

SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Link English is designed as a course for linking the SLC English syllabus. It is used in the first year of the higher secondary level, in addition to the other courses in English.

It is recommended that the students should first take an English test for screening. A sample English test and its answer key are included in the book. It is further suggested that those embarking on this course should take a one-hour pre-test so that teachers would be able to measure student's progress as well as assess the efficacy of the course. Guidelines for preparing this test are also included in the book.

The course consists of three parts: "Using an English Dictionary", "John White – an English student" (reading passages and exercises), and "Three Sample Lessons". It may be necessary/possible to supplement it with a few more exercises, and suggestions for the construction of follow-up material are presented in the book.

1.2 Objectives of the study

The specific objectives of the study are:

- a) To analyze the Link English course in terms of its physical aspects as well as the adequacy of the contents,
- b) To find out whether "Link English" serves as a course for linking the SLC English Syllabus with the first year of the higher secondary level, and
- c) To list some pedagogical implications from the findings of the study.

1.3 Significance of the study

This study is expected to be significant to the textbook writers, curriculum designers, methodologists, teachers and other persons directly or indirectly involved in the English language teaching.

1.4 Limitations of the study

The following are the limitations of the present study:

- (i) The analysis of the Link English course is based on its physical aspects and the academic aspects.
- (ii) The analysis of the Link English course is limited in terms of its linkage between the SLC English syllabus and the first year of the Higher Secondary Level English syllabus.
- (iii) The first section of this chapter concerns with the analysis of the physical aspects of the Link English course. The second section of this chapter presents the analysis of the academic aspect of Link English.

SECTION 2

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

For making the study more convenient, this chapter is divided into three major sections. The first section of this chapter concerns with the analysis of the physical aspects of the Link English course. The second section of this chapter presents the analysis of the academic aspect of Link English. The third section deals with a comparative picture of the Link English course in terms of its linkage with SLC English syllabus.

2.1 Analysis of the physical aspects of link English

Generally the physical aspects of textbook are analyzed on the basis of the size of the book, cover page design, printing quality, paper quality, font style, binding, price etc. The following table presents the physical aspects of Link English and this topic deals with these points in different sub-sections as below:

Table No. 2.1

Name of the book	Link English
Size of the book	13.7 ×21.8cm
Printing of the book	Offset printing
Publisher	Central Department of English, T.U, Kirtipur
Binding Style	Slide stitch
Printed at	Sajha Prakashan, Pulchok
Margin	Top 0.8 cm, bottom 2 cm, right 1cm
Price	Rs.55
Edition:	4 th 2003
Parts of the book	Three
Number of pages	180
Thickness of the book	0.8 cm

2.1.1 Size of the book

The size of the book is very important for the readers to develop interest in reading (using the textbook). The book should be of appropriate size, portable and interesting to read. Regarding

this fact, Link English has been changed in its size from time to time and made better. At present the size of the book is 13.7 X 21.8 cm and the thickness is 0.8 cm with 180 pages.

2.1.2 Cover page design

The cover page of a book is like a dress. It adds to the beauty of the book and is a source of attraction. The cover page of the book is designed economically in two colors in white background of the paper. The cover page is not hard. It is loose thick paper. The designer is Tek Bir Mukhiya and it is simple in design.

2.1.3 The printing quality and font style

Basically the type and size of the letters are more responsible to make the printing quality better. Link English has good quality of printing and the size and type of letters are also appropriate for the level of students.

2.1.4 The binding and the paper quality

In fact, the binding and the quality paper are very important factors as they ensure the durability of the textbook. Taking this fact in consideration, Link English is side stitched and the quality of the paper is not good in comparison to the other two books of the same level.

2.2 Analysis of the academic aspects of link English

To study the academic aspects of the textbooks, this part is further divided into following sub-sections:

2.2.1 Content

The major content of link English is not very broad and lengthy as it is meant to function as a link course between the high school level and the higher studies. The following table shows the list of contents:

Table No. 2.2

Part of the book	Sections	Number of exercises	Type/nature of questions
Part One	1	9	Objective
	2	7	Objective
	3	4	Objective

Part Two		33	Subjective and objective
Part Three	1	6	Subjective and objective
	2	7	Subjective and objective
	3	9	Subjective and objective
Total exercises	75		

The first major part of Link English is “Using an English Dictionary” which aims with developing the dictionary using skills of the students as well as giving knowledge about the techniques of using an English Dictionary more efficiently. There are altogether 20 exercises and this part is further divided into three sections: ‘Finding a word’ which focuses on alphabetical order, dictionary quarter and selection of guide words etc. The second section ‘Checking spelling’ tries to familiarize them about British and American spelling as well as makes them aware about the easily confused words and their spelling. The third part, ‘Finding the meaning’ helps them to find the meaning of a particular word as well as to find idioms and phrases in a dictionary entry. There is a final exercise at the end of this section where some word games are included related to the use of dictionary. A key to the above mentioned exercises is also included so that the students can check their answers themselves. The purpose is achieved by such exercises. These exercises are related to learner centered approach which makes language learning fun.

The second major part “John White- an English student” is related to the working schedule of the foreign students. It consists of a reading passage followed by comprehension questions. Structures with verbs (p59), jumbled word order (p60 and 95), are also included in this part. Besides, some model dialogues and situations for dialogues, letter writing, writing about daily routine, vocabulary about meals and food (p80), maps and descriptions of countries (p83) prepositions, comparisons (p88), vocabulary about countries (p94) and people (p100) are included in this part. There is a final exercise at the end of this part which summarizes some of the information in this part. The materials in this part are arranged in 33 exercises which help students to practice the skills of language by themselves. They help students to write about themselves, to describe about their daily routine, to manipulate different verb constructions. A key to some of the exercises is also included at the end of the part.

Likewise, the third and the last major part of the textbook contains three sample lessons which include comprehension passages as well as some simple grammatical exercises for revision of what they have learnt up to SLC. This part also makes them familiar with consonants and vowel sounds of English.

2.2.2 The language of the text

The role of language is vital while conveying any message. The language used in the text plays a vital role for the better understanding of the text. In Link English, the language of the various texts is simple which makes the text easy to understand for the students who have just passed SLC level from various general schools as well as other private schools.

2.2.3 The nature of the text

The nature of the text is also a vital factor to increase interest and attention towards it. Link English has a set of unique types of materials. In fact, it is basically a workbook like practical text in which there is very less theoretical description.

2.2.4 Exercises for practice

In such a course which aims to function as a bridge, there should be sufficient exercises for practice. Regarding this fact, link English includes a lot of exercises. Almost all the exercises can be done in the book as it is designed as workbook. There are altogether 75 exercises in its three major parts and most of them are objective and very few of them are subjective and simple guided-writing exercises.

2.2.5 Illustrations

To make the concepts clear, the illustrative examples, figures, pictures, charts or graphs in any text are very important. These help the students/learners to grasp the things easily and quickly. There are various kinds of tree diagrams, charts, tables and examples to illustrate the things to be done. The students don't feel any lack of illustrations and examples throughout the course.

2.2.6 Answer key to self-study

The answer key is really a great help to the students especially those who like to study any course themselves. In Nepal, there are many students who can't attend their classes regularly for various reasons and this system of answer key is very helpful for them. Link English is not

taught minutely and very few guidelines are given by the teachers for the students and the students have to do the exercises by themselves.

2.2.7 Integration of the language skills

Any language teaching learning courses should focus on all the four language skills. Learning a language means learning the skills of language. There should be integration between these skills. Anyone perfect in only one or two language skills can't be supposed to have learnt language. So the integration of the language skills is necessary in a good language textbook.

2.2.8 Grammar and vocabulary in link English

The chances to practice different aspects of language are also very important part of a good textbook because it ensures the language learning process. Link English also tries to combine various aspects of language. Generally, grammar and vocabulary are the major aspects of language without which we can't even imagine language. Grammar of the universal feature of language is properly managed in link English. There are many exercises related to tense, prepositions, conjunctions, sentence structures etc. The knowledge of vocabulary items is another important aspect of link English.

2.3 Analysis of the linkage

In this section, the linkage between the high school English curriculum and higher secondary English curriculum are interpreted and analyzed by showing that "Link English" has functioned as a bridge to fill the gap between the two levels. Though the SLC level contents should function as the foundation for higher studies, students can't take a leap to familiarize themselves with the higher level English. This function has been accomplished by "Link English". To study this linkage, this section has been further divided into two sub-sections. In the first subsection, the different course areas of class X compulsory English course is listed and analyzed. The second subsection is the analysis of the similar and dissimilar areas of study in "Link English" course compared and contrasted with SLC compulsory English course.

2.3.1 Course areas in X

In this sub-section, the main focus is directed towards the analysis of the course contents in X compulsory English curriculum. The following matrix shows the study areas of the compulsory English course for Grade X.

Grade X

	Functions	Language
1	Reporting statements	He told me that he was leaving.
2	Reporting questions	Gita asked me where Hari was. She asked me if he was at home.
3	Reporting commands	The Head teacher told me to come to school at ten o'clock.
4	Giving and withholding permission	You can...but you mustn't... Let her sit here. Don't let them write in the book.
5	Reporting, giving and withholding permission	I'm allowed to stay at home on Saturday. They're not permitted to enter through this gate.
6	Expressing conditions (1)	If you play volleyball you'll be late. If you don't eat you'll be hungry.
7	Expressing conditions (2)	If Sita could sing, she would be very popular. If he had not come to Nepal, he wouldn't have seen Mt. Everest. If Prasad wasn't the captain, the team would play better.
8	Asking for and giving reasons	Why did you go to Pokhara? I went to Pokhara because...
9	Criticizing	You shouldn't have...
10	Expressing preferences	I prefer tea to coffee. She likes living in Ilam better than living in Kathmandu.
11	Talking about the past (1): narrating past events	Maya had lived in Kathmandu twenty years ago
12	Talking about the past (2): interrupted continuous action	She had been living there for five years before she met Gita
13	Confirming and denying	They come from London/ so do I /so does Bill. She didn't wear jeans then. Neither did I/neither did Anju. I don't agree.

		I'm not sure that I agree/I don't think so.
14	Agreeing and disagreeing	You're right. That's a good idea. I don't agree with that. I don't think that's correct.
15	Expressing degrees of probability	He'll probably come. He may/might come. I don't think he'll come. He probably won't come.

The above matrix shows that the students have to study more than thirty different language functions for their overall development in four different language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing.

2.3.2 Contents of link English

This sub-section is related with the analysis and interpretation of the contents in "Link English" course. The table below shows the different areas of study to link the SLC and XI of Nepal.

Table No. 2.3

Skills	Contents
Reading	Short reading passages preceded by pre-questions and followed by comprehension questions and summarizing skills.
Writing	-Writing sentences using the language skills which are introduced. -Writing sentences from a jumbled word order. -Completing dialogues that have only been partially written and composing dialogues in a given situation. -Writing descriptions and comparisons using vocabulary about meals and food (p.80), countries (p.94), people (p.100) and marriage/weeding (p.121).
Language skills	-Doing exercises involving spelling-where certain words have been missing letters e.g. thro-t. -Recognizing when a word has either British or American spelling e.g. center and center. -Choosing the correct homonym or near homonym e.g. stationary or stationery. -Manipulating different verb tenses and grammatical constructions. -Using prepositions correctly e.g. Chicago is – the middle of the U.S.A. -Using comparative and superlative structures to write descriptions.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Using conjunctions correctly e.g. she studied a lot –failed her exams. -Writing questions using: what, which, how, where, whose, when and why. -Becoming familiar with some common prefixes and how they change the meanings of words e.g. honest-dishonest. -Distinguishing between British English sounds in words like: ago, unusual, earth, odd and all.
Dictionary skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Saying what quarter of the dictionary a word is found in. -Using alphabetical order to say why a certain word comes before another. -Using alphabetical order to put a list of words or last names with initials in the correct order. -Using guidewords e.g. choosing the correct guide-words for GHEE, from gesture/get or getaway/giddy. -Using a dictionary to find a synonym. -Seeing a sample dictionary entry and analyzing its parts and using it to write sentences.

The above table shows that the contents in Link English course aim to develop students’ English in the areas of reading, writing, dictionary and language skills. For the improvement of students’ reading skill, short reading passages, which are preceded by some pre-questions and followed by comprehension questions, and summarizing skills are included in this course. To strengthen their writing skill, the course includes exercises like: writing sentences from a jumbled word order, completing and composing dialogues in given situations and writing descriptions and comparisons using vocabulary about meals and food, countries, people, and marriage/wedding etc. It also tries to familiarize the students with American and British spelling so that students may not feel difficulty in finding the variation between these two varieties.

2.3.3 Similar and dissimilar areas

In this sub-section different similarities and dissimilarities between different courses are analyzed. For appropriate and clear analysis and interpretation of the similarities and dissimilarities between the different courses, this subsection is further divided into two separate parts. The first part deals with the analysis of the similarities between link English and SLC English and the second part concerns with the analysis of the dissimilarities between these courses.

a. Similarities between SLC and link English course

This part deals with the analysis and interpretation of the similarities between the SLC English curriculum and Link English. Following similarities can be seen in the two courses:

- Basic reading skill development texts are given in both of the courses.
- Basic writing skill development items like sentence writing from jumbled word order, completing partial dialogues, short comparative and descriptive writing exercises etc. are given in both of the courses.
- Basic grammatical items like preposition, tense, use of conjunctions, comparison, making questions etc. are introduced in both of the courses.

In this way, basically there are similarities between SLC compulsory English course and Link English to function as a link course.

b. Dissimilarities between SLC and link English course

This part concerns with the analysis of the dissimilar areas in the SLC compulsory English course and Link English course. Following dissimilarities are listed below:

- In SLC English, there are listening and speaking activities which are lacking in Link English.
- A lot of language functions are to be studied in SLC English course but these are not found in Link English.
- Link English tries to make the students familiar about British and American varieties of language which are lacking in SLC English course.
- Some theoretical knowledge about the use of an English dictionary is presented in Link English but it is not found in SLC English course.

SECTION 3

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This is the concluding chapter and the most important part of the present research work. It deals with the findings and recommendations of the study.

3.1 Findings

From the analysis and interpretation of the data, the findings of the present study are summed up as below:

Strengths of the textbook

- a. The textbook is designed like a workbook in which students can write.
- b. The first part “Using an English Dictionary” helps students to develop their dictionary using skills.
- c. The emphasis on grammar and vocabulary items makes Link English a more useful book.
- d. Much emphasis is given in reading and writing skills which makes students more proficient in these skills.
- e. The provision of guided writing exercises prepares students for further free writing skill.
- f. The answer key provided in the textbook is an additional benefit for the students in the context of Nepal who can't attend their classes regularly.
- g. The language used in textbook is appropriate for the level of students.

Weaknesses of the textbook

- a. This textbook is basically a workbook like practical text in which there is very less theoretical description.
- b. Language functions are not found in link English.
- c. Size of the book is not much appropriate for the level of the students because it does not match in length and breadth in comparison to other textbooks of the same level.
- d. The quality of the paper is not good in comparison to other texts of the same level.
- e. This textbook lacks emphasis on oral practices which are the primary language skills.

- f. The textbook is relatively easy and the difficulty level doesn't match with the other texts of the level.
- g. The answer key for the first two parts is given but for the third parts is not given.
- h. Binding of the book is weak because it has been stitched on two sides.

3.2 Recommendations

On the basis of the findings presented in 3.1 above, following recommendations are made:

- a. There should be some refinement by including some more exercises for proper practice of English sound system so that the students will develop their oral production skills.
- b. Gradual change in the quality of paper, binding and size of the book is necessary.
- c. Some more texts should be added so that the students from private English school backgrounds do not feel too easy.
- d. Link English should be continued as a link course between SLC and higher studies.
- e. The teachers should teach this course properly and minutely so that the students will be able to develop their performance in English as well as be well prepared to proceed with the other two texts of this level.

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