

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 General Background

Language is the most advanced and powerful means of human communication. It is species specific and species uniform possession of human beings. It is the universal medium to express human thoughts, feelings, ideas and emotions. The vast knowledge in different fields of human activity is accumulated and stored by the use of language. Most of the activities of the world are carried out through language such as, transmitting human civilization, literature, political and diplomatic activities and human achievements. Thus, according to Richards et al. (1985), “language is the system of human communication by means of structured arrangement of sounds to form larger units” (p. 153). The definition shows that language refers to the system of sound and words by human to express their thoughts and feelings. In this regard Jespersen (1994) writes:

Language is not an end in itself, just as little as railway tracks, it is a way of connection between souls, a means of communication . . . language is the most complete, the richest, the best means of communication it bridges the physical chasm between individuals . . . (p. 4).

This shows that it is essential for an individual to get mastery over any languages to survive in a society. There are so many languages in the world. Among them, the English language is the most prestigious and dominant one. According to Harmer (2003), it is the international language and a vital tool for any student to become successful in communication (p. 18). For him (ibid), although English is not a language of the largest number of native or first language speakers, it has become a lingua franca because of historical, economic, and cultural factors which have influenced and sustained the spread as the language.

1.1.1 Acquisition and Learning of Language

As language is the most widely used means of communication, it is common to all and only human beings. That is, it is the greatest accomplishment of human civilization. There are two different ways of gaining mastery over a language:

- By acquisition, and
- By learning.

Language acquisition takes place in an informal social situation. It is a subconscious and spontaneous process of picking up of a language which results into knowing the language. In contrary to this, language learning takes place in a formal and academic setting. It is a conscious process of knowing the rules of a language which results into knowing about the language. This shows that first language is acquired and second language is learnt. To clarify this concept, it is better to take help of Mitchell and Myles (2004, pp. 5-6).

According to them, second languages are any languages other than the learner's native language or mother tongue. They include both language of wider communication encountered within the local region or community and truly foreign language, which have no immediately local uses or speakers. They may indeed be second language learners working with, in a literal sense, or they may be their third, fourth or even fifth language. It is sensible to include 'foreign' languages under our more general term of 'second' languages because we believe that the underlying learning processes are essentially the same for more local and for more remote target language, despite differing learning purposes and circumstances.

1.1.2 Second Language Acquisition

The term 'second language' refers to the language other than one's mother tongue used for special purpose such as education, government, trade and so on. Second language acquisition, SLA in short, includes how people or learners are able to learn an additional language after they have acquired their mother tongue. So, second language acquisition stands in contrast with the first language acquisition. SLA is possible in a foreign language context as well as

in a native one. It is general term that embraces both tutored (classroom) acquisition and untutored (naturalistic) acquisition. This shows that SLA is the subconscious/conscious process by which a language other than the mother tongue is learnt in a natural or tutored setting. To clarify what an SLA is, it is better to consult the following definitions:

Gass and Selinker (2008) defined SLA as the process of learning another language after the native language has been learned. Sometimes the term refers to the learning of a third or fourth language (p. 7). For them, it is the language that is learnt after the first language is acquired. In the similar regard Ellis (1985) writes that SLA is not a uniform and predictable phenomenon...(It) is the product of many factors pertaining to the learning on the one hand and the learning situation on the other (p. 4). His definition expresses that the process of SLA does not occur in a predictable order. The learning itself and the situation of learning are such factors that determine how learning of a language takes place. Mitchell and Myles (2004) defined focusing on the pattern of language learning and stated that the learning of the 'second' language takes place sometimes later than the acquisition of the first language (p. 5). This shows that it is the study of how learners learn additional language after they have acquired their mother tongue. It is used as a general term that embraces both untutored (naturalistic) and tutored (classroom) acquisition. It is the process of learning a language after acquiring one's L1, i.e., the mother tongue. What is common in these three definitions is that SLA is the gaining the knowledge of another language after the acquisition of one's first language. It can be any language that is learnt after getting mastery over the first language.

1.1.3 Some Requirements for Language Learning

As a conscious process of getting mastery over language(s), second language learning needs some specific conditions to have success in second language proficiency. These requirements for successful SLA, according to Gass (2003) are:

- Positive evidence (input),
- Negative evidence (feedback), and
- Output.

In this regard, Gass (2003) writes, “the input (positive evidence) basically comprises the set of well-formed sentences to which learners are exposed. As the most direct means that learners have available to them from which they can form linguistic hypotheses, these exposures are available from the both spoken and written form of the language. It is also called models as it provides means to have learning the language” (p. 225).

Feedback, i.e, negative evidence is, according to Gass (ibid), the type of information that is provided to learners concerning the incorrectness of an utterance. It is the feedback in learners’ utterance which is incorrect so that it can be corrected and learning takes places. For him (ibid), it is of two types:

- Pre-emptive
- Reactive

Pre-emptive feedback occurs before an actual error in the process of learning. Reactive feedback is of again two types-explicit and implicit. According to him, explicit evidence is an overt correction where as an implicit evidence can result in a communication breakdown or in a recast.

Output is the third requirement that is necessary to have successful second language learning. The focus on output as a requirement for successful learning is that the activity of producing the target language may enable second language learners to consciously recognize their linguistic problems and make them more aware of something they need to know about the target language. Thus, it is through the production of output that promotes ‘noticing’ which helps learners to recognize a gap between what they want to say and what they actually say.

1.1.4 Input, Interaction and Output in SLA

Input, Interaction and Output all have determinant role in second language acquisition. The second language acquisition process cannot be completed in absence of any one of them. Here, an attempt has been made to explain them and their role in SLA in three different sub-headings as below:

1.1.4.1 Input in SLA

In general, the language exposure that is available to learners is the input. It is what is given to the learners. We have a well known fact that comprehensible and appropriately contextualized second language data are necessary for learning to take place. For successful second language learning, an exposure to comprehensible input is both necessary and sufficient. We should know that speaking is a result of acquisition and not its cause. Similarly, when input is understood, it will be enough for learning. That is, comprehensible input is the key to learning. However, the precise developmental contribution of the language used to address second language learners first attracted serious attention from psycholinguists and second language researchers in the light of the input hypothesis.

Crystal (2003) writes that input refers to a term used in PSYCHOLINGUISTICS to refer to the external linguistic DATA available to speakers in the course of acquiring a language (p. 236). By this definition too, it is clear that what is exposed as language exposure to the learners is the input.

(i) Role of Input in SLA

In second language acquisition, input has paramount importance since the input formed the basis of what was imitated and therefore, the basis on which one created so-called language habits. The important role of input has not diminished over the years, what has changed, however, is the conceptualization of how individuals process the input and how the input interacts with the mental capacities of those learning a language (first or second). Within second

language studies, the general function of input has been treated variably. In many approaches to SLA (e.g. input/interaction, input hypothesis, information processing etc.) input is still seen as being a highly important factor in acquisition. However, in others such as the Universal Grammar Approach, input is related to a secondary role, interacting with an innate structure to affect acquisition. Within this framework, the input provides language-specific information which interacts with whatever innate structure an individual (child or adult) brings to the language learning situation. As input in second language acquisition is concerned, Long (1982) has introduced two important concepts;

(a) Comprehensible Input

Input research has centered on the belief that availability of the target language is not a sufficient condition for language learning. What seems essential is that the learner understands it. Input must be comprehensible if it is to assist the acquiring/learning process. There are two ways of making input comprehensible; the first one is to pre-modify input before it is offered to the learner (pre-modified input), and the second one is to negotiate the input through interaction (interactionally modified input). Long (1982) has suggested four ways in which input can be made comprehensible;

- 1) by modifying speech,
- 2) by providing linguistic and extra-linguistic context,
- 3) by orienting the communication to the ‘here and now’, and
- 4) by modifying the interactional structure of the conversation.

Long (ibid) asserts that all four ways may aid communication, but he especially emphasizes that the 4th way i. e, modifying the interactional structure of the conversation-is most likely to aid language acquisition. He reports that the input that has not been comprehended (the “+I” part of the comprehensible input “I+1”) may become comprehensible through the process of interaction or negotiation.

(b) The modified Input

The modified input refers to the language addressed to learner/non-proficient non-native speakers by a teacher/proficient native speaker of a language. Pre-modified input is generally operationalized as input that has been carefully targeted at the level of the learner in order to facilitate learner comprehension. In general, one observes linguistic modification made by the more proficient speaker in all areas of language. A teacher/native speaker can modify the input by adjusting his/her speech most likely to ensure comprehension on the part of learners. One function of modification of it is to make the language comprehensible. Modified input is of two types: simplified and elaborated input. When input is pre-modified, learners seldom have occasions to misunderstand what is exposed to them.

1.1.4.2 Interaction in SLA

Interaction plays a significant role in second language acquisition. The interactionist approach considers conversational interaction as a locus of learning. Interaction involves a number of components including negotiation of meaning, focus on recasts, and feedback. This approach accounts for learning through input, production of language, and feedback.

Long (1985), in his two studies, proposed the integrationist approach of second language learning as a more systematic approach to link the features of environmental language and the learners second language development. In his hypothesis, he shifted the attention of the SLA field towards more interactive aspects of foreign language discourse. Before going through Long's interactive hypothesis, let us see the following two comments given on this approach of SLA. This would help to understand the approach in an intelligible manner.

[Interaction research] takes as its starting point the assumption that language learning is stimulated by communicative pressure and examines the relationship between communication and acquisition and the

mechanisms (e.g. noticing, attention) that mediate between them. (Gass; 2006, p.224)

[According to Long] lecturettes prescript and delivered in a modified, Foreigner Talk Discourse style were more comprehensible to adult second language learners than were versions of the same talks delivered in an unmodified style, thus supporting the argument that linguistic modifications could promote comprehension of input. (Mitchell and Myles, 2004; p.167)

In fact, Long's interaction hypothesis (1985) is an extension of Krashen's original input hypothesis. According to Long (1985, p.378) linguistic/conversational adjustments promote comprehensible input and it in turn promotes acquisition.

Negotiated interaction between native and non-native speaker and between two NNSs plays an important role in the development of a second language. Conversation is not only a medium of practice, but also the means by which learning takes place. Conversational interaction in a second language forms the basis for the development of language rather than being only a forum for practice as the interaction Hypothesis.

Negotiation for meaning, and especially negotiation work that triggers interactional adjustments by the NS or more competent interlocutor, facilitates acquisition because it connects input, internal learner capacities, particularly selective attention and output in productive ways. Environmental contributions to acquisition are mediated by selective attention and the learners developing second language processing capacities, and that these resources are brought together usefully, although not exclusively, during negotiation for meaning. Negative feedback obtained during negotiation work or else where may be facilitative of L2 development at least for vocabulary, morphology and language specific syntax. So that interaction hypothesis claims implicit

negative feedback which can be obtained through negotiated interaction, facilitates SLA. Interaction facilitates acquisition because of the conversational and linguistic modifications that occur in such discourse and that provide learners with the input they need.

1.1.5 The Role of Input and Interaction in Language Learning

Language learning (output) is the result of adequate and enough input through the procedural interaction. What the learner may produce depends on what and how s/he received that. Input is the source of language that is exposed to the learners whereas interaction may serve as a forum for or a facilitator of language development. It is the means by which the learner is able to crack the code. A successful learner must be aware of a need of learning in which negotiation in conversation is a means to focus learner's attention towards learning a language.

According to Gass and Selinker (2008), the view of input and interaction that has been presented here appears to be in opposition to the view of language learning constrained by principles of Universal Grammar. However, the goal of both perspectives is to come to an understanding of how second language grammars are formulated in light of the fact that the evidence learners have about the second language is so limited. Learners have two kinds of linguistic information at their disposal. The first is known as positive evidence and refers to that limited set of well-formed utterances to which learners are exposed. The second negative evidence consists of information provided to a learner that his/her utterance is deviant in some way (p.346).

As child (first) language acquisition is concerned, negative evidence is neither frequent nor necessary for acquisition to take place. It cannot be a necessary condition for acquisition because children do not receive much correction over what they produced. This statement can raise a question how does acquisition take place in child language then? It has an easy answer. They have a set of

innate properties that limit the possibilities of grammar formation. As grammar formation is limited, the task of language learning is reduced automatically.

However, the condition is different in relation to the second language learning. In one hand, negative evidence is a necessary condition for adult second language learning. In the other, they receive more negative evidence and need more correction than children as the learning takes place in the formal situation.

Similar is the case in relation to interaction as well. Interaction forms the basis for the development of syntax rather than being only a forum for practice of grammatical structures. Syntax develops out of conversation but the vice-versa is not possible. According to Ellis (1984), interaction contributes to development because it is the means by which the learner is able to crack the code (p.95). For him, learning takes place when the learner can infer what is said even though the message contains linguistic items that are not yet part of his competence and when the learner can use the discourse to help him/her modify or supplement the linguistic knowledge already used in production.

Learning may take place during the interaction (i.e. conversation) and/or negotiation may be an initial step in learning. In another word, negotiation can function as a promoting device for learning. Negotiated interaction is very much important for learning to take place. Mackey's (1999) study also shows that learners who were involved in structure-focused interaction moved along a developmental path more rapidly than learners who were not. Interaction helps to step-up the pace of development. That is, only a little development can be noted, when/where learners receive only pre-modified input without the opportunities for interaction. Different kinds of interaction may differentially impact the rate and route of acquisition. That is, the route could be altered depending on the context.

1.1.6 Output in SLA

In general, output is what the learner produces after s/he receives input and perceives it as intake. Output has traditionally been viewed as a way of practicing what has previously been learned. That is, it has generally considered having a positive effect on learning. It is assumed that output as merely repetition may be less useful than output where learners are given opportunities to incorporate new forms into their production.

In fact, output is necessary to increase fluency and other language performance. That is, learners must practice producing the second language utterance if they are to learn to use their interlanguage system confidently and routinely. However, Swain (1985) goes beyond this 'practice' function of output in his 'output hypotheses' and claims that output has to do with the development of the interlanguage system, not only with the increased efficiency in using it.

Swain (ibid) has conducted a study with Canadian immersion students, where he has shown that even though students had received abundant comprehensible input in French and were somewhat fluent in the language they had still not acquired the grammatical competence. Immersion student's achievement test scores equivalent to those of students in the standard English program proved that the input had indeed been comprehensible (the immersion students took the achievement test in French). Still, immersion students' many syntactical errors in French confirmed that the target language grammatical system had not been fully acquired. This information gave researchers cause to question whether comprehensible input really is the only causal factor in second language acquisition. Swain (ibid) suggested that 'output' was the missing factor and called the concept 'comprehensible output' and has been credited with first articulation what has come to be called the 'output hypotheses.'

One of the possible ways to account for the lack of grammatical accuracy was that learners were not being pushed to produce language output. He (ibid)

theorized that learners in immersion setting were not pushed to a deeper analysis of the target language grammar because they could get their meaning across adequately without doing so. Swain (1995, p. 128 as cited in Mitchell and Myles, 2004, p. 174)) processes three functions for learner output:

- The ‘noticing/triggering’ function or what might be referred to the consciousness-rising role.
- The hypothesis testing function.
- The meta-linguistic function or what might be referred to as its ‘reflective role.’

He (ibid) believes that the activity of producing the target language may ‘push’ learners to become aware of gaps and problems in their current second language system (first function); it provides them with opportunities to reflect on, discuss and analyze these problems explicitly (third function), and of course, it provides them with opportunities to experiment with new situations and forms (second function).

It can be generalized from this statement that comprehensible output may offer at least three things that input could do. They are;

- i) Provide the learners with opportunities for contextualized, meaning use.
- ii) Allow the learners to move from semantic to syntactic processing of the target language.
- iii) Force them (the learners) to move from semantic to syntactic processing of the target language

1.1.6.1 Role of Output in SLA

Comprehensible output plays a crucial role for the acquisition to take place in the second language. Output stimulates noticing of the target linguistic forms contained in the subsequently provided input, and finally results in the acquisition of the target forms. According to Song (2010, p.109), Schmidt

(1990/1994) proposed in noticing hypothesis, which claims that ‘noticing is the necessary and sufficient condition for the conversion of input to intake for learning. As noticing is necessary in learning linguistic form, frequency of forms, perceptual salience, instruction, the current state of learner’s inter-language and task demands all play an important role in directing attention and bringing some features of input into awareness.

As output is concerned, a second language learner will begin to acquire the target like form if and only it is present in comprehensible input and ‘noticed’ in the normal sense of the word, that is consciously. Swain (1995) proposes in his output hypothesis that output can facilitate the process of noticing of both problems in one’s IL and the relevant features in the input. This noticing will then stimulate the processes of language acquisition by promoting learners to seek out relevant input with more focused attention.

According to Gass and Selinker (2008), input alone is not sufficient for acquisition, because when one hears language one can often interpret the meaning without the use of syntax (p.325). That is, a little knowledge other than knowing the meaning of the words and knowing something about real world events is needed. But, this is not the case with language production or output. One is forced to put the words into some order. According to Swain (1985, p. 249), production then ‘may force the learners to move from semantic processing to syntactic processing. For him, as cited in Gass and Selinker (2008, p. 327), output may stimulate learners to move from the semantic, open-ended, non-deterministic, strategic processing prevalent in comprehension to the complete grammatical processing needed for accurate production. Output, thus would seem to have a potentially significant role in the development of syntax and morphology.

It is generally suggested that collaborative tasks, such as information gap activities, may perhaps be one of the best ways to get students to produce

comprehensible output. A reason for these types of tasks and other kinds of pair and group work activities may be useful because, whereas individually learners may be novices, working together they have access to their partners knowledge and can essentially ‘rise above’ their individual level of competence and become, temporarily and with the help of their partners, more proficient experts. Thus, by doing this, learners working in a pair can produce comprehensible output beyond their competence level and learn something new.

1.2 Review of Related Literature

Although role of output in SLA is a new subject to study in Nepal, a number of researches have been carried out outside Nepal in it as well as in the other aspects of SLA. Some of the important ones were as below:

Ellis and He (1999) studied with low proficiency English second language learners using a pool of unfamiliar furniture vocabulary. All the learners carried out a designed task, placing small pictures of the furniture items around the plan of an apartment, but one group received pre-modified instruction that they could not negotiate. A second group received the same instruction but could negotiate, if meaning were not clear, while the third group were required to give the instructions to an interlocutor. In that study, pre-tests and post-tests of the selected vocabulary showed that the third, ‘output’ group outperformed the others both receptively and productively.

Izumiet et al. (1999) studied the potential of the ‘pushed output’ to promote English second language students’ learning of the counterfactual conditional in English. Experimental groups were given different kinds of texts including rich examples of the structure, and had to generate similar texts (in an essay writing task and a text reconstruction task). Control groups meanwhile received the same textual inputs, but did other activities based on them (e.g., Answering comprehension questions). The writings of the experimental groups showed a

significant improvement during the experimental treatment, but on the eventual post tests, focusing on the target grammar structure, the control groups performed just as well. Thus, it seemed that rich input combined with a variety of ‘noticing’ activities, have been enough in this case to lead to grammar learning, without any added benefit being derived from the output requirement.

McDonough (2005) tested the output hypothesis directly in her study of Thai learners of English. To investigate the acquisition of English questions, four groups carried out communicative tasks in the study. The four groups focused on salience (enhancement) and opportunity to modify the following feedback. Despite the errors there is no feedback only a response. Her detailed study provides evidence that the best predictor of acquisition, in this case operationalized by the acquisition of more advanced questions, is the opportunity to modify one’s speech.

White (1991) conducted a study entitled “the development of adverb placement by French children learning English.” Her purpose of the study was to find out the answer of the questions of how learners learn not to do something in the L2 that is present in the native language. The study consisted of five classes of French NSs learning English as a second language (two classes at grade 6) and one control group of monolingual NSs of English. One of the grade 5 groups and two of the grade 6 groups were given explicit instruction on adverb placements as well as exercises and correction on adverb placement; the other groups were given instruction on question using the same type of exercises but no explicit instruction on adverbs. The classroom treatment lasted two weeks. All children were given pre-tests, post-tests immediately following the treatment sessions, a second post-test five weeks later, and a follow up test a year later. The test consisted of grammaticality judgment tasks (with correction), preference tasks, and a sentence manipulation task. By comparing the group’s performance, White has shown that negative evidence did indeed promote the learning of adverb placement.

The study found that French learners of English have to learn that English allowing subject-adverb-verb order and that it does not allow subject–verb adverb-object order.

Mackey (1999) carried out a research to find out whether conversational interaction facilitates second language development, and the developmental outcomes are related to the nature of the conversational interaction and the level of learner involvement. The procedure included the pre-test, treatment and post tests. It was concluded that interaction led to development of second language. More active involvement led to greater development of language.

As the related study in Nepal is concerned, an attempt has been made here, to review some of the important ones that were carried out in the department of English Education as below:

Pant (2004) carried out a research entitled “effectiveness of discovery technique in teaching subject-verb agreement in grade nine”. The main objective of the study was to find out the effectiveness of discovery technique. The findings of the study showed that the students taught through discovery technique did relatively better in comparison to those taught through explanation technique.

Regmi (2004) conducted a research work entitled “effectiveness of group work technique in teaching English tenses.” His objective of the study was to determine the effectiveness of group work technique in teaching English tenses. It was found by the study that the students who were taught using group work progressed relatively better than the students who were taught using explanation technique.

Pande (2004) also carried out an experimental research entitled “*the effectiveness of project work technique in developing writing skill.*” The main

objective of the study was to find out the effectiveness of project work technique in developing writing skill. The finding showed that the use of project work technique in classroom teaching is slightly more effective than conventional teaching.

Bhandari (2005) carried out a research entitled “the effectiveness of the two techniques- pair work and group work in teaching communicative functions of English.” The objective of the study was to compare the proficiency of those two techniques. It was concluded that the pair work technique is relatively more effective than group work technique for teaching communicative functions of English, in general.

Oli (2005) also conducted an experimental research entitled “the effectiveness of task based technique for teaching grammar.” His study aimed to find out the effectiveness of task based technique for teaching grammar at school. The finding showed that task based teaching of grammar is more effective than theoretical or form based teaching of it.

Rawal (2006) carried out a research work entitled “the role of input and interaction in learning the English language.” Her aim of the study was to find out the role of input and interaction in learning the communicative functions of the English language. The grade nine 28 students of one of the private schools in Kathmandu were sampled as the sampled population for the study. Her study shows that the modified input and the interaction as per the modified input was found more effective than the textbook input and interaction based on it for learning the communicative functions of the English language.

Adhikari (2007) conducted a research work entitled “effectiveness of test re-test method to measure the reliability of the test item.” His main objective of the study was to find out how effective the test, re-test method is to measure the

reliability of the test item. His study has shown that the method was effective and thus, was helpful to measure the reliability of the test item.

Adhikari (2008) conducted a research work entitled “effectiveness of communicative method in teaching reading comprehension.” He has set the objective of the study to test how effective the communicative method in teaching reading comprehension was. The study has found that the communicative method of language teaching is effective enough to teach the reading comprehension in comparison to the other (GT and or ALM) method to the school students.

Dahal (2009) conducted a study entitled “the effectiveness of process writing” to find out how effective the process writing was to develop writing proficiency in the students. As the finding of the study is concerned, the study showed that process writing was effective to develop writing proficiency ability of the students in comparison to some other modes and methods of teaching writing.

Shrestha’s study (2010) entitled “the effectiveness of teaching materials in developing writing skills” aimed at finding out how effective the teaching materials were to develop writing skill in the students. The study has found that teaching materials play important role for learning to take place. As the proficiency of student (on writing skill) taught with teaching materials seemed higher and better than that of the students taught without any of such materials, it has proved that the use of teaching materials create effectiveness in developing writing proficiency on students.

A numbers of research have been carried out to find out the effectiveness and role of different methods, techniques and tools in developing the language proficiency on the students in the Department of English education. However, only some studies in SLA and no study in the output have been carried out yet. Thus, it is the first study on the role of output in SLA in which an attempt have

been made to find out how effective role does the output play in second language acquisition (learning) of the learners mainly in relation to the learning of English past tense.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The study had the following objectives:

1. To find out the role of output in learning English past tense.
2. To suggest some pedagogical implications.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The study is very important as it has dealt with problems related to teaching writing skill. It has provided some insight into the practical problems that arouse during teaching of writing. The findings of the study will be important for the students and teachers of ELT as it may function as a path finder for their academic journey. Further, its findings and recommendations will be helpful to the textbook writers, curriculum designers, language planner and policy maker, researchers as well as for all the others who use English as a second or foreign language and are directly and/or indirectly related to language teaching, especially the teaching of writing skill at school level.

CHAPTER TWO

METHODOLOGY

The following methodological strategies were used to fulfill the objectives of the study:

2.1 Sources of Data

The researcher used both primary and secondary sources of data to collect necessary information. Specifically, the sources of data were as below:

2.1.1 Primary Sources

The sampled students of grade 9 were the primary source of the data for this study. The researcher himself was involved in experiment. A comprehensive test was designed and administered as both pre- and post-test to collect required data for the study.

2.1.2 Secondary Sources

The researcher made use of secondary sources of data as well in the study. Some of them were Ellis (1988), Gass and Varonis (1994), Polio and Gass (1998), Mackey (1999), Mitchell and Myles (2004), Pant (2004), Regmi (2004), Pande (2004), Bhandari (2005), Oli (2005), Rawal (2006), Adhikari (2007), Gass and Selinker (2008) Adhikari (2008), Dahal (2009), Shrestha (2010) and so on.

2.2 Population of the Study

The students of grade 9 of secondary level public school were the population of the study for this research work.

2.3 Sample of the Study

The thirty students of grade 9 of Metro Higher Secondary School, New Baneshwor, Kathmandu were taken as the sample of the study.

2.4 Sampling Procedure

Students were sampled through judgmental non-random sampling procedure. The selected students were divided into two (controlled and experimental) groups and studied in depth.

2.5 Tools for Data Collection

Test items were the tool of data collection. A comprehensive test was designed and administered to the sampled students both as pre- and post-test to collect necessary data. Secondary data were collected through document study.

2.6 Process of Data Collection

First of all, I visited the selected school and met the concerned authority. A good rapport was established and the purpose and process of research was explained. The English teacher of grade 9 was consulted and the students were explained about the purpose and process of the research work. Before this, I developed the test items to be used in the pre- and post test along with the task to be used for treatment. A pre-set test item was administered for the purpose of pre-testing the student's knowledge. The test item was examined and scored. Students were divided into two groups (controlled and experimental) on the basis of their pre-test score. Then, the same teaching items were taught to the both groups. Experimental group got special treatment whereas the control group did not. The post-test was administered after the teaching of 20 days. Finally, the result of post-test was compared with the result of pre-test. The scores of both the tests were analyzed and interpreted so as to derive the findings of the study.

2.6 Limitations of the Study

The study was limited only to:

- i. The grade 9 students of Metro higher secondary school, New Baneshwor.
- ii. The acquisition of English as a foreign language in the classroom setting.
- iii. The experiment of 20 days.
- iv. The teaching of the past tense.

CHAPTER THREE

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This chapter deals with the analysis and interpretation of collected data. The data have been analyzed keeping them in a holistic comparison. Before starting the presentation, analysis and interpretation of the collected data; the basic information associated with the analysis and interpretation has been given below in brief:

3.1 Holistic Comparison

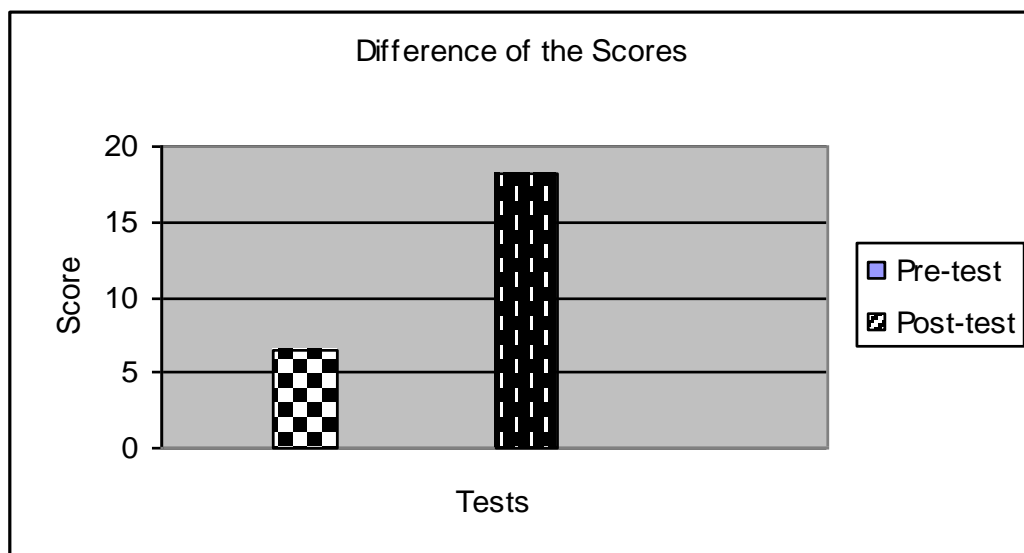
After collecting the test items of both the pre- and post-tests, scoring was made. The tests were of 140 full marks; 100 for written and 40 for spoken test. The table below presents the average score of students' achievement in both the tests.

Table No. 1
Comparison of Students Score

Group	Average score (pre-test)	Average score (post-test)	Difference	Difference %
A	73.40	79.86	6.46	8.80
B	73.26	91.46	18.20	24.84

The information presented in the table above shows that the pre-test score of both the groups (73.40 and 73.26) was the same and alike. As the average post-test score is concerned, Group A increased it by 6.46 marks in average (i.e., 8.80 %) whereas Group B increased it by 18.20 marks (i.e., 24.84%). The difference between them is shown in the following bar-diagram:

Figure No. 1
Difference between the Pre- and Post-test



According to the figure above, the result of Group A had only a little progress (i.e., 8.80 %) whereas Group B made for better progress in comparison to Group A (24.84 %) which signifies the effect of treatment. It is mainly due to the intervention used while teaching them. Thus, it shows that the language output plays a significant role in learning a second language.

The holistic comparison has consisted of the overall analysis of student's achievement score. By breaking down the score of the students in respective spoken and written skills the following table provides a glimpse of the overall status of the study.

Table No. 2
Overall Status of Student's Achievement

Tests	Group A			Group B		
	Written	Spoken	Total	Written	Spoken	Total
Pre-test	46.93	26.46	73.40	46.73	26.53	73.26
Post-test	50.53	28.93	79.86	62.53	29.33	91.46
Difference	3.60	2.47	6.46	16.80	2.80	18.20

According to the data presented in the table above, the final achievement score of the students of Group A is 11.74 marks (i.e., 14.52 %) lower than that of the score of Group B. This signifies that there is a good increment in the achievement of the students of Group B. As test-wise comparison is concerned, the pre-test score of Group B (73.26) was 0.15 marks lower than the pre-test score of Group A (73.40). Here, the difference is so low that it does not signify any result and thus, can be regarded as the same and/or equal marks. While in the post-test, it has 11.60 marks increment in the score of the students of Group B (91.46) in comparison to the score of the students of Group A (79.86). This is why, some effects of treatment/intervention can be observed in the Group B which indicates that language output has a significant role in the development of second language performance in the students.

3.2 Skill-wise Comparison of Students' Achievement

To explore the role of output in SLA, a test with written and spoken skills were taken for analysis. The skill-wise result of student's achievement has been given in the table below:

Table No. 3
Skill-wise Comparison of Test Result

Group	Skills	Average score (pre-test)	Average score (post-test)	Difference	Difference (%)
A	Written	46.93	50.53	3.60	7.67
	Spoken	26.46	28.93	2.47	9.33
B	Written	46.73	62.53	15.80	33.81
	Spoken	26.53	29.33	2.80	10.55

According to the data presented in the table above, the pre-test result of Group A in writing skill (46.93) is 3.60 marks lower than the post-test result (50.53) which has the increment of 7.67 percent in the post test. As same as this, the pre-test result of Group B in written skill (46.73) is 15.80 marks lower than the post-test result of the Group (62.53) which shows 33.81 percent increment in

students achievement. Accordingly, as compared the pre-test result of spoken skill (26.53) with the post-test result of spoken skill (29.33) of the Group B, it has the difference of 2.80 marks which denotes 10.55 percent increment in the post-test. Here, it is clear by the data above that the post-test result of both the skills has gradual increment and has in progress in comparison to the pre-test result. Further, the post test result of Group B has significant increment in comparison to the pre-test result in both the skills. It is mainly due to the application of treatment and intervention. As overall performance of student's skill-wise result is concerned, Group B, the experimental group, has 0.33 marks more than the Group A, the controlled group in speaking skill test. Accordingly, Group B's obtained marks of post-test in writing skill is 12.20 marks more than that of the Group A. thus, the average overall achievement of Group B is 12.40 marks (12.53%) more and better than that of the Group A. it shows and justifies the role of output/language production in learning the second language.

3.3 Teaching Item-wise Comparison of Test Result

Twenty lessons related to past tense were taught for 20 days so as to find out the effect of treatment/intervention. Both the groups were taught the same lesson. The test items have covered the main six items among the items taught. Being based on student's response on writing test, the following item-wise achievement was found and is presented below for further analysis.

Table No. 4**Teaching Item-wise Comparison of Test Result**

S.N.	Teaching item	Score of group A		Score of group B	
		Pre-test	Post-test	Pre-test	Post-test
1	Narrating past events	18	18	18	21
2	Expressing the past	17	18	14	20
3	Sentence transformation in the past	8	9	8	12
4	Describing past habits	1	2	2	3
5	Generating past sentences	1	2	2	3
6	Interpreting Para orthographic text	2	2	3	4
Average score		46.93	50.53	46.73	62.53

The data presented in the table above shows the teaching item-wise average scoring of the students in both the pre- and post-test. It is clear from the table that Group A (the controlled group) has 46.93 average pre-test scoring whereas the post-test average scoring is 50.53. It shows 7.67 percent increment in the post-test. As the increment of 5 percent in the post test does not signify the effect of the intervention, the 7.67 percent increment means only a little improvement from the pre test due to the effect of the intervention/treatment. So far as the scoring of Group B (the experimental group) is concerned, its average pre-test scoring is 46.73 whereas the average post-test scoring of this group is 62.53 (i.e., 15.80 marks more than that of the pre-test). It shows that the post-test result has 33.81 percent increment than the average scoring of the pre-test of the group.

According to the data presented in the table above, students have felt difficulties in interpreting the para-orthographic text in the past tense. They obtained only 20-40 percent marks in this item. Narrating past events and

expressing ideas and opinions in the past were found the two items that students have coped up with almost high scoring. The data show moderate type of (average) scoring in sentence transformation whereas all of them were found little bit poor in describing past habits and in generating past sentence in comparison to the other types of teaching items taught so far.

The descriptions in aforementioned two paragraph show that students have similar type of learning rate in almost all the functions taught so far. The difference between the post-test score of Group A and Group B is mainly due to the difference between the intervention/treatment that was applied during the observational period. That is language output was focused with constant practice in the Group B (experimental) whereas it was lacking in the group A. This is why, the language performance of any students depends on and it is determined by the language output which further helps to better the language output.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study was conducted to find out the role of output in learning a second language. Specifically, the role of related output in learning English past tense was explored in the study. A practical study of 20 days was conducted to reach to the conclusion. For the convenience of the study, the findings and recommendations of the study are given in two different sub-headings. The analysis and interpretation of the collected data has helped the researcher to derive the following major findings of the study:

4.1 Findings

The major findings of the study are as below:

- I. The average increment percentage of group B is 14.52 percent to compare with the average achievement of Group A. That is, Group B has achieved 11.74 marks more than that of the Group A. It implies that the output of Group B in English past tense was better than group A. Through this evidence, it is found that focus on output is a requirement for successful learning of a second language as the activities of producing the target language enables the target language learners to consciously recognize their linguistic problems and make them more aware of something they need to know about the target (second) language. It is derived from the study that the production of output promotes ‘noticing’ which helps them to recognize the gap between what they want to produce and what they actually produced.
 - a. The post–test result of both the groups in average [79.86 (A) and 91.46 (B)] as well as skill-wise [spoken-28.93 (A) and 29.33 (B) and written-50.53 (A) and 62.53 (B)] is found better than the pre-test result of both the groups. It shows that the increment on post-test is due to the treatment during the observational period.

- b. The difference between the post-test result of Group A and the post-test result of group B has found noticeable (post-test result of group B is 14.52% more than the Group A) difference. The progress of Group B was due to the focus on language output (production).
- c. It has found that both the groups have made progress in speaking skill as Group A had 9.33 percent increment and Group B had 10.55 percent increment in the post-test in spoken skill. The difference between them (1.22%) was not so significant; however it implied the effect of special treatment on group B.
- d. As writing skill is concerned, Group B has higher average increment (33.81%) than the increment of Group A (7.67%). This difference was due to the focus on constant practice of language production (output) which was not focused in Group A. It shows that output (producing language output) is based in how much and how well the learners were pushed to produce the language output during the observation.

4.2 Recommendation

On the basis of aforementioned findings of the study (that were derived from the analysis and interpretation of the data), following recommendations for pedagogical implications have been suggested.

- a. The scope of the study was only to the 9th graders of a private school in Kathmandu who were taught English past tense only for 20 days. Thus, it is suggested to carry out further researchers having large sample and longer time in different levels and also in different skills, aspects and functions of the language so as to generate more valid, accurate and authentic finding.
- b. The study was related only to the learning of English past tense. It is recommended for further researchers to carry out further studies in other

functions and aspect as well focusing in all the input, interaction and output.

- c.** Further, the activity of producing the target language pushes the learners to become aware of the gaps (problems) in their current second language system and provides the opportunities to analyze those problems explicitly as well as provides opportunities to experiment with other structures and forms of the language. Thus, it is suggested that the main aim of teaching at class should be to develop (or to assist to develop) the inter-language system at learners so that second language learning can be facilitate through the set system.
- d.** It is suggested to modify the learner's output by means of clarification requests, focus on interaction, feedback, comprehension check, confirmation check, and so on which push them to retrieve the correct form of language. Thus, 'pushed output' should be focused while teaching.
- e.** It is suggested to the syllabus designers, textbook writers as well as to the teachers to focus in using modified output so as to push the students in producing language output.
- f.** As far as possible, it is suggested to conduct such types of other studies in the natural setting for the betterment and authenticity of the study.

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