



**ROLE OF FATHERHOOD TO BUILD THE LINGUISTIC
IDENTITY OF DAUGHTERS IN NEPAL**

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(Received on December 18, 2025; Accepted on March 15, 2026)

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the profound and varied impact of fatherhood practices on the childhood identity formation and language learning paths of daughters in the patriarchal socio-cultural setting of Nepal. It aims to explore the stable academic gap to understand how paternal engagement and socio-cultural milieu enable the daughters' educational and professional development strands. The study applies qualitative research methods underpinning narrative inquiry. The study utilizes Norton's (2013) theory of Investment from Language learning and Identity. The study has selected six English teachers as participants from Kathmandu, Bhaktapur, and Lalitpur. It has used in-depth interviews to gather rich lived experiences and detailed narratives of participants. It attempts to identify the traditional, emotionally distant father and the responsible, actively involved father who champions gender parity. The study reveals a direct correlation between paternal support and his commitment and communication style, and daughters' self-worth. This self-concept fundamentally mediates daughters' language learning practices and their capacity to become strongly educated and professional in the imagined community. The main contribution is that progressive fatherhood can facilitate daughters by providing higher parental economic status, confidence, and challenging social barriers, thereby promoting self-autonomy. The study asserts that perceiving women's linguistic and professional empowerment is a fundamental paradigm shift in the patriarchal context.

Keywords: *Fatherhood, Linguistic identity, Daughters, Language, Investment*

Introduction

Language consists of a crucial linguistic device to play a significant role in setting individual identity and social positioning. Identity creates, builds and establishes itself as a dynamic and socially built milieu emerging through communication shaped by cultural assumptions, power and access to linguistic discourse (Rahaman, 2025). Language learning is not only the process of language acquisition of linguistic competence and performance but also concerned with a site where language learners negotiate voice and agency. Gendered norms affect who speak, when, and how, influencing early linguistic development and shaping educational and professional development in the schooling of male governed society. It supports building self-expression, existence and dignity.

Linguistic identity refers to how people perceive themselves and get recognition among others related to language use, reflecting power dynamics and social hegemony. Family plays a significant role as a primary acculturating agent in shaping early linguistic identity. Fathers could be able to influence daughters through their investment

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in everyday interactions, communication styles, education, and career decisions. In this regard, Dillon et al., (2025) asserted that Family experiences assist to comprehend whose voices are valued, shaping daughters' confidence to participate in private and public linguistic spaces.

The notion of fathers' investment supports us in understanding why daughters engage with language despite structural constraints. In this context, Rahman (2025) says that investment in language is an agency to recognize social and symbolic capital. In patriarchal schooling, investment in daughters' language, particularly their linguistic identity, is intertwined with the expectations of the family, social norms, and the legacy of educational participation. Fathers' attitude and support influence daughters' investment in language learning to perform as competent speakers and professionals.

Fatherhood plays a vital role as the gatekeepers of daughters' education, mobility, and autonomy. However, there is a shifting role of fatherhood at present who challenge gender norms and values and then support their daughters. In this context, Abah et al. (2025) said that some fathers practice to avoid the traditional role of fatherhood and invest in cultivating voice of daughters, but some fathers give emphasis to following the language of obedience, silence, and social responsibilities. Such transformations explore and empower through everyday practices, shaping daughters' childhood experiences of self – concept, discourse, and agency. Thus, understanding fatherhood's investment in daughters' linguistic identity encompasses broader gendered disparity in Nepal.

This study aims to explore the relationship between fatherhood and daughters' linguistic discourse amid the lived experiences of six daughters. The study highlights how parental role, especially fatherhood engagement, shapes access to voice, investment in language learning and professional development, obtaining the transformative role of progressive fatherhood in patriarchal societies. By foregrounding the father-daughter relationship from the site of linguistic socialization, the study embodies language, gender, and identity to offer gender parity in career, decision-making, and linguistic discourse.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore the nuanced role of fatherhood in shaping daughters' linguistic identity and educational trajectories within the patriarchal socio-cultural context of Nepal.

Research Question of Study

1. How do fathers' practices and investment influence the linguistic identity of their daughters?

Literature Review

This research article applied the relevant literature review in three strands: Language, Identity and Gender, Investment in Power Relations, Daughters' Identity, Social Mobility and Professional Identity, and Theoretical framework.

Language, Identity and Gender

Language and identity are inseparable constructs that are socially integrated and performative, reflecting cultural, ideological, and gendered norms. In this term, Beauvoir (1949/2010) said that women's social identities are constructed with women's socially constructed identities to stop their voice. Similarly, Norton (2013) asserted that language learners' identity has been mediated by society, that's why learners invest in recognition and future imagined communities. In addition, Lantolf and Pavlenko (2001) said that language acquisition is co-constructed through cultural practices. More recently, Evans and Jakiela (2025) said that parental investment including fathers' engagement facilitates to set children's linguistic development to create the early foundation for self-expression. Together, the linguistic identity of daughters in patriarchal society is influenced by family practices, sociocultural structures, and opportunities for identity.

Investment in Power Relations

Language investment gets direct connection with power, and social positioning. In this context, Norton (2013) says that that learner's investment in language can help to develop a belief that it will appear as social expertise. Norton and Toohey (2011) declare that investment is concerned with social relations and unequal power structures connected with family, respectively. The theory of Bourdieu (1991) presents that linguistic competence is for privilege and career opportunities. Moreover, Rahaman (2025) illustrates that girls' investment in language for parental encouragement can reinforce gendered expectations of society. So, daughters' investment in language learning emphasizes their personal and professional development along with self-expression.

Daughters' Identity

Daughters' identity construction is entangled with patriarchal schooling that regulates voice, subjectivity, and opportunity. Beauvoir (1949/2010) states that women are considered as the other. Building in this Ahearn (2012) evaluates how linguistic and social identities are constructed within family and community. In this context, daughters' linguistic identity is concerned with investment of fatherhood. Moreover, Gallagher et al. (2025) opines that father involvement can counteract restrictive gender norms, fostering confidence, and professional development through educational engagement on daughters. It shows the role of paternal practices in mediating daughters' ability to navigate socio-cultural and linguistic activities.

Social Mobility and Professional Identity

English functions as a symbolic resource for social mobility, especially for women in male governed society. In this context, language proficiency is linked with identity, and professional opportunities (Cummins, 2000). So, language and communication are embedded with society. Similarly, Norton and Early (2011) discuss that language learning is a process of socialization and a self-empowerment process. Rahman (2025) states that a father's investment in daughters' language learning process leads to the way of gender status. Thus, progressive fatherhood facilitates daughters to assert autonomy and challenge obsolete social practices. On one hand, this study embodies that the language acquisition process is inseparable from identity, and on the other hand, fathers stand as formative assignments to build daughters linguistic identity.

Theoretical framework

The theory analyses how fatherhood practices function as an initial socializing influence on the process of daughters' identity construction. Supportive and positive fathers can invest, generate, and build daughters' identity, fostering a strong confidence, and value of daughters' voices. Such childhood experiences bridge daughter's investment in language learning and professional development that is understood through Norton's theory of investment (2013), concerned with social position, and identity. Overall, investment in linguistic discourse becomes eye opener to lead into the journey of professional development, and a wide range of empowerment in imagined communities.

Methods

This research study includes a qualitative research approach grounded in narrative inquiry. The study adopted an in-depth exploration of participants lived experiences with meaning-making processes. The study applies to Norton's investment (2013), which is conceptualized as a socially situated practice associated with identity, power, and access to symbolic resources.

Participants were purposefully selected to conclude six women English teachers from the public secondary schools across Kathmandu, Bhaktapur, and Lalitpur. Selection criteria attempted paternal influences, ranging from fathers who were emotionally distant and traditionally oriented to those who were actively involved and supportive to facilitate daughters in the pathway of gender equality.

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The research followed a narrative approach along with the identification of thematic patterns that assist in illustrating the relationship between fatherhood practices and daughters' linguistic and professional identities.

Results and Discussion

This study explored how fatherhood creates and sets the linguistic identity construction of daughters in Nepal by portraying the lived experiences of women English language teachers. The narratives of participants indicate that fatherhood can play a crucial role in participants' linguistic lives. Fatherhood gets integration with a social institution through which authority encouragement softens subtly rather than overtly. Underlying the narratives of participants is parental linguistic investment towards daughters' competence and performance. In this context, Gurgand et al. (2025) says that paternal engagement in linguistic communication shapes the confidence and career of daughters through their voice. Fathers' investment in daughters' childhood through communication and interaction builds their personal and professional careers. Paternal guidance and encouragement support to questioning and raise voice.

Fathers get more active engagement with sons compared to daughters. Daughters engage in household chores with their mothers and influence their mothers by following maternal norms. Sons speak directly, but daughters speak cautiously. Such kinds of practices in the restricted environment create silence due to interrupted speech, lack of acknowledgement, and differential empowerment. It creates hesitation in their expression, and they are unable to speak confidently. Supportive paternal roles make daughters bold, confident, and enthusiastic in their expression, educational achievement, and profession. It influences linguistic performance and self-positioning as speakers (Gurgand et al., 2025). Thus, drawing on the experiences of participants, daughters encounter school positioning as hesitant or restrained language users.

Similarly, the lived experiences of participants illustrate that communicative fatherhood supports fostering confidence and courage to question the traditional paternal role and social assumptions. Participants who perceived time to engage with fathers were able to ask questions, share their experiences, show curiosity, and present their opinions without fear of reprimand. Fathers of these categories remained far from traditional ideologies. They create an everyday communicative and interactive environment with daughters' voices within family discourse. In this term, Rahaman (2025) asserted that Identity and Language Learning emphasize that such early recognition enables learners to invest in language with confidence and purpose.

The attitude of fathers towards daughters' education further structured participants' linguistic identity in a profound way. Lived experiences of participants showed that fathers' support in daughters' schooling delayed early marriage, invested in education, resisted community pressure, and encouraging to follow paternal role created sustained learning environment for daughters encompassing access to English language education. Here, one participant recalled her father, who openly challenged neighbours who questioned the value of educating girls. In this context, Beauvoir (1949/2010) says that daughters are made by society. So, the language learning milieu is shaped by social validation and familial recognition. Thus, shifting fatherhood could bring a transformative notion to strengthen the language learning capacity of daughters that opens the door to capturing opportunities for personal and professional growth.

In contrast, narratives of participants revealed that the priority of fathers towards sons' education was described as entering school with uncertainty and diminished confidence. Such kinds of daughters kept language learning tasks as secondary and gave priority to household chores by following maternal norms, which affected their early engagement with English. In addition, the English language appeared as a space through which they generated and built confidence and asserted professional identity, along with

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intellectual presence. Here, Linguistics and Education (2024) asserted that the latest work in language education showed that marginalized language learners always rework early exclusion by investing in the formal languages of high status profoundly.

The accounts of participants present how fatherhood functioned as a mechanism for either reproducing or disrupting patriarchal norms. Daughters of supportive fathers expressed that their fathers encouraged them to participate in public discussion and enjoy gender parity. Others described strict regulations of behaviour, dress, and speech during adolescence. In this regard, Rahaman (2025) asserts that research on gender and language confirms that parental attitudes play a vital role in shaping how girls learn to navigate gendered boundaries. Analytically, fatherhood appeared as an ideological site where patriarchal assumptions naturalize lasting implications for daughters' linguistic agency.

Significantly, the lived experiences of participants referred to the many restrictions imposed in childhood, identified as oppressive in future life, even in their profession. Participants reinterpreted their childhood silencing as socially produced rather than personally deserved. Here, Beauvoir (1949) said that women are not born, they are made. Thus, language learning is a social phenomenon that can be acquired through the support of family and social norms, where fathers can play a crucial role in building the linguistic discourse of daughters.

The influence of positive investment in fatherhood expanded beyond childhood into married and professional respondents. Daughter raised by supportive fathers presented entering married life with greater confidence in the world of work, mobility, and professional continuity, even in restrictive marital contexts. In addition, supportive fatherhood assists in shaping daughters' ability to sustain voice and professional identity over time. Research indicates that early familial help constantly shapes women's concerns across major life transitions (Linguistics and Education, 2024).

Language always functions as symbolic power including professional competence. It facilitates daughters to claim authority, economic contribution, and respect within marital household chores. Therefore, language is a vehicle to transform social positioning. Likewise, English functioned as a site of identity reconstruction rather than academic attainment. Capturing entire narratives of the participants, this study integrates with the idea that use of professional language appeared as a vehicle for reclaiming voice and building identity. In brief, daughters' professional identities were co-constructed through familial background, and linguistic investment, rather than produced institutional schooling. Hence, fatherhood is a crucial vehicle in shaping daughters' childhood experiences of voice.

Findings

This research study finds fatherhood investment and responsibilities in shaping daughters' childhood experiences and lived stories of voice and silence. The experiences of six participants revealed that their linguistic discourse was shaped concerned with their fathers' investment, engagement, and interaction along with communication. Traditional fathers did not appear supportive, and they were emotionally at distance with their daughters who guided daughters in limitation within family discourse, affecting confidence and performance during formal schooling. In contrast, in this regard, actively engaged and interactive fathers created supportive fatherhood that made daughters' voices meaningful at home, which emphasized opening new avenues encouraging them to raise their questions, share opinions, and use gender inclusive language.

The research highlights the attributes of fatherhood to integrate daughters' capacity to navigate male governed hegemony of society and pursue their professional identities. Supportive fatherhood facilitated daughters' immense mobility decision making autonomy by allowing career growth and professional development. Progressive fatherhood identified appropriate attempts to facilitate learning and growing

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environment to daughters. They created problem-solving and leadership skills in the personal and professional life of their daughters. Moreover, the research showed that the shifting identity of fatherhood fostered linguistic and educational empowerment along with their daughters' ability to challenge patriarchal socio-cultural norms and assert agency of real and imagined communities.

Conclusion

This research concludes that fatherhood appeared a foundational landscape of daughters' linguistic identity, social agency and the device of professional empowerment in the context of male governed Nepalese context. Gender supportive fathers promoted and stimulated agency and discourse investing in language acquisition compared to emotionally distanced or traditional fathers. Gender friendly fathers cultivated potential space for their daughters' entire growth and pursue professional growth and learning milieu. The study came in conclusion that the investment of fatherhood creates bond of father-daughter relationship to shape further identities in the entire dimensions of their daughters.

Overall, the research study highlights the benefits of progressive fatherhood to challenge obsolete patriarchal traditions and promote daughters' empowerment. Early fatherhood supports make passports for professional confidence, self-autonomy and agency in language bridged professions. Finally, the study showed that fatherhood supports evoking daughters' voice by generating and establishing long-term implications for linguistic, academic, and social enhancement of daughters. The study also contributes to comprehending the shifting landscape of fatherhood to construct daughters' linguistic identity by providing actionable insights for educators, policy makers, and families focusing on fostering an inclusive linguistic and professional agency to daughters.

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