

**STUDENTS' PARTICIPATION IN ELT CLASSROOM
INTERACTION AT HIGHER SECONDARY LEVEL**

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

Submitted by

Rajendra Kumar Shrees

Faculty of Education

Tribhuvan University

Kirtipur, Kathmandu, Nepal

2012

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DECLARATION

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

Date: 2012/08/16

.....

Rajendra Kumar Shrees

RECOMMENDATION FOR ACCEPTANCE

This is to certify that **Rajendra Kumar Shrees** has prepared this thesis entitled '**Students' Participation in ELT Classroom Interaction at Higher Secondary Level** ' under my guidance and supervision.

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DEDICATION

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Rajendra Kumar Shrees

ABSTRACT

This thesis entitled “Students’ Participation in ELT Classroom Interaction at Higher Secondary Level” was carried out to find out some of the basic features of classroom interaction. The main objective of the study was to find out the existing situation of classroom interaction at higher secondary level English classes. The research study was mainly based on the primary sources of data which was collected from higher secondary school of Baglung district. The schools were selected by using purposive sampling procedure. The data was collected with the help of classroom observation checklist and questionnaire. The systematically collected data have been analyzed and interpreted descriptively and analytically. After analyzing the data, it was found that the most of the interactions between teachers and students were based on course content, authoritative formulaic and rote learning but not creative. This study found that the teaching materials were not used for interactive activities and there was a gap between teachers' theoretical knowledge and classroom practices. English language teachers considered listening and speaking as essential skills but much attention was given in reading and writing in the classroom.

This thesis consists of four chapters: The first chapter is introductory in nature. It introduces classroom interaction in general. The classroom interaction, its aspects, level and some interactive activities have been further described in the following headings. Some research works have also been critically reviewed in this chapter and objectives of the study have been mentioned. The second chapter deals with the methodology adopted during the study. In the preparation of this thesis, both primary and secondary sources of data were used. Sampling procedure was purposive. The researcher used classroom observation checklist and questionnaire for teacher as a tool for data collection. The limitations of the study are also mentioned. Similarly, the third chapter deals with the analysis and interpretation of data collected in the classroom observation checklist and

questionnaire. The last chapter deals with findings of the study according to the analysis and interpretation; and some pedagogical suggestions made on the basis of the findings. In the final part of the thesis references and appendices have been included systematically.

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LIST OF SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS

%	:	Percentage
&	:	And
A.D.	:	Anno Domini
ALM	:	Audio Lingual Method
CLT	:	Communicative Language Teaching
CUP	:	Cambridge University Press
Dr.	:	Doctor
ELT	:	English Language Teaching
ESL	:	English as a Second Language
etc.	:	etcetera
e.g.	:	For example
G.T.	:	Grammar Translation
Mr.	:	Mister
Mrs.	:	Mistress
NELTA	:	Nepal English Language Teachers' Association
NNS	:	Non Native speaker
No.	:	Number
OUP	:	Oxford University Press
p.	:	Page
Prof.	:	Professor
T.U.	:	Tribhuvan University

CHAPTER- ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.2 General Background

In English, speech is a basic and primary skill which leads to the development of other language skills i.e. listening, reading and writing. Speech develops through interaction so it is inevitable for effective communication. Here, it is the interaction through which learners acquire a second language, second language is well organized through formal learning in the classroom. Classroom interaction is one of the best ways for second language acquisition. Ultimately, classroom interaction describes the form and the content of behavior or social interaction. In particular, it is the relationship between learners and teacher and learners and learners themselves. A wide range of methods have been adopted to investigate the amount and type of interaction. Thus, classroom interaction is a very important factor that determines the achievement of students in language, which will determine their further learning.

1.1.1 A Brief History of English Language Teaching Methods

There are various methods of ELT developed around the globe in different times. Among them some are out dated and some are still in use. There have been lots of changes in English language teaching. Richards and Rodgers (2009, p. 3) mention that changes in language teaching methods throughout history have reflected recognition of changes in the kind of proficiency rather than reading comprehension as the goal of language study; they have also reflected changes in theories of the nature of language and language learning. In the 18th century, the modern language replaced the old languages like Latin and Greek. In the beginning, English was taught using the same procedure that was used for teaching Latin. Teaching of grammar rules, list of vocabulary and sentences for translations were practiced. Speaking the foreign language was not the goal and oral practice was limited to students reading aloud the sentences they have

translated. This approach to language teaching was known as grammar translation method which was widely used for the English language teaching till 1940s.

In Nepal, before the implementation of New Education System Plan (NESP) in 1971 A.D., the Grammar – Translation (GT) method was used in teaching English. NESP was a revolution in the education system of Nepal. Package-programme was introduced and implemented for teachers training. Trainings were given about new methods in teaching English and other subjects to the teachers. As this method gives emphasis on grammar and translation, the students do not suppose to learn the actual means of language that is speech. Moreover, it emphasizes only on writing and vocabulary. It does not teach a language but about a language to the students. So, nowadays it is proved that the students do not learn the English language effectively through this method. As it has been criticized that this GT method gives no emphasis on the speaking skill of the second language. As a result, in the final decades of the 19th century, the GT method was attacked as old and lifeless method to language teaching. Thus, as in the other countries, the teachers in Nepal also started teaching English through ‘Direct method’. Teachers began attempting to teach a foreign language acquisition. Thus, the Direct method started with the emphasize on oral communication, use of the target language and development of the ability to think in the target language. Audio-lingual-method (ALM) began in America during the World War II. It was theoretically based on the structural linguistics and behavioural psychology. Drills and Pattern practice of structure in the form of dialogue were the core features of this method.

Nowadays communicative approach to teaching languages is being practiced in ELT. It means that teaching language is for the purpose of communication. Canale and Swain (1980, as cited in Richards and Rogers, 2009, p. 1) talk about the four components of communicative competence:

i) Grammatical Competence, ii) Sociolinguistic competence, iii) Discourse competence and iv) Strategic competence. Communicative competence includes organizational competence and pragmatic competence. Organizational competence includes grammatical and textual competence whereas pragmatic competence includes illocutionary and sociolinguistic competence.

Communicative language teaching (CLT) took place in 1970s as the reactions to all the preceding methods that could not focus on real communication.

Linguistics began to look at language not as interlocking sets of grammatical, lexical and phonological rules but as a tool for expressing meaning. This reconceptualization had a profound effect on language teaching methodology. In the earliest version of CLT, meaning was emphasized over form; fluency over accuracy. It also led to the development of various courses that reflected the different communicative needs of learners. This need based approach also reinforced another trend that was emerging at the time that of learner centered education. Hymes (1984, as cited in Larsen Freeman,2000, p.125), says that CLT method gives emphasis on the rules of use without which the rule of grammar would be useless. He lists four components. The first is whether or not something is formally possible. The second is whether or not something is feasible. The third is whether or not something is appropriate and the fourth is whether or not something is actually done.

A brief explanation of methods can be described as follows:

) **G.T Method**

Generally, this method is called traditional and classical method. In this method grammar is regarded as the central point of teaching. Thousands of vocabularies are learnt in isolation. Rules of grammar are more important and accuracy is emphasized. Having the knowledge of grammatical rules and vocabularies contribute in classroom interaction for example, if we do not have adequate vocabulary power, certainly we cannot communicate what we want.

) **Direct Method**

This method was introduced replacing the grammar translation method when the teachers frustrated by the limitation of G.T method. Teacher began to teach English language in a way that was more similar to first language acquisition. According to this method we can learn English through English it helps to conduct better classroom interaction.

) **Audiolingual Method**

We can take this method as a third phase in the history of English language teaching, It gives emphasis on teaching of listening and speaking before reading and writing. Likewise, it discourages use of mother tongue in the classroom. Listening and speaking comes within interaction so this method is also helpful on classroom interaction.

) **Communicative Language Teaching**

This method came into practice with the view to language is for communication. It emphasises that language is not only teaching of grammar or structure but it should address adequately the functional and communicative aspect of language.

CLT introduced with the design of school level English curriculum and textbook in 1995 in Nepal in order to enhance the students' communicative skills. The general objectives of the secondary level English curriculum are to enable the students to:

-) Develop an understanding and competence in spoken English and
-) Communicate fluently and accurately with other speakers of English.

These above mentioned objectives cannot be met unless there is the interaction between teacher and students and among the students in the classroom.

Classroom interaction provides the students with an opportunity to use the target language. The more the teacher can create environment for the interaction the more the learners learn the language. In this regard, this study helps to find

out whether or not the teachers and students interact in the classroom to develop the communicative competence. Another important method, under communicative approach is cooperative language learning. Which aims to foster cooperation rather than competition, to develop critical thinking skills, and to develop communicative competence through socially structured interaction activities (Richards and Rodgers, 2009, p. 195).

As my study is related to classroom interaction, I have discussed more about the classroom interaction in the following section

1.1.2 Classroom Interaction

Classroom can be defined as a place where more than two people gather together for the purpose of learning, with one having the role of teacher. Teachers have certain perception about their role in the classroom (Tsui, 1995, p. 1). Similarly, Gaies (1980) describes the classroom as the 'crucible' in which elements interact. The teacher and the students are the elements of interaction where both of the elements have their own particular needs and expectations that they hope to see satisfied (as cited in Tsui, 1995, p.3). So, classroom is the place where the teacher is present for teaching and students is for learning or in other words, environment is managed for teaching learning activities.

On the other hand, interaction is a kind of action that occurs as two or more objects have in effect up on one another. The idea of two way effect is essential in the concept of interaction, as opposed to a one way. Classroom interaction refers to the interaction between the teacher and learner and among the learners in the classroom. According to Ellis (1985, p. 127), interaction consists of discourse, jointly constructed by the learners and their interlocutors.

Classroom interaction is the type of language used in classroom situation; it is often different in form and function from the language used in other situations. Brown (2001, p. 165) says "Interaction is a collaborative exchange of thoughts,

feeling or ideas between two or more people resulting in reciprocal effect on each other." Rivers (1987, p. 4) defines interaction as:

Students get facility through language when their attention is focused on conveying and receiving authentic messages. Interaction involves not just expression of one's own ideas but comprehension of those of other, one listens to others, one responds (directly or indirectly) others listen and respond.

A good interactive teaching and learning includes the following characteristics:

-) A task of lesson which offers a challenge and gives pupils something to think about.
-) A positive learning which fosters confidence and respect enabling learners to give and accept constructive criticism and see errors as stepping stones to success.
-) Teaching which address a variety of learning styles has high expectation and allows thinking time.
-) Leadership, vision, which anticipates the need of teachers and pupils.
-) Appropriate resources in the right place. (Retrieved from <http://www.mape.org.uk/activities/disclose/resources/menu.html>,)

Communicative language teaching demands to ensure that the learners genuinely interact in the language classroom rather go through meaningless drills and abstract explanations. If the students are involving in the interaction in the classroom, we mean that they are learning. Teacher initiates a talk by asking questions or encouraging students to answer or giving lecture or commanding. The classroom interaction seems as greeting-acceptance, question-answer, command-obey etc. The more the students are involved in interaction the more they learn.

Classroom interaction generally means the talk between teacher and students or between/among students. Brown and Rodgers (2005, p. 26) opine that learners

and teacher meet in the classes in schools, multimedia labs, distance learning situation, one-to-one tutoring, on the job training, computer-based instruction and so on. In the classroom, teacher plays different roles. Regarding teachers' role in the classroom there are different roles discussed by different scholars. If we take a teacher as the one transmitting a message, then he or she can be seen as trying to communicate with whole class, a group of students, or an individual student at different points of the lesson. The class reacts to the teachers' action in different ways. They repeat something well, something badly, they give some answers correctly, and make mistakes with others; they follow the teachers' instructions' with some activities. In the classroom we see the action and reaction between the teacher and the students.

Learner can best learn by exchanging the knowledge and experience either in a group or in pair. In this regard, Harmer (2007, p. 51) suggests the three elements for successful language learning: engage (E), study (S) and activate (A). All three ESA elements need to be present in most lessons or teaching sequences. Whatever the main focus of the lesson, students always need to be engaged in practice, study and activities should be designed to get students using language as freely and communicatively as they can.

So, in the language classroom, interactions are more important because language is the subject of the study as well as the medium for learning. When the students listen to the teacher's instructions and explanations, when they express views, answer questions and carryout talks and activities, they are not only learning about the language but also putting the language that they are learning to use. In situations where the target language is seldom used outside the classroom and the students' exposure to the target language is therefore mainly in the classroom, the kind of input and interaction that is made available is particularly important.

1.1.2.1 Aspects of Classroom Interaction

Aspects of classroom interaction gives outline of relevance to language learning where the dominant pattern of interaction is that of teacher's question, student's response and teacher's feedback which are commonly found in all classroom and is typical of classroom exchanges. As we see, teacher talk not only takes up the largest portion of talk but also determines the topic of talk and who talks. It is therefore, teacher talk is a very important component of classroom interaction. So, it will be better to discuss further the following common aspects of classroom interaction.

(a) Teacher's Question

Educational studies on classroom language have examined the cognitive demands of teacher questions and their effects on students' learning. Studies on ESL classroom, however, have focused on the effect of teacher questions on learners' production of the target language and on the types of learner response. The modification of question to make them comprehensible to students and to elicit response is another important area of classroom interaction (Tsui, 1995, p.17). The teacher introduces the topic and directs a question at the whole class. He/she modifies the question when no response is forthcoming. After the students have answered the modified question as a group, the teacher then puts the previous question again to the students.

(b) Teacher Feedback and Error Treatment

Interactional feedback is an important source of information for learners. Most generally, it provides them with information about the success of their utterances and gives additional opportunities to focus on production or comprehension (Gass and Selinker, 2008, p.329). Teacher's feedback on students' response is an important element in classroom interaction. They are likely to frustrate if the teacher does not give positive feedback. In language classroom what the teacher considers an appropriate contributions and error is

very important, not only in terms of getting students to produce the target language and to engage in meaningful communication, but also in terms of their understanding of how the language works.

(c) Teacher Explanation

There are different ways of defining explanation. Some define it very generally as providing information or communicating content, other make a distinction between explanation of procedures and explanation of concepts, vocabulary and grammatical rules. Inappropriate explanation or over-explanation hinder rather than help students to comprehend (ibid, p. 16). The other important strategies that the teacher use while teaching vocabulary are giving examples, gestures, and anecdotes and so on. Likewise, the teacher explains about the background of a poem which facilitates the students to interact on the subject matter and their comprehension becomes easier.

(d) Modified Input and Interaction

Many researchers found that, in order to make teacher's speech comprehensible to learners, they tend to modify their speech by speaking more slowly, using exaggerated intonation, giving prominence to key words, using simpler syntax and a more basic set of vocabulary. On examining conversations among interlocutors, Long (1980) found that typically these conversations contain many modification devices, such as:

) Comprehension check

NNS1: I was born in Nagasaki. Do you know Nagasaki?

) Comprehension check

NNS1: And your family have some ingress

NNS2: Yes ah, OK OK.

NNS1: More or less OK?

) Confirmation check

NNS1: when can you go to visit me?

NNS2: visit?

) Clarification request

NNS1: ... research.

NNS2: Research, I don't know the meaning.

(as cited in Gass & Selinker, 2008, p. 319)

This is the result in the modification not only of the input but also of the structure of interaction. The modified discourse can be understandable and removes communication gap.

(e) Turn-Allocation and Turn-Taking Behaviours

The involvement of students in classroom interaction is largely determined by the turn-allocation behaviors of the teacher and turn-taking behavior of the students. To allocate turn to all students is something that all teachers strive to achieve and wish they often believe they have achieved. Allwright (1980) found that in fact some shy students take 'private turns' by giving answers or making comments that are for themselves instead of for the rest of the class (as cited in Tsui, 1995, p. 7). The teacher should wish to make these private turns public.

(f) Students Talk

Student's involvement in classroom learning is very important or an important form of involvement is students' participation in classroom interaction. Cultural factors, anxiety, gender etc. may be the factors that affect students' participation in the class. Sometimes, students are inactive because they are weak in English. But some students are inactive simply because they are shy or afraid of making mistakes. An effective way to alleviate these factors is to remove the performative and evaluative nature of speaking in class. This can be achieved by group work, where students interact with their peers in a collaborative manner. In terms of language learning, group work provides

students with the opportunity to engage in genuine communication where they produce coherent discourse rather than isolated sentences, hence helping them to acquire discourse competence rather than linguistic competence. The interactive learning activities that we can adopt in classroom are later be introduced in this chapter.

1.1.2.2 Levels of Interaction

Interaction is a collaborative exchange of thoughts and ideas between two or more people in a certain issue. Regarding this, interactive teaching involves the interaction between the teacher and the students and interaction among the students.

a. Students-teacher Interaction

Students-teacher interaction is often a two way process where the teacher encourages the students to participate more actively in class. Students remain more active to learn. When students are well motivated in the subject matter, they will ask for additional information. They will be supported by the leader to take part in activities. Their attentiveness and willingness to learn will in turn motivate the teacher to teach.

b. Interaction among the Students

Interaction among the students enhances their communicative performance. The students involving themselves in interaction helps them to achieve better educational outcomes, recall the information and apply knowledge to new and novel situations. Interaction among the students develops communicative competence, co-operative learning skills and motivate for learning. Thus, the interaction among the students helps to establish the foundation of the development of independent, self-directed and good learning skills.

1.1.2.3 Interactive Activities in the Classroom

There are various kinds of interactive activities practiced in language classroom which enhance and make teaching learning activities more collaborative. These sorts of activities always show the proficiency of teachers and learners for such activities, both the parties (teacher and learners) must pay attention equally and participate actively. Some of the common activities are discussed below:

(a) Pair Work

According to Cross (1992, p. 430), "Pair work is one of the important learner centered techniques which is often used in a communicative classroom. It is a management task for developing communicative ability". Pair work makes students engage in interaction to each other. During pair work teacher has two roles, as a monitor and a resource person. In pair work, students can practice language together, study a text, research language and take part in information gap activities. They can write dialogues, predict the content of reading texts and compare notes on what they have listened. It increases the amount of speaking time and allows students to work and interact independently.

(b) Group Work

The teacher divides the whole class in small groups to work together in group work. It is a learning activity which involves a small group of learners working together. The group may work on a single task or on a different part of large task. Tasks for group members are often selected by the members of the group but a limited number of options are provided by the teacher.

(c) Role Play

Role play can be used in large class. It is a way of bringing real life situation in the classroom. When we do role play, we ask students to imagine. They may imagine a role and situation. According to Brown (2001, p.183), role play mainly involves:

-) Giving role to one or more members of a group and
-) Assigning an objective or purpose that participants must accomplish.

Brown suggested that role play can be conducted with a single person, in pair or in groups, with each person assigned a role to accomplish an objective. Role play is a simple and a brief technique to organize in the classroom. It is highly flexible, initiative and imaginative. It encourages students to talk and communicate ideas with friends. It makes classroom interactive. A variety of language function, structures, game can be practiced in the classroom through the role play.

(d) Discovery Technique

Discovery technique is the technique where students are given examples of language and told to find out how they work to discover the grammar rules rather than be told them (Harmer, 1987, p. 29). Discovery techniques aim to give students a chance to take charge earlier. The activities which fall under discovery technique make students active and thoughtful and invite them to use their reasoning processes/cognitive powers.

According to Richards, Platt and Platt (1996, p.290), discovery technique is based on the following principles:

- i. Learners develop processes associated with discovery and inquiry by observing, inferring, formulating hypothesis, predicting and communicating.
- ii. Teachers use a teaching style which supports the process of discovery and communicating.
- iii. Teachers use a teaching style which supports the process of discovery and inquiry.
- iv. Textbooks are not the sole sources of learning.
- v. Conclusions are considered tentative and not final.

- vi. Learners are involved in planning, conducting and evaluating their own learning with the teacher playing a supportive role.

Discovery technique is of great help to teach vocabulary and grammar materials which allow students to activate their previous knowledge and to share what they know. They also provoke a kind of interaction with words and structure which helps them to make them livelier.

This technique encourages students to learn themselves. So that, the class will be interactive and motivated. Moreover, it leads to better understanding and clear interpretation of the sentence. Here, the teacher does not tell the students how the language works or what the grammar is but the students themselves actually find out meaning and grammatical information.

(e) Project Work

According to Richards, et al. (1996, p.295), the project work is an activity which tends around the completion of a task and usually requires an extended amount of independent work either by an individual student or by a group of students, much of this work-takes place outside classroom.

Similarly, focusing on the importance of project work, Ur (1996, p. 232), says, "Project work fosters learners' responsibility and independence, improves motivation and contribute to a feeling of co-operative and warmth in the class."

Project work has been introduced as a part of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). It integrates all language skill involving a number of activities that requires all language skills. Project work provides one solution for the problem of autonomy of making the learners responsible for their own. It emphasizes on group centered experience and it is co-operative and interactive rather than competitive. This technique encourages imagination, creativity, collaboration, research and study skills.

Project work normally involves a lot of resources, e.g. time, people, materials etc. The learners practice a range of skills and language systems. In the classroom, project work may provide many opportunities to meet a variety of learning aims but it requires strong classroom management skills.

(f) Teacher Talk

Ellis (1996, p. 146), defines, "teacher talk as the language that the teacher addresses to the L2 learners, with its own specific, formal and interactional properties." He further summarizes that "the teacher talk occurs in one to many interaction, where the learners may vary in their levels of proficiency and where there is likely to be limited feedback from the few students."

It is only the oral form rather than written form which is investigated under teacher talk. It is a language used by a teacher inside a classroom rather than elsewhere. Teacher talk has its own special features such as the restriction of the physical setting, special participants as well as the goals of teaching. Therefore, teacher talk in English classroom is regarded as one special variety of the English language. The dominance of teacher talk is not an uncommon phenomenon in classroom interaction and a number of studies have been devoted to investigating its characteristics and effects on students' interaction patterns or the characteristics that make teacher talk effective. It is especially used in class when teachers are conducting instructions, cultivating their ability and managing classroom activities.

1.2 Review of Related Literature

There are few researches related to classroom interaction in the Department of English Education have been carried out, however, this is one of the most important area to make reform in language learning. Some of the researches which are somehow related to my study are as follows.

Sinclair and Coulthard (1978), carried out a dissertation on classroom discourse. They analyzed the interaction of eight to eleven years old children and their

class teachers in different subjects. Their analysis propounded a theoretical model of analyzing classroom discourse in terms of five discourse units: lesson, transaction, exchange, move and act, from top to bottom respectively.

Similarly, Edmondson (1981), carried out a study on spoken discourse. His dissertation concentrated in the use of language in classrooms. He has also investigated the conversation behavior in relation to its use and effects in terms of linguistics orientation. He came to an important conclusion that teachers' and students' social roles and relationship in the classroom play crucial role in classroom interaction. His study also showed that teachers very often ask question as a teaching activity and the turn-taking in the classroom was controlled by the teacher.

Phyak (2006), carried out a study on "How does a teacher interact with students in English classroom?" The major objective of this study was to find out the discourse strategies used by teachers to interact with their students in the classroom. He selected a government aided school out of Kathmandu valley using purposive sampling procedure. Class observation checklist was used as a main tool for data collection. He analyzed the information obtained from the data descriptively and analytically. He reached a conclusion that there was one-way interaction in the classroom. The classroom language used by both teachers and students was not polite. He found that it was not due to the power relationship but due to culture and lack of exposure. His study revealed that one of the real problem in teaching of English in the context of Nepal was the lack of classroom interaction strategies from both teachers' and students' side.

Raut (2010), conducted a research entitled "Conversational analysis of classroom interaction". The main objective of the study was to analyze the common features of classroom interaction. He selected three private boarding school of Kathmandu valley applying judgmental sampling and recorded the nine conversations between the students of grade nine. Observation checklist

and tape recorder were used as research tools to elicit the required data. The collected data was analyzed using different tables. The major findings of his study are that most of classroom interactions between students started with 'hi/hey' and ended with the terms like: bye/bye'/sec you'. Adjacency pairs are the key features of classroom interaction which are found as the form of question-answer and offer acceptance sequence.

Chimariya (2011), carried out a research entitled "A study of classroom interaction at secondary level." The objective of his study was to find out the practice of classroom interaction at secondary English classes. He selected ten secondary schools and twenty English teachers who were teaching at secondary level of Sankhuwasava district purposively. He observed the classes and took some notes in his diary. On the basis of the classroom observation checklist the collected information was tabulated, analyzed and interpreted by using simple statistical tools such as: percentage, tables, bar diagram and charts. After analyzing the data he found out that most of the classroom interactions were initiated by the teachers and those conversations were authoritative, formulaic and based on rote learning.

Dhungana (2011), conducted a study entitled "Classroom management in teaching of speaking". He aimed to indentify the ways of managing classroom to tackle the problems in teaching speaking at lower secondary level. He observed 4 classes of sampled teachers on the basis of observation check list. He analyzed the information received from the collected data by using tables, pie charts and bar graphs. The result of this study showed that 70% of the classes were conducted with no consideration on language focus of the activities. He found that in a very few classes (22.5%), teachers motivated their students towards the speaking skill where as in 77.5 percent of the classes, the students were not motivated. He concluded that most of the teachers did not use eye contact while speaking with the students and mother tongue was used most of the time as the medium of instruction.

Nepal (2011), conducted a research on "Use of communicative Language Teaching in Nepalese Context." The main objective of the study was to find out challenges faced by English language teachers in the use of communicative language teaching. He made a survey in Morang district. He selected forty secondary level English language teachers who were teaching in different ten government-aided and ten private schools of Morang district using simple random sampling procedure. He used questionnaire and class observation checklist as a tool to elicit data. He analyzed the systematically collected data with quantitative approach. From the study he found that large sized classroom and lack of teachers' sound knowledge are problems for applying in reading and writing rather in listening and speaking, students were passive listeners, more than 90% teachers opined that interaction as the best activity in language teaching.

Various above mentioned studies focus on different aspect of interaction, for example, some focuses on classroom discourse and spoken discourse. Some has the aim to find out the discourse strategies used by teachers to interact with their students. Some focuses on features of classroom interaction as well as some focuses on interaction practices and management in teaching of speaking.

Although many researchers have been done in the field of interaction however there are almost no research has been carried out on "Students' participation in ELT classroom interaction" to my knowledge. So, the present study is a new study as it attempts to explore the existing situation of students' participation in classroom interaction at higher secondary level English classes.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the present study were as follows:

-) To find out the existing situation of students' participation in classroom interaction at higher secondary English classes.
-) To suggest some pedagogical implications.

1.4 Significance of the Study

In language, speech is a basic and preliminary skill; which leads to the development of other language skills i.e. listening, reading and writing. Speech develops through interaction and teacher-students interaction is very important for students, in this regard, there is no adequate exposure of English for most students in Nepal. The classroom interaction is a very important factor that determines the achievement of students in languages, which will determine their further learning. My study will be useful to the novice teachers who have just begun their teaching carrier. This study will equally be beneficial for experienced teachers to conduct better classroom interaction, as this study concerned with the classroom interaction.

CHAPTER- TWO

METHODOLOGY

The following procedures were adopted to fulfill the above mentioned objectives.

2.1 Sources of Data

To meet the objectives of the study, the researcher used both primary and secondary sources of data.

2.1.1 Primary Sources

The primary sources of my study were the English language teachers and students of grade 12 of Baglung district.

2.1.2 Secondary Sources

The secondary sources of data were the various books and articles, such as : Rivers (1988), Cross (1992), Tsui (1995), Ur (1996), Brown (2001), Brown and Rodgers (2005), Phyak (2006), Harmer (2007), Gass & Selinker (2008), and Richards and Rodgers (2009).

2.2 Population of the Study

The population of the study was 10 Higher Secondary level English language teachers and students from same schools of Baglung district.

2.3 Sampling Procedure

Ten higher secondary schools and ten English teachers (one teacher from each school) teaching at higher secondary level of Baglung district were purposively selected for the study.

2.4 Tools for Data Collection

I used two tools, questionnaire and classroom observation checklist to elicit the required information for the study.

2.5 Process of Data Collection

In order to collect data for the research, I visited ten higher secondary schools then I selected ten English teachers and explained the purpose of my visit after getting the permission from school authority. I distributed the questionnaire and requested them to answer the question within half an hour. I also observed two classes of each teacher to find the students' participation in classroom interaction. Finally they were thanked for their support.

2.6 Limitations of the Study

The study had the following limitations:

- i. The study was limited to higher secondary schools of Baglung district.
- ii. It was limited within the students' participation in classroom interaction in their English classes.
- iii. It was observed only twenty compulsory English classes of grade XII.
- iv. The population was selected only from the school of Baglung district.
- v. There were 10 higher secondary English teachers and students of respective school for the study.
- vi. Only two classes per teacher were observed for the study.

CHAPTER -THREE

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This chapter deals with analysis and interpretation of the collected data from primary sources. This study primarily was aimed at finding out various types of classroom interaction practiced at higher secondary English classes. The information received from the primary sources is analyzed and interpreted after direct classroom observation and answer of the question given by higher secondary English teachers.

3.1 Analysis of Classroom Observation

Twenty classes of ten teachers (T1- T10) were observed from different schools. My aim was to find out the situation of students' participation in ELT classroom interaction. Item-wise analysis and interpretation of activities gained from classroom observation has been presented below.

3.1.1 Participation in Classroom Interaction at the Beginning of the Class

Every teacher was aware of warm-up period. Though, they took it as a formality. Actually they did not allocate proper time for this session. Students were not paying attention to this phase. It was not so interesting as well. Only second time of class observation, it was tried better. In 13 classrooms, girls were sitting in the front side but they were rarely found that they answered the teachers' question.

Only three teachers (T3, T5 and T8) revised previous lesson in a short. They were not able to make their students participate in their teaching learning activities. Most of the teachers (T1, T3, T4, T5, T6 and T9) started the lesson writing on the board and described themselves. Three teachers (T2, T3, and T10) asked questions at the initiation stage to the whole class but not individually. Girls and boys took part in whole class responding to the teachers' question. Girls were found listening more attentively in comparison to boys. In

all the classrooms observed; it was found that students' activities in classroom interaction were mostly depended on the tasks given and directed by the teachers. In this regards, teachers asked questions then the students responded them, only seven students asked to clarify or repeat the subject matter. Interaction between teachers and students was found regularly while practicing. Three classes had interaction between students but I did not find the equal participation of girls and boys.

In fourteen classes I observed; it could be seen that teachers' explanation of the content in English but sometimes they explained in Nepali too. I found that students felt easier when the teacher used Nepali language to explain the content. Most of the time students remained silent when the teacher described the subject matter in English. Sometimes they asked to repeat again using Nepali language, "*pheribhannus ta sir.*" When teacher was writing on the board, students were found talking in Nepali language.

Generally, teachers did not express anger and shouts towards their students. Some girls who were sitting at the back of the classroom expressed shyness while answering to the teacher's question. No teachers encouraged their students to ask question or give opinion in classroom interaction but frequently they asked questions to the students either individually or to the whole class.

The teachers gave different examples to clarify the course content, they explained their own experiences but they did not give any chance to share the experiences of the students in relation to the content. There could be found many examples from the students' side if they were pushed to provide a little bit.

While observing the class, one thing I found that a very few teachers (T6 and T8) allowed their students to check the response of other students. In most of the cases, teachers were hurrying to correct the mistakes made by their students. Another point I found that enough wait-time was not provided to think and

respond to the students. They provided three/ four seconds of wait-time after most of the questions asked which was not sufficient for learners to think and respond. And immediately after that either the teachers asked another student or it was asked other question to the same student.

3.1.2 Use of Teaching Materials in Classroom Interaction

Teachers can make the students interact with the materials. In my observation, some of the teachers (T4, T6, and T9) did not use any materials. One of the teachers (T3) brought a material (poster) where people were dancing and wearing a typical cultural dress. The lesson was about culture. He used this material properly in the first stage and made the class interactive but he did not remove that while not using. So the students were concentrating on the picture and did not pay attention on his rest of activities. Three teachers entered with teaching material into the classroom but did not use in proper way. Some other teachers (T1, T2, T3 and T5) neither used teaching materials nor allowed their students to use materials for interaction. Those classes were not so interesting and interactive as well. They only used daily used materials like white board, marker and textbooks. The students were limited to use only textbook which was in their hand.

3.1.3 Fluency and Accuracy in Speaking

In seventeen classes, the teachers spoke fluently, accurately and used appropriate language according to the level of the students. But only twelve students participated in interaction, whose fluency and accuracy was poor. Only the memorized chunks were spoken fluently and accurately by the students. One thing I found from class observations is that the students who were studying in private school had better fluency and accuracy than that of public school. The content which was memorized was found fluently produced but the subject matter in relation to the students' experience and opinion was produced slowly,

inaccurately and with long pause, sometimes it was stopped without completing their opinion.

3.1.4 Analysis of Group Work and Pair Work

At the time of class observation, I found only five classes (T4, T5, T6, T8 and T9) that the group work had been conducted. I did not find any group work in rest of all classes. Boys were selected as group leaders in every group. No girls took part as a leader of the group. Some teachers (T1, T2, T3, and T7) were indifferent in forming groups and selecting the leader. They did not encourage the girls to be the leader of their group. There were three to five students in a group. Most of the discussions conducted were formulaic and readymade type but not situational and creative. All the students used similar previously learned structure. Most of the activities were conducted only within the situation given in the text book. Two teachers (T2 and T5) were unable to correlate the task in different context. Three groups were taking part actively and their activities were purposeful. Four boys practiced outside the class while I was leaving the class. The students who took part in interaction frequently, their performance was excellent but students who took part sometimes their performance was not good. The performance of the third group was not purposeful and the students were passive in doing the task, though the teacher was moving around the groups and facilitating them. The reason I would like to mention here is that the students' low level of proficiency in English language. In my classroom observation I noticed another thing that the teachers were not able to divide the students into similar groups that would help to co-operate and interact among the students who have different level of proficiency. Likewise, next thing that I found from the observation is lack of motivation towards the activities. Teachers should provide immediate feedback to the students, instead of doing this some of the teachers (T3 and T8) laughed at the students who were producing inappropriate utterances.

3.1.5 Interaction in Evaluation Session of the Class.

Classroom interaction is determined by the questions that the teachers ask. The comprehensiveness of question is also determined by the way how s/ he present the questions to the students. In fifteen classes the teacher asked questions related to the subject matter that he had taught in that period. All the teachers (T1,T2,T3,T4....T10) asked close-ended questions more often but open-ended questions in lower extent. Moreover, all teachers' behaviour of asking closed-ended question, for example, " Does ' mat' come before ' man'?" to both the boys and girls was good in all schools. It means teachers behaved or asked equally close- ended questions to the boys and the girls. But in terms of open-ended question in most of the classes, such questions were directed more often to the boys in comparison to the girls. After open-ended questions majority of teachers (T2, T3, T4, T8, T9, and T10) did not provide enough wait- time to think, discuss and respond to the students. In most of the cases teachers were less skillful to modify their question. six boys tried to give answer the open-ended question but girls kept silent. They answered the questions only which they knew confidently. Girls did not dare to response, any of the questions asked by the teacher, four boys who were sitting at the back of the classroom felt discomfort when the teacher asked them question, they did not speak a single word. In such a condition the teachers expressed dissatisfaction and anger towards them. Particularly teachers were not encouraging to all of the students equally. Anyway, all the teachers corrected the wrong answer produced by the students.

3.1.6 Teacher Feedback to the Students' Responses

Teacher feedback after students' responses is one of the affective aspects in classroom interaction. In most of the classes, all teachers used small solicits such as words and phrases while providing oral feedback. They provided feedback on average. They mostly used corrective and evaluative feedback.

Sometimes, they used negative feedback strategies and in some cases all the teachers remained neutral as well. It means they did not provide any feedback to the students after their response. While using positive feedback strategies more than half of the teachers used the language such as ‘yes’, ‘you are right’, ‘good attempt’, ‘go ahead’, and ‘o.k.’. The following classroom examples illustrate these ideas.

T1 used positive feedback strategy in one instance as:

Teacher: How do you describe ‘castle’?

Punam: ‘Big house’, ‘huge’.

Teacher: O.K. That’s right.

Similarly, two teachers frequently used, ‘No’, ‘Not’, ‘Wrong answer’, etc. while providing negative feedback as given in the following examples from classroom observation.

Teacher: Tell me the meaning of ‘hobby’.

Boy: ‘Uddheshya’.

Teacher: No. Not ‘uddheshya’. Hobby means something that you like to do.

Majority of the teachers did not treat the boys and the girls differently in case of providing feedback but their way of providing feedback was not quite satisfactory and useful in many cases. In some cases all the teachers rarely praised students’ responses. Thus, it can be interpreted that most of the interaction was limited within teacher initiation and students’ responses. At the end of the class very few teachers gave conclusion of the lesson.

3.2 Analysis of the Questionnaire Responded by the Teachers.

In order to make the study more authentic and reliable, a set of questionnaire of open-ended questions was designed to ask for English language teachers. The

main concern of asking questions to the language teachers was to explore the existing situation of students' participation in classroom interaction in ELT classes. So this sub-section deals with the analysis and interpretation of the data based on the language teachers' responses or opinions. These questions were asked to get general information and opinions from the respondents. There were altogether eleven questions which were concerned mainly with conducting interactive activities in the classroom. These have been analyzed and interpreted descriptively as below.

The first question in this set of questionnaire was asked to define interaction, whether it is necessary or not to make teaching activity effective and asked to provide appropriate idea for their explanation. All the teacher viewed that interaction is a classroom activity where communication is held between or among the students and the teacher. They added that the classroom interaction is essential component of teaching learning process. It is an inevitable part of ELT which helps the students to improve in speaking.

The second question was concerned with the types of activities that they use for classroom interaction. They answered that they use pair work, group work, question answer and picture description. According to them sometimes they conduct a debate involving some bright students to promote their speaking skill and such activity may be a model for other students. In response to this question T3 added that he conducts project work and language games for classroom interaction.

All the teachers' common answer of the third question is 'Yes, they ask the questions related to subject matter, and they added that students ask in confusion or they do not understand the explanation and sometimes they ask to repeat again. T5 mentioned: (*Some of my students ask me about my personal matter, such as my marital status, family etc.*)

The fourth question was concerned with the use of English language by the students to talk with teacher and their friends in the classroom. T1 responded this question that the most of the students are not interested to use English language not only with their teacher but also with their friends. Few students who are eager to learn, they try to use it. Majority of the teachers (T3, T4, T6, T7, T9, and T10) viewed that their students feel hesitation to talk in English and only a few students try to speak English in their class with their friends. In general, their answers are similar to that of others is, the students do not use English language to talk with teacher and with their friends in the classroom. But two teachers (T1 and T5) of private school viewed that the students speak in English language in their English classes frequently. Different teachers responded this question using their own ideas, experiences and views; in conclusion very few students speak in English with their teacher as well as with their friends.

The fifth question was that, "How do you encourage speaking in English in your classroom for those who do not want to speak in English?" All the teachers responded differently to this question. T4 said that he encourages his students to speak in English without any hesitation in a way whatever the structure they produce whether they speak right or wrong and he lets them free to speak any way they like. Others responded that they establish close relation with the students so that they can remove humiliation and hesitation with the teachers. They use simple classroom language to encourage their students to speak English. Some teachers (T2, T5, and T8) said that they create life like situation in the class and inspire the students to speak. After the production of word, phrase or sentence by their students, though they are not sensible or grammatically incorrect, teachers provide reinforcement immediately.

The sixth statement was, 'Interaction helps the students to acquire second language'. All the teachers agreed with this fact. They justified that speech is preliminary thing of language learning. Listening and speaking can be

developed through interaction. Supporting the statement they viewed that it helps to remove errors and shyness of the students and enhance their fluency and accuracy. Interaction makes language teaching effective. Students get opportunity to share ideas, knowledge and skill so that they can solve the language problem easily. Teachers added that even the weak students get benefit from CI.

Similarly, the seventh question was asked to identify whether the girls and boys take part equally in pair work, role play and group work and it was asked to supply the reasons of not participating equally. Majority of respondents (T2, T4, T5, T6, T8, T9, and T10) said that the girls do not take part actively in role play, pair/ group work or project work because of their shyness, social tradition and due to physical structure. They viewed that the boys seem more active than the girls though they have no command over subject matter but girls are always back because of their hesitation. According to response given by few teachers (T1, and T3) either boys or girls those who were talented in English take part actively but weak one did not.

The eighth question was concerned with the measures that the language teacher applies for the participation of students in classroom interaction. In response of this question T6 mentioned: 'At the beginning I neglect the grammatical errors of the students while speaking. I try to apply communicative approach in classroom interaction.' Some teachers (T3, T4, and T9) viewed that they ask to memorize some sentences, structures or paragraph and ask to recall them in front of the class, somehow it helps to build confidence. In this regard T5 said conducting dialogue, drill and question –answers are some ways to involve students in interaction. He further added that first of all teachers should make students open their mouth.

From this, it can be inferred that for successful interaction let the students free to speak and in the initial stage of speaking grammatical mistakes should be ignored.

In response to question number nine, most of the teachers (T1, T2, T3, T5, T7, T8, and T9) were in favour of both the interactive activity. According to them they used student-student interaction because one student can express his/her ideas freely without hesitation, with his/her friends. At the time of student-student interaction, teacher should not hinder their activity, environment should be created to feel easy but the teacher can observe indirectly so that she/he can give feedback. Some teachers (T4, T7 and T10) mentioned that they used student-teacher interaction because only the student-student interaction may not complete the entire objectives so, student-teacher interaction is essential for guiding the students properly.

The tenth question was related about how the teachers conduct classroom interaction in their English classes. All the respondents viewed that they ask questions individually, give a topic for discussion, form groups according to their competency level then give a task, make different pairs and have a conversation. They further added that they support and help to make their activities easier. T4 and T5 viewed observation is must in students' participation in CI, when the certain task is over then the teacher should give him/ her creative feedback. T8 responded that informal talking with students establishes close relation with them. So that they can express their ideas even though their utterance is grammatically incorrect. He said that he keeps his students away from threats of grammatical mistake.

Finally, the eleventh question was 'What languages do your students feel comfortable to speak with you and with their friends outside the class? If they speak other than English language, do you encourage students to speak in English language?' In general, the entire respondents viewed that the students

feel comfortable to speak in Nepali language with their teachers and friends. English teachers felt that English language is lacking environment to speak everywhere. They added although the context is not in favour of English language, teachers are trying their best to encourage their students speak in English language. T3 responded a little bit differently. He mentioned: 'Though I know that it is better to encourage my students to speak in English language not only inside the class but also outside the classroom. I have not encouraged them yet to speak in English outside the classroom. I want to advise to add one more code of conduct for the students of higher secondary level that they must speak in English wherever they meet their English teacher.' Few teachers (T5 and T10) who were teaching in private school viewed that their students feel comfortable to speak in both Nepali and English language outside the classroom.

CHAPTER- FOUR

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Findings

On the basis of the analysis and interpretation of the data, the following findings have been derived.

- i. Regarding the students' participation in classroom interaction, few teachers (T2, T3 and T10) asked questions to the whole class and they asked the questions in similar way, there was no variety or modification in the questioning. So it was apparently mechanical. The question answer based on rote learning or confined only to lesson is not an interaction in a true sense. It seemed that the question answer in the class was just examining how much they have learnt.
- ii. It was found that when the teachers asked open-ended question, they did not provide apt wait-time to think and respond to the students such questioning behaviour of the teacher may discourage the students' responding.
- iii. Some of the teachers (T2, T7 and T10) brought teaching materials for interactive activities but they did not use properly.
- iv. The content which was related to the students experience and opinion was produced slowly, inaccurately and with long pause. Sometime it was stopped without completing the sentence.
- v. I found that the students who used to take part in group/ pair work or question-answer, they could speak more fluently and accurately than those who were passive in interactive activities.
- vi. Majority of the teachers (T2,T4,T5,T6,T8 and T9) viewed that they conduct pair/ group work in the classroom but very few classes(five) were found having pair /group work where the activities were not satisfactory to enhance students' interactive activity.

- vii. From the classroom observation, it was found that the boys were more active in answering the questions than the girls.
- viii. I found almost all informants responded that listening and speaking are the most emphasized skills except T2. However, in actual class observation they were found to use reading and writing with much attention.
- ix. Most of the teachers opined that the students feel comfortable to speak in Nepali even in English classes because our mind is full of Nepali language.
- x. Many teachers were found that they had the knowledge of classroom interaction but they were not applying in real field because of the examination system that only emphasises on reading and writing.

4.2. Recommendations

On the basis of the findings from the analysis and interpretation of data, some recommendations have been made. They are as follows:

- i. Teacher should ask questions individually to their students in varieties of way. Question should not be limited within to test how much content students have learnt but it should be creative and to response students' opinion.
- ii. Modified questions should be asked for better comprehension and girls should be encouraged for active participation in classroom interaction.
- iii. Pair work in classroom is important for language learning. Therefore, the teachers should make their students participate actively.
- iv. All the language skills should be equally emphasized by the teachers and learners.
- v. Sufficient teaching materials should be managed in the classroom and used properly.

- vi. The keys to learning a foreign language effectively are the clear-cut plans of teachers for the lesson and the extensive practice on the items learned through a variety of amusing activities on students' and teacher's side. There should be plenty of oral practice for speaking the real language. All the activities that have been doing by the students should be equally observed and special care is required for the poor ones.
- vii. Teacher should provide enough time to think and respond after asking open-ended question.
- viii. Theoretical knowledge of the teachers should be applied honestly in their practical field.
- ix. While designing English syllabus for grade 12, syllabus designers and experts should include interactional activities and it should be better to allocate 20 percent marks for listening and speaking in the final exam of grade 12.

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