues.

Use of L1 in L2 Writing

Do L2 writers utilize their prior linguistic resources? If they do, how do the

scholars perceive this notion? Actually, the relationship of L1 and L2 also corresponds with how competent one is in his/her L1. The quality of students' written composition in an L2 is affected by their L1 composing skills. The use of L1 enables many L2 writers to explore ideas fully on their own intellectual and cognitive levels, but their too much dependency on the L1 may inhibit L2 writing performance (Kobayashi and Rinnert, 1992). This L1-L2 nexus led writing scholars to study the L1 and L2 relationship in a more systematic manner. The study of the L1 and L2 writing connection, in fact, goes half a century back into the 1970s (Liao, 2005).

Traditionally, using L1 in the L2 writing process was considered as a sign of negative transfer. It was considered that thinking in an L1 and in L2 involves a discrete kind of thought process. Teachers discouraged their students bringing topics from their L1 experience fearing it would hinder the L2 writing process (Friedlander, 1990). Encouraging students to think and write entirely in the target language was considered the most efficient way of teaching writing. However, this notion has been excoriated by multiple research studies, which suggest that the use of L1 in L2 is context specific. There are certain situations where multilingual writers can produce a better text when they utilize their L1, and in other situations, they can better exploit their L2. An older study by Friendlander (1990) shows that the Chinese ESL writers who were good at planning effectively and writing better texts when they planned in the L1 for the L1 related topic, but if the topic was related to L2 (i.e., English), they were good at using their L2. When the research participants planned in Chinese for *Qingming* festival and English for Carnegie Mellon University, they produced superior plans and essays. But whether one wants to or not, writers utilize their L1 in L2 writing in different

circumstances. Other studies, such as Beare (2000), Wang (2003), and Woodall (2002) make similar conclusions that although the extent of use varies, L2 writers use their L1 while writing in L2 in different phases, such as planning, generating ideas or content, or solving linguistic problems such as vocabulary issues.

A recent study, which was conducted by Ramirez (2012) over four participants studying in an American university, reveals that L2 writers' use of L1 is a natural manifestation. Though their L1 use largely determines how proficient one is in their L1 and L2 and the contexts (EFL vs. ESL), the findings also suggest that L2 writers are mostly habituated in their L1 use while generating the content, organizing the texts, and comprehending the given tasks. Additionally, writers' use of L1 largely determines how succinctly they involve their cognitive processing on the textual production. "The more the cognitive processing is related to the textual output, the less L1 is used in it" (Wang & Wen, 2002, pp. 239-240). However, the activities which are not directly associated with the textual output have a high possibility of being carried out in the L1. A little later, another study was carried out by Weijen, Bergh, Rijlaarsdam, & Sanders (2009), where they hold that Dutch multilingual writers utilize their L1 in L2 writing process quite well while writing argumentative essays under think-aloud conditions. Though their use of L1 varied in different conceptual activities, such as generating ideas, planning, and meta-comments, it clearly shows that all participants use their L1 while writing an argumentative essay in their L2 to some extent. However, their research focused on L1 use for the conceptual activities only. But other studies, like Wang and Wen's (2002) study, contend that the activities which are more closely associated with the text content occur less frequently during use of L1 while writing in L2.

Additionally, there are multiple factors that cause multilingual writers use their L1 in the L2 writing process. Three such factors include low L2 proficiency, L1-L2 cognate/non-cognate language relation, and transfer of training (Weijen et al., 2009). Furthermore, an interesting study by Woodall (2002), carried out over 28 adult participants, showed that linguistically less proficient L2 learners switched to their L1s more frequently than more advanced learners. If there was a more difficult task in L2 writing, there was the increased duration. The same study also revealed that for students of cognate languages (English/Spanish), longer periods of L1 use helped produce a higher quality of text in L2 whereas, in a case of non-cognate language (English/Japanese), the use of the first language was related to lower quality of texts.

Although most of the studies showed lucid proposition that L2 writers use their L1 to some extent, Hirose's (2003) study derives a different result. In terms of organizational patterns, while writing an argumentative essay, the 15 Japanese L2 writers used L1 and L2 essays' organizational patterns and they remained different to each other. A little later, she conducted another study (2006), which came in similar conclusion, "The participants with higher writing abilities in both languages tended to choose different organizational patterns, whereas the lower participants used similar patterns in L1 and L2" (p. 144). Moreover, there are a few studies that show the transfer of training from L1 to L2, which has made the L2 writers utilize their meta-knowledge quite obviously. Thirty-five years ago, Jacobs (1982) conducted a study aiming to understand the relationship between L1 and L2 composing processes and found evidence that the interface between intensive L1 and L2 training reinforces the students' tendency to apply the meta-knowledge they had acquired to their L1 and L2 essay writing. As examined by

Kobayashi and Rinnert (2008), the collaboration between intensive L1 and L2 training was established to strengthen the students' tendency to apply the meta-knowledge they had acquired to their L1 and L2 essay writing. Although the internal structure of the participants' Japanese essay contained an original perspective, the overall structure of their essays was identical in L1 and L2. The study claimed that the combination of training contributed to steady use of discourse type and the transferability of writing competence across languages remains quite high.

As reviewed above, there are several studies carried out over the past decades investigating the role of L1 in the L2 writing process by the multilingual writers. However, current literature does not suffice the concerns of emerging multidimensional contexts of EFL because the EFL context in itself is quite broad. According to Fejieda (2006), "L2 writing requires abundant studies covering much ground with disciplined intellectual views and practices in ESL/EFL settings" (p. 68). These studies are contextually limiting and do not directly investigate Nepalese participants, their rhetorical practices, and the writing perceptions they hold. Ortega & Carson (2010) further contend, "We need future research that helps us understand how the development of L2 composing competence interacts with, destabilizes, and most likely transforms the nature of L1 composing competence, and how the experiences afforded by different social contexts shape these processes" (p. 63). Therefore, this study has great potential for further exploration of the underrepresented group of L2 writers. Moreover, unlike the current study that explores when and how Nepalese multilingual writers use their L1 in a U.S. composition class and their perceptions regarding the use of their L1 in this context,

previous studies have not highlighted the L2 academic writing issues of Nepalese multilingual writers, an underrepresented group.

Translingual approach in writing. Aligning with the traditional monolingual notion in the U.S. academy, a new concept emerged that perceived heterogeneity as an obstacle of communication and meaning. According to Canagarajah (2013), such impressions mask the diversity inherent in all acts of writing and other forms of communication and gainsays the creative interaction between the languages. English classrooms in the U.S. universities tend to be heterogeneous. As a result, countering this understanding, a conception appeared recently, the translingual approach, which is endorsed by multiple scholars. According to Horner, Lu, Royster, & Trimbur (2011), “This approach sees difference in language not as a barrier to overcome as a problem to manage, but as a resource for producing nuances in writing, speaking, reading, and listening” (p. 303). The translingual approach considers language variations as resources rather than taking it as defective forms; this is why no single definition of language justifies its nature. “Viewing differences not as a problem but as a resource, the translingual approach promises to revitalize the teaching of writing and language” (Horner et al., 2011, p. 305). This idea encourages multilingual writers to utilize their prior linguistic awareness for the betterment of their L2 writing process.

We cannot compartmentalize the knowledge of second language of the multilingual learners; instead, such knowledge always synergizes with the prior-linguistic awareness. Consequently, Canagarajah (2010) attributes that a bilingual writer’s competency is not simply two distinct monolingual competencies added together; instead, L2 writers integrate knowledge of two languages. As a result, it is qualitatively different

from monolingual competence, which is why multilingual writers' shuttle between languages and discourses whenever they successfully execute their writing strategies. When the L2 writers construct a text, the L1 and prior-cultural understanding may manifest to some extent. "Their multilingualism provides that magical 'double vision' that enables them to understand the possibilities and constraints of competing traditions of writing" (Canagarajah, 2010, p. 175). This notion aligns with Uysal's (2012) study, which was carried out with 18 Turkish native speakers who were residing in the United States. The researcher analyzed the argumentative essays written in both students' L1 and L2. The findings of the study indicated common patterns employed in both similar and dissimilar manners across the L1 and L2 and influenced by the culture and other factors such as assertiveness devices, rhetorical questions, evidence types, and embellishment styles.

Even after reviewing the recent advancement of translingual approach in writing, it is not prudent to simply assume the cross-linguistic act of Nepalese L2 writers because the research participants that the previous studies have targeted so far may not necessarily resemble the same socio-economic, educational, and other factors that makes the Nepalese L2 writers distinct. The idea of translingual act, on the other hand, further strengthens the intention of investigating the Nepalese L2 writers' cross-linguistic act and exploring their perception toward their use of L1.

Issues in L2 Writing

Though there are myriad factors affecting the L2 writers' rhetorical convention, a few fundamental features may help determine how they construct an academic piece. Morton, Storch, & Thompson (2015) contend that L2 writers' discipline, and social

factors that they identify, help shape the academic literacy accordingly. The research participants of their study perceived that to “do” academic writing involves skill development, interpersonal relations, and negotiation of identities. When we talk about these issues in academic writing, writing does not remain entirely a personal monologue because the pair and group feedback requires a writer to interact with his/her group mates and think the audiences in a broader spectrum, which ultimately helps build the self-confidence. But again, there persist several factors playing a significant role in such a writing piece, such as culture, writers’ perception, and their rhetorical styles.

Culture and writing. Language and culture are intertwined to each other (Kramsch, 1993). Li (2014) contends culture is an inescapable context in which we live and grow, or rather a destiny. When a language learner is exposed to any new culture through its food, clothing, beliefs, ways of life, and other societal issues, it is obvious that one becomes part of it and starts acculturating steadily. As there are countless ways to make meaning, cultural factors help shape the writing differences, too (Hyland, 2003). Limited cultural understanding and knowledge about other cultures may engender ethnocentrisms and deleterious views toward others’ writings; in contrast, having cross-cultural understandings may help produce an appreciation for writing differences because it is found that the topic familiarity and cultural appropriateness are important factors on bringing certain impacts on one’s writing. Hussein & Mohammad’s (2011) study—which was carried out at Qatar University in 2010 with 16 research participants who were on a Level 2 Foundation Program—resulted the similar findings. One of the major findings showed that their research participants tended to write on topics that were familiar and

culturally appropriate to them. Thus, having such cultural awareness would eventually increase the comprehension and the writing rhetoric of the writers.

L2 writers come from different cultures and are influenced by their own cultural patterns, which cause them to write in ways that are not native-like (Casanave, 2007). They utilize their own cultural understanding, which is influenced by their L1 culture. Matsuda and Hammill (2014) assert, “L2 writers bring a wealth of diverse cultural backgrounds, values, assumptions, and practices into the composition classroom” and since their population is diverse, their perception of cultural closeness with the U.S. culture also diversifies (p. 270). For instance, resident L2 writers may identify themselves more with the U.S. culture than the other group of L2 writers, like the international student writers who come to the U.S. on F1 and J1 visa status.

In this connection, the language form and tendencies writers follow while writing reveal their own identity and culture. English being one of the diverse languages posits its multifaceted forms, which makes Nepalese writers’ writing tendencies peculiar out of its many forms. “Standard English is an accepted form of communication, but that Nepali English is also an accepted means of communication in its own right because it reflects Nepali culture” (Daniloff-Merrill, 2010, p. 243). Because of the country’s geographical location in the South Asian region and because of its own multicultural circumstances, people in Nepal typically put aside their personal expectations for the good of the collective. Many personal issues lay upon every individual’s family and upbringing. Some families bolster individual expectations as a priority, but generally, Nepalese families are strongly group-oriented. The collective tendency implies they feel more comfortable when they are in unified situations rather than the individualistic ones. This

is perceived as a comfort zone, rather than an area where they have to ponder independently, and it comes from family dynamics and also spreads into the educational system; more importantly, such communal proclivity can have direct influence in their writing rhetoric, such as topic selection, citation, providing details, presentation of ideas, organization of writing, and consideration of the audience.

Because of the individualism against collective ideological beliefs, Nepalese learners' encounter with new cultural experience in the U.S. context may not be as comfortable as experiences in their home country. In the multilingual classroom context, though teaching culture may not be seen explicitly in any composition courses, cultural patterns and values one carries may nonetheless influence the nature of the content through which L2 writing skills are taught. The composition classrooms may serve as a platform for cultural orientation, and the writing teachers often serve not only as writing instructors, but also as explainers and mediators of culture and cultural values (Shukri, 2014). Nepalese students, though they may seem intrigued, can have their own fashion of dealing with writing than any other writers.

To summarize, multiple studies, such as Kramsch (1993), Hyland (2003), Hussein & Mohammad (2012), and Shukri (2014) have been carried out investigating the relationship between culture and language. Hyland (2003) and Shukri (2014) strongly affirm that differing cultural knowledge may also differ in one's writing rhetoric. Since Nepalese L2 writers have a unique cultural background, it must play some sort of role in their L2 writing process, too. Therefore, it is crucial to know the Nepalese culture's relation with language and, more importantly, their L1 use and perception in L2 writing process.

Perceptions of L2 writers. How do L2 writers recognize the complexity of academic writing, negotiate the contexts within which they learn to write, and perceive their use of L1? When writers try to communicate through writing, their interactions cannot remain stable all the time which results diversified writing rhetoric depending on the context and other factors. Because of different sociopolitical reasons, L2 writers may construe the negative attitudes as part of the subtractive influence of their L1 in L2. There can be numerous reasons why there remains a subtractive influence in their L2 writing. According to Pearson (2007), there can be five different factors playing a forefront role to have a subtractive influence in learners' language development process, which are input, language status, literacy access, family language use, and community support. Menken and Kleyn's (2010) study affirms the similar findings, which was conducted over 29 participants who were in Grades 9 to 12 in New York City high schools. The findings revealed that the students' prior schooling was posing substantial challenges for their academic literacy acquisition and their bilingualism posed difficulties for them in all subject areas. They further assert that subtractive schooling can have negative consequences for students' academic performance, and attaining academic proficiency in each language enables students to reap the full benefits of bilingualism. However, there are substantial studies that have proven L1 to be impacted positively in L2 writing, too.

As far back as 1992, Silva carried out a study on, *L1 vs L2 writing: ESL Graduate Students' Perceptions*, with 13 L2 writers who were in an American public university and aimed to investigate how the ESL graduate students perceive the differences in writing in their L1 and L2. The findings of the study revealed that the ESL students perceived the L1 and L2 writing act quite differently in terms of process, rhetoric, and language.

Twenty years later, in 2012 Polio and Shi reviewed the existing literature and attributed that writers' perceptions are align with the various issues such as the purpose of writing tasks within a specific setting, culture, and disciplines. Consequently, L2 writers' perceptions and judgments on textual borrowing and plagiarism in academic writing are diverse and vexing.

From this, it does not become intricate to assert that since the multilingual writers come from a multifaceted cultural background, distinctive disciplines, and hold diverse contextual features, their perceptions are also constituted accordingly. Similarly, it is not less invigorating to investigate how the Nepalese L2 writers hold a notion of their L1 use while writing a research essay assignment in the U.S. academy. According to Polio and Shi (2012), "Since attitudes to plagiarism in some Asian countries have not developed the same way as they have in English-speaking countries, students with an Asian background might not regard copying as entirely negative" (p. 96). If this is the case, Nepalese L2 writers, coming from a South Asian context, might have constructed their perception of the entire L2 writing process differently perceiving their L1 use at some position.

Since Nepal comprises differentiated contexts, Nepalese students may not necessarily perceive and write in the same manner despite the similar writing context in the U.S. because there may be other factors affecting, which results Asian students facing numerous challenges meeting the academic expectations in the U.S. context. Kobayashi & Rennert (2002) agree on this saying, "Asian students' problems with English academic writing in north American settings have been reported in a variety of studies" (p. 92). Their prior knowledge might play any kind of role in this process. As far as the academic writing is concerned, one can view things right and wrong based on the writing

convention that one follows. In regards to U.S. university writing context, since the multilingual writers come from different contexts, their perception might have been influenced heavily by their prior linguistic awareness. This adds additional reason why investigating Nepalese L2 writers' perception and use of L1 in L2 writing process would contribute to the current literature significantly.

Contrastive rhetoric and Nepalese L2 writers' context. According to Hirose (2006), the cultural factors are involved in organizing the L1 and L2 texts. In order to comprehend the term culture, one must recognize the CR hypothesis (CRH), which deals with the research on writing on cross-cultural context (Shukri, 2014). Shukri (2014) further quips that the notion of CR has not just been limited to organizational structures; instead, it is supposed to assist creative use in expressing one's ideas in text in the second language. The approach of CR should help and enrich the writers' understanding of the target L2 culture as well as its language. When language and culture are inseparable, learners also acquire new culture in the process of acquiring a new language. While the learners advance their understanding of the target language, on the other side, they may come to enhance their understanding of the values and meanings familiar to the target culture, which are similar to their own. By that time, their understanding of these target culture's values and meanings may still remain disparate from their native culture. In such conditions, learners must choose for themselves between their first culture (C1) and the foreign one (C2) (Kramsch, 1993).

The notion of cultural differences in rhetoric has been an interest of writing teachers since Kaplan's (1966) study of over 600 L2 student essays (Hyland, 2003). L2 writers' diverse cultural backgrounds help systematically develop their ideas in different

ways in L2 than the native speakers of English. Compared to linear pattern of English writing guided by the process-approach, Nepalese speakers produce texts based on an indirect approach and come to the point at the end of the writing. Additionally, writing is taught through product approach in Nepalese context. However, Barakat (1993) affirms that the western mode of argumentation is based on syllogistic model of language.

Nepal is a multiethnic and multilingual country having 125 caste/ethnic groups and 123 languages, and English is increasingly making inroads as a de facto working language in many government offices and other national and international nongovernmental organization (Sharma & Phyak, 2017). Whether it is a private or a public school, the administrative structure in terms of curriculum and teaching is formed in a top-down basis. When it comes to teaching writing, it is dealt with a product-approach. However, Nepalese users of English have been able to distinguish themselves differently, making their English use as one of distinctive varieties, called Nenglish, which has the influence of Nepali and standard English (Rai, 2006). Therefore, “to understand Nenglish one has to be familiar with the Nepalese pragmatics,” because Nepali English has its own features whether it is in spoken or in writing (Rai, 2006, p. 36). Therefore, having some empirical case studies that foreground the Nepalese L2 writers would give enough opportunity to view the Nepalese L2 writers accordingly.

To conclude, studies have consistently agreed that there is very close relation between language and culture. Moreover, differing cultural background helps make one's writing rhetoric different, too. Stemming from very diverse multicultural contexts, Nepalese L2 writers can have their own writing rhetoric, which has still not been the focus of any particular study yet. The purpose of the study therefore is to add additional

input to the current literature in terms of how the multilingual writers perceive and use their L1 while composing the L2 research essay.

Identity Construction in L2 Writing

Can we expect two L2 writers who come from disparate social contexts writing with an equal level of rhetorical awareness in a same writing assignment for any composition course? While talking about the basic writing pedagogy in a book, *A Guide to Composition Pedagogies*, Mutnick and Lamos (2014) give an instance of error correction and suggest that rather than just taking error issues on an individual level, it is equally important to see the larger social aspects of the L2 writers. The assertion that they are trying to make in the book was that although errors are idiosyncratic, they are also the signpost of the writers' social identity, such as where the writer is from, what type of educational background he/she has had, and his/her area of study. The issue may not necessarily be confined within errors. More importantly, when we look at the L2 writers' writing piece wearing a larger lens, we may find various identities negotiated in their papers because "L2 writers vary in how they view themselves in relation to the different cultures they are part of" (Matsuda and Hammill, 2014, p. 271). This creates a curiosity about how the L2 writers adapt their prior-linguistic knowledge and perception to identify themselves in the target language learning context.

According to Canagarajah (2013), instead of seeing L2 writers' writing from deficit points of view, it has to be perceived from other ways, too. Since the L2 writers are benefited by the additional prior linguistic, socio-economic, and educational knowledge, L2 writers' writing posits unique space in writing. In other words, "multilingual writers shuttle between different communities and literate discourses—

between Chinese and English, for example—we realize that they can bring the strengths from alternate backgrounds to enrich their writing in English” (Canagarajah, 2003, p. 157). Doing this, obviously presents extra pressure for L2 writers compared to L1 writers. As a result, the writers themselves perceive academic writing as a negotiation of their identities (Morton et al., 2015). In this process, the L2 writers traverse from one linguistic territory to another to meet the writing requirements of a new academic context but, still, their prior linguistic experience cannot be left easily. In a book, titled, *Reinventing Identities in Second Language Writing*, Fujieda (2010) provides her lived experience saying,

By delving into my empirical academic writing performance during my graduate studies, it is no wonder that my writing style in English followed the Japanese one. I became aware that my academic writing in English represented the archetypical of the formal style in Japanese writing such as being intricate, writer-based, and elliptical. (p. 165)

Fujieda’s case is reminiscent of social identity theory, which was put forth by two social scientists, named Tajfel and Turner in 1979.

Social identity theory. Social Identity Theory is a framework to understand intergroup dynamics, which also provides insight into how individuals encounter social and organizational change. This theory is developed and used in social science and workplace management, which explores how individuals’ relationships and memberships with group members affects his or her sense of identity (Ortmeier-Hooper, 2010). An individual’s value and emotional significance are determined by his or her knowledge of his membership of a social group (Tajfel, 1978). According to (Tajfel, 1978), the four

established components that contribute to building a sense of social identity are: categorization, identification, comparison, and self-categorization (see Figure 1.1).

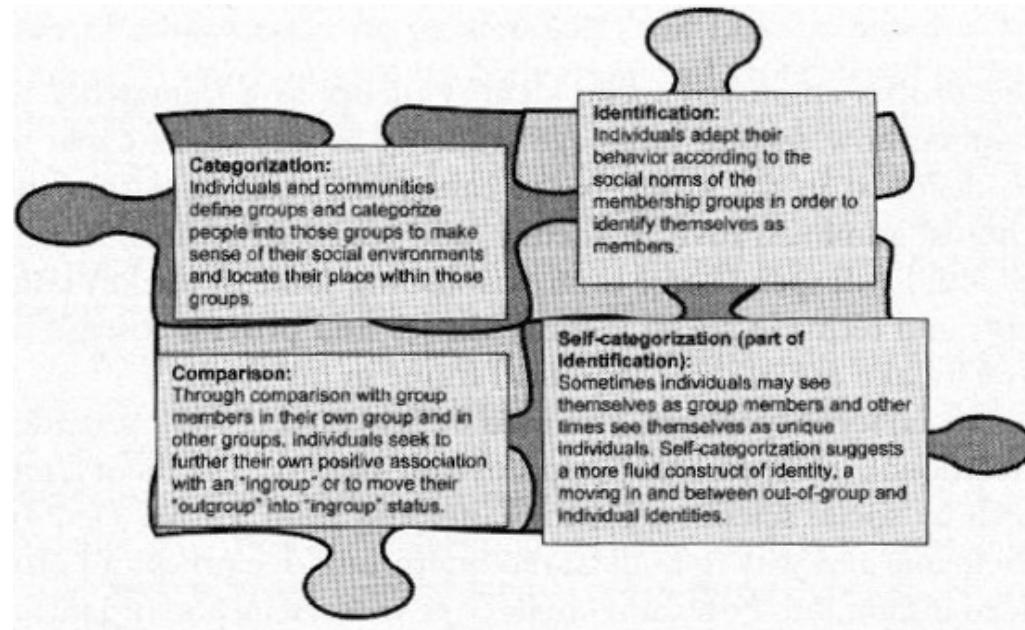


Figure 1.1. Four components of Tajfel and Turner's social identity theory.

(Ortmeier-Hooper, 2010, p. 8)

These four components of social identity theory act like a series of building blocks that individuals employ first to describe and place others and then to identify themselves in relation to those others (Ortmeier-Hooper, 2010). As long as the implication of this theory with L2 writers' writing tendency is concerned, it is pivotal to observe their perception of group categorization (how they define their group membership), their relation with the group members (how close they see themselves and associate with them), adaptation of individual behavior (how one adapts his/her behavior based on the social and group membership), and observation of varied self-identity (how one views his/her identity in relation to the group membership and some other time other roles). These issues significantly impact the L2 writers' writing process because such

issues come from writers' lived experiences. Thus, failure to maintain the expected level of writing in any academic context cannot just be linked with individual level; instead, it may be further associated with their identity, which can be the result of their failure to accept the new social identity. When writers transition from one educational context to another, their perception might be constructed distinctly because of their own prior linguistic and other contextual factors. Writers might perceive their identity entirely different than any group members in the newly established context, which can have a significant impact in their writing, too. For example, when the Nepalese L2 writers transitioned from their home country background to a distinctly different country, USA, their social identity must have changed accordingly. Additionally, Jarratt, Losh, & Puente's (2006) study outlines that the students' transnational linguistic experiences and identifications impact their research and writing strategies in complex and significant ways, as well as their future educational goals. Thus, since there are less number of studies focusing on multilingual writers' identity issues, having more diversified studies would contribute to better understand their writing tendencies and perception.

The EFL teachers' publications do not explore much research on the identity issues (Liu, 2010). As long as L2 writers are concerned, how can their identity be negotiated in a new academic context? According to Jarratt et al., (2006), "to ignore the rich and complex histories of such students' literacies is to participate in the "tacit default assumption" of composition teaching in the U.S. composition—English monolingualism" (p. 26). They further assert that if we do so, we miss the significant opportunity to understand our students' discursive rhetorical backgrounds and to benefit from their prior bilingual experiences in the new context of academic writing. In this juncture, it is

pertinent to take into account a notion of Canagarajah (2002) about the tendency of recognizing “difference as a problem” of L2 writers, which he terms as “limiting perspective”; instead of considering it as “different as resource” where writers exploit the rich, complex, multilingual identities, and literacies as resources in their rhetoric, academic, and creative writing process (p. 218). Nepalese L2 writers constitute their own identity and at the same time they negotiate their identity with the new academic context backed up by the unique Nepalese socio-cultural experiences. Multiple scholars have affirmed that Nepalese users of English have their own way of writing and, at the same time, forming a new identity which has actually been established as Nenglish (Nepali-English) as another variety of English (Daniloff-Merrill, 2010). Daniloff-Merrill (2010) for instance, contends, “studies already conducted by Nepalese scholars...show that Nenglish is an established variety of English through its use in the essays of Nepalese L2 writers” (p. 253). Since the use of Nenglish constitutes a part of the students’ L2 writer identity and it is a non-dominant variety of English, to treat all the instances of it as errors neither validates the identity of the writers who use it nor validates it as a language variety. Therefore, there is a need to negotiate the uses of Nenglish, individually, with the writers based on the intended audiences of the writing tasks in which the Nenglish appears (Daniloff-Merrill, 2010).

Nepalese writers construct their own identity in their writing but it has not been investigated yet on whether such identity issues come when they write research essay assignments. The multilingual writers come from much-diversified contexts, like Nepal, and exploring issues related to these contexts would help understand whether Nepalese L2 writers construct their own identity in their composition process. Therefore, there is a

need to investigate the diversifying context of EFL, so that accurate representation and grounded interpretation would be derived.

Chapter Conclusion

To sum up, significant gaps in L2 writing scholarship exist for diversified contexts such as Nepal. We lack research about how Nepalese students perceive and utilize their L1 while writing in L2 (i.e., English) writing process. Ortega & Carson (2010) mention, “L2 writing research of any kind and particularly linguistically and cognitively oriented L2 writing research needs to vigorously engage with the notions of multicompetence and social context” (p. 65). Despite the large student population in U.S. academia, very few studies have been carried out centering on Nepalese L2 writers who come from linguistically and cognitively diverse social context. Coming from an educational background (Nepal), where product approach of writing is still prevalent, may entail some significant challenges in Nepalese student population while attending the writing classes in the U.S. institutions where the process approach is predominantly used. Therefore, this research study has been carried out to help flesh out the current understanding of Nepalese multilingual writers’ concerns in their L2 writing process.

This study was designed to start addressing two specific gaps in the research by examining Nepalese student writers’ composition process while writing the research essay assignment during their first-year composition class in a U.S. university context; first, their perception of using L1 while writing the research essay in L2, and second, their use of L1 while writing the same assignment in L2. This investigation revealed diverse perceptions of Nepalese multilingual writers toward their L1 use and multifaceted factors associated with their use of L1 in their English composition process. Such

investigation and documentation will be a contribution toward real world gaps experienced by the multilingual students in the L2 writing context (i.e., in the U.S. and beyond). The next chapter details the methodological aspect of the study.

CHAPTER III

Methodology

Introduction

This chapter explains how the present study was conducted in order to find out: 1) What are Nepalese students' attitudes toward using their L1 in a first-year composition class in the U.S.? and 2) How do Nepalese undergraduate students in a U.S. composition class use their L1 for the research writing process? The chapter consists of an explanation of each of the following: the research setting and participants, research materials, data collection process, and data analysis.

The current research was conducted at Minnesota State University, Mankato (MNSU), as a graduate thesis for my Master's degree in Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL). The participants in this study were nine (9) Nepalese students studying at MNSU who were in their first year of the undergraduate study from different disciplines (see Table 3.1). Some of them were in their second semester whereas this was the first semester for a few other participants (see Table 3.1). There was no attempt to restrict for gender balance in this study, but it should be noted that there was a large discrepancy between the number of female and male participants (N=1 (female); N= 8 (male) (see Table 3.1)). All participants were Nepalese and their mean age was 19.55 (see Table 3.1). It has been more than ten years that these participants have been learning English and almost every one of them can speak and write in other than their mother tongue (see Table 3.1 and Table 3.2). I started collecting their questionnaire responses once they started working on their research essay in April 2016. Before this, they had already completed writing three different types of assignments as part of their English

101 composition course requirements (i.e., a literacy narrative, a comparison and contrast essay, and argumentative essay). Once they completed their research essay assignment, I asked them to provide those essays to me as written artifacts. After analyzing the questionnaire responses and written artifacts, I conducted the interviews in one-on-one basis.

Research Materials

The data for the current study was collected using various data collection tools (i.e., questionnaires, written artifacts, and individual interviews). The questionnaire consisted of five open-ended questions (Appendix C). The purpose of the questionnaire survey was to investigate the Nepalese L2 writers' perception on using their first language while writing the research essay assignment in L2 (i.e., English). The participants had the liberty to complete the questionnaire at the place and time of their preference and convenience. The second data collection tool was the written artifacts which were the research essay assignments. These written artifacts helped investigate whether there were any obvious signposts of their L1 use in the written discourse of their research essay, such as the topic selection, parts of the essay, any direct instances from their L1, or any participants of their research essay.

The last data collection tool was the one-on-one interview, which was conducted at the end of the process. The interview data helped investigate the use of participants' L1 in their L2 writing process more in detail. It provided an extended opportunity to discuss issues that pertained specifically to their experience. For instance, many of the participants were brief while providing the answers of the questionnaire because they were under time pressure with the end semester assignments. Similarly, many of them

had their written artifacts discussed in diverse experiences, such as eating habits among Minnesota State University's students, paying college tuition, obsessive compulsive disorder, the effectiveness of standardized tests, children and the Internet, a health company's market research, and bullying.

The one-on-one interview clarified some of the issues, which the research participants did not have shared in such extended manner while responding the questionnaire. Some of the participants expanded their previously stated responses during the interview time. To be more specific, when there was a question about whether the research participants used their L1 while writing the research essay assignment, a few of them denied doing so on the questionnaire, assuming that L1 use meant to be in an orthographic form. When it was clarified that using their L1 does not necessarily mean in orthographic form only, several of them changed their proposition during the individual interviews. For instance, when I asked whether they employed their L1 while writing the particular research essay, some of the initial responses that I received from the participants were negative. Then, I enquired why that was the case; their response was that Nepali language is unintelligible to their audience. Whenever I clarified that use of their L1 does not necessarily mean in the orthographic form, then they immediately responded positively and their answers were obviously in agreement of the use of their L1. Similarly, this opportunity gave a chance to ask multiple questions regarding certain tendencies in their writing. For example, when I questioned them on the reason of their preference to discuss the research essay assignment with the Nepalese classmates or the Nepalese writing tutor, they detailed that they felt more comfortable with them because of the cultural proximity. The participants also clarified many issues regarding their

Table 3.1 Research Participants' Biographical Information

Participants¹	n	Major	Age	Gender	# of Months in the U.S.	# of Spoken Languages	# of Written Languages
Suman	1	Engineering	19	M	9	4	3
Kabita	1	Nursing	22	F	5	3	3
Kamal	1	Information Technology	19	M	9	3	2
Prem	1	Engineering	20	M	9	4	3
Gopal	1	Engineering	19	M	9	3	3
Saroj	1	Information Technology	18	M	5	3	2
Puran	1	Undecided	21	M	5	3	3
Ganesh	1	Information Technology	20	M	9	3	3
Sagun	1	Engineering	18	M	5	3	3
All	9						
Mean Age: 19.55; Std. Deviation of age 2.89; Mean of spoken languages: 3.22; Mean of written languages: 2.77							

¹ All names of participants are pseudonyms.

Table 3.2 Participants' Years of English Instruction

Participants	Years of English instruction
Suman	15
Kabita	11
Kamal	14
Prem	12
Gopal	15
Saroj	13
Puran	15
Ganesh	15
Sagun	14
Mean 13.77	
Std. Deviation: 4.41	

experiences and feelings in writing the research essay.

Data Collection Process

For the purpose of triangulation, I collected multiple sets of data employing diverse data collection procedures: a questionnaire, written artifacts, and interviews. According to Denzin and Lincoln, (2005), multiple methods and triangulation are critical in attempting to elicit an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under study, which is why I decided to employ more than one data collection tool to get in-depth data. This strategy adds rigor, breadth, and depth to the study and provides corroborative evidence of the data obtained. Once the study received Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, the names and email addresses of each individual who was of Nepali nationality was obtained from the instructors of the English 101 composition (for multilingual writers) class. There were a total of 13 Nepalese students studying in the two sections of English 101 composition (for multilingual writers), which were the special section designed only for the multilingual writers. They were all sent individual email invitations to take part in the research project explaining the objectives of the research. As the email was an invitation to participate in the current study, it asked for voluntary participation. The students who were interested in participating in the research study were provided the recruitment letter and asked to join the informational meeting, where they had the opportunity to sign the consent form (see Appendix A and Appendix B). The number of participants who agreed to take part in the research was ten (10). One of the participants withdrew from the study during the data collection process, however.

Questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed to collect the participants' perceptions on the use of their L1 while writing the research essay assignment. The 10

individuals who agreed to participate in the study were sent a set of questionnaire via MavMail and were asked to return the completed responses within a week. They were asked to take the survey within a week of receiving the invitation email. The questionnaire consisted five open-ended questions (see Appendix C). Out of 10, nine participants responded on time whereas one participant withdrew from the study.

The advantage of questionnaire tool is that it is relatively modest and relatively easily administered and managed (Fowler, 1993). “It must be acknowledged, however, that surveys can be of limited value for examining complex social relationships or intricate patterns of interaction” (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008, p. 82). In keeping with the qualitative research tradition, the questionnaire used in the present study was entirely open-ended in its nature, which sought to shed light on participants’ personal experiences and perceptions on the use of their L1 while writing in L2. The questionnaire had a distinct place in the study’s methodological design and served as a useful complement to other data-collection methods.

Written artifacts. For the purpose of getting a bigger picture looking at what kind of essay they worked on, utilizing their L1 use instances and for the purpose of “corroborat[ing] and augment[ing] evidence from other sources,” participants’ final essay assignment was collected as a written artifact prior to conducting the interview (Yin, 2009, p. 103). At the beginning of the data collection period, the participants were informed that their final essay assignment, which they would submit to their teacher, would be collected along with their writing guidelines. They also mentioned that if they chose not to submit their final essay to me, they did so without putting themselves in any risk. Consequently, one of the participants did not submit the written artifact. These

artifacts remained valuable data sources to correspond with the data collected from other sources, such as interviews and a questionnaire. For example, whenever they mentioned they did utilize their L1 during the L2 writing process, sometimes I offered them opportunities to show any instances in any part of the essay itself.

Interviews. For the purpose of having in-depth understanding on their experiences of using L1 during their L2 writing process, and their perceptions on the use of their L1, I sent individual e-mails to my research participants describing the purpose of the study, inviting their participation and requesting a convenient date and time for the one-on-one interview. Guided by the Rubin and Rubin's (2005) responsive interviewing model, I conducted an in-depth interview with my participants. According to Rubin and Rubin (2005), responsive interviewing model allows researchers to use rich thematic materials to obtain lucid and nuanced answers. If the researcher does not get the answers with the aforementioned features, he/she may need to alter the wording and spend more time building trust with the research participants. This was the case the current study. At the beginning, the individual emails were sent to all the nine research participants who had agreed to be interviewed signing the consent form earlier. All of the interviews were the one-on-one mode, which took place in April 2016 on the MNSU campus (see Appendix D). These interviews were audio-recorded in their entirety in Sony ICD-PX720 Voice Recorder. On completion of the interview, the audio recording was transcribed verbatim using the MAXQDA12 software.

Table 3.4 Data Collection/Analysis Schedule

Week 1	Finalized participant selection doing all the paperwork and scheduled data collection timeline
Week 2	Reviewed collection methods
Week 3	Sent out requests to send the participants' responses along with the questionnaires
Week 4	Collected questionnaire responses
Week 5	Analyzed the collected data; Questionnaire responses
Week 6	Collected the written artifacts
Week 7	Analyzed the collected data; Collected written artifacts
Week 8	Interviewed student participants
Week 9	Transcribed the data; Interview responses
Week 10	Analyzed the collected data; Interview responses

Data Analysis

After the data was transcribed using the MAXQDA12 software, the grounded recursive content analysis approach was employed. Once the data was collected using the questionnaire sets for this qualitative study, the analysis procedure began immediately to ensure its necessary interconnectedness with the research goals and data collection methods. Patton (2002) defines content analysis as “any qualitative data reduction and sense-making effort that takes a volume of qualitative material and attempts to identify core consistencies and meanings” (p. 453). For this, I have gone through multiple data sources, theoretical perspectives, and analytic positions in different lights to identify and articulate the emerging sub-themes, themes, and patterns. As explained by Merriam (2009), I constructed the categories, sorted them, named them, and determined the number of categories connecting with the current theories and literature. For qualitative analysis, I made an attempt to reduce the volume of information, and recognize themes or patterns across participants' responses. In the end, all the responses were categorized according to the following themes: L2 writing in a cross-cultural context; L1 use in L2 research writing; and multilingual writers' identities.

Chapter Conclusion

In this chapter, I presented the detailed description of my study's research methodology. As stated above, three types of data collection tools were used: a questionnaire, written artifacts, and interviews. Qualitative data analysis methodology was employed using the recursive content analysis procedure. To solicit the perspective of Nepalese undergraduate students' perceptions on their L1 use, the questionnaire responses were collected. Similarly, for the purpose of analyzing how the participants represented their identity, the written artifacts were solicited. Additionally, the one-on-one interviews were conducted with all the nine participants to obtain in-depth understanding on the use and perception of their L1 during the L2 writing process. Finally, a detailed data analysis process is discussed, with specific details on how the emerging themes were carried out.

Chapter IV

Findings and Discussion

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to explore how Nepalese learners of English perceive and use their first language (L1) to complete a research writing assignment in second language (L2) in a U.S. university composition class. I believe that a better understanding of the participants' perceptions and use of their L1 would allow the educators and researchers to prepare their teaching pedagogies accordingly in the academic writing processes. This chapter reports the findings obtained from nine participants via an open-ended questionnaire and written artifacts, as well as individual interviews. The findings of the study are discussed corresponding with the two major research questions of the study, which unearth the multifaceted, vigorous, and fluid relationship among the writers' rhetorical style, identity, cross-culture issues, and L1-L2 relations. The two major questions of the study are as follows:

- 1) What are Nepalese students' attitudes toward using their L1 in a first-year composition class in the U.S.?
- 2) How do Nepalese undergraduate students in a U.S. composition class use their L1 for the research writing process?

Additionally, the findings are followed by a discussion section highlighting three major emerging themes from the study, which are: L2 writing in a cross-cultural context, L1 use in L2 research writing, and multilingual writers' identities.

Findings Pertaining to Research Question 1

This section presents the findings of the data analysis in relevance to the first research question of this study. The first question relates to the attitudes of Nepalese students toward using their L1 in their composition class in the U.S. context. The first research question is: What are Nepalese students' attitudes toward using their L1 in a first-year composition class in the U.S.?

To find out the attitudes of the research participants, questionnaire responses were solicited and analyzed. All the nine participants of this study were studying in an American university and were in their first year of the undergraduate study. Some of them were in their second semester whereas it was the first semester for few other participants. I started collecting participants' questionnaire responses at the beginning of their research essay assignment, and the individual interviews were conducted after participants' had submitted their final draft of the corresponding research essay.

It is found that the majority (seven out of nine) of the participants perceive their L1 as a resource in their L2 writing process (i.e., their English writing process). Participants indicated that their L1 played a significant role while writing a research essay assignment, though it did not help them in any particular phase of their writing. Some of the participants took help from their L1 in the preliminary phase of their essay such as while choosing the topic or brainstorming and outlining their ideas, whereas other participants utilized their L1 during the composing of their first draft or final draft, or even while applying the APA citation style. Instead of a hindrance, they opined that their L1 was as an asset. This can be because being a multilingual writer gave them a different eye to look at the issue from binary or even multiple perspectives. Puran recalled: "Since

my first language is Nepali, I always try to understand English through my Nepali language" (Questionnaire, 04-12-16).

Though the individual interviews showed that all the participants used their L1 at some point in the research essay writing, four participants' questionnaire responses resorted that using L1 during the L2 writing process was not a good idea. Based on their questionnaire responses, they perceived that switching from one medium to another was a time-consuming process and also the Nepali scripts were not comprehensible to their audience. When he was asked whether he used Nepali during the research essay writing process in English, two of the participants' questionnaire responses were:

- No, I don't use Nepali while writing in English. Though I sometimes tend to mix Nepali in some of my writings, it's not a good idea to mix them together because it becomes hard to understand the ideas, if the reader is not from my country.

(Prem, Questionnaire, 04-12-16)

- No, I don't use Nepali during my English writing assignments. It is because as I did not write much, my writing in Nepali is not good. I am very poor at finding exact opposite translation from Nepali to English or vice-versa. (Kamal, Questionnaire, 04-12-16)

Prem's response shows that in spite of their ability to use L1 in L2 writing process, some of the Nepalese L2 writers' attitudes are affected by their audiences to perceive such tendencies as negative. The above quote shows that Prem's perception of using L1 is not positive because his intended audiences are not multilinguals who can understand his L1 and L2 both. Similarly, Kamal's assertion showed he is more into English writing tendencies exclusively. However, when it was clarified during the

individual interview that using their L1 does not necessarily mean in the written scripts only; instead, it may even happen in conceptualization while having an instructor consultation with their paper or at any point of their writing. Having that clarification helped them change their later responses, and all the participants were found to utilize their L1 in some way. Suman's response is in the same vein, "I use Nepali during the brainstorm process because it helps me to think productively" (Interview, 05-03-16). Suman's questionnaire response was like Prem's but having this fact clarified during the individual interview, none of the participants said that they did not compose their research essay using their L2 writing expertise only; instead, they were multilingual at some point. They were found to be utilizing diverse writing strategies, which made them use their L1 in different phases of their writing, but there was not any single participant who only used the English language. Since the research essay writing was the first such experience for participants, there was not any bulk of idea in their L1 that directly transferred in their L2 research writing process but all the participants perceived their L1 as a supportive tool in different phases of their writing. They utilized their L1 in many ways, for instance, topic selection, brainstorming, outlining, ideas development, writing the first draft, and proofreading.

Findings Pertaining to Research Question 2

This section presents the results of the data analysis in relevance to the second research question of this study. The second research question investigates the Nepalese undergraduate students' use of their L1 while writing a research essay in a U.S. composition class in their L2. For this question, all the three sources of data: questionnaires responses, written artifacts, and interview results were analyzed. There are

three major findings in regards to the following question: How do Nepalese undergraduate students in a U.S. composition class use their L1 for the research writing process?

It is found that all the participants utilized their L1 while writing in a research essay writing process in their L2 irrespective of their diverse tendencies of using L1. There was not any specific phase where these participants employed their L1 consistently but it varied from person to person in a very non-linear fashion as detailed below.

I unearthed that the participants' use of their L1 brought one very significant issue in their writing - identity. Certain tendencies of their use of L1 clearly showed that these participants portrayed cultural and background knowledge, which were imbedded in their writing, too. When the participants were asked whether they would choose English or Nepali if they had given the options while writing the research essay writing, seven participants ushered that they would choose English because they were familiar with writing in English since the beginning of their schooling. However, they shared that their writing is inspired more by Nepali socio-political issues. Even though the participants were in a U.S. university context, they brought up their home country issues in their writing in one way or another. Saroj described the rationale in this way:

Whenever I think on any topic, I think how it would be if it was in Nepali context.
That gives me a unique idea rather than the common ideas of the U.S. I prefer to mix Nepali context in my writing. (Interview, 05-03-16)

Similarly, Sagun added:

I used Nepali mostly to think about the points, opinions, and arguments. I used it in quite similar manner. I mainly used Nepali while writing the introduction and

conclusion because first you actually have to introduce your essay. Translating those things from Nepali helps me to develop my writing. Therefore, my native language actually helps me to think about the introduction and how to conclude my essay. (Questionnaire, 04-16-16)

Such data samples show that their use of L1 is not just because of the convenience but it is more than that. Whenever they started brainstorming their essay issues, their L1 context came in their writing, as Saroj and Sagun narrated their experiences above; however, their uses are diverse as Saroj and Sagun's uses are different. Their L2 writing process were influenced by their background, upbringing, perception, and culture in general. They perceived their culture in a significant position in their writing process; this is why eight out of nine participants were found taking help from their Nepalese classmates, senior students, and writing tutors. Kabita detailed her reason of choosing Nepalese in this way: "I feel easy talking with Nepalese because they become very direct and go to the point during the consultation, which I don't find with other people. Other people try to maintain the formality" (Interview, 05-03-16). Kabita's clarification further associates with the upbringing and the background where she came from. Her background helped her determine and shape the attitudes toward certain situation and topic, which appeared to be affected her writing process, too.

The participants of this study thought that the topic that they chose for their research essay writing project could appropriately be understood by someone who shared the similar background and provided better feedback. They were found to be more comfortable sharing their ideas and thoughts with the person who was from the similar background. As a result they consulted their papers with their classmates, roommates,

senior friends, and the writing center tutor who were close to their cultural background. However, one of the participants opted for either the native speakers of English or any other international students because he thought they were the more authentic sources to utilize than the Nepalese sources. Kamal narrated his logic in this way: “I know pretty much who my Nepali friends are, what they think, and how they react. But if you have someone from other linguistic and educational background, it’s good to see my writing from their perspective” (Interview, 05-02-16). Kamal found that his perspective aligned with other Nepalese because of the same background and schooling, but the same writing might be perceived differently by someone who carries a dissimilar background. For this reason he chose a non-Nepalese person for the consultation.

Discussion

This section discusses the findings with details that support and explain each finding. It focuses on the following central themes of this study: 1) L2 writing in a cross-cultural context; 2) L1 use in L2 research writing; and 3) multilingual writers’ identities.

L2 writing in a cross-cultural context. Shifting the life from Nepal to the U.S. in itself was a great transition in all the participants’ daily lives, and similar was the case in regards to their writing process development. The research essay writing was the first time that they had experienced in their life but the L2 writing experience was not their first attempt. In fact, the writing rhetoric, which they had practiced in their home country, was different in several ways. The data that tended to fall under this theme goes into three different areas: 1) socialization in L2 writing process; 2) L2 writers’ diverse writing strategies; and 3) product versus process writing.

Socialization in L2 writing process. During the research essay writing process, seven participants were found to be consulting with someone else to get some sort of feedback in their research essay. For the consultation of their papers, interestingly, they chose a person who was from their home country, Nepal. When they were asked about the reason behind choosing the Nepali individuals particularly, their clarification was culturally based. Rather than just being a coincidence, it was because they felt comfortable sharing their thoughts with the person who was in a cordial relation with them. Some of the participants pointed out that they felt easier sharing their thoughts with the person who shared the similar cultural background. They perceived that the Nepali consultant was better at understanding the topic and the ideas of their writing because they were close to them culturally. On this point, Sagun commented: “It’s easier to talk with the Nepali friends but it’s very hard to explain things to other friends who are from other linguistic background” (Interview, 05-02-16). Similarly, another participant, Gopal, put it as follows: “I base on my Nepali classmates’ reviews and feedback because they were direct and close to my thoughts” (Interview, 05-04-16).

These responses are interesting because while asking about the language preference in writing, most of them had said that they would choose English but while having consultation they mostly used their L1. All of their socialization happened to be very informal with the predominant use of their L1. According to them, their discussion on the essay assignment became clearer when they expressed the ideas verbally in their L1. This was one of the reasons why most of them were in the same section of the English composition class. Talking about the sitting arrangements in their class, they even used to be in a same group during their class work, and because of certain difficult

vocabulary items, they used to use Nepali while explaining things in their English composition class. This idea corresponds with Weijin, Bergh, Rijlaarsdam, & Sanders' (2009) study, which was carried out over Dutch students. According to this study, twenty participants' L1 use was investigated while writing an argumentative essay in their L2 (i.e., English) and the result showed that the research participants used their L1 while writing in the L2 to some extent. The authors called for further studies saying that the use of L1 is activity-specific, which cannot be generalized in all other cases. They did not, however, mention anything about if the multilingual writers employ the same amount of L1 while writing a research essay in L2.

The participants' desire to have a cordial environment while socializing for their writing entails that language learning strengthens in a less threatening and informal setting. When there is a hierarchy between the teacher and the students, learners do not prefer such a condition even in their writing process. One such participant, Saroj, described it in this way: "Because since they are from my home country, I am more familiar with them. I can easily talk with them and share my ideas with them" (Interview, 05-03-16). Saroj's response correlates with Kaplan's (2001) claim that the distinctive thought pattern ESL students possess is culture-specific because "logic which is the basis of rhetoric, is evolved out of a culture; it is not universal" (p. 12). This is why writing rhetoric differs from culture to culture and time to time even within the particular culture. Saroj and Sagun's logic of taking help from someone who was from their home country is representative of the culture-specific reasoning.

L2 writers' diverse writing strategies. One of the overriding findings of this study is that the participants employed their L1 in one way or another. One similarity while

discovering this finding further was found that all the participants used certain strategies while working on the research essay assignment though those strategies were distinctive by nature. Participants spoke more poignantly about their writing strategies, as is represented by Kamal and Puran's responses below:

- Talking about the research paper, I started with the main topic. Then, I started looking up on the information that the main topic would fit into. After that, I brainstormed how I was going to write it down. Then, I started writing. I collected data and brainstormed how it should be organized and then started analyzing my data. (Kamal, Interview, 05-02-16)
- The main thing is you have to understand the topic, first. When I study and research, I try to understand it by translating it into Nepali. If there are certain unfamiliar words, I translate that into Nepali. Actually, you can't explain if you haven't understood well. In order to understand the things, I sometimes translate the concept in my language. Then, I start writing in English. I better understand the topic when I translate that into Nepali. (Puran, Interview, 05-06-16)

Kamal seemed more concerned on the main ideas of the writing. Once the ideas were lucid, he started reviewing the literature related to his topic area. The contemporary literature might have given him some sort of ideas on how other authors framed their research essays. Kamal's response indicates that his brainstorming step went into oscillation and his use of L1 was imbedded within all these strategies from brainstorming to data analysis. Then, he started analyzing the data that he had collected. Since writing is a recursive process, Puran's writing strategies seemed to be utilized recursively, too, but his strategies seemed different than Kamal's. Interestingly, he utilized his L1 to

comprehend the readings. According to Puran, these were not only the research essay specific strategies but were also the general type by nature, for example translating the unfamiliar words' meanings and the main idea of the reading into L1 for the better comprehension, which he tended to use in other L2 writing processes, too. In terms of the text comprehension, he seemed to be relying on his L1 for the better understanding. Such diversification prevails in most of the other participants. It clearly showed that bi- and multilingual writers' writing processes cannot be dichotomized into L1-L2 and/or culture-L2 writing distinctively; instead, they share some blurring lines and dislocating one from another would eventually result in a counterproductive scenario. As the research essay was a daunting and arduous task, it was not uncommon for the research participants to use certain types of writing strategies. According to Ortega and Carson (2010) multicompetent writers "negotiate multiple cultural and educational influences in their development of composing abilities" (p. 55). Additionally, Jarratt et al., (2006), for example, argues that "students' transnational linguistic experiences and identifications inform in complex and significant ways their research and writing strategies" (p. 24). Being multilingual writers helped making the participants' writing strategies idiosyncratic.

Product versus process writing. When the participants were asked to compare their past and present writing experiences, all of them expressed their altering feelings rather than their contemporary writing practices. When they were asked a question, how they started writing in English, most of them clearly stated that their contemporary writing process happened to be drastically different than their previous writing experience back in their country. Their past writing experience was based on the product

approach, but they employed the process approach while writing the research essay assignment in the U.S. context. Back in their country, the teacher used to ask for one time submission and that essay used to be graded right away focusing more on the minor issues of writing such as word choice, grammar, and to some extent the higher-order concerns, too, such as, coherence and idea generation. Participants, such as Gopal and Kamal, framed the two diverse experiences as follows:

- If it was in Nepal, I don't think I'd be able to write such a long paper in English. This is because our Nepali writing style is completely different. Our teacher never asked us to submit the outline, first draft as such. The writing that I wrote for any assignment used to be the first and last from our side. At first, I used to make a lot of mistakes while writing. I used to pay a lot of attention to grammar rules, like tenses, verb forms, and all those stuff. Later, my teachers used to over-correct my writing looking at the content level issues. After writing and practicing in writing, I became more adaptable in writing. Even though I was not good at writing, I did not feel bored while writing because it was a common tendency to make mistakes during the early grades. (Gopal, Interview, 05-04-16)
- When I was in grade eight, I had to accumulate ideas at my first attempt. Over here, I have to present it well writing it in a sequential order. I should have everything that is graded. I should have my thesis, body, and conclusion well written. But I didn't have to give fine tuning at my first attempt. That's the main difference between writing back home and in here. (Kamal, Interview, 05-02-16)

All the participants' responses were in the same vein as Gopal and Kamal's. Writing was taught adapting the product approach in Nepal, which contradicted with their

contemporary U.S. university's approach. Though both of these approaches have their own pros and cons, the participants seemed more content with the process writing approach because it gave them chance to work on their writing back and forth. This idea is best illustrated by Prem who said:

I am more comfortable sharing my writing with others than in the past. I was really uncomfortable sharing my own writings, essays in the past because I wasn't confident enough in my writing skills. Right now, I feel more comfortable.

(Interview, 05-02-16)

Stemming from a background where the product approach was employed caused participants to be more conscious of lower order concerns (e.g., grammar, punctuation, comma splices, and word choice) even at the preliminary phase of their research essay writing process. But a teacher in a U.S. university would be more likely to pay more attention to the higher order concerns (e.g., development of ideas, coherence, and the overall structure) of the writing rather than micro issues. These kinds of discrepancies obviously impacted the current research participants' writing. Hinds (1987) says that these sort of discrepancies occur when one grows in a different writing circumstances where writing is viewed differently than the other places. This scenario was found in these participants' case. The linguistic and cultural background triggers making one's writing different than others. As Atkinson (2003) defines L2 writing knowledge as pre-built phenomena socially and culturally, the research participants of this study seemed affected by their L1 culture in their L2 writing process to many extents: socialization process, in their writing strategies, and effect of product-based approach in process-based L2 writing. As Atkinson (2003) further defines L2 writing, "it is basically all social

action” (p. 60). Several of my research participants of this study socialized their writing process, employed diverse writing strategies, and embedded their L1 writing culture even though they transitioned from product-approach writing to process writing approach.

L1 use in L2 research writing. Many of the participants perceived their L1 as a supportive asset in their L2 writing process even though writing such a research essay assignment was the first attempt of their life. Prior to this, they have had no experience writing a research essay, but still their L1 was useful in the different phases of their research essay assignment in English. This clearly articulates that it is not necessary to have any matching language items to transfer from a writer’s L1 to L2 writing, but their L1 appears to be useful in one way or another. Participants’ L1 did not seem to be an obstruction. Based on the nature of the data that fell under this theme, there are four sub-areas within this category: L1 and L2 writing connection; L2 writers’ language preference in writing; research essay writing in L2; and past writing experience in L2 writing process.

L1 and L2 writing connection. When the writers were asked a question, “Do you think that Nepali was useful while writing the research assignment in English?,” most of them agreed that even though there was nothing concrete to take and apply in their L2 writing while writing the research essay assignment from their L1, their L1 helped them tremendously in L2 writing process in different stages. Suman, for example, framed the L1 and L2 connection as follows:

I still use Nepali language when I brainstorm on any topic that is assigned for my English writing. I use Nepali language to generate ideas. I think a lot of creative ideas while speaking in Nepali because that is the language I am comfortable

with, but not the English. English is my second language. So, it creates a barrier for me to think a lot. So, I basically use Nepali language to brainstorm: create and come up with a lot of ideas. And then, utilize them in English. (Interview, 05-04-16)

When the participants were asked, first, which language they would choose if they had a choice, the majority of them (seven out of nine) mentioned that they would choose English because they do not feel comfortable with their L1 grammar rules. But their longing to speak, brainstorm, and contemplate on the topic was in Nepali. They used their L1 not just to complement each other language but it was more than that (i.e., the use of their L1 assisted their writing when they felt too vague in L2 writing). In the response stated above, Suman used the word “still” which signifies that it is not the first time that he used his L1 while writing in L2. It articulates that he has come across a long way in his writing process but the use of his L1 in L2 writing has not been any case specific. Sagun’s response further clarifies:

Actually, I don’t think I would have completed my every assignment in time, if I did not use Nepali. Nepali has been really helpful. I don’t know whether it’d be the same case if I was born in the U.S. But since I was born in Nepal, I used different languages and it actually helps me to explain and understand, and translate things easily. (Interview, 05-02-16)

Sagun’s response is quite unique that he clarified that his Nepali origin could easily be seen in his research writing. However, Suman and Sagun’s use of L1 is not any stage and writing assignment specific. When they were asked about their use of L1, they answered in a much more diversified manner. For this they were asked to mention at

what writing stage they would use their L1, and it is found that their L1 use ranged from contemplation of topic area to the final draft preparation. This reiterates what Taylor (2009) stated earlier - that the learning of English cannot be separated from the other languages students bring with them. It can clearly be seen their L1 connection in their L2 research writing.

Multilingual writers' language preference in writing. One of the dominant findings of the study was that the participants utilized their L1 in L2 research writing even though the majority of them preferred L2 in their writing. When they were asked a hypothetical question, which language they would choose for the research essay assignment if they were given a choice to elect either language, English or Nepali, a majority number of the participants mentioned that they would prefer English. When they were asked to clarify why they would opt for English rather than Nepali, they declared that they were habituated writing in English though their English writing practice was not the same as their contemporary American university followed. Additionally, five participants asserted that they did not feel confident with their L1 grammar rules. They preferred English because it was an easy language to write in as long as the grammar rules and other mechanics of writing were concerned. Even though English was their L2, L3 and even L4 to some of the participants, they did not feel any less confident while choosing English as their preferred language choice of writing. One of the reasons behind this is that though English is treated as foreign language in Nepal, the exposure that they have had during their high school helped develop their L2 as second language in their writing because sometimes English functions as more than a foreign language in Nepal (Giri, 2015). The reason behind this can be because almost all the research participants

had been to the English medium school in Nepal where they were exposed to the English writing from the beginning of their schooling. Conversely, all of the participants disagreed that their writing would be stronger if they had utilized their L2 only; instead, the individual interview further mirrored that their writing became better when they utilized their L1 language features in their English writing process. While asking the question, “Would you write the same essay better if you were asked to write it in your L1?,” they abruptly mentioned that their writing would not gain that kind of shape even if they had used any particular language only. In response, Prem asserted: “I don’t think so because a lot of the sources out there are in English. So, even though I write in Nepali, I heavily depend on English sources. This is just one reason” (Interview, 05-02-16). Similarly, Kamal said:

I express well in Nepali because it is my first language. I was brought up in Nepali society. If someone asks me to express something, I can respond them well in Nepali but I prefer English more than Nepali. Even when I was in Nepal, I used to prefer English. (Interview, 05-02-16)

Both of these participants perceived themselves as better writers in English only when they could use their L1 at any point. Rather taking their L1 as an impediment, these participants seemed to be benefitting from the multiple features of both languages. The questionnaire response provided some evidence that they did not use the orthographic form of Nepali in their L2 writing process because it was a time consuming process switching languages while writing. Additionally, the interview response revealed that they had also utilized their L1 while writing the research essay assignment in English. They stated that they only utilized the English orthographic form in this process but they

switched their L1 use back and forth during the topic selection, brainstorming, and literature review processes. Participants' such contentions help make a conclusion that there is a close connection between their L1 and L2 use even though the participants preferred any particular language (i.e., English). Their L1 is playing a supportive role in their L2 writing process. This idea correlates with Matsuda & Hammill's (2014) assertion, "One of the obvious resources L2 writers have is access to their native language—and perhaps additional languages they may have learned" (p. 272). They further aver that the L2 writers may also be experts in language learning strategies because they have learned at least one language (i.e., English) at a level that is far more advanced than the foreign-language-learning experience of many U.S.-educated native English users.

Past writing experience in L2 writing process. One of the primary findings of this study is that the participants used their L1 in their L2 research essay writing though their use comes up with diverse factors, such as identity, culture, and their various writing strategies. In addition to this, another issue that resembles the participants' writing is their past writing experiences. Though all the participants' previous writing experiences were not similar to what they did for their research essay writing process, there were many acquaintances from their past writing experiences. In regards to their U.S. university writing experience, they perceived it as more prolific. This could be because they viewed their previous writing background aligned more toward product approach where they used to see their writing progress just in terms of the grades and final comments by the teachers whereas since their contemporary university had adopted the process-based approach, they received peer feedback, teachers' initial comments, and one-on-one

conference with their writing teacher, which gave them chances to work on their writing multiple times and made them feel more accomplished. This can be the reason why they adored the process-based approach more than their home country's writing system.

Comments by Suman and Prem illustrate such contentment:

- The main thing that I liked about this class was the seven steps of writing.

Especially, like in Nepal, what we do is just go to introduction, write the body, and then go to the conclusion. But here, they make us think about the outline, write the first draft, revise it, self-review, receive reviews from peers, revise it again, make some final changes, and then submit the final draft. So, there you go seven steps! But in Nepal, you write. You don't even see it again and you can submit it. (Suman, Interview, 05-04-16)
- Our Nepali teachers don't give any specific guidelines. So, I am not sure about it. But the introduction, bodies, and conclusion are the same. That's the main steps I follow whether I write in English or in Nepali. I do take care of those three issues in writing. (Prem, Interview, 05-02-16)

Even though their past writing experiences were not similar, they clearly stated that they utilized some of the ideas that they had learned before. Back in their country, the sentence structure tended to be long, but very concise and clear sentence structures are preferred in the U.S. university context. They knew the fundamental ideas about the issues that they had to include in the different parts of their essay: introduction, body paragraphs, and conclusion. As long as the takeaways are concerned, they still noticed that their past experiences bolstered them in their research essay writing. One of these participants, Kabita, described it in this way: "I still remember practicing hook and thesis

statements when I was preparing for the language tests like TOEFL and IELTS” (Interview, 05-03-16). Her assertion entails that neither these participants are in a condition where they have whole-heartedly been immersed into the writing with their L2 knowledge only, nor they have depended too much in their L1; instead, the previous knowledge still remains remunerating.

Writing tendencies in EFL context may pertain more dissimilarities than the similarities with the U.S. university writing process but many of the participants, including Kabita, asserted that their past writing expertise transferred into their contemporary writing. This aligns with what Kobayashi and Rinnert (2008) found in their studies - that students' previous writing experience and training affects their current writing. Their study revealed that the transfer of writing knowledge did not only take place from L1 to L2 but it occurred in a reverse way, too, which was from Japanese to English respectively. Such transferability, at some point, made the L1 and L2 writing being as the same. But the participants of my study still think their L2 writing different than their L1s, though there were some takeaways that they applied from their L1 to L2.

L2 research writing process. While talking about the research writing assignment during the one-on-one interview, the findings showed that all the participants mentioned that they attempted such writing experience for the first time in their life. Compared to other types of assignments, many of the participants considered the research essay writing as the toughest assignment in their English 101 composition class. They perceived that the research essay writing in itself was daunting because it was a time-taking process that involved reviewing the literature, collecting the primary and

secondary data, and finding the research participants. This idea is best illustrated by Prem's comment below:

Yes, it is very challenging. In fact, it's the toughest assignment of English 101 class. First thing is the page length. It has to be about eight to ten pages long. We need our own primary data that is the main factor that makes this research paper the toughest one. (Interview, 05-02-16)

Although it was the first time working on such a research assignment, which did not match with any of their past writing experiences, the participants mentioned that they did utilize their Nepali and their past L2 writing expertise in one way or another. First, when they reviewed the contemporary literature, they tried to comprehend the texts utilizing their L1. When asked how he utilized his L1 in this process, Kamal said:

Though I have not written research paper in Nepali, I even had to follow the same steps that I follow for English language. I start brainstorming and collecting information, then I start writing. There is not much difference whether I write in English or in Nepali. I do follow the steps. (Interview, 05-02-16)

The L1 seemed supportive to frame the draft of their writing. Many participants consulted their Nepali classmates in their final draft, too. They eventually used Nepali while talking to their classmates even though their draft was in English. As they mentioned, they felt clearer when they used Nepali verbally while discussing about the English research assignment, which was written in English. Jarratt, Losh, & Puente (2006) similarly put out that continuing nexus with home languages may foster rather than detract from mastery of academic English. They stress on the need to learn what

habits of thinking and writing will serve such students well in academic work in the U.S. but also cultivate their abilities to function as global citizens in the twenty-first century.

Multilingual writers' identities. The paramount finding of this study exhibited that the participants used their L1 in one way or another in their L2 research writing process. Interestingly, their use of L1 emerged with their identity. The data that tended to fall under this theme spread into three different areas: Multilingual writers' consideration of audience; experiencing subtractive bilingualism with writing; and empowerment through diverse writing strategies.

Multilingual writers' consideration of audience. When the participants were given a putative question, like if they were given an option of choosing any particular language, many of them clearly said that they would choose English. Among the diverse reasons, one consistent and reoccurring answer of six different participants was because of the wider readership scope of the English language. Having English as medium of their writing widens their readership. Participants, including Kamal and Kabita, framed their consciousness as follows:

- I can write well in either language but the question is who your writing is for?

When I write in English even the Nepali readers can read and of course other people. But if I write in Nepali, only the Nepali readers can read it. This is because English is an international language whereas Nepali is not. Beside that English is used to language for me because I am already in the U.S. That's why I tend to choose English in my writing rather than Nepali. (Kamal, Interview, 05-02-16)

- I can express more I could in Nepali because it is my mother tongue. I grew up in Nepal. If I have to express something, I can do a well in Nepali but I prefer English more than Nepali. Well, even in Nepal, I used to prefer writing in English. (Kabita, Questionnaire, 04-18-16)

Since the research participants seemed equally comfortable in both languages, choosing either language would not be a big deal for them. But because of the high readership English language has, many of the participants preferred using English for their writing. One of the reasons why these participants seemed conscious about the readership of their writing is because they wanted to make their writing widespread using a language that has higher privilege. This is one of the reasons why Kamal wanted to write in English even when he was in his home country. Atkinson (2003) opines, “Obviously, English has a highly privileged place in the hierarchy of languages used for academic purposes” (p. 51). This hierarchical status of English language may have affected these participants’ use of L2 (i.e., English) in their writing because they are concerned with their identity. They felt more empowered writing in English than in their L1 (i.e., Nepali), and they wanted to make their writing known to their wider audiences.

Experiencing subtractive bilingualism with writing. When the participants were asked about their feeling of being multilingual, several of them seemed pleased because having U.S. university exposure would help enhance their English language proficiency. On the other hand, they were equally anxious about their decreased time that they have had for their L1. Several of the participants agreed that having U.S. university exposure was helpful for their English proficiency development but they did not seem pleased with having less exposure to their L1. Their transition engendered diverse feelings. When they

were asked a question during the one-on-one interview, “How do you see your transition between a student of Nepali education system and now an American university student in the U.S. context?,” eight participants expressed their mixed feelings. Participants such as Suman and Gopal expressed this discontent in the following ways:

- On the other hand, I am poor and poorer in Nepali because at the end of the day all that matters is experience. I am getting more experience in English but less experience writing in Nepali. So the trend is going opposite side. The trend of English is accelerating while the trend of writing in Nepali is decelerating. I see myself in a progressive manner. Also, I see myself as a better writer. (Suman, Interview, 05-04-16)
- When I came to the U.S., I got to see all the English speaking community, which has been helping me to improve my English including writing skills. I think I am lagging behind with Nepali language practice because I write in English all the time. Though I am lagging behind with Nepali, I am moving forward with the English language use. (Gopal, Interview, 05-04-16)

On one hand, they seemed ecstatic with the quality of classes that they have had; on the other hand, they were concerned about the drastically low amount of exposure to their L1 including the writing skills practice. Since English is treated as a foreign language in Nepal, their English use was limited within to the school periphery whereas being in a U.S. context, the scenario has reversed (i.e., their Nepali use was confined to speaking with their Nepali roommates). Though Suman saw his progressive manner of English learning as opposite side of a coin, Gopal and Suman both sounded like they were not depressed whatever amount of exposure that they have had in Nepali because

they saw their English writing going into upward scale in general. This ties with what Lee (2013) opines, "...identity development is situated within a wider system of social, cultural, and historical relations" (p. 331). The major concern of the participants including Suman and Gopal's response assert that they were worried about degrading time that they had given to their L1 writing. Their response clearly showed that they wanted to build their identity as a multilingual writer. They recognized the benefits of additive bilingualism (i.e., continuing to develop in all of their languages). According to Gee (2015), identity "is not just what you say or even just how you say it. It's also who you are and what you're doing while you say it" (p. 3). These participants saw their identity balanced when their exposure time is balanced.

Empowerment through diverse writing strategies. While enquiring about the participants' use of L1, the findings exhibited that these participants have had diverse writing strategies. All the participants mentioned that they adapted different types of strategies while writing their research essay though their strategies were diverse in nature. Interestingly, several of their strategies were connected with their L1, to some extent. The individual interview revealed that most of the participants used the following types of strategies: putting codes or short notes on either side of the readings in Nepali while reviewing the literature for their research essay assignment, guessing meaning from the context, summarizing, becoming culturally aware, cooperating with their home country friends to give feedback, and evaluating one's progress. Such activities mirrored what Canagarajah (2010) illustrates: "Multilingual writers, like everyone else, come with multiple identities" (p. 175). When they were asked why they did so, they stated that it reminded them their prior experience and also recapped the readings that helped them in

their composition process. This notion goes in the same vein what Li and Wharton (2012) had discovered earlier, "...context is a more powerful factor than discipline in accounting for variation, in that we found more notable differences between contexts than between disciplines" (p. 353). Even though these participants were writing in a new setting, their context still was writing no matter what writing they were involved in. The writing genre affected these participants less than the writing context. This is because the noting strategy was not the first time that they used during the research essay writing process; instead, they clearly said that it was the strategy that they used to employ even while reviewing the literature at their home country. These assertions are further supported by the following comments of Puran, Gopal, and Saroj:

- When I study and research, I try to understand it by translating it into Nepali. If there are certain unfamiliar words, I translate that into Nepali. In order to understand the things, I sometimes translate the concept in my language. Then, I start writing in English. I better understand the topic when I translate that into Nepali. (Puran, Interview, 05-06-16)
- Since I was grown up in Nepali environment, I try to think the issues of the topic from Nepali context but the culture and all other things are completely different than the U.S. There are many things that they are different. (Gopal, Interview, 05-04-16)
- The topic of my essay was "Overpopulation Causing the Destruction of Natural Resources" that can be specifically found in our home country back and in the entire Asia. That idea mainly popped up in my mind from our home country context because the population is very high back in Nepal and the natural

resources are being destructed every day for the selfish use of human beings like for shelter, food, and even animal hunting. (Saroj, Interview, 05-03-16)

An assumption can be made here that if these participants were not the multilingual writers, their writing strategies may not have been as diverse as they were. When they were asked why they happened to mix their strategies with their L1 while writing in English, many of them shared that was how they grew up educating themselves. Matsuda (2001) notes, “In order to construct their voice in their target language, then, L2 writers need to develop a personal repertoire of discursive features and strategies in the language,” which might be the reason why the participants of this study started mixing or connecting with their L1 (p. 51). Such L1 connection is important because writers often form and establish their own authorial presence by associating themselves with other sets of discursive practices (Clark & Ivanic, 1997). But few other participants mentioned that they even based their research area the U.S. context. Puran, for instance, based his essay on the U.S. context, who called: “I have focused on internet and children in my research essay. When I thought about this topic, my concern has been to the American society because American society is advanced” (Interview, 05-06-16). Some of the participants’ L1 connection and others’ U.S. based research focus proved that the multilingual writers’ writing strategies are extremely diverse. This is not uncommon because “intuitive strategies of multilingual writers do not necessarily come from a vacuum in the brain” (Canagarajah, 2010, p. 173). Because L2 writers’ prior educational background plays an important role in their experience in U.S. higher education, they vary in how they view themselves in relation to the different cultures they

are part of (Chiang & Schmida, 1999). Their writing strategies are unique, which distinctly entails who they are in their L2 writing.

The discrepancies found between the previous studies and the present study can be stated in several ways. First, the research participants' unique nature of L2 writing experience is investigated because they come from a distinctive linguistic, socio-economic, cultural background representing the EFL context (i.e., Nepal). Second, the investigation centers on the perception and use of L1 (Nepali) while writing a research essay assignment in the U.S. university context. Transitioning from the EFL setting, these participants have indulged for the first time in such writing assignment in English shows an exclusive case in itself. The participants of this study have made explicit connection between language, culture, and identity.

This study contributes to the growing body of research on second language writing by focusing on multilingual freshmen writers' unique perception and writing tendencies in the U.S. university context in terms of their distinctive cultural background and strong sense of connection to their home language. The writers of this study are nonetheless worth examining in the context of L2 research writing because of their recurrent literacy practices in languages other than English. These participants were neither at an advanced level of L2 writing with a close connection with their established L1 nor were they at a beginning level of writing in English. Alternative input of this work is the application of behind the scene issues in writing, such as cross-cultural and L1-L2 connections rather than solely linguistic analyses that many researchers have applied to L2 students' writings and the extending issues of identity across the rhetoric of L2 writers.

Chapter Conclusion

In this chapter, I have presented and discussed the findings of the study, analyzing the data that was solicited from the nine Nepalese first-year English composition students via open-ended questionnaires, written artifacts and one-on-one interviews. The findings stated that though the Nepalese L2 writers were not fully satiated with their progress on the L2 research writing assignment, they were found to be fully positive regarding the use of L1 in their L2 research essay writing process. Similarly, the participants' L1 seemed to be playing a supportive role while writing their L2 research assignment. Their use of L1 was also connected with the cross-cultural and identity issues. Therefore, the discussion further detailed the findings incorporating and analyzing more data that was collected from the different research tools. In the next chapter I will describe the pedagogical implications of this study, as well as the suggestions for future related research.

CHAPTER V

Pedagogical Implications, Suggestions for Future Studies, and Coda

Introduction

The final chapter of this thesis discusses the pedagogical implications, and suggestions for the future studies with some concluding notes. The purpose of this study was to investigate how the Nepalese writers perceive and use the role of their first language (L1) while writing in their second language (L2, English). The two primary questions of the study were centered on Nepalese students' attitudes toward using their L1 and how they use their L1 for the research writing process in the first-year English composition course in the U.S. The study's findings revealed that the Nepalese multilingual writers do use their L1 during the research essay assignment writing process and possess a positive attitude despite feeling that they do not have enough exposure to writing in their L1. The pedagogical implications section of this chapter details what the findings of this study mean and why it is important to take such results into account. This section also discusses how the progress of L1 and L2 writers pertains to distinctive tendencies. Subsequently, the further study section details how such emerging issues can be further investigated and in which areas the studies can be focused. Finally, the researcher gives his final remarks in the conclusion section.

Pedagogical Implications

Steady increases in incoming rates of international students in the U.S. institutions was discussed in detail in the First Chapter and with this the increase in Nepalese students in the U.S. academy. The statistics, which are stated in the First Chapter, show that classrooms in the U.S. academy are becoming more diverse. For instance, the

Institute of International Education (2016) report shows the international student population in the U.S. academy increased by 7% in 2016, a single year. Similar records showed that Minnesota State University's (2016) admission in Fall 2015 (compared to the previous year), was slightly higher than 5%. The Nepalese student population remains the fourth largest out of the international student groups who come to MNSU from 95 different countries.

The results of this study revealed that multilingual Nepalese writers employ their L1 while working on their research essay assignment, and it also signifies that students' ability to utilize their prior linguistic knowledge has neither resonated in any single particular reason nor is it confined to any solitary purpose. Multilingual writers are encouraged to use their L1 for diverse reasons and purposes, and the single argument of L1 transfer does not suit well in multiple contexts. Instead, there are numerous other reasons, (e.g., the more heterogeneous the student population becomes, the more diversification pertains to students' abilities or strategies to compose a text). So, how does this research inform the composition teachers who have been teaching courses like English for Academic Purpose (EAP) 136 Introduction to Composition (for Multilingual Writers), English 101 Composition (for Multilingual Writers), and English 100 Introduction to Composition? In this juncture, the writing instructors may have to update their understanding of the complexity of their students' perceptions and incorporate those multilingual students' strategic uses of their L1 into their teaching strategies. As Matsuda (2010) states, “[t]o work effectively with the student population in the twenty-first century, all composition teachers need to reimagine the composition classroom as the multilingual space, that it is, where the presence of language differences is the default”

(p. 93). Such assertion encourages the writing teachers to develop a notion that it is obvious to have composition students with heterogeneous backgrounds and diverse rhetorical styles, which is a call for them to reconsider their lessons—whether they are ready to embrace the situated complexities of their students. Composition teachers need to reimagine their teaching strategies, which means they have to ponder on how their lessons might allow their students to use their L1 at some point. For example, several of the research participants of this study asserted that they would not bring their research essay up to the level that they have had if they had not utilized the cross-linguistic expertise. This means composition teachers should develop a separate perspective to observe the distinct potentiality of the multilingual writers. Here, the proposal is not advocating to replace the monolingual eye with the multilingual lenses only; instead, there should be additional lenses to view these diverse populations and their diverse writing tendencies like the Nepalese L2 writers' case, so that writing teachers could make their classroom more inclusive and more accommodating.

The relevance of writing is not discipline-specific; instead, it is becoming necessary in our everyday lives, such as in business communications. On the one hand, the Nepalese students' desire to socialize with the homogenous group of people tells us that writing is not only an individual chore; instead, "writing [is] a situated social act" where culture and identity issues are imbedded (Julier, Livingston, Goldblatt, 2014, p. 56). On the other hand, students' desire to be socialized during their writing process is another call for the writing teachers who teach in the transnational (students from cross-country) and transcultural (students from cross-cultural) contexts making their classroom more conducive to diverse populations and giving the students a realization that their

classroom is embracing the students' individual differences. As it is shown by the findings of this study, when the multilingual writers switch to their L1, it engenders diverse productive results; such as students comprehending the given tasks more effectively, generating more ideas on the assigned topics, and deriving new perspectives in terms of the applicability of the ideas.

Additionally, students' cultural heterogeneity invites the writing teachers and researchers to be more conscious on the different multilingual group of students when they plan their lessons. Many of the participants of this study experienced understanding of the instruction, and they interact more if the person with whom they are talking has cultural proximity with their own culture. One ponder point arises, "why this is so?" As a composition teacher, what does it mean? In fact, this may not be just because of the cultural issues, which are always imbricated with language; instead, it can also be because of the differences that they hold while negotiating the meaning among the different groups of population. It is within the purview of composition teachers who may have to consider such issues and their students' tendencies more seriously especially in a class where writers are from multicultural contexts.

As multilingual writers are backed up by diverse social and educational factors, these writers noticeably regurgitate their identity issues in their writing process. For instance, when my research participants worked on the research essay assignment, several of them had clearly brought the transnational issues in their writing, such as the issues of their home country, as well as U.S.-related issues, either through the topic selection, research focus of their assignment, supporting details in their arguments, or in the examples that they put forth. Instead of considering such acts as fortuitous events,

their actions should make the composition teachers aware of how the multilingual writers steadily construct their identities in writing.

Therefore, as a writing teacher it is crucial to notice our students' prior linguistic and cultural backgrounds, identity issues, and also the statuses of their L1 (compared to L2) which may affect their perception significantly while writing in L2. Since this was the case when Nepalese undergraduates started writing a research essay assignment in a U.S. university context, I agree with Canagarajah (2016), who reiterates, “[s]ince the contexts, genres, and students in each writing course (and literacy event) are different, teachers have to be alert to developing their pedagogies, feedback, and assessment from the ground up” (p. 266). Each group of the multilingual writers are different; as a result, the ready-made teaching materials and strategies cannot always produce success stories. Instead, teachers must be aware of the pedagogy of particularity, (i.e., the situated context) of their learners and teaching environment. In this context, Kumaravadivelu's (2001) proposition of taking our own teaching context more specifically resonates with us: “language pedagogy, to be relevant, must be sensitive to a particular group of teachers teaching a particular group of learners pursuing a particular set of goals within a particular institutional context embedded in a particular sociocultural milieu” (p. 538). As a composition teacher, our teaching pedagogies should be guided by the situational understanding of our multilingual writers, instead of applying the holistic interpretations. Because of such varied factors, as analyzed in Chapter Four, Nepalese L2 writers' cases still remain unique for composition teachers teaching to the multilingual composition classes, like EAP 136 Introduction to Composition for Multilingual Writers, English 101

Composition (for Multilingual Writers), and English 100 Introduction to Composition; they should understand this fact.

Suggestions for Further Studies

While the intellectual discussion on making the writing classroom inclusive continues, my study remains advantageous by uncovering how the Nepalese L2 writers perceive their L1 use while writing a research essay assignment. It was found that the Nepalese L2 writers recognize their L1 as an additional asset in their L2 writing process instead of considering it as a hindrance in their writing skills development. Similarly, there are diverse factors that help make the L2 writers use their L1 in different trajectories of their research writing process, such as cultural proximity, comprehensibility, clarity, writers' identity, writing strategies, language proficiency, prior linguistic awareness, and their perception toward L1. These findings convey a lot about the multilingual writers particularly during their transitioning period into the U.S. academy from their L1 writing background. But there remain other numerous issues that are still unanswered. Therefore, having more studies centering on more diverse issues of L2 writers is a need so that it would help build newer perspectives to view the L2 writers' cases with more accurate interpretations.

One of the findings of this study was that the research participants considered their L1 as a resource during their L2 writing process. Now, the question arises, can such resource be made beneficial for the whole composition class? There is a paucity of thought in this regard on how multilingualism can be beneficial to the whole composition classroom. Tardy (2006) mentions, when it comes to academic composition, writers may experience similar issues regardless of their L1 or L2 writing, but what commonalities

exist between multilingual writers and their peers in mainstream composition classroom. This can help reframe the issue of learning academic L2 writing as well as the concern of the mainstream population; instead, it is necessary to move from L2 writers' rhetorics and cultural differences as a deficit model to both as a difference but a resource for composition classroom context.

Correspondingly, the categorization of L2 writing population, in itself, is very broad, which does not incorporate the characteristics of the entire population succinctly and does not suffice the need of the diverse multilingual group. As it is detailed in the Chapter Two, the characteristics, rhetorical features, and the categorization of this group is very distinct. Going further than the two primary research questions of this study was beyond the vantage point of this study's inquiry, but future studies are needed to focus on how writing teachers can better prepare their teaching lessons without diserving any groups of students. To be more specific, the participants of this study seemed self-conscious being in a group that possesses similar cultural and linguistic understanding by choosing their country specific classmates and writing tutor while discussing or taking consultation on their research essay assignment. In the era of multilingual society, this is conveying something very stimulating to investigate how such tendencies would be used to ameliorate the entire composition group. Having further studies centered on two groups of writers, (i.e., multilingual and monolingual) would help researchers find out how their writing tendencies are similar and different.

Additionally, the inquiries of this study concentrated on single genre, research essay writing assignment. There are, however, different genres that the first-year composition students involve themselves in, such as argumentative essay writing, cause

and effect essay writing, problem/solution essay writing, and comparison and contrast essay writing. It would be intriguing to see how L1 use varies across different genre writing in L2, and it is also not wise to generalize the findings of such studies into all contexts and genre writing processes. Therefore, further studies should be conducted focusing on different groups of students so that such results would help formulate some reliable common ground. Because multilingual writers' L1 use may not necessarily remain the same across different assignments (e.g., narrative essay versus problem-solution essay), more genre specific studies are recommended.

The participants of this study come from a country where the economy is very low compared to other developed countries, but English is essential for many jobs. It would, therefore, be interesting to find out whether the research and methods conducted and practiced in the U.S. or any other developed countries' contexts would be equally useful in contexts from where these student writers come from. The entire South Asian context, for example, is a study focus which has still not received much attention in terms of research on L2 writing, correlating it with the academic written discourse, digital rhetoric, multimodal pedagogy, and technology. This research study did not observe how the Nepalese L2 writers mediated technology while writing in L2, but further studies can be stressed on such issues and correspond on whether the rate of L1 use increases while mediating technology during their L2 writing process.

Many studies, including this one, center around multilingual writers' writing skills development, correlating it with English language in most cases. There is a need to decentralize the research focus not just by putting English in its locus, but investigating how the multilingual writers utilize their ethnic languages (L1) while writing in any of

their L2s, such as in Hindi, Nepali, Urdu, Bangla, or Sinhala, which are some of the South Asian languages. Definitely, the results of such studies would explain more because the status of these languages is not similar to English. The role of power, identity, and L1-L2 similarities would also play a significant role in terms of academic written discourse as it signified in this study. Academic written discourse need not refer only to those at the university or professional level, and for many learners in South Asia, it is important to do research on issues relevant to those at lower levels of language competence; for example, beginning or intermediate level.

The current study also revolved around Nepalese L2 writers' writing issues and perception eyeing specifically on the research essay assignment. Since there is less attention studying the nexus between multilingual writers' L1 use regarding research essay assignments, my study helped fulfill that gap, but further studies can investigate how the multilingual writers begin their writing skills development in their L1, first. Such focus would bring some new thoughts observing their L1 writing tendencies compared with their L2. Additionally, such attention would help researchers see how far the multilingual writers go from their L1 writing expertise to their L2. Knowing more about students' L1 writing development would help composition teachers to better prepare lessons, according to the level of the multilingual writers.

Lastly, my study investigated how freshmen L2 writers constructed their perception and employed the L1 during their research essay assignment in the U.S. university context. It would be exciting to investigate whether their current tendencies were still the same when they started writing in the L2 back in their homes. During the time when other studies did not pay much attention on such issues, this study remained

crucial, but other significant issues still pertain which are worth paying attention to.

Actually, the multilingual writers' L2 writing journey starts further back. For instance, all of the participants of this study are more than decade-old English learners (see Table 3.2).

Having such investigations would further detail how these writers construct their trajectories across the time, finding out different leveraging points and stumbling blocks.

Coda

In this study, I have explored the perception of the Nepalese L2 writers toward their L1 use during the L2 research essay writing process, and their use of L1 during this process. My findings suggest that the Nepalese L2 writers perceive their L1 use as a resource rather as a hindrance, which corresponds with some of the previous studies conducted in the EFL contexts; however, the study observed that considerably wider ranges of issues, such as language status, identity, task comprehensibility, cultural proximity, make the L2 writers' L1 use distinctive. Instead of generalizing such results to the entire L2 writing population, such tendencies have to be investigated further, focusing on other new L2 populations who are still not in the limelight nor do they possess a unique socio-economic and cultural understanding. In this connection, Kumaravadivelu (2001) recommends teachers look at the three-dimensional system while reframing their teaching pedagogies. One of the fundamental dimensions to take into account is the pedagogy of "particularity," which Kumaruvadivelu asserts, "[p]articularity is something we learn. We don't distinguish birds until we learn their names and hear their songs" (Kumaravadivelu, 2001, p. 539). Our teaching lessons can be contextually associated only when we understand the local context and the distinctiveness of our learners.

Subsequently, L2 writing teachers need to learn their student populations with more careful eyes and discover how their students negotiate their writing skills within the new cross-cultural context while writing in their L2. The L2 writers do utilize their L1 expertise but their linguistic repertoire is not necessarily confined within the issues revealed by any other studies, which are focused on different L2 writing populations. In this sense, the notion of generalizability may deceive the eyes of the writing instructors. There are several issues connected with multilingual writers' writing tendencies, which cannot be generalized to the entire group and the total context; instead, their issues of socio-economic and cultural upbringings also should receive attention. One issue that ignores these socio-economic and cultural considerations, is limiting international students in the U.S. academy to categorizations in terms of their visa status as F1 or J1. This does not represent the particularities of diverse multilingual groups and does disservice to the various dissimilar multilingual writers. Even the additional classification as English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) groups of student populations does disservice to these groups of writers who represent unique cultural and socio-economic backgrounds because each writing group is distinctive in their own rights. To give an example, according to the current categorization, the Japanese and Nepalese L2 writers fall under the same group, (i.e., EFL), but since these two groups of writers share less similar issues (socio-economic condition, educational background, and cultural backup), the current categorization has to be redefined based on their diverse rhetorical tendencies, without basing categorization on the status of their legal documents, like their passport status.

This study informs writing teachers who are teaching in the U.S. university context that every multilingual writing class is distinct, in its own right, and the writing rhetoric of each writing group has to be treated with distinct eyes. As there are myriad backgrounds that make multilingual writers distinct, their writing strategies may also influence a similar sundry path. Instead, teachers need to re-think their teaching techniques and strategies if they allow the multilingual writers to use their L1 whenever the writers feel they need to, if they consent grouping according the background of the writers, and if they give scaffolding based on students' expectations and learning levels. Having such opportunities, teachers may revisit their teaching lesson to better prepare their students to be citizens of a broader context. Additionally, this study further notifies writing teachers in the Nepali context to observe how their students further negotiated context in a broader cross-cultural situation (i.e., U.S.).

The findings of this study, at the same time, notify that despite the dissimilar social context, Nepalese L2 writers resemble a unique identity and cultural issues in the U.S. university context, which has a direct impact in their writings. On the other hand, my study renovates the uniqueness of the U.S. composition classroom by bringing the previously unnoticed L2 writers' issues, such as multilingual writers' L1 use, while writing a research essay assignment and their perception to the use of L1 while writing in L2, which is expected to help strengthen the understanding of the writing teachers, in general, by uncovering L2 writers' perceptual writing tendencies and the L1 use in L2 writing. This study helps bring out the more unique issues—such as the L2 writers' identity issues, and their perception and the use of L1 while writing in L2—which can be the important ingredients of a complete recipe for the writing teachers, research scholars,

and the entire society, in general, to recognize the multilingual writers based on their uniqueness.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Participant Consent Form

Dear Student,

My name is Shyam Bahadur Pandey. I am a graduate student in the English Department's Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) program at Minnesota State University, Mankato, and I am a graduate assistant of the Writing Center in the Center for Academic Success. I would like to conduct research on second language writing under the supervision of my graduate advisor, Dr. Sarah Henderson Lee. The purpose of my study is to inform Nepali English language instruction by investigating Nepali learners' perceptions and use of their first language while writing a research paper in a U.S. composition class.

If you agree to participate in this study, you will: 1) Complete a questionnaire regarding your attitudes toward using your first language in the second language writing process; 2) Provide any written artifacts related to your research writing assignment in English 101; and 3) Give an audiotaped interview, not to exceed one hour, regarding how you use your first language in the writing process of a U.S. composition class' research assignment. The time commitment to participate in this study will not exceed two hours.

Your participation is completely voluntary, and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time. Discontinuing the study will not affect your relationship with Minnesota State University, Mankato and will not in any way influence your final grade in English 101. You can withdraw from the study at any time by contacting the faculty Principal Investigator (PI), Dr. Sarah Henderson Lee, at sarah.henderson-lee@mnsu.edu or (507) 389-1359.

The risks you will encounter as a participant in this research are not more than experienced in your everyday life and may include issues related to academic success, peer pressure, and second language writing. Additionally, minimal stress can occur when audio-recording is used. There will be one audio-recorded interview during the data collection phase of this study. The benefits for participants are normal benefits associated with reflective writing practices, including a heightened awareness of how language is used in the academic writing process. Additionally, participants gain self-awareness about their first language use in their second language writing.

Consent forms will be collected by the faculty PI, Dr. Sarah Henderson Lee, and stored in a locked file cabinet in her office. The student PI will store all electronic documents, including questionnaires, written artifacts, and interview recordings and transcripts, on his password protected computer. Individual participants will only be able to view their own questionnaires, written artifacts, and interview recordings and transcripts. In any dissemination of this research, pseudonyms will be used for all names to ensure confidentiality of participants. All consent forms, audio-recordings, transcripts and collected data will be retained for three years before being destroyed, per federal regulations.

Initials: _____

If you have any questions please feel free to contact my graduate advisor, Dr. Sarah Henderson Lee, at sarah.henderson-lee@mnsu.edu or (507) 389-1359. If you have any questions about rights of research participants, please contact Dr. Barry Ries, Administrator of the Institutional Review Board, at barry.ries@mnsu.edu or (507) 389-1242. If you have any questions regarding the security of electronic information, please contact, the Minnesota State University, Mankato Information and Technology Services Help Desk at (507) 389-6654 and ask to speak to the Information Security Manager.

A copy of this letter will be provided for you to keep. If you are willing to participate in this study, please initial the bottom of the first page and sign the second page before returning it to the faculty PI, Dr. Sarah Henderson Lee. Your signature indicates that you have read and understand the information above and willingly agree to participate. Thank you for your consideration.

Your name (printed) _____

Your signature _____

Date _____

MSU IRBNet LOG #: 871983

Date of MSU IRB approval: 02/22/2016

Appendix B: Recruitment Letter

Date:

Dear _____,

You are invited to participate in a research study (IRBNet ID: 871983) titled Multilingual Writers' Perceptions and Use of L1 in a U.S. Composition Class: A Case Study of Nepali Students. This study will inform Nepali foreign language instruction by investigating how Nepali learners of English use their first language to complete a research writing assignment in a U.S. university composition class.

If you choose to participate in this study, you will: 1) Complete a questionnaire, 2) Submit written artifacts from your English 101 research assignment, and 3) Be interviewed once about your research writing process.

If you are interested in participating in this research, please plan to attend the below informational meeting.

Day/Time: TBD

Location: TBD

If you are unable to attend this meeting and are interested in participating in this study, please email me at shyam.pandey@mnsu.edu.

Thank you again for your consideration.

Best regards,
Shyam Pandey

Appendix C: Questionnaire

1. Do you think that writing a research paper in English is a difficult task? What is most challenging for you in this process?

2. If you could choose Nepali or English to write an academic research paper, which would you choose and why?

3. Do you use Nepali while writing in English? If yes, at what writing stage(s) do you use it and why? If no, why do you not use Nepali while writing in English?

4. Are you a better writer because you can write in two different languages? Why or why not?

5. At what stage in the research writing process do you feel most successful? Why?

Appendix D: Sample Interview Questions

1. How many languages can you speak/write? Which language did you learn first at school? How long have you been studying English?
2. What language do you prefer to write in and why?
3. Is writing a research assignment in your English 101 class challenging? Why do you think so?
4. Would you write the same research paper better if you were asked to write in your first language? Why or why not?
5. What do you enjoy about writing in your L1? How about in English? Why?
6. How do you start writing in English? Do you follow any certain strategies or steps? How do these strategies/steps differ from writing in Nepali? Why do you think this is the case?
7. Do you think that Nepali is useful while writing a research assignment in English? Why or why not?
8. Did you seek help while writing this research assignment? If yes, what kind of help did you seek? If no, why did you not seek help?
9. Did you discuss your research writing assignment with a classmate who is from your home country? If yes, why? How did it help in your writing process? If no, why not?
10. Tell me how you used Nepali while creating this outline/draft/final manuscript.
11. In what way did Nepali influence the introduction/body/conclusion of this research assignment?

Appendix E: Research Essay Assignment Instructions

Due Dates:

First draft – April 18
 Reverse outline - April 25
 Final draft – April 28

All parts of this assignment should be uploaded to both D2L AND turnitin.com by 11:59 pm the day it is due.

What is an analytical research paper?

A research paper is the final product of an involved process **of research, critical thinking, source evaluation, organization, and composition**. Primary and secondary sources are the heart of a research paper. The purpose of this essay is to further the field in which it is written, and to provide you a wonderful opportunity to increase your knowledge and analysis of a specific research question. A successful research paper analyzes and synthesizes multiple sources of data to draw conclusions to answer a clearly defined research question.

Topics

You can choose your own topic for this paper, or use one of the suggestions below. All topics should be approved - make sure to send me an email as soon as you decide what topic you will write about. You will start with a wider topic and do initial research in order to narrow the topic down to your specific research question.

Example topics:

- How has U.S. anti-terrorism policy affected terrorism? Has there been an increase or decrease in terrorist activity since 9/11 and the Patriot Act?
- How are people and governments acting to slow down climate change? What actions have been/would be most effective?
- How is 3D printing changing access to resources? What effects might this technology have on medicine, industrial production, art, and so on?
- Will artificial intelligence ever become a reality? How do people feel regarding AI?

Long list of other possible research questions:

<http://www.myspeechclass.com/good-and-interesting-research-paper-topics.html>

<http://www.myspeechclass.com/good-and-interesting-research-paper-topics.html>

<http://www.myspeechclass.com/good-and-interesting-research-paper-topics.html>

Primary research requirement

You will include a component of primary research in your final essay. This can be a survey, interviews, or your own compilation of statistical data from a source such as Google Analytics. Your research topic will influence what type of research you decide to complete. We will learn more about primary research in class. Keep in mind who your

research participants might be as you develop your topic. For instance, will you poll MNSU students, or specifically undergraduates, or even more specifically undergraduates in one major? Alternatively, perhaps you have a professor you would like to interview, a lab experiment, or other ideas. The easiest options are surveys and interviews; however, I encourage you to consider other types of research you can access.

Essay requirements:

- 8-10 pages
- At least 6 sources (NOT websites without prior approval; max 1 website)
- Use one citation style (APA, MLA, etc.); use Purdue Owl and your textbook to make sure all in-text citations are correct
- Should have a title page (not included in final page length)
- A 1 paragraph abstract (single-spaced, not included in final page length)
- Use Times New Roman font, size 12
- Double-spaced
- The first line of each paragraph should be indented (by no more than .5 inches; this is one click of the Tab button)
- Use standard 1-inch margins (this is what Word uses by default)
- A separate bibliography listing your sources (not included in total page length)

Essays that are not following this format will be reformatted by the instructor in order to avoid inconsistencies in page length.

Sample research essay using MLA style:

<http://www.dianahacker.com/pdfs/hacker-Day-MLA.pdf>
<http://www.dianahacker.com/pdfs/hacker-Daly-MLA.pdf>
<http://www.dianahacker.com/pdfs/hacker-Daly-MLA.pdf>

Sample research essay using APA style:

<http://www.thewritesource.com/apa/apa.pdf>
<http://www.thewritesource.com/apa/apa.pdf>
<http://www.thewritesource.com/apa/apa.pdf>