

DOI: 10.21672/1818-510X-2021-67-2-149-157

**“WHEN I STOPPED MAKING SENSE, SENSES BECAME CLEARER!”  
MEANING-MAKING IN ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH**

**Rebat Kumar Dhakal**, Doctoral Fellow  
Kathmandu University School of Education  
Nepal, 44700, Lalitpur  
E-mail: rebat@kusoed.edu.np

Meaning-making is the central focus of all ethnographic writing. However, a methodical approach to meaning-making remains under-represented in literature and it is undermined in academic discourse. Taking two anecdotes of presenting preliminary senses of the ethnographic field materials of my doctoral research, I explore some issues central to meaning-making processes in ethnographic research on inclusive school governance. The paper argues that rather than adopting the ‘phased approach’ consisting of ‘data gathering’ and ‘meaning-making’, ethnographic research can better interweave these two for revealing a more comprehensive and insider view of reality. Moreover, reflecting on my experience and learning, I emphasize involving participants in the meaning-making process, which is not only desirable but possibly a reasonable option for neophyte ethnographers.

**Keywords:** meaning-making, sense-making, ethnography, field materials, neophyte researcher, school governance, data gathering, phased approach, participants, Nepal

**Context.** The idea of this paper may not be ‘novel’, but ‘revealing’ to me – a novice qualitative researcher plunging into the ocean of what may be a ‘private’ method of social anthropology without being armed with the much-needed lifesavers. Although ‘making sense of ethnographic field texts or qualitative “data” in general’ is not a new topic – this paper takes a different angle with specific reference to my doctoral research on ‘inclusive school governance in rural Nepal’ and I believe it will be relevant for the neophyte researchers who hanker after ethnography to ruminate on the ethnographic meaning-making process. In this study, I have used field texts, field narratives and field materials interchangeably.

My initial thinking on this qualitative research project began with a call for PhD fellowship by Kathmandu University School of Education (KUSOED). I prepared a research proposal on school governance, applied for the fellowship and got selected. The fellowship was funded under the grant from Danida Fellowship Center (DFC) – and thus the project was popularly called ‘DFC project’ between the close network of its partners – Martin Chautari (Nepal) - lead partner, KUSOED (Nepal) – my degree-awarding institution, and the Danish School of Education, Aarhus University (AU/DPU, Denmark). Therefore, my study and academic engagement spread over these three institutions. In this paper, some instances of my engagement in the first two institutions are referred.

The overall purpose of my doctoral research project was to explore the gendered dynamics of School Management Committee (SMC). The fieldwork for the study was conducted from mid-2016 to end of 2017 in a rural community school in Gandaki Province and the participants included six SMC members (three male and female each). In this paper, I reflect on my experience and learning of engaging in ethnographic fieldwork and meaning-making of the field materials without making a boundary to separate each – though the focus is on the latter one. Here, my focus is on women SMC members since the problems in my research lie in meaning-making of the women’s life experiences regarding school governance. Therefore, the three women participants in my study, pseudo-namely Nirmala, Tara and Sharmila, are quoted in this paper.

With meaning-making also comes the idea of presenting and representing such meanings. I found multiple creative and expressive ways [1–3] to present, represent and reflect on ethnographic field materials such as narratives, vignettes, poetry, monologues, dialogues, episodes, acts, scenes among others, and I have used poetry, vignettes, dialogues, scenes and episodes in various occasions throughout the research process. In this paper also, I have utilised my knowledge of literary genres (especially poetry) to be emotive, expressive, empathetic and to reach a different level of abstraction [4]. Moreover, the poetic texts are not different from the narrative texts since these boxed poems are also part and/or product of the meaning-making process.

In the following section, I present my 'case' – a conundrum I faced in the initial days of engaging in meaning-making of field materials and sharing of them.

**Making Sense or Nonsense.** I begin this section with a short poetic expression of my experience of sharing my initial senses of the field materials in a larger scholarly community.

**Will I Ever Make Sense of Field Narratives?**

Poor me!

When I make literal meaning of the 'field narratives', I am not academic!

"You're just retelling what the 'data' says, where is your 'analysis'?"

You have to do it again. Draw more meanings."

Oh, yes. I should draw more meanings.

Implied meanings, sarcastic meanings, emotive meanings.

Or even meanings maybe not stated (or intended?) by the participants.

When I make possible 'implied', 'further' and 'associated' meanings,

I was not doing justice to my 'data'.

"Does your 'data' speak that?"

"How come you make such meanings from your 'data'?"

I wonder what my field narratives tell me, and what they tell others!

I recalled my professor saying "What's not said is as important as what is said."

Was he wrong?

I think I misunderstood.

Which I often do.

The first stanza is my reflection on the comments on my paper by the participants in a seminar at Martin Chautari in late 2016, who saw my draft paper empirically rich but lacking my meanings and 'analysis'. I agreed. Maybe I was struggling with the novice-researcher syndrome – relying on "a mere summarisation of other texts as if the other texts represent fixed and accepted meanings in the form of knowledge claims" [5, p. 159]. I worked further on the paper and became sure that I have my meanings drawn and also 'analysis' done. I presented this 'substantially revised' paper at a seminar at KUSOED in early 2017. The commentator was a professor from another university who was introduced as a subject expert on my research issue. The commentator this time rated the paper above average but questioned on the meanings I added and wondered whether I made sense of and did 'justice to' the field narratives. To borrow the commentators' words: "Does your 'data' speak that?" This question pushed me into further self-reflection. I even started wondering: a) why field materials tell me one thing and my readers another, and also b) whether the field narratives should always tell the readers and the researcher the same thing. I discuss this predicament in the following section.

**Do Field Narratives Tell Me One Thing, and Others Another?** Relating to the comments from the second seminar participants "Your interpretation seems like that of an 'armchair academic', did you really go to the field?" Here, I was more punched by 'armchair academic' than by questioning my field engagement. I did not wish to respond to the commentator because I have had rich empirical evidence in store (as commented in an earlier seminar at Martin Chautari) and happily agreed that the evidence was not so profoundly spread over the paper this time. Here, I want to pause for a minute to situate my 'field' in the broader context of ethnographic inquiry. Field, may that be for pure 'data collection' at the first stage or 'data collection with meaning-making' at the later stages referred to all locations and processes where and whereby I got in touch with the research participants.

Now I return to answer the comment on my paper in the seminar. I believe, following my qualitative research orientation since my Master of Philosophy study programme, that people are value-laden and thus choose meanings based on what they value [6], especially, following their instinct, subjective assessment of the available evidence, individual disposition towards the phenomenon in question. It is therefore according to one's subjective thinking that people ascribe meanings to an object, action or idea [7]. Again, reflecting on my position as a researcher and the critics as well-versed scholars in the field did not allow me to stick to my partial knowledge of

subjective meaning-making. Again, a crucial limitation in my research is that women's world is interpreted from a man's perspective. I think there could be a different kind of interpretations if the same texts (of female voices) were interpreted by a woman researcher.

As indicated by commentators at both the seminars, I, a hill-Brahmin<sup>1</sup> male researcher studying the inclusion of women in school governance, needed to be extra cautious to reduce possible 'macho' bias that could creep in from using gender insensitive language or even 'flawed expressions' [8]. In fact, researchers studying the other gender and doing the gendered research point out this challenge and caution researchers to 'have the "balls" to negotiate certain situations and emotions [9]. I therefore aware my readers to take my interpretation as one made from a male researcher's perspective but trying to voice women's experiences. Therefore, regarding my meanings and interpretations, I was somehow confident because those were what I sensed after multiple readings of the field 'notes', re-assessing the participants' social relations, their patterns of interactions, and using my memory to visualize their expressions.

With a feeling that I could not make 'academically valid' meanings of the field texts, I started thinking over and over again on how I could improve my meaning-making ability. I went through literature [7; 10–13], discussed with my peers and faculty at the University, and also discussed with some 'ethnographers' (including 'methodologists') but remained inconclusive. As such, I felt that though meaning-making is the major process of the ethnographic knowledge construction [14], it remains understudied, especially as an embedded process of 'data gathering'.

The literature describes ethnographic meaning-making in several ways. Some scholars suggest incubation, which is "the process of living and breathing the data, by which the researcher tries to understand its meanings, find its patterns, and draw legitimate yet novel conclusions" [12, p. 389], and immersion in the data but do not give practical ideas on how to go about in the ethnographic meaning-making process. Likewise, some suggest "circling in and out of the field" – researcher visiting and leaving the field time and again [15]. They suggest observing and interacting in the field, and structuring and writing up analysis out of the field (e. g. at home) and revisiting the field to verifying their analysis and to gain more detailed insights into the unanswered issues. Likewise, some scholars discuss some models of meaning-making [13]; however, they do not touch how that meaning-making is an embedded process of 'data gathering'. For some, it is through mutual interaction between the researcher and the participants that meanings are co-constructed [16], but these authors do not evidently articulate how. Though these ideas might be useful for mid-career researchers, these did not actually prepare me to venture into the ethnographic meaning-making process.

I then was thinking of visiting the participants, sharing my meaning of their experiences with them and asking them whether my meanings of their experiences made sense to them. Meanwhile, I got an opportunity to attend a workshop on 'participatory research' at the University, which fortified my ideas of going back to the participants for meaning-making. In fact, my research was on inclusive governance, then why could I not think of doing 'inclusive research' [17]? Though I did not adopt 'participatory' or 'inclusive' research methodology, the insights from these designs pushed me to go back to the participants. The extensive reflection on the field narratives and also prolonged engagement with them helped me gain a richer understanding of their thinking, responding and negotiation processes in their varying phases of participation within the school decision-making body, i.e. School Management Committee.

**Whose Meanings Count?** One of the most important aspects of social interaction is the meanings people attach to everyday objects, events or phenomenon or to their (or others') ideas, actions and experiences. For Lofland and Lofland (1996), meanings are also referred to as culture, norms, values, understandings, beliefs, worldview, perspective, or social reality [7]. Moreover, meanings are the products of intellectual (reflective) reasoning and that people form meanings not only when they interact with people or texts, but also through all senses [18]. Therefore, individuals have varying meaning-making abilities and processes based on their physical, psychological, emotional, social and cultural circumstances (so my meanings and other researchers' meaning of the

---

<sup>1</sup> As per the sociocultural practice in Nepal, Hill-Brahmin refers to a so-called high caste group who/whose ancestors lived in highlands. In terms of the classical Hindu caste system (that groups people into four broad social classes or varnas, namely Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya, and Sudra), Brahmin is the high caste.

field text may differ). Therefore, rather than how we make meanings (which are the secondary level of meanings) of the participants' lifeworld, how the participants themselves make meanings (primary level of meanings) shape their understandings of the roles and their enactments thereof in everyday practice. Reflecting on the comments on my paper in both the seminars, I realised that I largely failed in meaning-making (thus my meanings did not count) and then I felt that a 'field-based meaning-making' approach could be a possible way out for me.

To further understand this complex dynamics of meanings, I take Krauss' (2005) elaboration of Erikson's (1963) typology of common or shared meanings and unique meanings. These typologies are elaborated by stating that "what has a common meaning to a group of people may have a unique meaning to an individual member of the group" [7, p. 763]. For example, a woman SMC member not being vocal in most of the meetings may mean she is introvert and that she does not have anything to speak for; however, *the meeting room full of men was restraining for her to speak up* (Nirmala, reflecting on her tenure as the only one woman in the earlier SMC). Therefore, individual construction of meanings is shaped by different factors and that it was the most challenging job for me to unearth these unique meanings.

I believe that knowledge and understanding are embedded in our everyday world and thus, understanding of life can emerge from people's life experiences. This encouraged me to involve the research participants in meaning-making through a dialogical process engaging in social interactions. Thus, the dialogue between me and the research participants became not merely an opportunity for me to collect information about the participants but rather an opportunity for each to develop new meanings together [19, p. 11]. The dialogic interaction allowed for constant, active communication and engagement between myself as a researcher and the women SMC members paving the way for creating shared meanings during the conduct of this inquiry.

Following this, I adopted participant-engaged meaning-making process so as to co-construct an understanding of their socio-cultural lifeworld and developed field narratives into ethnographic research (product) through a complex process of reflexivity and description [20]. This way of meaning construction may be called 'inter-subjective knowledge construction' [16], which allowed me to build rich local understandings of how the women SMC members make sense of their experiences. This insight allowed me to claim that meaning-making should not be isolated from participants and their context, and the best idea would be to involve them in the process of co-construction of meanings and knowledge.

**Standing for Participant-Engaged Meaning Making.** With the commentators' scepticism on my preliminary analysis, I reckoned that just like how I engaged with participants to generate field narratives, it is also important to consider how I draw meanings and conclusions out of those narratives. Thinking over different approaches to 'data analysis' or 'meaning-making', I thought of at least involving the participants themselves since it was them who were the owner of the experiences and narratives and none would understand what their experiences meant better than themselves. It may seem like 'audit trail' [21] or 'member checking' [22] whether what I sensed out of their narratives were actually capturing what they meant. In fact, once the field texts are generated, it might even suffice for some researchers to conclude the field engagement process and that they may solely rely on their own interpretation and 'analysis' of the field texts and reach a 'solid' conclusion, and others to feed the once collected field texts into some software and rely on its outputs. However, my 'fear' of possible misinterpretation of the field narratives, or even inability in making any interpretation at all and the possible 'injustice' to the research participants and the research itself forced me to work with the participants in 'preliminary' meaning-making and make field engagement a reiterative process.

My readings thus far did not show it explicitly that researchers are really doing this way or probably everyone knows this is how ethnographic 'meaning-making' or 'data interpretation' should be done by default – which I was partially aware of. Though scholars recognize that any attempt to separate the research process into "data collection followed by analysis is futile" [23, p. 121] since this process is ongoing simultaneously all the time [24], they have not explicitly put this practice in a methodical way.

Although scholars agree that ethnographic 'data analysis' begins with the pre-fieldwork phase and continues into the process of writing up, many of them [25, 26, 27, 28, 29] seem to separate two major phases in the research process: 'data-gathering' and 'data analysis'. According to this practice,

data gathering is the first phase in which the researcher engages with the participants with research instruments and notes, gathers or develops field narratives. And later, based on the 'gathered data', the researcher constructs knowledge by "interpreting and interacting with written text and other visual and sense-based information sources" [13, p. 1]. Some scholars bring 'fieldnotes writing' as a halfway activity [30]. However, I now do not see a clear boundary between these two 'phases'. These two go simultaneously – often the so-called 'data-gathering' is also part of the analysis, and the 'meaning-making' is also part of data gathering.

Based on the above elucidation, I stand against the 'phased research approach' in conducting ethnographic research. To argue for this, I stand with the researcher who also advocates that splitting 'data collection' and returning home or office for 'data analysis' will not be of much help for ethnographers [23]. Therefore, there are no 'collection' and 'analysis' phases but one whole 'field engagement' during which the researcher begins by recognizing the agency of the participants, works with them together for getting their stories and getting meaning from their stories. I adopted this idea in my research once I got this sense of one whole chunk of fieldwork unseparated by the boundary of 'data collection' and 'data analysis'.

Being fully self-assured of going for 'participant-engaged meaning-making' or 'meaning-making with and through participants', I, however, am not blinded – I claim that 'participant-engaged meaning-making' is a worthwhile approach, but I also recognize that there are plenty more options available to meaning-making in ethnographic research. However, I want to reflect on my own experience of inviting participants to engage in the process. Therefore, I view making senses emerge as not just a *workable* option to be considered but an *integral* part of ethnographic meaning-making with some inherent benefits that 'typical sense-making' out of 'data' may not offer. Thus, I chose working with the participants for listening to them and involving them in getting meanings from what they tell me. So I invited the participants themselves or each other to shed light on what they meant by what they felt, experienced and said, and how they said in a particular context (time, space, logic and rhetoric). Such reflection on the participants' experiences by themselves helped me find not only alternative but insider meanings [31]. In this process, I highlighted the key narratives from the field, went to the participants and asked them to clarify what they meant by those narratives and if there were any changes in perspectives lately. As a researcher, my task became more focused and easier – putting the narratives and their meanings in a context and viewing that from or against a particular (theoretical) perspective.

I learned several things from this experience. An important learning while adopting this strategy was 'giving them the choice of how (Nirmala, Tara and Sharmila all liked individual, women only or small group interaction), when (during school time) and where (at school) they would like to discuss their experiences, reflect on their everyday practices. Given the social structure and values, women participants wanted to meet me at school, rather than in their houses with their family members surrounding them. I sensed that they wanted to be 'free' from the structure of the family. They wanted to go out from this structural domain and feel free while talking with me. However, they did not choose a more open, freer space. So a boundary is there around them. Men, on the other hand, wanted to meet me anywhere they were readily available – at their home, nearby chowk, teashop or at school. Therefore, social relations and gender considerations are important in engaging in ethnographic fieldwork [8]. I introspect, if I were a woman, the scene would likely to have changed as Tara (a participant) shared, *women community members are more likely to open up with women teachers even in school*. Therefore, they might have taken it as discomfort talking to an outsider man. Besides gender, other categories like class, ethnicity, etc. may also influence the participants [32]. Though they agreed to discuss their meanings with me, I sensed that they were not much comfortable initially. So I adopted another strategy to allow them an option to discuss in their group and one (who seemed more vocal since the beginning) to share their discussion with me. After the second session, the roles of sharing the discussion were swapped, every time another member would lead the discussion and sharing. This activity was also empowering them – as Sharmila (another participant) reflected '*Now I think I can also lead the SMC meeting or a sub-committee.*'

I became aware that bringing ethnographic narratives is not like bringing mere interview texts and their 'stories', but also their way of storytelling in relation to their socio-cultural context, and also about the 'blissful' or 'troubled' sides of their story. Besides, as an ethnographer, I needed to write my

field experiences or reflect on those into the writing [33]. Cautions were to be made to also record the tone, language, and other gestures and facial expressions among others while they talk. Also, I learned to trust the research participants more than myself – in terms of making meaning of their narratives and experiences. I learned to relax their hesitation to talk openly to an outsider man. If they are not verbalizing, they might be having a ton of hesitation internally. I learned that we need to constantly question our meaning-making process, interpretations, conclusions, and critically evaluate what effect they have on what we know and how they impact the participants.

**When to 'Stop Making Sense'.** Let me talk about when and why 'stop making sense' strategy work in ethnographic research. While I had collected so much rich data being there – observing them in context with their social lives and their involvement in school decision-making table, I could get contextual interpretations and meanings from the participants. Though my interpretation followed by their explanation would still be an option (that was what I was planning initially), I sensed that something went afield in between and thus their meanings at times were different from mine. I was still okay since these would get rectified in subsequent interactions. However, comments from the reviewers at the seminars indicated partially that I was going astray from field narratives and partially that I was not making sense of them. This required me to take refuse to the research participants' meanings, interpretations and reflections on the earlier narratives as well as changed understanding if any.

Following this, I intentionally picked some highlighted statements, or seemingly contradictory or ambiguous remarks by the participants and raised a few in each sitting with them and asked them to explain to me why they think, feel, sense, and experience that way. For example, Sharmila, a women SMC member said, '*I didn't want to be a quota woman.*' I took this very literally that she was 'self-respectful', 'reliant' and was not accepting any 'alms' (as explained by her in a small group interaction at school), however upon engaging in the meaning-making process in the second round at her home, she revealed how that idea came to her and why she unintentionally said so. She elaborated how a Non-governmental Organization (NGO) worker who always spoke against the 'quota' system had influenced her – due to which she did not want to fill the 'quota'. She, however, suspected the NGO worker when the latter openly said in the SMC formation meeting that only if she would be given the 'Chair', she would be interested in coming to the SMC otherwise she won't stand just to be a 'quota woman'.

This kind of participant-engaged meaning-making enabled me to see the meanings not expressed in the spoken texts. This also indicated my failure to understand their context, sociality ("social relationships and meanings" [34, p. 230] and intentionality. Moreover, the researcher's socio-cultural background and interpretative capacities are also important (sometimes helpful and sometimes hindering) to understand the everydayness of the participants [35]. I further realized that being in context also enriched the meanings and credibility of my interpretation from a particular (theoretical) lens. Moreover, possible qualms I might otherwise have and ignored while interpreting the field narratives are gone, and thus increased credibility of the research findings. For example, If one is not fully aware of the 'context' and 'patterns' of the participants' utterances, it is best to avoid making sense, and instead engage the participant themselves in the meaning-making process.

One advantage over the conventional phased process of field engagement was more precise meaning-making of the "naturally occurring" [36, p. 1163] texts (i. e. non-verbal language and cues) which often give a lot of extra information [37] useful for situating their meanings. Of course, there could be an entirely different meaning of a person's yawning or 'winking of an eye' in the middle of a conversation. A yawn may normally indicate a person's need for rest or sleep, or it could also mean their unwillingness or disinterest in the conversation. And sometimes asking about such empirical material may not lead the participants to answer honestly – especially when a man researcher is talking to women participants [38; 39]. Nevertheless, being sensitive, emotive and empathetic to such unspoken materials leads a researcher to make a more precise meaning than making 'any' sense, and thus it guides them to act accordingly.

**Closing Thoughts.** I know from my own experience of meaning-making in an ethnographic study that in the journey of seeking the research participants' socio-cultural world, feelings, hopes, despairs, life experiences of being included or excluded in school governance, I need to allow for the participants to live and breathe in my research during the field process. By doing so, I could get a

more comprehensive and insider view of reality. What I was doing is opening myself up to learn. Having experienced so, I assert that meaning-making is to be intertwined with the 'data collection' and involving participants is not only desirable but possibly a reasonable option for neophyte ethnographers, who then might further enlarge their 'analysis' – a second or third level meaning-making – with reflection, literature critique or drawing inferences from the evidence so as to bring new insights to the field of research. This process also indirectly encouraged (if not empowered) the research participants to discuss gender dynamics in school, their experiences and further ideas and some emergent governance issues or 'gendered' participation issues in school governance. If only I did not adopt that approach, I think I would have certainly missed some important 'nuances' and 'everydayness' of women SMC members in School Governance.

Having gained such revealing experience during this research journey, I learned that engaging in the fieldwork is actually the most important part of the research process in ethnographic research. And thus research processes (field visits and meaning-making procedure) have become my favourite. I hope that my experience and reflection will inspire those who are facing similar challenges in 'meaning-making' of qualitative data generally.

On a closing note, even today I often sit on my chair and go down the memory lane to that moment when I first presented the preliminary 'interpretation' of the field texts, and reflect how I can better make sense of or let senses emerge from the field narratives. I should thank the critics who helped me rebuilt my meaning generation, sense-making or 'data analysis' and interpretation skills brick by brick. The following poem is my reflective account of the ethnographic meaning-making process I lived through.

**Will I Ever Call It An 'Elephant'?**

I am an observer, information seeker, reflector, questioner, and learner;  
They're the knowers, doers, experiencers, feelers, creators, sense-makers of  
their lifeworld.

Who am I to make sense of their lifeworld?

Will my senses CAPTURE who they are and why they act the way they do?

Tch, tch, tch! Poor me, a six-blind-men<sup>1</sup> replica!

Will I ever assemble the 'body parts' and call it an 'elephant'?

Uff, I think I won't.

Until I submerge, assimilate, live the life they live.

Can I do that?

I think I can't.

Until I become one of them.

So what can I do?

Stop making sense, make senses emerge.

From them. Least, from someone like them.

Let them make sense of their lifeworld.

Batcha, then senses become clearer.

---

<sup>1</sup> 'Six Blind Men and the Elephant' is a popular folk tale from South Asia that beautifully narrates how six blind men describe an 'elephant' by touching different parts of its body. Based on their limited observation and experience, they develop distinct senses of the parts of an elephant, rather than grasping the idea of a whole elephant.

### References

1. Angeles, L. C. Ethnographic poetry and social research: Problematizing the poetics/poethics of empathy in transnational cross-cultural collaborations. *GeoHumanities*, 2017, 3 (2), pp. 351–370. DOI: 10.1080/2373566x.2017.1344560.
2. Downey, H. Elucidating ethnographic expressions: Progressing ethnographic poetics of vulnerability. *European Journal of Marketing*, 2019. DOI: 10.1108/EJM-02-2019-0141.
3. Luitel, B. C. Storying, critical reflexivity, and imagination: A transformative approach to research as/for culturally contextualised professional development. Taylor, P. C., Wallace, J. (eds.). *Contemporary qualitative research: Exemplars for science and mathematics educators*. Springer, 2007, pp. 217–228.
4. Koschmann, T. The edge of many circles: Making meaning of meaning making. *Discourse Processes*, 1999, no 27 (2), pp. 103–117. DOI: 10.1080/01638539909545053.
5. Riazi, A. M. (ed.). *The Routledge encyclopedia of research methods in applied linguistics – Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods research*. Routledge, 2016.
6. Berger, P., Luckmann, T. *The social construction of reality*. Penguin 1966.
7. Krauss, S. E. Research paradigms and meaning making: A primer. *The Qualitative Report*, 2005, no 10 (4), pp. 758–770. Available at: <https://rb.gy/jhzwoy>.
8. Warren, C. A. B., Hackney, J. K. *Gender issues in ethnography*. Sage, 2000. 2nd ed. DOI: 10.4135/9781412984331.
9. Poulton, E. “If you had balls, you’d be one of us!” Doing gendered research: Methodological reflections on being a female academic researcher in the hyper-masculine subculture of “football hooliganism. *Sociological Research Online*, 2012, no 17 (4), pp. 1–13. DOI: 10.5153/sro.2717.
10. Hall, D., Hall, I. Analysing ethnographic data. *Campling, J. (ed.). Practical social research*. Palgrave, 1996, pp. 189–211. DOI: 10.1007/978-1-349-24739-4\_9.
11. Hunter Revell, S. M. Making meaning in qualitative research with conversational partnerships – A methodological discussion. *Advances in Nursing Science*, 2013, no 36 (2), E54–E65. DOI: 10.1097/ANS.0b013e3182901fdb.
12. Hunter, A., Lusardi, P., Zucker, D., Jacelon, C., Chandler, G. Making meaning: The creative component in qualitative research. *Qualitative Health Research*, 2002, no 12 (3), pp. 388–398. DOI: 10.1177/104973202129119964.
13. Wolsey, T. D., Lapp, D. Meaning-making. *Hobbs, R., Mihailidis, P. (eds.). The international encyclopedia of media literacy*. John Wiley & Sons, 2019, pp. 1–12. DOI: 10.1002/9781118978238.ieml0102.
14. Schindler, L., Schäfer, H. Practices of writing in ethnographic work. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 2020, p. 1–22. DOI: 10.1177/0891241620923396.
15. Wedel, J. R., Shore, C., Feldman, G., Lathrop, S. Toward an anthropology of public policy. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 2005, no 600 (1), pp. 30–51. DOI: 10.1177/0002716205276734.
16. Taylor, P. C., Medina, M. Educational research paradigms: From positivism to pluralism. *College Research Journal*, 2011, no 1 (1), pp. 1–16. Available at: <https://cutt.ly/PuhAgdC>.
17. Nind, M. *What is inclusive research?* Bloomsbury, 2014. DOI: 10.5040/9781849668149.
18. Hulst, M. van, Koster, M., Vermeulen, J. Ethnographic research. *Bearfield, D. A., Dubnick, M. J. (eds.). Encyclopedia of public administration and public policy*. Taylor & Francis, 2015, 3rd ed., pp. 1335–1339. DOI: 10.1081/E-EPAP3-120051222.
19. Talbot, D. The dialogic production of informant specific maps. *Reid, J., Russell, L. (eds.). Perspectives on and from institutional ethnography*. Emerald, 2018, vol. 15, pp. 1–28. DOI: 10.1108/S1042-319220170000015005.
20. Harman, R., Harklau, L. Ethnographic research. *Robinson, P. (ed.). Routledge encyclopedia of applied linguistics*. Taylor & Francis, 2013, pp. 215–221.
21. Carlson, J. A. Avoiding traps in member checking. *The Qualitative Report*, 2010, no 15 (5), pp. 1102–1113. Available at: <https://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol15/iss5/4>.
22. Lincoln, Y. S., Guba, E. G. *The constructivist credo*. Left Coast Press, 2013.
23. Jeffrey, B. Ethnographic writing. Beach, D., Bagley, C., da Silva, S. M. (eds.). *The Wiley handbook of ethnography of education*. John Wiley & Sons, 2018, pp. 113–134.
24. Gubrium, J. F., & Holstein, J. A. Analytic inspiration in ethnographic fieldwork. In U. Flick (Ed.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative data analysis*. Sage, 2014, pp. 35–48.
25. Brear, M. R., Hammarberg, K., Fisher, J. Community participation in health research: An ethnography from rural Swaziland. *Health Promotion International*, 2020, no 35 (1), e59–e69. DOI: 10.1093/heapro/day121.
26. K.C., L., Van Der Harr, G. Living Maoist gender ideology: Experiences of women ex-combatants in Nepal. *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 2019, no 21 (3), pp. 434–453. DOI: 10.1080/14616742.2018.1521296.

27. Mukoni, M., Mudaly, R., Moletsane, R. Gender, power and women's participation in community environmental education. *Southern African Journal of Environmental Education*, 2018, no 34, pp. 14–29. DOI: 10.4314/sajee.v34i1.2.
28. Pitti, i. Being women in a male preserve: An ethnography of female football ultras. *Journal of Gender Studies*, 2019, no 28 (3), pp. 318–329. DOI: 10.1080/09589236.2018.1443803.
29. Whitley, R., Zhou, J. Clueless: An ethnographic study of young men who participate in the seduction community with a focus on their psychosocial well-being and mental health. *PLoS ONE*, 2020, no 15 (2), e0229719. DOI: 10.1371/journal.pone.0229719.
30. Reeves, S., Peller, J., Goldman, J., Kitto, S. Ethnography in qualitative educational research: AMEE guide no. 80. *Medical Teacher*, 2013, no 35 (8), e1365–e1379. DOI: 10.3109/0142159X.2013.804977.
31. Knapik, M. The qualitative research interview: Participants' responsive participation in knowledge making. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 2006, no 5 (3), Art. 6. Available at: [https://sites.ualberta.ca/~iiqm/backissues/5\\_3/PDF/knapik.pdf](https://sites.ualberta.ca/~iiqm/backissues/5_3/PDF/knapik.pdf).
32. Oltmann, S. M. Qualitative interviews: A methodological discussion of the interviewer and respondent contexts. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research [Sozialforschung]*, 2016, no 17 (2), Art. 15. Available at: <https://cutt.ly/luhPXG6>.
33. Rai, I. M. Shifting ethnographic paradigms and practices: Unleashing from colonialism. *Journal of Education and Research*, 2015, no 5 (1), pp. 82–92. DOI: 10.3126/jer.v5i1.13063.
34. Cunliffe, A. L. Retelling tales of the field in search of organizational ethnography 20 years on. *Organizational Research Methods*, 2010, no 13 (2), pp. 224–239. DOI: 10.1177/1094428109340041.
35. Blommaert, J. Investigating narrative inequality: African asylum seekers' stories in Belgium. *Discourse and Society*, 2001, no 12 (4), pp. 413–449. DOI: 10.1177/0957926501012004002.
36. Peräkylä, A., Ruusuvuori, J. Analysing talk and text. *Denzin, N. K., Lincoln, Y. S. (eds.). The Sage handbook of qualitative research*. Sage, 2018, 5th ed., pp. 1163–1201.
37. Wilson, V. Research methods: Interviews. *Evidence Based Library and Information Practice*, 2012, no 7 (2), pp. 96–98. <http://tiny.cc/jp1tqz>.
38. Dhakal, R. K.. Going beyond fair treatment: Promoting gender responsive education in Nepal. *Laingik Samabikas Shiksha [Gender Equality Development Education]*, 2017, no 18, pp. 139–145.
39. Dhakal, R. K. Promoting gender inclusive governance to deliver better education in Nepal. *International Journal of Social Sciences & Educational Studies*, 2019, no 6 (1), pp. 83–95.