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## Stakeholders' Perceptions on EFL Teacher Professionalism: A Phenomenological Study at a Bachelor Programme in Nepal

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## Stakeholders' Perceptions on EFL Teacher Professionalism: A Phenomenological Study at a Bachelor Programme in Nepal

### Abstract

Teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) in the twenty-first century has witnessed several changes, which have sparked tremendous changes in the teachers' standpoints and the conceptualizations of professionalism. In this context, this study explored the stakeholders' perceptions of EFL teacher professionalism. For this, the phenomenological research design was adopted. The study site was a Bachelor's Programme on a community campus in Nepal. The informants comprised the real stakeholders of the programme that comprised three EFL teachers, nine students, two administrators, and one member of the campus management committee. To collect the informants' lived experiences, the researcher used an unstructured interview in a naturalistic setting. The results revealed that EFL teachers' professionalism can be measured by their roles and skills; teacher-student relationships; and teachers as administrators and change agents. This implies that EFL teachers, like the teachers of other subjects, should be loyal, committed, accountable, and responsible as the success or failure of the autonomous programmes mainly depends on the teachers.

### Keywords

EFL, professionalism, roles, tasks

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# **Stakeholders' Perceptions on EFL Teacher Professionalism: A Phenomenological Study at a Bachelor Programme in Nepal**

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Teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) in the twenty-first century has witnessed several changes, which have sparked tremendous changes in the teachers' standpoints and the conceptualizations of professionalism. In this context, this study explored the stakeholders' perceptions of EFL teacher professionalism. For this, the phenomenological research design was adopted. The study site was a Bachelor's Programme on a community campus in Nepal. The informants comprised the real stakeholders of the programme that comprised three EFL teachers, nine students, two administrators, and one member of the campus management committee. To collect the informants' lived experiences, the researcher used an unstructured interview in a naturalistic setting. The results revealed that EFL teachers' professionalism can be measured by their roles and skills; teacher-student relationships; and teachers as administrators and change agents. This implies that EFL teachers, like the teachers of other subjects, should be loyal, committed, accountable, and responsible as the success or failure of the autonomous programmes mainly depends on the teachers.

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## **Introduction**

Teachers are generally regarded as having a key role within the whole educational system. Thus, they need to adapt their roles and design their tasks to suit the particular contexts they encounter. Their roles lie in the cline comprising two extremities, authoritative and democratic (Harmer, 2008b). The stereotypical authoritative role exists in teacher-fronted classrooms (Rose & Kasper, 2010) where a teacher is a guide and the students are followers. Notwithstanding this, the democratic role shares leadership between the teacher and fellow students. In other words, the former is an exemplar of a vertical relationship whereas the latter is horizontal. This circumstance is prevalent in English as a foreign language (EFL) context since English is a global lingua franca and a medium of instruction in one way or the other. In this study, teachers' roles are observed in EFL contexts although its implications are valid in other contexts, too.

As multilingualism has become a common currency now, EFL teachers demonstrate diverse dispositions and behaviours such as introvert/extrovert, field-dependent/independent, and risk-takers/avoiders (Gass & Selinker, 2009; Saville-Troike, 2010; Gass, Behney, & Plonsky, 2013). Further, teachers' traits depend on their aptitude, attitude, motivation, and emotion. Despite their personalities and traits, they need to be open to adaptability which enables them to handle the "magic moments" (Harmer, 2008b, pp. 24 & 157) instantly and efficiently.

EFL teacher professionalism is not confined within the boundaries of the classrooms. Their roles seem significant both in and out of the classroom contexts as they are also members

of a community. Hence, their roles and tasks comprise administrative, professional, and social which encompass their entire professionalism.

Based on the context delineated above, this study was conducted to explore the EFL teachers' professionalism in terms of their roles and tasks to perform within a particular context of a specific programme being conducted at a college affiliated with Tribhuvan University, Nepal.

The entire instruction system has witnessed tremendous changes from teacher-centred to learner-centred, specific methodology to post-method pedagogy (Kumaravadivelu, 2003), excessive uses of information and communication technology (ICT), and use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in pedagogy, among others. The twenty-first century has also sparked debate about globalization/localization, blended learning/virtual learning, and paperless classrooms. Further, the post-COVID context in the World has brought unforeseen changes which force teachers, especially EFL, to redefine teacher professionalism. In this context, the findings of this localized study are rational and significant to a global readership where Englishes are emerging.

The rationale of this study lies in addressing the current global voice for diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice. The visibility of the study from the marginalized context (from the place where English is just used in formal contexts) is needed to observe as a researcher. I have addressed this niche as a professional teacher and therefore, the findings could be beneficial to the prospective pedagogues of ELT, researchers, teachers, material developers, and students.

### **Review of Literature**

Teacher professionalism in English as a foreign language (EFL) context constitutes multiple perspectives on teachers, the teaching-learning process, the learners, and the like. Teachers are regarded to be the leaders of the learners. Therefore, the former has the responsibility of opening the latter's doors. This view is echoed in these words, "If the teacher is indeed wise, he does not bid you enter the house of his wisdom, but rather leads you to the threshold of your own mind" (Gibran, 1991, as cited in Harmer, 2008b, p. 107). This concept has been put forth since antiquity in Sanskrit culture, in which Guru [teacher] is seen as the one who tears darkness and leads the learners towards brightness. That is why, teacher metaphors like actors, orchestra players, gardeners (Harmer, 2008b), and others exhibit the teachers' multifarious roles to perform and tasks to do.

Professionalism is a vague and elusive term. Pratte and Rury (1991) define professionalism as "an ideal to which individuals and occupational groups aspire, to distinguish themselves from other co-workers" (as cited in Creasy, 2015, p. 23). To particularize the notion, professionalism is a multifarious term that incorporates the three categories like professional parameters (related to legal and ethical issues), professional behaviours (like building rapport with students, parents, colleagues; maintaining positive attitudes of a professional; and so on), and professional responsibilities (like the responsibility to the profession, students, school, and the community (Brehn et al., 2006, as cited in Creasy, 2015, p. 24).

However, Richardson (2001) views professionalism as a commitment to the occupation and for them, commitment to teaching means "the degree of positive, the affective bond between the teacher and the school that reflects the degree of internal motivation, enthusiasm, and job satisfaction teachers derive from teaching and the degree of efficacy and effectiveness they achieve in their jobs" (p. 820). This implies that professionalism in teaching calls for the strong associations of teachers with the institutions they work. This also calls for their

commitment to their occupation. Nevertheless, the concept of professionalism is a dynamic and complex phenomenon to define concisely.

Although the parameters are vague and context-specific, some researchers have offered the attributes of professionalism. For Demirkasimoglu (2010), the nature of professionalism in terms of “the respectability status of the occupation, improvement of service quality, the achievement of the highest standards, self-control, and professional autonomy” (p. 2048). They have also attributed “public image” to teacher professionalism (p. 2050). This view conceptualizes teachers as celebrities, autonomous being committed to the betterment of the teaching profession. Similarly, Hussey et al. (2010) have conceptualized professionalism in terms of altruism, code of ethics, the body of knowledge, and specialist skills and expertise. In this framework, altruism connotes the highest level of honesty and devotion to the job chosen; code of ethics to the appropriacy of the principles or guidelines and the profession; body of knowledge to the wholistic repertoire of needed information and experience; and specialist skills and expertise to the ability and artanship to accomplish the tasks in the selected profession. Likewise, Cottle (2014) has cited Franklin’s (2010) metaphor “a floating, or empty signifier” that implies professionalism as an imprecise concept and “is an idea that has become what it is today through a series of discursive formulations as it has weaved through a variety of meanings and societal structures throughout history” (p. 3). Basing his study on Hall’s (1908) professional model, Cottle (2014) incorporates five attitudinal attributes such as (a) formal and informal associations which reinforce the values, beliefs, and identity of the profession, (b) belief in public service, (c) belief in self-regulation, (d) personal commitment and dedication, and (e) autonomy.

Based on the delineations above, the present study constructed the framework of professionalism in terms of loyalty to the policies, strategies, programmes, students, and their occupation of the educational institutions they are involved in. Secondly, the teachers should develop an affirmative bond with co-workers and administrators. They should show their positive associations in both formal and informal settings. Thirdly, teachers should show their readiness to observe and to be observed in formative and summative contexts. Mainly, formative observations provide teachers with opportunities to strengthen or improve their performances. This provides a chance for continuous assessment and improvement, which are crucial in a teacher’s development. Fourthly, teachers need to get mastery over the contents they have to deliver in the class. Then, they can deliver the contents confidently and convincingly. Likewise, they should be well-practitioners and be involved in numerous tasks for years for their professional development.

Beyond these thematic perspectives delineated above, I have found some empirical studies that are related to my work. Of them, Nabukenya (2010) accomplished a study that aimed to investigate the teachers’ professionalism on teacher performance. The study followed a mixed-method design, in which a quantitative approach was utilized in the questionnaire survey and the qualitative approach included a combination of interviews, focus group discussion, and documentary analysis. The major finding of the study was that teachers’ code and commitment did not have a significant correlation with their performance. Instead, the study revealed that teachers’ attitudes and performances are closely associated. This study implies that teachers’ attitude towards their profession depends on other factors than the teachers’ code of conduct and commitment. This study, thus, shows opposite results to the findings of Cottle’s (2014) study that demonstrates the significant place of commitment in teachers’ performance and professionalism.

Similarly, the study of Madueke (2014) conducted a case study to explore the teachers’ perceptions regarding their responsibilities related to teaching social-emotional competencies and the influences of those beliefs on their classroom practices. This study also followed a mixed-method approach for data collection and information. Qualitative data were collected

through interviews and classroom observations whereas quantitative data were collected through a demographic survey and a questionnaire on teacher beliefs. The results show a mismatch between what they believe and what they practice. This study implies that teachers do not practice what they preach.

Likewise, Schechter (2014) accomplished an intrinsic case study to explore the roles, and responsibilities of writing coaches. This study also followed a mixed-method approach, which also collected qualitative data from interviews and observations, complemented by a non-experimental quantitative survey of the informants. The researcher found that the writing coaches spent more time performing teachers' and administrators' responsibilities though they were deemed coaches. A posteriori data exhibited many challenges faced by the coaches. Beyond the purposes, the study highlighted the challenges they faced and the factors that might cause job dissatisfaction. Therefore, the researcher has developed a model for overcoming these issues. This study, like Madueke's (2014), reveals variations in teachers' perceptions and practices.

Unlike these three studies, Keuning-LaFrence (2016) conducted a descriptive study to explore perceptions of the roles of general and special education teachers regarding the inclusion of students with cognitive impairment in the general education classroom. Following a survey research design, the study shows the significance of collaboration in teaching, one of the important 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills.

These empirical studies are related to teacher performance, variability in teachers' perceptions and practices, teachers' roles and responsibilities, and perceptions of their roles. None of them explored the stakeholders' perceptions of EFL teacher professionalism holistically in terms of roles to play and tasks to perform. This gap is researchable and significant because professionalism can efficiently be measured based on the teachers' roles and tasks.

To address the identified gap, this study aimed to explore professionalism in EFL teachers with special reference to the Bachelor of Mountain Tourism (BMTM) programme of a community campus; and to suggest some implications for EFL teachers' professional development for learners' better results and institutional enhancement. Specifically, this study explored EFL teacher professionalism in terms of teacher roles and tasks as the theoretical bases of this study: controller, prompter, participant, resource, tutor, rapport builder, task doer, manager and knowledge builder/holder, as the variables to explore and settle (Farrell & Jacobs, 2010; Harmer, 2008a, 2008b; Kumaravadivelu, 2003; Larsen-Freeman, 2007; Nagaraj, 1997; Richards & Rodgers 2003; Tickoo, 2007). These EFL teacher traits fall under the parameters of professional, administrative, and social domains. As a whole, these variables depict a big picture of teachers in general.

## **Methods**

The main purpose of the study was to explore the EFL teachers' professionalism. To achieve the objective, I have followed the phenomenological research design, which calls for interpretivism that examines, "how people engage in the process of constructing and reconstructing meanings through daily interactions" and that prioritizes, "people's subjective understandings and multiple meanings in the research process" (Leavy, 2017, p. 129). Phenomenology as a discipline, "aims to focus on people's perceptions of the world in which they live and what it means to them; a focus on people's lived experience" and as a qualitative method, phenomenology focuses on vivid human experiences as they are (Langdridge, 2007, as cited in Kafle, 2011, p. 182). Thus, phenomenologists are, "interested in human consciousness as a way to understand social reality, particularly, how one thinks about the experience; in other words, how consciousness is experienced" (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011,

as cited in Leavy, 2017, p. 129). The phenomenological research design fits to meet the set objectives in this study as it calls for the lived experiences of the stakeholders such as teachers, students, administrators, and CMC members who are involved in the selected study area. Thus, I took EFL teachers' professionalism as a phenomenon to investigate and the stakeholders' perceptions as the clusters for developing themes to draw inferences.

### **Informants and Information Sources**

All the stakeholders of the Bachelor of Mountain Tourism Management (BMTM) at a community campus in Nepal, made a universe of this study. The four-year bachelor's programme that comprised eight semesters was launched in 2017. When this research was conducted in 2019, only 50 students in the first to fourth semesters were studying. In the programme, there was the involvement of 15 teachers and 2 administrators. The campus management committee (CMC) was the same for all the programmes and faculties on the campus under study. Of them, I purposively selected only fifteen informants as it was not possible to include all in this small-scale study and a few informants for in-depth investigation were sampled purposively in qualitative research (Flick, 2009, Creswell, 2012). Furthermore, Giorgi (2008) has put these words, "At least three participants are included because a sufficient number of variations are needed to come up with a typical essence" (as cited in Finlay, 2009, p. 9). Therefore, I selected three teachers teaching English, nine students who were involved in the BMTM programme, one CMC member, and two administrators. The selected students were from the first and the third semesters as the other students were preparing for their term examinations, and the administrators comprised a campus chief and a support staff. I selected only one CMC member because the campus chief would represent both the CMC and the administrators.

I used both primary and secondary sources of information because only one type, namely, neither primary nor secondary alone could fulfill the total requirement of the research. I used secondary sources such as references to develop a framework for analysis and primary sources to collect lived experiences. The former information was collected by using the unstructured interview as interviews are the main methodological techniques in the phenomenological paradigm (Leavy, 2017). I used an unstructured interview because it allowed "maximum flexibility"; "the intention is to create a relaxed atmosphere in which the respondent may reveal more"; an interview schedule or guide was not prepared but the researcher only thought about a few "opening or 'grand tour questions'" (Dörnyei, 2007, pp. 135-136). The next reason for choosing this interview type is that is "most appropriate when a study focuses on the deep meaning of a particular phenomenon" (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 136). The further reason is that the unstructured interview allows the interviewees to be reflective and expressive of their lived experiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, 2018). The secondary information was collected from references, textbooks, and journals. In this way, I used multiple sources of information to ensure the authenticity of the information.

### **Information Collection and Processing**

Firstly, I went through secondary sources for shaping theoretical guidelines on the phenomena of teachers' professionalism in general. Then, I built a good rapport with the informants so that I could record their lived experiences through the unstructured interview.

After obtaining their consent, I took in-depth interviews with them and recorded these vignettes in a diary so that I could use their chunks for the analysis and interpretation process. I conducted the interviews on the campus premises as it was convenient for the researcher as well as the informants. The language of the interview was Nepali because it is the mother

tongue for both and they can easily communicate in this language naturally. I used some “grand-tour questions” (Dörnyei, 2007, pp. 135-136) that incorporate EFL teacher professionalism in terms of the teachers’ roles and tasks along with probes for showing the informants, I was their active listener. Each interview lasted thirty minutes and each informant was interviewed three times as I reached the data saturation phase then.

For information processing, I used codes for the analysis and interpretation of the information obtained through the interview taken with the informants like the students (S1, S2...S9), the teachers (T1, T2, T3), the administrators (A1, A2), and the member of the campus management committee (CMC1). All these alphanumeric codes aimed to maintain anonymity. Then, I codified and developed themes based on the information obtained from the informants (thus, themes are data-emergent) such as teacher roles, teacher-student relationship, teacher skills, teacher knowledge, teachers as administrators, teachers as agents for change, and teacher professionalism. and do phenomenological reduction for subjectively interpreting the results to draw inferences.

### **Quality Standard**

I maintained authenticity and trustworthiness in collecting and processing information by way of using multiple sources and member checking. I used to interview for collecting information and maintained quality in information processing by showing the interpretations of the informants wherever possible and practicable.

### **Findings**

Based on the information obtained from the selected 15 informants in the interview, seven themes emerged such as teacher roles, teacher-student relationship, teacher skills, teacher knowledge, teachers as administrators, teachers as agents for change, and teacher professionalism. The thematic delineations are illustrated in the subsequent sections.

### **EFL Teacher Roles**

Regarding the EFL teacher roles, the informants generally expressed homogeneous views and opinions. A1 stressed the autonomy of the BMTM programme in which the EFL teachers are fully responsible for syllabus designing, deciding teaching strategies, setting test papers, and their examinations and so on. Thus, they viewed the English teacher’s roles as very significant and decisive and remarked on their “significant role in programme enhancement” because English plays a crucial role in global communication. They added that for the teachers’ professional development, the campus had already conducted a training programme to set questions and check the answer sheets; and a discussion session on the syllabus- design. Their remarks entail that teachers should be active participants in theoretical and practical aspects of the contents designed in the programme. Otherwise, the teaching-learning process becomes incomplete. A1 also conceded that EFL teachers should be good managers who could manage their classes well as it is said, “All managers are good leaders, but all leaders are not good managers.” They imply that teachers should be good leaders as a part of good administrators. In social roles, they asserted that teachers should show the linkage of classroom-learnt contents to social needs. In this way, EFL teachers’ social roles are reflected in the students’ behaviours and skills.

Likewise, A2 claimed that the main aim of the BMTM programme is to activate the learners maximally to be able to communicate globally. His claim is evident from the students’ active participation in the field trip and its presentation in the form of a report in the classroom.



Thus, “teachers should lead the students to be actively involved in social activities that are closely connected to tourism activities,” they said. The EFL teachers should also be initiators of the problems, facilitators for students to discover the solutions, manage their activities well, and lead them towards the goal. This implies that the EFL teachers, who are better than other subject teachers, are better initiators, facilitators, and leaders. A2 did not accept teachers’ administrative roles directly. Nevertheless, they admitted the EFL teachers should be record keepers, classroom managers and information-seekers. Besides the students’ approach to the society in the form of the field-/project work, society can be brought to the campus by calling members of Hotel Association Nepal (HAN); Tourism Association Nepal (TAN) or any other associated organizations for sharing their experiences in the mountain tourism domain. This view is substantiated as the English teachers have better communication skills to build up a good rapport with these associations.

Like the administrators’ views, CMC1 admitted that the EFL teachers’ roles in the BMTM programme had to be crucial. Thus, teachers are required to be laborious and open to updating and modifying their performance as per the requirements. For them, English teachers should be real professionals but not job holders in the programmes.

The EFL Teachers in the eyes of the teachers themselves are a little bit different from the eyes of the administrators. For T1, teachers could be full authorities traditionally, but facilitators currently. For them, “Teachers are still out-pouring agents of knowledge whereas students are like passive receivers. It is a one-way traffic state of teaching. It is a wrong practice. The teachers should be more observant whereas the students should be more active in learning.” This quotation shows the distinct teacher and student roles in traditional and current practices. In the former context, teacher-centred activities would be conducted whereas in the latter, learner-centred tasks would be preferred.

Further, teachers as social beings who can impart social norms, values, socialization processes, concepts of civilization/patriotism and so on. Overall, teachers can be role models for the students inside and outside the classroom contexts. T1 views teachers to be administrators as they maintain discipline, regulate learners’ behaviours, and keep records like their attendance, academic activities, and evaluation results, as a whole systematize classroom procedures. Unlike T1, T2 and T3 emphasized the role of facilitators who could impart theoretical knowledge to the students and instil the students with the skill and knowledge to apply their knowledge in practical fields. They said that the students should maximally be involved in fieldwork, project work and mainly in self-learning tasks. Like other informants, T2 also categorized the EFL teacher roles into three types such as professional (facilitator, controller, resource), administrative (record-keeper, classroom manager) and social (rapport builder, role model).

Students perceived teachers to be their guides even though the latter appeared not truly to be so. Thus, they also complained about teacher behaviours, roles and tasks in some typical contexts. The students expressed their dependency on the teachers as the latter are the primary inputs in the EFL context. For example, S3 asserted that teachers should be resourceful, role models, evaluators, and devoted. They can also be social role models who can motivate the students’ thinking. These remarks exhibit a portrait of an ideal EFL teacher who should perform an exemplary role inside and outside the classroom.

Similarly, S1, S2, and S9 observed EFL teachers as two-way communicators, information-imparting agents, experience-sharing agents, task-doers and so on. They also complained about teachers’ uneven participation in fieldwork. However, when I asked the administrators about this issue, they denied it and claimed that the teachers facilitated them in preparing the survey questionnaire, or interview guidelines. This controversy implies that there is a niche in communication between the students and the teachers, and this niche can easily be

fulfilled by good communication between the two. This gap can be filled by the EFL teachers as they have good communication skills.

Students' perceptions and expectations of the EFL teacher roles call for good planners, managers, record-keepers, controllers, co-constructors of knowledge, and facilitators. They want the classes to be more interactive. Students perceive teacher roles to be good administrators like managers, planners and critical educators who can critically observe/analyze the current educational practices.

### **Teacher-Student Relationship**

Regarding the rapport-building phenomenon, A1 asserted that students should be greedy for gaining more knowledge whereas teachers should not be sinful in transferring their knowledge and sharing their experiences as much as they have. This implies that teachers can build a good rapport with the students inside the classroom by sharing contexts wholeheartedly, monitoring students' tasks, calling their names, and satisfying their hunger for knowledge. Likewise, outside the classroom too, teachers can provide the students with moral education, the recommendation for the placement of a suitable job, and counselling for the implementation of their theoretical knowledge into practical lives. Furthermore, teachers who teach English in the BMTM programme are subject experts in the domain and so they have public relations with the banks, hotels, business houses, and other tourism sectors. Thus, they can consolidate the relationship of campus to society. In this way, the English teachers can maintain good rapport with the students not only as members of the campus but also as members of society.

A good rapport can be maintained by keeping a friendly relationship with each other. This belief is held by A2 who also charged students for not being as active as they should be in such a typical programme. A2 also expressed that the students were also brought to the Mountain Museum Fair officially. In this way, A2 stressed how the students maintain rapport with the society in which the teachers' role is crucial.

The teachers' and the CMC member's perceptions were that teacher-student relations can be maintained by maintaining a little gap between the two. Regarding this phenomenon, T2 conceded that teachers should be neither too close nor too distant from the students. They opined if the teachers are too close, the students cannot be controlled and if the former is too distant the latter do not regard the former. They also gave some strategies to build a good rapport like calling the names of students, applying control mechanisms and being even-handed, to mention but a few. His/her strategies imply that the teachers should behave considering students' psychology. Similarly, T1 recommended rapport-building strategies like interaction, group discussion, individual rapport and so on. T1 asserted, "To maintain good relations, teachers should be fewer administrators and more facilitators." The difference between T1 and T2 lies in terms of control mechanisms. T1 is against it whereas T2 favours the same.

The students perceived the English teachers to be friendlier. They wished the teachers to be even-handed and address their problems directly. However, they also complained about teachers on the ground that the latter asked questions and cared much about those who were more talkative and active. Their complaint entails that the teachers should not be biased and prejudiced like this. They also wished teachers to be psychologists who could understand the students' needs and wishes. S7 and S9 also complained about teachers not being even-handed. Hence, the teacher's role is significant not only for imparting textual information but also for advising campus administrators in favour of the students.

The students also viewed that teachers could build a good rapport with the guardians as the former are regarded with prestige and high social recognition. The EFL teachers, for them,

should be updated with current social movements and shifts so that they could impart current and updated knowledge that could meet the needs of contemporary society.

### **EFL Teacher Skills**

Since teaching is a skill, teachers should be skillful in the transformation of their knowledge. For A1, English teachers should have skills of transformation, presentation, communication, delivery, class-controlling, professional, motivational, dispute-settlement, and leadership. For them, the teachers should be capable of transforming their knowledge explicitly. Unless the teachers are capable of presenting content either using interactive multimedia or hand-outs or so, the students may not believe in the former. Since teaching requires two-way communication, the teachers should be able to communicate both in even and uneven circumstances. The teachers should, at times, be controllers. For controlling the classroom activities, the teachers should also be good leaders who could motivate the students toward the tasks they need to perform. Thus, A1 recommends teachers be influential and good communicators for the transformation of attitudes, skills, knowledge, and experiences they hold.

A2 added that teachers need to possess managerial skills so that the students can attain these skills through sharing. The teachers should also have skills for effective management and hospitality skills as they are role models for the students. CMC1 added contemporary skills which they referred to as 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills.

The students believed that teachers should be decorated with language, planning, and time management skills. For instance, S5 and S6 viewed that the EFL teachers should be completely responsible for planning the fieldwork and for being involved in the case study approach. Very interestingly, S7 said that the teachers should develop the skill of listening to others. They imply that teachers should not believe only in what they know; instead, they should have the skill to listen to the students' versions, too. It indicates that teachers should develop 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills to be critical educators.

The EFL teachers perceived that communication skill is a must. In tune with this common belief, T2 assumed, "Communication skill is a backbone for teachers. It is like a gun for soldiers. Communication skill incorporates fluency, content knowledge, and choice of diction." They further said that teachers' presentation skills also comprised body language, gestures, facial expressions, get up and so on, which underlay motivational factors for the students. Thus, for A1, teachers are required to play different roles as per the demand of the contents. They believed, therefore, in "less lecture and more classroom activities that are related to social practices." These explications show that teacher skills are dependent on the students' level, background, content, and context of teaching.

### **EFL Teacher Knowledge**

Teachers are supposed to know the contents, materials, resources, and available information and communication technology (ICT) devices like overhead projectors, multimedia projectors, interactive whiteboards, devices for using podcasts, blogs, and so on. Thus, teachers require up-to-date knowledge of all the sources and devices. Regarding this phenomenon, A1 conceded that the EFL teachers should develop knowledge of theoretical and applied aspects of the contents because the courses of BMTM attempt to develop a theory-practice interface. They also added that the English teachers should know current approaches, methods, and techniques, and psychological principles of teaching. Likewise, A2 viewed that teachers should possess knowledge of contents to deliver and classroom administration (that includes keeping teacher blogs, journals, anecdotes, and students' records). Thus,

administrators believe that the teachers should have knowledge of contemporary issues in the contents, students' psychology and methods for the delivery of content academically and pragmatically.

T1 and T2 also admitted to what the administrators claimed. Further, they believed that they should know interdisciplinarity too because unidisciplinarity may paralyze the students' knowledge. T1 opined that teachers should develop lesson plans although they favoured not the mechanical aspects but relevant functional/mental ones. T2 added that teachers should know contemporary (political and economic) issues that are relevant to the course of study in the specific programme.

The students also focused on content, applied and pedagogical knowledge in teachers. S2 and S7, for instance, reported that their teachers were in a hurry only to complete the course but they did not have any idea about the question set in the board examinations. Similarly, S3 and S5 stated that the programme was a new area of study for the teachers and thus they seemed confused about taking the necessary steps in teaching. These students' vignettes prove that teachers should be the knower of not only theoretical aspects of content but also their pragmatic and behavioural perspectives in real-life situations. For S2, teachers should know about the programme that produces manpower who believes in do-it-yourself (DIY) principles. This means the students after completion of BMTM will be independent entrepreneurs. These students' versions were also supported by CMC1 who conceded that the programme has an infinite scope and its aim is not to produce manpower who looks for services but to produce such ones who seek to be the boss of their entrepreneurs. They (CMC1) meant that this programme targets produce job creators but not job hunters. This is the beauty of autonomous programmes like this one, they imply.

### **EFL Teachers as Administrators**

EFL teachers are also good administrators although many may not observe it directly. A1 conceded that teachers should be good administrators of the educational system in general and of the programme specifically. For them, they should regulate students' behaviours in terms of time, dress, learning, and others as leading figures. Not only this, but teachers are also feedback providers, correctors, and continuous assessors because they accompany students most of the time during class hours. They also asserted:

Teachers are knowledge co-constructors since, in BMTM, the courses are innovative. One-time preparation does not work. They should, in this sense, be co-learners like students. The students can be asked to look for the contents themselves and present them in the class. Teachers can learn many things from the students this way. At this conjecture, teachers need to be tactful managers of the students' tasks.

This vignette demonstrates teachers as critical educators and knowledge co-constructors. The teachers, in this way, can learn many things from the students. However, teachers need to have the skill of tactful management of students' presentations.

Likewise, the teachers observed themselves to be the rulers of students inside and outside the classroom contexts. Nevertheless, T2 believed the teacher's administrative roles were limited only to the class hours. In this way, T1 and T2 viewed teachers' administrative roles differently.

Even the students stated that teachers are not administrators generally, but they admitted that the teachers might demonstrate administrators' behaviours. This shows that the administration for them is limited to the tasks of the campus administration section.

Like the teachers' and the students' observations, CMC1 also perceived teachers not to be direct administrators but the organizers of students' ideas, feelings, and experiences by

brainstorming and exchanging views in clusters. Therefore, EFL teachers are also direct and/or indirect administrators.

### **EFL Teachers as Agents for Change**

The English teachers are generally believed to be the agents of social change because the voice for change is materialized at the schools and universities by the teachers who are involved in teaching an international language. A1 focused on the teachers' roles for innovation and transition as BMTM itself is an innovative programme that produces required man powers for the mountain tourism sector. Thus, the teachers are and can be the agents for social change by linking up the academic programmes like this one and the social activities. This implies that society should collaborate with this type of programme.

Similarly, CMC1 asserted that parents are first teachers whereas the teachers are second ones and therefore the latter could be social role models for students. They opined that a complex schema of social deeds begins from simple things, events, and circumstances of society. Therefore, teachers should highlight this issue skillfully. It means that teachers can mediate social changes to the students explicitly. Further, it also entails those social activities (like Hotel Association Nepal, Tourism Association Nepal) can be highlighted by members of such associations to the students and the teachers can motivate the students to assimilate changes. The students and teachers also expressed similar views. However, S6 recommended that teachers should be empowered for designing the syllabus, setting questions, administering tests, publishing results, and conducting remedial teachings. This implies that demotivating teachers cannot be agents for change whereas motivating ones can be.

### **EFL Teacher Professionalism**

Professionalism is necessary for professional success and institutional proliferation. In the words of CMC1, "Teachers are different from other employees and teaching is a more complex profession. Thus, professionalism in teaching needs loyalty to the teaching profession." This entails that the EFL teachers, like all other subject teachers, should be loyal to their teaching profession considering ethical issues. This belief was also expressed by A1 in these words, "In the BMTM programme, all the activities are teacher-focused. Thus, they need to be fair and loyal to imparting knowledge. They need to be sincere and devotional to their social responsibility like this." Therefore, being punctual, self-regulated, and disciplined in the profession are pre-requisites in teacher professionalism. They further asserted that the success or failure of the programme depends on the EFL teachers' authority, responsibility, and accountability which exemplify professionalism in teachers. Therefore, the administrators, in this way, also include teacher autonomy as a part of teacher professionalism.

Likewise, T1 viewed that teacher professionalism signifies loyalty to the institution and honesty in work; and T2 added responsibility and punctuality as key terms to teacher professionalism. The above delineations prove that the main aspects of teacher professionalism include teachers' whole-hearted devotion to teaching professionalism.

Some controversies are observed in teachers' sayings although they showed congruence in professional roles like controller, resource, facilitator, resource, and tutor. These incongruences were mainly in administrative and social roles. In interview responses, they claimed to be good managers, rapport builders, agents for social change, good planners, and record keepers. Notwithstanding their claims, they kept only students' daily attendance in the name of record keeping. They were not observed keeping anecdotes, cumulative records, rating scales, and so on. They advocated that teachers could brainwash the learners and could mould the latter as a porter could do to the raw mud. As the students also remarked that teachers just

asked them to go to the field and collect information; the teachers remained unknown about exam schedules and field trips at times. This also confirms teachers' ignorance and inadequacy to fulfil their responsibility to motivate the learners, make the administrators listen to them, and resonate these issues with the CMC members. These instances demonstrate that the teachers do not perform their social and administrative roles and tasks as per the requirements for the prosperity of the autonomous programme.

The study revealed students' perceptions of teachers were not uniform. They assumed teachers to be know-all agents to outpour knowledge and information into their raw minds. In the meantime, the students were complaining about not being free to do their tasks in their way. The students claimed that teachers should develop 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills like collaboration, competition, and cooperation whereas the former wished the latter to be their guides in the meantime. Likewise, the administrators and the CMC member wished teachers to be social role models so that the students could follow the former. These paradoxes prove that the BMTM programme in the selected campus is in a transitional phase, which calls for the teachers' positive attitudes and performances rather than codes and commitments in papers. In turn, their perception is dependent on various factors like remuneration, the nature of the educational institution, leadership, and the students' behaviours. Between these lines, the administrators require setting the environment for teacher- and learner- autonomy so that they can be responsible, accountable, and professional in their performances.

The stakeholders claimed professionalism in terms of loyalty, honesty, punctuality, responsibility, accountability, and commitment to their occupation.

Despite some paradoxes mentioned above, the study exhibits the need for professionalism on the part of the EFL teachers to take for the learners' better results and the institutional prosperity.

## **Discussion**

The results of the study reveal that EFL teachers are not very aware of their administrative and social responsibilities, which are desirable to bear inside and outside the classroom contexts. Harmonious relations among the stakeholders play a vital role in gearing up the prosperity of the programme launched. Furthermore, EFL teachers are at the centre of the concentric rings of academic and social spheres. Thus, they can drive students and other subject teachers to their destination by being good role models.

The findings exhibit congruence in the saying and doing of the teachers regarding professional roles such as controllers, facilitators, resources, and tutors. However, they demonstrate incongruence in administrative and social roles. They claimed that teachers should play the role of managers, rapport-builders, agents of social change, planners, and record-keepers. From the students' perspectives, EFL teachers showed inadequacies in motivating students, and having information about examinations, and field trips. Teachers are found indifferent towards these social and administrative roles which are crucial for the success of the autonomous programme like BMTM. In behaviours, they were not following what they asserted. These paradoxes imply that teachers could preach better than they practice. This finding aligns with the research by Maduke (2014) and Schechter (2014) which shed light on the crevice between teachers' words in sayings and actions in practices.

The study emphasizes the EFL teachers' positive attitudes toward the success of the specified programmes like BMTM. The students' views show inconsistencies in their perception of the teachers as some asserted them to be like nurturing birds while others opined them to be just facilitators who need to know 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills such as collaboration, competition, and cooperation. Further, the administrators and CMC members wished teachers to advocate and perform social roles needed by the students. These are also needed for the

proliferation and upliftment of the emerging programme launched on the campus. Only policies and commitments may not impact affirmatively in this regard. These findings corroborate Nabukenya's (2010) research which stresses the need for teachers' positive attitudes for the success of any programme. This research also stated that teachers' positive attitude depends on various factors such as the type of institution they are working in, leadership, and students' behaviours, among others.

This study echoes EFL teacher professionalism in terms of loyalty, honesty, punctuality, responsibility, accountability, and commitment to their profession. This resonated with Richardson's (2001) research but contrasts with Cottle's (2014).

Communication skills are at the heart of the success of any programme. Good communication among the stakeholders like students, teachers, administrators and CMC members is required to yield better results for the programme and to enhance institutional prosperity. For this, the EFL teachers are required to be responsible and accountable for designing a syllabus, deciding prescribed and reference materials, administering exam schedules and conducting remedial teachings if required. These all entail the call for teacher autonomy.

Updated knowledge of 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills like collaboration, communication, and cooperation adds grace to being efficient critical educators. The EFL teachers' knowledge and skill to use modern ICT tools aim to produce job creators rather than job hunters. This motto can be substantiated by developing learner and teacher autonomy, which in turn sparks the spirit of teacher professionalism and student agency.

The conclusions drawn above have these implications at levels like policy, practice, and further studies. Firstly, the EFL teachers should be made aware of their tripartite roles (professional, administrative and social) and their tasks to perform accordingly. Likewise, good communication among the teachers, the students and the administrators should be obtained so that these stakeholders, share views on the syllabus, textbooks, exam schedules, administration of exam schedules, using washback techniques, and so on. Further, the harmonious relationship among the stakeholders (like teachers, students, administrators, and CMC members) should be maintained to lubricate the social wheels of the BMTM programme.

The subsequent implication is that the EFL teachers should have updated knowledge and skills of the contents and contexts. Therefore, they should have 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills like collaboration, communication, competition, and cooperation to be critical educators. Knowledge and skills for using modern ICT tools are required to add grace to the faculties. Finally, the study can be replicated in another study area, the extended number of participants, other agendas of EFL teacher professionalism, and by using other research designs, tools and techniques.

In this study, I have purposely sampled a limited number of informants from a specific programme (BMTM) of a public campus of a university in Nepal and thus may lack generalizability. Further, this study is limited to teacher roles and tasks within the multifarious framework of teacher professionalism. Therefore, further studies, on the other facets of EFL teachers, can be conducted to attribute this study.

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