

TECHNIQUES TO PROMOTE COMMUNICATIVE SKILLS AMONG THE
STUDENTS OF PRIMARY SCHOOL: AN ACTION RESEARCH

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A Dissertation

Submitted to

School of Education

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Masters of Education in English Language Teaching

Kathmandu University

Dhulikhel, Nepal

October, 2013

AN ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Tara Sapkota for the degree of Master of Education in English Language Teaching
presented on 3 Oct, 2013 Title: *Techniques to Promote Communicative Skills among the
Students of Primary School: An Action Research*

Abstract Approved: _____

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Although communication is an aspect of living of all the animals existing on the earth, there is difference in how communication takes place; we, the human beings, communicate using the language but the animals do using the signs. It is true that language is also a sign; however, being the most developed creature, the human beings have the systematic patterns whereas the others don't. In addition, human language is clearer enough to be studied. Using the same language human beings have been able to conquer the world. It is communication and the advancement in the field of communication that has made it possible to merge every nook and corner of the world and develop the world as a small global village. And there is no doubt that it is English language that has adjoined the world into a single chain.

With the modern changes and development in science and technology, English language is getting essential for everyone. It has also been a very common indicator of person's knowledge. In addition, it is also the indicator of how modernized one is getting along with the time. In our context, communicating in English is the must for getting enrolled into a good job, or into a good school. It has been a common requirement of our

daily living. This is the reason; the wise parents ask why their child doesn't communicate well in English. There is a fear; no good English means no any better opportunity.

However, the development of the skill in the students is not noticed as per the expectation and the increasing grades. Though the students get into high school the pattern of their communication seems to be very near to the way they used to do when they were in the primary school. Changing the communicating skills rapidly once the students grow up is, certainly difficult, though not impossible.

Therefore, I carried out this study to help the students improve their communicative skills in primary level. I had no big dream of bringing about the changes overnight; however, I did have the hope of getting something useful and practicable for the classes. So, I centered the study in trying out various techniques in the language classes. I, not only, was heading for the activities effective in the class but also the ones that the students love to carry on with.

I had made a rigorous study of literature before making the intervention plan so that I would have no problem in preparing the materials and the process of implementing the tasks upon the students. I was doing the things being based on qualitative method; hence my ontology, epistemology and axiology remained very subjective. The whole of the broad methodology was specified by 'action research', for, my research method was action research. I was trying to find out the ways of improving communicative skills of the students and trying out the different activities in the class in small groups, therefore, I find it appropriate having the research method chosen. Similarly, for the validity of the research, the quality standards have been addressed.

The study results that students love to work in the small groups. They not only like working in the groups, but also improve their skills being in the groups. In addition, sharing and cooperativeness in the group enhances their learning and understanding. Group works have left positive impact on them and that they want to continue with the same in the days to come as well. On the one hand, the study has sharpened those who were already good at learning, in fact, communicating, on the other had it has also motivated the quiet ones to speak up in the class with their friends and their teachers. The learning aspect, this way, has been improved, besides, they have also been found feeling better psychologically. The students' conversation sounds much structured and better, it is polite as well. Their conversations is better than that they used to have. Something important about the study is that they do not coin the words randomly but look for the appropriate one. Therefore, the outcomes of the action research are positive.

Tara Sapkota, Degree Candidate

3 October, 2013

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to all the my dear teachers who held my bare hands, taught me to take the steps; helped me stand when I fell and empowered me to move ahead, loved me for all goods and rectified all the terribles, warmed me up with the rays of hope in the cold days; filled me up with strength in the weedy moments, wiped my desperate tears, followed me up and kept heartening, made me discern the lost me..... without which I could have never made this long journey alone.

DECLARATION

I, hereby, declare that to the best of my knowledge this dissertation is original otherwise acknowledged, no part of it was submitted earlier for the candidature of any research degree to any university.

Tara Sapkota, Degree Candidate

3 October, 2013

Masters of Education in English Language Teaching Dissertation of *Tara Sapkota*
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I understand that my dissertation will become part of the permanent collection of
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Many helping hands, kindly, held me to make me strong enough to stand on my own to come at this stage and to come up with this piece of dissertation. It is the greatest unjust not to mention them here at this moment.

I express my sincere gratitude to the dissertation supervisor Assoc. Prof. Laxman Gnawali for all the roles he played; a guardian, a tutor and a guide and all support; moral and academic, he provided for the completion of the two years study, which made me feel the lost care and the missed guidance in the strange place and among the strangers; it is his faith on me that kept me dragging ahead in all the situations.

Similarly, I express my special regards to Dr. Bal Chandra Luitel for the research support he provided during the study and also made me aware of what I was doing and where I was, every time he met me around. It was, in fact, something that always kept me encouraged towards its completion.

I have a very special space in my heart for Ms. Alexendra Poiter for the research support she provided from the very beginning, since proposal writing, without whom, it would have been difficult for me to accomplish my study on time.

I also extend my sincere thanks to Asst. Prof. Dhanapati Subedi, Dr. Tikaram Poudel and Mr. Tikaram Pokharel for their academic support and continuous encouragement during my study.

I have special regards deep inside my heart for the little participants of the action research. Without their active participation, I couldn't have completed the study smoothly on time.

I am heavily indebted to Mr. Ishwori Prasad Sharma and Mr. Bhuwani Prasad Dhakal, for their continuous moral support and concern towards my study since my late childhood. In fact, it is injustice if I forget to acknowledge every individual teacher of SOS Hermann Gmeiner Higher Secondary School Kavre, without whom, perhaps, I would have had a very tough time to come to this stage.

I thank Rosebud School, particularly, Mr. Amit Pandey, the Assoc. Superintendent, for being kind enough in understanding my circumstances and being flexible with my duty hours.

I have special appreciation to my classmates who always helped me in many different ways, sometimes as the support and some other time as the critique. I thank everyone in the class for making the two years so friendly and so homely.

I am thankful to Ms. Lina Gurung, the hostel in charge, for making suitable study environment. And I am equally grateful to Ms. Maya Gurung, the hostel warden, for her motherly care throughout my stay at the hostel.

I can't be ungrateful to my family; I am thankful to them for making this possible in whatever way they could.

I also thank Mr. Santosh Gautam for necessary rectifications he made in the dissertation to make it read better.

Lastly, I extend my special thanks to the ones, for helping right in front of me or at the back; in action, with the words or in the feelings; leading me, walking by me or following me; supporting me or challenging me; whatever happened have been good for me.

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CHAPETR I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter begins with a narrative of my life since my birth to the present. It includes a brief background of the study. I mention the problem statement, research questions, the purpose of the study and its significances. I finally define the scope of my research.

Personal Narrative

*The darkness enveloped world;
With dancing stars and the cheery moon.
In the stillness;
bar the melody of the breeze,
and the whistling stream.
Up the hill,
there was a cry,
a sudden cry.
My cry,
from a damp corner,
the cry of my birth,
Ah! I was born...*

There are certain things that are imaginative and, yet, so real, and there are certain things that are real, yet, sound so imaginative, like this piece of prose, where I imagined and arranged them into words, but it had happened really; of course, I was born...

I breathed for the first time in the world as the first child of my parents. I never knew what they wanted to see their daughter as, for, they never shared that with me. I grew up with my hopes and my dream of being something since the time I did not know what that SOMETHING was. Perhaps the story is getting longer yet, there are things, I think, that are to be put down on paper before writing about who, professionally, I am.

I never knew that someone had so many dreams for me but it is true that I was being brought up in dreams; the dreams my mother had for me. She said she had desire to see me standing on my own when I was still creeping, she wanted to see me walking on my own when I was hardly standing, she already dreamt to see me in the school uniform when I was still crying in the little cot, she wanted to hear that I passed SLC when I was still in middle school..... Her dreams went on lengthening and I went on meeting them. Unfortunately, she never shared what she wanted her daughter to be when she grew up! I was brought up within the dreams but those dreams had finally nothing to make out of me. Nobody asked me what I wanted to be; neither had I told them how I felt. There was no communication. I sometimes feel so bad that I could not communicate. I lacked the words, I lacked the sentences. I expressed in emotions, yet, nobody felt them. It pinches me badly time and again. Sometimes I feel had I communicated well, perhaps, the things would have change. I know it has nothing to do with the research I am carrying out, however, once I found compelled to live in the way that other want which is convenient for them not for me, I realized how important it is to be good at communicating. It makes sense that the ones who do not communicate are also learnt and the ones who communicate well may not be very good at learning; but what I think is if one communicates well the person can be assured of what s/he has learnt.

Well, I went on growing up, I went on studying. To every class I was upgraded I felt that I had been upgraded to a higher level that always created pressure within myself, the pressure of hard work, the pressure of better performance, however, I never said how I was feeling; I didn't communicate again; I was so silent as ever, this time I was even more silent. I had so many things to tell because as I went on growing up I had even more that needed sharing but I did not do so. As the result I suffered so much. It was not communicating in English, it was only communicating my feeling but I could not do that as well. Perhaps it does not make sense here but it does illustrate how important it is to be able to communicate well.

Background of the Study

In the following section I write the detail background which is directly or indirectly related to the research I have carried out, though it may read like a story somewhere.

Journey to Education Faculty

As soon as I had finished my School Leaving Certificate (SLC), I joined a community college in Banepa and began my journey to higher studies in the field of education. I did this in spite of my interest elsewhere. Actually, I had some other dreams. However, the catastrophe hit me in such a way that I could not go against the pre-decided decision of the so-called head and the helplessness of the counterpart. I, with the heart full of pain and the suppressed dreams; had to continue with my studies; and there began teaching along with my studies. When I was in Grade 12, I had to go for 'Practice teaching' course, which did not remain the practice any more but the beginning of my career of an English teacher. Once I got out of the school, I was called from the other

school for volunteering; I worked for few months as a volunteer teacher. Then, after few months, I was given the job of Secondary level English teacher, which made me a professional English teacher.

English Language in my Context

Perhaps, it is better to mention who I am before I write more about English language in my context. I am a student; professionally, I am also an English teacher I have been learning English since a long period of time, for more than 15 years. Though I can't remember much about my learning in the early days, I vividly remember myself saying that I have no problem in speaking English to one of my friends when we were going for an interview to get admitted in grade 5 in a newly opened school. However, I don't remember how good I was at speaking English then. What I remember is, when I was attending the speaking test of English in grade 5, my teacher had to correct me to use polite English as I was repeating the same word, "What?" to ask him to repeat what he meant; I didn't know how to communicate then.

While looking back to my profession, teaching English, I have been working as an English teacher for about four years though there were some of the instances that I had worked as volunteer teacher in the beginning of my profession. I began teaching in public schools; hence, the use of English language in the schools was not noticed. Truthfully, I had to teach English translating into Nepali there. The students were, of course, good at writing, with fair handwriting but they were poor at reading and very poor at their communicative skills while in private schools, they write fair handwriting and try to speak English; but it does not seem parallel to their level. The grammatical structures they use are unique. Something very interesting about their language is, they, use the

Nepali words adding an ‘-ing’ at the end when they speak English. They speak English fluently but their communication sounds poor.

A Glance at the Realities

As a teacher, I always have to keep the students in mind. The understanding that comes to them after spending time with me needs to be the focal point of my actions at school. However, as it is said, ‘It’s always easier said than done’, there are problems regarding the understanding and the use of the understanding by the learners. In the limited time period I have to teach the given mass of students. While doing so, one group understands what I am seeking from them and they seem trying out those abilities. There is next group who seems to understand my teaching but they do not readily apply it in their learning. Finally, there is one more group who neither understands, nor do they try to understand. One of the reasons behind the situation is we have larger classes with students having multiple intelligence. Making all those students with multiple intelligence understand at once in a class is very difficult. It is because some students seem to learn very fast whereas some seem to learn slowly and there is another group of students who never seem to learn. Regarding the variation in learning of the children Cameron (2010) mentions Piaget’s theory of child as active learner under which it is stated that a child’s thinking develops as gradual growth of knowledge and intellectual skill towards a final stage of formal, logical thinking (p.3). The other way of understanding is the learning of a child depends on their growth of knowledge and intellectual skill. Littlewood (1998) has something more to tell about variation in language learning of the students. According to him, two major factors influence how successfully someone learns; the nature of person’s motivation to learn and the qualities

to learn. In addition to this, language aptitude of the learners also plays a vital role in how well they learn language. Language aptitude, furthermore, is constituted of the ability to identify and remember sounds, the ability to memorize words, the ability to recognize how words function grammatically in sentences and the ability to induce grammatical rules from language examples (p. 62, 63). These requirements make language learning quite different from learning math and science in the sense that the more one uses language the more language is learnt. I find it contextual to quote Cameron (2010) as well here, who mentions that the central characteristics of foreign language learning lie in the amount and type of exposure to the language (p.11). It is further mentioned, no matter what the children are exposed to, television, video or films they learn language.

Littlewood (1998) has mentioned personality, age and active learning strategies as the factors affecting language learning. Whatever the factors might be, the practical use of language helps in learning it better than the theoretical, therefore the practical aspect of language teaching needs to be prioritized than the theoretical one while teaching language. However, it does not mean that the learners do not have to learn the theory. Language can be taught to almost everyone except those who have language related problems. Some students cannot speak because they are mute. Some of them have hearing impairments. These people may speak but do not hear, therefore their learning and addition to their language store through listening is impossible. It is not always true that the learners learn language when they have opportunities to listen in their classroom. They ought to listen outside their classroom. Regarding this aspect of learning, Ur (1996) states that students should learn to function successfully in the real life listening situation so that they make sense of what real life situation is and how sense is made. This way

such students with listening impairment, too, have problem in learning. In addition, it is also true that some students may have problems in changing their communicating habits as per their learning in their classes, yet, we can help them to use the language or speak in the language with some effort. Thus, this time, as a language teacher, I would like to deal with the communicative aspects of the students' language, particularly at primary school level.

I am especially interested with the learners of the primary school because I have experienced many students having problems with their language use. Usually, the students enter into formal schooling after they complete their grade three. Until grade three, they are taught non-formally, hence the language aspect is not prioritized much. However, the preference of the language development, both from the school and that of parents, rise up at once when they step into formal school. Besides, English, as the language of communication and the medium of teaching and learning, is preferred in almost all of the private schools and to some extent in the public schools, once the primary schooling begins. Therefore, the learners are supposed to be good at English if they are to learn well.

However, not everything goes as expected; there are issues with the students' communicative skills. There are several deviations in the language they use. I help the students to communicate in a better way may it be in spoken or it is in written. They repeat their utterance when I make correction but they are found repeating the same things in other occasions. I cannot be very prescriptive regarding their language use as well; as Harmer (2007) says that constant interruption from the teacher destroys the speaking skill of the learners, I do not want to frustrate them and hinder the effort they

are putting from their side, in communicating effectively. However, being aware of the reality, I have been doing the same. Perhaps it is because they speak to their friends in the same manner they have been used to with the same bits of language and it is true that they spend most of their day with their friends rather than they do with me. The generalization I have made from the experience is that they need to improve their language with their classmates. Therefore, I have decided to carry out research in the same field, this way I will be there with them when they are talking to their friends and make constructive changes. I will provide them with several group and pair activities so that they have opportunity to communicate with their friends, thus, it is going to be an action research.

Problem Statement

As Littlewood (2003) writes, “an efficient communicator in a foreign language is not the one who best manipulates the structures but the one who is skilled at processing the complete situation in himself” (p. 4), I never force my students to memorize the structures I teach them in the class. I tell them that it is better to learn and be able to use the language in practice rather than learning the structure by heart and reciting the same when they are asked to in the class. So, when I go to the class with the aim of teaching speaking, I prefer to provide them with the situations close to their daily living so that they can use the same to practice language. Such activities include greeting, inviting, requesting, apologizing etc. Regarding the communicative activities Larsen-Freeman (2004) states that communication requires the students perform certain functions like promising, inviting, declining invitation in social context (p. 121), for which I make my classroom more like a social meeting rather than a strict classroom. However, while

doing so, the students seem to take the other advantages; when I am busy with a certain group, they get engaged with some other chats, very often, using their mother tongue. Though Barnes (1976) quotes that language development is clearly enhanced through collaborative group work which allows for and build talk (as cited in Jones & Wyse, 2001, p. 27); sometime group work seem to divert the students attention. The problem is that they have less opportunity to communicate in their class on the subject matters. In addition, the available opportunities, too, do not seem very helpful. It is when they talk to their friends in-group; they are likely to use deviated language which finally takes the form of the total language they speak. In fact, it has come to be the language they have been using to communicate among each other.

Getting focused in the communicative skills of the students of primary school, they frequently use the deviated structures. I would like to put down the words of Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005), which is very relevant in the classroom context, “A learner may succeed in judging a sentence correctly as grammatical and yet unable to produce the structure exemplified in the sentence in free production” (p. 6). They tell that the particular sentence is correct when they have to write, but when they have to speak the same thing in communicative situation they get deviated. Similarly, the words they choose, sometimes, sound strange. Very interesting about the choice of the words by such young learners is that they seem to coin different words to mean the same thing in different occasions; there is no consistency in the words they choose to mean same thing and these words, of course, are not the English words. The next thing about their communication is that they tend to mix up their mother tongue when they communicate.

“*Come to check my also, no...*”, a student told her teacher to call to check her notebook. “*Ma’am, what saying, not bujhing...*” another student said the teacher to tell that she didn’t understand that the teacher meant. “*She don’t know to read also....*” There was another student to tell that her friend didn’t know to read properly. This is how, almost all the time the students are found speaking to their friends and the teachers, despite the rule that every student must speak English in the school hour except in their Nepali period and with their Nepali language teacher. Here, I find it important to mention Bloom (1970), “Children’s speech is very much tied to context and behavior.... It appears that children learn to identify certain grammatical relationships and syntactic structures with the environmental and behavioral contexts in which they are perceived and then progress to reproducing approximations of heard structures in similar, recurring contexts” (p. 155, 156) which seems to have happened in our context as well, the students simply try to put the words in the way they do with their mother tongue but do not follow the way Bloom further states, “in order to use a structure in a new situation, the child must be able to perceive critical aspects of the context of the situation”.

This habit, if not tried to put under control, develops into habit. In other words, it gets fossilized. The students will have trouble to manipulate the language in the days to come. The important point is as Swain (1985, 1995) believes learners need to be helped to focus on accuracy and precision of their language use (as cited by Cameron, 2010, p. 108). There is no doubt that it affects their communication skills, in addition, it also affects their writing skills. Being not able to communicate well itself is a great loss when one is supposed to do so after being into the learning situation.

The ways to improve their skill in the teaching process are to be thought over. It might have happened so because it is necessary to bring about some change in the ways I teach. The problem, perhaps, seems not with the techniques that are being used in the class while teaching but with the processes. Therefore, in the research I tried out different techniques and activities to find out if it works.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to help the students promote their communicative skills at primary school. It was an attempt to implement various techniques to help overcome the difficulties they experienced in communicating at primary school level.

Research Question

To fulfill the aforementioned purpose of the study, I have the following question as my research question:

- i) What techniques can be used to promote communicative skills of the students of primary school?

Significance of the Study

According to Richards and Rodgers (2001), “the primary function of language is to allow interaction and communication” (p.161). In other words, the sole aim of the use of language is communication whether it is spoken or written. Thus, while teaching language, the use aspect of language, I think, has to be prioritized than the theoretical ones. Hymes, as cited by Larsen-Freeman (2004) has the similar words for defining what communication is alike; it is, knowing when and how to say what to whom (p.121). However, in case of the use of English language, we find that most of the students have problems. If we are able to address those problems on time, it helps the learners to learn

better English. The study, thus, has two distinct significances; pedagogic significance and teacher training significance.

Pedagogical Significance

According to Harmer (2007) if students are involved in meaning focused communicative tasks, then language learning will take care of itself (p. 69). We can go into the classroom with several activities or tasks that require the students to use language. In this regard, Harmer (2007) further says that if students are focusing on completion of tasks they are just likely to learn language as they are if they are focusing on language forms (p. 71). However, our schools seem to lack the use of the way of teaching due to the same reason, I have primary school where the learners are found not using the language properly. Here, I do not claim that the learners are not taught in the way they need to be taught. The traditional teaching is not, yet, out of practice, therefore, there are possibilities that can be used but that might not have been used. Even though the students use the language i.e. English; it is full of deviated forms.

Teacher Training Significance

As I am carrying out an action research, I believe, as Nunan (1997) suggests that I was the researcher of my own classroom, which helped me in revising the curriculum I use throughout the session. In addition, it also helps me for my professional development and renewal (p. 75). Miller and Pine (1990) have the similar point to make; they say that the action research can enhance the professional status of teaching, generate theory and knowledge, increase the effectiveness of improvement efforts and promote teacher development. Besides, this action research not only provides an insight into different

strategies that have been used in a language classroom by the teachers to help the students in promoting their communicative skills but also the possibility of other techniques that can be used in the class. Therefore, this study is helpful for my professional development as an English teacher. The experience that I gain from the research is of help to my colleagues as well. I also believe that it helps in designing curriculum for the school use. Besides, it is also of help to those who want to be effective language teachers.

Delimitation of the Study

This study was carried out to explore the techniques that are fruitful for the language teachers in the classroom to promote communicative skills of the learners of primary school. This study was limited within the classroom techniques that the teacher used in teaching process in order to improve the communicative skills of the students. This research was an attempt to solve the problem of weak communicative skills of the students.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I have written a short account of my personal life which has some indirect relation with my being in educational field. I have segmented this chapter into different sections to make the facts specific and easier to understand. I have mentioned the problem that I have seen in communicative aspect of the learners of primary school. Here, of course, I have elaborated the significance of the research without which the introductory part of the proposal would make no sense. In addition to this, I have mentioned the research question the leads my research study and the delimitation of the areas it occupies.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter deals with the literature related to the research. I review the related topics of communication. I also include the thoughts and ideas of the scholars on communicative language teaching. It deals with the theories of communication. In addition, I review the related researches that have been carried out in the field of communicative language teaching. I deal with these matters under three different sub titles viz. thematic review, theoretical review and previous research studies in this chapter.

Thematic Review

In this section I write the brief discussion of the related literature I went through thoroughly for the study.

Communication: An Introduction

Agee, Ault and Emery (1982) define communication as the act of transmitting information, ideas and attitudes from one person to another (p.4). They, regarding the value of communication, furthermore write that communication is primal one, which is necessary for our survival in the contemporary civilization, as communication is as fundamental as food and shelter. For me, letting others know what one is feeling, how one is feeling, what one felt or what one's intention is, is communication. It may be with the help of spoken language. It might be shared with written notes. Alternatively, sometimes, it might also be expressed through symbol or signs. Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2005) defines communication as the activity or process of

expressing ideas and feelings of giving people information (p. 301). One can express what s/he feels along with what they think. In other words, it might be a thought or emotion; while communicating a person may deliver whatever s/he has in their heart or the thing they have in their mind. However, there is no any hard and fast rule that there has to be the presence of a next person to be delivered. It can be interpersonal or intrapersonal. As Agee, Ault and Emery (1982) state, interpersonal communication takes place within a single person, it is 'talk to self'. A person has several purposes for doing so. Sometimes they talk to self for clarifying the ideas, some other times; they do so for analyzing a situation. A person talks to own self in an interpersonal communication. Thus, it may take place at any time, either while sitting, or walking or sometimes while doing something else as well. But, interpersonal communication on the other hand, is in opposition to intrapersonal communication. It is communicating with another person directing a message to one or more of the person's senses- sight, sound, touch, taste or smell (p. 4, 5). Whatever category it falls in, either interpersonal or intrapersonal; there is exchange of ideas in communication.

Though communication can take place in various modes, very often, the spoken mode is realized in use; however, we cannot discard the use of written and symbolic modes. Besides the letters, e-mails, or any other written notes from a person to another, the hoarding boards with the alphabets and the signs and symbols by the side of roads also make one sided communication. Hence, communication is the talk, with a next person or a group or own self, verbally, nonverbally, using symbols and gestures or through written note.

Components of Communicative Language Ability

Hedge (2010) has identified five different components of communicative language ability; linguistic competence, pragmatic competence, discourse competence, strategic competence and fluency.

Linguistic competence, also known as grammatical competence, has been defined by Chomsky (1980) as the cognitive state that encompasses all those aspects of form and meaning and their relation including underlying structures that enter into that relation which are properly assigned to the specific sub- system of human mind and relates representations of form and meaning (as cited in Krishnaswami, Nagarajan & Verma, 1992, p. 21); i.e. linguistic competence is ones command over the structure, that includes meaning as well, over the language. In other words, to be able to make communication in any language a speaker needs to have knowledge of the structure and meaning of the language which is true. It is because structure provides the frame of the language and meaning gives heart and soul to the frame. In addition, according to Hedge (2010) linguistic competence involves the knowledge of spelling, pronunciation, vocabulary, word formation, grammatical structure, sentence structure and linguistic semantics (p. 47). Thus, it is a part of language ability.

Pragmatic Competence

Regarding pragmatic competence too, I would like to quote Chomsky (1980) here, who says that pragmatic competence is the ability to use the knowledge of language along with the conceptual system to achieve certain ends or purpose (as cited in Krishnaswami, Nagarajan & Verma, 1992, p. 21). Therefore, the knowledge of the structure and meaning of the language is concretized in pragmatic competence, with

some purpose, by the ability of an individual to use the language i.e. pragmatic competence.

Discourse Competence

A discourse is a text. Whatever is written or spoken is a text. As competence refers to ability or command over something, discourse competence, in laymen understanding and expression, is the ability to produce and understand a text. Thus, it has also been termed as textual competence. Canale and Swain (1980); Faerch, Haastrup and Philipson (1984) say that discourse competence is various abilities needed to create coherent written texts or conversation and to understand them (as cited in Hedge, 2010, p. 52). Neither the structure alone nor the use itself is all in all about making use of language. It is necessary to know how to make the use as well, thus, the 'how' aspect of language is the domain of discourse competence.

Strategic Competence

According to Canale and Swine (1980) strategic competence is all about coping in an authentic communication situation and keeping the communication channels open while communicating. These strategies are also known as communication strategies. Hedge (2010) mentions that such strategies usually come into use when a speaker is unable to express what s/he really intends to because of the lack of the resources. In such situations, such speakers keep the communication going on either by changing their original intention or by searching for the other means of expression.

Fluency

Fluency refers to speed. The speed at which language is spoken by an individual is the fluency of the person in his/ her language. Hedge (2010) states, "it is the ability to

link units of speech together with facility and without strain or inappropriate slowness or undue hesitation” (p, 54). Knowing is not always being competent. Similarly, being able to use is not being perfect. Besides knowing, using, creating and compensating in the difficult times, it is necessary for a speaker to be able to speak with reasonable speed which is the area of fluency. Therefore, an ELT teacher needs to be careful in developing fluency of the students.

Communicative Language Teaching

Communicative language teaching implies use of communication while teaching language in order to improve the communication skills of the learners. According to Larsen-Freeman (2004), communicative language teaching aims broadly to apply the theoretical perspective of the Communicative Approach by making communicative competence the goal of language teaching and by acknowledging the interdependence of language and communication (p.121). In this regards, Richards and Rodgers (2001) state that it is an approach not a method that aims to make communicative competence the goal of language teaching and develop procedures for the teaching of four language skills that acknowledge the independence of language and communication (p. 155). Therefore, communicative language teaching is not only making the learners communicatively competent i.e. making them able to convey the message appropriately but also helping the learners learn the other skills of language equally.

As the approach itself tries to address numbers of skills, the centre i.e. communication, is realized in other approaches as well. In this regards, Richards and Rodgers (2001) state that Natural approach, Content based teaching, Task based learning

also incorporates communication to larger extent within the approaches and the methods (p. 153).

Theory of Communicative Language Learning

There is no doubt that communicative language teaching is all about teaching language through communication where the students communicate as much as possible which finally helps them to promote their language skill, especially, the use aspect of language. Richards and Rodgers (2001) have drawn the following theories of language learning under communicative language teaching:

Communication principle: the activities that involve real communication promote learning.

Task principle: the activities in which language is used for carrying out the meaningful task promote learning.

Meaningfulness: the language that is meaningful to the learners supports learning

Acquisition principle: language develops through its communicative use (p. 161, 162).

In a communicative class, in every activity, a teacher makes use of real communication. In other words, the activity requires the learners to make a real communication between and among them. Where there is communication there is the explicit use of the language. The students, thus, communicate in the given situation, which is actually a task, using the target language. Such activities and the communicative instances are not merely the piece of imagination but they do make some meanings. The activities are only the waste of time if they do not convey a clear meaning; therefore, it requires a teacher to put a considerable amount of effort to design the activity for the

class. The process, thus, practised, finally, helps the students to acquire the language. Putting it into the other words, the skill of using the target language gets developed through the communicative use of language.

According to Piepho (1981), Communicative language teaching involves the following levels of objectives;

- i. an integrative and content level (language as a means of expression)
- ii. a linguistic and instrumental level (language as semiotic system and an object of learning)
- iii. an affective level of interpersonal relationships and conduct (language as a means of expressing values and judgments about oneself and others)
- iv. a level of individual learning needs (remedial learning based on error analysis)
- v. a general educational level of extra linguistic goals (language learning within school curriculum) (as cited by Richards and Rodgers, 2001, p. 162)

This design of communicative language teaching integrates over all scope of language teaching. Language is the means of expression; it is integration of various aspects since human expression is not bound within some limitations. As language is also a sign system and the signs are to be learnt while learning the language, the linguistic and instrumental levels are also to be kept under consideration. This is such a tool which is used to express wide range of expression, from the individual to tangibles and beyond tangibility. Both interpersonal and intra-personal conducts are the matters to be dealt by the language, therefore, the affective concerns also become a part of communicative

language teaching. Furthermore, individual needs of the learner in the classroom are the next important aspects that should not be missed while teaching language. Every child is in the class to learn, hence, fulfillment of their learning needs is the duty of the language teachers. In addition to this, the individual's needs and the general aim of education can't be left. After all language teaching is a part of general education, however, it is not the totality of teaching and learning, therefore, it is the other aspects to be closely thought about. A language teacher may involve the extra- linguistic things to teach language which helps the learners in two ways; they get to learn language and also something more. The use of the authentic materials is of great help in this regard.

Syllabus in Communicative Language Teaching

According to Stanchina and Riley (1978), communicative syllabus includes the following types of syllabuses; Structural, Functional with spiral around a structural core, Structural, functional, instrumental, Functional, Notional, Interactional, Task based and Learner generated (as cited by, Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 164)

All of these syllabuses attempt to make maximum use of language in the language classroom. However, there might not be as much use of language as it is required since there are several problems in the learners. For Ur (1996), inhibition in speaking the foreign language, nothing to say, low and uneven participation and use of mother tongue (p. 121) are some of the problems with speaking activities. However, despite the problems, communication or the speaking in the learners can be fostered if learners talk a lot, the participation is even, motivation is high and language is of an acceptable level (Ur, 1996, p. 120).

Ur (1996) further states that the aforementioned problems in speaking can be minimized through the use of group work, base activity on easy language, careful choice of topic and task to stimulate interest, instructions on training in discussion skills and keeping the students talking in target language (p. 121, 122).

Activities in communicative language teaching classes

I have already mentioned above that there are other approaches and methods that make use of communication besides communicative language teaching. In other words, we can realize communication in different methods and approaches through the use of various techniques.

Communicative language teaching implies use of various activities in the class where the students need to communicate with one another and each other to accomplish the activity. In other words, it is creating the need to communicate among and between the learners. If the students have ample opportunities to speak and communicate, they learn the language better. Larsen-Freeman (2004) mentions authentic materials scramble stories, language games, picture strip story, and role-play (p. 132-134) as some of the techniques of communicative language teaching. According to Ur (1996) dialogues, plays, simulation, role play (p. 131-132) are some of the activities for spoken practice. Ur (1996) further states that describing picture, picture difference, things in common, shopping list, solving a problem (p. 128) are some other activities that are of help in language classroom.

Before, I go for brief introduction of the communicative activities I find it contextual to mention Littlewood (2003) where he has categorized the activities into two categories on the basis of the functions they serve; functional communication activities

and social interaction activities. The functional activities include those activities that need the learners to solve the given problem or the situation with whatever language they have. It, therefore, not only manipulates the language they have but also provides them with the opportunities to use the new pieces of utterances, which helps them to add to their language store. The social interaction activities, on the other hand, need the learners to make use of language appropriate to the situation they are in since being able to speak is being able to use the language as per the situation.

Here is the brief description of the communicative activities that can be used in language classroom.

Scrambled Sentences

‘To scramble’ means ‘to mix up’ or ‘to jumble’, therefore, scrambled sentences refers to the activity of mixing up the sentences. When such exercises are given to the students in group or pair, they communicate with each other to complete the exercises, thus, they learn to use the language. The advantages of these activities, according to Larsen- Freeman (2004) are that the learners learn the cohesive and coherent characteristics of language; the learners, with the use of formal linguistic devices, learn the way sentences are bound together in suprasentential level.

Language Games

Usually, games are the activities that learners of any age are found enjoying. When it comes to young learners, they find them even more interesting. When the activities are designed as the games, the learners participate more actively than in any other activities. The learners enjoy the class and learn language not being very conscious about learning, thus, it breaks the monotony of the class as well. According to Marrow

(nd), language games have three features, there is information gap as a participant doesn't know what his/ her pair has, there is choice of language and after speaking they receive feedback (as cited by Freeman, 2004, p. 133).

Identifying Pictures

This activity needs the students to identify a particular picture from among the given set. In other words, it needs at least two students to work together where a student holds a set of pictures with similar contents but not the same and the next has one of those; the one with a set of pictures identifies the picture with the second one by asking several questions. Littlewood (2003) mentions that the students need to ask and answer the questions like 'What color....?', 'How many....?', 'Where?' etc.

Discovering Identical Pairs

Littlewood (2003) writes, 'Four pictures are distributed among four learners, who, thus, have one picture each. A fifth learner in the group holds a duplicate of one of the pictures. He must question others, in order to discover which learner has the picture identical to his own' (p. 24). Therefore, this is a group activity where the students get opportunities to speak to their friends, hence, learn to communicate.

Discovering Sequences or Locations

This activity can be launched in pairs distributing pictures to the students. Littlewood (2003) has these words to say regarding the activity, 'Learner A has a set of, say, six, pictures or patterns. These are arranged into a sequence from one to six (either in advance or by himself). Learner B has the same set of pictures, but these are not in sequence. Learner B must discover the sequence of A's pictures and arrange his own in the same way' (p. 25). The learners, therefore, make conversation to arrange the pictures

or the patterns into the predetermined sequence. Littlewood (2003) has further proposed different variation of the activities.

Discovering Missing Information

This activity can also be launched in pair. For this activity, a student is provided with a certain piece of information with something missing. The next student too has the similar set of information with the information that the first student doesn't have. Both of them, then, talk to each other to get their information completed. Littlewood (2003) states that the information is presented in tabular form that shows distance between various towns of a football league, table showing a summary of each team's result. The students ask the questions like 'How far....?', 'How many goals have....?' etc (p. 26). The teacher may provide the students with the format of the questions that they need to use and make them practice while implementing this activity in the language classes.

Discovering the Missing Features

According to Littlewood (2003) this is also a picture based pair activity where a student has to complete a picture of a street or country scene. Next student also has the same picture with some of the items deleted. The first student with complete picture finds out the details that have not been reproduced by the next picture. As the name of the activity suggests, this activity is all about finding out the features that have been missing in the next partner's picture.

Discovering Secrets

This activity, as Littlewood (2003) writes, can be launched in group or in pair. In this activity, a student has the complete information of a secret. The remaining students need to ask questions to find out the secret the first student has. However, the teacher

controls this activity. The students are instructed to use a particular type of question to ask for the secret which makes them practise the same in a meaningful situation, thus, they learn.

Communicating Patterns or Pictures

As the name of the activity suggests, the students need to communicate with each other in order to make the patterns. Here, according to Littlewood (2003), a learner has a set of shapes, which s/he arranges into a pattern; a next student too has the same shapes; they communicate with each other so that the second student can reproduce as exactly as possible the same pattern of the first one. The variation in the activity can be brought about by using pictures instead of the shapes.

Communicating Models

This activity is like ‘communicating picture and patterns’ where a student communicates with the next one to have the task accomplished. In other words, as Littlewood (2003) mentions that a learner has to construct a model; and the next student needs to have the same model made or drawn with the help of the verbal instruction of the first one. It requires two-way communication. As the second student finishes the task as described the first student provides with feedback.

Discovering Difference

According to Littlewood (2003) each student of a pair is provided with an identical picture, each with a number of distinctions. The students need to discuss to find out the difference that are underlying in the pictures.

Following Directions

In this activity too, a pair of students can be involved. Littlewood (2003) states that learners A and B have identical maps; A knows the exact location of the building or the Hidden Treasure, therefore s/he directs B and B follows A to the spot.

Restructuring Story Sequence

According to Littlewood (2003) a picture stripe story is cut up into its separate pictures. A picture is given to each of the student of a group. The students do not see the pictures of the other members of the group and decide the actual sequence of the story. The variation in the activity is possible by cutting the story into the paragraphs rather than into the pictures and getting the students to restructure the story. Another variation is possible by reducing the story into sentences and getting the students to restructure them.

Role-playing and Simulation

These activities create real or near real-like situation and make the learners play a role in it. These activities require the learners to act in the situation. Littlewood (2003) mentions that the learners are asked to behave as if the situation really existed in accordance with their roles (p. 48).

Dialogues

This activity helps the learners to get used to with dialogues. It is more of memorizing type rather than communicative. Ur (1996) states that dialogues are the old techniques of teaching language in which the students are taught brief dialogues that they learn by heart (p. 131). But when the dialogues are associated with other activities and used they become more communicative rather than mere memorizing activities.

Plays

Plays are creative activities where there is both fun and learning. Plays may be the text that the students have learnt or they are going to learn in the class. The teachers may need to spend good period of time in preparing the plays, but they are very useful for the language classes. According to Ur (1996), the results of plays can contribute a great deal both to the learning and to learners' confidence and morale (p. 132).

Telling Stories

This is one of the most liked activities of the young learners. The young ones like to listen to the stories. In addition, they like to tell the stories as well. In fact, it is not only the stories of the fairies and of the superman they like to talk about, they are very interested in sharing the events that took place in their home the other night. Therefore, it is one of the best activities that can be used in the class to keep the students speaking actively. Harmer (2007) believes that the students need to be able to tell the stories. It can be done by using the information gap activities in group. They can be given a sequence of the pictures. They describe the pictures they have seen and talk about them. They may be given pictures or objects and asked to make a story. They can also be asked to retell the story (p.129).

Theoretical Perspectives

As I was carrying out this study in order to explore how communication is being taught in English in primary school and how I can improve the skills of the students, I concentrated on communicative theory of language learning. Therefore, social interaction approaches and social constructivism were the theoretical base for the study.

Social Interaction Approaches

Language makes no sense in vacuum and it is not used meaningfully in isolation. Human beings, perhaps, would have never developed language if they had not felt the need of interaction with one another. Therefore, the primary function of language is interaction for communication.

Social interaction theory is combination of two terms, 'Social' and 'Interaction' where the former stands for the state and the latter for the process. This learning theory advocates that for language learning it is necessary to have both social context and interactional process. Regarding social interaction, Gass and Selinker (2008) opines, "A social interactional perspective on language, the linguistic codes cannot be understood in an isolated phenomenon outside of its social context nor can one understand how learning takes place without the support of social context" (p. 281).

Under this approach they deal with two key terms, conversation analysis and socio cultural theory. Conversation analysis reads only the manifested part of the speech. In other words, what is spoken is the area of study of conversation analysis. Gass and Selinker (2008) say that how much of language is learnt is seen in interaction of the speaker, the conversation that is made is the evidence of the language learning.

Similarly, socio cultural theory also emphasizes on the social context i.e. not in isolation but in the relational process. It is an integrated theory rather than a single one. Gass and Selinker (2008) mention that mediation and regulation, internalization and Zone of proximal development are the other related concepts of this theory (p. 281). They mention that mediation is the most important of all of these concepts. It is because socio-cultural theory rests in the assumption that all human activities including cognitive

activity is mediated by cultural tools like language and literacy which show the relation between human beings and social and material world. They use language as the tool to mediate both psychological and physiological process. Language not only helps in talking about the things that exist but also those that are beyond immediate environment; i.e. that are imaginary. While doing so, there learners not only make use of the language they have in their store but also go on adding more to the store.

The next way the learners learn language, according to Gass and Selinker (2008), is, through regulation. They believe that regulation is a kind of mediation. The learners first make object regulation i.e. they compare everything with object, next time they make other regulation i.e. they compare the things with other things rather than with the objects and finally, they make final regulation where they make use of language without any support i.e. independently.

The next concept according to Vygotsky (1978) is Zone of proximal development which is the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or collaboration with more capable peers (as cited in Gass & Selinker, 2008, p. 284).

Thus, language develops through interaction with the social context rather than from isolated cognitive process. Therefore, it is necessary to create social environment in classroom which is accompanied by the culture of the learners so that the learners interact with each other and develop their communicative skills.

Social Constructivism

For social constructivism, I have reviewed Vygotsky here. Zheng (2010), writing Vygotsky, states that children get cultural tools needed for development from culture; social context and culture are important for cognitive development. He says that children can master the concepts and ideas from the adults or the children who are more advanced rather than on their own. Effective learning, for them, is possible through interactive processes, discussion, negotiation and sharing (<http://www.slideshare.net/sinkyzheng/social-constructivism-cognitive-development-theory>). I am carrying out research for promoting communicative skills of the students where the students need to interact a lot. Thus, this is one of the supporting theories of my research.

A teacher, thus, as a constructivist, functions as an active facilitator in the classroom creating different social and cultural situations, making the learners use language. In addition to this, a teacher also participates in communication with the students, which obviously helps the students learn, as the teacher knows more than that of students. The various activities and the tasks created by the teacher help students to keep in touch with the language and strengthen their learning.

Zheng (2010) writes Language classroom can be made more communicative using the following four principles of Vygotskian classroom;

- Learning and development is a social, collaborative activity.
- The zone of proximal development can serve as a guide for curricular and lesson planning.
- School learning should occur in meaningful context and not be separated from learning and knowledge children develop in the ‘real world’.

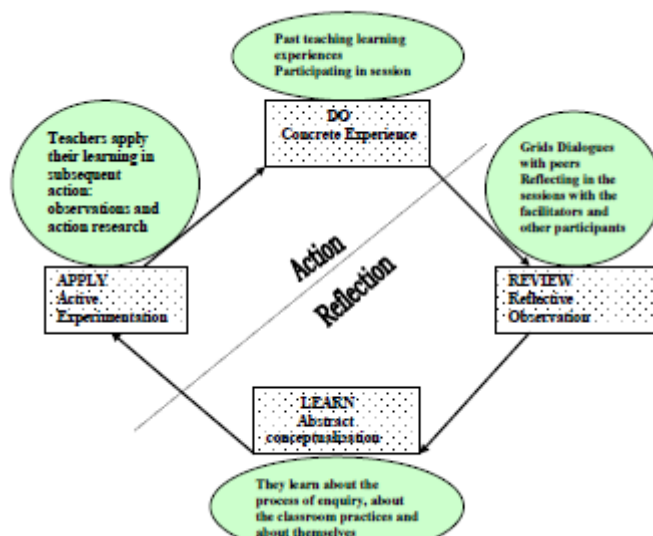
- Out of school, experiences should be related to the child's school experiences. (<http://www.slideshare.net/sinkyzheng/social-constructivism-cognitive-development-theory>)

Experiential learning

The next theory that I was relying on for the study was 'Experiential learning'. As the title refers, this theory is all about learning by experiencing. In other words, it is learning by doing. Rogers (1961) states that experience is the primary source of learning the highest authority, the touch stone of validity (as cited by Gnawali, 2001, p. 81). If the learners are put into the situation where they act, experience the learning item, they learn it better. Perhaps, it is very contextual in improving communicative skills since one learns to communicate more if s/he experiences communication.

Experiential learning can be better understood from the following figure.

Figure : Experiential Learning



Adopted from Kolb, 1984, and Kirk, 1987 (as cited by Gnawali, 2001, p.82)

The figure shows that the concrete experience is gained when someone does something or acts. The act is reviewed through reflection. The ideas got from reflection and the input got from the other sources like books and teachers help to learn. Finally, the learned, thus, is applied into the real situation that leads to concrete experience. The cycle goes on unless the learning takes place. There are opportunities to refine ones learning if this approach is followed.

Referring to my study, it was an action research. Action research was for solving the communicative problem that was there in the class. Therefore, the experiential learning cycle was of help to both myself and the students. Me, as a researcher, could make necessary changes in my teaching on the basis of experience and reflection. Similarly the students could also refine their learning by using the language and making necessary improvement in the required sections.

Previous Research Studies

Budha (2011), in her dissertation, has tried to explore the personal theories of the teachers about the strategies used to teach communication in secondary level, the strategies that the teachers use in classes for the development of communicative skills of the learners and language learning and teaching principles that the strategies are likely to be based on. The findings suggest that most of the teachers have moderate understanding of the skills of language, most of the teachers neglect communicative skills, the teachers having knowledge of communicative skills neglect communicative skills but the teachers lacking the knowledge knowingly or unknowingly focus on developing communicative skills, some of the teachers were found using some interactive activities in the class giving equal opportunities to the students to participate.

Zhang (2006) had carried out a study entitled “The ecology of communicative language teaching: reflecting on Singapore experience”. This study has tried to explore how Communicative language teaching was conceptualized, advocated, and implemented in the phases as reflected in the different syllabuses by the Ministry of education, Singapore.

Ozsevik (2010) carried out a study entitled “The use of communicative language teaching (CLT): Turkish ELT teachers’ perceived difficulties in implementing CLT in Turkey”. The study had been designed to investigate the Turkish EFL teachers’ understanding of English teaching, predominantly the difficulties and the challenges they faced in implementation of CLT practices in the Turkish context.

Chowdhury (2011) had carried out a research on “Communicative language teaching approach at higher secondary level in Bangladesh – Teacher’s perception and classroom practice” which had tried to explore higher secondary level teachers’ perception and expectations about CLT in higher secondary level in Bangladesh. Besides, this study has tried to identify the discrepancies between the teacher’s perceptions of CLT and real classroom practices at the level.

Mahdi (2009) carried out a research on “English language teaching in Iran and communicative language teaching” to investigate English Language Teaching in Iran as well as the extent of its compatibility with communicative pedagogy.

Research Gap

There have been several attempts of carrying out research in the field of communicative language teaching (CLT). The study of the literature related to CLT shows that not only in the nation but also abroad there are people interested in CLT. The

studies that I went through show that they have tried to find out the perception and practices of CLT. However, the studies seem to be focused in the higher level that had stroked me the most.

Ozsevik (2010) has been interested in finding out the perceived difficulties in implementing CLT. Chowdhury (2011) and Buddha (2011) seem to have similar interest of finding out the perception and the practices of CLT approach, though the latter is confined within the strategies of CLT. Zhang (2006) has shown concern towards the conceptualization, implementation and advocating CLT in the context. And Mahdi (2009) has investigated English Language Teaching and its compatibility with communicative pedagogy in their context. All of these studies, thus, have been centered in the perceptual and practice of CLT in a way or the other.

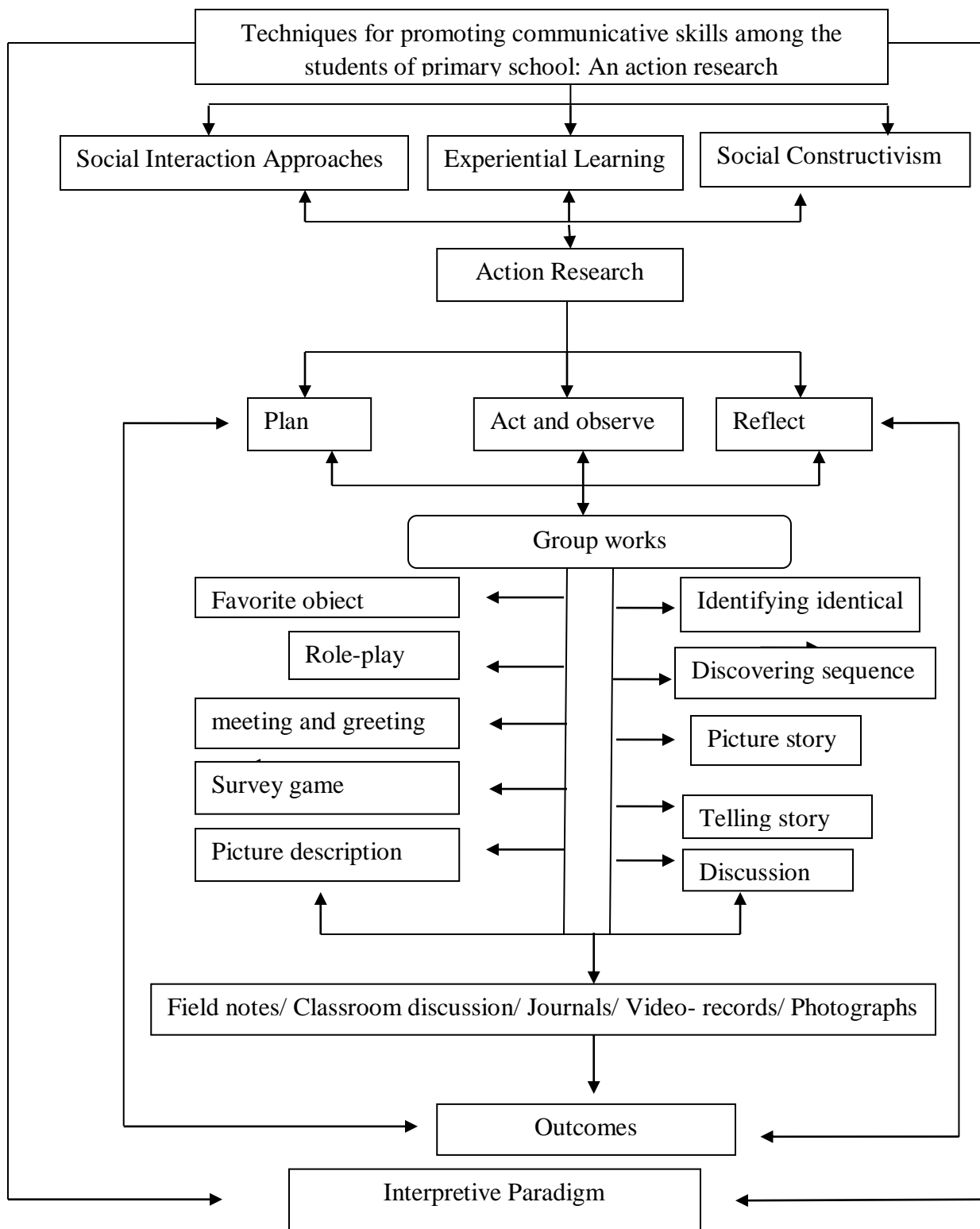
It is true that language is learnt through use and it keeps on developing with time so, the students of higher level definitely have better language than that of the students of the lower grade; i.e. lower grade is the basis of the language learning (of course in case of foreign language learning). Beginners of foreign language do have difficulties in learning the language. They have different patterns of learning and of course, they are not sure about different aspects of language. However, once they enter into middle school, though their language does not yet get perfect, they do have enough content and competency over the structure of the language. Therefore, they can speak in a satisfactory manner. However, their language shows that they do not seem to speak in the way they are supposed to. If the students at the level are not paid attention regarding their language, they will, definitely have problem with language in the higher level. The gap I have, thus, is that I have carried out this action research to test if the uses of the activities,

that are not commonly used in the classroom, make any difference in the communicative skills of the learners. Therefore, I studied the ways of improving the skills in the learners.

The next point to note is the level I took, I confined my study in primary school, I also studied the two specific aspects of communication; choice of diction and structure.

Finally, the context of the study is distinct, no one has ever carried out the study in the same context, I did, before.

Conceptual Framework



The aforementioned conceptual framework is the summary of the ways of improving communicative skills of the students in primary school. It presents my understanding and the practices about improving communicative skills of the students through group works in the level. I believe that using the language in an efficient manner is strengthened through interactional process, so I have chosen the theories that involve interaction; social constructivism, social interactional approaches. These two interactional theories have been accompanied by experiential learning that resembles the total action research process. If the learners are made to interact, in the class, i.e. in the learning situation, they learn better, for, it creates need to communicate. Similarly, the next belief is that language develops through sharing and discussion. Therefore, a teacher needs to provide the learners with ample opportunities to discuss, share, negotiate and interact. There are various activities that involve the students in such discussions and interactions. The activities that I carried out provided me with the data I needed. The data was collected as field notes, classroom discussion, journal and video records. This is how I got the outcomes of the study.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I have dealt with the literature I consulted for the research study. This chapter has been constituted with three major sections; thematic review, theoretical review and previous research studies. I have dealt with the literature directly related with communication and communicative language teaching under thematic review. The supporting theories for my study are presented under theoretical review. Similarly, the research studies that had been carried out in the past and are somehow related to my research have been presented under previous literature studies section. This chapter also

consists of the gap I have noticed between the researches that have been carried out and the one I did. Finally, I have presented the conceptual framework of my study as an overall picture of the study.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter is all about the procedural pattern of the research. I deal with the method I implemented to carry out the research in this chapter. The research paradigm that the research was based upon, philosophy of the study, research method, data collection tools, selection of research site, participants, data collection procedure, data analysis methods and ethical issues are also discussed in detail in this chapter.

Philosophical Consideration

Philosophical consideration provides basis for carrying out a research study. It is the back bone of research study that helps in structuring, legitimating, expressing and thinking of a research. Similarly it also helps in building relationship between philosophy and the research.

Interpretive Research Paradigm

Interpretive paradigm is generally used in qualitative and constructive researches. The goal of this research paradigm is to generate reflective understanding of 'the other' in context. In other words, a researcher tries to have the understanding of the others, as her/his own adjusting owns self in their position, sharing their pain and pleasure.

Under this paradigm, a researcher can include the lived experiences of the respondents as well as carry out the research in the natural setting focusing on the research area along with the culture and tradition of the respondents.

According to Lincoln and Guba (1989) quality standard in Interpretive paradigm is tried to maintain with two probing questions; is the research trust worthy? And, is the research relationship authentic?

A researcher tries to find out how immersed the researcher is in the study. Frequent checking of the collected data, hearing the voice of the participants, practice of skepticism, emergence of understanding and transferability are done to make the research trustworthy. Similarly, there is ethic of care, respect to the respondents, and respect to the self, ethic of fairness during the study.

Ontology

Ontology refers to the way of being or becoming. According to Richards (2003) Ontology, literally the science or study of being, is concerned with the nature of reality and their instances (p. 34). It is all about the truth of our belief. In other words, the individual belief of truth or existence of something for an individual is ontology. Therefore, ontology may differ from individual to individual.

For me, truth is dynamic i.e. truth goes on changing. It is because something which is considered true may not remain true in the next situation. In the field of teaching learning too, specially, while teaching, certain theories considered true by the theorists might not be as useful as it is described in our situation. Thus, it may give rise to variation that cannot be discarded.

Therefore, I tried to cover all the individual responses, principles and practices of the respondents that they think is true for them during the research because an interpretive researcher is the one who understands culturally different others standing on their shoes and feeling their pain and pleasure which is definitely true for them.

Epistemology

Epistemology is the science of knowledge. In other words, it is the way of knowing. Regarding Epistemology, Richards (2003) states, “the science or the study of knowledge refers to the views we have about the nature of knowledge and the relationship between the knower and known” (p. 35). Similarly, according to Cohen, Manion and Morission (2008) epistemology is concerned with the bases of knowledge; its nature and form, how it can be acquired and communicated to other human beings.

For me knowledge is completely subjective and personal, hence it is not confined to certain area nor is it confined to certain boundary and it is knowledge that results practices. What we do is the result of what we know. Therefore, during the study I considered my own understanding of language teaching that results the practice of making the students communicatively competent in the use of English language. Moreover, I also considered the knowledge of the students. Like my knowledge results how I teach, their knowledge results how they manipulate language. My considerations were beyond that they said they knew, it was also the way they did.

Axiology

Axiology is the science of value. In other words, it is the way of valuing or providing value to something or making a value judgment of something. Thus, this part of philosophy, too, is personal, in my opinion. It is because; something attributed with great value by someone might not get the same value from the next person.

Therefore, during my study, I considered the value judgment of my own perception and practices for the promotion of communicative skills of the students of primary school. Similarly, I also took the students perception of how they felt while

practising the activities in the class. Besides, their practice is the other fact of my consideration. The ethic of empowerment and the benefits were also my considerations so that I could make the research authentic.

Methodological Consideration

A researcher can make further plans of the research study after determining the method of the study. In other words, research method provides the way for carrying out any research study. Therefore, for smooth study I chose Qualitative Research Method.

Qualitative Research

Defining qualitative research is, of course, not showing it different from that of quantitative research, however, it is quite convenient to say what a qualitative research is through the difference; i.e. a qualitative research is not objective like a quantitative research; it is subjective in nature. It is subjective in the sense that it doesn't require a questionnaire prepared to be distributed among the participants as soon as a researcher goes to the field, nor the outcome of the research is numerical constant value, rather it might be varying. However, the variation is not the truth but it is the way the truth comes out. It is a prolonged process of researching where a researcher needs to spend quite a longer period of time with the actual target group. Besides, the approaches of data collection are also different. The first hand, the primary sources of data collected: through interview and observation are prominent than the statistical data. Similarly, mutual relationship with the participants is very important in this research as the researchers need to visit them frequently. Regarding qualitative researches Denzin and Linon (2005) state qualitative research as a situated activity that locates the observer in the world which consists of a set of interpretive material practices that make the world visible and

transform the world. The world is changed into the series of representations that include field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings and memos to the self. And the researchers need to study the things in their natural settings attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people to bring them (as cited by Creswell, 2007, p. 36). As a qualitative researcher I went to the field, i.e. the natural setting of the participants to collect the necessary information for the research study and interpreted them in a personal manner. Therefore, qualitative research is more narrative in nature than numerical. A qualitative researcher, thus, needs to be a researcher, collector, interpreter, facilitator and also the participant of the research to come to a conclusion. It is because, according to Patton (1990) qualitative methods consists of three types of data collection (I) in- depth, open ended interviews; (ii) direct observation; and (iii) written documents (as cited by Best &Kahn, 2006, p. 247). It is further stated that the data from direct interview consist of direct quotations of the experiences of the people, the data from observation consists of detailed description of people's activities actions and interactions and organizational process that are part of observable human experiences.

Researchers immerse themselves while carrying out a qualitative research. It is not only about finding out the things from others but also exploring own self. Guba and Lincoln (1995), in this regards, state that this type of research implies participants observational techniques that result in a more natural approach than surveys, tests, and the like used in more traditional quantitative approaches (as cited by Best & Kahn, 2006, p. 247). Therefore, qualitative research has been tried to be distinguished more as the research that is not quantitative.

Regarding qualitative research, Creswell (2007) says that qualitative research begins with assumptions, a worldview, the possible ways of theoretical lens and the study of the research problems inquiring into the meaning of individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem (p. 37). It is humanistic research study; hence, the findings include what the participants have to say along with the facts found out in their natural setting.

Therefore while carrying out a qualitative research, a researcher needs to be with the participants', experience what they have been experiencing, hence, express both subjective and objective voice of the respondents.

As the research method, I worked with qualitative research method during my study.

Action Research as a Method

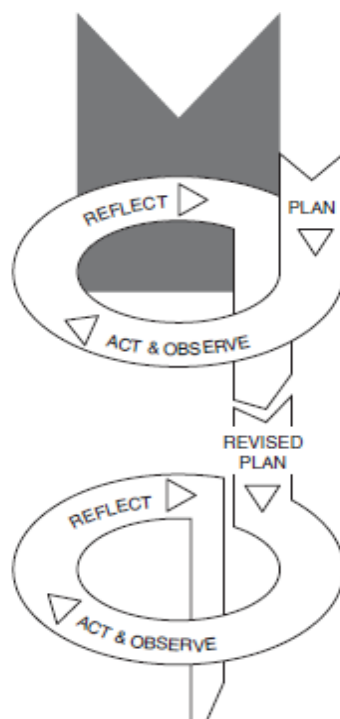
An action research is similar to other researches in the sense that there is an in-depth study over the topic, a researcher has to involve own self into the rigorous study to come to a conclusion. However, it is different from other researches in the sense that the researcher has to perform actions on the research participants in the research site to make some meaning. In an action research, the researcher, thus, needs to work in order to come to a conclusion. It can be carried out in a group, pair or by a single individual only. Elliott (1991) has an elaborated statement regarding action research that consists almost everything about what an action research is. He suggests that an action research is the process through which teachers collaborate in evaluating their practice jointly; raise awareness of their personal theory; articulate a shared conception of values; try out new strategies to render the values expressed in their practice more consistent with the

educational values they espouse; record their work in a form which is readily available to and understandable by other teachers; and thus develop a shared theory of teaching by researching practice. For Cohen and Manion (1994) action research is a small-scale intervention in the functioning of the real world and a close examination of effects such as an intervention (as cited by Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007, p. 297). Burn (2009) states that action research is a combination of action and research where action is incorporated within the ongoing social process and the societal context that makes intervention in the ongoing process in order to make improvement; research, on the other hand, is in systematic observation and analysis of the development of the changes that occur to identify the rationale for actions and make changes on the basis of the findings.

Action research is carried out in a cycle, it is a cyclical process. A researcher identifies the situation, plans for the improvements, implements the plan, evaluates the findings and plans again, implements and it goes on. Costello (2005) shows four steps in carrying out an action research; plan, act, observe and reflect (p.7) as the process of an action research.

Kemmis and McTaggart (2000) have proposed a spiral model of the action (as cited by Koshy, Koshy & Waterman, 2010).

Figure : Action Research Process



Adopted from Koshy, Koshy, and Waterman, 2010

An action research, according to the figure, begins with a plan which is put into action. The implementation is closely observed. The actor then reflects the effects of the implementation and revises the plan and action simultaneously. This cycle continues unless the purpose is met. It is same with the classroom researches as well. As a teacher, I planned the activities for the class, implemented in the classroom situation, reflected back the consequences and re- planed for the further classes.

I would like to put the words of Kemmis and McTaggart (1998) where they themselves describe the spiral model of action research:

- Develop a plan of critically informed action to improve what is already happening
- Act to implement the plan

- Observe the effects of the critically informed action in the context in which it occurs
- Reflect on these effects as the basis for further planning, subsequent critically informed action and so on, through a succession of the stages (as cited by Burn, 2009, p. 290).

I followed the same model of action research. I knew that there was problem with the students' communicative skills. In order to improve their skills, I developed a plan; I planned to make them work in groups in the English classes. I carried out the activities as per the plan. While the action research was on progress, I observed the students' behavior, their activities and their language. I reflected the changes and the effects on the students and re-planned for the other classes. While going through this way, I was trying to adopt the better way of improving their skills.

Research Design

Research design is all about planning for collection, sampling and analysis of data. A research design, according to Bryman (2009), provides a framework for the collection and analysis of data and a choice of research design reflects the decision about the priority being given to a range of dimensions of the research process (as cited by Budha, 2011, p. 59). It was an action research and as a qualitative researcher, I considered the following aspects for collection, sampling and interpretation of the data.

Participants' Selection

As a researcher, I formed smaller groups from the larger one so that it would represent the whole mass and also that it would not create a mess of the people, for we could not include each individual of the target group. The research that I was carrying

out covered primary school. It was true that I could not include every single student. Thus, I had a sample group formed as the participants of the research. The participants included a section of grade four with 35 students. I implemented the plan I had in the group I had selected.

Selection of Research Site and Participants

I carried out my research in a school of Kathmandu valley. As it was an action research, I carried out the research in the class I taught. It was limited within a single school and a single section of grade four.

Data Collection Approaches

In order to find out the fact, which a researcher has tried to find out from the research, data are the sources. And, data collection tools were the means which I employed to collect the information and set the procedure of the study.

I carried out an action research therefore, the events that took place in the class and the responses that the students made in the class, the activities they did there were the data I needed. I made the notes of everything that happened inside the classroom.

Data Sources

There is no doubt that the participants of the research are the data source, the primary data source. However, in what ways I collected the data is the matter of concern that I deal with here. The data that I collected from the participants were put into different forms like classroom discussion notes, observation field notes, audio/ video records and the photographs depicting the activities of the classroom including the sample produced by the learners.

Field Notes

Field notes were the major data source. I noted down everything that happened in the classroom as the data. I kept the notes through the journals as well. Every day I took the class, I wrote the journal. The journals were the word-pictures of the classroom situation.

Classroom Discussion

It was the next remarkable data source of my research. The classroom discussion that I held in the beginning of the research, during the research and after the research have provided me with good amount of data. The responses from the discussion were the comparing variable with how they performed in the class. The act of classroom discussion was the perceptual image of the students regarding English language and communicating in English. In addition, I used the classroom discussion in finding the reasons behind the particular behavior of the students.

Audio/ Video Records

They were the next data sources of my research. I had the video records of the class. Video records were a part of class observation. These records were the evidences of what I actually have found out in the field. They were also the live records of the field that helped me in making interpretation without missing the importants of the field as I could trace back to the record any time I liked.

Photographs

I had the clips of the photographs of the research site. Though it was the silent source, it helped me to organize my findings functioning as the proof of data collection and the reminder of the events in the class.

Data Collection Procedure

Data collection for the research begins from the selection of school as the research site. I selected a school as the site of data collection. I went to the school administration to get permission to carry out research in the school. Then I had a round of informal talk with the teachers of the school regarding the communicative skills of their students.

In the beginning I made myself clear to the students for the changed setting in the class. I also told them all about the activities that they were going to do in the class with me. I told them how they were going to work in the class. I also divided their groups so that they had no any confusion about whom to go to sit with from the next day onwards.

As per the plan, I took the classes using the various communicative activities for three months. However, there were several occasions that I repeated the activities, for, those activities were found very interesting by the students and I had found them effective for my context. Each day I entered the class with my pen and a notebook to note down everything that happened in the class. I noted down how the activities went on. The notes not only included the events but also the utterances that the students made in the events. In addition to the field notes I wrote the journals of every class after the class finished. The journals provided me with the complete detail of the class.

I also made the students write journals so that I could learn about how they felt in the changed setting. As they were in primary school and writing a journal was a new thing for them, I gave them some guiding questions and asked them to write the answers to the questions honestly.

The next about data collection was their written notes. I collected the written samples of the text that they jointly produced in their groups. With the written texts I

could make comparison between the changes in their writing as well. Although writing was not the prime focus of the study, the outcomes that I got from the research made me consider this aspect as well. I find it important to mention that writing in the group had helped me in engaging the students in group discussion. Therefore, I could not ignore these aspects as well.

I had three rounds of evaluation during the research to find the effectiveness of the activities I used in their class. During the evaluation, I instructed them in some activities which were the free exercises. Then I noted down what they said and did with their group members. It was the natural classroom setting where I could extract their real way of communicating as it would not be something that they had to present to me in the class like in the other regular classes.

I video recorded the presentations among the students and made notes of the practice in the English classes. I made evaluation of the changes in the skills. The evaluation was made on the basis of the way they communicated and the way they chose the words and the structure of the sentences. The process of class observation also went on with the communicative activities in the class. On the same basis, I made changes in the use of communicative activities.

Data Analysis

In the opinion of Spasford and Jupp (2006), it is the stage at which the researcher ‘tunes into’ the meaning, messages in his or her data and builds up an appreciation of nuances and structure and the possibilities for analysis (p. 153). Similarly, Bell (2004) mentions that data collected by means of diaries, interviews, questionnaires or any other methods mean very little until they are analyzed and evaluated (p. 171). It is further

mentioned that a hundred separate pieces of interesting information will mean nothing to a researcher or to a reader unless they have been placed into categories (p. 173).

Therefore, it is the stage of making sense of whatever is collected during data collection stage. In this regard, Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2008) state that data analysis involves organizing, accounting for and explaining the data; in short, making sense of data in terms of participants' definition of situation, noting patterns, themes, categories and regularities (p. 461). For data analysis, Richards (2003) presents the following aspects:

Collect	collect data
Think	think about the data, the aims of the project, other research etc. in order to inform categorization
Categories	code the data in order to assign it to categories\
Reflect	add notes, comments, insights etc
Organize	arrange the categories in different ways in order to see the data from different perspectives, looking for connections, relationships, patterns, themes, etc
Connect	link discoveries generated by these procedures to concepts and theories, seeking explanation and understanding
Collect	in the light of insights gained, collect further data

Similarly, Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2008) present five ways of organizing and presenting data analysis.

One of the ways of presenting the data is by groups where a researcher automatically groups the data and enables the theme, patterns and the similarities

to be seen at a glance. The second method of organizing data analysis is by individuals where the total responses of a single participant are presented and the analysis moves to the next person. The third way of organizing data is to present all the data relevant to a particular issue. The fourth method of data analysis is by research questions where all data is drawn for exact issue of concern of the researcher's research questions preserving the coherence of the material. And the fifth way is by instrument which is used in conjunction with another approach.

I followed the fourth model of data analysis i.e. data analysis by research question. As Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2008) state, "the relevant data from various streams provide collective answer to the research questions" (p. 468), the data that I collected through the different ways provided me with the answers to the research question.

I revised the journals I had written for the classes since I needed the details of everything that went on in the class. I visited the field notes that I had written for the important notes and the actual utterances of the students. I read the journals of the students and categorized their responses under different sub headings. I also read the text that they produced in the groups and made the notes. I watched and re- watched the video records of the presentation of the students. The photographs of the activities and that of the materials were also visited for the analysis.

Having made the study, I went on describing the things directing myself towards the research question. While analyzing the data, I also analyzed the detailed process of the action research. It included the explicit events and actions of the class and those beyond explicitness; I also presented the behavioral aspect of the students that I could

read from their individual expression rather than from what they said in concrete words. This way, I developed the details of the data addressing the research questions so that when I came to the end, the outcomes, too, addressed the question.

Quality Standards

It is quality standard that makes a research study reliable, therefore, it is necessary to maintain quality standard while carrying out a research. However, there have been frequent blames that qualitative researches are full of subjective judgments; hence, they are difficult to be believed. Yet, certain aspects are considered so that quality standard of qualitative research gets less questioned. Quality standard of qualitative research depends on its trustworthiness and authenticity. And there are still other things that determine trustworthiness and authenticity of a study. Credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability determine trustworthiness and authenticity of a research.

Credibility

Credibility is all about making the study believable. Credibility, in turn has several other things surrounding it and making it a whole. It includes prolonged engagement, persistent observation, peer debriefing, negative case analysis, progressive and member checking .

According to Guba and Lincon (1989) prolonged engagement provides richness and comprehensive details of the research site and the participants (as cited in Creswell, 2007). Therefore, I had prolonged visit for persistent observation of the research site and the participants. The persistent observation helped me to enhance collection of real data. It also helped me to make the research credible.

Peer Debriefing

According to Creswell (2007), peer debriefing or peer review provides an external check of the research process. Regarding peer debriefer, Guba and Lincoln (1985) state that the individuals who keep the researchers honest, ask hard questions about the methods, meaning and interpretations and provide the researcher with the opportunity for catharsis by sympathetically listening to the researcher's feeling (as cited in Creswell, 2007, p. 208). So I had my peers to debrief the study I was carrying out. One of the colleagues had jointly worked with me as my peer debriefer.

Member Checking

The next thing that I did to maintain quality standard of the research is member checking. Member checking is making sure about what the participants say. In other words, in the subjective interview, the participants may not tell the truth, thus, it is necessary to ask them time and again to make sure of what they are saying. I had to do this as well to make sure of their responses. Regarding member check, Ely. et. al (1991) states that at this stage a researcher solicits participants' views of credibility of the finding (as cited in Creswell, 2007).

Negative Case Analysis

I had carried out the actions upon the students until the problem was not met through them. Therefore, I had negative case analysis to maintain the quality standard. Regarding negative case analysis, Creswell (2007) states that a researcher need to revise initial hypothesis until all cases fit (p. 208).

Ethical Consideration

Creswell (2007) says, “A researcher needs to respect the research site so that the sites are left undisturbed after the research study. It requires the inquires, especially in qualitative studies in involving prolonged observation and interviewing in a site, be cognizant of their impact and minimize their disruption of the physical setting” (as cited by Budha, 2011, p. 68). Anderson (1998) says that all the research studies that involve people should consider ethical issue (as cited in Bhusal, 2011, p.86). This study too is of the same type, i.e. involving people. It is, therefore, necessary to consider the ethical issues while carrying out any research.

Thus, before I began my research, I took a formal letter of permission from Kathmandu University to the selected schools of Kathmandu valley. I also took permission from the respective school administration. While doing so, I did not explicitly mention the name of the school or that of the participants. I used pseudo-names of the participants. In other words, I named S1, S2, and S3 for the students. As I worked with the students in the group in their classroom while teaching them English language and confined to only the classroom activities, perhaps, I did not need any consent of their parents even though they are under age. Furthermore, I didn't do any activity that needed student's personal decision. In the report and the transcription, as well the same was applied.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has been divided into three sections; philosophical consideration, methodological consideration and ethical consideration. Under philosophical consideration, I have written on my ontology, epistemology and axiology regarding the

study. Under methodological consideration, I have mentioned the paradigm I am in, the method I used for the research, data collection tools, research site, data analysis, research design, and an action plan. Similarly, the ethical consideration included the ethical issues I considered while carrying out the research.

CHAPTER IV

ACTION RESEARCH PROCESS

This chapter is all about the detail of the action research that I carried out. I deal with every activity that I did during the research. The extracts of the materials, the sample produced by the participants and their photos are also presented here.

How it All Happened?

It is true that I like to work with children, it is true that I like to help others to learn, it is true that I find it comfortable to work with the grown up learners, however, it is also true that teaching has never been an easy job for me since I started teaching. Yet, the zeal of being an efficient teacher is still alive in me which is only the actuality that has made me think about the problems that the students have in the school. Though it has been a part of my duty, I gave an extra time for the thought about how I could help my learners learn better at the time that I was not at my job.

The thought about the classes and the students I teach has made me think of the problems that the learners were going through. The competitive world outside is there with its wide mouth open to ingest the toppers, therefore the grade that the students secure has been the synonym of how much the students know rather than how much the students have learnt. It is so sad that the students compare number of lines they have memorized from the teacher's note and they compare the points they have got on their answer sheets. It is even sadder to know that the parents look for the number of 'A's on the report card, the red 'ticks' on their exercise books and no comments about the student

from the school. The definition of learning has been limited within getting grades in exam and nothing more in almost all of the cases.

I have been realizing the same since I have started teaching. Perhaps they existed before as well, but I realized them alive after I started teaching as a teacher.

As I had already been in a school as an English teacher, I didn't have any problem in finding out a place for me to carry out this research. I chose grade four as the research group. It was the class with 35 students and most of them designated as good learners.

Though the school was a known place, the students were new for me as I was facing them for the first time. I didn't know them, they didn't know me, therefore, I had to introduce myself and also make my purpose clear.

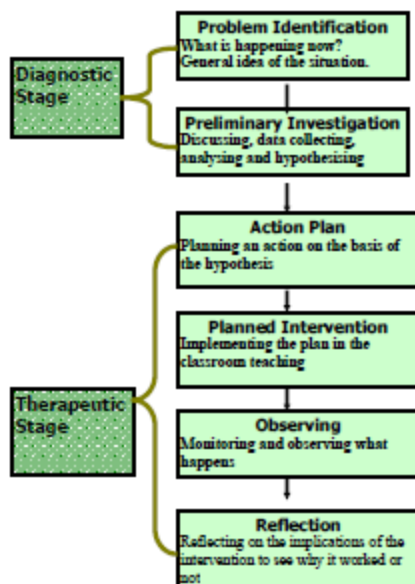
The school knew that I was carrying out research in the school with the group; I had notified the students that I would be doing something new from those who had been doing. They had agreed as well. I had no problem, but something that was troubling me was that I had limited time to finish everything. Unless I could keep up with the school's schedule, there was no problem, otherwise the school would raise question on why it could not be done. However, it was not very difficult for me as the learners had readily agreed me and the additional tasks that they would be doing.

Then, I started to launch the activities as per the plan. The students enjoyed so much. In fact, from the very first day I had formed groups of four for them. Unless I changed the group or stopped the activities, they were supposed to work in the same groups. They were so excited that every day I entered the class they asked me what activity I had for the day. The classes got interesting and I could explicitly notice the change in the learners' communicative skills.

Action Research Stages

I would like to divide the whole process of action research in two phases as Nunan (1993) (p. 42) and Elliott (1989) (p. 217) have put them; the diagnostic phase and Therapeutic phase (as cited by Gnawali, 2001) in the following figure:

Figure : Stages of an Action Research



Adopted from Nunan (1993) (p. 42) and Elliott (1989) (p. 217) (as cited by Gnawali, 2001, p. 59)

I went through the same stages while carrying out this study. As it is indicated in the figure, the first stage was the diagnostic stage. The diagnostic stage was followed by therapeutic stage later.

Diagnostic Stage

The figure shows that in diagnostic stage a researcher identifies the problem. In other words, it is making sure about what to work on in this stage. The problem identification, then, is followed by preliminary investigation. The investigation involves discussion on the problem, collection of data to make sure about the problem and

hypothesizing the causes and the ways of overcoming them simultaneously. I did exactly same. I had noticed the students having broken communication. It led me towards looking for what actually happened to their language. On the same basis, I had my plans formed for the proceeding stage.

Therapeutic Stage

This stage follows the diagnostic stage. After the diagnosis of the problem is made, the necessary steps are taken for the solution. The act of solving takes place in this stage.

As, pointed out in the figure, I, as the researcher, made an action on the basis of the problem. Then I implemented the plan in my classroom teaching. I observed them when they worked with the activities and noted down everything that happened. Finally, I had the reflection of the activities and the students' practice in the classroom in order to make the further plans for the further classes.

Diagnostic Phase

In this section I write the details of the activities I carried out to diagnose the problem under diagnostic phase.

Background

I was tired of telling each and individual student about what to say and how to say in English. A day I would correct a student for saying something, the next day I had the next with the same problem. In addition, the language full of strange structure and the words was making their language funny. Besides, I had also the experience that the students develop the same habit when they grow up if they are not corrected on time, for, I had the opportunity to work with the grownups with the similar problem in English they

speak. Therefore, I, from the very beginning of my graduate study, had it in my mind that I would have to do something regarding language of the students. To meet the same desire I chose grade four, the initiation of the formal schooling.

Why Action Research? Why not something Else?

I wanted to do something that would make some sense in my class; in very straight words, I wanted to experiment something during the research. I had decided to carry out an action research after putting so much of thought. On the one hand I had the obligation of carrying out the research and on the other hand, I had a wish of finding out something useful from the research that I carry out rather than making it limited only as a research paper. I would like to mention Norton (2009) here, who writes that the purpose of pedagogical action research is systematically investigate one's own teaching/learning facilitation practice with the dual aim of improving the practice and contributing theoretical knowledge in order to benefit student learning (p. 59). In other words, I wanted to understand how I teach, I wanted to improve myself and I also wanted to help my students learn. Perhaps, Richards and Farrell (2005) make me more clear here who state that an action research is way to better understand and improve the practice, it is redefining own roles and setting own agendas for improvement (p. 172).

The next point for choosing action research was to find out the reality of the challenge that many teachers feel. It is said that action research in school context is an additional burden, why would anyone take the burden when you already have so much of work load? Richards and Farrell (2005) further mention they say a question, 'Why add research to teacher's workload?' My research site was my class that I teach. I teach two other sections of the same grade, it took place during my regular working hours. I had the

obligation of meeting the need of the syllabus; in addition, I had chosen action research. This might be a professional issue, but my intention was also to find out if doing an action research is possible in general work schedule, it is, not making a special provision for action research particularly.

The action research began with discussion with the students as I was already set in my mind about what to do, I implemented the activities to collect the data, I reflected time and again, I evaluated how the things were going and what I was getting from the intervention and concluding what and how I ought to go along.

Identification of Problem

Identifying the problem was not a difficult task for me, for, I myself had the problem when I was in school, I had seen the problem with the students who were supposed to be better by then and I had been having the same problem with the kids at my work place now as well; I decided to carry on with it since it was the most prominent among the sets of problems in the school.

Therapeutic Phase

Like in the previous section, I write the details of all the activities I carried out under therapeutic phase to address the problem diagnosed.

The Beginning

It was the time for the regular class. It was the usual time and my usual way. I entered the class with so much of excitement. The students were at their place with their usual business. I had already asked them if they would like to work in the groups and learnt about them. So, I asked them if they would be happy to work in the group that I

form for them. They agreed and it made my task easier. I formed groups of four; there were altogether nine groups with a group with only three students.

I told them to not to change their groups and always be seated in the same groups before I entered the class. I also chose a group leader for each of the groups and informed them that the group leader would be changed every week so that every member would get the opportunity to take the lead. The next thing that I notified them was to be cooperative to the friends. That day, we, in cooperation of the students, had framed a set of rules to be followed in the class during the group works. I didn't want to impose my thoughts on them rather I wanted them to tell themselves so that it would be easier for me to remind me of what they had said. I waited for them to tell and noted them on the board. I was very happy to hear them. They even had reasons for doing when I had asked them why they ought to do so. To my question, "Why should you speak English?" they had responses like, "it will improve our English, it will be easier to talk to the foreigner, it will be easier for us to learn" and so on. I had then thought that it was going to be quite easier to work with them since they already know so many things about what they ought to do to learn English and why they ought to do so.

1. *We will always work in our own groups.*
2. *We will speak only English while communicating with our friends and the teacher.*
3. *We will help our friends in our group.*
4. *We will try to finish everything on time in the class without wasting our time in unnecessary talk*

Data Collection

I have mentioned in the third chapter, the data sources of the research are the field notes, classroom discussion, the daily journals, the audio- visual records and the photographs. In addition to the list of the data sources I have mentioned that I used the written samples that came from their group works. I told the students to write a few journals about how they felt in the class and about the class without any hesitation. In addition, I have also picked up the actual chunk of the language they spoke in the class and the series of their conversation without any change in the words and the structures; they are exactly the same that they spoke. I would like to present the detail here, however.

Whole Class Discussion

The whole class discussion was a way of the data collection as I have mentioned. It was also a way to get familiar with the students. I had to make them clear about what I was going to do in the class and also what they were doing with me there. On the top of it, it was also an effective way of drawing what they were feeling while working in the group during the action research. The questions that I used during the discussion are in Appendix 1. These questions were very helpful in finding out how they had been taught in the lower grades. They drew out their prior thoughts about how they might feel working in groups. During the research they helped me to find out how they were doing. The most important aspect about the discussion and the discussion questions was that they tempted the students to speak, this way I got the actual chunk of the language the students have, their style of communication, the choice of the words they made and the

structure of the statements. The next point to mention here is that it was helping me to involve the less speaking speakers as well; I realized it later during the action research.

Panel Discussion with Individual Student

Talking in the group had provided me a lot of information in the beginning and during the research; however, I thought that, perhaps I need to find out how a particular student thinks. Yet, I couldn't include all 35 students of the class, as I mentioned in the third chapter, here I needed purposive sampling. For the individual talk, I chose seven students, two excellent, two average, two others low achievers and an excellent student quite silent in the class.

I had the same set of questions for all the students. I kept them around me and asked the individual question to the individual student. They told their answers and I noted their answers in their words on my diary. The responses I got are completely the student's responses. I asked all the questions I had pre set. However, I also had to add a few of them during the discussion.

- “..... *I'll ta do that s*
- “..... *that yesterday nai done.....”*
- “..... *come to check my also no.....”*
- “..... *she haven't read also.....”*
- “..... *yes yaa.....”*
- “..... *Ma'am, what saying, not bujhing.....”*

Actual utterances of the students

It was the way the students spoke that had led the foundation for this action research. The actual bits of the language they spoke, the words they chose and the words they formed while communicating are some important basis of this research. Actually, there is nothing new in finding the students speaking in the way they do. We used to do somewhat similar. The students now of the similar age group are also found doing the

same. This similarity in the language of the students had made me do something to see if it helps.

The Details of the Actions for Small Groups

After I had decided that I would be carrying out an action research with the students of primary school, I had made a brief plan. The review of the literature I made had given me so much of insight into what to do in the class. Besides, the suggestions that I was getting from the tutor also guided me a lot in this regard. However, I had even space for the change that I might feel like making once I get into the field. Basically, there were two reasons, the first was that I had to make the change if the students did not enjoy the activities and the next reason was that I had to meet the requirements of the syllabus of the school as well, as this action research was being carried out in the actual classroom setting during the duty hour. Therefore, during the research I was always trying to meet the two important aspects.

I began the class a bit differently from the day I decided to act the action research; I had to go on according to the action plan I had pre designed for the research.

Action Plans

Collins English Dictionary (2013) states that an action plan is a statement of the steps that need to be taken to achieve a particular goal or objective. I had also planned some action plans so that I could meet the objective I have set for the research.

It began with a very simple activity of 'Meeting and Greeting'. I chose this activity as the first one for the class because I wanted them to get structured while communicating. The truth behind is, I had noticed that the students do not greet teachers and friends at school. Though they have been compelled to greet when a teacher enters

into the class I didn't find them doing it properly. The next reason was that I wanted them to know why they should greet and how they do it.

I showed them a written model of greeting on the board. I wanted them to practice the model. While doing so I was following Pinter (2006) who mentions that practicing and drilling a set of phrases and repeating models start speaking practice. She further mentions, "fluent speakers will also have to learn a range of other things such as what is appropriate to say in certain situations, how to manage conversations, how to interrupt and offer their own contributions" (p. 55). I was dealing with the young learners in the class which was one of the compelling factors for giving such model to practice in the class among their friends. I called a student to take the role of the student and I took the role of the teacher. I told her to read the words written

on the board on the student's part and I did the same of the teacher's part. While we were playing our roles in the pair, the rest of the class was listening to us. Once we finished, I repeated it with the second student. After those two presentations, I distributed the role cards to the students. Each group had two pairs of role cards. They had different roles to play. They practiced greeting in the pair but within their groups. When a pair spoke the other listened carefully and made the

comment at the end. Simultaneously, when the next pair did it, the other two listened and commented. Finally, I asked some of the pairs to come to the front and play the role for

Meeting and greeting

Student: Good morning Ma'am!

Teacher: Good morning. How are you?

Student: I'm fine thank you. How are you?

Teacher: I'm fine

the friends. This activity looked like a pair work but it was done in the group where two spoke and two other listened and commented.

The next activity I had for them was ‘picture story’. I would like to mention Kirsch (2008) to illustrate why I chose this activity, where she mentions that storying encourages learners to tell, read, write, edit and perform their own stories. She further mentions that the learners share experiences, negotiate meanings in authentic and meaningful learning context and construct new knowledge through collaboration (p. 132, 133). I displayed a poster. The poster had series of pictures. I instructed to look at the pictures and develop a story in their group. They had an obligation; they had to discuss in their group to make up the story. I wanted them to talk in their group and also write something in the group itself. Letting students write is helping them with their written communication as well. Kirsch (2008) also writes, “teachers need to be interested in what way they say, create a purpose for writing and make sure that there is an audience” (p. 132). My context involved all of the criteria and an addition of the need of communication to accomplish the task. I gave them following the poster for the first story they had to develop in their groups.

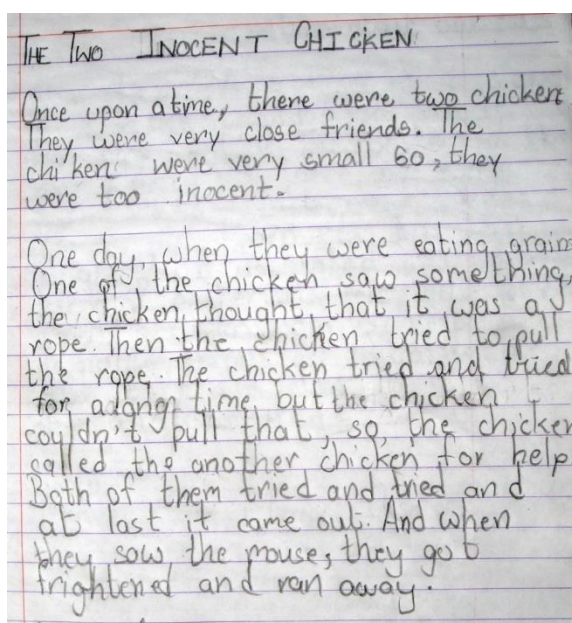
Figure : Sample Poster



Source: My Data

I used this activity quite frequently as I found that the students like this one the most. However, I had different pictures for them to make a story. The other pictures are attached in the Appendix. One of the groups came up with this story for the poster.

Figure : Students' Written Sample



Source: My Data

The next activity in the group was 'Discovering differences'. This activity can be carried out in different ways. One of the ways of implementing this activity in the class, as Littlewood (2003) writes, is, "distribute a number of pictures among a group of learners. Some pictures are identical and some are different. The learners must discover how many different pictures there are before, perhaps, also discovering all the distinguishing features" (p. 32). I chose this activity because I had realized that the students love to work with the picture. I was also in need of the activity that requires the students to speak a lot. It was a comparing exercise. As Willis and Willis (2012) say comparison often forms the basis for games and the other challenges (p. 91), I wanted them to learn to communicate in the way they have fun and they feel that they are playing. Regarding the comparing activity Willis and Willis (2012) further mention:

The game based on two nearly pictures can be done in two ways: cooperatively, with two people in collaboration, looking at both pictures and helping each other spot a certain number of differences and writing them down in the list. Or, it can be done in A/B pairs where each learner looks at their own picture and they find the differences by each describing their pictures in turn and stopping when their partner thinks they have found a difference to check it out and write down, Or, instead of writing A can ask B questions about the details in their picture and change over (p. 92).

However, I didn't follow any of these ways words to words. The way I did it was like the first one, but I had chosen it to be done in the group rather than in the pair.

I provided each group with a pair of pictures. They were similar but, of course, they had underlying differences. I again instructed to discuss in the group and find out the

differences between them. To the question “how many differences were to be sought from the pictures”, I had said that they could find as many as they could. The following are some of the figures I had used and the others are attached in the Appendix.

Figure : Sample Picture for Group Discussion



Source: My Data

‘Discovering difference’ had been carried out through the text as well. I had designed two similar texts and instructed them to find the difference. However, this difference was not like finding out the difference from the pictures. The difference was abstract within the text. I had used this activity while teaching them grammar; ‘verbs’ specifically. I used it to introduce ‘verbs’ to them. The following is one of the texts that I had used.

Figure : Sample Text for Group Discussion

Verbs		Non- Verbs	
Smile	Play	Beautiful	Quiet
Cry	Carry	Chair	Table
Jump	Read	Nice	Bag
Dance	Write	He	Pencil
Stand	Sweep	She	Pen
Sit	Draw	Book	Key

Source: My Data

The next activity I used in the class was 'Describing'. Describing took place in various forms. They were told to describe the things, place and the person as well. I had given hints for describing. The hints were the points to include while describing. On the first day, all of the groups had a single topic and the theme for describing. However, the next day onwards, I went into the class with different topics for different groups. I had prepared cards for them, I distributed the cards randomly. They had made the discussion and described on the topic they got. One of the members of the group was supposed to write the description they made while the others were contributing the content. Of course, the description was followed by their presentation. This activity was carried out quite

Describe the classroom.

Use the following hints to describe.

- Size (big/small)
- Location (the floor)
- Number of windows
- Direction of the door
- Furniture
- Special about your classroom
- The best about your classroom

frequently in the class. I had asked them if they had liked the activity before I repeatedly used.

To make them speak a lot in their group, the next activity I used was, ‘scrambled sentences’ or ‘reconstructing story sequence’. Littlewood (2003) says, “printed story may be cut into paragraphs or sections, each learner within the group must summarize one section and perhaps, answer questions put by the others. The whole group must reconstruct the story through discussion” (p. 33, 34). However, I used the activity in a different context, the first difference was I didn’t use the paragraph rather I used the sentences and the second was that the sentences would not make up a story but the summary of one of the poems they read in the class. After they had done all the exercises on the poem, I put forward this activity for them. It was like summarizing exercise of the poem. They had made discussion in their group to put the sentences in the correct order.

I used scrambling as a game in the class for other contents as well. I used it for grammar classes. While I was introducing ‘sentences’, I used it. I had cut the sentences into words and put them on a basket. I gave each group a basket. Each basket contained at least two sentences. They had to arrange the word cards into an order and form a meaningful sentence. Of course, I had a sentence in my mind when I gave them the bits; however, they were left free in forming any sentence, for, change in word order results different sentences. However, the obligation they had was they could use each word only once and only for a sentence. They ought not to repeat the use of any of the words. The sentence they found was written on a separate piece of paper. At the end they read out the sentence for their friends in the class. There were some important points that I wanted to impart to them but I also wanted them to find them out themselves. For this, I had

instructed them that they had to write at least two things about sentences once they found out the sentences. I wanted to find out if working in group helps in this regards as well.

Children are fond of stories. They love to listen to the stories. They love telling the stories as well. I find it contextual to quote Medwell, Wray, Minns, Griffiths and Coates (2002), “telling story helps children when they are reading as well as in writing their own stories later, children’s confidence can be developed through story telling activities as well as cooperative skills” (p. 116). So the next activity, I chose was ‘Telling a story’. I told them to tell the story they have read. I could have asked them to share their own stories as well. However, I had to make them work in the group for which I needed a story that everyone in the group knows. Therefore, I assigned them a story. Each member of the group had to tell the story for rest of the group members According to Willis and Willis (2012), “ good story telling contributes to everyone’s enjoyment and generally enhances our social experiences. The same is true in the classroom” (p.105). I wanted the students to develop the social skills too, so, while one was telling the story the others would listen carefully. After the story was told the other group members would comment on the story. They would add the missed points or make it clearer. Furthermore, as Alington & Mayor (2012) write, while telling the stories collaboratively, the students learn to present other’s judgment and take on the other person’s voices, which are the common features of language (p. 32). After everyone of the group finished the story, a member from each group presented the story for the class so that the class could hear that they discussed. I used this activity also quite frequently in the class.

The next activity was 'favorite object'. I had asked them to bring something they liked the most from their home. It could be anything like toys or the other instruments.

All I needed was a concrete object in their hands.

They would talk in their groups about their objects and share with their friends. They were given the outline of what to include in their description. In addition to the description, like in the other activities, they were supposed to write. This was an individual exercise; all the group members had to write the description. This activity was also done quite frequently, for, the students asked for. They came up with the object on the days when I had not asked for as well. They used to ask me when I was letting them work with the objects when I was around.

Besides these activities that I could give the typical names and have been introduced by the scholars, I used other activities as well. I do not claim that they have been typically designed by me. I had to create a communicating situation in the class. Therefore, in the situation when I felt it difficult to implement the often used activities, I used them. It was for my convenience as well as that of the students. Besides, it was also for meeting the purpose of the action research being carried out.

Favorite object

- What the object is.
- Description (name, colour, shape, size and other features of the object.)
- Who brought is?
- From where?
- Which occasion?
- The best about the object?
- The reason they like the object/ what makes it their favorite?

I used such activities more frequently while teaching grammar. I used them as the inductive approach of teaching grammar. Regarding inductive approach of teaching grammar, Harmer (2007) states, “instead of going from the rules to the examples, students see the examples of the language and try to work out the rules” (p. 82). I aimed at meeting the both of these goals, at first I tested how effective these scholarly views are in my context and the next is that I had to keep them busy communicating. I wanted them to communicate with each others in the groups and find out the requirements. I used simple discussions while teaching ‘pronouns’ and ‘articles’. I provided them with a text which they had to study and discuss for their self understanding as Thornbury (1999) writes while introducing what inductive grammar teaching is. I believe, discussion in their group while working out with the rules, trying to deduce something, also helps them to build their communicative skill; and my belief has been strengthened by the words of Cox (2012) where he presents the ideas of Vygotsky (1962, 1978) that learning occurs mainly through interaction and dialogue. He further mentions, “dialogue and talk can supply ‘scaffolding’ where the teachers can generate activities through which students can move their understanding of the taught content further forward” (p.16). Furthermore, Total Physical Response (TPR) was also used in the grammar lessons. Cameron (2010) clearly states that TPR is a form of CLT (p. 107). Citing Lightbrown and Spada (1999) she further writes that the learners develop skills in listening and speaking through TPR and it is particularly appropriate for

Stand on your table.

Catch you ears.

Touch your nose.

Laugh.

Shout.

Dance.

the beginners. However, I used TPR with the students in primary level while teaching them verbs. They discussed and found out the differences between the verbs and the non verbs, followed by the distinction, I made them do as I said. When they performed as I instructed, I wrote the phrases on the board and underlined the verbs.

While I was instructing the student to discuss and use English all the time, I was also doing it myself. Though I sometimes used some sentences in Nepali in the same grade but in the other sections, I used only English with these students. The first reason behind the use of only English with the students was I had seen students communicating in Nepali without any hesitation during their school hours, which they are not allowed, simply because they had heard their teachers communicating in Nepali with the other staff members. The next reason is all that Pinter (2006) says that in the young learners' classes the teachers often talk a lot in target language because they provide the learners with language input and this also helps the children to get used to the intonation patterns and the sounds of language (P. 47). This way I carried out the extra activities in the class for the student to work in their groups.

Evaluation

I implemented the action plan as it was planned though I had to make the changes as per the need of the class and their effectiveness in the students. I repeated the activities that they enjoyed; after all my intention was to see if working in the small group helps them to improve the way they communicate in English. I evaluated their communicative skills in a number of ways. The first thing was I used to go around the class when they made the discussion with their friends in the group. This way I was getting the actual chunk of the language they spoke. I have noted their conversations immediately on my

diary there. The next was I have collected their written samples that were produced in their groups. I also have the individual samples of their written texts of the students so that I could make comparison between the writings of the group and that of the individual student. There was another approach of evaluation as well; I had a set of discussion questions that I used during the action research process. I could draw out the opinion of the students from the discussion. They were responding without any hesitation. I can claim that they replied without hesitation because they would not only tell the positive things but also the negative ideas. Furthermore, the group exercise that they did for writing exercise also worked out as an evaluation. I could listen to them how they communicated when they had to make casual communication. Finally, I had also been comparing them with the students of the same grade who are taught by me, the same content but in a different way; not in the small groups.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter I discussed the action research process in detail. I have presented the details of the activities that I had carried out during the research. This section has been accompanied by the extracts of the materials I used in the class and also the samples that the students produced in the groups. I have also included the snaps of some of the activities.

CHAPTER V

OUTCOMES AND INTERPRETATION

In this chapter I deal with the outcomes of the action research and their interpretation. I have presented the interpretation of the journals of the students, the journals that I wrote myself, the classroom discussion and that of the field notes.

Interpreting Data

One of the important aspects of the world being defined as the global village is language and there is no doubt that English language is the common chain which has joined each and every corner of the world together. The increasing use of English from the technology to casual conversation has raised its importance even more.

Getting specific to our context, English has been an indicator of knowledge; the one who knows English is considered the known. Besides, it has been a common requirement for better job opportunity, abroad study and employment. Therefore, the parents tend to prefer the private schools where English is said to be taught well. Furthermore, English is taken for granted for the publicity of the institutions; 'English medium' is sought in all the institutions; where there is English medium they look for better English which includes better reading, better writing and better communication. I mentioned it in the first chapter as well which I would like to put down once again that the parents, now, have been aware of the fact that their children need to be able to use English properly, particularly communicate properly. One of the parents of my participants told me over the phone that she wants her son to communicate properly, her son knows English but it doesn't sound sweet. She wanted her son to communicate

sweetly. It was not only the obligation of the profession but also my own bitter experience that had led me towards experimenting something that would give out some concrete findings which I could implement in my context and also help the ones who are looking for similar resources.

The private schools, particularly, are said to use English language as the means of communication in the schools, however, the students seem to lack communicative skills. There might be numbers of reasons behind the bitter truth; despite the fact that the teachers speak in English, instruct the students in English, lecture in English and tell them to speak in English all the time, the students seem to lack better communication in English. My experience of being in the English classes from the primary school to university as a student and that of a teacher from primary to secondary school has lit me with an insight that we tell the students to do something but do not place in the situation where they actually have to be to learn. In other words, instruction may help in some ways to the students to learn, but unless they get opportunities to experience, their learning does not make much sense. So, the point I want to make here is that the students need to get used to with the content; in fact they need to get the opportunity to communicate if they are to learn communicative skills. One of the most important outcomes of the action research is also the same; the participants of the action research have caught up the idea of communication and also are aware of why they need to communicate in English even in the situation where the teacher is absent whereas the students in the other sections, whom I teach myself traditionally, do try to get the advantage of teacher's absence so, switch to their mother tongue soon.

Improvement in English Language in the Students

I would like to make a brief discussion on the influences that the action research has left upon me, my participants, the classroom teaching and of course, communication of the students.

To find what and how effective or ineffective the action research had been, I had been putting an extra effort every day. I had to learn the opinion of the participants on the activities they were doing, the effort they had been putting in the activities and most importantly, the effects of the activities in their communication, i.e. how they communicate. To find out these things and make a subjective judgment of their learning I had been following them everywhere in the school. I would listen to them in the class when they were engaged in the activities I assigned them, I would also listen to them in the assembly, I joined them in dining and sometimes I spent time in front of the bathroom hearing them. These instances helped me to encounter their actual communication. I also held a few rounds of discussion in the class to learn about their opinion. Besides, I went through the sample writings that they produced in their groups and the journals they wrote expressing themselves about the class and the activities.

These things, overall, have helped me to evaluate my classes and the effects of the activities upon the participant's communication.

Going through these various things, I feel that the activities I implemented for the students in the class have helped them to promote communication skills. I feel that the activities have been successful in making the progress of the students. The comments that I have got from the students have made me overjoyed and encouraged me to carry out the similar activities in the days to come with the other students as well. Something that I

found very interesting in the students is that they didn't find the class a bore. I was delighted to hear *"Ma'am what will we do in English class today?"* *"Ma'am, today also we will make story, okay?"* The another point to note I found in the class which made me feel that I am a success in the research is that the students who were silent in the classes previously have started to speak, both with the friend and the teacher in the class. Next thing that I would like to put here as a progressive point is awareness among the students of the importance of communicating in English; the students were found helping their friends to communicate in English when they had difficulty. Similarly, they were also informing me that their friends sometimes do not communicate in English and try to switch into Nepali.

When I came to the end of the action research which had been carried out for 12 weeks, I found that students greet their teachers. They had done it as the first activity, they do not use Nepali word with an '-ing' ending while speaking rather they ask for the appropriate word with the friends or their teacher. Their English sound more polite which often used to be the translation of Nepali previously.

Interpretation of the Learner's Journals

I chose the activities because I thought they would be helpful for the students to improve their communication skills. From whatever they did in the class and how they had been doing, I felt that I have done something successful. It is human nature that one obviously feels good about what one has done. However, I also believe that I need to take the response from the ones upon whom I had implemented the activities. Therefore, so as to learn how they felt about the various facets of the activities, I asked them to write a journal. As they were not used to, like us, in writing the journals, I had to develop some

questions and tell them to write for them as honestly as possible. They did according to the instruction which has been a concrete data for the action research. Here, I have presented the brief accounts of the data that I got from the students on the different aspects of the activities:

Learners Comment on Working in Small Groups.

All the 35 learners have mentioned that they liked working in the groups. In most of the journals I found them writing, *'I liked working in the groups because it is enjoyable and fun'*. One of the learners mentioned his reason behind liking working in the group as, *"I liked working in group because my friends helped me and I also helped my friends"*. Regarding working in the group, they seem to have no problem since in almost all the journals I found them writing *"it was very nice to work in the groups"*. One of the reasons behind, I think personally, is that the teachers, almost all the time, expect silence in the class in our context which is really a difficult task for the children to do. When they are placed in groups, they get opportunity to speak to their friends, therefore, they find in fun to be in the groups rather than alone at their desk. One of the students has mentioned the similar thought in his journal, *"I liked the group works because they were very exciting and working in group and doing group works is more exciting"*.

Learners Comment on the Activities.

Here again, all the journals had a sentence mentioned in them that all the activities were very interesting. Furthermore, I found that the students were quite critical about if the activities were helpful to them and in what ways rather than if they were merely fun. S1 wrote, *"I think all the activities we did were very helpful to improve our English language. They helped me by correcting my English language"*. And there were not only

the positive statements like this. S2 wrote, *“I think that some were little hard to do and most were enjoyable and easy. They were helpful to improve our English language”*. I was delighted to learn that the children in grade four are aware enough about what is good to them and what they need to do in the class while learning. S3 wrote something very striking, *“The activities I did were very fun full. They were helpful to improve my English language. They helped me in many ways like; they made my working skills improved. Now I am very happy”*. There was another student illustrating how the activities helped him. He wrote, *“By working in group our English will be improved. The group works help us to improve our spellings and speaking”*. Another student seemed very sensitive about all the four skills of language learning in the class, she wrote, *“I felt exciting about the activities. They are helpful to improve English language. They helped us in studies, reading, speaking English etc”*. Hence, I found that the learners enjoyed the activities they did in the class.

Learners’ Comment on their Teacher’s Role in the Class.

I had also been curious about what they thought about what their teacher was doing in the class. Therefore, I had asked them to mention this point as well. Like in the aforementioned aspects, here also they found that the help that their teacher was providing them was enough for them, all 35 journals mentioned *‘Tara Maam’s help was enough for me’*. I had also asked them to write something more if they want to mention. S6 wrote, *“Tara Maam’s help was enough when I was doing those activities. I want Tara Ma’am to teach us in the same way”*. There were other encouraging statements like this in other journals as well. Some of the students seemed to have been disturbed in the class by other students. I read a line in one of the journals where S7 wrote, *“Tara Maam’s help*

was enough for us when we were doing the activities. I want Tara Maam to be a little strict to undisciplined students and help us to do the activities". The other journal also read somewhat similar where the student wants me to be strict to the students, S8 wrote, *"I want Tara Maam to teach in better way by being happy and strict"*. This line has made me think so many things regarding my teaching; however, I am happy that they themselves feel that the teacher needs to be quite strict to them.

Learner's Comments for the Upcoming Classes.

All the students mentioned that they want me to carry the class on with the group works. They expressed that they learn better in the groups. Moreover, they enjoyed working in the groups. S9 wrote in the journal, *"I want to continue in a better group because I want to learn a lot"*. S10 wrote a very interesting line in the journal which is worth thinking by all the teachers, *"I want to continue the English classes by making fun activities and nice chapters, I want to continue in group, I want group work because I don't feel lonely"*. Honestly, I didn't start to work with these activities thinking that students may be feeling lonely in the class, however, this comment has made me realize that some students need extra attention so that they don't feel lonely, hence learn better. S11 who is usually quite in the class wrote, *"I want to continue the group work because we discuss and talk and write"*, this statement has motivated me a lot to be helpful, especially to her in the class. S12 wrote, *"I want to continue group work every day. I want group work because they help each other"*.

Interpretation of the Classroom Discussion

This was the next thing that I did to find out how they were feeling while the action research was in progress. I had been doing different things in the class involving

the students; therefore, I felt it quite wise to learn about how they were feeling. Most of the things have been mentioned in their journals; however, there is something more, more illustrative and more specific in the discussion which I am mentioning here.

Learners' Responses on Importance of Group Works according to their Experience.

When I asked them if they liked to work in the group, all the students raised their hands and shouted 'Yes'. However, the 'Yes' was not enough for me, I wanted to learn the reasons behind their 'Yes'. The reasons they gave were so scholarly that I was amazed myself if I was really speaking to the children of Grade four!

S1: Sharing and helping

S2: Working together

S3: No one fell in trouble, even if someone fall in trouble the group members helped

S4: We finish our work fast in group

S5: We learn we should not speak in Nepali

S6: We speak in English with our friends so we improve our English

The students thus, found out the benefits of working in the group. It was very nice to learn that the group works helped them to improve their English language as well, as they practice a lot in the group.

Learners' Comment on how the Group Works helped them.

On this title too there were different comments from the students. I found that the students were positive towards the activities they were doing in the class. When I asked them how the group works were helpful to them they made the following comments:

S1: It was the rule that everyone had to speak English

S2: We spoke in English so we made our English better

S3: We didn't mix Nepali language while speaking English

S4: When we didn't know how to tell something in English our friends helped us to tell

S5: When we were doing exercises of describing teacher; the other friends in the group helped me to complete it. They helped me with some confused words and how to tell them in English

S6: our friends' ideas helped us to complete the work

Their responses show that they are aware about how the activities have been helpful. They are also aware of the reasons behind.

Learners' Response on the Activities.

This was the mid- term discussion so that I know how I was going on with the activities and how the learners were feeling about the activities. The next reason was that I wanted to make the changes with the schedule of the activities or change the activities as well if they were not enjoying. So I asked them the activities they like the most.

S1: Every activity we have done

S2: Every activity

S3: Story writing, all stories

S4: Arranging the words in from the cards

S5: Poem writing and sharing (this activity was assembling the jumbled sentences of a poem)

S6: Story writing from the pictures

S7: Describing things

S8: Finding differences

S9: Describing our class

S6: Describing teachers

I should not have forgotten that I was working with the children. Yet, their responses show that the students like to speak a lot when they learn, therefore, their involvement should not be neglected while choosing the activities.

Learners' Responses on the Activities that they want to do in the Future Classes.

The action research was not then completed, so I thought it quite wise to get the ideas about what they wanted to do in the groups so that they enjoy the activities and also improve their communicative skills.

S1: We want to write our own stories

S2: Story writing from the clues

S3: Describing activities

S4: Finding differences

S5: Describing our favorite sport and things

S6: Describing the country and school also

With the help of the responses, I could make the further plans for the other classes. Their responses show that they want to learn interacting a lot in the class.

Outcomes of the Research

On the very first day when I asked them if they would like to work in groups there was a loud 'Yes'. I further asked them if they would enjoy working in the group I formed for them; again there was a loud 'Yes'. I again asked them if they really enjoy with the group members I chose for them, for, if they find themselves uncomfortable with their friends, it would be difficult to continue with the group works for my purpose. But this time as well they happily accepted. So, I started the group works for them in the groups.

All the nine groups were competing with each other while doing the tasks. Every group wanted to be the first one to complete the work. Therefore, I didn't face any problem getting used to with changed way of teaching. It was quite easy for me to manage the class as I had also appointed the group leader for the week. To not to let anyone down, I had promised them that every week I would be changing the group leaders. They had been so excited to be the group leaders that they would remind me a day earlier if I would change the group leaders next day. Some of them came to me in private and requested me to make them the leader next week.

I would like to mention the outcomes of my research in the following points:

Awareness among the Students about English Language Use

Though the students had been brought up in private school culture, which is in my context, where they are supposed to communicate in English all the time except with their Nepali subject teacher and in Nepali class, they lacked the basic skills of communication, for instance, greeting and thanking. It was given a positive direction that they have started to greet their teachers, which includes the ones who do not teach them as well. Perhaps, greeting and thanking may not mean so much, and this might not be a remarkable achievement for everyone, but I find it a great achievement, for, if we are to communicate well, we need to have some basic communicative skills and there is no doubt that basic communicative skills include greeting and thanking.

The students have been aware of the fact that if they are to learn to communicate in English well, they need to practise communicating in English. They have started to make their friends aware that they need to communicate in English all the time. They shared that the more they speak in English the more they learn.

Use of English Language

The students use English language to communicate all the time in the school as per the rule.

The students do not use the Nepali words ending with an ‘-ing’ if they do not know the actual English equivalent, rather they ask for help with their friends or the teacher around.

Students Motivation towards Communication and Activities

The students who spoke very less with the friends and remained passive in the class, during the discussion, have started to contribute in the group discussion. I heard them putting forward their ideas during the discussion.

Similarly, the students get very interested to work if they are directly involved in the preparation of the activities. I found them very active in preparing materials and displaying them. They are found even more excited when they use their personal things for the classroom purpose.

Raised Confidence in Students

The students seem to be more confident when they speak in the class. Their presentation is better now. The students, who used to hesitate to come in front of the class to tell their answer, now raise their hands to ask for the permission to make the presentation.

Improved Fluency during Communication

The fluency of their speech is considerably better after the action plan was implemented. Similarly, the structure of the sentences they speak sound better than what they used to do in the past. It is still not perfect, however.

Improvement in Writing Skills

The students, in group, produce longer text. The students, who used to bite their tongue to write 100 words, are not scared of writing 200 words in group. Their texts are better organized. There are fewer mistakes. And, they are longer and tight with the content.

Cooperation among the Students

Group works are very effective in making the correction of the students. The bright members of the group help the ones who need support. This way the total reliance on their teacher is reduced. The students are found helping the students of the other groups as well once they finish within their group.

Additional Effort on the Part of the Teacher

The classroom, however, looks quite messy. It is, sometimes, very difficult to manage the classroom. It sounds noisy as well. In addition to this, the students were disturbing the others roaming around the class from one group to the others. Therefore, the teacher needs to be always prepared with the materials for the class. If the materials are not prepared, the groups are only the source of disturbance.

Similarly, it is quite costly to make the materials for all the groups for each class. In addition, preparing materials for the communication is not an easy task. Therefore, it is quite difficult to carry on with the activities frequently if the work load is heavier; the first thing is the teacher needs extra time for preparation and the next thing is that the teacher may feel irritated by the noise the students make in the class while working in their groups.

When I disclosed the proposal, one of my tutors told me that action research is ‘a problem and trying out a possible solution’. He further mentioned that I had a series of different activities to implement in the class, so, a bit perplexed; he asked me what the commonality was there in the activities I had chosen. Well, I mentioned that they all are to be carried out in small group. Then, he had allowed me to get on with the action research.

Of course, I carried out everything in the small groups to improve communication skills of the students. The outcomes of the action research have also shown that group works help in improving communication skills of the learners. This is something that Bell (1998) also believes; he states that the most important factor about group work is that it promotes learners-learners interaction (p. 4). When the learners have ample opportunities to interact with one another the possibility to improve language also rises, in fact, the action research shows that the students exhibit the rise in their communicative skills when they communicate. I would like to mention Martine (nd), in this regard, where she points out four major advantages of small group works and pair works; small group works and pair increase students’ talking time, small group works and pair work create a more secure and positive classroom atmosphere, small group work and pair work are fun and small group works and pair works can mimic real English conversation (p. 35,36). I feel that one of these advantages had a very good effect upon the participants of the action research that they started to express themselves. They seem to have found the group environment secure for them to boost up their communication skills, which I regard as one of the most important achievements of the action research.

I was very happy to listen to one of the girls in the class who came running to me to ask what I was going to assign them to do in the class when it was, still, 45 more minutes left for the English class. I was amazed as she didn't speak in the class in the earlier days. Though her parents were thoughtful about it and had talked to me personally a few times that their daughter didn't speak and I had spoken to her to participate and interact in the class, she hadn't shown much interest. But after about a month time the change in the student made me feel that I got to go through literature; perhaps, there are some psychological effects as well. While surfing, I found Littlewood (2003) writing about the psychological factors in the classroom, he writes that it is not uncommon to find the inhibition and anxiety in the learners remain constantly aware of their own state of ignorance before a teacher who possesses all relevant knowledge, they are expected to speak or act only in response to immediate stimuli or instructions from the teacher and whenever they say or do is scrutinized in detail, with every shortcoming being made a focus for comment (p. 93). As far as I am concerned with the students of the type, I found it quite contextual to relate this piece of literature to their state of learning. In my context, it is true that they are aware of their ignorance, it is true that they are expected to speak only when the teacher asks them to speak otherwise they are to be punished for making noise in the class, and it is also true that whenever they say something or do something, the shortcomings are openly focused and commented in the class which might have made them silent. But once she has been in the group, I found that she found a secure atmosphere to express herself as Martine (nd) writes.

I would like to continue with Littlewood (2003) as I found the ideas relevant to my outcomes. He further mentions that the development of communicative skills can take

place if the learners have motivation and opportunity to express their own identity and to relate with the people around them. It, therefore, requires a learning atmosphere which gives them sense of security and value as individual (p. 93). Here, it seems that activities are for communicative skills and communicative skills to carry out the activities, however, in my context, the learners have improved their communicative skills through the activities where they found it secure to practise communicating.

I have mentioned that the students came up with longer text when they were doing the activities specially designed for the action research purpose. My straight understanding behind the better written text is the collection of the ideas in the group work. I found a similar literature entitled 'Group work' where the reasons for using group works are mentioned as:

- the output of the group is more than the sum of individual effort
- group effort at problem solving are more effective than individual efforts
- more ideas are generated
- interpersonal and group working skills are developed
- collaboration leads to effective performance
- knowledge and learning are shared
- it develops workplace skills (p. 1)

These points appear to be the advantages of group works and might not look quite contextual to my context; however, they are the supporting hands behind the success that I have got in my action research. In fact, these reasons have the overall effect in improving communicative skills of the students, both spoken and written.

I would like to mention some benefits that I found in the next article entitled ‘Benefits of group’:

- Students are encouraged to become active rather than passive learners by developing collaborative, cooperative skills and lifelong learning skills.
- It encourages the development of critical thinking.
- It enhances social skills and interactions.
- Quiet students have an opportunity to speak and be heard in small groups thus overcoming the anonymity and passivity associated with large groups.
- It makes the unit of study challenging, interesting, motivating, engaging and fun (for everyone) (p.1).

This list had some more points but I chose the ones that are contextual in my context only. The ideas also support the outcomes of the action research I carried out that the group works assist in improving interactions and motivating the learners. Now I understood that one of the reasons behind the students liking the monotonous grammar exercises. I had found them enjoying the exercises like they did the stories when I asked them to work in the groups. Similarly, this piece of literature has provided the support behind the outcome that some quiet learners have begun to speak in the class.

The outcome that I got from the use of the stories in the class had always stroked me. I chose the stories because I knew that students like stories. In addition to this, Willis and Willis (2012) have enriched my understanding through their words where they write, “Good story telling contributes to everyone’s enjoyment and generally enhances our social experiences. The same is true in the classroom” (p. 105). I had used the pictures to carry out the activities related to the stories, however, they further mention that anything

like anecdote, experiences or stories help in a great deal. Perhaps, the stories have been a good driving source for the students to improve their communicative skills.

I would like to add something here about writing and improved communication skill of the students. Kirsch (2008) writes, “Writing is a complex activity as learners need to carry out a range of different tasks simultaneously such as: organizing ideas, thinking about spelling and grammar, choosing the right words, ensuring coherence and cohesion and considering the perspectives of the audience” (p. 127). This statement has come so true to me that at least, I am convinced that group activities are helpful for improvement of both spoken and written communication. The

task they were assigned was to write which had be done after discussion only, this way they were practising both writing and communicating.

While I was going through this piece of literature, I was listening one of the conversations that the students were making when they were making up a story in their group, which I had noted down as it was said.

Regarding communicative writing, Kirsch further states, “The aim of communicative writing is to express personal thoughts. Pupils can be asked to

write stories, poems or reports. The task of the teacher is to help children express ideas coherently and accurately’ (p. 128). Something interesting about the class was that as, Kirsch (2008) wrote in the aforementioned statement, the students expressed themselves

S1: Write ‘Once upon a time’ first.

S2: Let’s not write ‘Once upon a time’.

S3: What to write then?

S2: We will write is differently.

S3: We can write , ‘In a garden, there was a seed of a rose’, no?

S2: Yes, yes.

S3: Ma’am, can we write a long story also?

as clearly as possible but they were doing on their own in their groups. Of course, as a teacher I was there to help but, very often they were helping themselves in the group.

All the activities I chose for the action research aimed at improving communication skills of the students, however, they were all based on the tasks. While designing the activities and implementing the designs in the class upon the students, I was following the steps that Willis and Willis (1996) proposed:

- Pre- task: the teachers introduces the learners to the task and may at this point highlight useful vocabulary and structures
- Task: learners complete the task alone, in pairs or groups
- Planning” learners plan a short oral and written report to tell their classmates how they progressed
- Report: learner report to the class
- Analysis: the teacher analyses the linguistic productions and highlights those aspects that need to be practiced
- Practice: learners practice aspects of the language where the teacher has noticed gaps
- Feedback: the teacher gives feedback on the content, language and procedures used to complete the task (as cited by Kirsch, 2008, p. 62)

The students, thus, were doing the tasks in the groups, they were communicating in order to accomplish the tasks. They were, this way doing two things at a time, doing the task and practising the language.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter I have presented the outcomes of the action research I carried out. I have also interpreted the outcomes of the research. In addition, I have made the individual interpretation under different subtitles of the journals of the students. Besides, I have also interpreted the journals I wrote myself, the comments from the classroom discussion and that of the field notes.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION AND CLASSROOM IMPLICATIONS

In this chapter I present a brief summary of the outcomes and the conclusion of the study. I also mention the classroom implications of the action research. At last, I explicitly, present my reflection of all the abstract thoughts and the concrete experience on carrying out the research.

Summary of outcomes

The outcomes and the discussion in chapter five reflect the positive outcome of the action research. Though the outcomes have been discussed in detail in the fifth chapter, I would like to mention a brief summary of the action research in this section as well.

1. The students are now aware about why they ought to communicate in English and how they need to do.
2. The students use English to communicate with their teachers and the friends.
3. The students participate actively in the activities. They put their effort to meet the requirements of the activity.
4. The students are confident while communicating in English. Even the quiet ones speak without so much of hesitation.
5. The fluency of language while communicating is comparatively better now.
6. They write better text when they work in groups and after the discussion with the group members. They are more cooperative with their friends.

7. The language teachers need to have extra preparation for the activities and the materials before every class. Similarly, the teacher needs to be very active during the class in order to make sure that the students have not missed the track.

Conclusion

Communicating in a foreign language is, obviously, not an easy task, and it is even more difficult for children to do so. It would not be so difficult, perhaps, if they could come in contact with the language outside the school. In other instances, they use Nepali, so imposing them the rule that they have to use English all the time at school, tends to put them in trouble. Therefore, they need some special provision if they are to improve their skill.

If the young learners are provided with opportunity to get exposed to the language and practise the language, they are able to refine their language skills. Making the students interact in the groups not merely helps the students providing with the practice, it also makes them aware of the significances of communicating in the target language. Once they are aware of the reasons behind, they do not need to be compelled to use the language all the time by the teacher, rather, they do it themselves with their teachers and the friends. The continuous practice, thus, refines their language in terms of both structure and pace. The good communicators are found to have raised confidence level in comparison to the poor communicator. However, to have improved communicative skills, the young learners need enough time and resources to create the need to communicate.

During the research, I tried to practise the same things. I set the students in small groups of four. Every day I went into the class with some activities to do. Some of the

activities were designed for communicative purpose only. There were some other activities where I tried to go along with the regular classes and the syllabus. The similarity between these activities was that in all the activities the learners had to speak in the groups with their friends. The activities were repeated in the class since they were very interested to carry on with the exercises.

The activities they are given matters a lot in the amount of practice they make. The more interesting activity they find, the more they practise. They do not get involved in the unnecessary talks. They come up with the other similar ideas and the other ways of doing the same thing than relying upon the instructions the teacher gives only.

I have come to know that if they students get aware about why they are doing something and are motivated towards the activities, they improve their ways of doing. For this, the teacher always needs to be prepared with the activities and the materials. It is nothing like getting into the class with anything to do thinking that they are little kinds and they don't know what we are doing. In fact, they know what is being done to them. Their comments have made me refine the way I present myself in the class. The children are not only the takers but very innocent evaluators as well. They feel the reality behind the words and they are wise as well to find out what is going around.

Classroom Implications

I carried out the action research for 12 weeks. In the three months time I have found few things that I find practicable in the classrooms situation if it is about improving the communicative skills of the learners through group works. These are applicable in the classroom situation like the one I had been going through; large class, multi abilities students who can speak some English, limited time bound and quite heavy workload.

1. The students learn better if they are aware about why they are learning the particular content. If the reasons are drawn from the students themselves, it is easier to manage them in the class and the outcomes of the activities are more effective. The students had set the rules themselves for the English classes. Therefore, they were acting as per the rules they made in the beginning of the research. The language teachers, thus, need to make the students aware of the reasons behind learning something, the clearer the reasons, the easier to motivate the learners.
2. If the students are to learn something they need to be into the learning situation. They need to practise language. Unless they practise they do not learn effectively. The learners communicate better than they used to do in the earlier days. Similarly, they don't mix up the languages to make the meaning, instead they ask for help with the other friends and the teacher. The language teachers need to provide the students with the opportunities to make practice.
3. Providing the drive to the students is better than providing the readymade chunk of language. In other words, giving the students tasks to make them use language is better than giving them a readymade piece of language to repeat and practise. They were doing the works in the groups. To work together, they needed to communicate. Increased communication helped them to refine the way they had been communicating in English. Therefore, the language teachers need to create a reason, this reason makes them work accordingly.
4. Group works are very helpful in developing all the skills of language if they are well planned. If the activities are not set step wise, they disturb the class. The

students would do the activities without disturbing the friends; however, sometimes they seemed so disturbing that their friends themselves would complain about them for the disturbance caused. It happened in the days when they didn't have a tight series of activities in the class. So the language teachers need to prepare the plans well before implementing them in the students to get the maximum benefit.

5. Including the students made materials and their personal materials interests them so much towards learning. They seem more interested to work with their materials than the usually used ones. 'Picture story' has helped a lot to make the research a success. Besides, 'Favorite object' was liked by the students a lot that they asked me again and again to hold the activity in the class. Having the students materials used in the class is both fun and easy for the language teachers to carry on with learning activities.
6. Pictures are good means to involve the students into talk. It is easier to direct the students towards the activities if the pictures are displayed to them. The day I displayed the pictures; they began the class with extra enthusiasm. They wanted me to paste the posters in the class and asked me to teach them to draw the similar pictures to them as well. The language teachers of the young learners, so, need to make maximum use of the posters in the class.
7. The learners love playing in group. Arranging games in small groups create a lot of opportunities for the students to practise communicating in the target language. The learners showed it in their performance in the class. The teachers, need to

involve them in games in the class to break the monotony of the class and make their learning effective.

8. Grammar exercises can be made interesting putting the students in the groups. The revision of 'noun', 'introduction to verbs', 'exercises on pronouns', 'the articles', 'forms of the verbs' were taught better in the groups than in individual.
9. Materials are the heart of involving students into communication in group. It is difficult to involve the young learners specially to involve in meaningful activities without concrete materials. Thus, it is always better to go into the class with the materials rather than going there to preach merely.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter I have written the conclusion of the action research. I have also illustrated the classroom implications that I have explored through the research. Finally, I have concluded the chapter with my reflection on carrying out the research.

RECOLLECTIONS

It was a morning of the last week of August, 2011; the sun had perhaps, just risen, however it was not bright outside, the morning I was awoken by the conversation that was going on just beside my room. I heard that I should not have chosen Kathmandu University while they were offering scholarship in the local college. I also heard that I was too arrogant to listen to other hence, there was no use talking to me. I felt feeble the whole day; the words were ringing louder in my ears. The same evening, when I came back from work I heard that I am to be stopped any way from leaving home the next day. All the fervor that I had in my heart and mind had withered, almost dead in the morning and the night went sleepless and dreamless. I still feel how heavy heart I had when I left home the next morning for the battle alone.

But time flew like an arrow, I can't put every bit of my feelings I had in this two years study in this short piece of reflection, I feel I can write an epic of this period of time. Now the years had ended, I had finished with my studies. The only left was my dissertation. Perhaps, so, I was really excited about carrying out the action research. This was the final line left that I was to cross in order to win the singly started battle of Post Graduate study..... However, the excitement was not the sole energy that was pushing me up for the accomplishment; I had some special feelings; fear and challenge which were exceeding the excitement. Had I had no fear and the challenge, I believe, I would have never gone doing the research and kept myself so concentrated on the research merely with the excitement. Perhaps, it was the same challenge that kept me firm in all the difficulties; perhaps, it was the same challenge that kept me dragging forward when I fell down with disappointments and hopelessness. In fact, the negative hormones have

kept me alive in all the situations otherwise, I don't know how many months it would have already been that Tara had been a real star. These were the same things that kept me going during the action research. In fact, all 12 weeks passed in fear.

Er...r, the story goes back to the very beginning of the fourth semester. We had to make changes with our readymade proposal. The change had kept me into such a trouble that I could not decide myself about what to do. Truly speaking, I had a doubt if I could really carry out the dissertation in the limited period of time. Most of how I was feeling and the reason behind the thought was the job. I could neither leave the job, nor go ahead easily with the job by my side, for; it was a difficult piece for me to do. And it was the same job that made me decide that I got to work with action research. I was quite disappointed in the beginning that I was going to do an action research once again whereas the friends were going to have a novel experience. However, the findings of the previous action research had really encouraged me in those desperate days.

I had thought I could start researching as soon as I had my proposal defended. But after the defense as well I had to spend a considerable period of time in preparing the research tools. I was ready with ten research tools that Tuesday when I had gone to my tutor to ask if they were okay.

I remember how I had stammered on the very first day of the research when I had to go to the superintendents' office to ask for permission to video record the class. I remember how excited I was to see the students enthusiastic about working in the groups. I remember how restless I was to make the materials for the next class once a class was over. I remember how scared I was when the members of the schools administration sometimes saw me working with those personal stuffs. I remember how busy I was in the

class when the students were doing their tasks and I was trying to catch their language and the products in my words in my diary. I remember how delighted I was when the students came to ask about the task for the class, when the quiet ones started to hover around me in the class, around the bathroom, in the dining hall. I remember how my heart had danced when I heard the students telling the words to their friends that I told them in the class. Of course, I remember how desperate I was to see the students roaming around the class creating a mess. I remember; how tired I was running from a corner to the next throughout the class to see how they were working. I remember how difficult I had felt to cut off my sleeping hours sitting in front of the computer. And I also remember how bitter I felt when the friends and the relative made satire for not being with them and telling them that I got to study. Everything is so vibrant in my heart and the memories that I feel I am never going to forget them.

Going to the class with an extra piece of activity was not at all easy for me. The class was already very difficult to control hence, I had been having trouble in accomplishing the predefined syllabus. The action research had been the additional burden for me. Similarly, preparing the tools for every class and the materials to use them also required a considerable effort from me. Similarly, writing down the notes immediately in the class as the record of the class and journals after the class had kept me tensed all the days. There were a number of days I escaped my lunch hour so that I could prepare for the action research. The nights went sleepless. Sometimes, I feel the throb in my head that I used to feel when I had headache in those days. Yet, I feel this piece of project so sweet.

In the beginning I thought that I was going for the research because I have learnt the things. But this research has made me feel that I have just started to learn. Mr. Gnawali told us in the class a few months ago that we will feel like starting the study again once we finish our studies here. Now I feel the same. I had difficulty in finding what to do in the earlier days for the research, but now I have seen many possible angles for researching.

In fact, these two years of the study have entrenched a different strength in me. The research alone has made me quite strong to face helplessness and hopelessness, I have learnt to face the insults, I have learnt to encounter the loss, and I have also learnt to be happy. The study was difficult so it was special; the study was special so it was difficult.....

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APPENDIX 1

Weekly Gantt chart

Week 1	1	2	3	4	5
Problem identification					
Observation 1					
Observation 2					
Discussion					
Planning					

Week 2	1	2	3	4	5
Meeting and greeting					
Scrambled sentences					
Pronouns (a game)					
Pronouns (replacing exercise)					
Pronouns (group exercises)					

Week 3	1	2	3	4	5
Picture story 1					
Picture story 2					
Discovering differences 1					
Discovering differences 2					
Discovering pictures 3					

Week 4	1	2	3	4	5
Describing places					
Describing things 1					
Describing things 2					
Describing things 3					
Evaluation 1					

Week 5	1	2	3	4	5
Scrambled sentences					
Picture story 3					
Jumbled words 1 (Introducing sentences)					
Jumbled words 2 (Types of sentences)					
Jumbled words 3 (Types of sentences)					

Week 6	1	2	3	4	5
Group exercise 1					
Group exercises 2					
Group exercises 3					
Telling story 1					
Telling story 2					

Week 7	1	2	3	4	5
Discussion 2					
Picture story 4					
Picture story 5					
Picture story 6					
Picture story 7					

Week 8	1	2	3	4	5
Favorite object 1					
Favorite object 2					
Favorite object 3					
Favorite object 4					
Evaluation 2					

Week 9	1	2	3	4	5
Group discussion (articles)					
Group discussion (articles 'a/'an')					
Group discussion (articles 'the')					
Group exercise 1					
Group exercise 2					

Week 10	1	2	3	4	5
Group exercise 3					
Telling a story					
Scrambled sentences (the story)					
Picture story 8					
Describing person					

Week 11	1	2	3	4	5
Verbs (TPR)					
Comparing texts (verbs)					
Collecting verbs					
Group discussion (verbs)					
Group discussion					

Week 12	1	2	3	4	5
Group exercise					
Telling a story					
Group exercise					
Discussion 3					
Closing					

APENDIX 2

Activity 1

Name of the activity: Meeting and greeting

Level: primary

Language functions: greeting

Language skills: speaking, listening

Organization: group

Time: 30 minutes

Materials/ preparation: role cards

Procedure

- Ask them if they greet their teachers every morning. If they do not, tell them why they need to do so.
- Write an example of greeting; between a teacher and student, on the board.
- Call one of the students and ask him/her to speak the student's part. Speak the teacher's part yourself.
- Demonstrate it in class.
- Provide them the role cards. Ask them to practise greeting in their group. Tell them to practise in pair and let other members practise. When a pair in the group practices, tell the other members to listen to them carefully and make the comments if necessary.
- Call a pair from each group to come in front of the class and present their demonstration for the class.

- Add the comments if it is necessary. Tell them to greet their parents, friends and teachers every morning.

Variation

- This activity can be practised in pair only.

Activity 2

Name of the activity: Favorite object

Level: primary

Language functions: explaining

Language skills: speaking, listening

Organization: group

Time: 30 minutes

Materials/ preparation: objects (students bring from their home)

Procedure

- Set the students in the groups of four.
- Tell them to get ready with the objects they have brought from their home. (The students were told to bring the things for the class the previous day in advance).
- Ask the students to say something about the object to their friends: their explanation includes:
 - What the object is?
 - Description of the object: name, color, size, shape, other features it has etc
 - Who brought it for them?
 - From where?
 - In which occasion?
 - What is the best about the object?
- Tell the other group members to listen to their friends and tell about their objects to their friends in their turn.

- Ask each group to send the one with the best description to share with the class in front of the class.

Variation

Students can be asked to write their object in advance at home and asked to share in the class. The other students listen to them and comment on the description.

Activity 3

Name of the activity: Develop a story

Level: primary

Language functions: explaining, agreeing, disagreeing

Language skills: speaking, listening, reading, writing

Organization: group discussion

Time: 30 minutes

Materials/ preparation: copies of pictures in series

Procedure

- Write 'Develop a story' on the board and ask them if they have ever written a story on their own.
- Ask one of the students to share the story in the class.
- Ask them if they can make up a story with the help of pictures.
- Tell them the story that you want them to make themselves with the help of the pictures.
- Tell the students to discuss in their small group and write description. Tell them that all of the group members have to write.
- Distribute the pictures to the students.
- Let them discuss in their group and develop a story.
- Let each of the group to present the story they have developed in their group in the class.
- Summarize their ideas and make up the story for them.
- Tell the students to write the story at the end of the class.

Variations

- Divide the students in pair and let them work with the activity in pairs with the strips rather than with the pictures.
- Give them the paper with jumbled pictures, tell them to order the picture and make up a story in group.

The strips they use in the class are:

Three lazy sons

Once an old man lived in a village with three of his sons.

The sons were very lazy. They didn't help him in his farm.

One day the old man fell ill.

He knew he would die soon.

So, he thought of teaching them a lesson.

*He called all three sons and told them that he had buried some boxes of gold in
the field.*

He asked them to dig the field and find them out.

*Finally, they knew that their father was right; they realized that their father
wanted to teach them a lesson. Then they were never lazy.*

Activity 4

Name of the activity: Describe your class

Level: primary

Language functions: explaining

Language skills: speaking, listening, writing

Organization: group

Time: 30 minutes

Materials/ preparation: cards with the points to be included in their description

Procedure

- Set students in groups of four.
- Tell them to get ready to make discussion on their classroom.
- Ask the students to tell to include the following points in their description:
 - Size
 - Location, on which floor
 - The direction the door is in
 - No. of windows
 - No. of tables and chairs
 - The special things that are there in the class
 - What do you personally think about the classroom
 - What is the best about your classroom
- Tell them to discuss about these points in their group and note it down in the notebooks.

- Ask each group to present their description in class.

Variation

Students can be asked to write about their room at home and share in the class. The other students listen to them and comment on the description.

Activity 5

Name of the activity: Scrambled sentences

Level: primary

Language functions: discussing

Language skills: speaking, listening, writing

Organization: group

Time: 30 minutes

Materials/ preparation: flash cards with the Jumbled words

Procedure

- Set students in groups of four.
- Tell them to get ready to make discussion for sentence formation.
- Ask the students to discuss in the group to arrange the words into sentences.
- Tell them to write the sentence they formed (one of the group members can do that).
- Ask one of the members from each group to read out the sentence for the class.
- Help them to form the sentence if necessary.

Variation

They can be asked to make as many sentences as possible from the word cards and share them with their friends.

Activity 6

Name of the activity: Types of sentences

Level: primary

Language functions: stating, agreeing, disagreeing

Language skills: speaking, listening, reading, writing

Organization: group discussion

Time: 30 minutes

Materials/ preparation: three chart papers with three different types of sentences (the examples).

Procedure

- Set the students in the group of four.
- Display the chart papers with the examples and the types of sentences on the board.
- Tell them to read the examples carefully.
- Ask them to discuss in groups to find out any two features of the types of sentences and write them down on a piece of paper.
- Ask of the student from each group to share the features they have found out from their discussion.

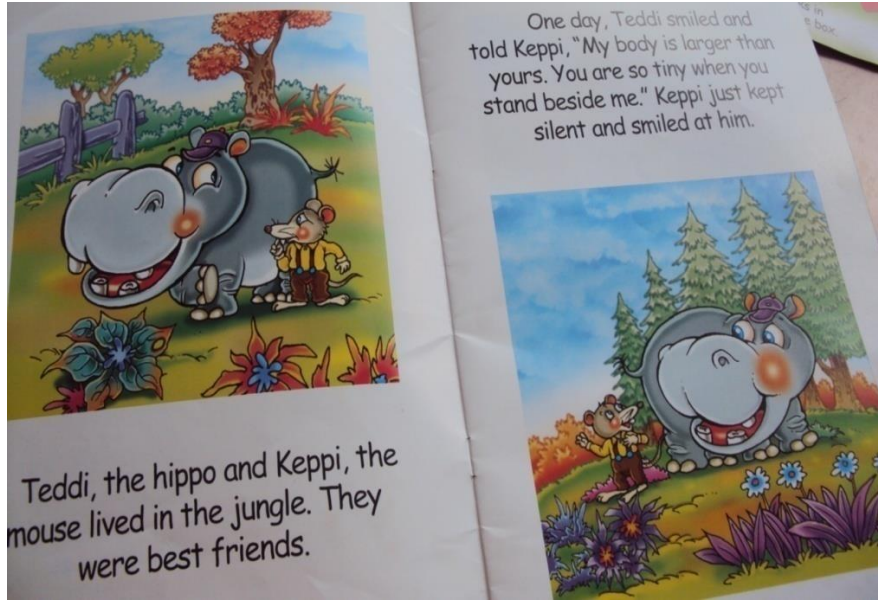
Variation

Prepare scrambled sentences. Give different types of sentences to different groups. Ask them to arrange the scrambles into the sentences and name its type.

APPENDIX 3

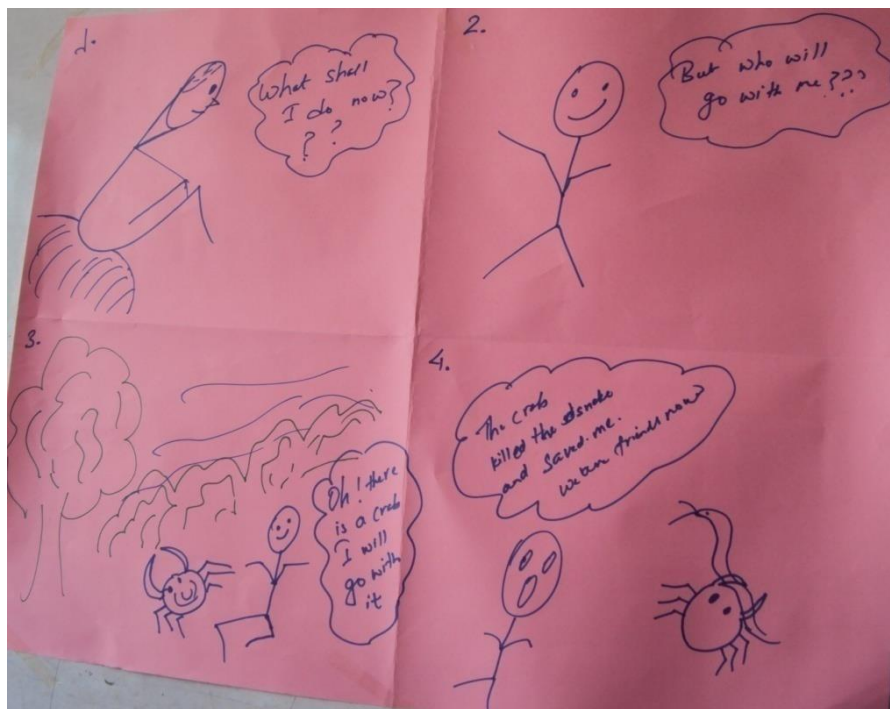
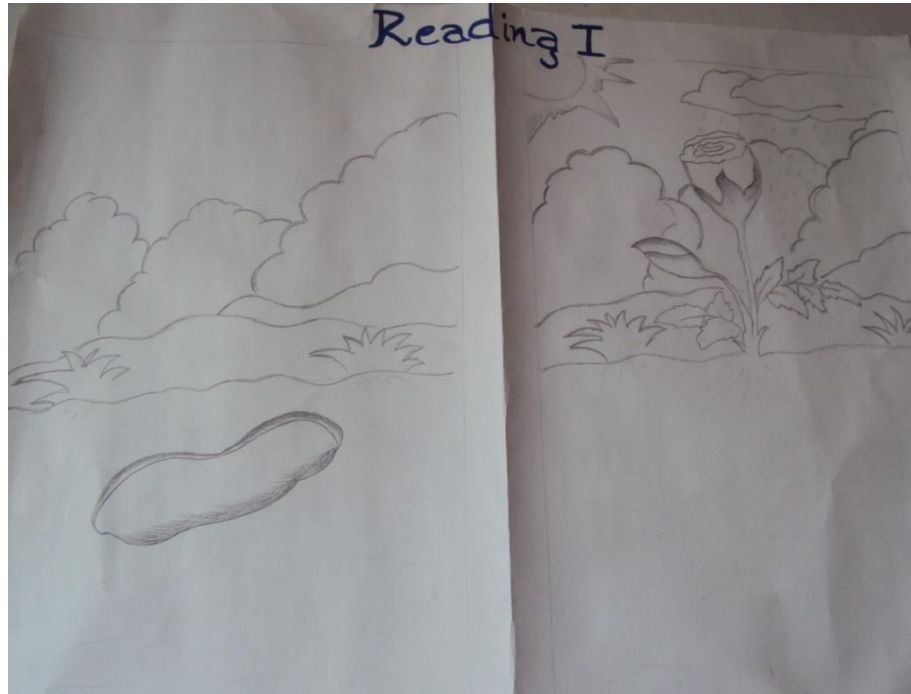
Pictures for Discovering Differences





APPENDIX 2

Posters for developing stories



APPENDIX 4

Pictures for stories





APPENDIX 5

Questions for Classroom Discussion (before action research)

1. Do you like English?
2. What do you like in English; listening, speaking, reading and writing?
3. Which language do you use when you have to talk to your teacher?
4. Which language do you use in class when you have to talk to your friends (during the class)?
5. Which language does your teachers while teaching you?
6. Which language do you use to communicate with your friends when teachers are not around?
7. How are you taught English? Does your teacher tell you do something (except exercises) in your class or tell everything and you listen to them?
8. Do you like to work in group with your friends?
9. Will you do the activities if I ask you to do in group?

Questions for discussion (During and After the Research)

1. How do you feel when you work in group? Do you like working in group?
2. What is interesting about working in group?
3. Do you think it helped you in speaking English?
4. How did it help?
5. Did it help you to complete your work? (With some clues)
6. How often do you use nepali words with ‘-ing’ forms?
7. Why do you use ‘-ing’ nepali words when you speak English?
8. Which activity was the most interesting one?
9. What do you want to do in group in the class now? Which activities?