THE COMMODIFICATION AND REPRESENTATION OF NEPAL IN
INTERNATIONAL TOURISM

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation investigates discursive practices in the context of tourism which serve to portray the linguistically and culturally diverse cultures of Nepal as desirable commodities for linguistic and cultural outsiders. Largely from the perspective of Nepali tourism workers, it analyzes the reproduction and circulation of these discourses in the contexts of educational training and encounters with tourists. By analyzing tour guides’ tour discourse, training discourses in a tourism literacy program, and interviews with multilingual tourism workers, I ask what linguistic, cultural, and ethnic resources are presented as valuable in Nepali tourism. Using ethnographic discourse analysis, I investigate what exactly happens in situ in tourist-guide encounters to understand how these discourses construct and (re)produce authenticity as an object of experience for cultural outsiders. I also examine tourism workers’ views on the dominant tourism lingua franca, English, to better understand how ideologies of English relate to the commodification of language. I also analyze the role of indigenous minority languages in the tourism industry, finding that the construction and circulation of linguistic and cultural identities in Nepal’s ethno-linguistic minority contexts are not only commodities for the tourism market, but also a means of claiming legitimacy amidst the ongoing political state-restructuring and ethnolinguistic movements within the country. Ultimately, this dissertation addresses the sociolinguistic question of to what extent tourism invokes linguistic, ethnic and cultural essentialism in an era when there is ever more awareness of cultural differences and sameness. Overall, then, my research adds to a growing body of work in sociolinguistics on the discursive representation, commodification and encounters of languages, cultures, identities, and peoples in the context of international tourism.
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TRANSCRIPTION CONVENTIONS

[ ] overlapping utterances

= connects ‘latched’ utterances

(.) indicates a pause that is less than 0.1 second

(0.2) indicates a pause that is timed

: marks an extension of the sound it follows

:: marks a longer extension

↑ ↓ marks rising (upward) and falling (downward) intonations

°speech° indicates decreased volume of materials or softer speech

word indicates emphasis

WORD indicates speech that louder than the surrounding talk

hehehe indicates laughter

(word) unclear speech

((text)) body language and other embodied actions

- sharp cut-off of an utterance

. a stopping or a fall in tone

, continuing contour

? a rising inflection

>speech< faster speech

<speech> slower speech

*italics* non English words (Nepali, Tamang, Tibetan)

‘speech’ talk produced as constructed speech
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Durga (pseudonym) is a trekking guide. I first met him in summer 2013 while he was learning English for tourism in a language institute in Kathmandu. I was in his class for five weeks, researching what trekking guides and porters were learning. The following year, I accompanied Durga for a seven-day trek to the Tamang Heritage Trail, a trekking route named after the ethnic Tamangs living in the surrounding areas in the northern Himalayas. The trek offered many opportunities to see and experience the lived culture of Tamangs in their closely-knit clusters of settlements. On the second day of the trek at Gatlang (Durga’s village), he invited a group of performers to perform for tourists. The performers, including Durga and his wife, welcomed their guests, offering a *khada* (a piece of special fabric used to welcome guests in the Himalayan Buddhist traditions) and providing locally brewed *raksi* (alcohol). Standing in separate groups of men and women, they sang a song in Tibetan, and sitting on the floor, they sang another song in the local Tamang language. The Tibetan song included a fragment of expression from the Nepali language “*bledako un jasto*” (like sheep wool), and this was the only expression I could understand as a native speaker of the Nepali language – the official language of Nepal.

Then I had a conversation with them to learn more about the performance. I did not understand Tibetan or Tamang, so I wanted them to tell the details to me in Nepali. One woman mentioned that the multilingual song depicted and represented their identity as ethnic Tamangs who have their distinct cultural practices. Their clothing, as she noted, was special and unique to them. Another person noted that since the song included information about the rural and rustic life in the mountains, the altitude and the animals that live there (e.g. sheep), and the life of
Buddha, it gave a feel of the place to the tourists. Another man seemed worried that the Tamang culture changed dramatically in areas close to Kathmandu (where many Tamangs reside). He was proud that their everyday cultural practices in Gatlang, the performance, and their traditional wooden houses kept their “unique” culture preserved and “uncontaminated”. They noted that it was their culture and tradition that attracted tourists to their village. They also talked about the benefits that tourism was offering to them. They mentioned that there were about five hotels in the village now, mainly targeting tourists and there were seven people working as porters and trekking guides from their village. And, there were a few weaving factories that produced crafts and fabric from local products, for tourists.

Toward the end of our conversation, another woman lamented that since there was no school to offer education in English, the children in the village could not learn English. Only a handful of the villagers could afford to send their kids to Kathmandu or Syaphru (the closest town, roughly a five-hour walk from their village). Pointing out to another village, Langtang, that was located across the hill, she noted “Teha ta jo pani English bolchha” (Everyone speaks English there). Langtang is the third largest trekking destination in Nepal (after Everest and Annapurna) in terms of the number of tourists it receives. The woman seemed envious that Langtang Tamangs were more proficient in English, and they also benefitted more from the “development” that tourism industry engendered. Another man added, in a rather sad tone, that he became old without learning to speak English and without seeing the outside world. He said, “Hami ta yaha kuhine bho, sir.” (we will be rotten here, sir). He said that he had a dream to work for tourism but, as he said, he did not have necessary English skills. For him, Durga was an icon to emulate.
I take this vignette as a starting point to show how language, identity and culture are increasingly the elements of discursive practices in the capitalist economy of Nepal in the context of cultural and heritage tourism. As an ethnographic note, the vignette conveys at least three major concerns and theorizes matters as follows. First, local ethnic identities and languages are objects of public display for commodity purposes for outsiders to consume. The Tamang and the Tibetan languages, and the Tamang food and clothes are used as elements to construct and represent cultural uniqueness and “authenticity” for tourists who are cultural outsiders. They are also used as resources to construct a distinct ethnic identity in the local geo-political context of Nepal. Second, tourism is linked to economic benefits to the individuals involved in tourism, such as tour and trekking guides, porters, and hotel owners. Gatlang villagers regard competency in English as a necessary tool for their social and economic mobility and for connecting themselves to outside world. Third, this vignette shows an ambivalence among the villagers toward tourism with regard to the continuity and changes of their traditions. While they consider it important to keep their tradition and heritage intact so that they can preserve their cultural uniqueness, they also feel a need for advancement and development by providing education in English to their children, by building roads, and by experiencing a “modern” world. And, quite ironically, with the help of tourism, they want to come out of the very life and tradition they appear to want to preserve for generations. It is through the economic development and outside mobility they can come out of their “rotten” life. These kinds of changes are not unique to Nepal. Indeed, such changes are taking place around the world.

It is these concerns of global mobility and the political economy of language and culture that are at the center of this dissertation. This dissertation investigates communicative practices in the context of tourism which serve to portray the linguistically and culturally diverse cultures
of Nepal as desirable commodities for linguistic and cultural outsiders. I examine the production and circulation of these discursive practices, largely from the perspective of Nepali workers in the tourism industry, by researching how they create and (re)produce these discourses. Tourists are also a central consideration, as they are the *raison d’être* for these discourses. The dissertation examines how tourists are represented to Nepalese tourism workers and how tourists co-construct their understandings of Nepal in actual tours and treks. I consider tourism primarily as a discourse-driven and discourse-producing economic industry that markets and commodifies cultural representations by using a range of communicative resources. I chose to study representational discourses and communicative practices in tourism since many of the activities that characterize, and also create tourism as a sellable commodity, are discursive in nature (Dann, 1996). I use the term discourse and discursive practice in a Foucauldian sense to refer to the process through which social reality comes into being (Foucault, 1991). By this, I acknowledge that social realities are linguistically and discursively formed, and such realities are subject to continual change, contestation, and reinterpretation. The meaning indexed by such practices is contingent on various modes of discursive uses including face-to-face interactions, and media and textual representations. Discursive practices in tourism are mostly driven by the capitalist market ideologies that commodify language and communication skills for economic gains. These representations are also influenced by socio-political ideologies and economic and cultural changes at destinations where tourism takes place, and my dissertation aims to shed light on this recursive process.

By critically analyzing ideologies about communication and discourses that yield representations of Nepal in tour guides’ commentaries, training discourses in a tourism literacy program, and in interviews with multilingual tourism workers, I ask what linguistic, cultural and
ethnic resources are valued in Nepali tourism. I explore how multilingual communication skills and resources are used in representations of Nepal and as part of the economic market of the tourism industry. I pay attention to the ideologies and roles of multilingual and intercultural communication skills in maintaining social relationships and in commodifying tourism destinations. Examining tourism workers’ motivations and experiences of learning and using the dominant tourism lingua franca, English, allows me to analyze ideologies of English in a society where tourism continues to be considered as a key economic resource that is expected to strengthen both individuals and the nation. Hence, new forms of multilingualism (such as the increased use of English and the commodification of local languages) are part of the new economic order where individual subjects develop their dispositions and skills to meet the market demands of the tourism industry. When a language is commodified, it has an exchange value in the market as a commodity in the form of objects, resources, and skills.

Another major concern of this dissertation is to investigate what exactly happens in situ in tourist-guide encounters. Here, I pay attention to what identities are created in interactions and how these discourses construct and (re)produce authenticity\(^1\) as an object of experience for cultural outsiders. Authenticity in a recent sociolinguistics scholarship has largely emerged as the

\(^1\) Heller (2014) notes that the Romantic version of authenticity largely rested on nationalism, personhood and citizenship. Authenticity as a political and cultural conceptualization for identity formation and citizenship heavily dominated the way people and societies understood the notion. Today, authenticity is a contested term in anthropology of tourism and sociolinguistics. In tourism, Dean McCannel is credited for initiating discussion on authenticity as an experience to be objectified for and consumed by tourists. Influenced by ideas from Claude Lévi Strauss and Emile Durkheim, McCannel developed the theory of tourism as leisure arguing that modern citizens have made consumerism a symbolic pattern of cultural identification and distinction. Taking the discussion further, Bruner (1994) provides several interpretations of authenticity in the context of cultural tourism. Researchers in sociolinguistics (e.g. Coupland & Coupland, 2014) have drawn on these conceptualizations and expanded them further to locate authenticity as an object of commodity largely accomplished in dursive work. I draw on and expand these debates and discuss authenticity from a constructionist perspective in Chapter 6.
discursive claims to and interpretations of experience in various interactional contexts (Coupland & Coupland, 2014). I address the sociolinguistic question of to what extent tourism invokes linguistic, ethnic and cultural essentialism and authenticity in an era when there is ever more awareness of cultural differences and sameness. Due to the global mobility of people, media, technology and cultural practices, societies in the world’s “periphery” have experienced the effects of globalization such that their life experiences are no longer starkly different from those at the “center” (Appadurai, 1996; Urry & Larsen, 2011).

Language and literacy training discourses for many service industries often emphasize a homogenous way of communication with their clients (e.g. Cameron, 2000; Hall, 1995). However, touristic encounters in Nepal show that tourist-guide interactions seem to defy the established notions of language and culture while nevertheless perpetuating relatively essentialized representations of Nepali cultures. Encounters with tourists seem to be characterized by fluid and complex language repertoires, accents and communication strategies. Overall, then, my research adds to a growing body of work on the representation, commodification and encounters of cultures, identities, and peoples in the context of tourism (Coupland, 2012; Heller, 2003; Pietikäinen & Kelly Holmes, 2011; Shuang, 2012). More broadly, however, it contributes to research on the sociolinguistics of globalization (Blommaert, 2010) and to scholarship on understanding the nature of “intercultural” understanding in the new millennium (Holliday, 2013; Zhu Hua, 2014).

In order to address the concerns raised above, I pose three key research questions in my dissertation:

1. How does training for tourism workers prepare them linguistically and culturally to interact with tourists and to represent Nepal?
2. What are the ideologies of English and other local languages in the context of international tourism? What goals and aspirations do Nepali tourism workers have in learning English?

3. What are the cultural practices that are valued and commodified in actual encounters? How do tourism workers and tourists co-construct authentic cultural representations in their interactions?

Next, I contextualize my research in applied linguistics and sociolinguistics research within the scope of globalization and mobilities. Then, I provide a more expanded theoretical framework of the dissertation, followed by a discussion of some major constructs that shape the theoretical orientation of this research.

1.2 Globalization and language practices

Recent applied linguistics and sociolinguistics research has been heavily influenced by the rapid changes in communicative environments and semiotic landscapes brought about by the massive movements of people and commodities both within and across national borders. With such mobilities and flows, there are social transformations in the way linguistic activities are understood and carried out in multiple domains of social life – economic, political and educational (Duchêne, 2009). Modernist concepts of “nation”, “language”, “community”, “authenticity”, “identity” and “native speaker” as bounded entities have come under close scrutiny as studies have shown the importance of boundary crossing and hybridity. It is for this reason that Jan Blommaert (2010), Nikolas Coupland (2010), Christina Higgins (2009, 2011), Alastair Pennycook (2007) and Ben Rampton (2006), amongst others, have been writing about the need for approaches to language that are better equipped to account for the hybrid, the translocal, the spectacular, the idiosyncratic, the creative and the multimodal. Although hybridity
and transmodality have been the norm rather than an exception in the context of global mobility, Blommaert (2010) also warns us that the modernist ideologies of identities and language have not completely disappeared in the context of border-crossing. According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), there are an estimated 1.2 million people traveling for tourism purposes each year. Tourism, thus, represents the largest number of people involved in human flows, and hence is a vital site for the study of modernist, nation-statist ideologies as they mix with more translocal and decentered understandings of language and culture.

Studies addressing topics of globalization and communicative practices have also paid attention to changes in communication contexts that result from the global flow of people beyond their national borders (Duchêne, 2009; Piller, 2011). While studies of perceptions, beliefs and reflections have proved useful to understand the characteristics of language use and discursive practices, researchers have realized a need to pay closer attention to the linguistic and communication practices through which institutions, policies and ideologies are formed and performed in situ. In line with this discursive trend, communication in its various forms was and still is perceived as being at the heart of what is going on in many contexts, and emphasis is placed on communicative practices (Collins, Slemrouck & Baynham, 2009). Many studies have focused on linguistic and other semiotic resources that people from different national, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds use and the communicative consequences of such differences. Findings across most studies suggest that differences in communication are not mere differences but are always framed and subject to ideological interpretation and reinterpretation, and these differences both create and reproduce uneven distribution of resources and power (Blommaert & Rampton, 2011). Such differences in communication are more apparent in contexts where the language or the variety spoken by a minority group is less valued for its economic and symbolic
power such as in the case of indigenous minorities (Eades, 2012) and asylum seekers (Blommaert, 2010). Such differences and hierarchies in language use are equally visible in workplace contexts where language is a major tool to do the job. Alarcon and Heyman (2013), for example, report that although the role of Spanish in transactional communication is crucial for bilingual call centers at the US-Mexico border, the companies do not value competence in Spanish as a technical competency in the form of training or extra compensation. Lorente (2012) also shows that the Filipino “supermaids” need competences in English and another language of the destination country (e.g. Arabic or Mandarin Chinese), but English is considered as the language of service work even if the work context may not require its use. According to Lorente, the international care industry creates a language hierarchy in which English occupies the top position. Tourism is another domain of language use where communicative practices can reproduce and reinforce differences in political, economic, and symbolic powers of different languages and their users. My dissertation will shed light on this concern.

The ever-increasing mobility of people and the circulation of goods in a globalized marketplace give rise to new language needs and practices (Duchêne, 2009; Heller & Boutet, 2006). Multilingual workplace settings such as companies, courts and hospitals also have an impact on the ways in which members should communicate with each other, and also with people outside the organization. This may include concerns about which languages and varieties are to be used for what purpose and what medium and which language should be used as a lingua franca. Service industries have had an impact on language use and literacy practices that aim for more standardized forms of communication in workplaces. That is, an economic ideology of the new work/world order (Gee & Lankshear, 1995) has influenced all dimensions of language use such as language policy, curriculum and textbook, teaching, and training of employees in both
formal education and less formal literacy training programs. Economy-driven service industries value certain ways of using language at the expense of others (Block, Gray & Holborrow, 2012; Duchêne, 2009; Heller, 2010; Cameroon, 2000; Piller, 2011).

Keeping these changing language practices and ideologies at the center, I next discuss the theoretical framework and the potential areas of contribution of this dissertation.

1.3 The theoretical framework and the areas of contribution

I draw on and contribute to two interrelated strands of scholarship in sociolinguistics, applied linguistics, and linguistic anthropology in order to investigate the linguistic consequences of economic and cultural globalization in tourism in Nepal: 1) the political economy of language, and 2) the discursive representations of Self and Other. Combining these different vantage points gives a more comprehensive picture of the discursive aspect of tourism. In my discussion of these two points, I discuss theoretical concepts, review key studies, and highlight the contribution. In the following section, I review theoretical and empirical work on the communication-mediated service industry in general, focusing particularly on the political economic dimension of language and communication in tourism.

1.3.1 The political economy of language

The political economy of language is an interplay of language, economy and politics. This perspective deals with the actual political and economic problems and challenges that involve language as a central component (Recento, 2015). It investigates the issues ranging from uneven production, circulation, and distribution of symbolic resources, to ideology, exclusion, legitimation and resistance to linguistic practice as participation in stratified markets, and to the relation of language to other forms of capital (Gal, 1989; Heller, 2010; Irvine, 1989; Rahman, 2009). This notion has been extensively discussed in socio- and applied linguistics under several
political-economic conditions with various labels: fast capitalism (Gee & Lankshear), new
capitalism (Fairclough, 2002), late capitalism (Heller & Duchêne, 2012) and more recently
neoliberalism (Block, Gray & Holborow, 2012). In all these political-economic conditions,
researchers have highlighted the relationship between economic interests, service industries,
language ideologies, and market-driven discursive practices (Cameron, 2001; Morgan &
capitalist societies are largely “discourse-driven,” suggesting that language may have a more
significant role in contemporary socio-economic changes than it has had in the past. Taking the
case of higher education in the United Kingdom, Fairclough contends that universities have
focused on aestheticisation or technologization of language to make their service industries more
“attractive” and marketable. Gee and Lankshear (1995) also discuss the “new work order,”
where knowledge workers are more driven by collaboration and partnership, but hierarchy and
authority are less valued. The neoliberal order likewise considers workers as a bundle of skills
deployed for accumulating capital and resources (Block, Gray & Holborow, 2012). In such a
new work order, communication and language practices play an important role to get work
accomplished. Two related strands of work have investigated the role of language and
communication in a market-driven global economy: the valorization of communicative practices
and the commodification of language and identities.

Within the first strand of work, as Duchêne (2009) observes, specific attention has been
given to “the regulation of communication patterns, the standardization of language varieties,
and the performance of identities” (p. 27). Here, language is largely a tool to get work
accomplished (Cameron 2000a, b; Heller 2003; da Silva et al. 2007). Communication skills have
become a commodity in service industries. This has led to a valorization of certain forms of
communication strategies and scripts. Cameron (2000a, 2002) presents a compelling case of the linguistic consequence of economic globalization in call centers in the UK, where specific attention has been given to the regulation of communication patterns and the performance of service identities. She shows that as service workers, call center employees are trained to follow “feminized” communication styles in interacting with the customers, including speaking with a smiling voice and using a higher pitch. These stylized speech characteristics are associated with expressiveness, caring, empathy and sincerity, which are stereotypically associated with the speech of women.

Another strand of work is the commodity value of languages and identities and their representations in the global economic market. A number of sociolinguists and linguistic anthropologists (e.g. Heller, 2003, 2010; Heller & Duchêne, 2012) have highlighted the increasing interplay between the political economy of language under the growing influence of a global economic market. Commodity value of language and identity as an object of consumption in the economic market is more visible in the case of tourism industry. For example, Heller’s (2003) ethnographic work in Francophone Canada shows that due to heritage tourism and a growing number of call centers built on a neoliberal economy, native French-speaking bilinguals now value their bilingual skills as a commodity in addition to considering them as tools to represent their ethnolinguistic identity. Pietikäinen and Kelly-Holmes (2011) argue that authenticity can be reconstructed and commodified in the tourist market of Sámland in northern Finland, where tourist souvenirs are considered as markers of Sámi authenticity that can be exchanged for a commodity value. Duchêne (2009) adds that promotional use of local varieties to mark authenticity can be made for marketing tourism activities. To refer to this identity and commodity value of language, Heller and Duchêne (2011) use the term "language as pride and
profit.” In this way, tourism creates conditions for the maintenance and development of various kinds of multilingualism and diverse ways people engage in such multilingualism. Their notion is helpful for me to discuss the changing importance of languages in Nepal in the context of tourism, allowing researchers to understand the dynamic roles of local and foreign languages.

1.3.1.1 Language and work

Changes in the new work order both valorize neoliberal discursive practices in the workplace and create conditions for alternative pedagogical practices that are needed for language workers to meet demands of the global economic market. Studies from call centers across different contexts (Cameron, 2000a; Heller, 2003; Mirchandani, 2012; Morgan & Ramanathan, 2009), for example, suggest that call center employees are trained with communication skills in English that require them to appropriate American identities, such as “to speak without an accent,” and present themselves as cosmopolitan, caring and hospitable. Through specifically designed curricula and instructional materials, such programs reproduce and reinforce service industry needs by teaching communication and literacy skills such as expert discourses, socially valued literacies and “prestigious” genres.

The global economic market has given an influential space for English, impacting language and communication skills teaching and training practices for different service industries. However, its role as a default lingua franca in all domains has been questioned (e.g. Kubota & McKay, 2009). Attention is being paid to the growing role of languages other than English in global markets. There is an emergence of unprecedented interest in multilingual competence in diverse contexts and domains (e.g. Heller & Duchêne, 2011; Park, 2009; Rubdy & Tan, 2008). Duchêne (2009) argues that as the economic market is reshaping many workplaces, multilingualism (often including English and other foreign and local languages) is
emerging as a practical necessity and is increasingly a norm rather than an exception in many multilingual societies. Piller’s (2011) analysis of an interaction at a tourist information center from a German-speaking part of Switzerland is useful to illustrate multilingualism at work. She shows that in a typical interaction, within a space of only a few minutes, a travel agent engages in multilingual code alternation: Standard German to work with the computer database, Swiss German to speak to a colleague, and English to speak to a tourist customer. Due to these changing work contexts, hiring of multilingual workers has become more practical as well as economically advantageous for many service industries. Similarly, in my dissertation, I examine how and to what extent multilingualism operates as part of tourism as an economic service industry.

Much work on the commodification of language and communication skills in applied linguistics and sociolinguistics has paid attention to language skills as part of the capitalist and neoliberal market order (Block, Gray & Holborow, 2012; Cameron, 2000a; Heller, 2003). Language as capital presupposes the reimagining of the worker as a bundle of skills where language occupies one key element (Park, 2011; Urciouli, 2008, 2013). Tourism is one key domain where language work is important.

1.3.1.2 Language and tourism

The existing body of work on tourism as an economic service industry – where a large part of its work includes language labor – has recently gained more prominence in sociolinguistics and applied linguistics; (e.g. Heller, 2003; Heller & Duchêne, 2012). In tourism, language is not only employed as a form of communication to represent meanings, but also as a way to construct cultural and linguistic authenticities and identities in different forms of discourses. Tourism is largely characterized by ideologies in which authenticities and stereotypes of people, culture and places are made, circulated and marketed (Caton & Santos, 2009; Coupland, Garrett, & Bishop,
As Boutet (2012), Heller (2010a) and Urciuoli (2008) discuss, workplace employees such as tour guides should be seen as “language workers” since most of their time is spent communicating with tourists. In many cases, tour guides are the only locals that tourists communicate with in face-to-face encounters (Salazar, 2010). Tourism as a service industry, thus, heavily depends on the discursive work performed by tour guides. Tour guides’ communication with tourists works as a powerful tool to transform tourists’ pre-tour fantasies and expectations into exotic experiences. In order to accomplish their job as well as to benefit maximally, tour guides not only learn the content of representation, but also the appropriate language and communication skills to perform those representations. These language workers constantly upgrade their culture and language repertoires in order to provide the best experience to their clients. Through language, tour guides reproduce and circulate dominant tourism representations and imaginaries by reinventing and recontextualizing narratives of destinations (Salazar, 2010). It is in their discourses where we can investigate the politics of representation, ideologies of language and communication, and commodification of languages, cultures and identities. By commodifying ideologies of authenticity and tradition through their multilingual skills, as my preliminary research findings indicate, tour guides prepare themselves for a service industry by learning discourses of representation, linguistically appropriate ways of representing those discourses and appropriate ways of dealing with encounters with international tourists. In addition, multilingual skills work as more effective tools to do the discursive work of representation because they can be used to communicate with a wide range of clients.

Heller and Boutet (2006) and Duchêne (2009) invite us to radically reconsider the role of language in general and the importance of multilingualism in different global economy industries around the world. Since tourism is a prime example of an industry where much work is
discourse-driven, it is important to investigate the ways discursive representations are accomplished and the role of communication and multilingualism in such discursive accomplishments. It is exactly this concern I address in my dissertation. I investigate in what ways discursive practices intersect with the political economy of language and how the global economic market promotes certain forms of communicative practices and language use. My goal is not to investigate the topic of language or communication to better understand the nature of tourism interactions, but rather, to investigate the interplay between representation, language ideology and their associated discursive practices with regard to their meaning in the new economy. I now turn to the discussion of discursive representation in the following section.

1.3.2 Discursive representation of Self and Other

Since the dissertation focuses on how tourism workers represent their destinations and themselves, and what communication skills they learn for such representation, it is useful to draw from scholars that have investigated representation from discursive and sociolinguistic perspectives. More broadly, the discursive representation of “the Other” has been a topic of critical discussion in many areas such as travel writing (e.g., Mills, 1993; Porter, 2014; Pratt, 2007), academic and ethnographic writings (e.g., Fabian, 1990), tourism studies (e.g., Bruner, 1991), feminist studies (e.g., Mohanty, 1984), and sociocultural linguistics (e.g., Bucholtz, 1999; Hill, 1998; Rampton, 1995). Following Hall (1997), representation refers to the process of producing meanings about certain objects or concepts through language and other semiotic modes. This is a constructionist approach to discursive representation. Constructionism recognizes a social character of language which acknowledges that “neither things in themselves nor the individual users of language fix meaning in language” (p. 25); rather it is the users of language who construct meaning, using representational systems—concepts and signs. Drawing
the notions of “othering” by Jacques Lacan and “generalized other” by George Herbert Mead, Coupland (2010) defines representation as follows:

Representations are the totality of semiotic means by which items and categories, individuals and social groups, along with their attributes and values, are identified, thematised, focused, shaped and made intelligible. In this sense, representing a class of items or people is more than ‘merely referring to’ them. It is generalised set of processes by which collectivities, including human identities and attributes, are symbolically forged, confirmed or challenged (p. 242).

Coupland’s definition of representation advances our understanding of representation as a discursive accomplishment: Both Coupland and Hall highlight the social and discursive nature of representation. These perspectives suggest that representations are not fixed and are not necessarily an inherent property of the object being represented; rather they can be multiple, dynamic and at times contradictory, and largely depend on multiple factors such the producers, audience and purpose of such representation. In the process of representing the Other, those who represent usually have more power over the process and form of representation than the object being represented. Most of the studies on representation have emphasized negative or punitive effects of Other representation since most evidence comes from contexts where there is a power difference based on linguistic, political, institutional and economic factors (Coupland, 2010).

1.3.2.1 Discourses of representation from a post-colonial lens

Contemporary work on the representation of the Other draws heavily from Edward Said’s (1978) influential work on Orientalism and Gayatri Spivak’s (1988/2010) work on othering. Said’s work is one of the most detailed examinations of colonial discourse and is generally regarded as one of the principal catalysts for the development of theories of postcolonialism and the creation of
postcolonial studies as an academic discipline. In his work, Said shows how the texts produced during the colonization period by the West constructed a type of colonial discourse, which he labeled as “Orientalism”. He argues that language was the key tool in literature that was used to construct the East as mysterious, uncivilized, and primitive, yet exotic and splendid. By representing the East as backward and stagnant, such discourse portrayed the superiority of the Western world. Such binaries, Said contends, were used to justify the exploration, exploitation and colonization of the East. Researchers who follow this line say that although the formal territorial control of much of the Third World ended with the rise of independent nationhoods in the 20th century, there still is an ideological domination of the East by the West through alternative tools (Caton & Santos, 2009). These researchers argue that modern institutions such as academia, literary writings and tourism serve as key instruments for the West to continue to exert control over the Rest and reproduce the colonial ideologies and power hierarchies between the First World and the Third World, in which the former maintains a privileged, authoritative and central ideological position, marginalizing the latter to the peripheries (Chang & Holt, 1991; Echtner & Prasad, 2003). Similar perspectives are found in writing that analyzes how the Global North continues to prosper off of the labor from and unequal trade with the Global South (Herod, 2009).

Analysis of the discourse of tourism promotional materials, travel guides and travelogs (Beeton, 2005; Law, Bunnell & Ong, 2007) show that representational discourses generally construct and perpetuate colonialist discourse by creating dichotomous distinctions between the tourist Self and the toured Other. They show that the discourse content and the discursive strategies used to present that content essentialize non-Western peoples and cultures, presenting them as being fundamentally different from and inferior to Westerners and Western culture
Discursive constructions of linguistic and cultural differences are a key element of tourist discourses. They are not mere differences but are subject to ideological interpretation and reinterpretation since these differences often create and reproduce uneven distributions of resources and power (Thurlow, 2011). Echtner and Prasad (2003), for example, analyzed Canadian promotional travel brochures on various countries in Asia, Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean, and the Pacific Islands. They show that the pictures and texts perpetuated three popular un-myths about the Third World: the myth of the unchanged, the myth of the unrestrained, and the myth of the uncivilized. Using Coupland’s (2010) term, these brochures construct “pejorative” discourses and suggest that tourist destinations are filled with “homogenous” cultures and people. Similarly, Caton and Santos (2009) carried out a content, semiotic and discourse analysis of 112 images taken from a website and a promotional brochure for Semester at a Sea – an educational tourism program for undergraduate students from several universities in the US. They show that hosts in most cases were represented as traditional and as racially and ethnically distinct with their portrayal of wearing exclusively traditional clothing and always engaged in traditional activities. Caton and Santos argue that this discourse constructs these people as those “who have not yet ‘embraced modernity’ – people who live in places where time stands still” (p. 199). The participants of the educational tour program (the undergraduate students) were represented as the knowing and exploratory subjects while the people they encountered were the objects of the gaze and contemplation, and were thus the objects to be learned about. Caton and Santos contend that the brochure and website images “tended to essentialize and exoticize hosts by depicting their cultures as primitive or backward, stagnant, and dependent on the West for advancement” (p. 201). The local people were silenced,
underrepresented and misrepresented. This leads us to understand power that lies in producing representations.

1.3.2.2 Power in representation

By representing the Other as different from the Self, dominant texts and practices position individuals and groups, especially as way of deprecating or socially excluding them. Coupland notes that the othering process renders an individual or a social group “distant, alien or deviant” (p. 244). It is the construction of an out-group, a process of social exclusion or marginalization. Representations are ideological in nature in that they express social values and priorities, covertly or overtly. Social representations are often crafted and objectified by dominant groups, leading to the naturalization of their perspectives (Blackledge, 2004; Eades, 2012). Representational discourses often index desires, expectations and worldviews of the producers and viewers, but they rarely reflect such desires, expectations and worldviews of those being represented (Galasinki & Jaworski, 2003).

The body of work on discursive representation in sociolinguistics and discourse analysis encompasses data from a range of social domains such as face-to-face interactions (Bucholtz, 1999; Coupland, 2010) and mediated contexts such as newspapers and magazines (García-Marrugo, 2013; van Dijk, 1992), broadcast programs (Hanson-Easey, Augoustinos & Moloney, 2014), websites and social networking sites (Burke & Goodman, 2012) and films (Higgins & Furukawa, 2012). In most of these studies, the Other often becomes the object of representation and its representational power is significantly limited. As an example, Jaworski, Ylänne-McEwen, Thurlow and Lawson (2003) recorded 18 episodes of the BBC’s Holiday and 10 episodes of ITV’s Wish You were Here? programs and analyzed 246 instances of tourist-host
interactions. Content and semiotic analysis showed three major types of host roles: experts or guides, helpers or servants, and “other”. In the first role category, hosts were portrayed as experts of local culture and environment and tourists as curious explorers, and in the second category, existence of hosts in the tourist destinations were presented as if they were there only to serve tourists. In the third category, the authors show that local populations in the tourist destinations were represented as elements of scenic environment – which they refer to as “peoplescape”. They conclude that in these holiday TV programs, local people are underrepresented and objectified, and whenever they are shown, they are there to help, entertain and inform tourists. The hosts are thus largely “silenced” (Coupland, 2010) from interactive discourses with the tourists. Since discursive representations such as the ones reviewed here are mostly accomplished without the involvement of the Other, they say more about the culture and its people that produce them than they say about the subject matter they depict (Caton & Santos, 2009). That is, the othering discourses of representation by no means portray only others; they project the discourse producers as certain kind of people.

1.3.2.3 Agency in representation

Tourism is an image industry constituting different forms of discursive representations by several social actors (Bruner, 1991; Salazar, 2010). As a commodity, it invokes representations of the destination places and peoples for its production, marketization and consumption. There are various modes and ends of representation. On the one end, there are tourists who have various representations of the destination peoples and cultures constructed in their imageries, encounters and narratives before, during and after their travel to “exotic” locations. On the other end, there are “hosts” or in colonial terms, “natives,” who often perform representations of themselves in order to meet tourists’ tastes and expectations. There are mediated discourses which create
representations such as travel guides, blogs, trip advisors and promotional materials produced and circulated by host states and local and international tour companies. In between all these, there are tour guides who both circulate and reinvent representational discourses through their narrative performances (Salazer, 2010). Representational dynamics of the Self and the Other are prominent in all these forms of discursive practices.

Many studies on discursive representation, including Said’s theorization of the Other, are particularly strong in analyzing mediated discourses in order to investigate the perpetuation of othering ideologies in tourism. The power and agency of representation mostly lies in the dominant Self because most forms of discourses such as travel writing, media (e.g. television), tour companies (and their promotional materials) and digital technology are mostly accessible to those who produce these discourses. However, success of tourism as an economic industry also depends on the power of representational discourses constructed and circulated by the objects of the tourist gaze (Bruner, 1991), variously recognized as the “natives”, “locals” “hosts” or “tourees” (Salazar, 2010). A few studies have investigated how host societies represent themselves, their cultures, peoples and identities (Yan & Santos, 2009). However, such discourses of self-representation by the Other have predominantly focused on images promoted by the state and the media (Bandyopadhyay & Morais, 2005; Bruner, 1991). This points out a need to pay attention to the potential agency of the Other to self-represent in various discursive modes. The main reason behind this politics of unequal representation is because those who get represented do not usually have adequate resources to communicate to a larger audience. However, within such representational constraints, it is possible that the Other can be agentive regarding in what way to represent themselves (Aitchison, 2001). One notable example of research on self-representation is Bruner (1994), who presents a case of the Maasai in Kenya.
Bruner shows that the Maasai deliberately work to mask their modernity by hiding their material objects such as socks, digital radios and watches from the scene because, as Bruner argues, they expect that tourists come there to see “the Maasai things”. Although they represent themselves as “pre-modern” and thus lacking modern “civilization” to cater to the imaginations of tourists, they have a high regard for their culture and identity. By performing their identities as “primitive”, locals may appear different and exotic in order to meet touristic imaginations, rather than being subject to racist and essentialist discourses. It should also be noted that discourses produced outside the domain of tourism by the Other may resist the very dominant tourism discourses and ideologies that represent them. Wang and Morais (2014), for example, argue that Mosuos, an ethnic minority in China known for its matriarchal family lineage and social order, show the heterogeneity of the subalterns and the complexity of their self-representation in their autobiographical non-fiction texts and authoethnographic weblogs. By using several discursive strategies, these people construct a positive image of themselves to international audience, and negate the values imposed by the Han Chinese tourists. Mosuos’ representations of themselves are characterized with “freedom, openness, and sincerity, and in contrast the Han appear conservative, cold, and hypocritical” (p. 84). As a further extension of this line of research, my dissertation offers the self-representation of the Other, all the while keeping in mind the possibilities of self-stereotyping and the power of economic market ideologies to commodify Nepal in the eyes of international tourists.

What is also missing from studies such as the above is the political economy perspective of discursive representation, which my dissertation aims to address in depth. The political-economic dimension of representation is perhaps a key factor that distinguishes tourism discourses (which may also include promotional discourses) from other types of representational
discourses (such as discourses about asylum seekers or indigenous minorities). Shankar’s (2012) study of promotional discourses in advertisements in the US provides a useful example of how we can study representational discourses while paying attention to the ideologies of the economic market. She analyzed varieties of advertisements, paying specific attention to how the ad designers construct race and ethnicity in their discourses. She found that Asian American executives try to understand and address regional values, norms and expectations of their Asian American customers by including an Asian language or an Asian variety of English and non-linguistic signs that represent one or more Asian American ethnic groups such as Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese or Indians. These promotional discourses represent Asian Americans not only as model minority producers but as model minority customers in the US. Construction and circulation of representational discourses in this case were largely market-driven.

An important question that needs more attention is: whose interests do these representational discourses primarily serve and to what end? Heller (2010) reminds us that although the national and imperial markets set up in previous centuries still operate, they are now reframed as collaborative rather than hierarchical and are aimed at economic development and competition rather than at servicing the nation or the imperial center. The tourism industry is a case in point. I argue that while neocolonial ideologies continue to be perpetuated in many forms of tourism discourse, the role played by the new economic world order (Gee & Lankshear, 1995) has become more important in constructing, disseminating and circulating specific kinds of discourses in a way that is desired by the market. The construction and circulation of tourism discourses is largely market-driven, motivated by economic interests. Since tourism as a service and hospitality industry heavily relies on language and communication work, its discourses serve the interests not only of tourists but also of “natives” or “host” communities, in which cases
stereotypical representations are constructed, marketed and consumed for the interest of both parties.

A focus on social actors who reproduce and circulate touristic representations for economic gains needs more attention in applied/ sociolinguistics in order to understand the role of human agency in the new economy. Researching how tourism workers activate and deploy their communicative repertoires helps us better understand how tourism is discursively produced, circulated and consumed. A performative approach to tourism helps us address this concern.

1.4 Tourism as performance

The notion of tourism as a performance provides a useful framework to understand tourist-host encounters and activities at destinations for the present study. This conceptualization is gaining an important space in anthropology of tourism, sociology and tourism studies, with a characterization of this supposedly new lens with the term “performance turn” in tourism studies (e.g., Edensor, 2001; Larsen, 2010). Edensor (2001) argues that production of tourism is “a series of staged events and spaces and as an array of performative techniques and dispositions” (p. 60). Tourist stages use representations where “images, signs, phrases and narratives provide the ideas that fuel the commodification and consumption of tourist sites” (Edensor, 1998: 13). Following this argument, tourism, thus, is a staged performance where identities, ideologies and languages are staged and refashioned to meet the need of the tourist markets and tastes. Drawing on Goffman’s social schema of “front stage” and “back stage” performances, MacCannell (1976) notes that what tourists are actually exposed to is “staged authenticity”. They, however, are made to believe they are getting the glimpse “behind the curtain”, although what is behind the curtain is itself a fabricated version of authenticity. Following this metaphor, there is a distinction between the front region and the back region – the front region is purposefully a display designed
for tourists and the back region a preparation space for the front performance, which is not often intended for outside visitors. MacCannel argues that the more tourists seek the authentic, the more local hosts put authenticity on display to satisfy tourists’ quest for it. In this way, those who frame spaces as tourist destinations largely shape tourist gaze (Urry & Larsen, 2011), and as a result travelers do “being tourists” through their various embodied activities (Larsen, 2010), such as photographing, listening and responding to tour commentaries, and so on. People at destinations, such as tour guides and cultural performers, engage in performance as part of their economic and cultural activity. Salazar (2010), who conducted extensive fieldwork in Indonesia and Tanzania, includes tour guiding within a theatrical framework of performance. Thus, tourism is enacted through the agentive actions of both individual guides and tourists (Edensor, 2001). In most cases, tourists are the ones who set the agenda and tour guides and hosts are the ones who must project their destinations and themselves in the way that is expected and imagined by the tourists.

Researchers in sociolinguistics have also acknowledged the usefulness of this performative approach to tourism discourse, which provides a useful framework for my dissertation. Tourist-host encounters are interpreted as occasions of discursive performance where identities, authenticities and representations are enacted for audience (Coupland & Coupland, 2014). Thurlow and Jaworski (2010), for example, use the notion of “performance of contact,” which is “a discursive occasion between hosts and tourists (and elsewhere between tourists and tourists) in which language and other semiotic material are entextualized and recontextualized for touristic purposes” (p. 277). They further show that examples of the performative uses of language are recontextualized tokens of greetings, exaggerated use of place and people names, and heightened and animated deployment of supra-segmental and
paralinguistic features and phrases. Such a conflating use of semiotic resources across “use value” and “exchange value” is emblematic of the performative aspect of discursive enactment in tourism (Heller, Jaworski & Thurlow, 2014). These contact zones, however, are hardly stable communities, but are fleeting encounters where communication and identities are highly unpredictable. Coupland and Coupland (2014) note that tourists are “semi-prepared” in terms of what to expect in guided tours: they may know how long the tour lasts, what location they are going to and what activities they are mostly likely to get involved in, but they hardly know in advance the specifics of the encounters. Scripts, skills and dispositions for performance by guides are developed over time through training and experience and in many cases well rehearsed and strategically deployed as part of their routine encounter with tourists (Kelly-Holmes & Pietikäinen, 2014). Taking account of the tourist-host encounters, Heller, Jaworski and Thurlow (2014) comment:

These are also the most obvious areas of tourism-driven activity, where language (and other semiotic codes) become vehicles for explicit staging (Edensor, 2001) or ‘high performance’ (Coupland, 2007) in which gathered (rather than simply co-present) participants overtly orient to and evaluate the formal, or ‘poetic’, properties of code through metapragmatic labelling, commentary, explanation, and translation. To be clear, such performances are heavily marked by some quite ‘traditional’ claims to ownership, belonging and ‘authenticity’; they are, however, also rooted in pragmatic instrumentalism, playfulness and appropriation. (p. 433)

Tourist-host encounters are rule-governed and host and guides acquire appropriate knowledge and behaviors, which also include verbal behavior of language and communication, to be enacted
in various situations. For them, scripts are important resources in order to style themselves and perform their respective roles (Kelly-Holmes & Pietikäinen, 2014).

For analytical purposes, Goffman’s (1981) notion of participation framework and footing is useful for my study. A participation framework refers to the participation status or the participant positions of all those who happen to be within the perceptual range of a spoken event relative to that event. Central to the notion of participation framework is the concept of footing. Goffman defines footing as “the alignment we take up to ourselves and the others present as expressed in the way we manage the production or reception of an utterance” (p. 128). There can be a diversity of audience roles: addressed recipient, ratified participant, over hearer, and eavesdropper. Similarly, Goffman conceives the speaker role in three forms, which he recognizes as production format: animator, author and principal. An animator is someone whose utterances are actually enacted and heard in an interaction; an author is someone who composes those utterances; and a principal is someone whose ideas are enacted in the interaction. Any change in the alignment one takes is in terms of these positions. A change in participation framework may lead to a frame change (e.g. from ‘performing tour commentary’ to ‘interpersonal talk’) and a code change. Tour guides’ narratives and accounts both construct and operate on different frames and footings for authenticity and representation, which are central to performance for tourists (Coupland & Coupland, 2014).

Goffman’s framework and metaphors, however, are not unproblematic. It is necessary to reinterpret them keeping in mind that participant roles and statuses in interaction are not fixed but are continuously changing and highly unpredictable. In the context of tourism, the distinction between “front” and “back” cannot necessarily be drawn neatly due to their fluid boundaries, and some of what may be regarded as back regions are “false backs” (Cohen, 1988). Unlike in
theatrical performances, tour guides’ scripts are highly flexible and continually changing depending on who they are talking to. Rather than a relatively fixed standardization of their linguistic skills and scripts, tour guides exhibit a higher amount of creativity and dynamicity in fashioning their narratives and commentaries. Considering this aspect, it makes sense to regard tour guiding discourse as a form of “staged spontaneity” (Goffman, 1959; Jaworski, Ylann-McEwen, Thrulow & Lawson, 2003) -- although the master narratives of the destinations may remain little changed, actors have room to inject their own versions of stories and details and still sound “real”.

The “new mobility paradigm” is a useful notion here, which argues for a construction of social life and identities on the move (Sheller & Urry, 2006). This resonates with Goffman in characterizing the performative nature of social actions and construction of spaces as mobile. With this notion, it is not only tourists and travelers who are on the move; local hosts and tourism workers also experience mobility in their encounters, relationships and imaginations which transcend these contact zones into translocal spaces. With these minor adjustments and reinterpretations, the performance metaphor provides a useful framework in understanding the roles and identities that language users take up in accomplishing their actions. In case of creating tourism as a commodity, tourism workers such as tour guides continually engage in the process of using language and other semiotic resources in a way that characterize tourism as a specific form of discourse or register. Next, I turn to the notion of enregisterment to interpret tourism as a specific form of language use.

1.5 Tourism discourse as enregisterment

Agha’s (2007) notion of enregisterment helps me conceptualize the distinct nature of tourism discourse as a form of register. The original use of the term “register” meant a vocationally-
defined lexical set such as a legal register or a business register. It was taken as pre-existing and largely independent of the speaker. Agha (2003) developed it as a constructed assemblage, implicating users, identities as well as a process of developing communicative repertoires. He developed the notion drawing on the work of Roman Jakobson and Charles S. Peirce to explain how “social meanings” and linguistic choices come to be linked and how sets of linguistic choices form varieties. For Agha, registers are living social formations, used by individuals in society to index various social personae, and are susceptible to variation and change (2005). The process of enregisterment is an ongoing process which continuously builds on language use in various contexts. According to Agha, enregisterment is a process “through which a linguistic repertoire becomes differentiable within a language as a socially recognized register of forms” (2003, p. 231). Through enregisterment, people construct identities, establish social relations and (re)produce social world in their everyday practices.

The enregisterment process includes signs beyond words and utterances such as embodied practices, multimodal signs, dress codes and other materials that are an important part of communication (Agha, 2007). This notion is helpful for me in discussing the link between micro-level interactional details and macro-level reproduction of social world in tourism discourses. In a sense, by analyzing the fine-grained details of interaction, this concept allows me to investigate ideologies and practices of identity representations, language, and communication at large. Through enregisterment processes, particular ways of communicating are recognized and assigned value in specific communities of practice (e.g. Wilce, 2008; Urciouli, 2009). Enregisterment is a dynamic process which recognizes individuals’ agency and local understanding of norms relevant to the domain of communication in question. Urciuoli and LaDousa (2013) argue that in many globalized economic industries, people participate in
continual processes of register formation or enregisterment. Language work that many employees are doing today may be enregistered with elements from diverse domains which may be “distinct to and connected with specific work settings and goals and interests” (p. 176). In the context of my study, I conceptualize enregisterment as a process whereby tourism workers such as tour and trekking guides are trained into specific register conventions and communication norms needed for circulating tourism discourses and establishing interpersonal relationships with their clients (tourists) through their communicative practices and other discursive modes. Nepali tourism workers are trained in telling tour narratives, reproducing discourses of representation and developing intercultural communication skills.

Next, I situate my research within the scope of applied linguistics and sociolinguistics. Doing so will highlight the relevance of the topic as worthy of investigation, and also contribute to expand the applied/sociolinguistics scholarship on the discursive representation and commodification of language and culture.

1.6 Tourism as a site of applied linguistics and sociolinguistics research

Tourism is undoubtedly one of the world’s largest economic industries that involves global flows of money, people and semiotic resources. It is a growing field of sociolinguistic and applied linguistic research (Heller, Jaworski & Thurlow; 2014; Jaworski & Pritchard, 2005; Pujolar, 2006; Kelly-Holmes & Pietikäinen, 2013; Thurlow & Jaworski, 2010). While some studies have taken a traditional sociolinguistic approach characterizing tourism discourse as a distinct register (e.g. Chiwanga, 2014; Dann, 1996), recent research has focused on spaces, actors, objects and processes treating tourism as a key domain of language activity. Most research investigating the interface between language and tourism has examined the commodification and circulation of language in the context of globalization and new economy (Heller, 2003; Jaworski & Thurlow,
Heller, Jawarski & Thurlow (2014) argue that a focus on language in tourism provides an important insight in understanding contemporary forms of economic, political, and social change. Building on recent reviews of work in this area by Heller et al. (2014) and Jaworski and Thurlow (2015), I summarize the major works in sociolinguistics of tourism under the following themes:

1. *Constructions of space*: Research on this theme has looked into how places and destinations are constructed and represented (Bruyèl-Olmedo & Juan-Garau, 2015; Jaworski & Thurlow, 2013; Thurlow & Jaworski, 2010; Yan & Lee, 2014). Emplaced multilingual discourses or touristic linguistic landscapes project spaces as distinct and exotic, yet accessible for visitors (Radtke &Yuan, 2011; Thurlow & Jaworski, 2012). Use of local and minority languages in local destinations construct spaces as worthy of consumption and experience, and the use of a dominant or international languages such as English around such locations construct them as translocal and indicate that visitors can have access to information in a language they understand so that they can learn about the history of the place, restaurants and accommodation at destinations, etc. (Bruyèl-Olmedo & Juan-Garau, 2009; Kaleen, 2009; Moriarty, 2014). Use of English may add a new indexical value to the space, reprojecting its identity as “global” (Shuang, 2012). The construction of tourism space is largely shaped by the tourist gaze – the particular way of seeing destinations, which is socially structured and systematized.

2. *Mediated and mediatized representations*: Studies under these themes have examined resemiotization and recontextualization of linguistic resources and identities at destinations in print and broadcast media, guidebooks, travelogs, postcards and other promotional materials (e.g. Jaworski & Piller, 2008; Jaworski, Thurlow, Ylänne-
These studies largely agree that mediated and mediatized materials create a particular “regime of truth” (Foucault, 1991), portraying destinations and peoples as objects of consumption, and thus, worthy of pleasure. These representations also contribute to a construction of space as worthy of visit (Heller, Pujolar & Duchêne, 2014; Thurlow & Jaworski, 2014). Promotional materials shape tourist gaze, encouraging them to see destinations in a particular way. Use of a specific language such as English in tourism promotional materials is largely driven by its economic value in tourism market (Piller, 2007) whereas use of local language may be emblematic of location and authenticity (Kelly-Holmes, Pietikäinen & Moriarty, 2011).

3. **Tourist-host encounters:** Work under this theme has examined the communicative encounters between tourists and local hosts or tourism service providers. Examples of communicative events are guided tours (Coupland & Coupland, 2014; Jack & Phipps, 2005; Jaworski & Thurlow 2010a; Kelly-Holmes & Pietikäinen, 2014) and visits to cultural and heritage sites (Coupland & Coupland, 2014; Pietikäinen, 2013), where local linguistic terms and cultural practices (e.g. greetings) are stylized and put on display for touristic consumption. This line of work also includes cultural performances often in a local, minority language where use of local language is a major component (e.g. Heller & Pujolar 2009). Service encounters with tourists are also occasions when communicative repertoires take multilingual and translingual forms, giving rise to some dynamic linguistic practices (Duchêne, 2009; Piller, 2011).

4. **Objects and artifacts:** Research on this theme has paid attention to linguistic and other semiotic resources that are used to add symbolic value to index localness, authenticity
and tradition, characterizing them as detachable objects in the economic market (Cordeiro, 2011; Coupland & Coupland, 2014; Heller, Pujolar & Duchêne, 2014; Jaworski, 2010; Pietikäinen & Kelly-Holmes, 2011). Cultural objects that did not have an economic exchange value, for example linguistic codes and varieties, have come to be produced and consumed as objects of commodity following changing economic markets. Local and minority languages are souvenirized or simplified in a few recognizable phrases or tokens (Corderio, 2011).

All this work adds to our understanding of language as a central activity of tourism, where linguistic and other semiotic resources are treated as markers of authenticity or heritage, resources for constructing identities of the self and other, and objects of commodification in market. Tourism, as Heller et. al (2014) argue, is a key domain of economic and social activity under globalization, and is a fruitful venue for studying “shifting identities, interpersonal relations, and group structures in contemporary life” (p. 432). Thus, a focus on human agency in creating tourism as an experience of commodity provides insights in understanding the changing nature of the contemporary life.

1.7 Summary
In this chapter, I have introduced the topic and research questions under investigation, discussed the theoretical notions that shape my research, and reviewed major studies that have examined tourism from a discursive perspective in applied/sociolinguistics. I pointed out that researching tourism from the language workers’ perspective provides important insights in understanding the process of contemporary changes in discursive regimes in the global economy where the commodification of language, culture and identity is a central component. I summarize the theoretical concepts that inform my study in Figure 1.1.
As shown in the figure, a discursive lens focused on tourism draws examples from a wide range of domains such as promotional materials, guided tours, guidebooks, travelogues and cultural performances. Organizing these notions from broad to narrow allows me to see how market forces have shaped communicative practices in tourism that are analyzable in smaller details of language and other semiotic practices.

Figure 1.1 Tourism from a discursive approach

The capitalist and neo-liberal markets have brought about changes in discursive regimes in language and communication training and use. Languages and identities are both the products as well as the processes of commodification in tourism market. Discourses of representation, both of the Self and the Other, are valuable cultural resources that are treated as commodities. Tourism discourses mostly cater to the tourist’s needs by highlighting and exaggerating linguistic
and cultural differences. Such differences, produced by both the Self and the Other, largely perpetuate othering discourses and stereotypes for economic gains. Tourism workers such as tour guides are mediating agents between tourists and locals to produce and circulate such representations so that they can provide a glimpse of authenticity to tourists. They perform various roles and identities in order to represent tourist destinations in their interactions with tourists. The economic market, the nature of representational discourses and the performative approach to language use conceptualizes tourism discourse as a distinct domain of language use. The notion of enregisterment looks into more micro-details of register formation through a specialized forms of language training and use, which are evident in individual words, expressions, affect displays, and other multimodal texts. These theoretical notions inform my analysis in Chapter 4, Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 in various ways.

1.8 Organization of the dissertation

In Chapter 1, I situated the study within the area of language and globalization in sociolinguistics and applied linguistics. I reviewed the theoretical notions that help me conceptualize this dissertation research. In Chapter 2, I will review the history of tourism in Nepal to date in order to understand how Nepal and its culture has been constructed and represented to international tourists. In my description, I will review the discourses of continuity and change in circulating the imageries of Nepal as a mystic land in the Himalayas from the 1950s. In the subsequent chapter, I will provide details of the methodology, the research context and the data, along with my comments on data representation and researcher positionality during fieldwork.

Chapters 4-6 comprise the analysis part of this dissertation. In Chapter 4, I discuss the rapport management and communication training for Nepali tour guides. I then move on to analyze three rapport management strategies: expression of affect, awareness of ethno-national
stereotypes, and communication styles. In Chapter 5, I examine the role of the English language in maintaining social rapport with tourists and in commodifying Nepali cultures and ethnicities, paying attention to the language ideologies conceptualized by Nepali tourism workers. Similarly, in Chapter 6, I analyze enregisterment of authenticity in tour narratives and interactions between Western English-speaking tourists and local guides and hosts in the context of guided tours and treks in the Himalayas. I show that the ongoing production and consumption of touristic representations reflects the very quest for authenticity by tourists. Moreover, I argue that tour guiding commentaries and representations construct authenticity in terms of cultural uniqueness which is demanded by the tourism market and the local conditions of the host community and its members. And, these discourses are equally motivated by a desire of self-representation by members of the marginalized ethnic communities, which has to do with their broader goal of identity recognition and ethnic existence within the ongoing, fragile political condition of Nepal. Finally, in Chapter 7, I discuss the summary of the major findings, the implications of this research and possible future direction in this area of inquiry in the field of second language studies.
CHAPTER 2
TOURISM IN NEPAL

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I present a brief history of tourism in Nepal. When Nepal was united through the Gorkha conquests in 1769, it was restricted from outsiders for protectionist reasons. This significantly affected tourism until the mid-twentieth century. Its foreign policy and its impact on the way Nepal saw foreigners in general established legacies that can be seen in the present day. I review Nepal’s tourism history from the 1950s in more detail since this period marks a beginning of a more organized form of Nepali tourism. Then I move on to the era of Western “hippies” (Odzer, 1995) in the 60s and 70s, to the present day tourism in Nepal, focusing on representations and fantasies through which Nepal has been viewed by outsiders to date. I document the increasing number of international tourists to Nepal after the termination of the Maoist insurgency in 2005, paying special attention to the increasing flow of Chinese tourists in recent years. This recent stream of tourists is important since my dissertation fieldwork took place during this time period. One key characteristic of post-insurgency Nepal is that ethnolinguistic identities have been more visible in the country’s political and tourism spheres in recent years.

Toward the end of the chapter, I show that although the representations of Nepal have largely been constructed and circulated by the foreigners in their travelogs, popular media and anthropological writings, Nepali tourism actors such as the Nepal Tourism Board (NTB) have also been working on in producing tourism promotional discourses by publishing postcards, leaflets, posters and CDs, and circulating them in tourist centers and cultural events, home and abroad. I argue that NTB’s promotional discourses largely draw on and reproduce dominant
representations of Nepal as viewed and constructed by the outsiders. Finally, I conclude the chapter by discussing the role of tour guides in circulating these master narratives. Such a historical review as well as a documentation of noticeable changes in Nepal’s tourism industry is important for my study because it provides a foundation in studying what kind of market-driven tourism representations are discursively reproduced and circulated by tour guides in Nepal.

2.2 Modern Nepal and its tourism in its early days

The modern history of Nepal begins from the time in 1769 when King Prithvi Narayan Shah (reigned 1743-75) conquered the Kathmandu valley and annexed it to his expanding Gorkha Kingdom. Before this annexation, there were several petty kingdoms or principalities where the rulers had no unity among themselves. They often fought with each other for territorial integrity and severity of their principalities. In the Kathmandu valley itself, there were three kingdoms: Kathmandu, Bhaktapur and Patan. There were 24 principalities in the western region and 22 principalities in the far western region (Chand, 2000; Whelpton, 2005). After unification, Prithvi Narayan Shah during his reign followed a conservative foreign policy which was later recorded in his Dibya Upadesh (Divine Counsel). Dibya Upadesh is the collection of the King’s instructions to the people of greater Nepal. The basic tenet of his policies as recorded in the Dibya Upadesh was to keep the country politically and economically sovereign and independent from two giant economic powers: Qing dynasty China in the north and the British East India Company in the south (Liechty, 2010b). Shah was particularly cautious of the people entering Nepal form the south. In his Dibya Upadesh (and here I quote from Stiller’s English translation), he argued that “we should not let the merchants of India come to our country; they will take away the secrets of the country and deceive the people poor” (Stiller, 1968: 46). In order to protect the nation from any forms of foreign influence, he restricted access for foreign traders,
discouraging traders of Indian origin from entering the country (Chand, 2000). Although this restrictive policy kept Nepal secured from the threat of sovereignty from the neighboring countries, it simultaneously isolated the country to a large extent from foreigners’ reach. Even though there was significant leeway given to traders from Tibet, the protectionist policies on the Indian side of the border also caused that to wane (Regmi, 1971). Chand (2000) notes that this policy lacked “outward-looking vision which would have proven to be fertile ground for the growth of tourism even during these days” (p. xxiii).

Figure 2.1 Nepal on the world map

(adopted from http://www.freeworldmaps.net/asia/nepal/location.html)

Prithvi Narayan Shah’s dictum on foreign policy continued to play a guiding role during the rules of successive Shah Kings and the Rana regime (1846-1951). The Rana rulers also considered the presence of foreigners in Nepal as a threat to the country’s sovereignty. In addition, the Ranas also feared that allowing Nepali people to come into contact with foreigners
could eventually lead to the downfall of their own rule since they thought that Nepalis could be influenced by foreign ideologies, particularly from India, such as political independence, democratic practices and mass education (Liechty, 2010b). As a result, foreign nationals except the diplomats were forbidden from entering the country. While the Ranas cultivated intimate political ties with the British Raj in India, they maintained Nepal as the only country in South Asia where Europeans were not allowed to enter for trade. Citing Upadhya (1992), Liechty (1997) further notes that keeping out foreigners was not only a matter of Nepali state policy. The British also sought to limit Nepal’s international reach and actively "discouraged Europeans from visiting Nepal," especially non-British Europeans (Upadhyaya 1992:128). Quite ironically, however, although the Ranas protected Nepal from Europeans’ access, they lived an opulent lifestyle with conspicuous consumption of European goods, and built palaces in neoclassical styles. People from neighboring India were allowed to enter with a permit only on certain occasions and for a limited period of time. The only occasion they were allowed to enter Kathmandu without a permit was during the Shiva Ratri Mela—a religious occasion devoted to the Hindu God, Shiva. However, they were not permitted to stay in Kathmandu for more than seven days (Chand, 2000). Thus, the number of foreigners who visited Nepal was very small until the first quarter of the twentieth century. In the 44-year period between 1881 and 1925, a total of 55 Europeans had gained access to Nepal, primarily as invited guests of the state (Rankin, 2004). Of these visitors, the largest group was probably comprised of high-ranking British officials and their parties on state visits. Other categories of Europeans who were often employed by the Nepali elites, mostly the Ranas, were physicians, military technicians and school teachers (Liechty, 2010b). Thus, since Nepal was isolated from the rest of the world for a period of a long time, it developed a certain kind of “mystique” in the minds of people who
wanted to come to Nepal (Satyal, 1988).

2.3 The beginning of organized tourism in the 1950s

It was only in the 1950s when tourism as a more organized endeavor started. There were a number of factors that made Nepal more widely known to outsiders during that period. Some major incidents included the uprooting of the Rana regime and the advent of democracy in 1951, acceptance of Nepal’s membership into the UN in the same year, the first ascent by a local Sherpa and a New Zealander to Mount Everest in 1953, and the coronation of King Mahendra in 1956. When the 1953 British expedition succeeded in putting Tenzing Norgay Sherpa and Edmund Hillary on Everest’s summit, this event gained popularity among people and media around the world—which made Nepal more publicly known to the people in many foreign countries (Chand, 2000; Satyal, 1988). In King Mahendra’s coronation in 1956, there were about 400 foreigners, including tourists, expatriates and diplomats. This series of events eventually led to the replacement of the country’s self-imposed isolationist policy by a more open door policy in the political arena and a rapid increase in diplomatic relations with more countries. Chand (2000) argues that these incidents greatly contributed to pushing Nepal into an international focus which is now considered to have been highly instrumental in heralding the development of tourism in Nepal.

In the discourses of the development of tourism in Nepal, the role played by a Russian expatriate Boris Lissanevitch is noteworthy. Lissanevitch first came as a tourist through King Tribhuvan’s special invitation to him since they knew each other when they first met in Calcutta. Lissanevitch later got a job in Nepal where he managed tourism and served a consultant to the government. In the early 1950s, he started the Royal Hotel in Kathmandu in order to attract and cater to the needs of international tourists, who were exclusively from the West. The hotel
offered services and entertainment to various kinds of people including mountaineers, diplomats, expatriates, researchers, spies, missionaries, aid workers, and all kinds of tourists. Liechty (2010b) notes that “though light-years away from the lives of ordinary Nepalis in the city, the Royal Hotel was the heart of Kathmandu’s foreign community” (p. 254). Many people in the tourism industry today consider Lissanevitch as the father of Nepali tourism and an undisputed pioneer in bringing tourists to Nepal. In order to honor Lissanevitch, The Hotel Association of Nepal annually awards its “Boris Lissanevitch Excellency Award” for those who make outstanding contributions to hotel industry in Nepal (Liechty, 2010b). Lissanevitch is credited for popularizing the idea that tourism could be a key source of economy for those who could invest in it. When it was recognized that tourism would bring money to those who were involved in the trade, the Royal family took initiatives to expand luxury tourism trade in Kathmandu by opening luxury hotels under their ownership.

Officially recognized tourist arrival records shows that in late February 1955, the Thomas Cook travel agency arranged a travel for 24 wealthy tourists to come to Nepal from India. The Royal Hotel hosted the accommodation of the travelers. Satyal (1988) quotes Lissanevitch’s speech:

In February 1955, when I ran the Royal Hotel, the first tourists ever visited Kathmandu. There were about 20 of them, mostly elderly ladies and all very rich. They fell madly in love with Kathmandu and brought all the local arts and crafts I had on display in the hotel (p. 78-80).

This event received press coverage in newspapers in the US such as the New York Times, Christian Science Monitor, Travel, Life and Newsweek. Liechty (2010b) notes that a four-page photo printed in Life was able to capture the US public’s imagination, turning Kathmandu from a
“forbidden Land” or “Shangri-La” to a tourist destination. The main source of attraction of Kathmandu as a tourist destination was its image in the West as being isolated and mysterious. 

*The New York Times,* for example, noted:

> In the last couple of years, Kathmandu and the world have been taking a look at each other and now there are hundreds of tourists who are able to say they have been to a place that other tourists usually do not get to (1956).

After seeing the increasing flow of mountaineers and wealthy tourists in Kathmandu, and its alluring economic benefits, Lissanevitch requested King Mahendra to grant visas to foreign tourists. However, the King is reported as saying the following to Lissanevitch (in Lissanevitch’s words):

> The king said he could understand a tourist wanting to visit someplace interesting, like, say the marketplace in Calcutta, but he could not see why they’d want to come to a place with nothing but mountains and forests (NYT, 1976).

Eventually, Lissanevitch is credited for having convinced the then King Mahendra to issue a decree to start granting tourist visas for the international visitors. When there were more visitors coming to Kathmandu after the visa was made easier, their first impression started appearing in their travel narratives and journals. Both western media discourses and travel narratives by foreigners played an instrumental role to create some kind of representational image of Nepal for those who had not yet been to Nepal. Liechty (2010b) mentions that “people brought with them lifetimes of media-derived memories filled with images and ideas about the Himalayas that profoundly shaped both what they hoped to find in Kathmandu and the language they had to describe it” (p. 267-68). The development of these tourism imaginaries related to a larger set of
developments in the world with regard to how Westerners created for themselves an understanding of their place in the world, a view that Said (1978) recognizes as orientalism.

Also notable in the early days were some initiatives both by the state and the private sector that created a more favorable environment for tourism to flourish. For example, the government of Nepal established the Tourist Development Board in 1957. It recognized tourism as a major viable source of national economy and foreign currency. Similarly, the first travel agency SHAH & RAI was established in 1959. Nepal secured membership of International Union of Official Travel Organization (IUOTO) and Pacific Area Travel Association (PATA) in 1959 and participated in their major activities. This also helped Nepal’s tourism move ahead. Then a number of other travel agencies opened such as Everest Travel Service and Yeti Travels, both in 1965. In 1958, Nepal received 2,056 tourists. In 1962, the figure reached 6,000 and 12,000 by 1966. In 1969, there were about 45,000 tourists (Satyal, 1988).

Thus, the number of foreigners visiting Nepal during the 1950s was not large. However, these few visitors played an important role in popularizing Nepal’s cultural and natural attractions and fantasies to outside world. Soon, many foreigners visited Nepal to experience the world’s tallest mountain peaks, arts and architecture preserved in ancient towns in Kathmandu valley, and the people that they had not encountered before (Satyal, 1988). Bhattarai, Conway and Shrestha (2004) maintain that many of the visitors perceived Nepal as a country far removed from Western modernity, and its pristine life devoid of modern day amenities made them nostalgic for the medieval times. When these tourists went back to their respective countries, they carried with them “exotic” travel stories of a hidden place nestled in the Himalayas. These narratives and tales acted as discourses of imaginaries through which Nepal was, and still is, viewed by outsiders.
2.4 Era of Peace Corps Volunteers and hippies

Starting in the 1960s, Nepal started witnessing an increasing flow of Western hippies. Similarly, in 1962, there were the first group of American Peace Corps volunteers. Their travel experiences increasingly popularized Nepal in Western imagination and fantasies (Shrestha, 1998). Nepal was a final destination of the Hippie Trail, a set of travel destinations originating from cities in Western Europe such as London, Amsterdam or Athens. Travelers from the US would take *Icelandic Airlines* to Luxemburg and come to Istanbul, Turkey. Thus, nationalities of many Western countries joined the trip. The Hippie Trail would start from Istanbul. Some major places that the travelers would go through were Tehran (Iran), Kandahar (Afghanistan), Kabul (Afghanistan), Peshawar (Pakistan), Chitral (Pakistan), Lahore (Pakistan) and Goa (India), Kathmandu often being the end of the trail. These were convenient places for them to stop for meals, cannabis and accommodation at hotels, cafes and shops, and also venues to network with other people walking through the trail. Liechty (2010b) writes “Kathmandu was often the destination with other places just stops along the way” (p. 275).
Hippies had many reasons for their trip, for example, spiritual enlightenment, freedom from a modern lifestyle, and an opportunity to see the world different from theirs. Kathmandu was a much desired tourist destination for these long-hair Western youth for two major reasons: since there was no trail beyond Nepal, they could feel that they had reached the end of the world, and second, hashish and marijuana were legally available for these pot-smoking travelers (Liechty, 2010b). In Kathmandu, they could enjoy the ultimate freedom of their life. One traveler from the hippie era, for example, remembers Kathmandu from his days in his travel diary:

an almost legendary city of temples nestling high in the Himalayas. True, it shared with Goa the honour of being the coolest place to hang out; but it was rumoured that Kathmandu was special, a place where time had stood still…. capital retained a village-like charm, with paddy-fields coming right up to the
walls of temples and old Rana palaces. There were few roads, only about 300 cars, and the air was so clear that whenever the clouds lifted you could see the Himalayan snow peaks…another advantage was that there were virtually no “straight” tourists. Organised trekking was still in its infancy (Durand, 2012)

Hippies represented themselves as different kinds of tourists. They did not call themselves "hippies". Rather they wanted to be known as "freaks" (Odzer, 1995). In Kathmandu, a local street in the heart of the city, traditionally known as the Jochhen Tole, was named as the "Freak Street" after them. For the residents of Kathmandu, hippie was a word “used to distinguish the new breed of young, countercultural, budget tourists from the earlier tourists who had tended to be older, wealthier, more formal, and more aloof” (Liechty, 2012:4). They were tourists, albeit of a different sort, and hedonism was their primary goal (Gregory, 2013). Unlike the traditional tourists, hippies tended to spend more time mixing and interacting with the local people than traditional sightseeing tourists. Hippies walked door-to-door of the locals in Kathmandu, trying to find places to stay. They slept in temple courtyards and other public places. Their presence was notably visible. They had little interest in luxury accommodation in places such as the Royal Hotel, even if a few of them could afford it (Liechty, 2012). Most of them preferred cheap lodges where they would stay for months (Chand, 2000). Some hippies would "go native" after a fashion (Gregory, 2013). To the locals, they seemed to be some version of the familiar South Asian religious ascetics who spent their lives in pursuit of peace, happiness and spiritual attainment (Liechty, 2012). These imageries, still today, have constructed Nepal as a land of spiritual mecca for many foreigners.

Some Peace Corps Volunteers also became part of the hippie movement or adopted the lifestyle of the locals in Kathmandu. Shrestha (1997) observes that many volunteers who were
sent to promote “development” were themselves looking for a relief from such a material
development and embracing what was regarded as a “backward” and poverty-stricken life in
Nepal. These volunteers lived and socialized with local people and rarely had motives similar to
those of the missionaries (Shrestha, 1997).

Although the hippies did not spend money to the extent that they developed the local
economy, their presence itself was instrumental to the emergence of the local tourist ghetto – the
Freak Street (in Kathmandu). The Freak Street initially was a center for pot-smoking for the low-
budget hippies. Later, it became a business center of local traders, targeting foreign tourists.
There were guest houses, trekking agencies, shopping centers, souvenir shops and restaurants by
the local entrepreneurs aiming for the visitors. Local art and craft products found a local market,
and local vendors earned foreign currency by selling those products.
Thus, tourism in the 1970s attracted a small number of largely low-budget hippies in search of drugs and spiritual enlightenment and a few Peace Corp Volunteers. It is also notable that although hippies never accounted for more than a quarter of the city’s international tourists, they became so popular that, ironically, hippies themselves had become an object of the world’s attention (Liechty, 2012). Hippies and Peace Corps Volunteers were able to construct and circulate mystic fantasies of Nepal to the people in their respective countries upon their return. These tales had coverage in Western media and travel diaries and inspired others who wanted to
follow their footsteps. Liechty (2010a) writes “in American and European pop songs, magazine spreads, and films, Kathmandu acquired a reputation for being as “far out” as it was “far away” (p. 275). A generation of young and mobile people, mostly from the middle class families, thus grew to view Kathmandu as the ultimate destination to travel to. The era in the 60s and 70s, thus, added a new dimension to develop Nepal as a travel destination in the imaginaries of the Western tourists (Bhattarai, Conway & Shrestha, 2004).

2.5 Tourism during and after the 1970s

Once Nepal was represented in the international media as one top choice for mountaineers, Nepal’s mountains and other “off the beaten tracks” gained popular imaginaries for many people in the West. As a result, there was a noticeable leap in adventure tourism. For many mountain climbers, researchers, and tourists, Nepal soon emerged as a popular destination for mountaineering, trekking, rafting, and wildlife observation (Chand, 2000; Shrestha, 1997) and this had an impact on how tour operators marketed their offerings. The Himalayas in Nepal attracted many adventurous mountaineers from many parts of the world. Since Mount Everest together with some ten snow peaks of over 8000 meters are in Nepal, mountaineering and trekking to tourism particularly grew in late 70s and 80s. Mountaineers comprised an average 2.3% of all international tourists in 1972, but in 1987 the number increased to 13.48 % (Satyal, 1988). For the mountaineers, the Himalayas were majestic, mysterious and attractive for many tourists from Europe, America and Japan. Similarly, there were only 13891 trekkers among the international tourists in 1976 but there were 47275 in the year of 1987 (Satyal, 1988). The number of mountaineers and trekkers continued to grow in the later years as more expeditions started taking place.
Nepal celebrated South Asia Tourism Year in 1975. There were a few travel agencies although most of them were branch offices controlled by Indian travel agencies. These Indian travel agencies were also partners to the big European and American travel companies. Most travelers came in a package deal. The number of tourists reached about 105,000 a year in 1976 and tourism became the country’s largest source of foreign exchange. The hotels were crowded with groups from West Germany, Japan, France and the United States (Satyal, 1988).

After hashish transactions were made illegal in 1973, the hippies started leaving Kathmandu. As a result, the popularity of the Freak Street saw a decline although it still continued to serve the tourist population by offering relatively cheap accommodation in lodges and by selling local arts and craft products in stores. At the same time, Kathmandu Guest House in Thamel— which was in about 30 minutes’ walking distance from the Freak Street – started attracting Peace Corp Volunteers and adventure tourists. Within a span of a few years, Thamel established itself as a new tourist hub by making restaurants and souvenir shops easily accessible to the tourists. Lodges offered facilities that sufficiently allowed the tourists to “feel at home” by using clean sheets, private baths, and hot water (Liechty, 2010a) while simultaneously experiencing “otherness”. By the 1980s, Thamel became the budget-shoppers’ paradise: handmade carpets, paper goods, masks, jewelry, statuary, thankas (painting on a fabric depicting Buddha’s life), clogs and ethnic exotica of all kinds. Liechty comments “whereas hippies often spent months in Kathmandu and left with little more than the clothes on their backs, “adventure tourists” spent a few weeks and left with bulging bags of bargains” (2010a: 287).

The government brought significant changes in tourism industry by creating tourist centers, regulating hotel and catering industries, and issuance of licenses for hoteliers and tour guides. Nepal, particularly the Kathmandu valley and life in mountain areas, offered
“authenticity” of pre-modern life due to its very isolation from the rest of the world and its geographic remoteness (Satyal, 1988). In the 1980s, in addition to the arts and architecture of temples and palaces in the valley of Kathmandu, other areas also gained popularity. Tourist attractions included not only the traditional stupas (Buddhist meditation places), temples, palaces and natural landscapes, but also people’s lives. The promotion of international tourism in different parts of the country helped develop their regional economy through employment and small scale trades such as tea houses, lodges and restaurants. Imaginaries of Nepal as a popular land of adventure and the destination for adventure tourists further circulated globally in television travelogues, coffee-table books, travel narratives of Himalayan expeditions, including even comic books (Liechty, 2010b).

2.6 Tourism in the 90s and during the Maoist insurgency (1996-2005)

The number of international visitors continued to increase, reaching 300,000 in 1990 and 464,000 in 2000 (Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation, hence, MTCA, 2003). Bhattarai, Conway and Shrestha (2004) note that this was largely due to two global trends: the increasing ease of international transportation and communication and the rise of leisure activities in affluent post-industrial societies of the West (p. 672). Most of the visitors were from Western countries, Japan and India. During the 90s, tourism was the third largest export industry in terms of foreign exchange earnings. After the largely state-controlled financially policy led to an economic crisis in the 1980s, Nepal implemented more liberal economic policies and encouraged private sectors more than before. The change in political regime in 1990 largely minimized the state role in regulating the economic markets (Shakya, 2010). Tourism benefitted from Nepal’s open neoliberal policies which were the results of economic globalization and privatization taking place in many parts of the world. Tourism and export industries such as the carpet
industries were interdependent on one another. Rankin (2004) notes that the growing number of tourists as well as the booming of carpet industries turned Kathmandu into one of South Asia’s busiest air transportation hubs.

The Nepal Communist Party (Maoist) declared war against the state in 1996. More than 13,000 people died in the insurgency that ended in 2006. As a result, Nepal witnessed a decrease in the number of tourist arrivals during the peak years of the insurgency from around the year of 2000 until 2006. The time of local insurgency coincided with the terrorist attack of 9/11 in the US in 2001, which especially impacted the flow of tourists from the West (Hepburn, 2010). Many countries were concerned about the safety of their citizens and issued travel alerts concerning travelling to Nepal. The number of tourists dropped from 464,000 in 2000 to less than 276,000 in 2002. By the end of 2001 Indian visitors had decreased by 24%, American by 60%, British by 45%, and Japanese by 63% (MTCA, 2003). Bhattarai, Conway and Shrestha (2004) maintain that of the tourist population travelling to Nepal, trekkers were the ones who suffered most from the insurgency. They note two primary reasons behind that. First, trekkers generally travelled along isolated trails, mostly in small groups, and were easy targets of the insurgents. Although there were no reported cases of Maoists physically harming tourists, the insurgents asked for money for their party. Also, tourists constantly harbored fear of potential harm from them at any time. Hepburn (2010) also confirms that insurgents had replaced the government authority in many trekking trails and destinations in rural areas. Second, the state security mechanisms were weaker or non-existent in the rural areas where most trekking trails were located. Mountaineers and cultural tourists, however, were the least affected ones. Mountaineers had their own group accompanied by porters and guides and traveled to destinations where insurgents had relatively little access, and cultural tourists would often remain within the Kathmandu valley or other urban
cities such as Pokhara where state security was relatively strong. The flow of pilgrims from neighboring countries such as India and Sri Lanka was not interrupted much. In other words, the demand for pilgrimages was impacted to a much lesser degree than its counterparts such as trekking (Bhattarai, Conway & Shrestha, 2004). The overall number of international tourists shows that the tourist population declined by 42% during 2001–2003 (MTCA, 2003). Thus, the Maoist insurgency greatly worsened the situation of Nepal’s tourism industry.

2.7 Nepal’s tourism after the insurgency and at present

After the ceasefire in May 2006, the Maoists entered parliamentary politics, and the atmosphere of violence and fear subsided. However, Nepal remained unstable due to conflict among the political parties. This conflict made governance largely ineffective and did not provide a favorable environment for the growth of the Nepali tourism. It took until 2010 to witness a satisfactory increase in the number of international tourists, which was 602,855.

![Figure 2.4 International tourist arrivals to Nepal from 1960 to 2014](image)
As the Figure 2.4 shows, Nepal now welcomes about 800,000 international visitors each year (Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation, hence, MoCTCA, 2015). The numbers are even higher, but it is hard to be precise since a large number of Indian visitors who come by land do not require a visa to enter Nepal, and as a result there are no accurate statistics documenting this population. The average length of stay per visitor is 12.44 days (MoCTCA, 2015). There are distinct tourist seasons in Nepal. February to April and September to November are two peak times of the year when Nepal welcomes most international tourists. During these months, the weather in Nepal is favorably warm and both cultural tourists and mountaineers find it comfortable to make their trips to Nepal. Sharma (2010) notes that roughly 60% of the total arrivals take place in these two seasons. It is also notable that the seasonality for Indian tourists is different. Nearly half of all Indian tourists arrive in the months between April and July. In this sense, there is a certain complementarity between Indian tourists and other tourists: Indian tourists come in what is otherwise an off-season for other tourists (Sharma, 2010).

As in the 1970s, many people still consider Nepal as a paradise for trekkers and mountaineers. The portion of mountaineers and trekkers was 13% of the total tourist population Nepal received in 2012. There are three particularly well-known and most visited trekking destinations—the Everest, Annapurna and Langtang, trails—all north bound, leading to the bases of some of the prominent peaks, namely Everest in the east, Annapurna in the central corridor, and Langtang mountain, directly to the north of Kathmandu (Sharma, 2010). There are other popular hiking trails that take tourists to such distant places as Dolpo, Kanchanjunga, and upper Mustang so that they can experience different cultural traditions and isolated landscapes. The duration of trekking varies widely, spanning from one day to three months, with the average being about 10 days long (Sharma, 2010).
Heritage and cultural tourists comprise about 47% of the total tourist population. Organized tours are still confined mostly to Kathmandu valley and a few other places such as Pokhara, Chitwan and Lumbini. Bhattarai, Conway and Shrestha (2004) point out that “this is partly because, for such casual, leisure, or cultural tourists, Nepal is often an appendage to their larger trips to India or Southeast Asia, usually lasting two to three days, a time frame hardly enough to go outside the Valley” (p. 673). In terms of importance, Kathmandu is the major tourist hub, the only location with an international air link, and receives almost all tourists to Nepal. Pokhara, the second major destination receives about 40 percent of all tourist arrivals. Chitwan, Nepal's major wild life sanctuary and Lumbini – the birth place of the Buddha – receive about 16 percent each of total tourist arrivals (Sharma, 2010). Nepal’s tourism is partly dependent on the Indian tourism market because it is the Indian travel agencies that arrange tours.
for almost two-thirds of international tourist arrivals (including Indians) to Nepal via India. As a result, a large amount of money from these organized tours goes to the Indian travel agencies, rather than to Nepalese-owned businesses (Bhattarai, Conway & Shrestha, 2004).

In addition to mountaineering, trekking and sightseeing, there are other tourism attractions in Nepal. Adventure tourism such as paragliding, bungee jumping, rafting and jungle safaris have been attracting international visitors although this comprises only a smaller segment of the tourism market in terms of the number of tourist population. There are also new possibilities of tourism emerging in recent years in different regions of the country outside Kathmandu. For example, Lumbini Development Master Plan aims to revive Buddha’s birthplace Lumbini by recreating a Lumbini village, a cultural center and a sacred garden. This will be instrumental to increase the number of both heritage tourists and pilgrims in the region. The Great Himalayan Trail – which is claimed to be the longest and highest trekking trail in the world (about 1700 km long, 6146m altitude and takes about 150 days in average) -- is also an ongoing initiative to promote wilderness and adventure trekking along the Himalayas. The relatively unexplored mid and the far western mountains and tourism based on niche products and the variety of rural experiences such as home stay programs in different regions of Nepal offer other opportunities for the development of regional tourism (Sharma, 2010). Sharma (2010) adds that new initiatives are geared toward establishing and propagating a "brand" image of Nepal beyond "low cost" tourism destination in order to achieve two million tourist arrivals annually by 2030.

As the number of tourists coming to Nepal continues to grow, more people reap benefits from this industry. The tourism industry is an important contributor to Nepal’s national economy. The total contribution of travel and tourism industry in 2012 was 9.4 % of the national
GDP. This industry directly supported 553,500 jobs (3.6% of total employment) (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2012). However, it is possible that these official statistics may not account for all the contribution that tourism makes to individual employees. The direct employment provided by the sector includes employment by hotels, travel agents and airlines and other passenger transportation services. It also includes the activities of restaurants and leisure industries directly supported by tourists. Trekkers in the hilly regions also contribute to the local economy by spending their money in tea houses and other resting points along the major trekking trails (Sharma, 2010). Tourism in Nepal has mostly been a domain of the private sector. It was basically through private sector initiatives that mountaineering, trekking, and sightseeing around the Kathmandu valley started in the 1950s and 1960s and this continues to be so even today (Sharma, 2010).

As the tourism industry continues to grow, Kathmandu has become a “translocal space” (Appadurai, 1996; Liechty, 2010a). Recent waves of mass tourism, consisting of travelers not only from the West but also from India and other Asian countries such as Japan, South Korea and China, have changed the landscape of the local spaces, particularly of tourist hubs such as Thamel. For almost all international tourists, Kathmandu may not be the primary destination of their visit but it continues to be the starting point of most adventures. Restaurants, entertainment houses and massage centers compete to meet the expectations and tastes of tourists from various ethno-national backgrounds. Nepal continues to be a land of oriental spirituality, exoticism and ascetic simplicity for many Euro-American and East-Asian visitors. Many Indians who are less in search of a cultural Other find Kathmandu to be an off-shore economic island with no import restrictions, legalized gambling and a pilgrimage site to visit (Liechty, 2010b).
Nepal’s natural and cultural attractions have been frequently featured in global media that circulate travel imageries. For example, recently it was ranked as number one among Top 10 Hiking Trails in the World and number two among “Top 10 places where nature meets civilization” by Places to See in Your Lifetime website, included in the list of “52 places to go in 2014” by the New York Times, “World’s best hikes: 20 dream trails” by National Geographic, and “The world’s best multi-day treks…without high altitudes” by the Lonely Planet and “20 places to see before you die” by msn lifestyle photos. These imaginaries and discourses have gone global with the help of online information technologies and constructed a certain image through which people around the world potentially view Nepal.

In addition to the images and discourses of Nepal’s natural beauty reflected in rugged mountains and lustrous nature, people living in the areas near the Himalayas have also been an interest of observation by Western tourists. As a result, anthropologists, particularly from the West, have also long been interested in the interface between ethnicity and tourism, paying attention to both the market motivations and everyday ritual practices of the ethnic Sherpas in the Nepal Himalayas. I will review this body of research in the following section because it provides important insights on the changing dynamics of ethnic identities in the tourism market. In addition, this review is important because ethnic identities (of Sherpas and others) are an important aspect of my ethnographic research.

2.8 Ethnicity in Nepali tourism: The Sherpas and others

When mountaineering expeditions became increasingly popular in the 50s and 60s, Westerners in particular came into contact with the Sherpa ethnic community (hence the Sherpas) who primarily assisted mountaineers in their capacity of porters or guides. Since then, they have been an object of tourist gaze and are stereotypically characterized with such personal qualities as
loyalty, cheerfulness, bravery and stoicism even in the face of appalling mountaineering hardships – qualities deemed increasingly hard to find in Western societies (Fisher, 2004; Lim, 2004; Ortner, 1999). Lim (2004) notes that the Sherpa are thought to have embraced these images of them and constructed an identity mirroring the desires of Westerners. Adams (1996) uses the term “mimesis” to refer to the way identities of the Sherpa are constructed. In this process, the Sherpa see themselves through the eyes of the Westerns and the images the latter have constructed of them. For them, their identities “become like that which the Other desires to see them as, in a set of perceived cultural differences and similarities that make the Sherpa larger than life, more real than reality itself” (p. 16). This process of identity construction not only compels the Sherpa to mirror the desires of the Westerners, but also to seek out their own cultural practices that would mark them out as “different” (Adams, 1996). Fisher also (2004) argues that the Sherpa “have a public, onstage side that they want the rest of the world to see, and a private, backstage side that is more unadornedly true to themselves” (pp. 373–74) that they are not willing to put on show. Most Sherpas construct images of Westerners as wealthy and generous. This mirroring of desires between the Sherpa and the Westerners has resulted in the formation of a particular dominant form of relationship: that of the patron and client (Adams, 1996). As a result, many Sherpas view Western tourists as potential financial sponsors who could contribute to improving their financial hardship (Ortner, 1999).

Adams’s (1996) analogy of mimesis provides a useful insight not only on how the Sherpas view Westerners but on how most tourism workers see foreign tourists in general. I also had similar observations during my dissertation fieldwork when I noticed that trekking guides and porters treated their social relationships with tourists as potential economic sources. Lim (2004) also reports that during her fieldwork in a trekking region in Langtang, she noticed that
the trekking guides and porters “harbor the hope that the tourists will agree to be their children’s sponsors for their education in the private boarding schools” (p. 384). Folmar (2009) likewise argues that many hosts tend to see the relationship with a foreign tourist a chance to experience a “modern” lifestyle that is much desirable in its own right, and is linked to other positive association with the modern, such as the chance to represent oneself as a bikasi (developed) person because of associating with Westerners. Many Nepalis working for tourism, thus, see international tourists, particularly from the West, as potential benefactors, and developing a strong network with them can lead to financial and travel opportunities to places which otherwise would be an impossibility. Folmar further adds that Nepalis welcome and promote tourism for fulfilling their social needs as much as they see it as fulfilling their economic needs. Many Nepalis want to see more tourists “because they like to have them around” (p. 89). Folmar’s (2009) observation, however, seems to be a gross overgeneralization since tourism and foreign tourists may not be perceived in the same way by all in different destinations and communities in Nepal. Guneratne (2001), for example, takes an example of tourist-host encounters in what he calls “village walk” in Tharu ethnic communities in Chitwan and notes that local people do not like outside tourists encroaching on their private spaces and have their photographs taken because “it seldom occurs to a tourist to ask permission before he or she presses the shutter” (p. 536).

Another encounter in which tourists experience and consume the ethnic Other is through cultural performances by ethnolinguistic minorities in tourist destinations. People from the Sherpa, Tamang and Tharu ethnic communities, for example, perform songs and dances for outside visitors in order to benefit economically from them. However, in addition to an economic dimension, performance of ethnic identities has a political and social dimension in the ongoing
socio-political context of Nepal. Such performances have become venues for ethnic activism where the performers and the communities self-assert the value and legitimacy of their identities. This activism has taken a form of an ethnic identity movement (the janajati movement) in Nepal. Although this movement developed not primarily from tourism, but from a political source, this has had multi-pronged effects for the economic benefits in tourism. In the following section, I provide an overview of this movement more from a political perspective.

2.9 The Janajati movement and ethnic identity in Nepal

There is a relationship between the commodification of culture and the political enactment of identity, as both give rise to the objectification of identity (Comaroff & Comaroff, 2009; Shneiderman, 2015). In the context of Nepal, it is not that political and market dimensions of ethnicity have replaced one another, but with the growing prominence of the janajati movement, indigenous people have been more assertive in valuing their identities and enacting them in different spaces and occasions, tourism being one key venue.

Ethnic movements have become a prominent part of Nepal’s sociopolitical changes after the restoration of democracy in 1990 since the change in political landscape provided more space for voicing political and other rights for individuals. Activists and political parties deploy the term adibasi as approximation of the English term “indigenous” or adibasi janajati to mean “indigenous nationalities”. The National Foundation for the Development of Indigenous Nationalities (NFDIN) defines adibasi janajati as “a tribe or community having its own mother language and traditional rites and customs, distinct cultural identity, distinct social structure and written or unwritten history” (2003: 7). The janajati movement includes a variety of ethnic groups, social organizations and political parties mostly consisting of people from communities who speak Tibeto-Burman languages.
Even though it is not a single movement, these ethnic activists and organizations argue that amidst diversity and differences, they have one commonality, that is, all these groups have been disadvantaged and discriminated in the modern Nepali state in respect to their legal rights and their participation in political, social and economic life (Lawoti & Hangen, 2013). For example, their access to employment at the government bureaucracy is negligible due to the linguistic and educational barriers. Positions in the government and bureaucracy are mostly occupied by the high class Hindu elites. These culturally and linguistically diverse groups have an identity primarily through their opposition to the ruling class Hindus. This movement has become a crucial step toward mobilizing people to achieve political changes since no single ethnic group is a majority in Nepal. Ethnic organizations and political parties have been working in broad coalitions in order to be recognized by the state and other international communities. This movement established the diverse group of peoples as an important collective political actor that could intervene and transform the political system (Lawoti, 2007). This movement has opposed the representation of Nepali nationalism as a unified nation characterized by high caste Hindu values and practices, arguing that such a representation downplays or eliminates cultural differences in Nepal (Lawoti, 2010). Hangen (2007), in this regard, writes:

The indigenous nationalities movement aims to increase the social, economic and political power of these people, revive their religions, and languages, and cultures, and end the dominance of the high caste Hindus. The movement has constructed a collective identity for this heterogeneous group as indigenous nationalities, enabling these people to take action to define and resolve their common problems (p. viii).

High caste Hindus from the country’s hill region, including the Hindu monarchy, constitute the politically dominant group in Nepali society (Lawoti, 2010). Some words used to
indicate the ethnic groups in general discourse are: backward, deprived, discriminated, marginalized, unprivileged, ethnic, minority, etc.

Three main types of organizations participate in the movement: indigenous people’s organizations representing single ethnic groups, a federation for these organizations called the Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities (NEFIN), and ethnicity-based political parties. NEFIN, which now consists of 54 individual member organizations distributed throughout the country, claims to represent the dominant voice of the movement initially focused on cultural revitalization in the 1980s, and on political inclusion and representation in the state after 1990. Janajati organizations’ political activism in the 1990s made these groups’ marginalization an important political issue, such that in 2002, the Maoists incorporated janajati organizations’ demands into their own political platform, in a successful bid to gain wider appeal (Hachhethu 2003). After the end of the Maoist insurgency (1996-2006), the Nepali state engaged in federal restructuring through two constituent assemblies in 2008 and 2014. Ethnic politics gained more prominence and sparked controversies in the process of constitution making in both the assemblies. Since 2006, ethnic organizations and parties have increasingly advanced political demands, such as the right to self-determination and ethnic federalism. Ethnicity-based federal restructuring also became one major agenda item for the Nepal Communist Party (Maoist). The second constituent assembly promulgated a new constitution in 2015 amidst political conflicts that continued to make ethnicity-based federal provinces an important agenda for state restructuring. However, the 2015 constitution does not create ethnic federalism, and it remains a topic of debate. The need for ethnic federalism was continually legitimized by referring to a history of subordination and internal colonization by high caste Hindu elites for more than 200
years (Hangen, 2007). Some of those historical narratives were a topic of touristic discourses during cultural tours and performances, to which I will return in Chapter 6.

There are certain noticeable achievements of the movement, both in socio-political discourses and in practices which are also visible in tourism. One major achievement of this movement has been the construction of a collective identity for diverse ethnic groups as *adibasi janajati*” (indigenous nationalities) as opposed to the high caste Hindu elites. This category is now recognized by both Nepali society and the government as constituting a widely accepted pan-ethnic identity (Lawoti & Hangen, 2015). This has subsequently reshaped political discourse in Nepal by presenting an alternative vision of Nepal as multicultural, multilingual and multi-religious (Hangen & Fisher, 1999). This process became a political tool to bargain with the state for the social, political and economic rights of the indigenous nationalities. The janajati movement advocated for multiplicities of identities by looking within their own communities’ history and traditions that could be used as symbols of ethnic cohesion around which their ethnic identities may be reimagined and mobilized (Hangen, 2007). The movement has contributed to the democratization of Nepali society by transforming the dominant political discourse, creating awareness of ethnic issues in society, and pressuring the state into addressing ethnic inequality (Lawoti & Hangen, 2010). The meaning of the constitutional provision for mother tongues was recognized as “languages of the nation.” Although the primacy of Nepali as a lingua franca is objectively uncontested and unchallenged, there is an increasing space for indigenous languages in education, media, administration and other areas. This attention to minority languages and cultures was visible in my field work, when I observed that ethnic Tamangs in trekking areas displayed their identities through their linguistic and cultural performances.
In addition to forming the *adibasi janajati* collective identity, the ethnic organizations and some political parties have been constantly working for the recognition of ethnic identities as different and unique at the same time. The idea of ethnic identity as separate has depended more on political movements and agendas. The movement is based on the notion that people have distinct cultures, languages, traditions and histories (Fisher, 2007). The movement, thus, is not a coherent movement, but largely a general process of growing awareness of their ethnic identities among members of indigenous communities. Shneiderman (2015) notes that politics of recognition is a crucial tool through which indigenous nationalities assert their worth and identity. However, there is no uniformity regarding whether or not a group of people constitute a separate ethnic group. The internal diversity and historical fluidity of several ethnic groups complicate the supposedly neat boundaries of ethnic distinctions and bounded ethnic identities. With a growing political awareness, ethnic communities and social organizations have been increasingly engaged in creating and representing ethnic groups as countable entities with an objective existence (Hangen, 2007).

This ethnic activism has given rise to the objectification of ethnicity in more concrete cultural and linguistic terms (Yúdice, 2003). As Comaroff and Comaroff (2009) argue, the objectification of identity appears “to have produced new sensibility, an explicitly new awareness of its essence, its affective, material, and expressive potential” (p. 2). *Janajati* organizations and political parties in Nepal have been engaged in self-objectification of ethnic identities through cultural performances such as singing and dancing. Such performances not only showcase their supposedly distinct identities but also produces alternative narratives that counter the dominant identities (Stirr, 2010). By producing these narratives in tourism, they supplement the sites for identity formation, extending it beyond the political realm. Ethnic
objectification is an essential process for the commodification of ethnicity in this era of globalization where market forces have been visible in almost every domain of human life. It is also through this objectification and commodification that a greater consciousness can be understood (Shneiderman, 2015). Although the process of self-objectification by people from the adibasi janajati communities has primarily been expressed with regards to the political process and the subsequent state policies, market forces linked to tourism have complemented the enactment and performance of ethnic identities in more visible ways in some ethnic contexts than in others (e.g. Guneratne, 2002; Ortner, 1999).

The tourism market is one such space where the enactment and performance of ethnic identities is noteworthy. There is more room for the refashioning of ethnicity in a more commodified sense in the economies of everyday life. Ethnic groups and communities at destinations may use various strategies for their stereotypical self-representation. In this way, tourism may contribute to the process of identity formation and may encourage visitors to conform to or re-evaluate their perceptions of marginalized ethnic groups (Hitchcock, 1999). I will analyze this dimension of ethnicity in Chapter 6.

It is not only the ethnicity of local people in the Himalayas that has been a major concern in tourism studies. There have also been changes in the conceptualization of ethnic and national identities of tourists in Nepal. In the following section, I discuss the changing dynamics of tourist population, particularly focusing on the Chinese tourists in Nepal, since the number of Chinese tourists are visibly on the rise in recent years.

### 2.10 Increasing number of Chinese tourists in Nepal

Historically, the term “tourist” in Nepal was mostly reserved for “white” visitors from the West. Lim (2004) points out that such a conceptualization might have been popular during the 1960s
and 1970s when Kathmandu was one of the key destinations for the Western hippies. Hepburn (2002) also notes how locals in Kathmandu conceptualized tourists in general:

‘Tourist’ is not a person who puts aside more lasting identities in order to travel: rather, the word often means ‘white person’. A Tourist is a ‘sort’ of person, as understood within the caste idiom common in South Asia. This term can mark a range of social categories and statuses depending on context, including race, culture, class, species, or caste (p. 611).

Many tour guides and locals still keep using the generic term khaire or kuire (white person) to refer to the category of tourists. This was noticeable during my field work in the summers of 2012 and 2013, when I observed tour guide training sessions or interviewed tour guides.

The racial composition of tourist populations to Nepal, however, has changed in recent years. A large number of tourists now come from various countries in East and South East Asia such as Japan, South Korea, China and Indonesia. This is the result of global economic changes and rising middle classes in many countries, coupled with people’s awareness and interest in border-crossing experiences. As China’s economy continues to grow, the number of China’s middle class population and their spending capacity is also increasing. There is a noticeable boost in China’s outbound tourism in many parts of the world (Andreu, Claver & Quer, 2013; Arlt, 2013; Hung & Li, 2016). According to China Tourism Research Institute, China had 120 million outbound tourists in 2015 and they spent 104.5 billion US dollars in that year.

Nepal and China are friendly political neighbors. China has been one of the major donors of foreign aid to Nepal for decades, and one of the key contributors for Nepal’s infrastructure development. Moreover, Nepali people have mostly a positive perception of China mainly because of its export of goods at reasonable prices. The Nepal-China relationship in the past was
mostly confined to the level of government and the business elites. Only recently have there been people-to-people contacts between Nepalis and Chinese mainly through business and tourism. Around 85,832 Chinese tourists visited Nepal in 2013, which is more than 10% of the total arrivals in 2012 (Pokharel, 2013). This growing trend is quite notable since only 19,000 Chinese tourists visited Nepal in 2009. This trend continues every year. The monsoon months of July and August were often considered a lean season for international tourists. However, with the arrival of the mainland Chinese even during this season, Nepal continues to be an attractive destination throughout the year. The Weekly Mirror (2013) reports that each Chinese visitor spends about 10.14 days on average in Nepal. This is very close to the average stay of 13.12 days by all international visitors. As one of the closest neighbors, Chinese tourists have found Nepal a relatively easily accessible destination to experience the cultural and linguistic Other. The growing number of Chinese tourists in Nepal says a lot about Nepal’s tourism industry and the imageries and imaginaries that are produced and circulated for the northern neighbor. Although Nepal shares a geographical border with China, these two countries have remained culturally very different since the giant mountains in the north do not allow easy access to the flow of peoples and cultures from one region to another. Thus, Nepal can be a very different cultural experience for the Chinese visitors. For those who are interested to observe diverse religious practices and monuments, Nepal can provide a notable example of religious co-existence, particularly of Hinduism and Buddhism. In November 2013, a group of Yunnan-based Chinese journalists visited Nepal and met Nepal’s President Ram Baran Yadav. Dr. Yadav is reported to have advised these journalists to raise awareness about Nepal among the Chinese people saying “The birthplace of the Buddha is Limbini, which is in Nepal and not in India… I hope you will tell the Chinese people in Chinese language that Buddha was born in Nepal” (Basnet, 2014).
Most Chinese come to Nepal for a holiday and sightseeing purpose and want to visit heritage sites such as historical palaces and Hindu temples and Buddhist religious destinations in Kathmandu. Many of them also go to other places such as Pokhara (a city with beautiful lakes, paragliding and mountain views), Muktinath (a Hindu temple in the lap of the Himalayas) and Lumbini (the birthplace of Gautam Buddha). My interaction with some Chinese tourists in Kathmandu showed that generally they prefer package tours in groups, and do not want to risk adventures that they have not experienced before. My observation aligns with Kim, Guo and Agrusa’s (2005) findings that mainland Chinese tourists are more concerned about their “safety” during their travel, and, therefore, they are more interested in sceneries and sightseeing. I found that only a few of them, mostly younger visitors, are interested in less challenging adventures such as trekking, rafting and paragliding. In order to cater to the needs of this growing number of Chinese tourists to Nepal, a few direct flights operate between these two countries now. At present, three airlines from China– Air China, China Eastern and China Southern – have scheduled flights to and from Nepal. While China Southern links Kathmandu to Guangzhou, China Eastern and Air China fly to Kathmandu from Kunming and Lhasa, respectively.

People from both Nepal and China have realized that there should be more promotion of Nepali tourism among the Chinese visitors. In addition, many Chinese visitors and delegates have suggested a need for improvement of air and land accessibility along with changes in quality services and internal infrastructure in order to increase the number of Chinese visitors to Nepal. A government run newspaper in Nepal, the Gorkhapatra, reported that a delegation of Chinese businessmen met the Nepali government representatives in July 2013 and urged them and the private sector in Nepal to improve the “quality” of services to attract more Chinese
tourists. These negotiations and concerns are sure to promote Nepali tourism and increase the number of Chinese tourists in Nepal.

Since most Chinese who visit Nepal are not proficient in English, the importance of Chinese as a link language is also increasing in Nepal’s tourism market. In some limited sectors such as hydropower companies and diplomatic negotiations, interpreters are being used to mediate communications, but in case of business and tourism, there is a need for Chinese speakers. The number of multilingual tour guides who can speak Chinese is growing. In addition to the Chinese language, these guides are also learning the cultural background of the Chinese tourists in order to better understand their touristic tastes and expectations. For example, as Chinese tourists like shopping for certain kinds of beads from Kathmandu, Nepali guides and shopkeepers learn to craft descriptions of such cultural items to Chinese tourists. Vendors and storekeepers in many tourist streets in Thamel are learning Chinese in order to be able to communicate with their Chinese clients. As I walked along almost all the streets in Thamel—the major tourist hub in Kathmandu—I noticed that there was a busy street which was full of Chinese scripts in store names and sale items on display. I asked a few local storekeepers about the changes in the destination and learned that there was a famous Chinese restaurant – The China Town Restaurant – in a location traditionally known as Jyatha, and for that reason some people know this street as the China Town Street.
Figure 2.6 The China Town Restaurant in Kathmandu

As I walked along the street, I took pictures of the street and talked to the store owners about the changing dynamics of the place. Many of them reported me that the linguistic landscape of the street had changed dramatically recently. There were more Chinese linguistic signs, sometimes the exclusive use of Chinese in stores and restaurants. I also learned that many storeowners were attending a local Chinese language institute and learning basic Chinese. Some of them told me that they had been to China for about three to six months in order to learn Chinese. Since they knew that most Chinese who come to Nepal do not speak English well, they had labeled their items in the store in Chinese and there are currency exchange booths in every other corner along the street. These changing scenarios suggest that the role of English as a default lingua franca in the context of international tourism may be questionable. It is a matter of further investigation to what extent Chinese as a global link language is expanding in many parts
of the world. Similarly, the commodity value of the Chinese language is also evident as more Nepalis learn it in order to benefit economically from tourism.

Thus, as more Chinese have started visiting Nepal, Nepali hosts and tour guides are looking for ways to cater to the Chinese tourists’ needs, expectations and fantasies in a number of ways, for example, by expanding infrastructural facilities, improving services, learning Chinese language and culture, and offering hospitality and trade in the Chinese language.

Growing number of Chinese tourists to Nepal has had influence on tour guide training discourse for Nepali guides, which I will discuss in Chapter 4.

2.11 Construction and circulation of tourism discourse by Nepali actors

Touristic representations and imaginaries of Nepal, as I described in the previous sections, have largely been in the way as viewed and constructed by the Western visitors in their travelogues, travel guides, popular media and anthropological writings. Although not as visible and efficient, Nepali tourism actors have also been in the game to construct and promote Nepal’s representations to outsiders. The Nepal Tourism Board, in particular, has been working to produce tourism promotional materials by producing CDs, brochures, posters and various postcards. Its website has a number of downloadable promotional videos and manuals. How does the NTB want to represent Nepal to the outsiders? Here are two promotional texts from *Travelers’ Information* and *Tourism Vision 2020* respectively.
Since Nepal opened its doors to tourism in the early 1950s and Hillary and Tenzing first climbed Mt. Everest in 1953, visitors have been mesmerized by the magic of Nepal’s kaleidoscopic natural scenery and the cultural mosaic of its people and history. Even Lord Shiva during ancient past settled back in Nepal due to its fascination motivating Hindu pilgrims to visit holiest places. Similarly birth of Lord Buddha has drawn attention of global Buddhist community. Nepal is strongly positioned as a preferred nature, culture and adventure destination in the world tourism map with a wide range of products to offer visitors.

Figure 2.7 Nepal Tourism Board’s promotional leaflet on Nepal as a tourism destination

Figure 2.8 Nepal Tourism Board’s brochure on adventure tourism in Nepal
Here, I provide a brief comment on these promotional texts. The NTB has tried to construct the image of Nepal as imagined and expected by the travelers from diverse parts of the world, as a land of majestic mountains and adventurous trekking routes, exotic cultures and ethnicities, and a unique blend of religious histories and practices, among others. In addition, beyond the land of the Sherpas, Nepal is now represented as a land of a unique ethnic diversity, which also fosters the nationalist ideology of unity in diversity. Similarly, these promotional discourses represent today’s Nepal as a rare place in the world for pilgrimage tourism and spiritual quest for both practitioners as well as observers of both Hinduism and Buddhism. These representational discourses have gained more prominence during certain tourism promotional years such as Visit Nepal Year 1998 and Nepal Tourism Year 2011. The NTB has also been displaying and disseminating these discourses through its various promotional activities in several countries abroad.

The representations in promotional materials created and circulated by the NTB include foreigners within the category of tourists in Nepal. When I examined the pictures, videos and other promotional images posted on its official website, NTB portrays “White” Westerners within the label of tourists and Nepali people are featured as the hosts or the objects of the tourist’s gaze. There was only one picture on the website that featured Chinese visitors as “tourists”. Domestic tourists are not represented there. This is perhaps due to the fact that tourism in Nepal is not a part of the major leisure activities for most Nepalis. Limited domestic tourism is mostly confined to the sightseeing of some historical palaces, tours and activities to national conservation parks and some new forms of adventure such as bungee jump and rafting. And these activities are mostly accomplished without including package tours and tour guides.
Trekking and mountaineering have not yet been the major touristic activities for Nepali people in general.

In order to increase the number, tour and travel companies have started creating their promotional brochures and websites offering tour packages for domestic tourists. For example, the Himalayan Legend Trek Pvt. Ltd.’s website (http://www.nepaltrekandtour.com/nepal-domestic-tourism.php) writes:

We are very happy to announce to focus our view to promoting domestic tourism too. Nepal is one of the most beautiful countries of the world. Hundreds of thousands of international tourists are visiting every year to explore and enjoy the beauties of the nature, culture and many more. But there are still so many things and places have not been explored by our own people... We should feel very proud of being Nepali and be able to test and explore the outstanding beauties of the country. Then we can be the real citizen of Nepal who can explain about our beautiful country.

Figure 2.9: Promotional text for domestic tourists

Representational texts and materials created for Nepali domestic tourists by many tour companies largely reproduce a collective identity of “we Nepalis”, and encourage Nepali residents to explore the diversity that lies within their nation. Traveling within own’s country is
potrayed as expanding the horizon of understanding and the worldview, and simultaneously contributing to national development by being a responsible citizen (Figure 2.9).

The role played by tour guides in constructing and circulating tourism representations is crucial. They play an important role to bridge the expectations of the tourists by circulating the imaginaries promoted by the tourism industry in Nepal. They constantly try to learn and understand the tastes and imaginaries of tourists who travel from countries far away from theirs. Although working as a tour guide is considered merely a seasonal part-time job for many people in Nepal until now, it has increasingly become an attractive profession for many young men. Each year, about 120 tour guides and 650 trekking guides receive training and license from a government-affiliated institution, the Nepal Academy of Tourism and Hotel Management (NATHM), located in Kathmandu (MoCTCA, 2013). During the training, they learn a variety of knowledge and skills. As part of their content, they learn representational discourses about Nepal such as its geography, history, culture, flora and fauna, trekking routes, high altitude sickness and first aid, architecture, archeology and religion. In addition, they also learn how to best represent the content they learn. This includes the language of representation such as words for specific expressions, metaphors, humor making and intercultural communication skills.

The language used to represent Nepal is as important as what is promised in these discourses. Although tourists and guides can both understand and speak English well, tourists generally prefer to have a guide who can speak their language if the tour group comprises linguistically homogenous members. Tour guides’ competence in English alone is not enough to communicate with tourists from various national, cultural and linguistic backgrounds since most tour guides can speak English with various degrees of proficiency. They identify themselves as primary guides of a particular language such as “Chinese guides” or “Italian guides” or “English
guides.” In recent years, more guides are learning multiple foreign languages in order to cater to different groups throughout the year. Although English is not the default lingua franca, it still is considered the most important language for Nepali tourism workers. I will return to this topic in Chapter 5.

2.12 Summary

This chapter has examined how the representations and fantasies of Nepal have shown continuity and change since 1950s. At first, Nepal was viewed as a secret land of mystery, a Shangri-La detached from a modern civilization which lacked facilities that the “progressed” West enjoyed at the time. As Nepal adopted a liberal foreign policy, mountaineers and rich tourists came to Nepal to experience medieval-type exoticism and extreme remoteness. These representations became prominent in the forms of travel diaries and travelogs in Western media popular at that time. For the Western hippies in the 60s and 70s, Nepal was an end of the world, a land of absolute freedom, spiritual enlightenment and a mecca for cannabis. These hippies, upon their return to their lands, circulated their travel narratives in different media formats to those who wanted to follow their footsteps. Nepal continued to attract adventure tourists such as mountaineers and trekkers as well as cultural tourists to experience Nepal’s natural and cultural exoticism. With the advent of mass tourism and boost in economy in many countries in the last two decades, Nepal has witnessed more and more tourists from middle-class families from various Asian countries despite a sudden fall in the first few years at the dawn of this century due to internal Maoist insurgency as well as global terrorism. This changing dynamics has changed Nepalis’ conception of tourists as “Western Whites” to “diverse people from around the world” to some extent, although the former conceptualization has not completely disappeared from everyday tourism discourse. The Nepal Tourism Board both continues to draw on and reproduce
master narratives of Nepal’s uniqueness and exoticism in its varied promotional discourses, while expanding the horizon of such representational discourses to include Nepal’s richness in ethnic diversity and a blend of Hindu and Buddhist spiritual practices. Tour and trekking guides continue to learn more foreign languages and cultural background of tourists in order to better meet the latter’s expectations and fantasies as well as to benefit economically by commodifying their language skills and cultural knowledge.

In the next chapter, I explain the methodology for this dissertation focusing on the choice of research methods, analytical approaches, data representation and researcher positionality.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I provide details of the methodology for my research. First, I explain the relevance of linguistic ethnography. Then, I move on to describe the context, the participants, the research sites and the tools of data collection. I also note the rationale behind choosing how to transcribe interaction and represent other forms of embodied data such as gestures. Finally, I explain some challenges and ethical concerns in researching workplace contexts, reflecting on my own positionality and subjectivity during the fieldwork. It makes sense for me to discuss it last since it provides a better understanding of how I viewed the different sites and how I was treated by the different participants in various ways. Since each chapter draws on data from different field sites and participants, this chapter provides only the overall methodological approach employed for my research; more specific data collection procedures and participant details will be provided in each chapter. Though the dissertation on a whole shares a key set of analytical frameworks tied to ethnographic discourse analysis, each analysis chapter makes use of additional analytical concepts and tools that better suit the types of data included for analysis, so I will discuss those in more detail in the respective chapters.

3.2 Ethnographic discourse analysis – linguistic ethnography

I situate my research within an ethnography-oriented discourse analysis tradition in applied linguistics and sociolinguistics (e.g. Bucholtz & Hall, 2005; Gumperz, 1982; Hymes, 1974; Rampton, 2007). This approach particularly suits my research as it deploys various methods of data collection such as natural occurrences of interactions, ethnographic observation, field notes, artifacts, qualitative and retrospective interviews and media and document analysis. At the same
time, it is a coherent framework because it places discourse as the central organizing principle for the collection and analysis of data. A discourse approach to any topic would allow for a focus on representation as well as on contestation, in addition to motivating certain sorts of data collection (e.g. interaction, images, embodied actions, etc.) A multi-sited ethnographic discourse analytic approach can offer a more comprehensive picture of the phenomenon under my investigation since it allows the exploration of linguistic practices and ideologies in different spaces and institutions, by different social actors and in different media and formats (Heller, Campbell, Dalley & Patrick, 2006; Marcus, 1995). I find Rampton’s (2007) suggestion useful for my research: rather than aiming to produce a “comprehensive” description of speech communities, ethnographic discourse analytic works should focus on “topic-oriented” ethnographies of specific types of speech events and interactions, speech style, or professional communication. Following this suggestion, my research focuses on the topics of language, communication, and identity representation in the context of Nepali tourism.

Within the ethnographic-discourse analysis tradition, I draw on linguistic ethnography (LE) as the key methodological approach. According to Rampton (2007), LE is not a new paradigm or a school, but a “a site of encounter where a number of established lines of research interact, pushed together by circumstance, open to the recognition of new affinities, and sufficiently familiar with one another to treat differences with equanimity” (p. 585). LE draws insights from ethnography of communication, interactional sociolinguistics, linguistic anthropology and new literacy studies, and is based on two major premises: (a) the context of communication should be investigated rather than assumed, and (b) a closer analysis of verbal and other semiotic data is crucial in understanding society. It aligns with the ideas that meaning takes shape within specific social relations, interactional histories and institutional regimes
produced and interpreted by people with expectations and repertoires that have to be grasped ethnographically, and meaning is more than just the expression of content, and identities, stances and other significant social nuances are indexed in the fine grain details of textual and other signs (Rampton, 2007). This methodological approach has been influential particularly in the work of applied linguists in the UK, and has now been carried out in a range of contexts such as education, workplace and community (Snell, Shaw & Coupland, 2015). Rampton argues that its focus is rather “different from both traditional ethnography and linguistics in that (a) it opens linguistics up inviting more reflexivity in the research process and to the potential importance of what gets left out in discourse, and (b) it ties ethnography down “pushing ethnography towards the analysis of clearly delimitable processes, increasing the amount of reported data that is open to falsification, looking to impregnate local description with analytical frameworks drawn from outside” (p. 596). In the context of my data analysis, linguistics and its analytical tools allow for focus while ethnography shows the bigger picture.

The role and space for ethnography in LE is different from what has been conceived in traditional forms of ethnography. Maybin and Tustin (2011) note that LE does not necessarily imply the sort of immersion in a distant, culturally strange context which has been typical of anthropological work in the past. Researchers may very well research their own familiar contexts, which do not have to be distant ethnic communities. The combining of insights from these two research traditions as espoused in LE can create “a synergy between linguistic and ethnographic analyses, describing the mutual shaping of language and social life to provide insights into, for example, identity, ideology, or institutional processes” (Maybin & Tustin, 2011: 223). I am interested not only in what tourism workers perform for tourists, similar to what Goffman (1981) recognizes as a front-stage life, but also the less visible and more casual
backstage life of Nepali tourism workers. As Jacobs and Slembrouck (2010) point out, LE is aptly relevant to pay attention to back-region, less visible, off-the record internal communication among social actors.

Since my research involves different agents and stakeholders in constructing and representing Nepali tourism and the necessary communicative repertoires for them, it is important to take account of how these actors get involved in such communicative encounters. For that purpose, LE is very wide-ranging in its empirical scope, investigating communication on different temporal and spatial scales. Rampton (2010) argues that LE can involve various levels and scopes of actors:

1) **persons**: their physical bodies, senses and perceptions; their semiotic repertoires and cultural resources; their social identities and dispositions; their attitudes; and their social memberships. In the context of my research, persons include tourism workers (trekking and tour guides, porters), their trainers, language teachers, people at tourism organizations, tourists, and local people who they encounter while at work.

2) **situated encounters**: events, genres, social activities and actions; peoples, interactions and inferences; material settings of participants; and interactions of signs and actions with institutions. These events include classroom training, language instruction, guided tours, cultural performances, and meal time talks.

3) **institutions, networks and communities of practice**: playgrounds, schools, clubs, institutions and the role they play in producing discourse, mass media, government and institutional policy, and mobilities of signs across time and space. Examples of these include the Nepal Tourism Board, a tour agency, a training institute, a language institute, and a cultural performance group.
I summarize these concepts and examples in the following figure.

Figure 3.1 Levels and scopes of actors in LE

Rampton’s (2010) suggestions above indicate the importance of interconnectedness and linkages between persons, encounters and institutions because repertoires get used and developed in encounters, encounters give life to institutions, and institutions are involved in socializing persons and their repertoires through the regimentation of encounters. This is a useful methodological framework for my study since my research pays attention to the nature and dynamics of similar linkages between tourism workers’ learning trajectories of linguistic and
communicative repertoires, actual communicative encounters with tourists, and the economic importance of their communication skills in their work and other domains of life.

Following LE, my data include the recording of the naturalistic speech in various contexts, supported by ethnographic observation, field notes, artifacts, qualitative and retrospective interviews and media and document analysis. These diverse data sources have a potential contribution for the fine-grained analysis of the interactional data. Rampton also notes “combination of methods used in fieldwork provides quite a sound basis for establishing authenticity of a lot of data: working in one extended peer group meant that there were a great many cross-references in what adolescents talked about, and several sources and kinds of data can be brought to bear in the analysis of particular linguistic practices” (p. 24). Rampton shows that retrospective interviews are not only occasions to cross-check the researcher’s understanding or indentify important interactional moments in the previously collected interactinal data, but as moments that rise to new interactions and meanings. There is, however, an ongoing debate regarding if and to what extent ethnographic knowledge is used to interpret discourse data (e.g. Moerman, 1988). Conversation analysts, for example, warn that relying on the ethnographic information as source of explanation for the interaction data can easily deceive the analyst by distorting the attention from what is actually happening in talk and how the participants themselves are orienting to and making sense of their practices. It is not only the conversation analysts, but also the discourse analysts who are concerned about this issue. For example, Sarangi and Candlin (2003) warn us: “although ethnographic observation can be a rich resource for validating discourse analytic claims, any rupture in the sphere of participation will jeopardise the authenticity of what one gets to observe and the impact such observation/action might have on what is being observed” (p. 281). But discourse analysts acknowledge that ethnographic
information of various degrees is necessary to make sense of what is going on in interactions. Here, I follow Gumperz’s suggestion in that “even after the material has been recorded, it is sometimes impossible to evaluate its social significance in the absence of ethnographic knowledge about social norms governing linguistic choice in the situation recorded” (1970, p. 9). Bremer et al. (1996) make the point that when we study second language users, we especially need ethnographic information since the inferences underneath language use are more susceptible to vary from first language norms. In addition, due to people’s various proficiencies in their second languages, it’s important to give people a chance (through interviews and observation) to explain and express what they felt was happening in interactions. In addition, as Maybin and Tustin (2011) indicate, I also use my knowledge from outside the data and fieldwork to interpret specific instances of interactions using lenses of theoretical constructs and my insights as a cultural insider in Nepal.

I use analytical concepts in analyzing the data drawn from other closely neighboring linguistic and anthropological approaches. Key analytical concepts are listed below briefly. More detailed discussion on the definition and relevance of these analytical concepts are discussed in the relevant analyses chapter since it aids the readers to understand why a particular notion was employed to analyze a specific kind of data. My selection of these analytical tools, thus, is data-driven.

(1) enregisterment (Agha, 2007): Enregisterment serves as an overall discursive approach to take account of the process of register formation in training classes and guided tours.

(2) membership categorization analysis (Sacks, 1991) and stance analysis (Jaffe, 2009): I use these approaches in Chapter 4 to analyze how a trainer categorizes tourists from various ethno-national backgrounds and displays stances toward them.
(3) participation framework (Goffman, 1981): I use this concept in Chapter 6 to examine how a tour guide participates in different interactional footings with visitors and local people at destinations.

(4) tactics of authentication and identification (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004). These terms are deployed in Chapter 6 to specifically analyze how local cultures and destinations are discursively represented as authentic objects for touristic experiences.

3.3 Choice of transcription convention and data representation

I follow transcription and data representation conventions in LE studies (e.g. Dickenson, 2010; Jacobs & Slemrouck, 2010; Rampton, 2007), which have been adopted and adapted from sociolinguistics and conversation analysis (Gumperz, 1982, 1999; Schegloff, 2007). The choice of data for transcription is selective because not all the recorded data were analytically relevant from applied linguistic and sociolinguistic perspectives; I recorded almost everything during my fieldwork because I found it necessary to understand what was going on in English and communication training classes, guided tours and cultural performances. After reflecting on my fieldwork and data after short intervals, my choice became more selective toward the end of my fieldwork, focusing on the issues that were more pertinent from language, communication and identity representation perspectives. Blommaert and Dong (2010) note that for novice ethnographers, recording almost everything in the beginning and being rather more focused later is a normal experience in fieldwork. What guided me in narrowing my focus were my research questions and my interest in seeing what these data meant for the discursive representations of Nepali cultures and languages in tourism. Although these questions largely guided me for what part of the data to focus on for transcription and analysis, the findings are inductive and emergent.
from the transcribed data; anything that appeared analytically interesting was not neglected from
selection and transcription. I transcribed the audio and video data in detail, paying attention to
the gestures, emotions, tones, movements of the speaker, and so on. That is, the starting point for
transcription and analysis is the actual discourse produced by different actors in varied modes
(e.g. interactions, interview responses, and tour narratives). When the original data was in
Nepali, I included the original data and the English translations in the data excerpts. Such form
of data representation is essential both to promote multilingualism in academic writing and to
allow the audience an opportunity to read and reinterpret the data with possibly a different
outcome.

I show a lot of diversity and flexibility in data representation in the analyses chapters and
this is primarily motivated by the topic under investigation and the issues being analyzed. For
example, in transcribing and representing the classroom discourse and interactions in guided
tours, I provide more interactional details such as pauses, overlaps, tempo and intonation. When
it is necessary and useful, I also provide phonetic transcriptions of the communicative devices
being analyzed. For example, in one of the excerpts in Chapter 4, I provide the phonetic
transcription of the pronunciation of certain words when the instructor highlights local English
variations in this tour guide training lessons. For the more ethnographic and qualitative
interviews, I largely do not provide as much interactional detail. Ethnographic field notes and my
own researcher reflections of observations are secondarily used only to complement the
discourse data.

Preference for a particular transcription convention and data representation mode is not
unique only to this study. This issue has been extensively discussed by a number of
sociolinguists and discourse analysts. Ochs (1979) published a seminal article arguing that
transcription as a researcher’s data is a “selective process reflecting theoretical goals and definitions” (p. 44). Since then, applied linguists have been increasingly aware of the methodological and theoretical implications of the activity of transcription in shaping their materials (what would be constructed as data) and the outcomes of their analyses (Vigouroux, 2007). As Bucholtz (2000) mentions, it is perhaps now undisputable in discourse analytic works that “all transcripts take sides, enabling certain interpretations, advancing particular interests, favoring specific speakers, and so on” (p. 1440). Transcribers must always make decisions about what to include and exclude in data transcripts, and that these choices have political effects. These choices, as Bucholtz notes, may not be purposive, but are largely guided by the researchers’ scholarly predisposition, which frequently operates below the level of consciousness. I also approached my data with my own intentions, biases, and subjectivities in a way that would help me achieve my research goals as well as represent the object under study in a scholarly manner.

3.4 Contexts, participants and data

I collected data from multiple sites and sources, spending 22 months in total spanning over several time frames (May – July 2012; May – July 2013; May 2014 – July 2014). I was mainly based in Kathmandu but made frequent visits to the popular tourist destinations across the country. My fieldwork started in the summer of 2012. Though I had some understanding prior to conducting field work, I deepened my understanding of Nepal’s tourism industry by collecting promotional videos, websites, brochures, photographs, postcards, signage, and guidebooks published by the Nepal Tourism Board (NTB). This helped me closely study how people, places, ideologies and identities are commodified in the tourist market by a top level tourism organization. Then, I talked to the individuals from NTB who were involved in the production
and circulation of these discourses. Some of the issues we talked about were: how did they decide what to include in the materials? Who were the target audiences? What impressions did they have of tourists’ tastes? What was overtly highlighted in these materials? I also met the President of the Tourist Guide Association of Nepal (TURGAN) – the national level association for Nepali tour guides – and read the newsletters and booklets it had published. Interacting with the people at NTB and TURGAN and going through their published materials gave me a general understanding of Nepal’s tourism industry and the professional roles of Nepali tour guides. I also got an idea of what discourses and ideologies of representation Nepali tour guides were supposed to learn in order to sell Nepal to outsiders.

In order to access tour and trekking guides, who were my key research participants, I first started by contacting former classmates and colleagues who were associated with the tourism profession. My existing networks helped me expand my contacts with other tour agents and tour guides. I took part in their social gatherings, enjoyed food and drink with the tour guides, exchanged visiting cards, and got their commitment for helping me when I would go to Nepal again for an extended period. I visited most of the tourist attractions in Kathmandu, stayed there for hours, observed tourist behaviors, and talked to tourists, guides and locals. Since summer was not a popular tourist season, I spent hours talking to local guides at tourist destinations. I learned that these local guides who barely completed their high school education could speak multiple languages. Although their proficiency in each language such as English, Spanish and Japanese was not well developed, they creatively managed to talk to tourists, negotiated their fees and provided more or less scripted version of the narratives of destinations. They did not receive formal language training in those languages, but seemed to have picked up languages without formal instruction by interacting with tourists over the years.
3.4.1 Site 1: Tour guide training institute

The Nepal Academy for Tourism and Hospitality (NATH) (pseudonym), located in the capital city, Kathmandu, is a government-affiliated tour guide training institute. NATH was established by the government of Nepal in 1972 with the technical assistance of United Nations Development Project and International Labor Organization. According to its website, the organization’s major goal is to produce a quality workforce for the tourism and hospitality industries in Nepal. This institute offers undergraduate and graduate degrees in hotel management and travel industry management. In addition, it offers short term courses and literacy programs for pre-service trekking and tour guides; trainings for housekeeping, front-office operation, food and beverage operations and travel agencies; and mobile outreach training on demand.

NATH offers a tour guide training and literacy program from May to July every year. I collected data at that program from May to July in 2013. The students attending the program were pre-service tourist guides who, upon completion of the program, would receive an official tour guide license. There were five sections in the cohort and each section had about 30 students. Each three-month session was divided into two parts. The classes ran from 6.00 am to 11.00 am during the first half of the three-month session, during which the students learned basic literacy content about Nepal’s history, geography, culture, flora and fauna, and intercultural communication skills. Although it is likely that the students had learned these topics in their school curricula, NATH’s classes present the information in a relatively more concise form for a tourism purpose. During the second half, students participated in field tours, which meant that they went out to major tourist destinations in different parts of the country and were taught skills and scripts for guided tours. These were more practical sessions that helped the students learn
ways of talking about significant tourism sites in situ. Thus, the literacy content and communication skills training at NATH were designed to equip Nepali tour guides with two basic aspects of their profession: “what” representations of Nepal were necessary and “how” these representations were to be enacted in their tour commentaries and interactions with international tourists.

With permission from the Director of the institute, I attended one of the five sections of the class as any other regular student, took class notes and responded to questions when asked. I also took part in field tours to about ten tourist destinations in Kathmandu and its neighboring towns. The data corpus consisted of class observation notes, recording of classroom interactions, notes and recordings from the field tours, recording of informal talks and break time chats with the students, and interviews with the instructors and the students. The total audio data consisted of 60 hours. My selective focus, however, was guided by the following questions: Did the tourists’ nationality and cultural background make a difference on what discourses the tour guides highlight? What image of Nepal did this tour literacy program prepare the students for? What ideologies of communication and self-presentation were the tour guides trained for?

3.4.2 Site 2: English language institute

Traveler’s World (pseudonym) is a private non-government organization in Kathmandu established in 1991 that aims to “provide education on safe and ecologically sustainable trekking methods, and to preserve Nepal’s unique and fragile ecosystem” (p. 5). Traveler’s World considers English language skills as an important aspect of sustainable tourism development in Nepal. It runs four-week English language courses twice a year, one starting in July and another in February. These courses are targeted for tourism workers such as porters, trekking guides, and travel agents. Most students told me that their fees are paid by their employers, that is, tour
agencies. Those who were not employed paid 2500 Nepali Rupees (about 25 USD) for the course. Traveler’s World hires “volunteer tourists”\textsuperscript{2} who are “native” English speakers willing to teaching English in “developing” countries. These teachers are not paid for their teaching but get the visa sponsorship through the organization. The students learn about safety issues, heritage and cultural diversity, conservation issues, and appropriate English skills to talk about these topics to their clients.

During my field work in the summer of 2013, Traveler’s World had basic, intermediate, and advanced levels of classes. Students were placed in these sections based on their scores in the placement test given by the NGO. I chose to participate in the intermediate section because the teacher in this section welcomed me to sit in her class. Among the total seventeen students, eight were ethnic Sherpas. Other ethnic groups included Tamang (three), and Gurung, Rai, and Magar (two each). This demographic composition in class largely reflects the population of porters and trekking guides in Nepal’s trekking industry.

I attended the class regularly for four weeks, recorded all the classroom interactions, collected the handouts, and took notes of lessons and activities. I was determined not to interrupt the regular business of classroom. However, both the teacher and the students would occasionally request me to translate some English words into Nepali for them. While students worked in groups, they treated me as an English expert by asking for my help to translate words and sentences for them or to complete their assignments. I wanted to have my role be very minimal, but I agreed to help out when they requested it directly. The teacher was a volunteer tourist from Boston and had majored in psychology. In terms of teaching experience, she only

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\textsuperscript{2} Volunteer tourism is a program organized for volunteers, mainly Westerners, to travel mostly to third world countries for a holiday, and work there for several months in order to improve the lives of the people. For details, see, for example, McGehee (2014).
had some English tutoring experience before she came to Nepal. She knew only a few Nepali words that comprised mostly greetings. The lesson topics included sustainable tourism, briefing of trekking schedules, weather and climate, cross-cultural differences, safety and first aid, and local festivals, food and cultures. The teacher also taught related vocabulary and necessary grammar items that went along with these topics.

3.4.3 Site 3: Guided tours and treks

I established a contact with a tour and trekking company, *Everest Trek* (pseudonym) through a network of a friend of mine. According to the manager of the company, Everest Trek receives about 1300 tourists each year and has created employment for 15 individual tour guides. Most tour and trekking guides were not employed on a fixed salary basis, but would be contacted by the company as needed. That means, Everest Trek was the main, but not the only, tour agency these guides were hired by. According to the manager and the guides, tour guides’ employability depended a lot on a good network with employers as well as their guiding skills and language competence to cater to needs of tourists. Most guides I established contacts with were multilingual, having proficiency in Nepali, their ethnic language (e.g. Sherpa and Tamang), English and one or more additional foreign languages.

I took part in guided tours and treks that produced about 50 hours of audio and video data and more than 400 photographs. I accompanied five tour guides with their respective tour groups from the beginning to the end of the trip, during which I observed and recorded the tour narratives and took notes of how tourism was performed *in situ*, both in the tour bus/van as well as in tourist destinations. The tourist destinations were in the Kathmandu valley consisting of historical palaces, museums, and Hindu and Buddhist temples. My focus was on how tour guides constructed and represented destinations to outsiders. I also took part in two treks in the northern
Himalayas. The first was the Tamang Heritage Trail trek, which lasted for seven days. There were three tourists (one American and two French) and involved a village tour and a cultural performance by an ethnolinguistic minority on the way. The second one, the Manasalu Circuit Trek, lasted for 15 days. We were five in this trek: a guide, a porter, myself and two Australian tourists. However, there were several occasions when we teamed up with other trekking groups on the way and trekked together.

Since most tours were conducted in English and my proficiency was stronger in it (compared to other foreign languages), I accompanied, observed and recorded tour commentaries and interactions that involved English as the primary language of communication. This means tours and interactions that involved the exclusive use of French or Chinese or Japanese, for example, were excluded from the study for the same reason. However, I recorded and took note of any bi-/multi-lingual data that occurred during the interactions. For example, there were uses of French among the tourists, and local minority languages between the guide and locals. I transcribed the multilingual data in local languages with the help of the guide. Recordings were complemented with photographs, field notes and observations collected from multiple sites. I also conducted retrospective interviews with the tour and trekking guides whose trips I joined. In addition to collecting the performed tour commentaries, I also had an opportunity to record more casual talks between the guides and the tourists such as meal time talks and other interpersonal conversations.

In order to better understand the role of multilingualism for tourism work, I interviewed 17 certified and licensed multilingual tour guides and the manager from the Everest Trek, asking them of their language, economic and social life. I asked them what their motivations behind learning multiple tourist languages were, how they made sense of their multilingual skills and
what these skills meant for their work life. These responses helped me understand the political economy of language in the tourism context.

In order to understand how my presence had an influence on my research context and the participants, and how I was influenced by the context, I discuss my positionality during the fieldwork in the following section.

3.5 Researcher positionality

My positionality and identity as a researcher was relevant to all the three research sites: the training classes, the English language classes and the workplace. However, here I focus on my positionality in the workplace and the English language classes because my presence had a more visible impact on those contexts and the participants. I was extra careful in the workplace since my presence could intrude into the regular business of the participants and communities I was researching. I did not want to disturb the workplace dynamics. For the same reason, I planned to follow Stubbe’s (2001) suggestion on doing research on workplace contexts. Stubbe notes that the data collection should not be allowed to interfere with the core business of the workplace, and each recording has to be accompanied by a certain amount of demographic and contextual information. In order not to interfere with them, I first asked two trekking guides to record their tour commentaries and conversations for me, whatever and whenever they liked. However, this became a problem for me to understand since a lot of communication between the guides and the tourists was embodied and context-specific. I realized that every instance of communication was to be accompanied with some observation and field notes. Then I decided to be present in communication sites so that I could have ethnographic notes and interviews with the participants as needed. There were still complexities in being physically present in research sites, particularly due to my dual roles. On the one hand, I had a goal to report as “objectively” as possible the
communicative practices at the workplace, without intruding the regular practice (Sarangi & Candlin, 2003). On the other hand, when it comes to participant observation in ethnographic research, participating in communicative events is often a desired component of research (Blommaert & Dong, 2010). In linguistic ethnography, the researcher, thus, has to balance a tension “between the goal of making truth claims on the basis of the data (which may include recordings, transcripts, fieldnotes, photographs, etc.), and the recognition of the role of the researcher’s positioning, interpretative capacities and theoretical framings in shaping research findings” (Maybin & Tustin, 2011: 522). I did participate but practiced reflexivity regarding my identity, power and influence.

In order to build rapport and trust with the participants, it was necessary to establish personal relationships with them. I developed a kind of friendship and close relationship with the tour and trekking guides I accompanied. For the guided tours, I travelled with the tour group, had lunch and other meals with them and took part in their conversations. For longer treks, there often was a separation of space and services between tourists and guides. Tourists would order from a menu which had listed both local food (e.g. momos [Nepali versions of Chinese dumplings], soups, rice and lentil) as well as more international food items (e.g. spaghetti, pizza, and apple pie). The porters and guides ate dalbhat (rice and lentil soup) by default. The tourists paid for more comfortable accommodation but the workers often slept in groups in rooms that did not have good beds. As a West-educated researcher with an adequate research grant, I could afford the food and accommodation that the tourists paid for, but I chose to be among the workers. I ate dalbhat, drank water from an open source, shared a room and a bed, and played cards with the workers. I drank local raksi (alcohol) with them; that was my first time drinking raksi since as a ‘high caste’ Hindu in Nepali society, I was socialized to refrain from drinking raksi.
Sometimes it was hard for me to digest food and water and, as a result, I suffered from
constipation, but still I did not opt for a tourist identity. One day, I was at the base camp for the
Manaslu Circuit Trek in a tent for the night. Tourists got a better accommodation with warmer
blankets. I, like any other porters and guides, got a thin blanket which was not adequate to keep
me warm. I could borrow an extra blanket paying $1 extra for the night, but since no another
worker borrowed, I did not either. In an attempt to be like one of them, I shivered the whole
night and went through a very rough time. This mingling and socialization provided me an
important opportunity to learn their personal and ‘backstage’ details, which was very important
to understand their work and personal life. I made every attempt to be like them, to the extent
that if I had paid the fees for the tour guide training program, I would have gotten a guide’s
license.

Researcher identities, however, are multiple and participants and communities do not
perceive the identities in the same way as they are projected. For most of my participants, I was a
West-educated, wealthy, urban person from a high caste Hindu family. All of them knew that I
was in the field for a limited period of time and I was going to write my research report as part of
my degree completion in the US. Here is an example of how my identity was perceived in a local
community when we were in the Tamang Heritage Trail trek. We went to see an elementary
school on the way and talked to the students and the teachers there about the school. One of the
school staff, who was from the local Tamang community, thought that I was a trekking guide and
(‘Brahmins’ are clever. They earn foreign currency. Our salary is meager.’). For locals, I was perceived as a member of the Nepali ruling class elites who had access to education, competences in foreign languages and access to foreign wealth. Perhaps, I was perceived as a top level tourism worker who deals mostly with international tourists. After the janajati movement, perception of the high caste people as hegemonic and dominant has been more visible among members from the ethnic communities. On another occasion, while I was in a city tour with a guide and three Australian tourists, I was treated as representative of Nepal and occasionally as a tour guide by the tourists. To recall an incident, we were on a tour to a historical palace in a town close to Kathmandu and I was asked by one of the tourists about the historical details of the palace. She asked similar questions several times. When I did not seem to know the answer, she once said: “Sorry, Bal, to have put you in trouble. Never mind.” Sometimes I would jump in their conversation as a cultural expert of Nepali society. These incidents were not rare, but frequent. My observation and experience resonate with comments made by Cameron, Frazer, Harvey, Rampton and Richardson (1992):

Researchers cannot help being socially located persons. We inevitably bring our biographies and our subjectivities to every stage of the research process and this influences the questions we ask and the ways in which we try to find answers . . . the subjectivity of the observer should not be seen as a regrettable disturbance but as one element in the human interactions that comprise our object of study (p. 5).

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3 Ethnic identities in Nepal can roughly be known from people’s physical appearances (e.g. face, nose, eyes, etc.; and surnames). For example, Brahmins are stereotypically known for their “pointed” nose and they speak Nepali as their native language.
I also approached my research charged with my personal histories, interests, and motivational relevancies and my identities that have to be continually assessed and negotiated with various participants within the studied sites.

It was hard for me to remain “neutral” in any communicative context since my researcher’s subjectivity was bound to influence the context and the participants, however careful I was. For that, it was necessary to undertake a continuous process of reflexivity about the whole process of research. My identity was negotiated and projected in multiple ways and it had effects on the research participants. As Dickinson (2010) reminds, I required both sensitivity and an in-depth understanding of the power imbalances involved between them and the researched. For example, while I was at Traveler’s World, the English language program for tourism workers, I was determined not to interrupt the regular business of the classroom. My presence, however, sometimes changed the environment of class participation. For example, both the teacher and the students would occasionally request me to translate some English words into Nepali for them. When the English teacher asked the students to write the meaning of English words into Nepali in their worksheet, the students sitting close to me would often ask me to help them by translating those words. Sometimes, they would ask me to translate what the teacher was saying in English into Nepali since the teacher was a monolingual speaker of English and the students were not proficient enough to understand English-only lessons. Researchers suggest that encounters such as this are real for ethnographic research and researchers sometimes are in a difficult position to trade off one for the sake of another (Sarangi & Candlin, 2001). I had to make wise and ethical judgements: I sometimes helped the students with translations, but I was conscious enough not to make intervention in a way that was detrimental to the goal of the task.
My presence and participation sometimes changed the interactional dynamics of the context. On several occasions, I was treated as a language expert and a communication broker between the guide and the tourists. While I was in the Tamang Heritage Trail trek, the guide frequently treated me as a bilingual dictionary. Whenever he had a problem in recalling a word or not knowing the meaning, I was invited to rescue him. Let us have a look at the following example.

**Excerpt 3.1: kind of frog**

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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>And here not ah: fish here (.) this area.</td>
<td></td>
<td>No fish?</td>
<td></td>
<td>No fish. (0.3) this here similar frog.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Like salamander?</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ah: ke bhanche teslai. (looking at me)</td>
<td>Ah: what do you call that?</td>
<td></td>
<td>It’s called paha (toad), sir, paha (toad).</td>
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<td>02</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Ah:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Paha bhanche ni sir paha?</td>
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<td>03</td>
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<td>Like do they have tails?</td>
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<td>04</td>
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<td>Like salamander?</td>
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<td>Like do they have tails?</td>
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<td>Paha bhanche ni sir paha?</td>
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<tr>
<td>08</td>
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<td></td>
<td>It’s called paha (toad), sir, paha (toad).</td>
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<tr>
<td>09</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Kind of frog.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yeah.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Kind of frog but we can eat those yeah.</td>
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</table>

The guide was with his three guests next to a pond in a high altitude place. He was trying to narrate the history of the pond detailing its present situation and its spiritual significance. In lines 1-3 in Excerpt 3.1, the guide notes that there are no fish in the pond at present but there are animals similar to frogs. But he does not seem to recall the exact word for “toad”. He asks a question to himself “what do you call that” (line 4). The tourist tries to help him by mentioning the word ‘salamander’ (line 5). There is a lack of uptake by the guide in line 6, and he continues his attempt to recall the right word. The tourist continues to find the appropriate word by asking
a confirmation seeking question (line 7). Then the guide addresses his turn to me in line 8 by using Nepali. Here, the guide is explicitly soliciting my language expertise to translate the Nepali word *paha* into English. I respond to him with “kind of frog” (line 9). Then there is an acknowledgement by the tourist in line 10 and an uptake by the guide in line 11. Although I did not provide the exact equivalent word for *paha* (which would be “toad”), the near equivalent translation “kind of frog” worked as a confirmation device for the guide that helped the communication move to a next stage. Here, my participation was not that of a third party neutral observer but a language expert.

Excerpt 3.2 comes from a cultural performance context by an ethnic minority in the Himalayas and illustrates interactional role as a translator *in situ*. Before the performance, the guide – who is an insider member of the minority community – welcomes the tourists by singing a song in group. Then he is trying to translate the song for his guests.

**Excerpt 3.2: What flew down from the sky**

01 Guide: Welcome to Tamang Heritage Trail. And ah: so ah there’s sang [seng]- sing
02 you know welcome (.). Tashi deley. And akash bata ke udi ayo
03 Welcome What flew down from the sky
04 means ah (.). from the sky (0.2) that is the fly you know. and: purneko jun jasto
05 like a full moon
06 means in full moon. The full- full moon and (.). there’s ah: ah: (.). in full moon
07 (.). full moon. Moon came you know.
08 Tourist: A moon what?
09 Guide: Moon moon - moon came.
10 Tourist: Moon camp?
12 What flew down from the sky was the full moon.
13 (0.2)
14 Tourist: Uhm
13   Bal: It’s shining.
14   Tourist: Okay.
16   Tourist: Um.
   Like sheep wool.
18   Bal: Yeah sheep wool.

From lines 1-2, the guide welcomes the tourists to the trekking trail and to his village by using the bilingual greeting tokens: welcome (English) and Tashi delek (Tibetan). Then he moves on to translate the local song into English in lines 2-5. The song was about the celebration of the Himalayan life traditions where animals and the vegetation are deeply appreciated. The song compares sheep wool with a full moon, white and flying in the sky. In line 6, the tourist, however, does not understand the translation by the guide, and asks a clarification seeking question. Then the guide responds to her with “moon came” in line 07. However, the tourist hears “moon came” as “moon camp” and does not seem to understand the meaning of the song and the guide’s translation. In line 09, the guide also does not get that the guide actually said “moon camp”; rather he goes on using using the word “moon came”, and repeats the translation of the lyric. There is a noticeable pause of (0.2) seconds in line 10. This indexes the ongoing communication trouble. Then in line 11, I (Bal) jump in with a translation of the lyric “something came down from the sky like a full moon” and continue until line 13. This changes the communication dynamics of the speech event: there is an acknowledgement of understanding both by the guide (line 15) and the tourist (lines 14), and the guide continues to translate the song for the tourists in line 17, which I confirm in line 18. There were several other similar occasions where my identity as a bilingual expert became relevant for both guides and tourists to address communication troubles in situ.
My participation in communication encounters in contexts such as the above should not be taken as mere neutral interactional practices. My role as a communication broker and a language expert comes with my power differences with my participants. Although I tried to be one of my participants by training myself in tour guiding discourses, learning about destinations, and by taking part in their back-stage life and activities, I was still not one of them. I was an outsider for them and because of this, power relationships were experienced differently on different occasions. In a sense I was a cultural insider because I was born and raised in rural Nepal where tourism was an important industry. A lot of information that I bring in for making sense of tourism workers’ activities and life draws on my own experience as a cultural insider. However, I travelled to locations and communities which I found very different from the community where I grew up. They were cultural outsiders for me, and I was the same for them. Therefore, the insider-outsider dichotomy does not quite fit in most contexts; my experience, as Jacobs and Slembrouck (2010) also point out, varied in terms of different kinds of insiderness and outsiderness on different occasions. I was operating in a continuum of awareness-unawareness with regard to the enactment of my power and identity during my fieldwork. Heller’s experience from her fieldwork in Canada resonates with my experience in Nepal: “I am engaging in relations of power, some dimensions of which I may be aware of, some of which I may discover as I go along, and some of which I will forever escape me” (Heller 2011: 35).

I was also constantly reflecting on how my research could help the researched community in any way. After I noticed some discrepancies between what students were taught at Traveller’s World and what their actual language needs for their work were, I was able to talk to the Director of the program about a need to address those gaps. I shared with the Director some representative examples of successful communication, miscommunication and communication
breakdowns between the workers and the tourists. When the earthquake of 7.8 magnitude struck the Himalayan region on April 25, 2015, I was able to network with a Nepalese organization in Hawaii to provide immediate relief materials (e.g. rice, wheat flour, blankets and utensils) to the people of Gatlang—one major ethnographic site for this research. Many of my research participants maintain contacts with me through emails and Facebook, and I am committed to consider providing any educational counselling or other support for their children’s education in future.

One may be tempted to know if there lies any difference between the ethnographer and the tourist, particularly in researching tourist-host encounters and destinations. In my participants’ eyes, there may be a lot of similarities of my identity as an ethnographer and a tourist: both take pictures and videos, consume destinations and cultural performances, and are there for a brief period of time. Similar to the tourist, I’m telling and writing my heroic tales of exotic locations and encounters in conference presentations and publications. Tourists do the same, albeit with different forms in different venues. But what makes me different from the tourist is a continuous reflexivity I exercise throughout the research process. Linguistic ethnography, as Jacobs and Slembrouck (2010) also point out, allows me to turn my gaze into the process of research as much as it does to the outcome of this process.

In Chapter 4, the first of the data analysis chapters, I begin investigation of how training for tourism workers prepare them linguistically and culturally to interact with tourists and to represent Nepal to cultural outsiders. For that, I analyze training discourses from a tour guide training program in Kathmandu.
CHAPTER 4
COMMUNICATION TRAINING FOR TOUR GUIDES

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I analyze how tourism workers in Nepal are trained to manage their social relationship with their clients. Nepali tourism workers who are trained as tour and trekking guides get formal training in what they call “tour guiding techniques”, where the management of interpersonal relationships is a key component. My data for this chapter are drawn from instructional lessons from a tour guide training institute in Kathmandu. As my analysis will show, the process of developing such competence involves the interplay of complex language, literacy and communication skills and ideologies-- which are largely shaped by tourists’ tastes and expectations. I show that being competent in the tour guide register is to learn ways to manage rapport and impression in order to make tourists feel satisfied, impressed, pleased and enthusiastic. I refer to the learning and teaching of this register as rapport management training.

Management of appropriate rapport and impression is integral to the workers who provide language labor in the globalizing economic industries (Hultgren, 2011). Since tourists are in search of fun, excitement, wonder and pleasure in their travel (Picard & Robinson, 2012), those who work for tourism should also learn appropriate communication and self-presentation strategies to build and maintain rapport and impression with their clients. Following Spencer-Oatey (2008), rapport management involves a set of communicative strategies and resources used to “promote, maintain or threaten harmonious social relations” (p. 4). Any communicative activity usually has transactional and interactional components. The goal of these two components is different: the transactional language is to convey content and information whereas the interactional language is to build good social relationship and make the participants
comfortable and unthreatening (Spencer-Oatey, 2008). Although there is a good deal of overlap between the two, my focus here lies in the latter because of its central importance in communication.

This concern is also reflective of the recent shifts for a preference of discursive regimes in studying communication in applied linguistics and sociolinguistics (e.g. Cameron, 2000). Spencer-Oatey (2008) further argues that the notion of rapport management pays attention not only to the management of self but also considers the other. In this regard, it makes sense to extend the scope of rapport management to include the notions of self-presentation and impression management (Goffman, 1959) since training for tour guides involves more than the communication component as a resource for rapport management. Combining insights from these works will be rewarding because tourism workers in this study use an array of resources to claim a range of identities and dispositions including desires to be likeable, pleasant, competent, reasonable, and honest. People’s use of language or a particular communication style can influence interpersonal rapport and, as a result, this may generate a particular form of impression on the interlocutors. In the context of tourism communication, a lack of appropriate interpersonal rapport and impression management can have economic consequences for the workers, for example, not receiving appropriate tips or in some cases losing a job. Sometimes, different cultures may have different conventions to build and maintain relationships with communicative partners, and it is important that those in the serving end mostly learn the appropriate social relationship strategies and dispositions acceptable for their clients.

Some key rapport management strategies taught to Nepali tour guides include learning the art of performance, explicit instruction in emotion management, raising awareness about ethno-national stereotypes of tourists, and developing competence in appropriate communication
styles. These training courses largely reproduce and reinforce market-oriented communicative practices in order to effectively sell the linguistic and cultural diversity of Nepal as a commodity. In this chapter, I argue that in addition to teaching the strategies of rapport management in tourist-guide communication, this training subtly invokes power asymmetries between the Western Self and the Third World Other, in which the latter is eagerly waiting to accommodate to the needs of the former. Moreover, I also show that although the training classes portray local languages and language practices as emblematic of locality and, thus, worthy of material exchange, more global styles of communication in “standard” English are valued as legitimate forms of tourist-host encounters.

The chapter is organized in the following way. First, I introduce the background of the data and the relevant tools that are employed in analyzing the data. Then I discuss performance as the key aspect of rapport management and communication training for Nepali tour guides. I then move on to analyze three rapport management strategies: expression of affect, awareness of ethno-national stereotypes, and communication styles. I end the chapter with discussion and conclusion.

4.2 The data

In this chapter, I analyze data excerpts from Mr. Pradhan’s (pseudonym) Touring Techniques class, which represents the first half of the training course at NATH. The reason behind selecting this particular class for analysis is because of its focus on the teaching and learning of communication and rapport management skills, which aligns with the broader goal of this dissertation to study discursive aspects of tourism. Mr. Pradhan was the Head of the tour guide training department for seven years. He had also been working as a tour guide for seventeen years. His major language of tour guiding was English, and he had worked tourists from various
nationalities including Japan, the UK, the USA, Germany, France and South Korea. I am also including data from a lesson by Mr. Baral who was a guest speaker for one day in Mr. Pradhan’s class. Mr. Baral was the president of a Nepali tour guides’ national level association. Training lessons were mostly monologues, during which teachers delivered lectures on various topics. There were no opportunities for the students to practice their communication skills in groups or pairs. Students only occasionally provided verbal responses to the teachers with their laughter and questions.

4.3 Stancetaking and categorization in training

Using a data-driven approach, I draw on some notions and tools of sociolinguistics in order to conceptualize and analyze what discursive skills and self-representation tactics tour guides learn for managing rapport and impression with tourists. In order to analyze the enregisterment of rapport management by paying specific attention to the linguistic devices at play, I focus on how these training discourses construct ideals of social relationship and communication in speaker’s vis-à-vis tourists’ stances (Jaffe, 2009) and categories (Sacks, 1992). As argued by Jaffe (2009), in taking up stances, speakers “project, assign, propose, constrain, define, or otherwise shape the subject positions of their interlocutors” (p. 8). As my analysis shows, these training discourses construct various affective and evaluative stances in order to project the trainees’ subject positions as well as those of the clients they will serve. The construction and display of stances works both ways in the training, focusing on the impression that tourists should experience and the rapport that the workers should learn to manage.

Taking a performative approach to language use, I show that rapport management is achieved by the categorization and display of stances by the speakers using varied modes of communicative resources. In order to analyze different stereotypical characteristics of tourists
from various nationalities, I use the tools of membership categorization analysis (MCA) (Sacks, 1992; Housley & Fitzgerald, 2002). MCA is analytically rich in that it offers concepts such as membership categorization devices (MCD), membership categories (MC) and category-bound activities (CBA) and predicates (CBP). This analytical approach is useful not only to examine the discourses of “national or cultural identities, descriptions and understandings but also to how senses of wider social structure and processes can be located, observed and described within situated action” (Housley & Fitzgerald, 2002: 60). Category bound activities and predicates describe how certain activities and attributes are common-sensically tied to specific categories or devices (Housley & Fitzgerald, 2002). In the context of the present analysis, the categories such as German, British or American can generally be grouped together under the device of “tourists”. Activities and attributes in the present study may include actions and characteristics of different categories of tourists. In my analysis, I will focus on how training discourses construct categories and attitudes necessary to learn about and to reward positive experience to tourists. The use of MCA and stance analysis becomes more relevant when I analyze the stereotypical characteristics of tourists from various nationalities, as constructed in the training lessons.

Next, I move on to analyze how training discourses at NATH prepare students with necessary tactics and language of performance and displays of positive affect. I present the following discursive themes with regard to the performance and construction of rapport and impression management strategies.

4.4 Performance training

Training discourse at NATH offers pre-service tour guides with an opportunity to learn the art of performance in order to display forms of skills and dispositions that are thought to be appreciated by tourists. Both Mr. Pradhan and Mr. Baral emphasized the performative aspect of tour guide’s
identities as diverse as filmic to religious identities. In the data, acting and performing are mostly portrayed as the category bound activities of guides while consuming positive experiences are constructed as the category bound activities of tourists. It is important to note that Mr. Pradhan’s teaching made a heavy use of code-alternation between English and Nepali. When the instruction was delivered in the Nepali language, I provide its English translation in italics in the following line. Mr. Pradhan’s use of English in his original speech is represented in bold. Mr. Baral’s lesson was conducted only in English. As explained in the methodology section, all the excerpts for this chapter come from the “tour guiding techniques” class taught by Mr. Pradhan (Mr. P) and Mr. Baral (Mr. B). The students are pre-service tour guides. Mr. Pradhan’s lesson topic was “Nepali tourism” (guest lecturer) and Mr. Baral’s was “tour commentaries”.

Excerpt 4.1: good actors

261 Mr. P: Maile bhanna khojeko ke bhane, What I mean to say is,  
262 **We have to be good actors.**  
263 Kahile kahi Rajesh Hamal jasto pani hunu parcha. Sometimes we have to be like Rajesh Hamal.

Excerpt 4.2: be an artist

11 Mr. B: This is an art. You have to be an artist like an actor. Sometimes you are an actor. Sometimes you are a director.  
12 So demonstrate that art to please the client.

In Excerpt 4.1, Mr. Pradhan mentions the name of a Nepali movie actor Rajesh Hamal, supposedly the most established male actor in the Nepali film industry to date. This kind of intertextuality categorizes tour guides as people who need acting skills. In Excerpt 4.2, Mr. Baral explicitly categorizes the tour guiding job as an art and for that he uses categorization devices such as “artist”, “actor” and “director”. Performance of such multiple identities is treated as
necessary for pleasing their clients. These rapport management and self-presentation skills are necessary to “please” tourists (line 13).

In Excerpt 4.3, Mr. Pradhan emphasizes that tour guides should put on identities that are sufficiently similar to their clients. Many tourist destinations in Nepal are pilgrimage sites mainly for Buddhists and Hindus. It is common for Nepali tour guides to work with vegetarian clients, and in order to build rapport with them, it is important that their identities are flexible. Excerpt 4.3 comes from the same “Nepali tourism” class by Mr. Pradhan. Here, Mr. Pradhan gives an example of a construction of religious identities.

**Excerpt 4.3: I don’t like meat**

267 Mr. P: Kun group kasto chha tehi group ko environment saga hami adjust hunu parchha.

_We have to be able to adjust according to the environment of the clients’ group._

268 Kahile kahi (.) sadhu santa pani hunu parchha hernus (.)

_Sometimes (.) see we have to become a saint (.)_

269 Kahile kahi monk hunu parchha hernus.

_Sometimes we have to become a monk._

270 **We cannot even eat meat.**

271 Tyaha ‘I don’t like meat’ bhanera pani bhannu parchha.

_There, we have to say ‘I don’t like meat’._

As Mr. Pradhan notes in line 269-271, tour guides sometimes have to adopt particular religious or vegetarian categories of identities even if they otherwise would prefer to eat meat. Identities and cultures are much fabricated here. This excerpt shows that when tour guides and their clients occupy different cultural and spatial positions, they are trained not to be what they already are but to project their identities as desired by their prospective clients. Mr. Pradhan notes that this categorization can be accomplished by verbal communication (for example, saying “I don’t like
meat”) and other embodied works (for example, the action of not eating meat) (line 271). This training discourse is framed in a prescriptive tone by using -nu parchha (have to) throughout the excerpt. This example of enregisterment suggests that it is the workers at the destinations, not the travelers, who are expected to accommodate to the differences that arise in cross-cultural encounters. This is framed as necessary for managing appropriate social relationship with clients.

In Mr. Pradhan’s class, students learn performative skills of sounding positive by staging tour commentaries of places such as Pashupatinath. Pashupatinath Temple in Kathmandu is one of the top attractions for both Hindu pilgrims as well as for other tourists. The temple is mostly crowded with Hindu devotees from Nepal and India. Cremation takes place in the open, along side of the bank of Bagmati, and this tends to attract tourists from all over the world. The river is considered as a sacred river for the Hindu devotees although it is much polluted these days. As Excerpt 4.4 shows, although tour guides cannot hide some “negative” realities such as pollution from the scene, they can exclude them or change the mode of representation from their commentary by using a more positive language. Use of the positive language is framed as an impression management tactic to lead tourists not to notice the negative aspects of the destination.

Excerpt 4.4: negative message

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Mr. P:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>101</td>
<td>Our commentary, our briefing is going to be positive hernus [see]. (.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>102</td>
<td>As far as possible try to make it positive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>103</td>
<td>Katipaya chij lai negative chij lai negative nai garnu parchha bhanne chhaina. That there’re negative things doesn’t mean you should present them negative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>104</td>
<td>For example, holy Bagmati river. (.) It is polluted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>105</td>
<td>I doubt publicly teslai polluted chha bhanera bhannai parchha. (.) I doubt you should publicly say that this is polluted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>106</td>
<td>Tara teslai alikati positive way bata garnus.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
But present it in a more positive way

Bolda kheri ke bhannu paryo ta bhanda kheri

What you need to say is

‘Right now (.) the government is planning to (. ) clean the (.) river.

Okay, there is a special campaign say Clean Bagmati’.

Aphno desko negative sakbhar naboldinus.

Don’t say anything negative about your country as far as possible.

Aba negative bolna thalyo bhane ta

If you want start telling them negative things

‘yesto thauma kina liera aais ta taile’ bhane prasna aauchha.

There arises a question ‘why did you bring us in such a place’?

They came here to see something good.

Part of the performance process is to emphasize what is appropriate and inappropriate to communicate and represent. Use of positive language and, as a consequence, a positive representation of the destinations is constructed within the scope of the category bound activities of tour guides. What is also emphasized is the expectations and fantasies of tourists who expect to see “good” places and cultures. Salazar (2010) notes that such kinds of discourses do an important work of “seducating” [seduce +educate] tourists: guides learn the art of seducing international tourists through education and training. Such an insistence on the use of positive words, and an avoidance of negative words, is, using Mr. Pradhan’s words, to prepare the tour guides to be the “brand ambassadors” of the country. In fact, both Mr. Pradhan and Mr. Baral persistently used the term brand ambassador to categorize the work of Nepali tour guides. Notice the use of the English evidentiality marker (Nuckolls & Michael, 2014) “I doubt” in line 105. Use of this token indexes a display of Mr. Pradhan’s negative stance against the use of the word “pollute” in order to publicly talk about the river in Kathmandu (lines 104, 105). Thus, training for a positive representation achieves two goals here: it pays attention to the expectations from tourists who are largely in search of boosting their positive experience (line 111-113). And
secondly, it constructs and reproduces a nationalist ideology (110) framed for representing the country positively. Mr. Pradhan indicates this by categorizing tourists as people who come to see something good in Nepal (line 113). Also noticeable in this excerpt (and in most of Mr. Pradhan’s lessons) is the use of a “constructed dialogue” (Tannen, 1989), for example in lines 108-109. By using such speech, he is providing what I recognize as expert discourse for developing tour guiding language skills for workers. By putting on a double voice, Mr. Pradhan is constructing his category of an authoritative instructor in the classroom and an experienced tour guide. He accomplishes this by modeling what should be said and how that should be said. By getting exposed to such examples, the trainees are meant to get enregistered into appropriate linguistic expressions for tour guiding.

The excerpts analyzed above show that NATH students are enregistered to be careful in the presentation of self and in performing representational discourses through the effective use of their verbal and embodied actions. Part of this training is to make the front-stage performance different, selective and exotic compared to its back-stage realities. Students learn tricks of performance, which frequently draw a boundary between their “real” self and the “performed” self. Presentation of self, here, is flexible and is in need of adjustment according to the tourists’ needs and preferences, and this involves a lot of acting and, sometimes, telling a lie.

Next, I move on to analyze affect training as a major component of rapport management training where Nepali tourism workers learn the strategies for the display of appropriate affect with accompanying actions and dispositions.

4.5 Affect training

I use the term affect instead of emotion here because affect is broader and includes “a mood, attitude, feeling and disposition, as well as degrees of emotional intensity vis-à-vis some focus of
concern” (Ochs, 1996: 410). Richard & Rudnyckyi (2009) note that the dynamic and reflexive quality of affect and its ability to act upon (or effect) action makes it analytically valuable. Thus, my focus in this section is not to find out about people’s actual feelings, but to analyze how affect and its accompanying communicative resources are enregistered in training discourses as a crucial component of the professional competence of the workers. The enregisterment of affect ostensibly produces workers that can meet the Nepali tourism industry’s expectations.

Classes at NATH focused on discursive production and positioning of workers in terms of affect work that they should pay attention to in their rapport management with tourists. Mr. Pradhan’s and Mr. Baral’s lessons do so through their explicit talk about affect and their display of affect-indexing stances in their lessons. As an example, Excerpt 4.5 comes from Mr. Pradhan’s class on tour commentary and Excerpt 4.6 comes from Mr. Baral’s class. As mentioned earlier, Mr. Baral was the president of the national level association for the tour guides, and on this particular day, he was a guest speaker in Mr. Pradhan’s class. In both of these lessons, emphasis was placed on three important aspects that the students needed to know in order to be good tour guides: information, communication, and service. The instructors emphasized that these three factors work in an integrated way and that it is good communication skills that integrate all three. In both excerpts, the instructors emphasize self-presentation strategies and affect work required by tour guides in order to accomplish the job.

**Excerpt 4.5: have a smile on your face**

121 MR. P: Commentary garda kheri- bolda kheri

*While giving a commentary- while speaking*

122 Tapaiko (.) anuharai risaeko jasto (.) kehi chij bhanda kheri pani (0.2)

*if your (.) face seems angry (.) when you say something (0.2)*

123 Please look at them. Have a smile on your face and then reply.
Excerpt 4.6: smile and smell

01  Mr. B: They don’t like to meet a person (.) with body smelling. Don’t smell (.)
02  They only like to meet a person who is not smelling. So the tourists
03  they have paid lots of money (0.4) so this is the part of (.) the
04  service. We must have a (0.4) tidiness. Tidiness also plays a vital role (1.0)
05  Then the expression. (2.0) You should have a (.) good (2.8) smiling
06  face. (1.0) No matter (.) you have a tension at home (.) you have a tension
07  with a travel agent (.) you should be always smiling (0.2) you should be always
08  pleasant (2.0) Express your satisfaction (1.8) Don’t squeeze your face (       )
09  gloomy: (.) tiri:ng (.) just to avoid tiredness, I told you (.) in tour time
10  also (.) somewhere you can go for (.) short break.

As Excerpts 4.5 and 4.6 show, part of being enregistered into the work domain of tour guiding is learning the art of impression management through self-presentation strategies and effective communication skills. It is not just the use of words or intonation or politeness but a combination of a number of factors including physical appearance, facial expressions and a display of appropriate affect. What is valued here is the simulated performance of personal qualities and dispositions. Tourists are not only paying money for the destinations but also consuming guides. It is important that tour guides learn to present themselves in a consumable way—through their discourses and embodied actions. As Mr. Pradhan emphasizes in Excerpt 4.5, part of performing the tour guide job is to learn to hide negative emotions such as anger and be able to display a positive behavior, for example, have an eye contact with the audience and show a smiling face.

In Excerpt 4.6, Mr. Baral as an epistemic authority in the classroom context constructs the dichotomous distinction between “we” (tour guides) and “them” (tourists) and categorizes tourists as people who do not spend money to consume odors or body smells (lines 01-04). It is quite common for people to smell bodily sweat given several circumstances in Kathmandu, such as hot weather during the tourist seasons, a lack of sufficient water (which may prevent people
from taking regular showers) and polluted air. This comment may also be indexical of differences between what qualifies as tolerable body odor in Nepal and in contexts where tourists come from. Here, olfaction in people’s life may be used as a resource for moral and social approval/disapproval and othering (Low, 2006). Here, the emphasis is also on the commodification of self-presentation (e.g. tidiness and lack of bodily odor) explicitly in economic values “they have paid lots of money” (line 03). Here, Mr. Baral’s discourse draws attention to the tensions between negatively depicted Nepalese cultural selves and the sanitized and cheerful subjects needed by global capital. Lines 05-10 show the importance of affect work in tour guiding. Affect management can be accomplished by a number of positive attributes and impression management strategies such as “smiling face” (lines 05, 07), “pleasant” (08), “satisfaction” (line 08), lack of “gloominess” and “tiredness” (lines 08, 09). These training discourses show that positive emotional attributes are to be put on show and negative ones to be hidden from the scene because there are certain things that tourists do not like (lines 01, 02).

Mr. Pradhan also highlighted the importance of a display of empathy and care along with the display of appropriate affect. The PowerPoint slide in Figure 4.1 shows this.

![Commentary Content](image)

**Figure 4.1 commentary content**
The text categorizes guides as people who should be both entertaining and empathetic to their clients by being cheerful, humorous, engaging and caring. Mr. Pradhan illustrates the meaning of caring in the following way:

**Excerpt 4.7: feeling comfortable**

10 Mr. P: **And be caring. ‘I’m fine. Ma’am (. ) are you enjoying the trip?**

11 **How are you? Are you feeling comfortable?’**

12 Jarurat ta *chaina (. ) tara bhannu parcha. Garmi chha.*

*She may not be feeling uncomfortable (. ) but you have to say it. Suppose it’s hot.*

13 ‘Ma’am I hope you are fine’.

In Excerpt 4.7, Mr. Pradhan illustrates how one can be caring by displaying an empathetic stance toward tourists they serve. Using a constructed dialogue, he addresses a female tourist using a deferential language: “Ma’am (. ) are you enjoying the trip?” (line 11), and “Are you feeling comfortable” (line 12) “Ma’am I hope you are fine” (line 14). Mr. Pradhan, however, indicates that such displays of empathy can be acts of performance since the guides should ask whether their clients are feeling comfortable even if there are no such obvious signs of clients feeling uncomfortable (line 13). In case of tourist-guide contacts, Picard and Robinson (2012), however, warn us that badly or inaccurately performed signs of affect may lead to situations of ambiguity and often to suspicions by tourists of being deceived by a fake smile. In the present context, “natural” display of desired emotions and other demeanors as part of communication work is an inherent part of preparing for the Nepali tourism industry. Such displays of empathy, as Cameron (2001) notes, do an important function of establishing and maintaining interpersonal relationships. Use of such social talks is a positive politeness strategy because it shows a commitment by the speaker to show an interest in the hearer (Hultgren, 2011), which is essential for managing and sustaining harmonious social relationships.
The excerpts and examples in this sub-section are reminiscent of findings on communication and rapport management in different service industry contexts, which I discussed in Chapter 1 and briefly mentioned in the beginning of this chapter. These interactive scenes map onto zones of self-other encounters because all are embedded in service transactions in which affect and several other forms of self-presentation are carefully managed and commodified. In writing about the call center industry in Britain, Cameron (2000) argues that because of the traditional association between femininity and attributes such as emotional expressiveness, empathy and care, there is congruence between these behaviors and “good service”. The idea is “to make customers feel they are not merely being served but actively and individually cared for” (Cameron, 2000: 338). However, the tourism industry in Nepal is traditionally a men’s work domain. Although one is likely to see more women in tourism now compared to a decade ago, the number of such women is meager. The main reason seems to be that it is not a norm in a traditional Nepali society for women to spend nights outside home for paid work, and working as a guide may require traveling with strangers and spending nights at destinations. In the class of 36 students I was sitting in, there were only four female students. And, when I spoke to them, none of them were sure whether they would enter the tour guiding profession eventually. One student, for example, told me that she wanted to work for a tour agency in an office rather than working outside.

The nature of care and relationship management can, therefore, be interpreted from a perspective of masculine caring in a professional context. I argue that the strategies for managing social relationship and rapport with tourists offer us a window to understanding the hierarchical tourist-guide relationship in Nepal’s tourism industry, which can be recognized as discourses of servitude that turn the guest-guide relationship into that of master-servant relationship. The
examples above offer a compelling argument for looking into microscopic interactions of
touristic encounters in order to understand the broader implications of contemporary capitalism
and modernity. The dispositions and strategies that Nepali tourism workers learn to display are
indexical of their membership to a social class or group, intending to serve tourists, mostly for
economic reasons. The commodification of communication in tourism workplaces is also in
some sense the commodification of these workers’ servile persona. While tourist-guide relations
may vary across individuals, asymmetrical power relations and hierarchies channeled through
service and care produce a culture of servitude that is inexorably intertwined with the availability
of low-paid, loyal tourism workers. Overall, the examples above show that Mr. Pradhan and Mr.
Baral enregister the pre-service tour guides into a number of complex performative discursive
strategies to help them develop competencies and communication tools for boosting rewarding
experiences on their clients.

4.6 Ethno-national stereotypes and the production of essentialism

As part of learning the strategies of rapport management, Nepali tour guides are enregistered into
the tactics of building and maintaining social relationships with various tourists in different
ways. Training discourses at NATH show that essentialism is constructed as a necessary strategy
for managing the tour guiding job. In the following excerpts, I show how the essentialist
categorization is used as a tool to construct various stances for an instructional purpose. The
instructor categorizes tourists as representative members of broader ethnic and national identities
and displays various stances toward them. Excerpt 4.8 shows a production of the general tourist
category in Mr. Baral’s class in which American tourists are categorized as a representative
example of their category.
Excerpt 4.8: He has not seen cow dung

17     Mr. B: Sometimes tourists ask silly questions.
18     Don’t laugh because they don’t know.
19     They have not seen things. A man who is in America.
20     He has seen nothing. (.) He has seen his apartment. He has seen his office
21     He has not seen these valleys. He has not seen-
22     He has not seen these cows. He has seen nothing. He has not seen
23     the cow dung. If he has that sort of experience, don’t laugh. Tell him
24     ‘this is a part of our life. This is the everyday life of Nepalese society.
25     If you see in the city malls, you’ll find it different’.
26     So expression should be very pleasant.

Excerpt 4.8 shows that the training lessons are geared toward making the students aware that what is mundane for them in Kathmandu can be exotic, alien and quite new for foreign visitors. For example, it is common to see cows, dogs and other animals around the historical palaces, temples and streets in Kathmandu, and this may be a source of wonder for tourists (lines 17-19). Laughing at tourists’ supposedly “silly” questions is portrayed as impolite and disrespectful, and thus a face-threatening act (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Taking Americans as representatives of the category of international tourists, Mr. Baral then categorizes them as people who have not seen cows and that their life is confined to their offices and apartments (lines 19-24). This categorization essentializes and represents the tourist as an urban, perhaps in white collar category on a holiday, usually from the West. Cow dung can be a new object of gaze for tourists, but may index a lack of cleanliness at destinations. This discourse invokes multiple interpretations. On the one hand, it constructs a dichotomous hierarchy between the more “advanced” West versus the “primitive” third world, categorizing Americans as urban and detached from “dirty” surroundings. On the other, not seeing and asking a question about cow dung is framed as a marker of inexperience, and even stupidity (line 23). However, as part of the
rapport management training, these guides are asked to learn to respect their clients’ questions with a display of positive affect: “pleasant” expression (line 26). Discursive production of destinations using a polite and respectful language is a skill expected of tour guides. Mr. Baral also provides a model of an expert discourse on what to say and how to say it: “this is a part of our life…” (line 24).

Excerpt 4.9 is taken from Mr. Pradhan’s class on “tourist characteristics”. During this lesson, he showed PowerPoint slides and described tourists from various nationalities. Most examples come from his experience as a tour guide but a lot of ideas are drawn from his brought-along knowledge of local history and politics.

**Excerpt 4.9: Hard working**

01 Mr P: By nature, uniharu hard working pani hun.  
*By nature, they are hardworking as well.*

02 Aba Germanharu hard working chhan bhane dekhi (.)  
*Then, if Germans are hardworking (.)*

03 **now you have to demonstrate yourself**-  
04 tapai as a guide (.) tapai pani ke hunu paryo ta?  
*what kind of person should you be as a tour guide?*

05 SS: Hardworking  

06 Mr. P: Hardworking hunu paryo.  
*You should be hard working.*

07 Tapaiharu- euta German chha for example.  
*You- there is one German, for example.*

08 Ma euta example dinchhu tapaiharu lai (0.2).  
*I will give you an example (0.2).*

09 Kathmandu bata pokhara gai rakhnu bhaeko chha (.)  
*You are going from Kathmandu to Pokhara (.)*

10 **Suddenly <your car broke down>**.  

11 German chha bhane dekhi, usko attitude ke hunchha bhanda kheri (3.0)  
*If there is a German – his attitude is like (3.0)*
tyo driver ↑le (.) tyo ke- ke bhancha (0.2) pangra (.) kholi rachha bhane dekhi, (.)
if the driver (. ) I mean (. ) is changing the tire,

he might go there (. ) and- and give a helping hand (1.0)

Aba tyaha nut bhuima khsya cha bhane dekhi,
If a nut has dropped on the ground,

ulle hatta na patta tyo nu:-(0.6) driverko ma lagera rakhidincha
he will quickly pick up the nut and give it to the driver (0.2).

He’s so cautious (0.3) and he thinks that

<he has to> (. ) give a helping hand. (1.5)

Aba client testo chha.
Suppose your client is like that.

Aba guide chai- tapai chai yeta ‘thanks god (. )
but if you as a guide ‘thanks god,

kasto tired bhaeko thiyo (0.2) balla puncture banne bho (. )
I was so tired. Now I’ll have the puncture fixed (. )

Malai anan:da bho’ bhana tapai euta kunama basera chai sui sui-
I’ll just enjoy’ and you stay in a corner and-

SS: Hehehehehehehehe
Mr. P: Yasari basdinu bho bhane
If you stay like that

what sort of impression will that client have?

(1.6)

Maniliu euta hat ma coke liera maja: saga agadi aera
Suppose you have a coke in one hand and you come close and say

‘yeah, everything ↑fine? everything going okay?’

SS: Hehehehehehehehe
Mr. P: ‘Hau dai ( . ) aba kati time lagchha ↑ta:?’
‘Hey brother, how long does it still take?’

Bhanera yesari kura garm bhayo ↓bhane aba k huncha hola ta.
If you talk that way, what will happen?

In Excerpt 4.9, Mr. Pradhan constructs a positive stereotype toward Germans by categorizing
them as hardworking. In order to illustrate it, he provides a hypothetical example of a car
breaking down during a trip from Kathmandu to Pokhara in which a German tourist is likely to give helping hand when the guide fixes a flat tire (line 13). Then Mr. Pradhan makes a hypothetical contrast between the client and the guide: a helpful and caring client versus an unhelpful and lazy guide (lines 16-20) who prefers to rest while someone else fixes the tire. This generates laughter from the students in line 22. Then he asks a rhetorical question in line 24: “what sort of impression will that client have?”. By asking this question, Mr. Pradhan emphasizes that tour guides’ activities should not give a negative impression to their clients (line 24). He changes his footing in line 27 and puts on the voice of a guide. This rhetorical question and the accompanying laughter co-construct a moral stance of the teacher and the students toward the hypothetical soda-drinking tour guide, suggesting that while the client is working to fix the car, it is morally inappropriate for the guide to enjoy a drink. Drinking a Coke is framed as indexical of enjoyment and fun here. The situation would perhaps be different if a group of Nepalis had hired a car and a driver, and the car broke down. The driver would be less likely to get help from his passengers. The laughter in lines 22 and 28 show that the students are laughing knowingly, indicating that they are aware of the irony of not helping in the situation with a German tourist. Mr. Pradhan treats this action as inappropriate and suggests that tour guides rather accommodate to the ways tourists from specific countries behave. What is culturally and linguistically appropriate in a particular context is not predictable a priori, but is in the process of making.

Excerpt 4.10 also comes from Mr. Pradhan’s lesson on tourist characteristics. Here, he continues to construct specific tastes and fantasies of German tourists and suggests ways regarding how the Nepali tour guides can cater to these tastes.

**Excerpt 4.10: Scholarly type**

40  Mr. K.:  Uniharu herdai pani kasto dekhinchha ta?
How do they look like in their appearance?

Padhya lekhya jasto bidwan jasto dekhinchha. (0.4)

They seem they are educated and scholarly. (0.4)

Germans harulai tapaile engage garauna chahunhunchha bhane

If you want to engage Germans
talk about the (. ) arts and crafts (. ) music.

Tesko barema kura gardinus ( . ) makkha parchhan.

Talk about these things and they will be very happy.

And they are (. ) more adventurous type.

If you have offered them any activities
talk about these things and they will be very happy.

And they are (. ) more adventurous type.

Tesko barema kura gardinus (. ) makkha parchhan.

Talk about these things and they will be very happy.

And they are (. ) more adventurous type.

If you have offered them any activities
sell garnu bhaeko chha bhane
or sold them some activities such as
‘let’s go to- let’s go for a (1.5) hike.’
‘Kaha jane ta?’ ‘Nagarjun jane’. ‘kina ta’ bhanda kheri
‘where?’ ‘Nagarjun’. ‘why’.
>‘Because it is going to be very adventurous’.
‘Because it is going to be slippery’<,

Jugale pani tokchha hernus.

They might be bitten by leeches there.

They love that.

‘Wow. Hora? (. ) jugale pani tokcha’?
‘Wow. Really? (. ) are there leeches on the way?’
‘Let’s experience ↓that.’ (0.4)

Uniharuko tyo attitude hernus kinabhane

They have that attitude because

↑they (. ) are very adventurous type.

Because it is going to be slippery (. ) in monsoon time.

(in different places) there can be wild boars also. (0.2)

If you are lucky, wild boars are ( )

‘maybe I should get that hiking’ ( )

Aba tehi kura American lai- American lai bhannu bhayo bhane,

If you say the same thing to the Americans- Americans,

leech chha bhane tya jyan gae pani jadaina hernus.
Mr. Pradhan displays a positive stance toward German tourists by explicitly categorizing them as “educated” and “scholarly” (lines 40 and 41). He also provides the category bound activities that promise to make them happy: by talking about arts, crafts and music (line 43). One major attraction of Kathmandu as a tourist destination is its rich history in art and music. Arts and carvings of ancient palaces and temples have been preserved for their national heritage value as well as for their commodity value for the tourism industry. At NATH, pre-service tour guides learn representational discourses regarding how to represent such heritage and to whom. Here, German tourists are categorized as the appropriate consumers of such commodities. Next, Mr. Pradhan constructs German tourists as adventurous and nature lovers (lines 50 and 51). Instead of constructing slippery hikes, wild boars and leeches on the way as markers of risk and danger, Mr. Pradhan categorizes them as desirable objects of touristic experience (line 53). By taking a footing of German tourists, Mr. Pradhan displays an affective stance marked by positive demeanors such as excitement, courage and confidence (lines 54 and 55). Finally, Mr. Pradhan compares Germans with Americans and categorizes the former as dare-devils who lack fear of being attacked by wild boars and leeches on the hiking trails. For him, Americans are more cautious. Thus, in this excerpt, the focus is again on the expected affect that the German tourist experience, for example, excitement, preference, interest and joy. Even if the hiking trails near Kathmandu valley are dangerous during monsoons, tour guides learn if and how hikes can be turned into an exotic and rewarding experience.

In Excerpt 4.1, Mr. Pradhan describes the characteristics of British people and distinguishes them from Americans.
Excerpt 4.11: Good morning ma’am

218 Mr. P: Americans don’t want respect.

219 Respect sabaile khojcha (.) tara badhi respect garna thalnu bhayo bhane, everybody wants respect (.) but if you start to pay extra respect,

220 They tell ‘come on Krishna (.) we don’t need that respect’ (0.4).

221 ( ) British chha bhane dekhi

222 ( ) if it is a British person

223 Ma guide (0.2) maile uhalai greet gare bhane

224 I am a guide (0.2) and if I greet her

225 <‘good morning ma’am. how are you this morning’? (bowing))

226 Bolda kheri pani ma soft tone bhaera bolchu. ( ) (1.0) maile yehi chij-

227 When I speak I speak in a soft tone ( ) (1.0). If I say the same thing-

228 If I have to say this to the (0.2) another American lady

229 ‘Hi Jenny. > how are you<’

230 SS: Hehehehehehe

231 Mr. P: Pharak hernus hai.

232 See the difference.

233 She will appreciate me with that (1.2)

234 Maile yehi chij

235 If I say the same thing

236 if she was British and if I say ‘hi Jenny’

237 (1.2)

238 SS: Hehehehehehe

239 Mr. P: ‘Malai kina Jenny bhanis’? (0.2) (in a rather arrogant tone)

240 ‘Why did you call me Jenny’? (0.2)

241 British haru ko euta background.

242 Let me tell you a background of the British people.

243 Uniharu ko background hernus ta.

244 See their background.

245 Colonize garea baseka hun ( ) ke bhanchha teslai ( )

246 They had colonized ( ). I mean ( )

247 S1: Ahh:

248 I see.

249 Mr. P: ‘Kunai jamanama ta hamle ta sansari rule garera basya theu ni.’
'Once we ruled the world'.

That sort of ego.

S1: ( ) ‘Sansar bhari nai hamile garya bhanchha’ re tiniharu le
( ) They say ‘we ruled all over the world’

Mr. P: Ho ta colonize (.) uniharulai tyo ghamanda ajhai pani kata kata
Yes, colonize (.) they still have that vanity to some extent.

S2: ( )

Mr. P: Ajhai pani tyo hernus ta- uniharuko influence thau thau ma ajhai pani chha (1.2)
See they still- they still have that influence in several places (1.2)

That means they want that kind of respect. (0.8)

Bhanepachi tyo respect uniharule khojchha hernus. (0.8)

Aba maile (.) American lai for example he is American here. Maile American

lai ‘good morning sir, how are you’ bhanera bhanyo bhane dekhi

For example, he’s an American here, and if I say (.) to an American

‘good morning sir, how are you’

He looks and pats on my back and he is going to say (.) ‘Kamal I’m

not your sir. I am (.) Joe. You can call me Joe.’ (0.2) See- see their openness.

From lines 218-234, Mr. Pradhan makes a distinction between two categories of tourists – British and American – by anticipating their affect in terms of their preference for respect.

Categorization and stance display take a form of a constructed dialog between a tour guide, an American tourist and a British tourist. Americans are categorized as “normal” who do not want “extra” respect in contrast to the British tourists who want that extra respect. In line 220, Mr. Pradhan voices a hypothetical response from an American and categorizes that person as somebody who prefers to be informal in a tourist-tour guide relationship-- an attribute indexing a more positive stance toward Americans. In line 223, Mr. Pradhan takes on the footing of a tour guide and greets a British woman. By using a more formal word “ma’am”, a slower tempo and an embodied action (bowing), he is constructing what is appropriate for a British woman to address with. In line 225- 226, he creates a contrast in terms of formality in language use by
using a more informal and shorter form “hi Jenny > how are you<” in order to accomplish the same phatic communion task. Use of a faster tempo and the informality and brevity of expression here invites laughter from the students. The American woman is constructed as somebody who not only accepts informality in language use but also the one who “appreciates” with that (line 229). In line 234, by taking on the footing of a British woman, he categorizes her as reacting negatively toward the informal use of English. By constructing the woman as arrogant toward a particular form of language use, he is not only constructing and representing the stance displayed by the British and American tourists, but also constructing and displaying his stance toward these tourists. That is, one stance is embedded into other, which I recognize as an embedded stance.

From lines 235 to 245, Mr. Pradhan provides an account of why British want more respect than any other tourists, particularly than Americans do. By invoking the colonial history of Britain, he displays a negative stance toward British by categorizing them as people having an “ego” (line 240) and displaying vanity (line 242). That is shown by the evidentiality marker in line 245 implying “we” can know what “they” want. Wanting and not wanting respect is not constructed as a neutral difference in tourist preferences in terms of intercultural communication and interpersonal relationships but also in terms of what is desired and positively valued from the part of tour guides. In taking up this stance, Mr. Pradhan’s remarks show the dual role played by honorifics in establishing both social distance and social deference. By noting the use of the first name versus a polite honorific address term (Jenny vs. ma’am), Mr. Pradhan stereotypes Americans as people who value social closeness while potrays British as valuing social deference. He asserts that an American way of showing respect is treating others as equals, rather than showing a status difference. An American who is greeted with a more servant-like “respect” may actually feel disrespected because it might show that the guide is not aware of the tourist’s
cultural preference for informality and equality. Not seeking extra deference, being informal, which are categorized as the characteristics of American tourists, are constructed as desirable attributes marked by displays of positive stances, such as “openness” in line 249.

Figure 4.2 was generated from the various categories and CBAs attributed to different nationalities in training discourse in Mr. Pradhan’s class. I am arranging them roughly in terms of which tourists got most attention in the lesson.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nationalities</th>
<th>Attributes and activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Americans</td>
<td>Easy to work with; don’t like deference and formality, open-minded; jolly; like landscapes; don’t like to bargain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British</td>
<td>Very formal in dress and language; disciplined; shrewd; suspicious; reserved; “colonial mind”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germans</td>
<td>Hardworking; scholarly; like arts, craft and music; adventurous; punctual; formal; disciplined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>Noisy; drink a lot; smoke a lot; want to have a lot of fun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>Proud of their language; nationalistic feelings; don’t like to speak English; like arts, craft and music; communal; superiority complex; fond of cuisine; love decorations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australians</td>
<td>Nice people; travel with family; adventurous; money conscious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indians</td>
<td>Superiority complex; like shopping; love to take pictures; not interested in culture and religion; not punctual</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 4.2 Ethno-national stereotypes of international tourists**

As the excerpts above show, pre-service tour guides at NATH learn to strategically essentialize international tourists and by the same token they construct their identities as flexible.
The diversity of foreign tourists is simplified into a set of tidy, concise and knowable categories. Learning about tourist stereotypes is part of developing a cultural and linguistic repertoire to manage their rapport and self-presentation tactics, which must, of course, be continually adjusted. These stereotypes are discursive tools to mark the boundaries between “us” and “them” and also between different categories of “them”. Many previous studies suggest that creating a boundary between self and other reinforce prejudice and discrimination (Haarmann, 1984; Ladegaard, 2007, 2012; Coupland, 2010). In the present context, it seems to make sense to learn these stereotypes at one level as the workers need to have some idea on what kind of tourists they are serving. These stereotypes are at the same time problematic because they paint a monolithic picture of each nationality and demonstrate preferences for certain nationalities. The instructors draw on their work experience and their “brought along” knowledge of local history and politics. Construction of the negative stance toward British tourists (e.g. colonial mind), for example, may have to do with the local history of South Asia which was mostly colonized by Britain until the mid 20th twentieth century. And also, a negative stance toward Indian tourists seems to draw on the prevalent beliefs among Nepali people that India and Indian people have a “dominating” (what most people call a “big brother”) attitude toward Nepal and its people. Rather than teaching them to challenge such stereotypes, the tour guides at NATH are trained to accommodate to and behave like someone else they are yet to meet by being enregistered into the complex array of communication and representation strategies. Following Spencer-Oatey (2008), such a need for accommodation is within the scope of sociality rights and obligations of Nepali tourism workers who are in the serving end. The training discourses show that the tour guides are suggested to put their “real” identities on hold for the time being, if required. Learning about the
essentialist characteristics of their prospective clients is a resource for the tour guides to get their job done by using appropriate rapport management tools.

Next, I turn to an examination of how the instructors at NATH talked about language and communication styles with the trainees. I will analyze how Nepali culture and local linguistic practices are being represented in training discourses.

4.7 Enregistering communication styles

NATH classes focused on appropriate styles and metapragmatics of communication for managing rapport and impression with tourists. I argue that training of communication styles presents some paradoxes: while the teachers pay attention to the need for a display of authenticity and tradition (for which language is a component), they constantly remind the students that they should speak using the language and style that is likely to be understood and appreciated by their clients. Mr. Pradhan and Mr. Baral’s lessons highlighted the importance of local Nepali cultural and linguistic practices as markers of authenticity for tourists.

I start with an excerpt where local language is categorized as a marker of local authenticity. As Excerpt 4.12 shows, one example is the use of Nepali and associated embodied practices in greeting tourists.

Excerpt 4.12: Say namaste

11   Mr. B: Whenever you meet foreigner – tourist (.)
12       meeting them always join your fore hands.
13  Bow down your head and say namaste. When we
14       meet and greet people like this (.) this way we are
15       exposing our culture. Like French say bonjour. German say grüße.
16     Italian say ciao. Chinese say nihao. We must say namaste
17     because this is the Nepalese tradition. We have to introduce
18     our tradition to the foreigners. Then afterward you can say
19     good morning, good afternoon, good evening.
Mr. Baral’s suggestions incorporate elements of Nepali culture and local politeness strategies in welcoming international tourists. Joining the hands, bowing down the head and uttering the Nepali greeting word namaste is treated as a marker of Nepali culture, which is an object of consumption for cultural outsiders. Although this suggestion draws on a conventional form of greeting in Nepali society, it is exaggerated to some extent in order to show extra deference to external guests. Mr. Baral legitimizes this by drawing the greeting tokens from linguistic contexts as diverse as French, German, Italian and Chinese. Following Spencer-Oatey (2008), these tokens are rapport management conventions across cultures. These suggestions work as prescriptions for the students, as marked by imperatives such as “always join your fore hands” (line 12), “bow down your head” (line 13) and “say namaste” (line 13). The instruction is not given as optional but prescribed through such modal tokens as “must say” (line 16), “have to” (line 17). English greetings “good morning” or “good afternoon” are then treated as optional communicative tokens to phatic communion in initial encounters, as indicated by Mr. Baral’s use of a modal and a verb “can say” in line 19. Mr. Baral’s transition from Nepali to the English greetings is ideologically motivated since it treats English as the lingua franca for tourist-guide communication. In the example above, local greeting tokens and politeness strategies are treated as legitimate and authentic resources to start a conversation with foreigners, and such politeness resources are indexical of the commodified discourse in the market. Here, local language Nepali works together with a more global language English.

In order to be successful, these pre-service tour guides are expected to build and manage rapport with tourists using communicative styles and resources that tourists understand. In this regard, the enregisterment of local linguistic resources and styles is limited to only some formulaic routines. In Excerpts 4.13 and 4.14, I show how local authenticity is appropriated, and
also replaced with outsider-centric perspectives that cater to touristic preferences and needs.

Excerpt 4.13 comes from Mr. Pradhan’s class when he explained to the trainees how to introduce themselves to their clients.

**Excerpt 4.13: Hare Rama Hare Krishna**

23 Mr. P: Greet (2.0) okay and then right after that you are going
to introduce yourself. okay, you want to say ‘my name
is Krishna Pradhan. in short, you may call
me Krishna. (2.) It’s like Hare Rama Hare Krishna’.
27 Bhanepachi hasi hasi aphone nam bhanera tapailae

*That means after you say your name with a smiling face*

28 Make sure you have enough time (.) for your (.) introduction.

29 (2.0) okay (.) and if you are fine-

30 Ajha tapaiharule ke bhanna saknu huncha bhane dekhi uniharusaga

*Moreover, what you can tell them is*

31 ‘many of our names are very difficult for foreigners’.

32 Bhanepachi teslai simplify garna khojnus. kasari garnu huncha

*That means you have to try to simplify them. How you do it*

33 it’s up to you. For example, in my case (.) sometimes I tell

34 ‘if it is difficult for you to pronounce the name Krishna,

35 you may call me Kris’. (.)

36 Kris bhanya ke ho ta (.) common name ho.

*What kind of name is Kris (.) it’s a common name.*

37 If they are British or if they are Americans

38 Kris bhanya ke chha ta

*What kind of name is Kris?*

40 Common. Why are you trying to (.) do that?

41 Kina tapaile testo garnu bha ta?

*Why are you doing that?

42 So that they can=

43 S: =they feel comfortable

44 Mr. P: They feel comfortable and if they have any

45 problem they will call you by your name.
In lines 25-27, Mr. Pradhan mentions what and how they should introduce themselves to their clients. He suggests a strategy in pronouncing a Nepali name in a way that is more globally understood, as in the use of *Hare Rama Hare Krishna* in line 26. This is portrayed as a more familiar term perhaps because there are several *Hare Rama Hare Krishna* groups and temples in many cities in the US and the UK – two countries that are referred to in this excerpt (line 37). This is followed by an account in line 31 which suggests that Nepali names are “difficult” for the foreigners to pronounce. By the same token, the focus is on a positive experience that the tourists should feel. What is noteworthy here is that “easiness” is achieved by adopting an English name “Kris” for “Krishna”. Line 36 and 40 provide evidentiality for such “easiness” since this is a “common” name for both Americans and British. To what end are the tour guides trained to abandon their local identities and adopt identities of the English speaking world? This is again for managing a certain impression of their clients: “they feel comfortable” (lines 43, 44). Use of expert discourse reported forms in English lines 24-26, 31, and 34 gives an exemplary model of what should be said and how that can be said.

The combination of a supposedly global discourse (*Hare Rama Hare Krishna*) and an appropriated, westernized identity (Krishna > Kris) from the English speaking world is categorized as a universally recognizable communicative resource. Mr. Pradhan is drawing on the shared repertoires and references to which he thinks tourists are already familiar with. He does not mention the specific ethno-national backgrounds of the international tourists here. In this excerpt again, putting English speaking tourists at the center, Mr. Pradhan’s training discourses reproduce identities of the English-speaking people as a universal tourist category. These lessons did not draw on Chinese names such as Cao or Japanese names such as Kami. Even if visitors from India and China comprise the largest tourist population in Nepal now,
training discourses continue to represent English speaking Western visitors as the primary consumers of Nepali tourism. On a subtle level, such a conceptualization reinforces and reproduces the ideologies of a more powerful Western Self for which the Other is continually in need of changing and adjusting to the former’s needs and preferences.

Excerpt 4.14 provides another example of the messy dynamics between a local identity and the globally valued communicative resources. This excerpt comes from Mr. Baral’s class. Here, his emphasis is on the “correct” use of English as a language of tourism.

**Excerpt 4.14: sukul school and eight**

43 Mr. B: Finally you should concentrate on your language. The language what you speak (2.0). It should be clear (.), it should be precise (.) Now I’ve improved my English. I am not from a convent school. I’m not from the school-boarding school (0.8) English boarding school. I come from (.) a sukul school.
44 SS: Hehehehehehehe
45 Mr. B: Mat school. My parents get- sent me the mat school (0.2) We used to write on the clay. You people are writing on the paper. ((13 lines omitted; Mr. Baral asks students not to make a noise or leave the classroom))
46 Mr. B: I come from a school where I was taught one (.) two (.) three (.) four (.) five (.) six [sikəs] (0.3) EIGHT [ɔːt]. EIGHT [ɔːt] (0.2) I was taught EIGHT [ɔːt] (1.2) Suppose you have- you finish the tour (.) in the evening. (0.6) tomorrow you have to tell your client (0.6) ‘tomorrow morning (. ) the tour will start at eight [ɔːt] o’clock’. you are not doing good (1.4) they will not understand at all because it is not a language. we have to (.) learn the language (. ) correctly.

From lines 43-49, Mr. Baral emphasizes that language should be “clear” and “precise”. He alludes to the fact that those who are not from the convent schools (English medium private schools) should work harder to do the tour guiding job in Nepal. Here, Mr. Baral invokes the existing hierarchies between the two categories of schools in terms of their medium of instruction and their potential consequences for the school graduates. His use of sukul invites
laughter from the students in line 47 partly because it is a Nepali word inserted in an English discourse (*sukul* means “mat”), and partly because it is partially homophonous to the English word “school”. From lines 63-69, he tells his own story of English learning where he was taught [sikəs] for “six” and [əit] for “eight”. While Mr. Baral recognizes the existence of the local variation in English use in Nepal, particularly in vernacular-medium public schools, he displays a negative stance toward it by questioning its legitimacy in the lingua franca context of international tourism. Local English accent is devalued and categorized as inappropriate in NATH’s training discourses. Pronunciation that does not conform to the ideology of “standard” English is not recognized as a language (“it is not a language”, line 68) devoid of its instrumental, and thus, its economic value. And the justification for the *erasure* (Irvine & Gal, 2000) of such a local variety from enregisterment is the assumption that foreign tourists do not and cannot be expected to understand local varieties (line 67). Rather than treating communication as a two-way negotiation of meaning, Mr. Baral suggests that it is the workers who need to understand and be understood by tourists. Researchers (e.g. Heller, 2010; Pietikäinen, & Kelly-Holmes, 2011) have shown that local and marginalized language varieties such as Quebec French, Sámi, and Irish mark authenticity that can be commodified in tourism market. This excerpt, however, shows that such commodified authenticity is not applied in the case of local English. Instead, Mr. Pradhan categorizes English as a language of Nepal’s upper classes who attend convent schools and that is presumably marked with “native” speaker norms. What Mr. Pradhan enregisters his students into are only the centripetal norms of communication

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4 The “*sukul school*” or “mat school” indexes schools with poor infrastructure and facilities where students use homemade (usually from rice straw) mats instead of wooden and metal chairs, benches and desks.
in English, which help Nepali workers produce the talk that is not only intelligible but also comfortable for the outsiders.

As a form of standard and efficient communication, Mr. Pradhan frequently suggested for what he referred to as a KISS formula for communication. KISS stands for ‘keep it short and simple’. He reminded that the guides should be loud, accurate, simple, concise and selective in their language use, but the use of idiom and technical jargons should be avoided in tour commentaries (see Figure 4.1 in the previous sub-section). Avoidance of jargons in such communicative contexts indicates efficiency and a better understanding in communication, and marks a positive politeness strategy (Hultgren, 2011). Mr. Pradhan also indicated that there are ways to know whether tour guides are successful in rapport and impression management with their clients, as his PowerPoint slide in Figure 4.3 shows.

![Assessing Success](image)

**Figure 4.3 Assessing success in communication**

Figure 4.3 shows that success in tour guiding largely depends on managing appropriate impression, which means that the visitors listen to the guide, ask relevant questions, look at what is pointed out and sound enthusiastic. Some positive demeanors are the degree of attentiveness
from tourists, their enthusiasm, cheerfulness, appreciation and curiosity. Here, it is important to note that these are ascribed and hypothetical forms of engagement particularly because the instructor is describing “ideal” tourists. In reality, many tourists wax and wane in their enthusiasm, and find some things more interesting than others. The depiction of tourists as if they are constantly enamored with the guide is hard to achieve in reality.

Analyses of the excerpts above show that training at NATH places aspiring tour guides in Nepal in a liminal position: while they are asked to represent themselves as markers of local authenticity for foreigners, they should also appear knowledgeable enough to represent local destinations and identities in a way that tourists understand. Thus, international tourism presents a double-edged domain in terms of its discursive practices: it builds on cultural stereotypes to market local authenticity while at the same time trying to standardize communication to sell that authenticity (Duchêne, 2009; Piller, 2011). Morgan and Ramanathan (2009) argue that such kind of in-betweenness problematizes modernist discourses that break countries into categories of “western and “non-Western” and “modern” and “waiting-to-be modern”. Tour guides’ discursive work is very important to accomplish their performance of liminality through their adoption of some foreign identities or more globally recognizable discourses outside tourism. However, unlike most call center operators, tour guides are not trained to pass as Americans or British by adopting the latter’s identities or by neutralizing their ways of speaking but rather they are enregistered into certain convergent accommodation strategies where certain forms of communication become legitimate, recognizable and intelligible to their audience (cf. Cowie, 2007). Nevertheless, training for an adoption of the Western identities and specific English discourses both constructs and reproduces the hierarchies of the Western Self and the Third World Other in touristic encounters.
4.8 Discussion

This chapter has shown that pre-service tour guides at NATH are enregistered into complex repertoires and ideologies of tour guiding literacy and communication skills in order to enhance positive affect in tourists. They are familiarized with some most common vocabulary and structure of tour narratives through the instructors’ expert discourse that are in the most dominant tourism lingua franca language—English. Through these examples, tour guides learn the skill of what should be represented and how that should be represented to cultural outsiders. These training discourses show that tour guides’ communication with international tourists go beyond the appropriate use of only linguistic tools such as words, grammar and pronunciation. This chapter shows some similarities with emotion work in service provider settings (e.g. Cameron, 2001; Mirchandani, 2012) where emotion management is a crucial part of communication to get the job done. The training discourses frequently make it relevant that the tour guides should put on a number of identities that display their positive affect. There are two dimensions of affect work that interactively operate here: the appropriate affect displays and the effort of making others feel positively. By explicit teaching of the types and needs of appropriate and inappropriate affect displays, the training lessons enregister the tour guides for emotionally appropriate embodied communication and self-presentation skills and strategies. Tour guides learn ways not only to sound professional and polite but also train themselves to project a positive affect toward their clients using the resources of language and other accompanying actions. They learn to adopt attributes of caring and servitude. These prescriptive suggestions are part of a verbal hygiene (Cameron, 2000) in regimes of good service in tourist industry. What is at the center of everything is the positive affect that the tourists should experience: they should feel comfortable, pleased and satisfied-- which is supposed to be the key end of most touristic
experiences constructed and circulated by NATH. The analysis has also shown that in order for the tour guides to make their clients feel happy, they are trained to learn specific tastes of their clients. By learning ethno-national stereotypes of their clients, they reproduce essentialism as a strategic tool to manage their job. Rather than overcoming the stereotypes, Mr. Pradhan’s and Mr. Baral’s lessons reinforce and reproduce stereotypes. These discourses produce essentialism by constructing stances toward, and categories of, tourists, and raise questions of how these ideas are put into practice in actual encounters.

Another issue that this chapter has brought to our attention is the regimentation of communication skills in today’s capitalist industries. Researchers note that workers in many service industries are trained to use standardized and scripted skills, focusing on the efficiency of the job (Heller, 2003; Mirchandani, 2012). In the context of the present study, although there is a conscious effort from the instructors to teach tour guides a common register of tour language and accompanying self-presentation strategies, they are also suggested to be inventive and creative in their narratives. Discourses and communicative resources that are enregistered as tour guiding narratives mostly focus on transactional discourses with some attention to the interactional and social aspect of the talk at work. My ethnographic observation shows that communication in tour guiding context seems to be less regulated and scripted than in contexts such as call centers in that tour guides are relatively free to invent their own narrative styles and speak exactly as they like, without any close regulations. In addition to transactional discourses, there is an important space for social and interpersonal communication in tourist-guide interactions.

4.9 Summary
Tour guides in Nepal are strategically positioned in a liminal position in training discourses. In order to cater to touristic imaginations, they are trained to continually create their identities as
representatives of locality, authenticity and be the cultural ambassadors of their country. Quite contrarily, at the same time, they are taught to change their identities and their communication strategies in order to accommodate to those of their clients. These guides are enregistered to construct their subject positions as people who know global discourses competently enough to deliver them in their clients’ language in a way that are intelligible to them. They learn communication tools that help them commodify their identities in ways that construct both contrasts and similarities with their clients. Central to such dynamics is the goal of meeting the imaginaries and expectations of the tourists to consume pleasure, comfort, and satisfaction. These discourses and tactics that are meant to address tourists’ experience ultimately feed into the Nepali tourism industry’s motives for economic gain.

In the next chapter, I examine the role of the English language in maintaining social rapport with tourists and in commodifying Nepali cultures and ethnicities, paying close attention to language ideologies conceptualized by Nepali tourism workers.
CHAPTER 5
ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING

5.1 Introduction

In Chapter 4, I analyzed how Nepali tourism workers are trained for communication and management of social relationship with tourists. I showed that training for tour guides included an interplay of complex language, literacy and communication skills and ideologies, which are largely shaped by tourists’ tastes. In this chapter, I make my focus more specific, investigating the ideologies of and aspirations in learning English from the perspective of porters and trekking guides. I will show that Nepali tourism workers treat English as a valuable resource in commodifying local cultures and identities and in establishing and sustaining their relationship with their clients. I will also argue that although tourist-worker encounters are fleeting, their relationships may last longer, and the ability to communication in English is key to maintaining such contacts.

In examining how discourses operate in people’s work space and in their everyday life, I draw on the concept of language ideology in sociolinguistics. Language ideology, following Silverstein (1979), is a “set of beliefs about language articulated by users as a rationalization or justification of perceived structure and use” (p. 173). Given the globalization of language practices, economic markets play an influential role to define and shape the potential economic value of languages and communicative resources conditioned by various sociopolitical settings, policies, and histories (Lorente, 2012). English language ability is exchangeable in a globalized market of the “new economy” that gives importance to its symbolic value (Heller, 2003; 2010; Park & Wee, 2012). Such an economic ideology can be examined in terms of discourses about English and its relationship to access, empowerment, cultural and economic capital, and
inequality (Block, Gray & Holborow, 2012). In the context of tourism, language and communication become both sellable commodities and tools for their exchange (Pietikäinen & Kelly-Holmes, 2011), and an examination of ideologies and practices of English is an important window to understanding the role of English in the increasingly globalized world.

I begin by giving some background information about the workers in Nepal’s trekking industry. Then, I move on to give details of the institutional context where the research was carried out. Next, I provide analyses of interviews with trekking guides and porters with regard to their articulation of English language ideologies for their work and personal life. I will pay attention to their English proficiency, their cultural and linguistic identities, and their relationships with tourists. I conclude the chapter by summarizing major findings and by discussing this chapter’s contribution to the study of language in tourism.

5.2 (Language) workers in Nepali trekking industry

Workers in the Nepali trekking industry include people from several different ethnicities. Jobs that are considered low-skilled such as porter and trekking guide are occupied mostly by people from indigenous ethnic groups such as Rai, Tamang, Gurung, Sherpa5, etc. They are in a relatively disadvantaged position in this industry from multiple perspectives. First, using the term from Wallerstein’s (1974) world-systems theory, Nepal is a “peripheral” country in the global economy, whose per capita income is $694, and the vast majority of Nepali citizens, by implication, are economically weaker compared to the people from the “center”. Second, as members from marginalized ethnic communities, these workers are less empowered in terms of formal education and economic status within the country. Third, they formally benefit only

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5 For many foreigners, Sherpa is the generic word for Nepalese porter accompanying tourists on these treks. However, for Nepali, Sherpa is used as an ethnic category. For details, see Ortner (1997) and Adams (1996).
marginally from tourism; the large proportion of the foreign income from the tourism products goes to national and international travel agencies, hotels and the Nepali government. My key participants are quite aware of these realities and their positions in the industry, as I will show in the analysis section.

Ability to communicate in their clients’ language is a valuable component of Nepali trekking guide’s work. Although it is not uncommon to find guides that speak tourist languages such as Chinese, French, German, Japanese and Russian, English serves as a dominant lingua franca among speakers from multiple linguistic backgrounds. Trekking guides communicate with tourists in order to provide commentary about local cultures, weather and the daily schedule. In addition, guides also talk about themselves and their cultures, an essential element of sustaining interpersonal relationship during week-long, or sometimes month-long, treks.

The nature of interactions between the tourists and workers is highly unpredictable. My ethnographic observations on a number of treks showed that tourists ask any random questions from questions about families to the name of a local plant to the caste system. This unexpectedness is also experienced in interactions with tourists from diverse national and linguistic backgrounds. Although these workers are located in the peripheral zones of the world, their lives are nonetheless equally impacted by the unexpected and constant flow of peoples, cultures and languages from around the world (Wang et al., 2014). In what may be considered as translocal spaces, these workers construct and represent a range of identities and transactions through their communication work with their clients. Some manage to sustain their relationships even after their trips are completed.

The concerns raised above led me to investigate how workers in Nepal’s trekking industry prepared themselves linguistically and culturally to deal with the unexpectedness. Since
much of the guiding work is accomplished, and relationships are mediated and sustained through communication in English, I became interested in learning about these workers’ motivations and ideologies toward English and its use. For that, it was necessary to go further into their lived language learning and use experiences and practices. In what follows, in order to learn about their aspirations and ideologies, I present findings from the institutional ethnography at Traveler’s World.

5.3 The key participants

As I provided details in Chapter 3, Traveler’s World is a non-government organization in Kathmandu offering English lessons to tourism workers, mostly porters and trekking guides. In order to investigate the students’ language learning lives more closely, I decided to choose a few key participants who were willing to respond to my questions and concerns. Six students volunteered to be interviewed, and shared their class notes and assignments with me during the program. I digitally scanned all of their class notes and interviewed them on several occasions. Interviews were conducted in Nepali after the class. Each interview lasted about one hour, totaling five and half hours of audio data and 76 pages of transcriptions. I started the interview first asking their motivation behind choosing to work for tourism. Then I asked them to recall major highlights of their work journey from the beginning to that day. They brought stories of their relationships with their clients, problems with communication, discrimination experienced in work, reasons behind changing their jobs, and issues of employment and payment. Then I asked them why they came to Traveler’s World and why they needed English lessons. Given

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Note that Traveler’s World is different from NATH, which is a tour guide training institute. NATH was the research site for the data analyzed in Chapter 4.
below are the profiles of six focal participants. First names are anonymized, but, with their permission, I retain the family names since they are indicative of the participants’ ethnicity.

**Chhatra Magar** was 40 years old and had completed five years of primary school education. In his initial years working in the tourism industry, he worked as a porter carrying cooking utensils for trekkers. He sometimes worked as a helper to the main cook. Later, he worked as a main cook for four years. He also worked as a porter guide for three years before the company he worked for closed down. He joined the language classes at the Traveler’s World since one of his friends recommended it for him, but he is not sure how this class is helpful in improving his English skills. He said that English communication skills are more important when the guide or the guests are sick during treks. He said that he has tourist friends in the US and in South Africa who have been financially supporting his family. He speaks his native language Magar, Nepali and English.

**Nema Sherpa** is 35. He started working at a hotel when he was 18. He completed two years of formal education at primary level. He also worked as a porter for three years. By learning English, he wants to develop his linguistic skills so that he can talk about Hinduism, Buddhism and weather during treks, as these are popular topics requested by tourists. Nema says that he has a business partner who is British. His English communication skills will help him to promote their business of tourist products such as local handicrafts and arts. He speaks Sherpa, his native language, Nepali and English.

**Durga Tamang** is 34 and has completed eight years of formal schooling. He was born in a rural district of Rasuwa at the Tibetan border. He started working as a porter in 1990. He received trekking guide training in 2005 and is now licensed. He owns a trekking company in Kathmandu and works as a trekking guide for his own company. He also has a guest house, which is
managed by his wife, on a trekking route, the Tamang Heritage Trail. His two children go to private English medium schools in Kathmandu. This is the third time he is taking English classes at Traveler’s World. He says that by improving his English, he wants to be able to communicate on the phone and write emails in English. He realizes that “good English” will give him satisfaction and believes that being able to use English well will create a positive impression on his clients. He speaks his native language Tamang, Tibetan, Nepali and English.

Dawa Sherpa is 24. He moved from a rural district of Dolakha to Kathmandu when he was 17 and started working as a porter. He also worked as an assistant cook during treks. Now, he is a trekking guide. He says that he learned English from his experience with tourists who sometimes correct his English. He completed nine years of schooling from a Nepali medium public school. Before he started working in tourism, he says that he knew only a few English words, and most of his initial communication with tourists was limited to “yes” and “no” and body language. He wants to improve his English in order to speak with tourists who have different “accents”. In addition to Nepali and English, he also speaks the local languages Tamang, Sherpa and some Gurung.

Mingma Sherpa is 24. He joined a German-sponsored Lama school when he was eight. A Lama school mainly offers courses on Buddhist philosophies, scriptures and its way of living. At school, he skipped English classes since he did not like them. Later he joined a three-month English language course for Tibetan refugees. He worked as a porter during three treks. When I met him, he was planning to get training and licensing as a trekking guide. The certificate issued by the Traveler’s World is valuable for him to find a job as a trekking guide. After developing adequate level of English fluency, he wants to open a lodge and to travel to Switzerland where
his girlfriend (who he met through tourism in Nepal) lives. He speaks Sherpa, Tibetan, Nepali and English.

**Rakesh Tamang** is 41 now and comes from the rural district Dolakha. He stopped formal education after he failed in grade 10 – the final year of formal school education in Nepal. He worked as a kitchen porter for six years since 1996. After that he has been working as a trekking guide. His tuition and fees at the Traveler’s World are paid by the trekking agency he is currently with. He says that his English certificate is valuable for him because his current and potential future employers will trust his English skills. He says that he has tourist friends in the Netherlands who might invite him for a visit in the future. Most of his income from his trekking job is spent on his two children’s education. He speaks Tamang, Tibetan, Nepali and English.

### 5.4 Data analysis

This study specifically takes a discursive approach in analyzing the interview data and treats participants’ responses and texts not as reflections of “true” realities but as a window to understand how their social worlds are constructed. I focus on how the participants experience their English language learning and make sense of their experience. A discursive approach to interviews is similar to what Holstein and Gubrium (1995) have recognized as the “active interview”, where the focus is not just on what is said, but how it is said (Talmy & Richards, 2011). The focus here will be to understand how the interviewees use language to interpret their language learning and use experiences and position themselves and others vis-à-vis the English language. In order to approach the analysis, I transcribed all the interviews. Then, following Strauss and Corbin (1990), I coded the transcribed data, identifying the emerging themes and patterns. Below are the themes that emerged from the coding.
5.5 Moving away from “broken English” and coming closer to clients

One major theme that emerged from the data was the participants’ concern to reduce the physical and social distance with their clients during their work. These workers, who were mostly porters, reported that they mostly had to maintain a certain physical distance with their clients while carrying loads. Even if they had a minimum physical distance, the fact that their major work duties required them to carry trekking gear and other loads did not require them to talk to their clients until they had some emergency situations about the local weather or their health problems. They told me that that they would rarely initiate conversations and often did not speak until they were asked. All of them regarded the porter job as physically challenging and not prestigious. When I asked them what kind of work they started with, they often hesitated to utter the word “porter”, although the loan English word is already a part of Nepali vocabulary. They instead told me that they worked as bhari bokne (to carry load), avoiding the word “porter” altogether. For many people in Nepali tourism and beyond, the word “porter” is a marker of low-wage labor, that lacks prestige, and as a result, it is a stigmatized identity for the workers who belong to that category of the job. For many of them, moving from porters to trekking guides indexed mobility for economic and symbolic reasons: they would earn more money if they could be trekking guides since guiding was a more prestigious profession compared to carrying loads.

In Excerpt 5.1, Dawa makes a distinction between two types of workers: those who want to remain porters throughout their lives and those who want to transform to a more prestigious and rewarding job. For him, those wanting to change themselves should strive to be guides. Dawa also recognizes English as the common lingua franca in such workplace contexts and is used to communicate with people from diverse nationalities. He also notes that it takes a while for these workers to be familiar with their clients’ English. Dawa also categorizes “native” speakers’
accent (such as British accent), as difficult to understand. His account resonates with findings in English as a lingua franca research (e.g. Seidlhofer, 2004) where researchers report that higher intelligibility is achieved in communication between the non-native speakers of English compared to the native speakers.

**Excerpt 5.1: Some carry loads all the time**


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7 Nepali tourism workers use words *khaire* and *kuire*, referring to white hair and blue eyes, to mean the “White” tourists from the West. During my ethnographic work, I found that *khaire* is used a category to refer to tourists in general (excluding Indian tourists). Please also note that most tourists who go for trekking in the Himalayas are from the West.
inform. Some people walk in two or three meters’ distance. Some Whites (Khaire) tell them to walk in 5-10 meter’s distance. It depends on the situation as well. At the Annapurna trek, there is no problem even if they walk in a one-hour distance. If one is a guide, s/he can walk with the tourists. We can talk to them.

The participants mentioned that porters often experience discrimination at work. The trekking guides have more power than the porters, and that power lies in the guides’ job entitlement as a senior worker in the hierarchy as well as their better communicative ability to interact and remain closer to their clients. Sometimes, guides deliberately ask porters to maintain a certain physical distance, as Dawa’s response to my question “How far is the distance?” in Excerpt 5.1 shows. Here, physical distance is consequential for the social distance between the tourists and the porters: the farther the physical distance, the wider the social distance. The guides, thus, are more powerful because they are literally closer to the clients physically as well as communicatively. Since the porters are less likely to have frequent verbal interactions with their clients, they may be deprived of receiving tips or of developing any interpersonal relationships. During the informal chats, the participants also told me that sometimes the senior guides do not distribute tips to their porters even though the clients tipped for all of them. Rakesh, another porter, also told me that sometimes the guides receive tips which should be divided between them and the porters, but if the guides know that porters do not know about the tips, the guides may not distribute the amount to them.
This led me to learn about the types of language skills and competence they aspire to develop. Both during my observation of the Travelers’ World’s English lessons and in the interviews, I asked the participants to describe and evaluate their current level of English proficiency. Many of them told me that they speak “broken English”. Rakesh defines his “broken English” in Excerpt 5.2.

**Excerpt 5.2: “Broken” English**

| Bal: Ke ho tyo broken English bhaneko? | Bal: What does this mean? |
| Rakesh: grammar ramro hudaina. Word order pani mildaina. Word word ma bolne ho sir. Accent ramro hudaina hamro ta. Hau bhausa ma bolnu parcha. | Rakesh: Grammar is not correct. Word order is not correct. I speak in words only, sir. We don’t have a good accent. We should speak it using gestures and body language. |

For Rakesh, “broken English” has certain characteristics such as incorrect use of grammar and word order. Rather than speaking in full sentences, “Broken English” speakers speak in words only. Rakesh notes that this type of English use lacks a proper accent and the speaker needs to make use of gestures and body language. These features make it different from a “standard” English use. His response includes the use of metalinguistic terms, mostly in English. This shows that Rakesh is aware of the meaning and use of the terms such as “grammar”, “word order”, and “accent”, which seem to serve as a set of criteria against which a good communicative ability can be evaluated.

Then I was curious to see some examples of what Rakesh and others meant by “broken English”. I went through all the completed assignments and class notes of the focal participants.
Their written English had many characteristics of their “broken English”. Figure 1 was taken from Chhatra’s class notes.

Figure 5.1: Chhatra’s English class notes

The notes in Figure 1 were produced by Chhatra during a group work in his English class. The students were asked to report their activities in the past simple tense. Chhatra took notes using the past tense before he reported his activities to his group members and to the teacher. Chhatra told me that his writing represents English words as he hears them. The first few lines are in Nepali with occasional translation into English and vice versa. His literacy skills in Nepali also
show characteristics that do not conform to standard Nepali writing. For example, the word उभएचा (ubhaecha) in the second line should be उभएचर (ubhaechar) in standard Nepali, and the word डेफे (defe) in the third line should be डाँफे (danphe) if we follow the standard writing system in Nepali. Similarly, Chattrà́’s English writing shows orthographic peculiarities in its use: he uses “treek” for “trek”, “languse” for “language”, “contuse” for “continuous”, “averyd” for “everyday”, “staday” for “Saturday” and “vigited” for “visited”. Chhatra’s problems are not limited to spelling only. These writing literacy practices are also reflective of peculiarities in his pronunciation as well. For example, in his classroom interactions, he often used pronunciations such as [wither] for “weather” and [ges] for “guests”. For many workers like Chhatra, “broken English” is a problem in the sense that it is “insufficient” and “deficit” when compared to the dominant norms of language use.

This observation then led me to explore more about their aspired level of competence in English. I noticed that although these workers wanted to improve their English skills, they did not aspire to be very competent in it. Chhatra, for example, recognizes that too much English can cause him trouble. In Excerpt 5.3, he highlights the importance of speaking minimally with his clients.

**Excerpt 5.3: Clients do not like a lot of English**

Chhatra: Mero experience anusar dherai English chha bhane pani uniharuko client le ramro mandaina. Aba dherai angreji janne harule aba kura gardai jada yo thauma yeto huncha re yesto garcha re bidesilai bhandai gayo nepali le aba overtake gardai jancha ni

*Chhatra: To my experience, if a guide knows a lot of English, the clients will not like him. In course of trekking, tourists will also talk about different places and activities. When the guide knows a lot of English, he becomes a loudmouth;*
ani unihar bu bak bak gardai jancha. ‘Ma Napal ma janmeko, malai thaha nabhae talai kasari thaha huncha?’ Bhanne kura haru bhayo. Testo hudo rahecha bhanu na.

Bal: eh ho?

Chhatra: Mero gau ko pani euta dai hunuhuncha.

Tour guide leader pani garnu huncha. Prayajaso time time ma guest haru saga thak thak thuk thuk pari rakheko huncha. Tehabata tyo company bata arko company ma jane. Maile bujhda badhi angreji jane pachhi testo huncha. Malai ta thikka jane pugchha.

he speaks too much overtaking the clients. The guide may think ‘I was born in Nepal and how can you know more than I do?’ These kinds of things happen.

Bal: Oh yeah?

Chhatra: I have one elder brother in my village.

He is also a tour guide leader. He frequently has conflicts with his clients. He moved to another company. In my understanding, this happened because he knows more English. I want to learn just the right amount.

In Excerpt 5.3, Chhatra notes that having better English skills as less desirable since a stronger competence in English may lead one to be more talkative. Chhatra displays his negative stance toward a guide who speaks a lot, using the word bak bak (chatterbox), and by the same token, he positions himself as somebody who does not wish to be too competent in English. He uses a reported thought of a worker who brags of his legitimacy of knowledge as a Nepal-born guide and displays an arrogant stance (using a non-honorific pronoun ta for “you”) toward a hypothetical tourist who does not seem to acknowledge this legitimacy. Chhatra also gives a reference of his colleague from his locality who had to suffer for speaking too much English. Chhatra, thus, treats better speaking skills as potential tools for making one a chatterbox, which can be a cause of conflicts between workers and tourists. He just wants to learn the “right” amount so that he can avoid being an annoying loudmouth. So, according to Chhatra, it becomes economically disadvantageous to learn too much English since it may lead to a job loss or
deprive one from receiving better tips. His response shows that there are contradictory positions of English in his life. While developing communicative skills is a catalyst for his economic mobility, it has to be approached with a caution.

Chhatra and other participants frequently pointed out that developing competence in Standard English was not their goal. The tourism workers’ repertoires of literacy and their economic value exist alongside other economies and job markets in Nepal which require more diverse and sophisticated repertoires. These workers’ local English norms do not challenge the dominant, more “standard” norms. Although improvement of their English skills is desirable, these workers seem to treat sophisticated levels of English as belonging to a separate domain, which is seen as inaccessible, and even unnecessary for them. Heller (2010) notes that that the new economy is caught in contradictions between standardization and flexibility. While the formal curricula and trainings try to inculcate the “standard” norms in language use, workers in the new economy continue to deviate from the centripetal norms for their own ends, which are often economic. Nepali tourism workers’ truncated repertoires (Blommaert, 2010), thus, are resources for the formation and sustaining of their distinct group identity in which language serves as a part of the total skillset. There is a value of the combined use of language skills, service and self-presentation (such as loyalty and honesty). These qualities are perceived as desirable by their clients.

5.6 English for commodifying cultures and identities

Another theme that emerged from my fieldwork was the role of English for constructing local cultures and identities as commodities for outsiders. Tourism market has created conditions for Nepali tourism workers to re-learn their own cultural practices in a way that can be neatly explained to people from cultures different from their own. Their identities and cultural
practices, which are largely a part of their subconscious domain, should be articulated in a
presentable way, in bits of information. The participants told me that conversations that occur
during treks tend to be different from those that take place in guided tours. Rather than speaking
on pre-planned topics, trekking guides are likely to be asked any random questions by their
clients. Nema notes that he wants to develop communication skills in English in order to be able
to talk about his culture and religion (Excerpt 5.4).

Excerpt 5.4: We need to talk about our culture

Nema: Communication chahine chai bises gari hamro culture ra religion bisaya ma bhannu parda. Uniharulai impression parne kurama communication important hudo rahecha.

Bal: In what contexts do you need to speak while you are at work? What kinds of skills do you need?
Nema: Communication is especially necessary when we need to talk about our culture and religion. Communication is important while talking about stuff that they are impressed with.

Cultural and religious practices and norms are already a part of their knowledge repertoire; from
what I observed in their interviews, the guides felt that what they need further are language skills
in order to commodify their identities and cultures. Nema uses the word “our”, which may index
two things: it may mean cultures and religions in Nepal or the cultures and religions of his own
ethnic communities. Good communication skills and knowledge about local cultural and
religious practices are constructed as resources that impress tourists.

Another participant, Durga, has a teahouse in the Tamang Heritage Trail. Having worked
in this industry for years, he is familiar with tourists’ tastes and interests. In Excerpt 5.5, as a
member of the Tamang ethnic community, Durga indicates that tourists are interested in his
Tamang heritage culture. In order to be financially successful in tourism market, both Durga and his wife need English to talk about their culture. They should be able to explain Tamang food, dress and other cultural practices. Such skills are necessary when he has to translate and explain his culture and religion to the cultural outsiders and this is a part of his job for both face-to-face and mediated-communication such as telephone.

Excerpt 5.5: Whites ask about Tamang culture


Bal: kasto kura?

Durga: Tamang ko dress, food ani aru thuprai kura. Uniharuko qestiona ko answer dina sakena bhane khusi hudainan. (0.3) Tara mero budile angeji jandaina. Thorai matra. Tehi ‘yes’, ‘no’ ani menu ko item haru. (0.3) Ajkal ta phone ma pani angreji bolnu parcha maile.

Durga’s response in this excerpt also reminded me of some activities in the English class that Durga and his friends were assigned to. As part of their assignment, they had to write an essay explaining who they were (their ethnic identities, major festivals, and food and dress). Durga told me that in order to complete the assignment, he made use of his cultural knowledge that he acquired informally, in a less conscious way. The guides who are not from the Tamang ethnic background read about Tamangs in books and in the internet in order to equip themselves with
necessary language and cultural tools to talk to their clients during the Tamang Heritage Trail trek.

I also asked my participants whether their ethnic identities empowered or marginalized them in their profession in any way. More specifically, I wanted to understand how Sherpa and other ethnic communities view their ethnic identities in this profession and in the tourism market. It is important to consider the historical aspects of ethnic identity because discourses and representation of ethnicity have influenced and been shaped by tourism. When mountaineering expeditions became increasingly popular in the 1950s and 60s, Westerners in particular came into contact with the Sherpa who primarily assisted mountaineers in their capacity of porters and guides. Sherpas since then have been the primary contacts as people climbed mountains and have stereotypically been characterized with such personal qualities as loyalty, cheerfulness, bravery and stoicism even in the face of appalling mountaineering hardships – qualities deemed increasingly hard to find in Western societies (Ortner, 1999). Lim (2004) notes Sherpas are thought to have embraced these images of them and constructed an identity mirroring the desires of Westerners. This process also help Sherpas to seek out their own cultural practices that would mark them out as “different” (Adams, 1996). This has impacted how tourists construct the Sherpa identity. Mingma’s response in Excerpt 5.6 largely represents this discourse.

**Excerpt 5.6: Sherpas are strong**

Mingma: Khairele sodhcha ‘where are you from?’ Ani maile ‘I’m from Sherpa community’ bhanyo bhane khaire khusi huncha. Yo ta himal bata aeko manche rahecha. ‘Oh you are from Sherpa community’? Teti khusi bhaera sodhda ni

Mingma: Whites ask ‘where are you from?’ And if I tell them I am from the Sherpa community, they will become happy. He thinks the Sherpas are from the mountains. ‘Oh you are from the Sherpa community?’ He is so happy when he asks this.
They think that Sherpas are strong. They need less oxygen as they are from the bottom of the mountains. And if the workers are from other ethnic groups such as Tamang, it seems that the Whites consider them inferior. The Sherpas are famous in the world for their honesty.

Mingma indicates that Sherpas as an ethnic category are an object of consumption for foreigners. The construction and representation of the Sherpa identity is largely discursive here, being carried out in interactions using English. Mingma, for example, takes on a footing of a tourist and puts on his voice “Oh you are from a Sherpa community?” His reported voice represents the tourist’s emotional stance toward the Sherpa guide—a positive evaluation. This excerpt indicates that the Sherpa identities such as honest, strong and best acclimatizers are constructed, represented and conveyed through appropriate communication skills.

Adams (1996) noted that due to the consumable quality of the Sherpa identity in the tourist market and its potential economic benefits, people from other non-Sherpa ethnic backgrounds (such as Tamang and Rai) sometimes claim their ethnic identities as Sherpas. Note that the participants in this study consisted of people from other ethnic groups who could easily pass as Sherpas in terms of their physical appearance. That means their identity at their work would largely depend on how they discursively represent themselves to their clients. I asked the non-Sherpa porters and guides regarding how they viewed their ethnic identities in the tourist market. Chhatra is from the Magar community and he is aware of how the Sherpa identity is valued in the tourist market. In Excerpt 5.7, he indicates that although Sherpas were very popular
guides and porters in the past, this situation has changed. That is, that one is Sherpa does not necessarily mean that the clients will like them.

**Excerpt 5.7: Sherpas are not the only good people**

Chhatra: Ahile nai ta teti farak dekhidaina. Pahile chia hamile bharkhar bharkhar kaam garda chai ke hunthyo bhane kuireharule Sherpa bhane pachi jasto naramro kaam gare pani one of the best bhanera bhanthe bhane tara ahile khas bideshi le pani sherpai matra ramro ho bhanne chiana tara kasto ho bhane uhaharulai paila Tenzing Norgay Sherpa le himal chadeko le garda euta le garda sabaiko naam bhayho. Testo ho. Arule jasto ramro English bolero batauna sake pani uniharule accent ma boleko bhar ma pani ramro mancha. B: ke bhannu bhako?

Chhatra: I don’t see much difference now. In the past, when we had just started working, the Sherpas were considered as one of the best even if they did not perform well. But now, foreigners have realized that Sherpas are not the only good people. Because Tenzing Norgay Shepa first ascended Everest, Sherpas were popular. That’s the reason. Even if other people speak good English, the Sherpa were considered good guides despite their poor English abilities. Even if they say oh yes and no, this is enough sometimes. In this profession, one has good English does not necessarily mean that he will do good because the clients will see the performance as well.

Chhatra’s response in Excerpt 5.7 largely represents disadvantaged people from other ethnic communities who were considered equally capable of working as porters or guides, but were less positively valued in the market in the past. Chhatra’s response indicates that tourism as a commodity gives importance to a combination of skills and dispositions that are valued in this work. This suggests that good communication skills do not guarantee a better job performance.
Nor do they necessarily increase their wages. What is equally important for the porters is the physical work and service they provide.

Anthropologists report that ethnic Tamangs were mostly discriminated against in tourism work because Sherpas occupied the high paying guiding jobs (Ortner, 1996). In Excerpt 5.8, Rakesh who is also from a non-Sherpa (Tamang) background indicates that Sherpas are a desired object of tourist consumption and gaze. Putting on a voice of a tourist, he says that Sherpa bhaneko chuttai ho, indicating that Sherpas are different from other ethnicities, and are, thus, special. However, Rakesh does not regret being a Tamang. He comments that although having a Sherpa ethnic identity privileges some to some extent, intelligible communication skills (both verbal and non-verbal) and service are more important.

**Excerpt 5.8: Sherpas are different**

Bal: Sherpa hunu ra aruma ke pharak chha?  

Bal: What is the difference between the Sherpa and others?  
Rakesh: I have found that many tourists consider Sherpas differently. But I never wished that I were a Sherpa. Our language and body language should be good. If we give them a good service, they’ll be happy.

Thus, it is not only the destinations that the tourists are consuming, but services and identities of the service providers. The construction and representation of cultures and identities is largely discursive carried out in English and other semiotic modes. The participants recognize that English skills are necessary to talk about their own and others’ identities and cultures to the foreigners, and some identities are valued more positively than others in the market. Being an
indigenous ethnic group within Nepali society presumably connects with its commodifiability (yet for certain communities only) within the context of tourism. It, thus, creates a complex and multilayered identity of being marginal within the context of ethnolinguistic identity and politics in Nepal, but being at the central of the tourism industry. The internal politics in Nepal recognize Tamang, Rai, Sherpa, and Gurung – the ethnic background of these porters and guides – as politically and economically marginalized groups (Lawoti, 2010). The tourism industry, however, puts Sherpas being at the center compared to other ethnic groups. Although the non-Sherpa workers recognize asymmetry in terms of ethnicity, they, however, do not seem to devalue their own ethnic identities. This contrasts with observations made by Adams (1996). This positive valuation of can be explained in terms of the ethnic identity movements in the current politics of Nepal. Due to the increased awareness of identities and rights of the indigenous groups in recent years, people have started valuing their ethnic and linguistic identities more positively in Nepal. Ethnic identities, for many, are resources for their pride and tools to claim their economic, educational, political rights and privileges (Lawoti, 2010).

### 5.7 English skills and aspirational positions

Nepali tourism workers also have a desire to establish interpersonal relationships with foreigners through their communication. Lawson and Thurlow (2007) note that the Gambian destination guides continually strive for developing friendship with their guests, however, fleeting it may be. Such a trend has also been briefly mentioned in the context of Nepal by a number of anthropologists (Fisher, 2004; Ortner, 1999). Lin (2004) notes that Nepali tourism workers in general harbor a desire to develop interpersonal relationship with their clients to benefit economically. Further examining this aspect reveals changing dynamics of interpersonal relationships and identities in the context of the new economy.
During treks that last for weeks to months, Nepali tourism workers have opportunities to engage in more intimate interactions with tourists and talk about their personal and family life. They may also have chances to talk about their financial needs and hardships. These porters and trekking guides told me that their salary alone is not enough to support their family. They largely depend on tips and other forms of generosities from their clients, and most of the time this is an important motivation for wanting to work in the tourism industry. Many of the interviewees told me that they either have established more sustained forms of relationships with their clients or seek to do so in the future, although, as they indicate, all of them may not be able to do so.

**Excerpt 5.9: Relationships with clients**

Bal: Do you have a relationship with your clients only during the trek or does it continue after that as well?

Dawa: Relation, communication and contact continue. We should be honest during treks. We’ll certainly get rewards from that. If we are honest, contact with the client continues. I still have many White clients in my contacts.

Bal: Kam garunel matra ho ki kam sakiepachhi pani client saga sambandha huncha?

Dawa: Relation, communication and contact bhai rakcha. Trekking ma hami imandar hunu parchha. Imandar bhae pachhi aba imandar gareko phaliphap ta pauchha ni tapaiko. Imandar bhaepachhi contact ta bhai halchha ni. Hami saga ahile trekking ma gaeko dherai khaire haru contact mai chha.

For example, in Excerpt 5.9, Dawa indicates being *imandar* (honest) is key to *phaliphap* (rewards), and such *phaliphap* is indexed often by economic gains or extended networks. Maintaining and contacting with foreigners, especially “White” tourists, is considered a symbolic and social capital that can enhance prestige among peers. In Excerpt 5.10, Rakesh also narrates a story of his relationship with his foreign clients.

**Excerpt 5.10: I have two friends**

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Rakesh: Dui jana sati chha. Euta Germany ma ani arko Holland ma. Holland bata Phillip le 200 dollar pathyo. 6 barsa samma. Chhora chhori ko school fees tirna support bhayo. (0.2) Malai Holland jana man chha. Phillip le ‘I will see’ bhaneko chha.

Bal: Ani kasari kura hunch ta?
Rakesh: Ma cyber janchhu ra chat garchhu. Facebook ma pani chat-message huncha sir hamro. Phillip pheri pani Nepal aauchu bhaneko chha. (0.2) Aba auda Langtang trekking jane ho.

Rakesh: I have two friends. One in Germany and another in Holland. Phillip from Holland sent me 200 dollars. For six years. It helped me pay my children’s school fees. (0.2). I want to go to Holland. Phillip has said ‘I’ll see’.

Bal: And how do you communicate with him?
Rakesh: I go to cyber and chat with him. I also chat-message him in Facebook, sir. Phillip has told me he’ll come to Nepal again (0.2) When he comes, Langtang will be our next trek.

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In Excerpt 5.10, Rakesh positions himself as a *sathi* (friend) of his clients. Use of this word indexes an increased intimacy and minimization of interpersonal distance between the two. The fact that his “friends” are from the Netherlands and Germany and that he wants to plan to travel to one of those countries shows how interpersonal relationships are imagined and constructed through tourist-worker encounters. Rakesh’s connection extends beyond his local and national boundaries, sometimes through online communication tools, and communicative resources are necessary tools for that connection. Rakesh indicates that English skills are necessary to communicate with his friends through online tools. In most cases, communication between guests and Nepali tourism workers occurs in English as a lingua franca.

With a continual relationship with their clients, these porters and trekking guides may have a chance to serve the same clients again. Many of the participants told me that they have better chances of strengthening their interpersonal relationship during the repeat trips. Those who
were married and had children harbored an expectation to find sponsors for their children’s education.

**Excerpt 5.11: They support daughter’s education**

Chhatra: Uhaharule chai malai Western Union

Money Transfer bata pathaunu hunchha. Ahile chai

normally bhannu pardha uhaharule chai malai thulo

chhori padhna ko lagi sahayog garnu hunchha. Tesai

karan le maile padhauna sakeko. Natra ta maile

aphone kamaile garo hucha. Jastai maile first year

ko lagi kati tire hola bhane college ma hostel ko

samet garera 80 hajar bhanda badhi bujhaisake.

B: Ekpatakma?

Chhatra: Ho ekaipatak ma. Teti paisa ta mero

aphno kamaile ta asambhav thiyo. Jethi chhori ko

aba 12 clear hune ho.

Bal: Ani angreji sikera ke garne ta?

Chhatra: Kam lai chaihinchha hajur (.). Kura garna

jannu paryo ni. Ani tyo sathi haru saga email

lekhna jannu parcha. Ahile ta chhori le help

garchhe. Tara sadhai testo nahola.

**Chhatra: They sent me through Western Union**

Money Transfer. Now they are supporting my

eldest daughter’s education. This is the reason I’ve

been able to send her to school. Otherwise, it will

be difficult for me to support her only with my

income. I think I paid more than 80 thousand

rupees for my daughter including fees and hostel

charge for the first year.

Bal: At a time?

Chhatra: yes, in one time. This amount is

impossible for me from my work salary. Soon, she

is going to complete grade 12.

Bal: Then what will you do with your English?

Chhatra: I need it for my work (.). I need it to talk.

And I want to learn to write emails to my friends.

Now, my daughter is helping me. But she may not

be able to do so all the time.

Chhatra, in Excerpt 5.11, told me that he has been able to give quality education to his daughter due to the financial support from his clients. Eighty thousand Nepali rupees (which is equivalent to $800) as school fees is an expensive amount for any average Nepali. Chhatra indicates that income from his job is inadequate to pay for his children’s education. Chhatra’s daughter goes to
an English medium private school and is now able to help her father in writing emails for his clients. Sending his daughter to a private school creates a distinction among Chhatra’s villagers since not all people can afford these expensive schools. In response to my question “what will you do with your English skills?”, Chhatra indicates that he needs to improve his English in order to be able to communicate with his friends via emails.

Tourist-worker relationships sometimes end in closer relationships of different forms such as sexual partners, girlfriend-boyfriend, and in some cases husband-wife. Most stories about such relationships told by Nepali workers may simply be their brags, but there are true stories, as other researchers in the context of Nepal have also noted (e.g., Adams, 1996; Ortner, 1999). Mingma told me that he has a Swiss “girlfriend”, who was his former client, and he wants to improve his English skills in order to sustain his relationship with her.

**Excerpt 5.12: Whites have a different heart**


*Mingma: If we have good English and if we tell the Whites stories well and translate for them, we have good money. Whites have a different heart. The difference between knowing English and not knowing it- if they give tips, we’ll get 5 dollars more when we know English. There are a lot of benefits if we know English.*

*Bal: You told me you have a Swiss girlfriend? Does your English learning have to do anything with that?*

*Mingma: yes. For example, when learning English- a few days ago, my White female friend told me*
In Excerpt 5.12, Mingma recognizes that in order to earn good amount of money, one has to be able to tell stories and translate well for the clients. He positions *khaires* (White tourists) as people having a different heart, indicating that they are generous. He makes a distinction between two types of tourism workers: those who have good English skills and those who do not, and portrays English speaking workers as earning more tips. The value of English is constructed as offering economic benefits to those who can use it. In response to my question regarding the role of English in maintaining contacts with his foreigner girlfriend, Mingma treats English as a necessary tool to have such a contact. He also reports the voice of a *khaireni* (female version of *khaire* to mean a White female tourist), who Mingma claims is his girlfriend, and positions himself as somebody who needs to improve his English skills. His desire to improve his English skills is motivated by his imaginary travel to a foreign land and work in an English-speaking environment.

As the analysis shows, the participants position themselves as both continuing learners and users of English. English indexes both an instrument to communicate with their clients as well a resource to imagine, establish and sustain their friendship and romantic relationship with them. Such relationships are ultimately linked to the participants’ aspirations for better life chances. This observation resonates with Jaworski and Thurlow’s (2010) argument that any sense of “community” or “friendship” in such encounters is often a function and a result of
economic exchange, which they term as a “commodification of sociability”. Examples of such motives may include expectations for financial gains by receiving more tips, by having their children’s education sponsored, by doing business together and by looking for opportunities to travel abroad. Mobility – both in the sense of seeking to secure more prestigious jobs locally and the desire to travel beyond Nepal – is important aspect of Nepali tourism workers. However, the workers make it clear that it is not only the English skills that automatically create conditions for better payoff or upward mobility. It is a combination of communication skills, service and personal traits such as honesty. They realize that although service and hospitality are necessary to impress their clients, appropriate communication skills are effective tools to mediate their aspirations with any possible financial and other forms of benefits from their clients.

5.8 Summary and conclusion
This chapter has shown how a growing number of tourist products in heritage and adventure tourism has lead to aspirations and motivations among Nepali tourism workers to learn English language skills in order to sell tourism commodities to outsiders. Broadly, the chapter has expanded our understanding in two major ways.

First, the chapter has shown that Nepali porters and trekking guides aspire to improve their English, but only to a certain degree. They do characterize their English skills as “broken” that need to be fixed, corrected and improved. However, they do not aspire to be too competent in the “standard” norms of English because they treat a sophisticated level of English as inaccessible, unnecessary, and even undesirable. The new work order considers competences as objectifiable, unified, measurable and standardized skills (Gee et al., 1996; Cameron, 2001), and treats language and communication skills as a set of technical skills that can neatly be developed and evaluated through standardized curricula. In the present context, however, Nepali tourism
workers do not use such scripted speech. Rather, their repertoires are translingual, “deviated” and are marked by local norms (Blommaert, 2010; Higgins, 2009). In other words, the ideologies of English narrated in their interview responses and literacy practices show creativity, multiplicity and complexity, which show differences from other studies that have documented orientations to more universal norms in communication (e.g. Holtgren, 2011). Their use of “broken English” marks their distinct class identity that is characterized by their execution of physical labor and low wage. For these workers, use of “standard” language norms is reserved for more “prestigious” jobs in domains such as education and media, and their use of standard English may betray their group identity.

Second, by being able to speak in their clients’ language, Nepali tourism workers want to imagine, establish and sustain interpersonal relationships with their clients, and their client-worker relation is re-imagined for friendship, sponsorship and romance. The topic of interpersonal relationship has been discussed by a number of anthropologists, particularly focusing on the relationship between the Western clients and the local hosts (e.g. Salazar, 2010; van Beek, 2003). These relationships ostensibly problematize the the very notion of social relationship in terms of its phatic rituals and interpersonal bonds since these connections primarily have economic motives. However, it would also be naïve to confine the interpretation of such interpersonal relationships only from the lens of new economic order. Research on the anthropology of sponsorship in the Himalayas (e.g., Ortner, 1999) has informed us that for ethnic Tamangs, Sherpas and Tibetans, finding a sponsor is a part of “cultural schema” of coming-of-age for young men. Known as jindak, looking for a financial supporter for monasteries, communities and individuals is a traditionally accepted practice in those communities. Jindak, in this sense, is a patron or a protector who helps a weaker person to succeed. Traditionally, the
relationship is less hierarchical and more reciprocal: the lesser person also serves and takes care of the protector. The new economic order shaped by the tourism market, thus, interestingly interact with an already-existing form of economy and its concomitant ideologies in the Himalayas. As Adams (1999) argues, this takes us beyond a staged representation of self for financial gain, to a form of culture work in action. Thus, in addition to treating English as a transactional tool, Nepali tourism workers consider English as a resource to fulfill their expectations that transcend their locality in terms of their relationships and desires. Repertoires in English are considered as an instrument to mediate their imagined and material cultural worlds. Thus, we can see that the ideologies of English are intertwined with various subject positions and aspirations. Jaworski and Thurlow (2010) remind us that discursive formations and practices in touristic encounters “establish fleeting identities, relationships, and communities existing in the moment (italics in the original), working across national and ethnic boundaries (pp. 281). The present study, however, extends our understanding of such relations, providing evidence that although the encounters seem momentary, there is a possibility that such contacts go beyond one-shot meetings to more sustained inter-relationships. English is central to establishing and sustaining such contacts.

To conclude, I reiterate Jaworski and Thurlow’s (2010) observation that discursive practices in tourism “engender new sense of community and authenticity, invoke new place-identities predicated on the re(invention of tradition, heritage, and heavy policing of language boundaries” (p. 258). The global economic market has created a more influential space for English, and by studying tourism industry from a discursive perspective, we can learn a lot about the ideologies and practices of English language learning and use. In tourism, the English language and economic ideology come together in ways that make their interconnectedness more
visible. English skills are treated by the Nepali tourism workers as tools for upward social and economic mobility. By improving their English, these workers want to move from their physical labor (porters) to language labor (guides). Compared to carrying loads, trekking guide is a more prestigious and better paying job for them. These workers are aware of the unequal power relationship between themselves and their clients. They are also aware of their disadvantaged positions in the world, in their country, and in the tourism industry. They are low-paid workers in the global margins and know that the clients they serve are from the socio-economic “power centers” that they consider are more privileged in terms of linguistic and economic resources. The ethnographic details in this study show that language learners are agentive and capable of making sense of their actions by positioning themselves variously in terms of their communicative skills, ethnicity, economic class, and job category. International tourists, particularly from Western countries, are constructed as wealthy and competent in English. These workers are aware that tourists’ linguistic and financial resources are the empowering tools that enable them to travel to locations that they want. They also want to empower themselves with English skills, cosmopolitan tastes and translocal imaginaries to travel and see the world beyond their immediate reach.
CHAPTER 6

REPRESENTING NEPAL IN GUIDED TOURS

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I analyze how Nepali tourism workers represent Nepal through enregisterment practices in guided tours and interpersonal encounters, paying attention to how they make touristic experiences exotic, memorable, and positively rewarding for tourists. As I explained in Chapter 1, the performance and enregisterment perspectives on tourism enable me to investigate and theorize micro-level roles and semiotic details in constructing and selling tourism as a commodity in the economic market. The ethnographic and discursive details show that one major way to enhance positive experience of tourists is to represent local spaces as fundamentally different from the places visitors come from. In this chapter, I analyze the enregisterment of authenticity in tour guiding commentaries and interactions between Western English-speaking tourists and local guides and hosts in the context of guided tours and treks in the Himalayas.

Drawing on a performative approach to tourism, I illustrate that tourist-host interactions, which largely take the form of representational discourses of a marginalized ethnolinguistic group in Nepal, fall into a trap of essentialism, reinforcing and reproducing the “authentic” ethnic identity as a distinct and internally homogenous social category. I argue that this enregisterment process is the result of two distinct forces operating simultaneously in Nepal in recent decades. First, market-driven economic interests have shaped the discourses of representation where identities, representations, and cultural and linguistic practices are constructed and consumed as portable objects and commodities. Second, the indigenous people’s movement, hence the janajati movement, has further given rise to the representational discourses of ethnolinguistic minorities.

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8 Please also refer to Chapter 1 for details for the janajati movement.
in Nepal. I will later show that in addition to touristic purposes, political forces have also shaped the representation of ethnic minorities in Nepal. Interactions between international tourists and local hosts are social occasions where local identity representations for mainly economic reasons coincide with global discourses of tourism imaginaries and a quest for authenticity by tourists. A close analysis of communicative encounters is a fruitful way to analyze the complex processes of authenticity and identity formations in the age of globalization. Doing so is extremely important to learn about the economies of the global mobility that largely is unevenly distributed among peoples and nations. In order to understand more clearly how the processes of touristic representations are played out, I provide a discussion focusing on the notion of authentication (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004) from a sociolinguistic perspective before moving on to a detailed analysis of guided tours. I first start with the notion of authenticity from a constructionist perspective in order to discuss the authentication processes.

6.2 Authenticity and representations in discursive work

Authenticity is a major characteristic feature of the discursive regimes in tourism in the current phase of globalization (Heller, 2003; Pietikäinen & Kelly-Holmes 2013; Want, 2014). Cohen-Hattab and Kerber (2004) note that the current authenticity debate in the theoretical literature surrounding tourism is reframed to address issues of identity, representation, and the function of ideology in tourism sites more adequately. Since identity representations and construction of cultural authenticities is an important aspect of heritage and cultural tourism in the Himalayas, it is important to briefly mention how we can examine these concepts from a discursive perspective. I situate discourses of representation and authenticity within the broader framework of identity construction in sociocultural linguistics, as outlined by Bucholtz and Hall (2005). Instead of considering identity as a pre-given social category, they employ the term identification
to refer to the ongoing social and political processes enacted by participants in social interactions. Discursive representation in the context of tourism is not separate from, but is part of a broader theoretical framework of identification where the performative part of identity is driven by certain ideologies of discursive regimes.

I approach authenticity from a constructionist perspective. This perspective sees authenticity as negotiable, situated and a contingent quality that emerges in particular social contexts (Bruner, 1994). This means authenticity is not a descriptive quality inherent in objects, cultures, landscapes, and peoples, but rather it is socially constructed through various modes of discursive practices by tourism workers, tourists, and scholars alike (Pietikäinen, 2013; Wang, 2014). Authenticity, in this sense, is an experience, an activity achieved through various semiotic modes. Bruner (1994), for example, has argued: “No longer is authenticity a property inherent in an object, forever fixed in time; it is seen as a struggle, a social process, in which competing interests argue for their own interpretation of history. Culture is seen as contested, emergent, and constructed, and agency and desire become part of the discourse” (p.408).

Kelly-Holmes and Pietikäinen (2014) analyze the Reindeer Farm tour in Sámiland in northern Finland and argue that the use of local Sámi linguistic and cultural resources in guided tours gives the tourists a glimpse of otherness and remoteness, which in turn produce authenticity effects. Investigating the processes of authenticity and identity representation are meaningful because tourism as a major economic activity largely depends on how tourism stakeholders create and circulate these images and concepts. Macro level tourism stakeholders such as tourism boards and policy makers in many geopolitical contexts treat tourism as a major resource for economic sustainability and development. Tourism workers such as tour guides also continually engage in reinventing the narratives of tradition and identity for economic and political reasons.
Tourists, who are at the center of the activity, are in a persistent search for cultural experiences and activities that largely tend to be different from their mundane life. Thus, the analyses of identity and authenticity are not ends in themselves, but an important window to understand the economies of experience in the global market.

Bucholtz and Hall (2005) use the term tactic of authentication in order to draw our attention to the agentive processes played out in discourse. Bucholtz (2003), for example, notes:

It is the tactic of authentication that produces authenticity as its effect. Thus sociolinguists should speak not of authenticity but more accurately of authenticity effects, achieved through the authenticating practices of those who use everyday language. This perspective does not deny the cultural force of authenticity as an ideology, but emphasizes that authenticity is always achieved rather than given in social life, although this achievement is often rendered invisible (p. 408).

I take this performative approach to authenticity as an emergent property and apply it in the communicative context of tourist-host interactions where claims to authenticity are made relevant.

I investigate what tactics and practices are deployed in producing authenticity effects in ethnic identifications and representations. These representations are either constructed by the host or are invoked by the tourist through his/her schematic readings of destinations. I refrain from claiming what are and are not authentic representations in any objective or subjective sense in the communicative practices. Instead, I pay close attention to the discursive enactments where references are made to cultural, ethnic, and linguistic authenticities. In this sense, I see authenticity as a key construct for giving meaning to peoples, places, objects and to each other and to the world around them by tourism workers, tourists, and local hosts, and authenticity as an
experience has an exchange value in the global economic market. I will pay attention not only to the linguistic resources, but also to the entire range of semiotic or multimodal practices deployed in interactions and performances (Pennycook, 2007; Wang, 2014).

6.3 Ethnographic background of the study

6.3.1 Tourism in the Himalayas

The northern Himalayas in Nepal are known for two major forms of adventure tourism: mountaineering and trekking. In order to attract more tourists and provide more exotic experiences, tourism authorities in Nepal deployed ethnic communities at destinations to turn these adventure experiences into cultural experiences for tourists by introducing and naming trekking trails after ethnic minorities, for example, Chepang Hill Trek, Limbu Cultural Trail, and Ghale Gaun, all of which refer to ethnic categories in Nepal. The ethnographic details I am analyzing in this chapter come from tourist-host encounters in the Tamang Heritage Trail (henceforth THT) in Nepal which is near the border of Tibet (Figure 6.1).

The THT remained off the beaten tourist track until 2003 mainly because other trekking trails and regions such as the Everest region, the Langtang, and the Annapurna area were perceived to be more touristically appealing for the market. This trail was named after Tamangs—a marginalized etholinguistic group that lives immediately around the capital city and in northern areas bordering Tibet. Interviews with several trekking guides and porters show that the THT was the most popular trekking trail among the six ethnic heritage trails that started in the same year 2003. Lim (2008) notes “due to its pristine environment, awe-inspiring mountains, and the remoteness of its valleys, the Himalayas was also the well-spring of countless legends, myths and romantic imaginings, engendering the sacralization of the landscapes that had served as a source of religious inspiration for peoples both living in its vicinity and beyond” (p. 31). By the
high caste Hindus, Tamangs were classified in the enslaveable “alcohol drinking” and “beef-eating” category near the bottom of the caste hierarchy (Höfer, 1979). Alcohol drinking and beef-eating practices are strictly prohibited from a religious point of view in a traditional Hindu society. Tamangs have also been variously labelled as “Bhote” or “Bhotiya” (people from Tibet), somewhat othering and derogatory terms, by the high caste Hindus in the hills, and in the national law in the past (Lim, 2008). The discriminatory treatment by the state led to a long history of exclusion of Tamangs in political, economic and educational opportunities. Tamangs in this area mostly live in poverty and have almost no facilities for health and education. Only a few Tamangs who are in an economically better position have sent their children to nearby towns or to the capital city.

If visitors trek along the THT for a week, they have a chance to see Tamang and Buddhist lifestyles, cultures, and architecture. One promotional website, for example, writes:

Tamang Heritage trail trekking is special for those trekkers, who would like to see traditional and untouched heritage, custom and lifestyle of indigenous Tamang people. They are descendants from Tibet and have hardly seen any tourists… They dress colorful and their houses are adorned with beautiful woodcarvings. (Taken from http://www.allnepal.com/nepal/tamang_heritage_trekking.php). This promotional text exoticizes Tamangs as people who have not had encounters with outsiders, and by implication, have not yet been the object of the tourist gaze. This text reproduces the popular rhetoric of a quest for authenticity in tourism, which MacCannell (1976) notes as “modern man [sic] has been condemned to look elsewhere, everywhere, for his authentic, to see if he can catch a glimpse of it reflected in the simplicity, poverty, chastity or purity of others” (p.
41). Here, otherness and authenticity work together in ways that caters to tourists’ desires to “get off the beaten path” and “in with the natives” (p. 97).

**Figure 6.1 Map of the Tamang Heritage Trail obtained from**

http://setohimal.com/trips/tamang-heritage-trek/

In addition, this region has been able to attract foreign tourists and ethnographers who mainly look for an ideal of an old Tibet, framed by the Tibetan Government in exile’s representations of what was lost, with the help of Hollywood, and they are most likely to have heard that this part of Nepal maintains old Tibetan traditions that were not destroyed by the Chinese occupation, including forms of Buddhist and Bon cultures that they have read about or
encountered some representatives of, due to the concomitant and related globalization of these religious traditions. Since it is not easy for most foreigners to travel to Tibet due to the geopolitical regulations and restrictions, many of them come to Nepal in order to experience Tibetanness (Moran, 2004). This rhetoric was actually reproduced by the *Lonely Planet* guidebook:

> This area is connected to Tibet and the trails in this region were used by traders from Tibet bartering in salt and mountain goats for meat (changra) with foodstuffs from the south. The people of this region are mostly Tibetans who came from Kerung in Tibet across the border and settled in Nepal. In earlier days, the citizenship of Nepal would not be offered to real Tibetans, so they changed their ethnicity to Tamang, which is what they still write till date. The culture and traditions of these people are similar to Tibet just across the border. (Adopted from: http://www.lonelyplanet.com/asia/tours/hiking-trekking/tamang-heritage-trail#ixzz45epo4tKH)

Tamangs in these areas live in cohesive communities, speak their ethnic language Tamang and a Tibetan dialect, and marry people from within their community (Lim, 2008). The tourism industry has a considerable influence on how Tamangs have self-identified in the past. Lim (2008) notes that Tamangs in the neighboring Langtang area can easily pass as Sherpas or Tibetans, given their similar physiological appearances, and some of them take advantage of this to participate in the tourism economy. When they are dealing with the government, they represent themselves as a distinct ethnic category—Tamang—within the ethnic spectrum of the country (e.g. for census purposes), but during encounters with tourists, they are concerned with the commodity value of ethnic identities in the industry. They know that playing the ethnic card
Adams (1996) and Ortner (1999) note the existence of discrimination against Tamangs in the Nepali mountaineering industry by Sherpas (the dominant ethnic group in Nepal’s mountaineering industry) and Western tourists since the industry privileges Sherpas as “authentic”, reliable, and sturdy mountaineers. As a result, many Tamangs in the past have tried to pass as Sherpas for employment purposes in mountaineering. My ethnographic findings show that Tamangs in the THT area take pride in representing themselves and their culture as Tamang because, as they claim, Tamangness is different and distinct from other ethnic cultures and categories.

6.3.2 The guide, the tourists and my ethnographic involvement

Durga (pseudonym) is one of my key participants and is Tamang. I first met him in July 2013 at an English language institute Travelers’ World (also pseudonym) in Kathmandu. He was taking a summer English course that was taught by foreign volunteer tourists. I attended his class regularly, took notes, recorded classroom interactions, and interviewed the teachers, the students, and the program director in order to learn about the language skills and resources he was learning and his motivation to learn them. Durga had received only eight years of formal schooling, and he characterized his English competence as “broken,” which for him means being not grammatical nor well-versed, compared to “standard” English. This characterization is similar to Blommaert’s (2010) notion of truncated competence – the ability to use multilingual resources depending on the domains of language use. He speaks English, Nepali, Tamang (his native language) and a Tibetan dialect. In addition, he knows a few words from several international languages such as French, Spanish, Chinese, and Japanese.
He was born and grew up in the Tamang village of Gatlang. He first started working as a porter in 1990, and later received training and his license to be a trekking guide in 2005. He also owned a trekking company in Kathmandu, and this expanded his breadth of work and the potential income. As a company manager, he arranged treks and employed other workers. He has worked with tourists from a wide range of national and cultural backgrounds including Australia, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Spain, Britain, the U.S. He was also listed as a recommended guide by *Lonely Planet*. He also owned a guest house on the trekking route of the THT, which was managed by his wife. Although Durga is a member of a marginalized ethnic group from a rural part, he was seen in a relatively better financial position in his locality. For example, his two children went to an English medium private school in Kathmandu, which only very few could afford from his village. Durga says that his job as a tourism worker has made this possible. Durga was primarily a trekking guide, meaning that he carried maps, had information about the altitude, the vegetation, the weather, and the landscape of the trekking trail areas. In addition, he was also a tour guide providing commentaries to his clients about the culture, heritage, and religion of the people living along the trekking trails.

I accompanied Durga throughout the seven-day trek in the THT. Durga had three tourists: an American woman and a French couple. The American tourist, who seemed to be in her early thirties, came to Nepal after spending two weeks in India. She told me that she was a low budget backpacker who loved hiking. She had been on both hikes and guided tours in India. She spoke English, and she had learned a few Hindi and Nepali words through guidebooks and touristic encounters. She was an enthusiastic learner, though, and she constantly tried to practice Nepali words and phrases, and tried eating with her hands while we were at restaurants. After the THT, she was planning to go to the Everest base camp trek. I, however, have very little information
about the French tourists since they quit the trek after the second day. The French woman was afraid of heights, and they returned to Kathmandu on the third day. As the research focused on the tourism workers, little ethnographic information about tourists was acquired. Moreover, since the tourists were on their holiday, I did not want to ask more personal questions for the sake of my research.

As I walked, I first tried to maintain about a ten-meter walking distance from them because I did not want to interfere in their conversations. However, maintaining such a physical distance was not always possible because I was frequently invited as a conversational participant by both the tourists and the guide, and was occasionally asked to help with translation help. Since the French couple quit the trip after the second day, the only tourist remaining was the American woman. However, Durga met another trekking group (a Sherpa female guide and a French woman) on the third day and we were together most of the time during walks and mealtimes. I had access to not only the discourses of guided treks and tours, but also mealtime and other non-formal conversations. I audio recorded all the conversations among the participants, which totalled about 25 hours of data. Since most conversations took place while on the move, while ascending and descending some difficult trekking routes, it was not possible to video-record most of the conversations. I was still able to collect about two hours of video data.

6.4 Tactics of authentication

In this analysis, I focus on how the tour guide employs some tactics of authentication. I mainly take examples from two tour events: a village tour and a cultural performance. Thematically, I organize the data analysis from the high performance context to the low performance context of everyday life because this allows me to examine language use from a performance lens in a
continuum. In the following section, I closely examine how authenticity is invoked and represented by the tourists and the guide.

6.4.1 Invoking essentialist representations by tourists

Tourists give meaning to their pre-travel imaginaries through their essentialist readings of Tamang cultural and language practices at destinations. When they witness unexpected practices and features, this may be a source of wonder for them. The conversation in Excerpt 6.1 took place when the male French tourist saw Durga talking to and shaking hands with one of his fellow villagers.

Excerpt 6.1: you shake hands

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Tourist 2:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>Usually you don’t shake hands.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02</td>
<td>Ah: (0.3) yeah in a village (.) yeah (.) heheheheh</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03</td>
<td>So it’s like family (.) with your close friends. With a family</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04</td>
<td>or whe- when do you shake hands?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05</td>
<td>Ah: so usually not (.) yeah. We doesn’t (.) shake hands</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06</td>
<td>(but you did)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07</td>
<td>But now (.) now, yes now we can ( )</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08</td>
<td>Oh it’s a- like like a new thing or</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09</td>
<td>I think so. Yeah.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Okay.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Excerpt 6.1, the tourist expresses his assumption that people in Gatlang normally do not shake hands (line 01). Shaking hands seems to be interpreted as a non-local practice. This assumption seeks a confirmation and explanation from Durga. In line 02, Durga seems to acknowledge that people do shake their hands in his village. The tourist, however, wants to explicitly know when and with whom they shake their hands. Durga, using the first person plural “we” in line 05, suggests that shaking hands is not authentic Tamangness: “we doesn’t shake hands”. People, however, do shake hands. The tourist also recognizes this as a new practice in Durga’s village.
Travel guidebooks claim to offer useful tips and survival linguistic phrases for tourists. But travelers may find actual encounters very different from what might have been assumed based on these guidebooks. Excerpt 6.2 is another example of how the American tourist’s expectation contrasts with actual encounters.

**Example 6.2: Thank you and dhanyabad**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Tourist 1:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>Is ‘thank you’ the same in Nepali as in Hindi? Dhanyabad?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02</td>
<td>(0.5) I’ve not heard people really using it.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03</td>
<td>Durga: Not really.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04</td>
<td>Tourist 1: You don’t thank people for stuff they do?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05</td>
<td>Durga: We don’t. We normally don’t. We not thank people for small things.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06</td>
<td>This not our culture. We (.) ‘thank you’ more. And dhanyabad less.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07</td>
<td>Durga: Thank (.) you is like Nepali language.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08</td>
<td>Tourist 1: Um</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09</td>
<td>Durga: Like ‘hello’ ‘thank you’ ‘okay’.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Tourist 1: I heard people at the airport said dhanyabad.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Durga: because they =</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Tourist 1: =I heard over the loudspeaker. I think they were being more formal.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Here, the tourist appears to be looking to establish cultural differences, a key element of the exotic experience. The tourist seems to have learned the Hindi word *dhanyabad* for ‘thank you’ (line 01). She also mentions that she heard the word in an announcement at the airport in Nepal (line 10). It is unusual for her when she does not hear that word much (line 02). This example not only shows a contrast with her assumption that Nepali people use the word *dhanyabad* as a token of appreciation but also allows her to openly wonder whether Nepali or Tamang people do not thank others for things they do for them (line 4). It may perhaps sound rude to her. This shows a difference in her frame or schema of two cultures. Then the tour guide makes it clear that it is not a common feature of Nepali culture to use *dhanyabad* for small things. For Durga, the repetitive use of *dhanyabad* sounds redundant. Durga comments that the English word ‘thank you’ is more
likely to be used, which creates a fluid boundary between English and Nepali since the words that are considered English are not limited to English-medium communication only.

Authenticity and representation, then, is not only limited to the production of identities by local hosts and workers, but it also refers to how consumers of those representations and practices activate these essentialist interpretations of the destinations they travel to. The excerpts above suggest that tourists expect and hope to see peoples, societies and traditions that are different from theirs. However, such essentialist images and expectations can be challenged in actual encounters.

6.4.2 Authenticity in a high performance context

In this section, I analyze and discuss a “high performance” (Coupland, 2003) context in which Durga and the people from his community staged a cultural show for the tourists. Durga told me that there were two cultural performance groups in Gatlang. These groups performed traditional Tibetan and Tamang songs and dances on special occasions in the village for community members. After the local people and the trekking guides working in this area realized that tourists were interested in Tamang culture, cultural performers were invited to perform for tourists. This shows a new commodity value added to the otherwise cultural rituals performed for the internal community. Durga invited one such group to his teahouse on the evening of the second day of the trek. People in the interview later told me that their clothing, performances and songs were not very different from their everyday life. This performance, however, was staged, and was made for the public audience who were mostly cultural outsiders (Figure 6.1 below). They put on new clothing on various festivities and special occasions such as weddings. They wore the same clothes in their everyday life after they used them during the special occasions for a while. The performing group was wearing the Tamang cultural attire with a small guitar-like
musical instrument *tungna*. In the beginning of the show, Durga welcomed the visitors and introduced to them the members of the group in English. He simultaneously used Tamang to the members of the performing team. English here indexes a tourism linguistic franca and Tamang a marker of local identity and an indicator of people’s linguistic repertoires. Two women from the group welcomed their guests with a piece of fabric *khada*, putting them around each of the visitor’s shoulders and then offered them a bowl of locally brewed *raksi* (alcohol) to drink. The visitors accepted these gifts and they went along with their visitor status.

**Excerpt 6.3: From barley and millet (performance)**

01 Durga: And this song said (. ) ah: welcome. And ah: because tourists
02 came to Gatlang. They are- these are very happy you know.
03 The song said. it’s ah: normally they - alcohol this raksi you know.
04 For tourists you know this is ah: special food- special (. ) drink you know.
05 This is ah: this is from barley- from barley. From millet.
06 From not rice. But homemade yeah.

In Excerpt 6.3, Durga mentions that the song they sang for the tourists is a welcome song that expresses happiness of locals in welcoming their guests. He frames local alcohol as a “special food”, and indicates that this drink is made from the local grains barley and millet (line 05), not from rice (rice does not grow in high altitude places like Gatlang). He also notes that this drink is “homemade” as opposed to factory made. Homemade *raksi*, barley and millet all speak of locality and authentic Tamang tradition for the visitors. These are the identities of representation for locals and the objects of consumption for tourists.

Durga is not just a neutral broker working between local destinations and travellers. On occasions, he commodifies and constructs himself as an object of touristic consumption. For the performance that day, he changed his self-representation from a language and cultural broker to a local Tamang, a fellow member of his performing group. While he was in his shirt and jeans, he
spoke English as a connecting language with tourists during the village tour. His clothing and language clearly distinguished him from other local Tamangs. However, right before the cultural show, he quickly put on a local Tamang attire, stood in a line with other men, sang a song in Tibetan, and danced (Figure 6.2). Here authenticity is in the process of making, rather than a quality inherent in the object itself. In his discursive work, Durga was operating on multiple footings and identities: an interpretor during local-tourist encounters, a local for the tourists, and an English speaking translocal for locals.

Figure 6.2 Cultural performance group in Gatlang (Durga is second from the left)

The welcome song was in Tibetan, which indexes the history and tradition of the performance culture in the region. In this excerpt, Durga translates the Tibetan and Nepali song into English for the visitors. This song was performed in the evening of the second day as an event to welcome the guests in Gatlang (Figure 6.5).

Excerpt 6.4: bhedako un jasto

01 Durga: Welcome to Tamang Heritage Trail. And ah: so there’s
02 saying- sing you know welcome (.). Tashi delek. And
03 akash bata ke udi ayo?

Welcome
What came flying from the sky?

04 means (. ) from the sky you know (. ) that is the fly you know.

05 Ah: you know full moon. The full moon and (. ) there’s ah: ah: in

06 full moon you know full moon. Moon came you know.

07 Tourist 1: A moon what?

08 Durga: Moon- moon came.

The song used mixed codes from Tibetan, Tamang, and Nepali. In Excerpt 6.4, Durga welcomes the visitors to the trekking trail and to the performance by using “welcome” in English and “Tashi delek” in Tibetan. Use of the English word accomplishes a transactional function and the Tibetan words index locality and authenticity for the travelers. It can also index Tibetanness to the tourists who come looking for specifically Tibetan authenticity in the Himalayan region in Nepal. Then he moves on to translate a section of the song in Nepali into English (line 03). Durga did not offer a word for word translation of the song, but provided a brief summary that the song was about the local community’s happiness in receiving the guests, their celebration of the Buddha’s life, and their good wishes for the guests’ better future. The words and expressions in the song point out the particularity and authenticity of the language and cultural practices in the Himalayas. Language and other semiotic resources index particular ways of being in and belonging to the Tamang and Buddhist community. The performance works as a tool for authentication practices as speakers display various ethnic and other stances through language and other embodied choices. While the use of Tamang and Tibetan languages frames Durga’s identity as local, authentic and in itself an object and symbol of touristic consumption, his frequent use of Nepali with me and and other local people shows another layer of Durga’s identity– as a speaker of Nepal’s official language. Moreover, his use of English marks his more translocal, global identity – which creates a distinction between Durga and other Tamang people at the destinations.
Toward the end of the show, tourists including me were invited to stand in a row with other men holding each other’s hand, to repeat the song after them and to follow their dance moves. The drink, the attire, the song, the dance and the bodies that marked Tamang ethnicity were put on the show as commodities for consumption. These gazes and consumptions by tourists were potentially taken home by the tourists upon their return and shared in the forms of photographs, videos, online blogs, or oral narratives.

The performance was emblematic not only of the economic interests of the local community, but also a characteristic of their desire for a translocal and transnational mobility and recognition of their cultures, objects and identities. The discursive spaces of tourism provide this opportunity which otherwise would be unavailable in the margins of globalization in the Himalayas. The construction and performance of multiple authenticities here invite economic benefits to the local community since these encounters are also occasions for them to promote and sell their cultural objects (such as cheese and handicrafts) and rituals. In fact, I observed three tourists purchase cheese and woolen hat in Gatlang. Through their conscious strategies regarding how to represent their cultures and themselves, local hosts made a connection between their local material conditions, needs, and desires to symbolically represent them to outside members. The performers’ representation of the self and their cultural rituals were treated equally important for authenticating their identities as a distinct ethnic category in Nepal. Since I was interested to know the motivations and interests of the performers regarding the show, I asked about this after the show. Excerpts 6.5 and 6.6 are taken from the interviews with the performers and with Durga.

**Excerpt 6.5: tell other people**

Performer: Hami ta chhuttai manche ho, sir. Hamro culture ko barema ta dherailai thaha nai

Performer: We are a different people, sir. Our culture is not known to many people. Please
tell other people about our culture and village. And also recommend your friends to visit here. Tell us what else we can do.

In Excerpt 6.5, the performer constructs her ethnic group identity as fundamentally different from other people in Nepal. This distinction creates an essentialist category of “we Tamang” versus “other Nepalis”. She asked me to inform about their culture and people to other people so that they can visit Gatlang. Other performers told me that it was very rare to see another Nepali coming as a trekker in their village, which was not surprising to me. I was also treated as a transnational person who has friends outside Nepal and who could make recommendations for visitors. Similarly in Excerpt 6.6, Durga notes the uniqueness of the Buddhist and Tamang culture in Gatlang. In this excerpt, Durga displays a sense of worry that Tamang culture is lost in many other places, mainly in urban areas where there are mixed settlements and where urbanization is rapidly taking place. For Durga, Tamang culture, which is deeply rooted in the Buddhist religious practices, is being gradually replaced by the modern and industrialized products and practices. By keeping their past heritage intact, they want to preserve and promote their “authentic” culture.

**Excerpt 6.6: Tamang culture lost**

Durga: We have our Buddhist culture. We have the Tamang culture here. Tamang culture is lost in many places. We want to promote the lost culture. The government also declared a national holiday for our Losar. We have a unique language, dress, house, food and festivals. We want to recognize our culture to people from around the world. Our place is still poor. No transport, no health. No development.

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9 Losar is a Tibetan new year.
In Gatlang, for example, walls are made from stones and roofs from wooden planks, and Durga and other performers told me that they want to preserve that identity both as a marker of their unique ethnicity as well as an object of attraction for the outsiders. The final lines in Excerpt 6.11 show Durga’s ambivalent position: while tradition, illiteracy and rurality are framed as desirable commodities for tourists’ consumption in the Himalayas, availability and adoption of modern facilities and services are an essential aspect of development to improve the lives of people in his region. He wants to see development in his region enhanced by tourism; at the same time, he is aware that tourism will not attract as many tourists when Gatlang turns into a less rural place with the construction of roads and access to electricity and other modern facilities.

Analyses of the above excerpts show that spaces of tourism, thus, are venues not only for commodification of identities for material benefits but also occasions to recognize and legitimize ethnolinguistic and cultural uniqueness, which serves as a tool to create Tamangness as different from other ethnicities. This legitimation is emblematic of recent sociopolitical changes in Nepal. Although Tamang efforts in tourism do not seem to be directly resulting from the recent sociopolitical changes, these changes created a positive social environment to actually enact their identities to benefit from the tourism market. Politically, recognition of Tamangness as a distinct ethnic category by the state has potential implications for state restructuring and many indigenous people’s demands for a formation of identity-based federal provinces. Such recognition may also lead to the social and political inclusion of Tamangs in public service and education sectors. From the perspective of the local Tamangs, symbolic recognition of Tamangs

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10 After the 7.8 earthquake hit Gatlang in April 2015, most of these houses collapsed. The houses are now being reconstructed, and a report is not yet available to what extent Gatlang will be able to preserve its traditional architecture.
as a distinct social group may offer its members a sense of pride, self-importance and legitimacy. Tourism authorities are also involved in reproducing discourses of exoticness by that further objectifies different ethnic groups for economic benefits to the nation. In addition to the mountains, Nepali tourism largely depends on the projection and commodification of a marginalized Other by the state authorities such as the Nepal Tourism Board. Ethnicities get a more glamorous image in the hands of market-oriented travel agents and other tourism brokers. Durga and the performance team’s representational discourses in a sense helps to reproduce and reinforce the state ideology of unity in ethnic diversity in the country. In addition, what makes ethnic minorities an object of authenticity are largely shaped by how they have been imagined and represented by travelling groups who consume such tourist destinations. I was welcomed by Durga and his villages in the trek and in the performance for two reasons: first, as another fellow Nepali from a different, more dominant group who can know about and acknowledge the existence of their distinct culture; and second, as a scholar in the US who will write and publish about Gatlang and Tamang culture and this can potentially promote their local culture in order for attracting outsiders.

6.4.3 The village tour and discourses of tradition
In addition to experiencing Tamangness in the high performing context, tourists experience it in the local people’s mundane practices. Next, I analyze tourists’ access to and experience with Tamangs’ “authentic” everyday life. Durga accomplishes this by enregistering discourses about food, drink, shelter and traditional rituals. In a typical village tour, Durga takes his clients to the Tamang settlement area in Gatlang – a village in the lap of the Himalaya mountains and hills (Figure 6.3). The fact that Durga comes from this village gives him an insider privilege and easy access to local houses, prayer stupas (places for meditation for Buddhists), and community centers.
Since Durga speaks both Tamang and Tibetan – two major languages of communication in Gatlang – his linguistic competences are a useful resource to talk to local people and to translate their lifestyles and cultural traditions to outsiders. Tour and trekking guides who are perceived as outsiders without a background in Tamang do not have this privilege and access. The fact that Durga as a Tamang guide is physically present with tourists almost all the time is in itself emblematic of authentic Tamangness that tourists encounter and consume. Visitors, if they wish, have a chance to go from the “front region” of what they are able to see of local culture, to behind the scenes part of Tamang life. They can go to the kitchen and help chop cabbage or prepare meals, as shown in Figure 6.4. In fact, a French tourist who joined our team on the third day helped to wrap momos (Nepali version of dumplings), fry greens and do the dishes.
In the afternoon of the second day of our trek, Durga took his guests to a village tour and showed them what may be regarded as the backstage of Tamang life, for example, kitchen, bedroom, prayer room, weaving place, and a local watermill. In Durga’s village tour and culture talks, authenticity was indexed by a range of discourses that represented traditionality of the destination such as rurality, agrarian life, poverty, high altitude, a lack of education and literacy in the region, medicinal herbs, and Buddhist traditions, and this was accomplished by talks about food, drink, and shelter. Herbal plants and rhododendron trees, for example, index locality and their identity for the people living in the trekking trail areas and mark authenticity for tourists. Durga’s discursive enactments are complex and multilayered here. While the talks about rurality, lack of access to formal education, illiteracy and poverty are the guide’s self-othering discourses to highlight the tradition frozen in time, the discourses about nature and spirituality deem more positive, portraying destinations as interesting for tourists in a more favorable way.

Durga’s construction, and tourists’ consumption, of authenticity is not just linguistic, but multimodal consisting of accompanying activities that have to do with food, dress, language,
local mythologies and Buddhist legends. In the following excerpts, I pay attention to the process of both the construction and circulation of authentic Tamangness by the tour guide and locals, and consumption of such authenticity by the visitors on site. I will show them in the following excerpts.

**Excerpt 6.7: dhido means dumpling**

01 Durga: And: they eat ah local food.
02 Tourist 1: Like grind it?
03 Durga: Yeah.
04 Tourist 1: Okay.
05 Durga: Wheat flour (.) and boiling water.
06 Tourist 1: Um um
07 Durga: Into the:
08 Tourist 1: *Cham- cha*
09 Durga: *Chamba.*
10 Tourist 1: *Chamba*
11 Durga: *Chamba* (0.2) and make ah *dhido.*
12 Tourist 1: What’s that?
13 Durga: *Dhido* (.) *dhido* means (.) it’s like a dumpling you know.
14 Tourist 1: Dumpling?
15 Durga: Dumpling.
16 Tourist 1: Okay. Gottcha.

In excerpt 6.7, Durga uses the words “local” (line 01), which indexes that people living in the trekking trail areas do not eat imported food, but consume local produce. In responding, the tourist’s use of the word “grind” also indexes some sense of locality in indicating that the food item is locally ground in watermills, as opposed to factory produced and processed foods. During the trek, the tourist had learned the names of a few local food items such as *chamba* – a wheat-like grain in the Himalayas. This learning is often enhanced by interactions with the tour guide (lines 09, 11). Durga chooses another word *dhido* (lines 11, 13), which is also emblematic of
locality and authenticity in the Himalayan region. Dhido is also indicative of rurality and simplicity of the food since people who are relatively in a better financial position do not normally eat this traditional food, but consume rice instead. Although this food has been reconstructed as an “exotic” item in many restaurants these days, eating this as part of one’s everyday life is largely indexical of lack of money and lack of other resources for many people. There is no equivalent word of dhido in English and Durga translates it as “like dumpling” (line 13) in an attempt to translate into a more global discourse. Dhido, however, is not the same thing as dumpling since a dumpling is stuffed inside but dhido is a thick porridge, without stuffing. Nevertheless, Durga’s truncated repertoires in English convey roughly the round shape of the food item. Using Giles and Coupland’s (1991) term, Durga’s use of English is characteristic of an “accommodation strategy” observed in lingua franca encounters since his use of a more globally circulating discourse is a communication strategy to make his clients understand him. Durga’s discursive enactments through his careful selection of words and other expressions are, thus, indicative of wilderness, primitiveness and underdevelopment in the region. These discourses give a sense of a nostalgic pre-modern rural living for the visitors.

Similarly, talk about clothes is another resource that enregisters authenticity and primitiveness for tourists. The conversation in Excerpt 6.8 took place at one of the local houses in Gatlang.

**Excerpt 6.8: traditional cloth**

01 Durga: So do you see it’s ah:
02 Tourist 2: Traditional cloth?
03 Durga: Traditional cloth yeah.
04 Tourist 2: Yes
05 Durga: So it is handmade yeah?
06 Tourist 3: Um
07 Durga: Woman made this.
Durga took us to a Tamang house and pointed at the attire a woman was wearing (Figure 6.4). Durga’s semiotic act of pointing implies that the dress is an index of local Tamangness. Durga’s indexing invokes a response from the tourist who uses the word “traditional” in line 02. Durga confirms this by repeating the word. Durga uses the word “handmade” (05) to further indicate that the product was made not in a commercial factory. The fact that clothes are handmade creates an opposition between handmade and machine made. In line 07, Durga points out at another woman and says “woman made this”. It is not only the local product Durga is commenting on, but also the maker of this product that is equally local. These micro-level interactional discourses reproduce the promotional texts circulated globally through media and travel guidebooks. *Lonely Planet*, for example, writes:

> During this trek along unbeaten trails and offering a total wilderness experience you will explore traditional Tamang villages, unspoiled and virtually untouched culture, life, crafts and nature. You will receive a warm welcome by the locals rich in their distinct colorful costumes, their houses adorned with beautiful woodcarvings.

(http://www.lonelyplanet.com/asia/tours/hiking-trekking/tamang-heritage-trail#ixzz45eqHsA3l)

These discourses were actually embodied in the actions of the guide and tourists.
Durga took us to another house. There were two Tamang women, one sitting on a wooden stool and another weaving a woolen fabric. In Excerpt 6.9, Durga comments on a hat the first woman was wearing (Figure 6.5). Durga’s mentioning of “wool” (lines 01, 03) is indicative of locality. Sheep and yaks are the most commonly found animals in Gatlang and the places around. Due to high altitude, other animals such as cows, goats and buffalos do not live there. These interactions construct and reproduce discourses of Wilderness in the THT.

**Excerpt 6.9: felted wool**

01 Durga: This is hat yeah. So this hat also ah: wool. ((pointing out the hat))
02 Tourist 1: Um
03 Durga: Wool. Not this kind of wool or
04 Tourist 1: it’s felted wool with thick oil?
05 Durga: Ah no (. ) this is automatic. ((takes off the woman’s hat and shows it to the tourists))
06 Durga: [It’s ah: natural color yeah?
07 Tourist: [HEHEHEHEHEheheeh ((loud laughter))
08 Durga: [Not ah: doesn’t make a color or you know black color
09 Tourist 1: [Yeah yeah
In response to the tourist’s question in line 04, Durga indicates that the wool is “automatic” (line 05). The word “automatic” here means natural, not artificial or dyed. This is confirmed when Durga stresses that the color is “natural” in lines 06 and 10. It is not only the object (the hat) that is a focus of tourist gaze, but also the people that Durga points out. While Durga was showing and talking about the objects such as wool, fabric and a hat, he suddenly took the hat off from a woman’s head and showed it to the tourists. The tourists and I were surprised by this, but the woman whose hat was removed did not seem at all affected. This made me wonder whether the presence of tourists have somehow affected the residents, making them apathetic towards visitors. In fact, studies have reported that hosts in crowded tourist destinations have ambivalences regarding the presence of tourists in those areas (e.g. Gunaratne, 2001; Laxson, 1991). Using Graburn’s (1989) words, the presence of too many tourists would inevitably spoil the magic of the destination. But, based on my interviews and observations, activities such as these are less frowned upon in Gatlang because there are not many tourists yet, and tourists are also an object of reverse gaze for many people there. If too many tourists come inside their houses, intruding local’s private life, the residents may develop negative attitudes toward both tourists and guides. Even if the villagers are all giving their consent for such activities, this raises other questions about invasion of personal space. The fact that Durga is from this village gives him a special privilege to represent the villagers as his people and to interact with his neighbors in a more intimate manner.

Through his work experience, Durga is familiar with tourists’ tastes and expectations. Durga’s touring discourses reproduce and reinforce the essentialist ideology that the Other is
fundamentally different from the touring self. Such discourses are the result of both pre-formed understandings of the tourist as well as the result of interacting with them. As part of accessing to and experiencing the backstage of Tamang life, Durga took us inside a house. It was dark in the evening. A man was lying on a bed. There was a woman sitting next to the fireplace, breastfeeding her baby and weaving a woolen fabric. There were two other kids who seemed to be of four or five years. Durga entered the house first, followed by three tourists, and finally I stepped in. The tourists greeted the woman and the kids with a Nepali greeting word namaste, joining two palms together. The conversation in 6.10 takes place at that moment.

**Excerpt 6.10: we sleep same place**

01 Durga: Come inside. (0.2) and (.) so this is our you know
02 (0.2) family (.) house (0.3) Normally you know we are
03 (incomprehensible Tamang in the background) like this house you know
04 Tourist 1: Yeah yeah
05 Durga: Um: we eat ah same place ah we sleep same place. All family.
06 Tourist 1: Okay
07 Durga: There’s a fire. yeah kitchen. (0.3) Ah: (0.4) So when
08 we saw yeah there’s ladies
09 Tourist 3: Yeah
10 Durga: was those two piece you know (.) now she do like this you know
11 ((pointing at a woman weaving))
12 Tourist 3: Yeah
13 Durga: Then how much she need you know
14 Tourist 1: Um
15 Durga: So for one this or cloth you know (.) and then then
16 after (.) twice you know. So to tie I think
17 (incomprehensible Tibetan in the background)
18 Durga: and: yeah. Hehehe. Our:

In excerpt 6.10, Durga points to the room, the beds, the fireplace/oven, the kitchen and the people there. Then he points out the woman who was making a woolen thread and draws a
connection to another woman they had previously seen. Durga alludes to the whole process of making fabric directly from raw wool. Although this is not Durga’s residence and the people in the house are not his family members, he represented himself as somebody who both belongs to and owns the space and the peoples. Durga’s narratives carries on and the tour is not interrupted while walking through the doors. It is important to note the use of the first person pronoun such as “our” (line 01, 17) and “we” (line 02, 05, 07). These are the characteristic features of Tamang authenticity that seem to cater to the imaginations of tourists to experience the exotic Other. Use of these pronouns also indicates that the features that Durga mentioned are not specific to this family only, but representative of the Tamang culture in the region. These micro-level interactional details are also indexical of the larger, macro-level discourse and struggle for recognition by Tamangs in the political context of Nepal. Bucholtz and Hall (2004) note that social grouping and cohesive identity is achieved not merely by acknowledging a similarity that establishes identity, but more fundamentally, of inventing similarity by downplaying difference. Tourism is a discursive site to not only stage but also produce difference. Traditional forms of ethnic categorizations are resituated and resemiotized as valuable markers of difference (Heller, Jaworski & Thurlow, 2014). In the name of celebrating intercultural difference, tourist-host encounters in many ways give rise to or re-construct social categorization and distinction, and it is needless to say that linguistic practices play a central role in the marking and making of social difference (Jaworski & Thurlow, 2014). In the process of such categorization and distinction, there is an element of self-commodification in the representation of self (notice the use of “we” and “our” in the excerpt). These first person pronouns are also emblematic of Tamang ethnic identity and their way of living in Gatlang. These are discursive resources for the identification of Tamangness as a distinct ethnolinguistic category in Nepal.
It is important to note that in tour guiding discourse, the representation of the self is not uniform. Tour guides constantly change their footings (Goffman, 1981) that help them distance themselves from the people they are representing. Durga did this in order to create his identity as different from those who live at the destinations. “Our” food, dress and traditions may suddenly become “their stuff”. I illustrate this in Excerpt 6.11, which is a continuation from Excerpt 6.10.

**Excerpt 6.11: potato, corn, millet**

29 Durga: Yeah when- how much (.) then there’s store you
30 Tourist 1: know (.) and how much they need
31 Tourist 1: Um um
32 Durga: You know they pick. Taking out
33 Tourist 1: Um
34 Durga: Then make ah: flour and it (.) ah used their (.) eat lunch, dinner you know.
35 Tourist 1: Yeah.
36 Durga: So normally we eat (.) ah we have ah: growing our (.) pota- ah:
37 barley, (.) corn, millet and ah: potato you know

Durga points out the storage upstairs, the grains stored there and what people do with these grains. What is noteworthy here is Durga’s pronominal switch from the first person to the third person pronouns. He uses “they” (lines 30, 32) and “their” (line 34) to refer to the members of the family, re-inhabiting his identity as a language and culture broker – which is distinct from the locals who are the primary objects of the tourist gaze. Again, he switches his footing, using inclusive “we” and “our” in line 37, in order to construct and represent Tamang’s most common types of Himalayan crops such as barley, corn, millet and potato, all of which are again emblematic Wilderness indexed by local culture and eating habits of the people living in the region.
Such a change in footing has been also noted by Salazar (2010) in tour guiding contexts in Indonesia and Tanzania. Tour guides simultaneously operate on multiple footings, representing themselves as language and cultural brokers, as locals who are emblematic of authenticity, and as cosmopolitans who know diverse world cultures and languages. Tour guides put on a hat of one identity at one time and another hat on another occasion, or it is entirely possible that they work on multiple identities at the same time, depending on the contingencies of the local context. All of these footings, and the ability to switch between them, require linguistic resources and metalinguistic awareness needed to inhabit these different identities. Enactment of all these roles relate back to the training and education that the guides receive. As I analyzed and showed in Chapter 4, tour guides are institutionally trained to perform multiple identities and roles depending on the tourist’s interests and expectations. However, this knowledge is not sufficient as tourists from the same country or ethno-cultural background do not necessarily have the same tastes and interests. As a result, guides continually learn to manage switches in footings depending on the local interactional contexts. Here, Durga’s representation of the self is multiple and dynamic. His projection is a theatrical moving between the identities of a host and a more neutral host-guest mediator in the interactive work. For tourists, he is an insider member from the Tamang community who presents himself as a marker of local authenticity by wearing Tamang dress, by drawing his knowledge from the existing Buddhist mythologies and by speaking in local languages Tamang and Tibetan. Discourses of food, dress and traditions become resources for the objectification and representation of Tamang identity.

6.4.4 Linguistic practices in local minority languages

In addition to switches in footing, the use of different languages is also key to the tour guide’s work. Although the representation of identities becomes more visible in such communicative
contexts such as cultural performances and guided tours that follow some “scripted” narratives, it is possible to trace representation in what seem to be mundane linguistic practices. Multilingual practices such as code-switching, crossing, translations and metalinguistic talk construct certain ideologies, and these ideologies can be indexical of a range of social and linguistic identities. Jaworski, Ylann-Mc Ewen, Thrulow and Lawson (2003) show that the use of local linguistic practices helps create a “linguascape” of the travel destination which provides the travelers “with the flavor of the local language” (p. 145). Jaworski and Thurlow (2015) further write: “Language and other semiotic resources imbue tourist spaces (“destinations”) with added value, indexing the locality as a place of specific historical significance (heritage), presence of ethnic minorities, or authenticity of local products” (p. 4). In the THT case, representation is subtler, and it is not only the guide who constructs such representations, but also the tourists who may invoke them at various levels.

In the THT trek, Durga worked as a language and cultural broker between locals and tourists. In addition to experiencing local Tamang cultures and traditions, tourists also consume linguistic practices and resources as indexical of local authenticity. When tourists return home, in addition to taking some material objects and remarkable memories of their adventures, they also have a collection of various linguistic repertoires learnt during their travel. Tour guides are the mediating agents for such linguistic experience. During the trek and the village tour, Durga bridged conversations between the local villagers, teahouse owners and the visitors in order to help tourists experience destinations. In such conversations, local names, words and expressions become an object of tourists’ gaze and experience. Learning the meaning and pronunciation of the names and surnames of the Other is also a form of consumerism where tourists are the buyers
of bits and pieces of linguistic and cultural knowledge. I illustrate this in Excerpt 6.12 below.

Here, Tourist 1 is the American tourist and Pema is a trekking guide that we met during the trek.

**Excerpt 6.12: Pema and lotus flower**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Tourist 1:</th>
<th>Pema:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>And your name is Pima?</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02</td>
<td>And that’s lotus right?</td>
<td>Yeah.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03</td>
<td>Like a lotus flower. Is it Pima?</td>
<td>Pe (.) ma.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04</td>
<td>Pema. Lotus flower.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Excerpt 6.12, line 01, the tourist asks a confirmation seeking question on the pronunciation and meaning of another guide’s name. Pema confirms the pronunciation of her name as “Pe (.) ma” in line 06, and the tourist repeats the correct pronunciation and meaning of the name in line 07. The brief exchange suggests that identity of the Other represented by names is perceived as indicative of locality and are commodified as authentic tourist products.

In addition to the names and their pronunciation, conversations in local languages also become part of the tourist linguascape. Excerpt 6.13 is an example of the interaction where Tibetan is used for a transactional purpose among the guides and the local host, but is an object of wonder for the tourist. The tourist tries to learn a word in the local language here. The conversation in this excerpt took place in a teahouse. There was one American tourist, one French tourist, Durga, another guide (Pema) and me. We were drinking raksi after dinner. The host couple was sitting behind us. The link language for our group was English before this piece of conversation took place.

**Excerpt 6.13: Shibuno**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Durga:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>Makpa, makpa debe nipa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Brother-in-law, brother-in-law, once more.

02 Host: Gharpa yobune? Shimbu do?  
*Is it too strong? Is it good?*

03 Durga: Shimbu nu  
*It’s good*

*It’s good. Hehehehehe.*

05 Tourist 1: What’s shibuno?  

06 Pema: Sibuno. Hehehe

07 Durga: ‘Good’.

08 Bal: Okay

In line 01, Durga uses Tibetan asking the host for more alcohol addressing with a locally appropriate address term “brother-in-law” because the guide addresses the host woman with the term “sister”. Then the host asks if it was too strong and if it was good, all in Tibetan (line 02). Pema, who is another guide, also adds that the alcohol was good. Here, the Tibetan language serves a practical purpose among the people who can speak it although they have their own ethnic languages. For example, Pema is from the Sherpa ethnic community and her native language is Sherpa. Durga and the two hosts have Tamang as their native language. Although the tourists do not understand it, this conversation in the “other” language creates a “soundscape” (Jaworski, Ylann-Mc Ewen, Thrulow & Lawson, 2003) for them. Due to a language barrier, there is no direct conversation between the tourists and the local hosts. Considering the participation framework, the use of Tibetan here works as a lingua franca for those who speak it, but excludes those who do not understand it. This is actually brought to attention by the American tourist in line 05-- “what is shibuno”? Her question shows interest in being included, but it also indicates that conversations among local people are yet another produce to be consumed by tourists – nothing is “off limits”. Her question, however, generates laughter from
Pema because the words “shimbu nu” are mispronounced as “shibuno” by the tourist. Pema then repeats the poor pronunciation to herself. Durga translates the meaning of the word into English for both the tourists and for me (line 07). In addition to a transactional purpose, by speaking a shared language, these participants construct and represent a shared identity as speakers of the Tibetan language, and by implication the ethnic minorities of the Himalayas. In this sense, the conversation becomes a vehicle for authentication practices during the tourist-host encounter. At another indexical level, the Tibetan language represents locality and authenticity – and another produce to consume for the visitors.

Buddhist values and principles play an important role in the life of Himalayan Tamangs, and these values are enacted in Durga’s tour guiding discourses. Durga’s guided tours turn abstract rituals, beliefs and practices as objects of gaze and experience for the visitors. Tour guiding, in this sense, becomes performative through transforming the speaker’s words into an “illocutionary act” (Austin, 1975). For example, Durga in Excerpt 6.14, recites two popular Buddhist mantras “om ah hum vajra guru padma siddhi hum” (line 01) and “om mani padma hum” in line 02. This conversation took place as Durga started explaining Buddhist rituals following the tourist’s question about what Buddhists do as part of their prayer ritual. The tourist repeats the second mantra although she does not seem to know its meaning. She asks for a confirmation (line 04).

**Excerpt 6.14: om mane padma hum**

01 Durga: *Om mani padma hum om mane padma hum*

02 and he will be help in the- in now you know.

03 Tourist 1: That’s what it means? Not- *om mani padma hum* (.z) padma hum

04 Durga: *Om mane padma hum* means we call Padma- Padmashambhava

05 or Guru Rinpoche you know. We remember him and he will help

06 like a Jesus Christ you know. Jesus Christ [kraist]? (.z) Jesus Christ [krist]?
In Excerpt 6.14, Durga notes that the word “padma” comes from the name of Padmasambhava or Guru Rinpoche, who is considered as the founder of the Tibetan Buddhism (lines 04, 05). Durga gives a reference to Jesus Christ in order to make the tourist understand who Padmasambhava is. Durga’s discursive work draws on local cultural practices, everyday rituals and Buddhist mythologies and weaves them into compelling narratives and representations. He simultaneously draws on more familiar, global discourses (such as of Christianity) in order make the content accessible to his clients (lines 04-06). This encounter also serves as a space for the guide to learn the pronunciation of the English word Jesus Christ. Line 06 shows that Durga is not sure whether “Christ” is pronounced as [krist] or [kraist]. His uncertainty is indexed by his rising intonation, a question directed to the language expert in situ. In line 07, the tourist provides a correct pronunciation of the word, and Durga in line 08 shows an uptake of the term. Here local representation (Padmasambhava) is accessible with reference to a more globally circulating discourse (Jesus Christ). This observation is similar to a finding by Higgins (2009) of an intercultural encounter between a Hindu Tanzanian and a Christian Tanzanian, in which case the Hindu used references to Christianity and Islam in order to explain Hinduism to the Christian. This excerpt shows that Durga is skilled at finding ways to communicate cross-cultural ideas by using the tourist’s own (presumed) culture as a resource. This interactional skill is the outcome of the training for guides in the institute, which is further modified and adjusted through work experience.

As I argued before, practices in local languages mark a shared identity and a sense of solidarity among its speakers, and, at the same time, they are emblematic of authenticity for the
visitors. However, these practices may sometimes become a resource for enjoyment and self-mockery for the visitors. I analyze an example to illustrate this point in Excerpt 6.15. This conversation took place when we stopped at a local teahouse for lunch on the second day. There was a woman with her two young kids. The teahouse owner had two children and the tourist wanted to know one of their names. Because the children do not understand English, she requests Durga to ask the name for her.

**Excerpt 6.15: manta aila**

01 Tourist 1: Can you ask her name?
02 Durga: Ah:: (0.3)
03 Tourist 1: Is this another language?
04 Durga: Sonam (.). sonam. Sonam ((tries to remember))
05 Tourist 1: Oh you are trying to remember.
06 Durga: I forgot. Yes. Minta aila? Anga (.). minta?

_What’s your name? Honey (.). name?_

07 Tourist 1: Minda aila?
08 Durga: Minta? (2.0) Minsiego. Minnase?

_Name? (2.0) Tell me your name. Don’t you know your name?_

09 Tourist 1: You don’t have any- do you not have a name?
10 What’s your name? Mindada? Haha?
11 Bal: Hehehe

In Excerpt 6.15, the tourist requests Durga to ask the girl’s name. When Durga seems to try to remember, the tourist again asks a follow up question to make sure if the name is in a different language (lines 01-03). Although Durga first mentions the name as “Sonam”, he seems to forget the name. In line 06, he switches to the local Tamang language and asks the girl her name (line 04). The tourist, following Durga, tries to repeat what Durga just said, without understanding its meaning. However, the pronunciation is not exact to what Durga said; she pronounces [minda] instead of [minta] to mean “what’s your name?” (lines 06, 07). When there is a lack of response
from the girl after Durga’s repeated questions, the tourist asks in English “What’s your name”, which is followed by a non-sense expression “mindada” (line 10). This provokes laughter in both the speaker and me. This shows that the tourist is aware of the meaninglessness of this token. Local linguistic tokens become a source of fun for the tourist when she mocks her own words in an unfamiliar language.

These examples have shown how language practices at travel destinations have layers of meanings for the locals and the visitors. In addition to functioning as a transactional tool, these resources and practices produce authenticities and mark shared ethnic identities. As part of the capitalist enterprise of commodification, they also become objects of consumption for the visitors who want to enhance their “cosmopolitan” taste during travel. This indirect route of commodification, however, does not confer direct economic benefits to the people at destinations. The families such as those described above do not receive any monetary benefits from Durga for letting foreigners into their houses.

6.5 Summary and conclusion
In this chapter, I have analyzed how Durga navigated multiple footings in terms of his roles and language use in order to enregister authenticity and language as a form of commodity in the tourism market. I showed that identification and authentication are discursive accomplishments that can be analyzed in multiple semiotic modes. This accomplishment is a collaborative process between the tourist, the guide and locals at the destinations. Reality is not authentic in its own; what counts as authentic encounters with the Other are produced through mediated tours and commentaries. The representations are constructed by a cultural insider, in this case, Durga. A lot of observations that I have made in this chapter highlight the importance of human agency in constructing and circulating a certain version of identity representation, and thus, authenticity.
Durga’s construction of local authenticity draws on a number of discursive tactics. In order to cater to the touristic needs and expectations, Durga, mostly through his multimodal discursive work, represents Buddhist and Tamang cultures, peoples and identities in a way that is reminiscent of pure culture that is not affected by modern cultures and technologies. Durga’s essentializing discourses reproduce and reinforce the authenticity rhetoric of Tamang identity in the Himalayan region in which indigenous people are often portrayed as idealized, untouched, exotic and isolated (Cohen, 1993). These examples resonate with Heller (2014), who notes that globalization has put performance of ethnic authenticities at the center of discursive space motivated by their commodity values. She further comments that commodified performances serve as a particularly potent discursive space for a redefinition of what it means to be a member from a particular ethnicity in ways that serve to legitimize the political claims laid out by the ethnic groups as well as enhance value of authenticity of its commodifiable identity. Durga’s guiding narratives and village walk activities are partly staged since he understands the economic and other benefits of promoting Tamang ethnicity as distinct, traditional and unaffected by modernity. Tour guides, in this case, highlight what is often expected by the tourist market and its consumers, and hide from the scene that may seem less important or insignificant. This suggests that locals, including the guide, try to enhance the authentic and “exotic” experience of tourists so that they can have more visitors in future.

The processes and effects of these authentication and representation practices show some similarities with observations made by Heller (2003) in the Canadian context and Wang (2014) in an ethnic minority context in China. Discourses of representation and identity, as these authors show, are inevitably conditioned by the global economy, and the history and geo-politics of the locality that tourism operates in. My analysis seems to show that rather than a collapse of
authenticity, the ongoing production and consumption of touristic representations reflects the very quest for authenticity by tourists. Tour guiding commentaries and representations construct authenticity in terms of Tamang cultural uniqueness, which is demanded by the tourist market and the local conditions of the host community and its members. And, these discourses are equally motivated by a desire of self-representation by the Tamang guide and his people, which also has to do with their broader goal of identity recognition and ethnic existence within the ongoing, fragile political condition of Nepal. International tourism community largely regards Himalayan people as synonymous to the Sherpas and vice versa; Sherpa as an ethnic category now being recognized as a category for a sturdy job of porters or mountaineering assistants. Through cultural performances and explicit articulation of their identities, Durga and people in his Tamang community are very agentive in constructing Tamang as another ethnic community in the Himalayas, which has been underrepresented, and at times misrepresented, by the tourism industry.

In the analysis, I have argued that Durga’s discourses on identity representations are in tandem with the ongoing efforts in Nepal to gain some form of political recognition for the Tamang ethnolinguistic group that has experienced subordination and oppression under what has been recognized as internal colonization (Lawoti, 2010). Durga’s representational commentaries reinforce and reproduce the essentialist ideology that Tamang as an ethnolinguistic category is inevitable and natural, and this category maintains sharp boundaries with other ethnolinguistic groups in the country. Essentialism is interpreted as a cultural and linguistic phenomenon here. Tamangs are represented in tour guiding discourses as internally homogenous and characterized by distinctive linguistic and other semiotic practices. A shared language and culture becomes a powerful force in the formation and articulation of an imagined Tamang ethnicity. Guides of
these tours emphasize the uniqueness, difference and exoticness of the people and their lifestyles at destinations.

These two processes – the commodification of ethnicity in the global tourism market and the creation and representation of ethnicity in the internal indigenous politics –, however, are not distinctly different forces but are two sides of a coin. In recent years, tourism in Nepal has been promoted through politicized discourses of ethnic minorities. Distancing itself from the ideology of one-nation, one language, and one religion, Nepal seems to celebrate, or even encourage, ethnic and linguistic diversity for tourism purposes. Ethnicity has been re-projected in a more positive sense, allowing for a commercial value of ethnic minorities in the context of tourism. Authorities branding tourism products are promoting Nepal as a multi-ethnic state with more than 90 minorities. The state conceives ethnic tourism as an effective vehicle for the modernization of Nepal that will help alleviate poverty and accelerate development. MacCannell (1984) refers to this process as “reconstructing ethnicity”, which may be used as both a commodity to be sold and as a rhetorical weapon in interethnic relations. Although ethnic identity will continue to have significance for local people irrespective of the presence of international travelers, tourism in this sense promotes the restoration and recreation of ethnic attributes and this largely resembles the propaganda of leaders of the janajati movement in Nepal. Tourism here contributes to the process of identity formation in the context of new nation formation (Hitchcock, 1999). Thus, the promotion of tourism is a two-way process in which distinctiveness in ethnolinguistic identities can reinforce and reproduce the image created by the tourism market. In the next chapter, I move on to summarize the chapters, highlight their major contributions and suggest future directions for research in this area.
CHAPTER 7
CONCLUSION

7.1 Introduction

Throughout the previous chapters, I explored the commodification of language and communication in the global economy of tourism in Nepal. I paid attention to the enregisterment of communication skills in building social rapport with international tourists, and discussed the ideologies of the English language among Nepali tourism workers. I also analyzed the discourses of representation and authentication in guided tour contexts. In the present chapter, I briefly summarize the previous chapters and present their key findings. I will then consider some of the major implications of this research for the study of tourism discourse in the field of applied/sociolinguistics. Finally, I will describe the future directions of this research, especially paying attention to how tourism can continue be a vibrant field of research in second language studies.

7.2 Summary of the chapters and findings

In the first chapter, I introduced the topic and research questions under investigation, and discussed two theoretical notions --- political economy of language and discursive representation – that broadly shaped my research. Then I discussed the notions of performance and enregisterment that helped me analyze the discourses of training and representation in Nepali tourism. A review of major studies in the sociolinguistics of tourism helped me situate my research in the fields of applied/sociolinguistics. I showed that an investigation of tourism discourse from the language workers’ perspective provides important insights in understanding the process of contemporary changes in discursive regimes in the global economy where the commodification of language, culture and identity is a central component.
In Chapter 2, I examined how the representations and fantasies of Nepal have changed or remained the same since the 1950s. Reviewing the history of Nepali tourism, I first discussed that Nepal’s representation to the world was largely shaped by how Westerners viewed it from their eyes. Nepal was represented as a Shangri-La, nestled in the Himalayas, with its unique arts and crafts in palaces and temples. I then showed that in the 1960s and 70s, Nepal was an end of the world for Western hippies where they could enjoy absolute freedom, pursue spiritual enlightenment and trade cannabis. I also argued that with the advent of mass tourism and boost in economy in many countries in the last two decades, Nepal has witnessed more and more tourists from various Asian countries – noticeably from China-- despite a sudden fall in the first few years at the dawn of this century due to internal Maoist insurgency as well as global terrorism. I also presented some examples that showed how the Nepal Tourism Board continues to draw on and reproduce the master narratives of Nepal’s uniqueness and exoticism in its varied promotional discourses, while expanding the horizon of such representational discourses to include Nepal’s richness in ethnic diversity and a blend Hindu and Buddhist spiritual practices.

Chapter 3 explained the choice of methodology, research sites and the key participants. I also explained the analytical approaches, representation of the discourse data, and my positionality and reflexivity during my ethnographic fieldwork.

Chapter 4, the first analysis chapter, analyzed the training discourse from a tour guide training institute, focusing on how Nepali tourism workers are trained to build and maintain social relationship to international tourists. I showed that in order to cater to touristic imaginations, Nepali tour guides are trained to display their identities as representatives of locality, authenticity and be cultural ambassadors of their country. I also showed that these workers are taught to change their identities and their communication strategies in order to
accommodate to those of their clients. I argued that these discourses and tactics that are meant to address tourists’ expectations ultimately feed into the Nepali tourism industry’s motive for economic gains.

In Chapter 5, I analyzed interviews with trekking guides and porters with regard to their articulation of English language ideologies for their work and personal life. I showed that Nepali tourism workers characterize their English skills as “broken” that needed to be fixed, corrected and improved. However, the analysis also showed that they normally do not aim to be competent in the “standard” norms of English because they treated a sophisticated level of English as inaccessible, unnecessary, and even undesirable. The analysis also showed that by being able to speak in their clients’ language, Nepali tourism workers want to imagine, establish and sustain interpersonal relationships with their clients, and their client-worker relation is re-imagined for friendship, sponsorship and romance.

Chapter 6 took up the topic of enregisterment of authenticity and representation in the context of guided tours. I illustrated that tourist-host interactions fall into a trap of essentialism, reinforcing and reproducing the “authentic” ethnic identity as a distinct and internally homogenous social category. I argued that the enregisterment process was the result of two distinct forces operating simultaneously in Nepal in recent decades. First, the discourses of representation are motivated by the commodification of culture and ethnicity in the tourism market. Second, Nepali people’s enactment of their identities is equally motivated by the Janajati movement in the country. I discussed these issues drawing on the notion of authentication from a sociolinguistic perspective.
7.3 Implications of the study

This study makes major contributions to the two key theoretical strands that inform the study: discursive representation, and commodification of language and culture in the global economy. Most studies on touristic representations and stereotypes have focused on how powerful tourists represent the “cosmopolitan” Self and constructs the “native” Other (e.g. Dann, 2004). However, little is done to investigate the reverse gaze: how those who remain the Other construct and represent tourists (exceptions include Evans-Pritchard, 1989; and Maoz, 2006). The present analysis suggests that Nepali tour guides who present themselves as the Other for international tourists also continually learn ways to understand and represent tourists as part of their professional discourse. They learn skills and tactics for managing relationships with tourists. As I showed in Chapter 4, their professional competence comprises rapport management strategies that they learn through their perception and categorization of international tourists.

Another issue that was evident in the analysis was the category of “tourists”. Although the training does teach the tour guides to learn about cultural stereotypes of their prospective clients from many parts of the world, English speaking Western “white” clients, particularly Americans, are constructed as the tourists in Nepal. Indians and Chinese, who comprise the largest number of international tourists, do not serve as “typical” examples of international tourists in the training classes. Also, although tourists come from diverse linguistic backgrounds and there is availability of workers serving this diversity, training discourses valorize English as the language of the West, which serves as a default tourist lingua franca in Nepal’s tourism industry.

Representational discourses of the Other, whether they are represented by the Self or by the Other themselves, exist because they have a commodity value in the global tourism market.
They may feed into the discourses of essentialism, perpetuate racial and ethnic hierarchies and reproduce economic and other inequalities for economic gains. They are geared toward constructing the “regimes of truth” (Foucault, 1991) that are less likely to match with the realities on the ground -- the realities of the changing nature of the way people live their lives in the transcultural, globalizing world. These representations are, thus, problematic. However, they are problematic in different ways. Studies show that tourists’ representation of the Other are largely static and essentialist, and these representations are the major schemas through which tourists are likely to see and understand the destination cultures before, during and after their trips (Bruner, 1996). However, I showed that tour guides’ and local’s representations of themselves are mostly tactical, theatrical and seductive, motivated mainly by economic and even political reasons.

I also pointed out that for Nepali tourism workers, English continues to serve as the major link language in the global economy of tourism and it is used as a tool to commodity local cultural and religious identities and practices. Trekking guides who are mostly from indigenous ethnic groups learn and re-learn their own cultural practices, along with appropriate communication skills in English, in order to be able to neatly weave them into compelling narratives for tourists. These representations thus demand certain kinds of intercultural knowledge and English ability to effectively convey these narratives. Their practices are similar to what Heller (2003) found in Canada, where French developed a commodity value in the tourism industry in recent decades. Due to heritage tourism and a growing number of call centers in the late capitalist economy, native French-speaking bilinguals now value their bilingual skills both as tools of identity as well as of communication. In the present context also, ethnic identities are recognized as commodities in the tourism market. However, all identities are not equally valued. I argued that tourism can create a new hierarchy of ethnicities which puts some identities
at the center in terms of their commodity value in the market. Ethnic Sherpa identities, for
example, are still more positively valued and much desired by tourists. There is a body of work
in cultural tourism which explains such ethnicity and representational dynamics for commodity
purposes (Bruner, 1995; O’Connor, 2006; Salazar, 2010; van Beek, 2003). Van Beek (2003), for
example, notes a similar ethnic superiority in the tourist gaze at the Dogon in Mali, West Africa.
This sometimes leads to non-Dogon presenting themselves as Dogon in tourist encounters. This
raises the question of authenticity, and draws our attention to whether the staging of identity for
economic purposes challenges cultural authenticity and whether it creates artificial forms of
ethnic hierarchies for the sake of touristic consumption (Cohen, 1988; McCannel, 1986). In my
data, however, non-Sherpa ethnic people in Nepal showed a positive stance toward their own
identities and did not suffer because the Sherpa were iconicized by many tourists. This can partly
be explained due to the fact that there is an increased awareness and recognition of their
identities among the indigenous and ethnic communities in Nepal, and such an issue has been a
political agenda in various forms of ethnic organizations and political movements in the country.
Nepal’s tourism industry can serve as one such venue and English an accompanying
communicative tool to showcase their identities in a more visible and assertive way, as in the
case of Durga in the Tamang Heritage Trail, as I showed in Chapter 5.

This study also points out moral ambivalences among Nepali hosts and tourism workers
regarding the impact of tourism on their localities. On the one hand, they see tourism as a
passport to development, for both individuals and the nation, that can help make their economic
life better. For them, tourism can lead to infrastructure development such as roads and bridges,
and urbanization, and also it can pave ways for introducing new technologies and affordances
such as electricity and telephones. They know that being able to communicate in a tourist
language, such as English, can equip them with resources to connect to the people from the world that they have not been to. They imagine that these new affordances can make their life significantly different, in a more positive way. On the other hand, they also know that keeping local cultures, languages and traditions intact, will be rewarding economically for them as visitors come for things that are hard to find in other urban places. The present study shed light on this aspect in Chapter 6.

7.4 Directions for future research

Considering the future directions for a discursive approach to research on language and tourism in applied/socio linguistics, I discuss three promising and interrelated areas:

7.4.1 Tourism and multilingualism

A substantial body of work has investigated the role of English as a global language in late capitalist and neoliberal economic conditions. In recent years, we have also witnessed emerging interests in what has been recognized as a multilingual or plurilingual turn (Conteh & Meier, 2014; Flores 2013; Kubota, 2014; May 2014), which focuses on the plurality, multiplicity, and dynamicity of language practices. The linguistic market in most cases does not exclude but promotes English as part of the language users’ linguistic repertoire, with is a continuation of linguistic hegemony in the global economy. Taking the case of European multilingualism, Flores (2013) argues:

the current conceptualization of plurilingualism may become complicit in the production of a new elite class of English-speaking plurilingual subjects who have mastered multiple linguistic codes and participate in fluid linguistic practices solely at the service of neoliberal expansion. Their use of English would continue to marginalize the world’s non-English-speaking population.
Similarly, Boutet’s (2012) empirical documentation of the Filipino “supermaids” language training also validates the claim. She notes:

> competitiveness in the global market increasingly demands English speakers with workplace communication skills and linguistic competence in the language of their destination country. This emergence of workplace communication skills and multilingualism (i.e., English and the language of the destination country) as a means of making Filipino workers distinctive in the global labor market may be attributed to increased competition from other labor-sending countries, such as Indonesia and Sri Lanka, in the niches which the Philippines has traditionally dominated (p. 200).

This shows that competence in English is no longer enough for the “supermaids” in the competitive market of service industry they are going to enter. However, in such situations, English occupies the top position in the hierarchy.

Nepali tour guides in recent years have increasingly faced challenges of a need to learn and use additional multilingual repertoires in order to meet the market demand of their job. As a future research study, this leads me to critically examine the role of English as a de facto lingua franca in international and intercultural communication contexts. I refrain from making a claim that English serves as a common language in the global mobility contexts such as tourism. For example, as the multilingual tour guides’ interview responses show, tourists tend to contact tour companies in advance not always for an English speaking guide, but for those who can speak the client’s language. In addition, even though English is a shared language between the guides and the tourists, this may not necessarily always serve as a lingua franca in situ. As a future research project, I want to explore how tourism as a global economic industry engenders English-plus-
Another concern within the political economic dimension of language is the role of and the space for multilingualism that does not include English. Following Kubota (2014), I argue that the hegemonic role of English as unquestionably a global tool of communication can be challenged by promoting multilingualism which includes languages other than English. However, research that looks into languages other than English from a multilingualism-and-commodification perspective is limited. I suggest that researchers should pay attention to the spread and use of global languages other than English in the linguistic marketplace. As a future research project, I want to investigate Chinese as a global language from the perspective of Nepali tourism workers and businessmen, paying attention to whether it may be possible to develop human capital without a competence in English.

The linguistic market is not uniform, but is highly stratified. Markets can challenge the existing hierarchies of languages, but they at the same time give rise to a new linguistic stratification. It is also my contention that the multilingualism with or without English largely conforms to the ideals of the late capitalist market needs. Therefore, it is important to critically reflect on the multi/plural turn and pay more attention to the systems of power that produce racial, economic, and other inequalities related to plural language practices (Flores, 2013; Kubota, 2014).

7.4.2 Intercultural Communication

Greater attention has been paid by intercultural communication researchers to contexts such as international business, study abroad, migration and workplaces. However, despite tourism being one of the largest industries of human mobility, it has received scant scholarly attention from an
intercultural perspective. The very purpose of travel is driven by an ideology that touristic encounters are a major site of intercultural communication. In fact, the success of touristic travel is very often identified with a possibility of engaging with the locals. Given these concerns, I suggest more research into the relationship culture and communication in international tourism. It can provide important insights on the role of culture in communication, representation and commodification. Incidents of intercultural communication were very common in my data corpus. Due to my focus on representation and language/communication training for the dissertation, the analysis of intercultural encounters will be a topic of investigation in future. Researching tourism communication from an intercultural perspective can provide interesting findings on communication strategies, misunderstanding and identity negotiations.

Adding more information about tourists, their cultural backgrounds, and their touristic tastes would strengthen the study. Due to the transient nature of the tours and because of the fact that tourists were on their “holiday,” I was very careful not to interrupt their tours as well as the relationship between the workers and the tourists. I minimized my intervention, as much as possible, during the trips. I was concerned that my interviews and more frequent interactions with tourists would affect their experience and might negatively affect the business relationship between the guide and the client. For future studies, I suggest that researchers get more information by establishing more sustained relationships with tourists both during and after their trips. Perspectives from tourists are useful in understanding their tastes and their impressions of the efficiency of communication skills of Nepali tourism workers. Such findings can feed into improving the tour guide training program and the English language program for the guides.

I have drawn on the orientalist perspective, keeping Western tourists as central to my study. That means I suffer from the same bias as most previous researchers, that is, limiting my
focus on English speaking tourists and their service providers. For future projects, Chinese tourists may be constructing a different tourist identity in the sphere of international tourism, and the discourses that have to be crafted and circulated may be shaped differently by the market for Chinese tourists.

7.4.3 Linguistic landscaping

Another concern that this study points out but does not go into detail on is the social production of space in discourse practices. How do tourism stakeholders, including tourism workers produce tourist destinations? Again, this suggests the potential benefits for ethnographic research on the linguistic landscape of tourist spaces. I argue that more research is needed in this area.

During my fieldwork in many tourist destinations in Kathmandu, I noticed that the production of those destinations have been changing in terms of how they are represented discursively. Most places now have Chinese and English bilingual signs in store names, street names and public signposts. It is fruitful to draw on the notion of audience design (Bell, 1991) in order to see how changes in the linguistic landscapes are reflective of the background of tourists who travel to those destinations. Use of the Nepali and Newari languages serve as indexes of locality for outsiders. Thus, in addition to serving as a transactional means, linguistic landscapes at tourist destinations reflect how the local people maintain social relationship to tourists in general. In Kathmandu, for example, Chinese, English and other foreign languages are used as markers of cosmopolitanism and information, which in a sense serve as tools for creating linguistically “safe” places for international tourists. I also argue that the notion of a “tourist bubble” (Judd, 1999) helps us understand tourist behaviors and actions as social activities. The exclusive use of the Chinese language (or any other tourist language) in guided tours, shopping malls and hotels creates a “safe” linguistic environment, but it is likely to limit the traveler from
gaining intercultural experience. Due to the translocalness of tourist destinations, there is a marginalization of local languages in Kathmandu. Their limited use marks Otherness that tourists experience as part of authenticity (Moriarty, 2014). In both cases, linguistic landscapes are commodified in the tourist market. Following Kaleen (2009), I argue that a focus on linguistic landscapes at tourist destinations helps us understand the transient and diverse nature of the local social environment, which is a shift in attention from studies that have investigated more stable geo-political territories.

Finally, this study illustrated a usefulness of combining the discourse-oriented and ethnography-oriented approaches to the study of language in a workplace context. Creese (2008) notes that “ethnography can benefit from the analytical frameworks provided by linguistics, while linguistics can benefit from the processes of reflexive sensitivity required in ethnography” (p. 232). Following this broader approach, I started the analysis of my data from the discourse excerpts, and supplemented my analysis with various levels of ethnographic information. As most part of my data included communicative events that took places while the participants were on the move in treks and tours, it became almost impossible to record everything that the participants did and talked about. The walking distance between the tourists and the guides was not always close enough to allow me to record their two-way communication. Ethnographic notes in the field helped me make sense of what they were talking about or were acting upon. A continuous reflexivity on my involvement and identity during the fieldwork helped me approach the field, the participants and the data representation. For example, I became aware of my power and privilege as a high caste Hindu educated in the West with a relatively better financial position. Although I could not be exactly one of them, I tried my best to be a member of that community sharing accommodation and food with them and taking part in their conversations.
Thus, I suggest that combining discourse analysis with ethnography yields fruitful analytical insights on interactional moments, but must always be interpreted with a critical lens on the researcher’s positionality.
REFERENCES


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Trekking in Nepal: Annapurna Circuit: http://lifestyle.in.msn.com/gallery/20-places-to-see-before-you-die#image=16


APPENDIX: IRB APPROVAL

MEMORANDUM
CR

February 6, 2014

TO: Bal Krishna Sharma
Principal Investigator
Second Language Studies

FROM: Denise A. Lin-DeShetler, MPH, MA
Director

SUBJECT: CHS #20841- "Role of Language and Communication in Tourist-Host Interactions in Nepal"

Under an expedited review procedure, the research project identified above was approved for one year on January 28, 2014 by the University of Hawaii (UH) Human Studies Program. The application qualified for expedited review under CFR 46.110 and 21 CFR 56.110, Category (7).

This memorandum is your record of the Human Studies Program approval of this study. Please maintain it with your study records.

The Human Studies Program approval for this project will expire on January 27, 2015. If you expect your project to continue beyond this date, you must submit an application for renewal of this Human Studies Program approval. The Human Studies Program approval must be maintained for the entire term of your project.

If, during the course of your project, you intend to make changes to this study, you must obtain approval from the Human Studies Program prior to implementing any changes. If an Unanticipated Problem occurs during the course of the study, you must notify the Human Studies Program within 24 hours of knowledge of the problem. A formal report must be submitted to the Human Studies Program within 10 days. The definition of "Unanticipated Problem" may be found at: http://hawaii.edu/irb/download/documents/SOPP_101_UP_Reporting.pdf, and the report form may be downloaded here: http://hawaii.edu/irb/download/forms/App_UP_Report.doc.

You are required to maintain complete records pertaining to the use of humans as participants in your research. This includes all information or materials conveyed to and received from participants as well as signed consent forms, data, analyses, and results. These records must be maintained for at least three years following project completion or termination, and they are subject to inspection and review by the Human Studies Program and other authorized agencies.