

**PROFICIENCY IN THE USE OF ARTICLES OF GRADE
TEN DISTINCTION SCORERS**

**A Thesis Submitted to the Department of English Education
In Partial Fulfilment for the Master of Education in English**

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare to the best of my knowledge that this thesis is original. No part of it was earlier submitted for the candidature of research degree to any university.

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ABSTRACT

The researcher himself as a second language learner of English has been feeling difficulty in grasping English article system since his schooling till date. Similarly, as a secondary English teacher, he often noticed his students, high scorers and low scorers alike in the overall proficiency in English, using articles haphazardly. In this connection the present research entitled 'Proficiency in the Use of Articles of Grade Ten Distinction Scorers' was carried out with the objectives to finding out the proficiency in the use of articles of grade ten distinction scorers of private and public schools of Chitwan district and compare and correlate their article proficiency scores with their overall proficiency scores in English of their one of the previous terminal examinations. For this research, the data obtained from both primary and secondary sources were studied and interpreted. Thirty grade ten distinction scorers in the overall proficiency in English were selected using both non-random quota sampling and judgmental sampling methods and administered the hundred-mark objective test to elicit the data. The collected data were studied applying simple statistical tools and interpreted descriptively after editing and codification. The study showed the sampled students were not as proficient in the use of articles as they were in the overall proficiency in English. The average score of overall proficiency in English was found 85.03 while it was only 70.43 in the use of articles. Similarly, only 5 students, i.e. 16.66 percent out of 30 distinction scorers in the overall proficiency in English were found scoring with distinction in the use of Articles. 21 number of students, i.e. 70% of the sample population scored first division in the use of articles. And four students, i.e., 13.33 % out of 30 sample sizes were found scoring second division in the use of articles. The spread of scores, i.e. standard deviation of the article scores was found 9.07 while it was 3.86 of the overall scores in English.

The correlation between overall English scores and the scores in the use of articles was found 0.46.

The research study has been organized on five chapters. The first chapter comprises of background information, statement of the problems, objectives, etc. The second chapter includes the literature review. Similarly, research methodology, study design, data analysis and interpretation procedures, etc. are discussed in the third chapter. The penultimate chapter includes analysis of data and interpretation of the result and summary. In the last chapter, conclusion and recommendations are presented.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

AP	: Article Proficiency
APS	: Article Proficiency Scores
AS	: Article Scores
B. Ed	: Bachelors of Education
CLT	: Communicative Language Teaching
CN	: Countable Noun
DEO	: District Education Office
EFL	: English as Foreign Language
ELT	: English Language Teaching
ESL	: English as Second Language
F	: First
GU	: Generic Use
L2	: Second Language
LAD	: Language Acquisition Device
M. Ed	: Masters of Education
MI	: Multiple Intelligence
MN	: Mass Noun
NELTA	: Nepal English Language Teachers' Association
NES	: National Educational System
NNEPC	: Nepal National Education Planning Commission
OEP	: Overall English Proficiency
OEPS	: Overall English Proficiency Scores
OPE/OES	: Overall Proficiency in English/Overall English Scores
PUOA	: Proficiency in the Use of Articles
Regd.	: Registered

S	: Second
SD	: Standard Deviation
SL	: Second Language
SLA	: Second Language Acquisition
T	: Third
TESOL	: Teaching of English to Speakers of Other Languages
TU	: Tribhuban University
UG	: Universal Grammar
σ	: Standard Deviation(SD)
\times	: Disapproval or No consent
Φ	: Null/ Zero
\surd	: Tick or Approval

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with general background of English language teaching, statement of the problem, objectives, research question, significance, delimitations of the study and operational definition of the technical terms.

1.1 General Background

Language is one of the means of human communication. It is specific to human, which Vygotsky terms it as 'microgenesis' in his theory of 'social constructivism' of language learning. Since English is one of the languages of the world, it cannot be an exception to the aforementioned fact. For language is specific to human, we can learn language more or less to perform different functions.

English is a popular world language. It is a global language (Crystal, 1997). Still it occupies the dominant position in the world. Almost all the languages of the world have been more or less influenced by it. It is one of the languages used in the UNO, one of the reputed and recognized world organizations. A vast stretch of knowledge and technology is explored via it. It works as a bridge to unlock the world knowledge and technology. There is an overwhelming craze among young learners all over the world to learn English. English is accelerating modernization in the context of developing countries like Nepal, Bhutan, Srilanka, etc.

English is a lingua-franca. It serves as a language of connection among the other languages of the world. Because of the explosion of knowledge of the world, its importance is increasing day by day. According to Kacharu (1983, pp. 40-42), non-native varieties of language has got four basic purposes. They are: learning language for gaining knowledge of different subjects Mathematics, Science, History, etc.; interpersonal function, i.e. for keeping relationship among people in the society; regulative function ,i.e. the use of language to regulate conduct, for example, the use of English in the legal system and administration. And the

innovative function of language refers to the use of language in various literary genres.

Keeping the importance of English into view, the present school curriculum of Nepal has laid much emphasis on English: from pre-primary to secondary level, English is learnt as a compulsory subject of hundred marks in each grade.

Language is a system of systems. Every language comprises of many systems. A system can be the result of many sub-systems. So, a language in general, has its phonological system, morphological system, grammatical system, semantic system, pragmatic system and many other systems. So, learning or acquiring language involves being able to acquire/learn these systems and perform to achieve different goals of language.

The assumption of language learning has been changing from long ago being influenced by different movements such as traditional Grammar Translation Approach, Structural Approach, Functional Approach, and Communicative Approach and so on. Previously, accuracy of language such as proper use of noun, verb, adjective, etc. would be the subject matter of a language course rather than language skills. What we call today communicative approach to language learning, which was not in existence previously, had not appeared into existence at that time. But, with the arrival of early 1970s, there appeared a new provision regarding to incorporate subject-matter of a language course. It was "Language Functions", for example, giving advice, buying a ticket, seeking advice, requesting, etc.

Again, language functions exceeded their limits and introduced a new enterprise: communicative approach to language learning. The assumption behind it was that language learning starts from larger chunks unlike the way of discrete-unit learning. It supposes that language learning starts from learning of a complete and sensible sentence at start rather than learning a morpheme or a word. Moreover, it focused that language learning is for communication and its basic purpose is not

mere acquisition of the knowledge of language. The language skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing got highlighted in the language courses.

Since the present Secondary English Curriculum of Nepal focuses language skills targeting to develop fluency in the learners, learning of grammatical aspects of English has been neglected. This resulted today's secondary school learners of Nepal not likely to be able to develop accuracy in English. A majority of students in the secondary schools of Nepal are developing fluency more or less, but their competency in forming well-formed sentences is worsening. The researcher doubts them to be poor in forming English noun phrases, using appropriate articles, subject-verb agreement, speech, voice, preposition and many other aspects of grammar.

Hence, the researcher opines that there is a great need to expose secondary school children to enough grammar exercises along with the exercises to acquire language skills. There should be a good balance between students' accuracy and fluency.

1.1.1 English Language Teaching in Nepal

There is not a very long history of English education in Nepal. The introduction and development of English in the school curriculum can be traced back to 1850, when Jung Bahadur Rana, the Prime Minister of Nepal visited Great Britain for the first time as part of his formal European tour. Uprety in his article states:

Jung Bahadur Rana, who became the Prime Minister and a de-facto ruler in 1846, visited England in 1850 to strengthen the ties of friendship with the powerful British Empire. He was extended a warm reception by Queen Victoria who conferred on him the title of G.C.B. (Grand Cross of the Order of the Bath). He then realized the importance of the English language to communicate and to strengthen his friendship with the English people (Particularly with the Indian Colonial Power) to make his position even stronger in Nepal. Consequently, he invited an Englishman to teach his sons the English education to children of Rana families. He established

Durbar High School (Now, Bhanubhakta Ma.Vi., at Ranipokhari) in 1853, which was the first English school in Nepal. (pp.23-24)

In those days, Nepal was under the dark shadow of illiteracy. Education for children of common people was dreadfully neglected as there existed few schools throughout Nepal. Realizing the importance of Education in the development of a nation and the wider scope of English in the global context, a number of schools and colleges were established after the establishment of democracy in 1951.

After the revolution in 1951, Nepal began to play a more important role in international affairs. It became the member of most of the international organizations. The development of tourism and spread of education are the main factors for the popularity of English in Nepal. The other secondary factors are: the spread of English throughout the world as a lingua-franca and the prestige attached to English speakers. It has been more than a century since it was introduced in Nepal.

1.1.2 English in Secondary School Curriculum

Previously, the secondary level referred to grade nine and ten. Now, the latest provision states that the secondary level has been extended to Plus One and Plus Two making altogether four secondary classes: grade nine, ten, plus one and plus two. The secondary level English curriculum is entirely based on language skills. Unlike the grids of other core subjects, language skills are considered as different areas of learning. The examination specification grid of this course shows the assessment and evaluation part of the curriculum. It assists test makers to design valid test items that will measure the learning outcomes set in the curriculum. It also gives the type and number of test items required to measure a particular skill. Twenty-five percent weightage is allocated to listening and speaking skills, i.e. fifteen marks is allocated to listening test and ten marks to speaking test out of one hundred marks. The rest seventy five percent weightage is allocated to reading and writing skills, i.e. forty marks is allocated to reading and thirty five to

writing tests. Generally, five periods a week is allotted to the teaching of English subject in the secondary level.

So far as the teaching-learning materials of the secondary English subjects are concerned, they are basically prepared and designed by CDC. The teaching materials are: cassettes, textbooks, CD's, maps, etc. The textbooks of the secondary level have been written in line with the new English curriculum and it is incorporated with varieties of language functions and day-to-day activities so as to create interest in the students in the language lessons. The focus of the textbook is thus on the development of students' communicative competence. The materials follow the modern approach to English language teaching. Students are exposed to the language of everyday life. They are supposed to acquire major language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. These four skills are fully integrated in every unit of the textbooks. (Curriculum Development Centre Sanothimi, Bhaktapur)

Thus, the present curriculum of secondary level of Nepal aims at developing language skills and fluency in secondary school children. It employs language structures (forms) as a tool to realize language functions in learners.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In general, scoring with distinction in the overall proficiency of English is quite a common phenomenon to secondary school children of Nepal today. However, the researcher as a secondary English teacher often notices his/her students, high scorers and low scorers alike, using articles haphazardly when the researcher happens to examine their class-work, homework, or test answer-sheets. In this connection, the researcher aims to measure their proficiency in the use of articles, compare and correlate the findings with the overall English proficiency.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

This study was carried out with the following objectives:

- a) To identify the proficiency in the use of Articles of grade ten distinction scorers.
- b) To compare and correlate the proficiency in the use of articles with the overall proficiency in English of the grade ten distinction scorers.
- c) To suggest some pedagogical implications.

1.4 Research Questions

The researcher often noticed most of the Grade 10th students, high scorers and the low scorers alike, to have been poor in the use of articles despite the fact that their overall proficiency in English appeared satisfactory, and this emerged two questions in the researcher's mind:

- a) What is the proficiency in the use of articles like of the grade ten distinction scorers in the overall English proficiency?
- b) Are the Grade ten scorers with distinction in English as proficient in the use of articles as they are in the overall proficiency of English?

1.5 Significance of the Study

The present study, “Proficiency in the Use of Articles of Grade Ten Distinction Scorers” of private and public schools of Chitwan will prove useful to language teachers, textbook writers, curriculum and syllabus designers, methodologists and to those who are directly and indirectly involved in the field of language teaching-learning. The study will provide an insight to language curriculum designers or language course designers to be reflected to balancing proficiency on language skills and proficiency on grammar while designing English language curriculum, syllabi and textbooks. This study also will prove fruitful to language teachers in the sense that it will provide an insight to them to incorporating lessons on their students' language skills and grammatical aspects in a more balanced way.

Moreover, the study will be very useful to students learning English as a second

language in the sense that it will encourage them to acquire accuracy and fluency of the language. On the other hand, the textbook designers also will be benefited with the study in that it will provide them an insight to blending lessons that improve students' language skills and grammar aspects in their textbooks. Finally, this study will prove very useful to English language researchers to conduct further researches on the proficiency of other aspects of grammar such as prepositions, agreement, negation, voice, interrogatives, tense, speech, etc. as well.

1.6 Delimitations of the Study

The study had the following delimitations:

- a) The study was delimited to a few sampled numbers of students of non-randomly selected private and public schools of Chitwan district.
- b) A few numbers of schools and their students' overall proficiency in English and their proficiency in the use of articles might not be generalized to all learning circumstances and learners throughout, or outside of the country.
- c) The study was limited to scores obtained from tests on listening, speaking, reading and writing skills and the test on articles.
- d) The objective of the study concerned the proficiency of the scorers with distinction (in the overall skills) of private and public schools of Chitwan district in the use of 'a' /'an', 'the' and 'zero' or 'no' articles.
- e) Students' total scores in listening, speaking, reading and writing test was supposed to stand for their overall proficiency in English.
- f) A-hundred-mark close-ended test (objective test) having hundred spaces to be filled up with 'a' /'an', 'the' or 'zero' articles was supposed to represent students' proficiency in the use of articles.
- g) Students' scores obtained from the tests were categorized and interpreted being based on the secondary norm (of scores division and interpretation).
- h) The study might not measure the proficiencies of the students of their real language use context. Their overall language proficiency and their proficiency in the use of articles are limited to test scores only.

1.7 Operational Definition of the Key Terms

Overall proficiency in English: It refers to the ability of ten graders in Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing skills of English.

Proficiency in the use of articles: It refers to the ability of the students in the use of 'a/'an', 'the' or 'zero' articles of English.

Public Schools: It refers to schools controlled and financed by the Government of Nepal.

Private Schools: It refers to the schools controlled and financed by private sectors.

Articles: Articles are small words that are often used at the beginning of English noun phrases. They belong to a group of words called determiners.' (Swan 2006: 51)

Definite Article: 'The' is defined as definite article.

Indefinite Article: 'a' or 'an' are called indefinite articles. 'a' is used before singular countable noun that initiates with consonant sound while 'an' is used before singular countable noun that initiates with vowel sound.

Zero Article: It refers to 'no articles' at all as in: ... Ø....Ram;... Ø....Nepal; .. Ø..Lunch;.. Ø...School;.. Ø...water.

Countable Noun: It refers to a noun that has its singular and plural forms such as:

Noun	Singular form	Plural form
boy	a boy	boys

Scorers with Distinction: This refers to the students of Grade 10 who score 80 or above 80 scores out of 100 full marks in their listening, speaking and reading and writing tests in aggregate.

Uncountable Nouns: This refers to the nouns that do not have singular and plural forms such as water, petrol, information, etc.

Grammatical Aspects: This refers to different areas of grammar learning of English such as article system, voice, tense, preposition, agreement, negation or transformation, etc.

Secondary School Norm: This refers to categorizing and interpreting students' scores of a test or tests being based on the following standard:

S.N	Scores	Interpretation of the Scores
1	80 or 80 above	With Distinction
2	60-79	First Division
3	45-59	Second Division
4	32-44	Third Division
5	Below 32	Fail

The signs: "....." (blank) or 'X' (cross) or '∅' (null/zero) will stand for the same sense: 'no articles' at all.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Review of Theoretical Literature

So far as the history of language teaching is concerned, there can be noticed different periods. The period prior to early 1950s is known as pre-scientific period of language teaching-learning. It is also called the pre-scientific or unscientific or traditional period of language teaching and learning. At that time language teaching was not a distinct discipline. Language was learnt through Grammar-Translation or reading-oriented ways. On the other hand, the period between early 1950s to the late 1960s is identified as Psychometric-Structuralist period. This was the period of contrastive analysis, and the Structural Linguistics and Behavioural psychology combined to provide a scientific air to language teaching-learning. Thus, particular item of language irrespective of its context would be taught through habit-formation process of Behaviourism. Finally, there can be traced a period dating from the late 1960s till date which is known as Integrative-Sociolinguistic period of language teaching. The 'discrete -unit' teaching has been discarded and language elements that interact in larger context of communication is highlighted while teaching-learning takes place.

We can notice different approaches to language teaching with the experiments of J.B. Watson and Pavlov, termed as Behaviourism, language teaching-learning got influenced. It assumed that language learning was the connection between Stimulus (S) and Response (R). According to Behaviouristic approach, language is a part of total human behaviour. If a particular language response is reinforced, it then becomes habitual or conditioned. A particular response is reinforced till it becomes a habit. Thus, habit formation was the secret behind teaching-learning of language. Moreover, reinforcement, mimicry, imitation, rigorous practice, etc. were considered the language-learning secrets.

As a reaction to Behaviouristic approach to language teaching, there appeared nativist approach. Noam Chomsky is the profounder of this approach. This approach believes that language acquisition is innately determined that we are born with a built-in-device of some kind that predisposes us to language acquisition. Chomsky claims that human behaviour is more complex than that of animals. The language behaviour of human being cannot be described through animal behaviour unlike that of Skinner's experiment on rat-lever- pressing process. According to this approach, human beings have innate ability to learn language. Human mind is not a "tabula-rasa" but is equipped with some specific abilities like universal grammar (UG) and language-acquisition device (LAD). The language, according to this approach, is a complex phenomenon and its acquisition is not same as learning other skills. Mind, reason, logic and insight are the things that should be taken care into deal with the language. Among the nativists there are different opinions on how language is learnt. A group of nativists believe that there is universal grammar in the mind of the learners which enables them learn language. They believe that all languages have certain parameters and principles. The principles are common to all languages of the world. For example, all the languages have nouns, verbs, tense etc. But they do not have the same parameters. Because they vary in parameter setting, the languages of the world are different. There are some processing approaches related to nativists. They further vary into: information processing approaches and connectionism. Krashen, Long and Swan are the profounder of Input, Output and Interaction theories of language learning. Similarly, connectionists believe the nature of language similar to that of connection of network. (Mitchell and Myles, 1998)

Among various approaches to language teaching, functional approach is one. It was developed in late 1960s. It was developed to overcome the inadequacies of nativist approach. The functional approach emphasizes the instrumental character of language. It focuses on various functions that a language serves, i.e. expressive function, social function, greeting, welcoming, inviting, describing, etc. The functional approach accepts that the generative rules that are proposed under the

nativist framework were abstract, formal, explicit and quite logical, yet they dealt especially with the forms of language, not with the deepest level of language, that level where memory, perception, thought, meaning and emotion are all interdependently organized in the superstructure of the human mind. The generative rules of nativists are failing to account for the functions of language. The chief exponents of this approach are Bloom, Piaget and Slobin. They say that there are meaning and function at the deepest level as the essence of language. This approach of language learning believes that language learning is not merely learning the superficial word-order, but learning the rules of the functions of language.

Besides the aforementioned approaches, there developed an approach called Natural approach to language learning, it was first introduced by Terrell and developed by Krashen. It pays less emphasis on teacher monologues, direct repetition, and formal question and answers and less focus on accurate production of target-language sentences. In the Natural approach there is an emphasis on exposure or input, rather than practice; optimizing emotional preparedness for learning. Krashen and Terrell say that the natural approach is an example of communicative approach. The theoretical foundation of this approach is shouldered by monitor model so that the hypothesis of the model (monitor model of Krashen) is main theoretical basis of this approach. This approach regards language as a vehicle for communication. Krashen and Terrell say that acquisition can take place only when people understand messages in the target language. The natural approach to language teaching is based on the Acquisition-Learning hypothesis, the Monitor hypothesis, the Natural Order hypothesis, the Input hypothesis, and Affective-Filter hypothesis.

Moreover, there is another approach to language teaching-learning known as Multiple Intelligence approach. It believes human intelligence as having multiple dimensions. MI theory was originally proposed by Gardner in 1993, the use of it in the field of language teaching is a very recent phenomenon. MI theorists say that language learning and use are linked with linguistic intelligence. It is one of a

set of such perspectives that focuses learner differences and borrows heavily from these in its recommendations and design for curriculum and lesson planning.

Lazar (1991) has proposed four different stages for the syllabus design of MI: awaken the intelligence through multisensory experiences; amplify the intelligence through volunteering objects and events; teach with/for the intelligence and the transfer of the intelligence. Richard and Rodgers on the other hand show how the MI model can be used to serve the need of learners within a classroom: play to strengthen; variety is the spice; pick a tool to suit the job; all sizes fit one; me and my people.

Again, there is an approach to language learning, viz. Lexical approach. It focuses lexis, i.e. words and word combinations. It believes that the building blocks of language learning and communication are not grammar, functions, and notions of some other units of planning and teaching, but lexis. It focuses grammaticalized use of lexis, but not the lexicalized grammar. It supposes that language learning is learning of the chunks, collocations or words of the concerned language.

Language production is the product of previously met examples, not formal rules.

The lexical approach to language teaching also had some draw-backs. Since language teaching and learning is a complex phenomenon, the aforementioned approaches all proved to be insufficient and there emerged Communicative language teaching approach in the late 1960s. Before CLT there was situational approach dominant in the field of teaching-learning. CLT got developed when applied linguists in Britain saw the need to focus communicative proficiency rather than mastery of structures in language learning. Mainly Candlin, Widdowson, Firth, Halliday, Hymes, Gumperz and Labov are the scholars who advocated this view. In 1972, Wiklins proposed a functional and communicative definition of language, communicative use of language rather than usage. He developed a notional syllabus which played a significant role in developing CLT. Similarly notional functional approach and functional approach were developed. In mid 1970s the scope of CLT got expanded more.

The CLT is based on the theory of language as communication. According to it, the goal of teaching of language is to develop grammatically correct and socially appropriate communicative competence. CLT assumes that language is a system for the expression of meaning and its primary functions is for interaction and communication. The structures of language should be used to serve language functions which in turn should fulfill the communicative need of the language users. Thus, it focuses language functions or language skills, viz. listening, speaking, reading and writing. Though there are different models of communicative competence: Bachman's model, Canale and Swain's model, Staphit's model and many more, we can summarize their elements of communicative competence as: Grammatical Competence; Pragmatic Competence (Socio-linguistic competence); Strategic Competence, Discourse Competence and Fluency.

Linguistic competence is concerned with knowledge of the language itself, its form and meaning. In other words it involves knowledge of spelling, pronunciation, vocabulary, word formation, grammatical structure, sentence structure and linguistic semantics. Pragmatic competence refers to meaning of an utterance in relation to its socio-linguistic context. It is also called illocutionary competence. In Hyme's words, pragmatic competence makes us to know "when to speak, when not to, what to talk about with whom, when, where and in what manner". Discourse competence on the other hand, refers to the ability to create coherent and cohesive written texts or conversations and to understand them. It is a must for effective communication. Strategic competence, on the other hand, as Canale and Swain (in Hedge) define refers to how to cope in an authentic communication situation and how to keep the communicative channel open." Finally, fluency which is related to language production, especially oral production, is the ultimate and most important aspect of communicative competence. It focuses fluency with regard to accuracy. But it doesn't mean to claim that a grammar is not under communicative language teaching.

Again, there are task-based and project-based approaches to language teaching. According to task based approach to language teaching, language is a phenomenon to acquire while doing different tasks of everyday life. It focuses that what sort of tasks the learners are likely to perform in the future circumstances; they are organized in their syllabus and asked to perform the tasks as per the syllabus. In course of completing the tasks, the learners' language is supposed to be made up. It recommends some principles of tasks selection: a) ensure an appreciate level of task difficulty, b) establish clear goal for each task-based lessons, c) establish an appropriate orientation to performing the task in the student, d) ensure that the students adopt an active role in task-based lessons, e) encourage that the students are primarily focused on meaning when they perform a task, f) provide opportunities for focusing on form, g) require students to evaluate their performance and progress, etc. The Project based approach to language teaching, on the other hand, recommends language teachers to involve their students take part in projects to make them learn language collaboratively. The credit of task-based and project-based language teaching approaches goes to Prabhu and the Bangalore Project (1979).

We have no doubt that research studies on classroom instruction and theories of SLA do not always agree on what fosters learning. For example, Behaviourists believe that language is learnt through habit formation while Nativists believe language learning a creative and innate process. Social constructivists argue that language is a social phenomenon and social aspect of language should not be neglected. They focus on scaffolding, microgenesis, regulation and so many other social phenomenons. Some other argues that "lexis" is the key to language learning while the other argues "language functions" to be the key aspect of language learning. Moreover, Input, Output, Interaction, Affective Filter Hypothesis and Connectionism, all these have their own claims regarding the nature of language and how language is acquired.

Thus, there is a flood in the field of language and language-learning theories. Of course, this has created a confusion to language teachers and learners in that it is

very difficult for them to decide which theory or principle best suit them or their learners. To address such a language learning plight, there has been developed an approach called Eclectic approach to language learning. This approach advises language learners or teachers not to show any inclination to a particular language theory or language-learning theory. It suggests on using the strengths of all the approaches and theories on language. The Eclectic approach to language learning is propounded by H. Douglas Brown. Similarly, Kumaravadivalu has developed an approach to language teaching-learning. His idea is known as Post-method Pedagogy. It has got the three principles: the pedagogy of particularity, the pedagogy of practicality and the pedagogy of possibility.

The pedagogy of particularity focuses the key aspect of local context, i.e. situational understanding. L₂ policy makers, administrators, syllabus designers and language teachers will pay careful attention to local contingencies. This may refer to the use of local materials, teachers, etc. as per to address the need of the learners. It may refer to teach or learn a particular aspect of language at a time to meet learners' immediate needs. The pedagogy of practicality, on the other hand, advocates the teacher or learner autonomy. It focuses that rather than being overly concerned about what outside experts have to say regarding teaching efficacy, local teachers should begin to look for ways that will help them and their students learn successfully. It focuses on teacher's reflection and action which are based on their insights and intuition. The pedagogy of possibility, on the other hand, considers teaching learning not as absorbing new linguistic and cultural knowledge but as a site of struggling between the old and new identities for teachers and learners alike. L₂ learning is seen more as a tool to help learners come to grip with their own identity. They are thus advised only to learn whatever is possible of L₂ for them. They are given freedom to produce their own Englishes.

2.1.1 Reason for Teaching Grammar

Teaching-learning of article system of English comes under teaching-learning of English grammar. There are number of units as article system that comprise of learning/acquiring of English grammar. For example, tense, voice, transformation, narration, agreement, contraction, determiners, adjectives, noun and noun phrase structures and many others. Teaching-learning of English is thus a whole and article teaching-learning is its part. Many researches SLA give reasons for or against teaching-learning of grammar and the article system being a part of English grammar cannot be an exception their findings. Learning of grammar is for developing language accuracy. It is a must because the language speakers need not only to be fluent but also to be accurate to survive in today's competitive world. So, learners need to learn English grammar along with developing their language skills of fluency.

For some time, many teachers and the SLA researchers have recognized that second language learning seems to be fundamentally different from first language learning. Some of the basic differences between these process were summarized by Bley-Vroman is the fact that the first language learners are always completely successful in learning to speak their language, whereas adult learners often fail in their request to learn second language. The fact that success is guaranteed for child learners has been taken as evidence that they are endowed with a specific faculty for learning language. The generally low success rate of adult L₂learners' on the other hand, seems to imply that this language-learning faculty is time sensitive and vanishes as learners reach adulthood. Realizing the importance of grammar Cowan (2008) states

Bley-Vroman also recognized that L₂learners who do not fail in their effort to learn an L₂ can experience varying degrees of success. In other words, different L₂ learners reach different levels of proficiency. L₁ learners, on the other hand, always reach the same level of proficiency: perfect mastery. This is not what one would expect if L₁ and L₂ were identical process.

L₂ learners commonly attain what is referred to as a stabilized L₂ grammar (Long, 2003), reveal that some learners show no improvement in certain basic areas of English Grammar, producing errors such as dropping simple present tense '-s' (for third person singular) and plural noun marking, even over a long period of time. These very basic errors continue to occur in the speech of L₂ learners who have been in the country from 5 to 25 years, who use the L₂ every day, and who have a strong motivation for improving their stabilized features never occur in L₁ learner grammars.

It has also been noted that part of L₂ learners' success in acquiring a new language may be due to affective factors, like an outgoing personality and a willingness to take risks, exhibited in ways such as trying to say things in the L₂ without worrying about whether they are grammatical. These features do not appear to play any part in L₁ learning. Children always master their native language, regardless their personality traits.

Given these facts, why would anyone maintain that adult L₂ learners learn just like L₁ learners and, therefore, do not need any grammar instruction?(pp. 28-29)

Since Secondary school children of Nepal learning English as a compulsory subject are also L₂ learners who age between 14-16, this researcher opines that they cannot be an exception to the aforementioned evidences and thus advocates some lessons on English grammar to them.

2.1.2 The Evidence for Teaching Grammar

In course of learning English language the researcher learned a number of concepts under English grammar. Among them, article system came to be one of the most confusing areas of English grammar learning. The researcher in his school days would be highly influenced by his mother tongue and would happen to develop his own interlanguage of article use such as:

~~an~~ information

~~a~~ chalk

suggestions~~s~~, etc.

since he did not know that these nouns are countable in Nepali while they are uncountable in English. Similarly, he could not find any fundamental difference between the sentences as given below:

'**A simile** is a weak comparison.'

'**The simile** is a weak comparison.'

'**Simile** is a weak comparison.'

This happened to the researcher when he attended his Proficiency Certificate Level at university. For satisfying his curiosity he practised explicit exercises on grammar (articles) by Murphy (1994), Leech and Svartvik (1988), Hewings (2006) and many other explicit self-practice books on grammar. This is actually a reflection on how the researcher himself gained accuracy in the use of articles through explicit exercises. Moreover, the researcher as a Secondary English teacher has been employing explicit and implicit exercises equally to develop his students' accuracy in the classroom. He often notices his children grossly benefited by explicit exercises on grammar for developing their accuracy. Furthermore, Cowan (2009) presents the following cases for teaching grammar:

Over the past decade, an abundance of empirical evidence has emerged that shows that classroom instruction in grammar actually results in substantial gains in L₂ proficiency. This evidence comes from carefully controlled studies, many of which have been carried out in the classroom. For example, Master (1994) has shown that grammar teaching can effectively improve English learners' accuracy in the use of articles, a grammatical category that is notoriously difficult for many learners of English. Cadierno (1995) and Doughty (1991) have demonstrated that explicit instruction can increase students' accuracy in the production of past tense forms and relative clauses. Additional evidences that instruction that focuses students'

attention on grammatical forms promotes the attainment of high levels of accuracy documented in studies such as Carroll and Swain (1993), Fotos (1993), Lightbown (1991), Lightbown and Spada (1990) and Nassaji and Swain (2000). Furthermore, a number of views (R. Ellis, 1990, 1994, 2001; N. Ellis, 1995, Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991) indicate that grammar instruction affects the ultimate level of proficiency that students attain as well as the rate at which students progress. Finally, an analysis of 49 studies on the effectiveness of instruction by Norris and Ortega (2000) found that grammar instruction produces substantial gains in learning L₂ grammar and that these gains hold over time. Furthermore, Krashen claims that reading for pleasure provides sufficient comprehensive input to promote acquisition is contradicted by two classroom studies (Lightbown, 1992, Lightbown, Halter, White and Horst, 2002), showing that students who were given oral or written tasks as instruction outperformed students whose learning experience consisted of reading and listening.

In addition to the above studies, there is an extensive body of research on language learning in French immersion programmes that argues for the value of grammatical instruction. Immersion programs provide precisely the type of environment that Krashen claims fosters acquisition. The students who are given large amounts of meaningful input and have to focus simultaneously on understanding the new language and determining its grammar can learn language without any help from teacher. A series of reports (Hammerly, 1987; Harley, 1989, 1983; Lapkin, Hart and Swain, 1991; Harley and Swain, 1984, 1985; Swan and Lapkin, 1989) document that students in these immersion classes fall short of achieving accuracy with regard to some grammatical forms. These findings imply that attaining high levels of grammatical accuracy requires some grammar instruction. A number of researchers (Celce-Murcia, Dornyei, and Thurrell, 1997; R. Ellis, 1997, 2002; Mitchell, 2000) have extended the results of the immersion studies to communicate language teaching. They found that when a focus on meaning was emphasized at the expense of a focus on

grammar form, classroom instruction did not enable students to attain a high level of grammatical accuracy in English.

Today, many SLA researchers have concluded that very little of Krashen's theory of how adults learn an L₂ can be supported. Nevertheless, many teachers remain convinced that input Hypothesis is viable and that L₂ grammar instruction is not useful. The notion that the L₂ learners do not need grammar instruction resonates strongly with many kindergartens through grade 6 teachers, for instance, who have noted their students do seem to learn without formal grammar instruction. However, this does not support the Input Hypothesis; rather, it reflects something that has been known for some time that K-6 children are able to acquire another language with little or no instruction. They only require exposure to the second language in meaningful contexts. Adults, however, no longer have this ability and need help in discovering and internalizing the L₂ grammar if they are able to make substantial progress. The results of research cited previously argue that, when teaching adults, adopting a 'laissez-faire' approach to the development of (grammatical) accuracy in instructed second language, (and) concentrating on only providing opportunities for learners to process rich and comprehensible input' (Doughty, 2003, p. 258) may pose a serious barrier to the learners' development of competence in English. (pp. 30-31)

Reflecting on the aforementioned cases as well as his own cases of grammar teaching-learning, the researcher would like to focus that along with developing four language skills, there should be some lessons on grammar explicitly in the secondary school curriculum of Nepal so as to blend students' accuracy and fluency.

2.1.3 The Article System in English

The English articles (viz., definite 'the' indefinite 'a'/'an' and understood 'some' -as well as the 'zero' article at all) are part of a larger system and reference. However,

the learning difficulty and frequency of articles convinced us to treat them as separate topic before taking on the larger systems in which they function.

The use of 'a/'an', 'the' and 'zero' articles create problems to Asian, Slavic and African languages from a cross-linguistic perspective, i.e., these languages have no article system or these languages have quite a different trend to express definite, indefinite or generic or specific meaning of an utterance. For example, languages like French, Spanish, Farsi, the Scandinavian languages have no articles, but article-like morphemes. The way they use these morphemes differ from the way English does. For example, many of these article-using languages mark the generic use of an abstract noun with their equivalent of the definite article. Thus instead of saying "Beauty is truth." as the English poet Keats did, the literal equivalent of this sentence in many of those languages would be "The beauty is the truth." Let us see one example of such kind from Nepalese language too: In Nepali language, the words such as bread, furniture, information are treated as singular countable noun as a result, the literal equivalent of "a" or "an" can be placed before these nouns which is not allowed in English. It is because these nouns are uncountable or non-countable nouns. Therefore English people avoid 'a' or 'an' before these nouns to communicative generic meaning. Thus, because of the cross-linguistic influence Nepalese learners of English most often tend to use 'a' or 'an' before nouns such as: information news, furniture, bread, etc.

The concept of 'definiteness' or 'indefiniteness' also seem problematic to learners of different linguistic backgrounds. What a noun a language supposes definite may be perceived as indefinite in another language or vice versa. This problem is nicely depicted in Richard Lourie's humorous account of a Russian cultural attache's continual frustration at not being able to figure out a system for using the English definite article 'the' and the indefinite article 'a/'an':

Busy though he was, Poplavsky usually found ten minutes each morning for the reading of intelligently written articles from the American press. He was determined to win a final victory in his eleven-year struggle with his linguistic arch enemies, the definite and indefinite articles. The conflict

first erupted in his class at the special school at Gatchina where students were taught not only at classrooms but in a full-scale replica of an American town-supermarkets crammed with toilet paper, dog food, and chicken parts; gas stations with Coke machines and Chevies with hand-lettered, card-board FOR SALE signs on their windshields; and a McDonald's run by perky teenagers. "I want **a** box. I want **the** box. Why not simply-Give ME Box." Poplavsky had roared at his instructor who was running the checkout counter at the supermarket that day. Tearfully, she explained that not even the Soviet Academy of Syntax had been able to come up with a concrete rule that worked in all cases. "Then I'LL figure one out myself!" Poplavsky had vowed with all the bravado of the youngish lieutenant he was then; but now, as a middle-aged full colonel, he continued to struggle with those bedeviling linguistic will-o'- the-wisps.

'I don't think you want the 'the' here; I think you want an "a" ', an American had once remarked to Poplavsky after reading a Soviet-Embassy cultural press release.

"I don't want **a** 'the', I want **the** 'a'" Poplavsky had replied, frowning in consternation that was bordering on rage.

"That's right, a 'the' is not the right choice."

"But an 'a' is the right choice?" asked Poplavsky.

"Yes, an 'a' is the right choice."

"How can an 'a' be the right choice?" asked Poplavsky.

"A 'the' is right. The 'a' is Wrong."

"Stop it, stop it!" said Poplavsky in a voice that managed to beg and threaten at the same time.

Readers who are familiar with Russian grammar will understand and sympathize with Poplavsky's plight. Russian does not have anything like English definite and indefinite articles. Cowan (2007, pp. 111-12)

Moreover, stating the definite and indefinite issues of article use, Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1999) write

One may be wondering at this point how language without articles can signal definiteness or indefiniteness. The most common means is word order; that is, the noun in topic position is definite, where as a noun in comment position tends to be indefinite. Thompson (1978) gives a functional explanation for the evolution of the English article system. She says that languages like English that use word order to signal grammatical relations such as 'subject' and 'object' tend to develop articles because given versus new information cannot be consistently signaled through word order, as they are in topic-comment languages like Russian and Chinese, which tend not to have articles. In topic-comment languages, word order signals given versus new information: topic comes first, signaling given information, and the comment comes later, signaling new information. The definite and indefinite articles in languages like English help us to identify new and given information: given information tends to take the definite article while new information, somewhat independently of word order, tends to take the indefinite article(p. 271).

Thus, the article system of English is a complex phenomenon. The competence over it demands learners of cross-linguistic background to master the concepts of classification of English noun system, noun shifts, given versus new information, countable–non countable noun distinction, meaning of 'a' or 'an' and 'the', etc. which the researcher is going to explore in the next sub-sections:

2.1.4 Classification of English Noun System and Articles

Traditionally, the classification of English noun can be:

Proper Noun: Name of a person, place or a thing for example, Newton, Julia, London, etc.

Common Noun: It refers to the member of a class or species for example, boy, girl, table, child, cow, etc.

Material Noun: It refers to nouns such as water, ghee, petrol, iron, gold etc.

Collective Noun: It refers to nouns such as swarm, class, team, group, army, flight, flock, gang, etc.

Abstract Noun: Abstract nouns are nouns which are related to our feelings such as anger, poverty, kindness, love, hatred, etc.

On the basis of countability or uncountability nouns can be classified into countable and uncountable nouns:

Countable nouns are those nouns which can have their singular or plural form as shown in the example:

Count-noun	Singular form	Plural form
boy	<u>a</u> boy	bo <u>y</u> s
orange	<u>an</u> orange	orange <u>s</u>
army	<u>an</u> army	armie <u>s</u>

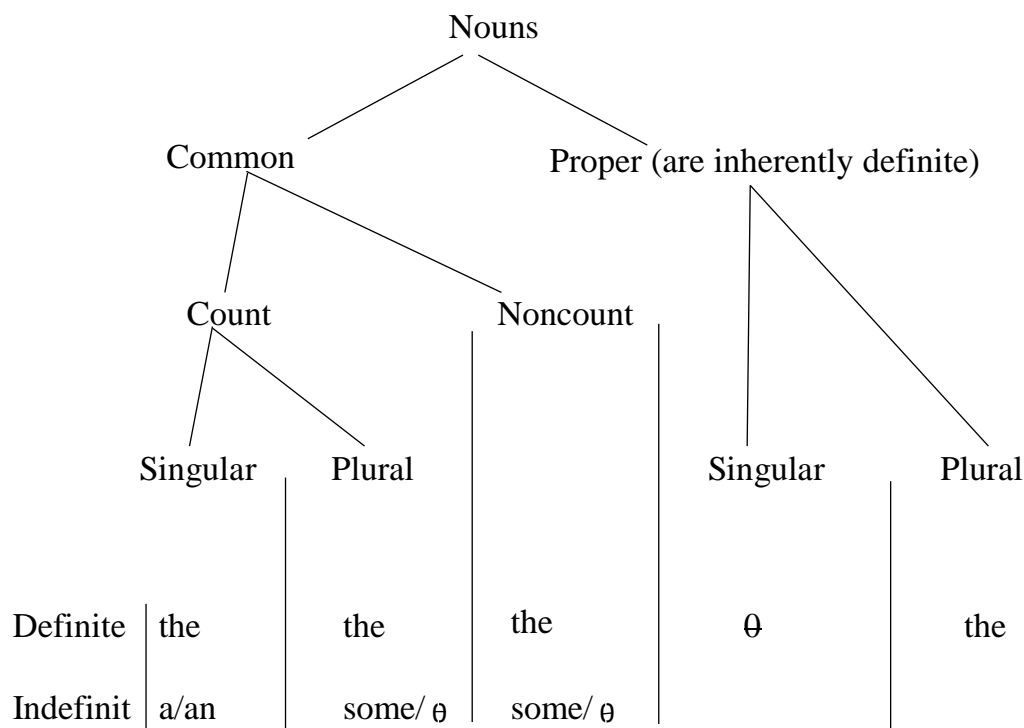
On the other hand, generally these nouns do not have their singular or plural form as:

Uncountable Noun	Singular form	Plural form
Water	<u>a</u> water	Water <u>s</u>
Ram	<u>a</u> Ram	Ram <u>s</u>
Nepal	<u>a</u> Nepal	Nepal <u>s</u>

Thus, among the five categories of nouns as mentioned earlier common noun and collective nouns fall under countable nouns and proper noun, Abstract noun and material noun fall under uncountable nouns.

However, Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (pp.172-3) present the following classification of English nouns with a view to supporting learners to comprehend article system in relation to classification of English noun system:

Classification of Nouns



They further write:

Most of the strictly form-based information about English articles depends on the English noun classification system. All English nouns are classified as either common nouns (e.g., a boy, a country, a planet) or proper nouns (e.g, Bob Robertson, Denmark, Saturn,etc. In addition, all common nouns can be further classified into non-count nouns (e.g. water, clothing and luggage) or count nouns (a beverage, a shirt, a suitcase). Non- count nouns are singular in number for purposes of subject-verb agreement, but cannot take the indefinite article (a or an) and the plural inflection as common count nouns do:

Noncount (common)

~~a water~~ ~~some waters~~

~~a luggage~~ ~~some luggages~~

Count (common)

a beverage, some beverage

a suitcase, some suitcases

Non-count nouns and plural count-nouns do, however, share the possibility of taking the zero article or indefinite 'some'.

Non Count	Count Plural
∅Water√	∅Suitcases√
some water√	<u>Some</u> suitcases√

Proper nouns are a special case: they are like common nouns because they are countable, but they are different because they are inherently definite and thus never take the indefinite article when they function as true proper nouns. When they take the plural inflection, they require the definite article to retain proper noun status:

Count Proper

√ ∅Mr. Wayne	× <u>a</u> John Wayne	√ <u>the</u> (two) Waynes (=John and Patrick)
√ ∅America	× <u>An</u> America	√ <u>the</u> (two) Americas (=North and South)

Even though both the proper/common and count/non-count classifications seem to overlap in certain cases, the conceptual distinctions involved are basic to mastery of the English article system.

2.1.5 The Count-Noncount Distinction

The lexical classification of English nouns into count and non-count is a very important fundamental to correct uses of articles. It is a conceptual distinction that account for many systematic patterns in article use. The distinction is problematic for ESL/EFL learners in the sense that many languages make use of similar concepts; however, what is countable and what is uncountable is somewhat arbitrary and varies to some extent from language to language. For example, information, furniture, chalk, iron, bread, etc. are non-count nouns in English, so the English people do not use 'a' or 'an' before them to bring their generic meaning. In English, these nouns alone can form a noun phrase. But languages like French, Spanish and Nepali assume those nouns to have been countable so they use the literal equivalent of 'a' or 'an' before bread, furniture, chalk, information, etc. Because of count/non-count distinction most Nepalese learners tend to produce the ill-noun phrases such as:

a chalk	an information, a furniture, etc.
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Thus, it is useful to distinguish what varieties of nouns are considered countable and what varieties of nouns are considered uncountable in English to better acquire the proficiency in the use of article. Influence of learner's first language in comprehending the concept of count-non count distinction must be controlled so as to further learners' proficiency in the use of articles.

2.1.6 Meaning of Articles

Variation in the use of articles ("a"/"an", 'the' or 'zero') can signal various meanings. There are two meanings that articles generally convey:

Generic Meaning: It indicates one which refers to all or most members of a set:

The cow is a domestic animal.

A cow is a domestic animal.

Cows are domestic animals.

The + cow in these sentences tell us that it is the cow species that is being commented upon. The examples are expressing generic meanings. These examples do not specify any particular cow of the speaker's and listener's perception or shared knowledge. There is an optionality to use "a"/"an" or "the" before common noun(s) to refer to all or most members of a set. Leech and Svartvik present:

a. The Germans are good musicians.

b. Germans are good musicians.

The examples as shown above show that plural common nouns and 'the' +plural common nouns can also signal generic meaning. But they mention that "a" signals more formal and abstract sense whereas "b" signals the most generic sense. Just before, a pair of sentences:

"A cow is a domestic animal." "The cow is a domestic animal."

have been written and mentioned that they give the generic meaning. But, their use is sometimes different. "A cow is a domestic animal", is used when the speaker assumes his listener do not at least know the fact that a cow is an animal. But 'The cow is a domestic animal'. is used when the speaker thinks that the listener is aware of the fact that the speaker is talking about an animal species at least.

Specific Meaning: It indicates a particular member of a set. For example,

The cow does not give milk.

The statements given above do not mean a general cow. So, its meaning is not that "all cows or a cow do/does not give milk." It indicates that a particular cow which the speaker thinks that the listener knows does not give milk. Thus, it indicates the shared knowledge about an object, entity or a thing between the speaker and the listener.

2.1.6.1 Meaning of Definite Article 'The'

Just before, it has been mentioned that the definite article 'the' can also signal a generic function like the singular indefinite forms and the zero articles such as:

The lion is the king of beasts.

A lion is the king of beasts.

Lions are the king of beasts.

But, with singular nouns, the generic usage of a 'the' is formal and abstract. While with plural or collective nouns, 'the' signals a sense of generic collectivity:

The Germans now realize that reunification has come with problems. (Plural)

The clergy are divided on that issue- (collective)

Most instances of 'the' are non-generic and Hawkins (1978) provides a useful perspective on the non-generic meaning of the definite article in English. He argues that a number of definite article types that people have claimed to be different are simply instances of the same strategy. He proposes his "location theory" to account for all instances of non-generic "the": when a speaker/writer uses 'the', he instructs the hearer/reader to locate the referent in the same shared mental set of objects. The instruction to locate may have a situational-cultural, a textual, or a structural basis.

Examples of situational-cultural instructions to locate the referent include the five following subcategories, which have often been proposed as distinct uses of 'the':

1. General-cultural use (the referent is unique for all members of the speech community): the sun, the moon, the earth, etc.
2. Immediate situational use:

Don't go there. The lion will attack you.

3. Perceptual situational use (the referent is uniquely visible, audible, etc.):

Pass me the salt, please.

4. Local use (general knowledge—unique for members of a specific community): the car, the church, the pub
5. Local use (specific knowledge—unique for members of the specific community):

(In the town of Halifax,) there is a type of gallows called the gibbett, which exists nowhere else.

Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman, (2000, p. 279) present three textual subcategories for the use of 'the', which can all be grouped together as instructions to the listener or reader to locate the co-referent in the text:

1. Anaphoric use (prior mention):

e.g., I bought a cow yesterday. The cow is red.

2. Deductive anaphoric use (prior mention of a schematically-related notion):

e.g., Fred bought a book at Dutton. He later spoke to the author about it.

3. Cataphoric use (Subsequent mention of something related)

e.g., Here is the car; your son parked yesterday.

There are two varieties of the cataphoric use.

- a) Usage with post-modifiers (relative clauses, prepositional phrases, appositives):

e.g., The person (he hated) was nasty to him. I remember the beginning (of the war) very well.

The number (seven) is considered lucky.

b) Usage with ranking determines and adjectives:

e.g., The first European in America was Scandinavian.

What is the next book you plan to read?

Some idiomatic and formulaic usages are quite difficult to explain in terms of any principle of form, meaning, or use:

That's the ticket!

He is right on the mark.

In other words, article 'meanings' and the usages to which articles are put are very abstract and general with a potential for change from one context to another. Also, some users are truly culture bound, which makes them particularly difficult for learners who do not share the culture behind the language.

2.1.6.2 Meaning of Indefinite Article 'a' or 'an'

The use of 'a' or 'an' before a singular countable noun signals indefiniteness. Since singular countable nouns generally cannot form a noun phrase alone, we need to place 'a' or 'an' before these nouns to reveal generic meanings:

For example,

.....cow

.....goat

.....bird

, etc. are singular countable nouns, so we have to place 'a' or 'an' before them to make a valid noun phrase of English to signal a generic meaning. For example,

'...cow is a domestic animal.' tends to be wrong since the word 'cow' needs a 'a' before it to signal a generic meaning. Therefore,

"A cow is a domestic animal." is a correct structure.

Here, the distinction between the use of 'a' or 'an' is another issue to mention: when there is a singular countable noun whose initial sound is vowel, we use 'an' article before that noun. But, in case of a singular countable noun whose initial sound is consonant, we use 'a' article. But, before the plural nouns, proper nouns, mass nouns and abstract ones, we do not use any articles irrespective of their sound to convey the generic meaning. For example,

- a) A cow is a domestic animal.
- b) A boy is courageous.
- c) An apple is fruit.
- d) An elephant is huge.
- e) ØWater is tasteless.
- f) Ø Ronaldo is a player.
- g) ØBirds can fly.
- h) Ø Love is strength.

The examples above 'a' and 'b' demonstrate the use of 'a' before singular countable nouns, that begins with consonant sound to reveal the generic meaning. 'c' and 'd' are the examples which show that 'an' is used before a singular countable noun that begins with vowel sound while example 'd' to 'e' receive 'no articles' to reveal the generic meaning because they are mass noun, proper noun, plural common noun and abstract noun respectively.

Though the aforementioned claims work in most cases of the use of indefinite articles, it is not hundred percent. It is because language learning is not ever generalizable. Sometimes, it may go beyond what we claim works the best. In other words, learning of articles is not an easy job. There are some exceptions and gray areas in learning article usages. Some of the exceptions include:

He went there by bus. (Grammatical)

He went there by a bus. (Ungrammatical)

He went there on/in bus. (Ungrammatical)

He went there on/in a bus. (Grammatical)

There is no rule that decide why one of the pairs is grammatical while the other is ungrammatical. We can simply say this is the way native speakers speak. These can be the examples of idiomatic expressions. Some more examples of exceptions include:

∅ Knowledge is power. (Grammatical)

What a knowledge! (Grammatical)

A knowledge is power. (Ungrammatical)

∅ Beauty is truth. (Grammatical)

What a beauty! (Grammatical)

A beauty is truth. (Ungrammatical)

What beauty! (Ungrammatical)

2.1.7 Shifts of English Nouns

The use of articles is sometimes affected when noun belonging to one type tends to behave as a noun belonging to another type. This phenomenon is widely known as shifts of English nouns. For example,

Common noun shifts to Proper noun

The ring road Ring Road

The earth Earth, etc.

2.1.7.1 Shifts Involving Proper and Common Nouns

When proper nouns are used in common noun patterns, they are no longer functioning as true proper nouns; they work as a common noun by virtue; for example the man called George – the George - All the examples demonstrated below are proper nouns that are being used as common nouns: The George that called yesterday called again today.

Some Ernests can surely be found in this crowd!

A Robert spoke to me all night long at the party.

Nine Marys were on the list.

There are some trade names that can shift into common nouns:

Kleenex – a Kleenex (=a paper tissue)

Xerox – a Xerox of something (=a photocopy)

Kodak – a Kodak (= a camera)

Geographical names such as Nepal, England, and London are inherently proper nouns. Yet, we have some geographical nouns which belong to unique common noun category. These nouns are assigned to common noun type because of their cultural or situational uniqueness. These nouns receive 'the' before them generally. For example,

the Sudan

the Gambia

the Ukraine, etc.

Again, over a time, the aforementioned nouns sometimes shift to proper noun as shown below:

Sudan

Gambia

Ukraine, etc.

In the examples above, use of 'the' has been avoided because the unique common nouns are working as true proper nouns.

The shift can also occur in case of local geographical names (place names). When speakers become personally acquainted with a geographical term and hear it mentioned frequently, they tend to drop the definite article and thereby create a proper name:

Unique Common Noun		Proper Noun
<u>the</u> green park	-	∅ Green Park
the river road	–	∅ River Road
the ring road	–	∅ Ring Road

The two alternatives sometimes exist side by side, the unique common noun is used by speakers who are less personally familiar with the place concerned, and proper noun is used by those who have close affiliation with and make frequent mention of the place.

In rare cases, it is possible for the same speaker to refer to the same entity as either a proper noun or a unique common noun:

Earth – the earth

Used as a proper noun, 'Earth' fits the same paradigm as other planets in our solar system – Venus, Mars, Saturn and so on; it is also used in case of personifications as proper noun: (mother) Earth. Used as a common noun, the earth relates to the sun, the moon, the land and the sea as part of our immediately visible

environment. This can sometimes have different frames of reference for one and the same entity, and they reflect in their article usage. (Celce-Murcia and Larsen Freeman, p. 275, 276)

2.1.7.2 Mass-to-Count Noun Shifts

English mass nouns are uncountable inherently. So, they receive no article to reveal a generic meaning. For example,

∅water

∅ghee

∅petrol

Similarly, they cannot be made plural by adding 's' or 'es' suffixes as:

~~waters~~

~~petrols~~

~~irons~~, etc.

For the purpose of subject –verb agreement, they are considered as singular countable noun and therefore singular verb is assigned to them as:

√Water **is** /am/are tasteless.

√Petrol **has**/have to be used., etc.

Despite the facts mentioned above, sometimes, these nouns tend to behave as common countable nouns. In such a context, the mass nouns receive an indefinite article as shown in the example below:

Mass Noun (substance)

coffee

chocolate

Count Noun (unit or serving)

a coffee (a cup of coffee)

a chocolate (a bar/type chocolate)

water

a water (river)

tea

a tea (a type of tea or a cup of tea)

When a mass noun shifts to a count noun, we conceive of such a noun as a kind of, a type of or an unit of.

The important thing to conceive about both noncount--count shifts and common--proper shifts is that the lexical classification of English nouns is important information for article usage. But, there is always a degree of flux that can be explained by speaker's intention of a classification and by usage in context.

2.2 Review of Empirical Literature

So far as we talk about present Secondary English Curriculum of Nepal, we find it to have been greatly influenced by communicative approach to language teaching. Since the communicative syllabus try to incorporate too many ideas such as Linguistic Competence, Discourse competence, Extralinguistic competence and language Functions together, the researcher feels as if there is too little focus to grammar of English language. So, the researcher is of the view that practicing students of grammar portions should be equally given importance along with language skills and many other aspects of language teaching-learning in the present Secondary English Curriculum of Nepal.

The researcher noticed a number of researches done by Nepalese Secondary English teachers which highlighted the importance of incorporating Grammar such as preposition, agreement, tense, voice speech, verbs, nouns, determines, etc. in English lessons or curriculum. However, the researcher found very few number of researches on 'articles' 'a'/'an', the or zero):

Sharma (1998) conducted a research entitled "Errors in the Use of Articles Committed by the Secondary Level Students" which classified errors and determined levels of difficulties of articles learning. His study was descriptive in nature. One hundred students of private and public schools were the sample size of the study. He found out that the total errors in the use of articles, 42.31

percentage was in the use of zero article, 29.62 was in the use of definite article ("the") and 25.43 percentage of errors was committed in the use of indefinite article ("a"/"an").

Dawadi (1999) attempted to find out "The Proficiency in the Use of Defining Relative Clauses" made by the students of government and private schools of Kathmandu, Lalitpur and Bhaktapur districts. He reached the conclusion that the students of private schools in terms of the performance of relative clauses were better than the students of government schools. Similarly, the performance of the girls was better than that of the boys.

Basnet (2001) conducted a research entitled "A Study on Proficiency of the Students in the use of Determiners". His study found out that 45.5% students were above and 54.4% were below average and the students of Dhankuta district were more proficient than the students of Kathmandu district.

Khaniya (2002) has made a research on "Proficiency of the Students in Negative and Interrogative Transformation". His findings showed that the proficiency of the boys was better than that of the girls in negative transformation. Only 45% students were above the average and 53.4% students were below average. Similarly, in the same study school-wise comparison was also done.

Aryal (2006) concluded a research on "Proficiency of Grade Eight Students in the Use of Prepositions". His major concern was to compare the proficiency in the use of prepositions between private and public schools and urban and rural schools.

Neupane (2006) carried out a research entitled "A Comparative Study on Proficiency in the Use of Articles of the Ninth Graders of Public and Private Schools of Tanahun". His findings showed that students of private schools were more proficient than the students of government aided schools.

Niraula (2008) carried out a research on "A Study of the Proficiency in the Use of Articles". He found out that 52% of his students were below average in the use of articles. He also found out that the students of private schools were more

proficient than the students of public schools. The proficiency of boys was found better than that of the girls in the use of articles ('a/'an', 'the' and 'zero').

Poudel (2008) carried out a research on "A Study on the Proficiency of Grade VIII Students in the Use of Articles". He found out that 59.16% students were above average in the use of articles. His studies showed that majority of the students were good in performance in the use of articles. His study also shows that the students of urban areas of Parbat district were more proficient than the students of rural areas. His study shows an additional fact that boys were more proficient than the girls in the use of articles.

English language has got the article system which Nepali language has not. Because of this reason the researcher finds his students and also himself producing erroneous noun phrases of English. This might have been so because of the difference between L₁ and L₂ (Nepali and English) or because of these learners' incomplete learning of the article system of English.

The present research on "Proficiency in the Use of Articles of Grade Ten Distinction Scorers" was carried out because the researcher found no any researches prior that could actually compare the overall proficiency in English and the proficiency in the use of articles of grade ten scorers with distinction of Chitwan district. The researcher was worried that majority of his students were committing errors in the use of articles. He was worried and anxious to find out whether his Grade ten scorers with distinction were as proficient in the use of articles as they were in the overall English proficiency

2.3 Implication of the Review for the Study

The researcher reviewed a number of researches to satisfy her/his research queries. However, she/he found no any prior researches that could measure grade ten distinction scorers' proficiency in the use of articles and compare it with their overall English proficiency. However, the researcher got equally facilitated from a number of research work related to articles proficiency to carry out this study.

From the review of the research by Acharya (2007), the researcher learned that proficiency of the students can be compared across different variables such as gender, schools and geography. The study concluded that students from urban areas were more proficient than the students from rural areas in the use of articles. Similarly, the study also showed that boys were more proficient than girls in the use of articles of sampled schools of sampled district (Surkhet).

Similarly, from the study carried out by Niraula (2008), the researcher learned that comparison of the students' proficiency can be made with the secondary norm. This research taught the researcher about designing a test to test students' proficiency in the use of articles. The researcher also got guided to use statistical tools such as average, percentage and correlation to compare their proficiency in the use of articles across different variables: sex, school, geography, etc.

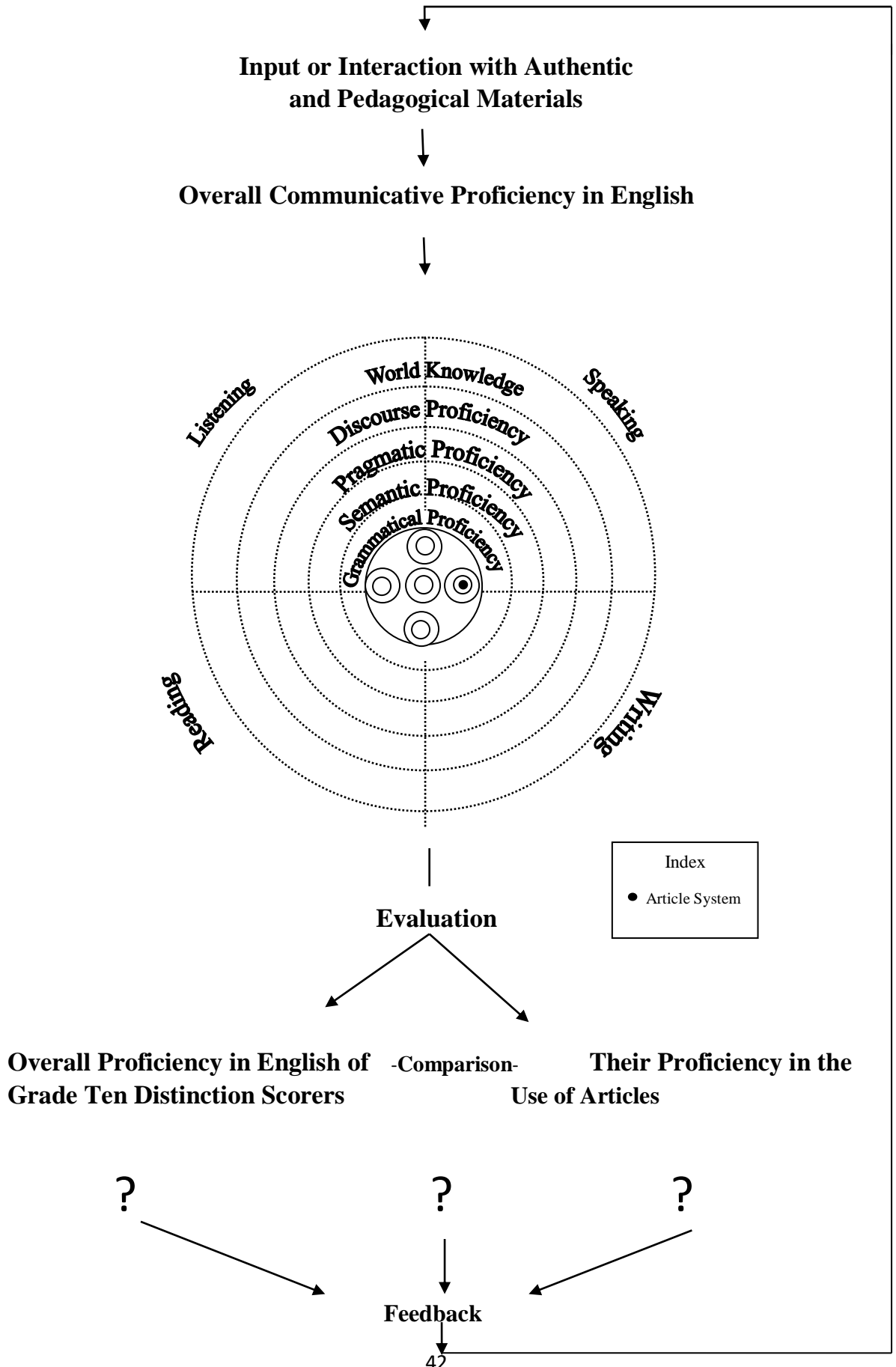
On the other hand, this study got supported by Poudel (2008) in that it taught the researcher another idea that comparison of students' proficiency in the use of articles can go across items in the test. This study also guided the researcher to employ the right sampling procedure (s) to conduct the present study.

Next, the study got supported to make an overview of students' problematic areas in the use of articles from the study carried out by Sharma (1998). His study guided the researcher to include questions in the articles-proficiency-measuring test from difficult, more difficult and the most difficult areas of article use.

Finally, from the review of the book entitled "Research Methodology" by kumar, ranjit (2006), the researcher got step-by-step theoretical guidelines on carrying out a comparative study manipulating two variables: overall English proficiency and proficiency in the use of articles.

2.4 Conceptual Framework

Whole-Part Relationship between O.E.P. and A.P.



CHAPTER THREE

METHODS AND PROCEDURES OF THE STUDY

The researcher employed the following methodology to fulfill the objectives of the study:

3.1 Design of the Study

This is a comparative study. It studied a large population of students by selecting and studying sample chosen from the population to discover and establish a comparison between overall English Proficiency of Grade ten scorers with distinction and their proficiency in the use of articles of private and public schools of Chitwan district. Thus, there are two variables under this study: Overall proficiency in English and the proficiency in the use of articles of the grade ten scorers with distinction. It was a cross-sectional study in the sense that the data were collected only of a single time. The quantifiable data were elicited from students through tests (as tool) and analyzed, compared and interpreted later. So, the research is quantifiable in appearance. However, the interpretation of the data twists it to a qualitative turn as well.

3.2 Population, Sample and Sampling Procedure

All the grade ten scorers with distinction in the overall English proficiency of private and public schools of Chitwan district was the study population of this research. The sample size of the study consisted of thirty grade ten scorers with distinction in the overall proficiency in English: 15 students from public and 15 students from private school from Chitwan district.

To obtain the sample, the researcher listed the names of the private and public schools of Chitwan district at first alphabetically into two separate columns. Then, the researcher reordered the names of the schools of these two columns in order of preference on the basis of the researcher's ease of access of the sampled population from his location. After that the researcher visited the listed schools turn by turn and recorded the names of the students who had scored with

distinction in English in the overall proficiency in their recent terminal examination until the desired sample size: 15 scorers with distinction from public school(s) and 15 scorers with distinction in the overall English Proficiency from private school(s) were met. Thus, for sampling schools, the researcher employed judgmental or purposive sampling whereas he employed non-random quota sampling for determining the sample, i.e., 15 students with distinction from public school(s) and 15 students with distinction from private school(s) of Chitwan district. While constructing a test to measure these students' proficiency in the use of articles simple random sampling procedure was employed.

3.3 Field of the Study

The study is related to students' assessment. It is related to grade ten distinction scorers' proficiency in the use of articles of private and public schools of Chitwan district in relation to their overall English proficiency. The primary data were collected by administering test(s) to the ten grade distinction scorers of the sampled schools of Chitwan district.

3.4 Tools and Techniques of Data Collection

The major tool for data collection was a test consisting of 100 marks objective questions. The question items for the test were derived from the written compositions of the concerned students in the previous tests, i.e. from the sentences in which they had used articles. For that the researcher rewrote the sentences having used *a/an*, *the*, and *zero/null* from each of the student's answer-sheets of their previous test as many as possible. Then, the researcher employed stratified random sampling procedure and selected 33 sentences of 'a/an' use, 33 sentences of 'the' use and 34 sentences of 'null'/'zero' use, making altogether 100 sentences that at least each required an article use. Then, the researcher deleted one article from each sentence and created 100 spaces where students had to fill 'a'/'an', 'the' or 'null'/'zero' articles.

3.5 Procedure for Data Collection

The collection of data for the study involved rather a long step-by-step process. At first, the researcher sought consent from the DEO and concerned schools to conduct the research. The researcher asked for the record of names of different private and public schools of Chitwan district from the record of DEO, Chitwan. Then, the researcher listed the names of the private and public schools of Chitwan district alphabetically into two separate columns. Then, the researcher recorded the names of the schools of these two columns in order of preference on the basis of the researcher's ease of access of the sampled population from the researcher's location. After that, the researcher visited the listed schools turn by turn and recorded the names of the students who had scored with distinction in English in the overall proficiency in their recent terminal examination, as provided by the school record, until the desired sample size, i.e. 15 scorers with distinction in the overall English proficiency from public school(s) and 15 scorers with distinction in the overall English proficiency from private school(s) were met. Then, the researcher collected their answer-sheets of their recent terminal examination of English to make a-hundred-mark objective test to measure their proficiency in the use of articles using students' own language that enabled them to score with distinction in the overall English proficiency. If the researcher were not able to get their answer-sheets of their previous recent terminal examination from the school administration, he would be re-administering their previous recent terminal examination of English to the concerned students to get their answer-sheets to make a-hundred-mark objective test using their own language of overall proficiency to measure their proficiency in the use of articles. Then, the researcher established rapport with all the 30 concerned students. He provided them information on when the objective test of hundred marks would be administered. Thus, the data were elicited through the administration of a- hundred -mark objective test in the use of articles. The time allotment of the test was of an hour and half.

3.6 Data Analysis and Interpretation Procedure

After the elicitation of the data, the researcher tabulated the data. He used statistical tools such as average, range, percentage, SD and co-relation to analyze and interpret the data gathered.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE RESULT

The researcher employed tables, illustrations, diagrams and simple statistical tool of percentage, SD, average and correlation for the analysis and interpretation of the collected data effectively and accurately as far as possible.

4.1 Analysis of the Data and Interpretation of the Result

The analysis and interpretation of the result was carried out under the following headings:

- a. Details of the Sampled Population
- b. Overall English Proficiency of the Sampled Students
- c. Proficiency in the Use of Articles
- d. Proficiency Difference between the Two Variables of the Sampled Students
- e. Proficiency Comparison of the Two Variables with Average
- f. Correlation between the Two Variables

4.1.1 Details of the Sampled Population

There were 30 sampled students of grade ten who scored with distinction in the overall English proficiency of private and public schools of Chitwan district. The researcher assigned them different codes that start from S1 to S30. Since this study aimed at measuring the sampled students' proficiency in the use of articles and comparing (correlating) it with their previous test scores in the overall English proficiency, names of the students, their sex, and type of school and location of the school has nothing to do with the study. In other words, overall English scores of the sampled students' one of their previous tests has been used as reference line to compare their proficiency in the use of articles. Thus, there are only two variables in the study: overall English scores and scores in the use of articles of the sampled students. Sex, names of the students, school type and address of the school, all these were not the variables of the study. However, the researcher refers to see the table in the Appendix 'C' for the aforementioned details. Out of 30 Ss, ten students were girls and 20 of them were boys. The numbers of schools from

where the samples were drawn was six: three private and three public schools of Chitwan district.

4.1.2 Overall English Proficiency of the Sampled Students

Since the researcher desired to measure grade ten distinction scorers' proficiency in the use of articles, the sampled students, i.e. 15 students from private and 15 students from public schools of Chitwan district, all were the distinction holders in the overall English proficiency in their one of the recent previous tests. Their overall proficiency in English referred to their total marks of listening, speaking, reading and writing of their first terminal examination of the academic year 2072 B.S. of English in the study. The scores range from 80 to 93. The average score in the overall English proficiency was 85.03. The data regarding the overall proficiency were collected from the students' respective schools' mark ledgers. For the details, the researcher refers readers to see the table in the Appendix-'D'. The overall English scores worked as a reference line to compare the sampled students' proficiency in the use of articles with.

4.1.3 Proficiency in the Use of Articles

The sampled students were administered an objective test in which there were 100 questions where they had to supply 'a'/'an', 'the' and 'zero'/'null' articles. Thus, one space had one mark. In the test, there were only 5 students (S1, S21, S23, S25, S29), i.e. 16.66% of the sampled population who scored distinction in the article test. On the other hand, 21 of the samples (S2, S3, S4, S5, S6, S7, S8, S9, S10, S11, S12, S13, S14, S15, S16, S22, S24, S26, S27, S28, S30), i.e. 70% of the sampled population scored with first division. And 4 numbers of the sampled students (S17, S18, S19, and S20), i.e. 13.33% Ss scored second division in the article test. Moreover, there lay one interesting aspect of the study that there were not any students scoring third or fail division in the use of articles. Then, all of the students were found "pass" in the article proficiency test. The average score in the use of articles is 70.43. The details of this discussion has been summarized and presented at the table below:

Table 1
Proficiency in the Use of Articles

Students	Scores in Articles	Division in Article Test				Result	
		Distinction	First	Second	Third	Pass	Fail
S1	85	√				√	
S2	65		√			√	
S3	65		√			√	
S4	68		√			√	
S5	75		√			√	
S6	77		√			√	
S7	71		√			√	
S8	77		√			√	
S9	78		√			√	
S10	77		√			√	
S11	66		√			√	
S12	62		√			√	
S13	66		√			√	
S14	70		√			√	
S15	62		√			√	
S16	63		√			√	
S17	52			√		√	
S18	56			√		√	
S19	58			√		√	
S20	51			√		√	
S21	83	√				√	
S22	68		√			√	
S23	80	√				√	
S24	76		√			√	
S25	80	√				√	
S26	77		√			√	
S27	71		√			√	
S28	75		√			√	
S29	85	√				√	
S30	74		√			√	
Total	2113	5	21	4	0	30	
Percentage of SS		16.66	70	13.33		100	
Avg. of Scores	70.43						

4.1.4 Proficiency Difference between the Two Variables

The table below shows that there were thirty students as sample population of the study. There are two sets of scores in the columns. In the column first, students' scores on overall proficiency in English have been shown. Similarly, in the column second, students' scores in the use of articles have been shown. Both tests were of hundred marks. In case of the overall proficiency of English, the scores are 80 or above 80 marks since it was the study of students who scored at least distinction in the overall English Proficiency. On the other hand, we can see students' varied performance in the use of articles in the second column. The table shows that there was only one student whose article scores outscored his/her Overall English Proficiency scores. The difference between the two variables was only of two marks in case of the S1. But in case of all the rest students, from S2 – S30, their OEPTS outscored their proficiency in the use of articles. This shows that excluding S1, all the students were less proficient in the use of articles in comparison to their overall proficiency in English.

In total, Overall Proficiency of the Ss was outscored by Article Proficiency only by two scores while Article Proficiency of the Ss was outscored by overall English proficiency by 440 scores. Similarly, the standard deviation in the Overall English Proficiency is found 3.86 while it is found 9.07 in the use of articles. The data show that OEPTS were less deviated from the centrality while article scores were more deviated from its mean. This stands for that there was more number of deviated scores in the second variable in comparison to first variable (first set of scores). Thus, the data show that the sampled students were less proficient in the use of articles than they were in the Overall English Proficiency.

Table 2
Proficiency Difference between the Two Variables

Samples	Variables		Proficiency Difference(Scores)	
	Overall Eng. Test Scores FM :100	Scores in the Article Test FM:100	OEPS outscoredAPS	APS outscoredOEPS
S1	83	85		2
S2	85	65	20	
S3	84	65	19	
S4	83	68	15	
S5	85	75	10	
S6	83	77	6	
S7	84	71	13	
S8	82	77	5	
S9	82	78	4	
S10	84	77	7	
S11	86	66	20	
S12	83	62	21	
S13	78	66	12	
S14	92	70	22	
S15	80	62	18	
S16	79	63	16	
S17	82	52	30	
S18	83	56	27	
S19	84	58	26	
S20	85	51	34	
S21	93	83	10	
S22	86	68	18	
S23	93	80	13	
S24	92	76	16	
S25	88	80	8	
S26	88	77	11	
S27	83	71	12	
S28	86	75	11	
S29	91	85	6	
S30	84	74	10	
Total	2551	2113	440	2
Average	85.03	70.43		
SD	3.86	9.07		

4.1.5 Proficiency Comparison of the Two Variables with Average

The table presented below shows that there were thirty students as sample size of the study. Their average score in the overall proficiency in English was calculated 85.03 while their average score in the use of articles was found 70.43. In this connection, the mean score of overall proficiency in English outscored the mean scores of article proficiency test scores. So, the average score difference also reveal students weaker proficiency in the use of articles in comparison to their overall proficiency in English. Similarly, out of thirty students, ten students, i.e. 33.33% students were found above average and 20 students, i.e. 66.66% were found below average in their overall proficiency in English. On the other hand, fifteen students, i.e. 50% students were above average and 15 students, i.e. 50% students were found below average in the proficiency in the use of articles.

Table 3

Proficiency Comparison between the Two Variables with Average

Variables	Sample Size	Average	Above average		Below Average	
			No of Ss	Percent	No of Ss	Percent
Overall English Proficiency (Scores)	30	85.03	10	33.33	20	66.66
Proficiency in the use of Articles	30	70.43	15	50	15	50

4.1.6 Correlation between the Two Variables

The researcher assumed the set of students overall scores in English as one variable as 'x' and the set of their scores in the use of articles the other variable 'y' and derived correlation coefficient. The correlation coefficient calculated is 0.466. The researcher used Pearson's Correlation coefficient formula:

$$r = \frac{n(\sum xy) - (\sum x) \cdot (\sum y)}{\sqrt{[n \sum x^2 - (\sum x)^2][n \sum y^2 - (\sum y)^2]}}$$

Table 4
Correlation between the Two Variables

Overall Eng. Test Scores(x)	Scores in the article test (y)	x ²	y ²	xy
83	85	6889	7225	7055
85	65	7225	4225	5525
84	65	7056	4225	5460
83	68	6889	4624	5644
85	75	7225	5625	6375
83	77	6889	5929	6391
84	71	7056	5041	5964
82	77	6724	5929	6314
82	78	6724	6084	6396
84	77	7056	5929	6468
86	66	7396	4356	5676
83	62	6889	3844	5146
78	66	6084	4356	5148
92	70	8464	4900	6440
80	62	6400	3844	4960
79	63	6241	3969	4977
82	52	6724	2704	4264
83	56	6889	3136	4648
84	58	7056	3364	4872
85	51	7225	2601	4335
93	83	8649	6889	7719
86	68	7396	4624	5848
93	80	8649	6400	7440
92	76	8464	5776	6992
88	80	7744	6400	7040
88	77	7744	5929	6776
83	71	6889	5041	5893
86	75	7396	5625	6450
91	85	8281	7225	7735
84	74	7056	5476	6216
$\sum x = 2551$	$\sum y = 2113$	$\sum x^2 = 217369$	$\sum y^2 = 151295$	$\sum xy = 180167$

$$= \frac{n(\sum xy) - (\sum x) \cdot (\sum y)}{\sqrt{[n \sum x^2 - (\sum x)^2][n \sum y^2 - (\sum y)^2]}}$$

$$\begin{aligned}
&= \frac{30 \times 180167 - 2551 \times 2113}{\sqrt{[(30 \times 217369) - (6507601)][(30 \times 151295) - (4464769)]}} \\
&= \frac{5405010 - 5390263}{\sqrt{(6521070 - 6507601)(4538850 - 4464769)}} \\
&= \frac{14747}{\sqrt{13469 \times 74081}} \\
&= \frac{14747}{\sqrt{997796989}} \\
&= \frac{14747}{\sqrt{(31587.92473)^2}} \\
&= \frac{14747}{31587.92473} \\
&= 0.466
\end{aligned}$$

The magnitude of the correlation coefficient is said to vary from [-1.0] to [+1.0]. The [+1.0] correlation coefficient indicates the perfect positive correlation whereas the [-1.0] shows the perfect negative correlation. The zero correlation indicates no predictable relation between the two variables. As the study showed 0.466 value as correlation coefficient, being based on the aforementioned fact, we can say that the overall proficiency scores in English and the article proficiency scores had positive correlation. However, since 0.466 is a bit far away from [+1] value, we cannot say that the two variables had absolute positive correlation.

4.2 Summary of the Findings

The main objectives of the study were to measure grade ten distinction scorers' proficiency in the use of articles and compare and correlate it with their overall scores in English subject of their recent previous exam.

The data related to article proficiency were elicited by administering a hundred-mark objective test. On the other hand, the distinction scorers' data were gathered from their respective schools. The students' first term exam scores in English worked as a reference line to compare the scores in the use of articles with the overall English scores.

Some of the major findings of the study include:

- Majority of the sampled distinction scorers in the overall proficiency in English, i.e. 29 samples, 96.69 % are found relatively less proficient in the use of articles. Only one student is found more proficient in the use of articles in comparison to overall proficiency in English.
- Only 16.66% of the sampled population was found scoring with distinction in the use of articles.
- The average scores achievement in the use of articles is found less than the average scores in the overall English proficiency, i.e. 70.43 and 85.03 respectively.
- Of the samples, 50% students are found below the average of articles scores and 50% were found above the average.
- The standard deviation of scores in the use of articles was 9.07 while it was only 3.86 in the overall proficiency of English. In other words, deviation tendency in the use of articles is greater in comparison to the deviation in the overall English proficiency. This shows that there is a great variety of scores in the use of articles in comparison to the overall English scores.
- Only one of the sampled students' proficiency in the use of articles outscored his/her overall English scores. This shows that among the sampled students, there is only one student whose proficiency in the use of articles is better than his/her overall proficiency in English.
- The correlation between the sampled students' overall English scores and their scores in the use of article is determined 0.46 by using Pearson's correlation coefficient formula.
- The correlation coefficient value obtained from this study shows that overall English proficiency and proficiency in the use of articles are positively correlated.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The researcher would like to make the following conclusion and recommendations:

5.1 Conclusion

The present study was conducted to measure the sampled distinction scorers' proficiency in the use of articles and compare and correlate the findings with their overall English scores of their first term examination. The study showed that majority of the sampled students were less proficient in the use of articles in comparison to their scores in English of their first terminal examination. All of the sampled students achieved distinction division in their overall English proficiency while most of them, i.e. 70% of the sampled students achieved only first division in the use of articles. The varied scores in the use of articles indicated students varied proficiency in the use of articles. The average of overall English scores of the Ss was greater than the average of their scores in the use of articles. Thus, the study showed that the sampled students were not as proficient in the use of articles as they were in the overall proficiency in English. On the other hand, the correlation between those two sets of scores was found 0.46. It suggested that the overall English scores and the scores in the use of articles were positively correlated.

Theoretically, overall proficiency comprises of pragmatics, semantics, morphology, grammar, four skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) discourse and many others. So, one may think that scoring with distinction in the overall proficiency in English should indicate their similar proficiency in each language aspects aforementioned. However, language learning is quite a different phenomenon. Therefore, overall English scores may or may not necessarily stand for students' equal proficiency in each aspect under Overall English Language Proficiency.

Thus, from the study it can be inferred that overall proficiency in English doesn't necessarily guarantee students' equal proficiency in each components(elements) of language proficiency. Students' proficiency in grammar, morphology, semantics, pragmatics, listening, speaking, reading and writing skills and their respective subskills or subareas should be assessed separately. In other words, scoring with distinction in the overall proficiency in English doesn't necessarily mean that students have the same level of proficiency in the use of articles or in the other areas of language learning. Each student has different degrees of proficiency in different language areas.

5.2 Recommendations

The researcher would like to make the following recommendations:

5.2.1 Policy Related

Article system comes under English language learning course of curriculum. Therefore, the present secondary level school curriculum of Nepal has addressed this phenomenon in the textbook and curriculum more implicitly. Article system which we find in English is not found in Nepali language. So, Nepalese learners feel more difficulty in grasping the concept of English article system. In this connection, the present curriculum and textbooks need to blend some more explicit and implicit exercises in the use of articles so as to better their proficiency in the use of articles. Moreover, secondary level text books should include more exercises that give students clear concept of English noun system. In addition to that, students' grammar proficiency should comprise of articles, noun system, voice, tags, tense, speech, etc. related questions in the test separately.

5.2.2 Practice Related

The study showed that majority of the sampled distinction holders to have been less proficient in the use of articles in comparison to their overall English proficiency scores. On the other hand, in the secondary English curriculum, there is not seen any explicit exercises for building up students' accuracy in the

use of articles. Similarly, secondary level text books also lack explicit exercises related to the use of articles. In the same way, students' classwork, homework and evaluation tools are found to lack sufficient focus in the use of articles. So, secondary English teachers as true translators of the curriculum are to incorporate grammar lessons, more specifically lessons related to the correct use of articles, in their lessons. They need to assign students enough classwork and homework related to English article system. Article lessons should be designed in such a way that students will be able to use articles meaningfully. Students are also advised to learn article system of English not only for scores but also for using it in the meaningful context.

5.2.3 Further Research

This is a study of proficiency in the use of Articles of ten graders of private and public schools of Chitwan district. The findings and conclusions drawn from the study may not be fully generalized to other contexts. This study covers the proficiency in the use of articles of grade ten distinction scorers in the overall proficiency in English. This research could not address the proficiency in the use of articles of those students who scored below distinction. Thus, there is a potential for future researchers to conduct a study to measure the proficiency in the use of articles of the low scorers and the high scorers together, or the low scorers alone. Moreover, this study is limited to only 30 numbers of students of private and public schools of Chitwan district. Therefore, further researches can be conducted to measure the proficiency in the use of articles on larger sample size, or on the students from other districts or other schools. Additionally, the study may prove a footstep to future researchers to conduct studies on students' proficiency in the use of other areas of grammar as well and give feedback to curriculum designers, textbook writers, teachers, students and concerned all.

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APPENDIX B

4.1.1 Details of the Sampled Population

Name of the Students	Code assigned to each Ss	Sex		Type of school		Schools and Address
		Female	Male	Private	Public	
Susmita Poudel	S1	√		√		Parijat H.S. English School Geetanager- 6, Kesharbag
SujanDahal	S2		√			
BholaSarraf	S3		√			
BibekBhurtel	S4		√			
AnishaDeuja	S5	√				
SandipSubedi	S6		√			Navayug S. English School Bharatpur-22
Smriti KC	S7	√				
Sabina Sahi	S8	√				
ManojGurung	S9		√			
Shankar Ghimire	S10		√	√		
Sunil Gajmer	S11		√			SahidSmriti Sec. School Geetanager- 9,Parasnagar
Robin Kharel	S12		√			
SulavShrestha	S13		√			
SandeshBista	S14		√		√	
Kushum Mishra	S15	√				
Sanam Dura	S16		√			Arunodaya Higher Sec. School Geetanagar- 5,Amarbasti
SurajThapa	S17		√			
AasthaDhungana	S18	√				
BibekSunar	S19		√			
SmritiMahato	S20	√			√	
NalinaDahal	S21	√				Preambasti Higher Sec. School Bharatpur-7
ChitraBdr.Khanguna	S22		√			
AlinaKharel	S23	√				
Mahesh Sapkota	S24		√			
AnishChaudhari	S25		√		√	

Ankit Acharya	S26		√			Amarjyoti Sec. Eng. School Bharatpur-21
DibashSapkota	S27		√			
Puja Bhatta	S28	√				
SikshyaShrestha	S29	√				
ArunKhanal	S30		√	√		
Total	Ss:30	11	19	3	3	

APPENDIX C

4.1.2 Overall Proficiency in English

Ss	Overall Scores in English				Division				Result
	Reading + Writing FM :75	Listening FM :10	Speaking FM: 15	Total FM: 100	Distinction	F	S	T	
S1	61	9	13	83	√				Pass
S2	62	9	14	85	√				Pass
S3	60	10	14	84	√				Pass
S4	60	10	13	83	√				Pass
S5	61	10	14	85	√				Pass
S6	60	9	14	83	√				Pass
S7	62	9	13	84	√				Pass
S8	60	8	14	82	√				Pass
S9	59	10	13	82	√				Pass
S10	62	9	13	84	√				Pass
S11	64	9	13	86	√				Pass
S12	62	9	12	83	√				Pass
S13	58	8	12	78	√				Pass
S14	68	10	14	92	√				Pass
S15	58	10	12	80	√				Pass
S16	57	9	13	79	√				Pass
S17	58	10	14	82	√				Pass
S18	60	9	14	83	√				Pass
S19	61	9	14	84	√				Pass
S20	61	9	15	85	√				Pass
S21	68	10	15	93	√				Pass
S22	61	10	15	86	√				Pass
S23	68	10	15	93	√				Pass
S24	67	10	15	92	√				Pass
S25	64	9	15	88	√				Pass
S26	63	10	15	88	√				Pass
S27	59	10	14	83	√				Pass
S28	61	10	15	86	√				Pass
S29	66	10	15	91	√				Pass
S30	60	10	14	84	√				Pass

TOTAL	1851	284	416	2551				
AVERAGE				85.0333				

APPENDIX D

4.1.4 SD Process of Article Scores

Samples	Article Scores	d=x- \bar{x}	d ²
S1	85	14.57	212.19
S2	65	-5.43	29.52
S3	65	-5.43	29.52
S4	68	-2.43	5.92
S5	75	4.57	20.85
S6	77	6.57	43.12
S7	71	0.57	0.32
S8	77	6.57	43.12
S9	78	7.57	57.25
S10	77	6.57	43.12
S11	66	-4.43	19.65
S12	62	-8.43	71.12
S13	66	-4.43	19.65
S14	70	-0.43	0.19
S15	62	-8.43	71.12
S16	63	-7.43	55.25
S17	52	-18.43	339.79
S18	56	-14.43	208.32
S19	58	-12.43	154.59
S20	51	-19.43	377.65
S21	83	12.57	157.92
S22	68	-2.43	5.92
S23	80	9.57	91.52
S24	76	5.57	30.99
S25	80	9.57	91.52
S26	77	6.57	43.12
S27	71	0.57	0.32
S28	75	4.57	20.85
S29	85	14.57	212.19

$$\begin{aligned}
\sigma &= \sqrt{\frac{\sum d^2}{N}} \\
&= \sqrt{\frac{2469.37}{30}} \\
&= \sqrt{82.31} \\
&= 9.07
\end{aligned}$$

S30	74	3.57	12.72
N=30	2113		$\sum d^2 = 2469.37$

APPENDIX E

4.1.4SD Process of Overall English Proficiency

Samples	OEP Scores	d=x- \bar{x}	d ²
S1	83	-2.03	4.13
S2	85	-0.03	0.00
S3	84	-1.03	1.07
S4	83	-2.03	4.13
S5	85	-0.03	0.00
S6	83	-2.03	4.13
S7	84	-1.03	1.07
S8	82	-3.03	9.20
S9	82	-3.03	9.20
S10	84	-1.03	1.07
S11	86	0.97	0.93
S12	83	-2.03	4.13
S13	78	-7.03	49.47
S14	92	6.97	48.53
S15	80	-5.03	25.33
S16	79	-6.03	36.40
S17	82	-3.03	9.20
S18	83	-2.03	4.13
S19	84	-1.03	1.07
S20	85	-0.03	0.00
S21	93	7.97	63.47
S22	86	0.97	0.93
S23	93	7.97	63.47
S24	92	6.97	48.53
S25	88	2.97	8.80
S26	88	2.97	8.80
S27	83	-2.03	4.13

65

$$\begin{aligned}
 \sigma &= \sqrt{\frac{\sum d^2}{N}} \\
 &= \sqrt{\frac{448.97}{30}} \\
 &= \sqrt{14.97} \\
 &= 3.86
 \end{aligned}$$

S28	86	0.97	0.93
S29	91	5.97	35.60
S30	84	-1.03	1.07
N=30	2551		$\sum d^2 = 448.97$