

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 General Background

English has become one of the widely used languages in the world. The use of English is not only confined with in the English spoken countries but also in other countries where people use it as a contact or trade language. Crystal (2003) asserts “Today, English is the main contender for the position of world linguafranca”(p.359). It is a means of communication between the people of different nations. One out of every four persons on earth can be reached through English. Crystal(ibid.) further states:

English is used as an official or semi official language in over 60 countries and as a prominent place in further 20 mother tongue speakers have now reached around 400 million; a further 350 million use English as a second language (p.360).

It is true that English is the mother tongue of the people of Britain, America, Australia, Canada and New Zealand but they are not the only native speakers of the language. Now in this 21st century, English has become the mother tongue of many people in different parts of the world that is to say the native speakers of English are not confined to the above mentioned countries but are spread all over the world. Many factors contribute to the gradual spread of a language – chiefly political and military might, economic power and religious influence. Crystal (ibid). says “among the languages ; by virtue of the political and economic progress made by English speaking nations in the past 200 years and is likely to remain so gradually consolidating its position”(p.365).

A very important reason for regarding English as a world language is that the world's knowledge is enshrined in English. Countries in Asia and Africa that were till recently under the British rule get their scientific knowledge and technological knowledge from English books. It is the knowledge of English that has helped those countries maintain the high level of their intellectual and scientific training and achievement. That is to say, almost all over the world, whether as mother tongue or as a foreign language, English is being used in one way or another. English has become the powerful language of the world enjoying all economic, political and social might. English has already been accorded this status by the world because it is the language used in international conference and in the forums of the United Nations Organization. It is being learnt and used all over the world not out of imposition but through the realization that it has certain inherent advantages. It is either dominant or well established in any countries. It is the main language of books, newspaper, airports, traffic controls, international business, conference, science, medicine, diplomacy, sports, advertising, etc. Crystal (ibid) says, "over two-third of the world scientist write in English, over 50 million children study English as an additional language at primary level; over 60 million study it at secondary level"(p.359).

Nowadays, English has become a genuine lingua franca; that is a language used widely for communication between people who do not share the same language. English language enjoyed the status of international language as the status of classical Latin and Greek diminished from that of a living to that of "occasional" subject in the school curriculum the study of Latin took on a different function. Richards and Rodgers (2003, p. 3) say, "The study of classical Latin (the Latin on which the classical works of Virgil, Ovid, and Cicero were written) and an analysis of grammar and rhetoric became the model for language teaching." As Latin and Greek language lost their status, the English language became one of the

most important international languages of the world. In this regard, Harmer (2008) argues,

just as in the middle ages Latin became for a time a language of international communication (at least in the Roman empire), so English is now commonly used in exchanges between, say, Japanese and Argentinean business people, or between Singaporeans and their Vietnamese counterpart. (p. 13)

English is one of the six official languages of the UNO and plays a vital role in international communication. Nearly half the worlds' books of science and technology are written in the English language. If we look at the media, we can find out that over fifty percent the worlds' newspaper or Radio stations use English as a medium of communication. Therefore, it has become a genuine lingua franca that is a language widely used for communication between people who do not share the same language. Burchfield (1985) also argues:

English has also become a lingua franca to the point that any literate educated person is in a very real sense deprived if he does not know English. Poverty, famine and disease are instantly recognized as the cruelest and least excusable forms of deprivation. Linguistic deprivation is a less easily noticed condition one never the less of great significance (as cited in Phillipson 1992, P.5)

As English is an international language, it is used in some of the countries as a second language and in other countries as a foreign language. English is taught as a foreign language in Nepal. The craze towards the English language is increasing

day by day. Undoubtedly, English is realized to be the most appropriate language for international communication in Nepal as it is the most widely used language in the world. Realizing the importance of the English language it was taught as a foreign language in all schools of Nepal starting from grade four up to bachelor level as a compulsory subject. Now the situation has been changed and English is taught from grade one to bachelor level as a compulsory subject. When English was imported from western countries, the method for teaching English was also imported from western countries where English was taught as a mother tongue. The first imported method for teaching English in Nepal was 'Grammar Translation Method'. At that time grammatical aspects of language were highly prioritized assuming that until and unless grammar is learnt, language learning is not complete. Among the four skills of language, reading and writing were highly focused and listening and speaking were ignored because teaching learning process was mainly based on Grammar Translation Method. Later on, other methods emerged in the field of language teaching such as direct method, audio lingual method, etc. but no method remained for long time as an appropriate method.

1.1.1 Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching

When linguists and language specialists tried to improve the quality of language teaching in the late nineteenth century, they often did so by referring to general principles and theories concerning how language are learned, how knowledge of language is represented and organized in memory or how language itself is structured.

In describing methods, the philosophy of language teaching at the level of theory and principles, and a set of derived procedures for teaching a language is central. In an attempt to clarify this difference, a scheme was proposed by the American applied linguist Edward Anthony in 1963. He identified three levels of

conceptualization and organized, which he termed approach, method and technique. According to Anthony (1963):

An approach is a set of correlative assumptions dealing with the nature of language teaching and learning. An approach is axiomatic. It describes the nature of language to be taught.

Method is overall plan for orderly presentation of language materials, no part of which contradicts, and all which is based upon, the selected approach. An approach is axiomatic and method is procedural (pp.63-67).

According to Anthony's model, approach is the level at which assumptions and beliefs about language and language learning are specified; method is the level at which theory is put into practice and at which choices are made about the particular skills to be taught, the content to be taught and the order in which classroom procedures are described.

From the above discussion, we know that, an approach is theoretical position and belief about the language, nature of language learning, and the applicability of both to pedagogical settings. Method is a generalized set of classroom specifications for accomplishing linguistic objectives. A method tends to be primarily concerned with teachers' and students' roles and behaviors and secondarily with such features as linguistic and subject matter objectives, sequencing and materials. They are almost always thought of as being broadly applicable to variety of audiences in a variety of contexts. A technique is any of wide variety of exercise, activities, or devices used in the language classroom for realizing language functions. Richards and Rodgers, 2001 as cited in Sharma and Phyak, (2009, p. 54), make some changes about the relationship among approaches and methods. They give emphasis on method, an umbrella as they say

the method is described in terms of issues identified at the levels of approach, design, and procedure. They say that method is theoretically determined by a design, and is practically realized in procedure (p.105).

From above discussion, we know that, an approach is theoretical position and belief about the nature of language, the nature of language learning, and the applicability of both to pedagogical settings. Method is a generalized set of classroom specifications for accomplishing linguistic objectives. Methods tend to be primarily concerned with teacher and student roles and behaviours and secondary with such features as linguistic and subject-matter objectives, sequencing, and materials.

1.1.2 Methods

A method is a way of teaching language which is based on systematic principles and procedures. It indicates a specific set of teaching techniques and materials generally backed by stated principles. Different methods of language teaching such as grammar translation method, direct method, and communicative method are discussed below.

1.1.2.1 Grammar Translation Method

The grammar translation method of foreign language teaching is one of the most traditional methods, dating back to late nineteenth to early twentieth centuries. Before 13th century the teaching and learning of classical languages e.g. Greek and Latin were confined to the analysis of grammar translation works and rhetoric. In other words, at that time Greek and Latin languages were taught by applying grammar translation method. In 16th century, modern languages like English, French and Italian gained importance as a result of political changes in Europe and they entered curriculum of European school in eighteenth century. But these modern languages (French, Italian, and English) were taught through the same method as

the classical languages were taught i.e. applying grammar translation method. According to Van Els et al.(1984:148) grammar translation method has no obvious theoreticians. Despite the fact that grammar translation method was considered to be a method any theoretical foundation, it dominated foreign language teaching from 1840s to 1940s and it is still popular method in some countries especially the developing countries like Nepal in its modified form.

1.1.2.2 Direct Method

The direct method came into use as a reaction to the grammar translation method which arrived at the end of the nineteenth century. It is said that direct method is not a method in itself, but it is a set of principles to be followed while teaching. Translation was abandoned in favor of the teachers and the students speaking together, relating the grammatical forms they were studying to objects and pictures in order to establish their meaning. Larsen-Freeman (1986, as cited in Sharma and Phyak 2009) provides the following common techniques closely associated with direct method:

-) Reading aloud
-) Questions and answer exercise
-) Student self-correction
-) conversation practice
-) Fill-in-the blank exercise
-) Dictation
-) Paragraph writing (p.87)

The sentence was still the main object of interest and accuracy was all important. The basic principle of the method is that English is learnt in the same way as the mother tongue is learnt.

1.1.2.3 Audiolingual Method

The audio-lingual method was introduced in use as an army method during the World War II. This in combination with some new ideas about language learning coming from the disciplines of descriptive linguistics and behavioral psychology went on to become as the audio lingual method. When behaviorist accounts of language learning become popular in the 1920s and 1930s, the direct method morphed, especially in the USA, into the audio-lingual method. Using the stimulus response reinforcement model, it attempted through a continuous process of such positive reinforcement, to engender good habits in language learners.

Audiolingualism relied on heavily drills to form these habits. Rivers (1968) says:

As we normally learn our mother tongue in the spoken form before being introduced to its representation by graphic symbol, and as 'speech' or sound communication, is the form in which all natural languages first developed, proponents of the Audiolingual method lays stress on learning to understand and speak at least some of the language before learning to read and write. (1968:37)

The theoretical foundation of Audiolingualism was derived from structural linguistics and behavioral psychology.

1.1.2.4 Communicative Method

The application of methodology is closely connected with time. In time of economic globalization, people with different languages in different countries communicated with each other more frequently. What emerged at that times requirement is communicative language teaching. Richards and Rodgers (2002) say "the origins of communicative language teachings are to be found in the

changes in British language teaching tradition dating from the late 1960s" (p.153). Until then situational language teaching represented the major British approach to teach English as a foreign language. In situational language teaching, language was taught by practicing basic structures in meaningful situation-based activities. But just as the linguistic theory underlying Audiolingualism was rejected in the United States in the mid-1960s, British applied linguists began to call into question the theoretical assumptions underlying situational language teaching.

Howatt 1984 says:

By the end of the sixties it was clear that the situational approach had run its course. There was no future in continuing to pursue the chimera of predicting language on the basis of situational events. What was required was closer study of the language itself and return to the traditional concept that utterances carried meaning in themselves and expressed the meaning intentions of the speakers and writers who created them. (p.280)

We have noticed that the goal of most of the methods we have looked at so far is to enable students to learn to communicate in the target language. In the 1970s educators noted that being able to communicate required more than mastering linguistic structures. Students may know the rules of linguistic usage, but be unable to use the language. It becomes clear that students perform certain functions as well such as promising, inviting and declining invitations within social contexts. In short being able to communicate required more than linguistic competence; it required communicative competence knowing when and how to say what to whom. Such observations contributed to a shift in the field in the late 1970s and early 1980s from a linguistic structure centered approach to a communicative approach.

Communicative method is against the notion of 'linguistic competence' proposed by Noam Chomsky. This method focuses on communicative proficiency rather than on mere mastery of structures. Hymes(1972) says that communicative method gives emphasis on "the rule of use without which the use of grammar will be useless". Hymes gives several components of communicative competence, of which grammatical competence is one. He lists four components. The first is whether or not something is formally possible – grammatical competence. The second is whether or not something is feasible , the third is whether or not something is appropriate and fourth is whether or not something accurately done.

The communicative method places great emphasis on helping students use the target language in a variety of contexts and places great emphasis on learning language functions. The main goal of language teaching under this method is to develop communicative competence in students i.e. to use language according to context which includes linguistic, sociolinguistic, strategic and discourse competence. The communicative method is usually characterized as a teaching method within a clearly defined set of classroom practices. As such, it is most often defined as a list of general principles or features. One of the most recognized lists is Nunan's (1991) five features of CLT;

- i. An emphasis on learning to communicate through interaction in target language
- ii. The introduction of authentic texts into the learning situation
- iii. The provision of opportunities for learners to focus, not only on language but also on learning process itself
- iv. An enhancement of the learner's own personal experiences as important contributing elements to classroom learning
- v. An attempt to link classroom language learning with language learning outside the classroom. (p.56)

These five features are claimed by practitioners of communicative method to show that they are very interested in the needs and desires of their learners as well as the connection between the language as it is taught in their class and as it is used outside the classroom. Activities in this method include role play, interviews, information gap, games, language exchanges, surveys, pair work, etc.

1.1.3 Language Skills

The four basic skills of language are listening, speaking, reading and writing. Among these four skills of language, listening and reading are receptive skills and speaking and writing are productive skills. In language teaching and learning all four skills play a vital role to get mastery over language but in language acquisition listening and speaking play an important role. In the field of academic life or learning\teaching a foreign language, writing plays a vital role.

Harmer (1991, p.85) states “literate people who use language have a number of various abilities. They will be able to speak on telephone, write letters, listen to the radio and read books”. The objective of language teaching is to enable the students to communicate in that language. Language learning is to gaining the skill of language which is also important in real life situation.

1.1.3.1 Speaking Skill

Language is primarily meant for speaking. Most foreign language learners are primarily interested in learning to speak. For our purpose we can define speaking as the ability to express oneself fluently in a foreign language. It is complex and complicated skill, in addition to the structures and vocabulary items.

Native speakers can speak fluently and accurately in a natural way. There are some features of natural speech. Ur (1996,p.120) identifies four characteristics of successful speaking activity.

- Learners talk a lot: as much as possible of the time allocated to the activity is in fact occupied by learners talk. This may seem obvious, but often most time is taken up by teacher talk or pauses.
- Participation is even: classroom discussion is not dominated by a minority of talkative participants: all get a chance to speak, and contributions are fairly evenly distributed.
- Motivation is high: learners are eager to speak because they are interested in the topics and have something new to say about it, or because they want to contribute to achieving a task objective.
- Language is of an acceptable level: learners express themselves in utterances that are relevant, easily comprehensible to each other, and of an acceptable level of language accuracy.

Cross (1992) identifies the feature of natural speech as "purpose, unpredictability, slips and hesitation, creativity, spontaneity, economy, intonation and stress, comprehension checks and turn taking"(p.4).

Speaking plays the vital role in second language learning. Despite its importance, for many years, teaching speaking has been under evaluated and English teachers have continued to teach speaking just as repetition of drill or memorization of dialogues.

1.1.4 Teaching Language Skills

In teaching four skills – listening, speaking, reading and writing the emphasis will usually be firmly on fluency. The purpose of language teaching is to enable the students to communicate in that language. It is essential, therefore, that every second of every language class is directed to equip students with the language skills they really need. "Language proficiency can be defined in terms of accuracy and fluency; if a learner has mastered a language successfully that means that he

or she can understand and produce it both accurately and fluently "(Ur.1996 p.103).

1.1.5 Teaching Speaking Skill

Speaking is primarily a productive skill in the sense that language is primarily manifested in speech. Language is a means of communication and this act is performed through speech. In this connection, Ur (1996, p. 120) writes, "of all the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing), speaking seems intuitively the most important: people who know a language are referred to as 'speakers of that language'". Thus, learning to speak in a foreign language is the most important task because those who can communicate in that language are referred to as the speakers of that language. Stressing on the importance of speaking, Bygate (1997) states:

Speaking is, however, a skill which deserves attention every bit as much as literary skills, in both first and second languages. Our learners often need to be able to speak with confidence in order to carry out many of their most basic transaction. It is the skill by which they may make or lose their friends. It is the vehicle par excellence of social ranking, professional advancement and of business. It is also a medium through which much language is learnt, and which for many is particularly conducive for learning. Perhaps, then, the teaching of speaking merits more thought. (p. vii)

Bygate gives more importance to teaching speaking in order to develop the learners' confidence in speaking. The primary purpose of teaching any language is to develop an ability to speak fluently in that language. Language is primarily

speech. Therefore, language teaching program should give due emphasis on teaching speaking without neglecting other skills.

A major objective of the most of the language teaching programs is to prepare the learners for meaningful interaction, making them able to use and understand natural speech from the genuine interaction. According to Ur. (1996), "Classroom activities that develop learners' ability to express themselves through speech would therefore seem an important component of a language course" (p. 120).

Speaking is not merely a single skill. It is the combination of several sub skills. To be a fluent speaker of a language, we need to get the mastery of those skills related to speaking. Munby (1979, as cited in Sharma and Phyak, 2009, p. 214) has identified the following sub skills of speaking:

- Articulating sounds in isolate forms.
- Articulating sounds in connected speech.
- Manipulating variation in stress in connected speech.
- Manipulating the use of stress in connected speech.
- Producing intonation patterns and expressing attitudinal meaning through variations in pitch, height, pitch range and pause.

Thus, to be a fluent and efficient speaker of a language, the learners need sound knowledge of grammatical and semantic rule, knowledge of suprasegmental features such as pitch, stress and intonation and the knowledge of non-linguistic elements like gesture, and body language/posture, facial expression and so on.

1.1.6 Components of Speaking

Speaking is a complex skill. It consists of several elements. Speaking ability has often been compared with communicative ability and the components of communicative ability are considered to be the components of speaking ability. However, there is no agreement on what exactly communicative ability consists of.

Hymes' (1997 as cited in Sharma and Phyak 2009, p. 218) theory of communicative competence consists of the interaction of grammatical, psycholinguistic, sociolinguistic, and probabilistic language components. Cannale and Swain (1980, as cited in Khaniya 2005, p. 25) mention that communicative competence includes grammatical competence, discourse competence, socio linguistic competence and strategic competence. In the same way, Bachman (1990, as cited in Khaniya 2005, p. 28) includes three components: language competence, strategic competence and psycho-physiological mechanisms/skills.

Likewise, talking about the components of speaking, Nunan (2003, as cited in Kayi, 2006) states that "teaching speaking" is to teach ESL learners to:

- produce the English Speech sounds and sound patterns.
- use word and sentence stress, intonation patterns and the rhythm of the second language.
- select appropriate words and sentences according to the proper social setting, audience, situation and subject matter.
- organize their thoughts in a meaningful and logical sequence.
- use language as a means of expressing values and judgements.
- Use language quickly and confidently with few unnatural pauses, which is called as fluency.

Thus, depending upon different views provided by different scholars on the theoretical framework of communicative competence, the components of speaking can be summarized as follows:

- Articulation and production of sounds and sounds sequence
- Production of stress and intonation patterns
- Grammar
- Vocabulary
- Communicative competence

- Connected speech
- Phatic communion
- Social components

1.1.7 Action Research

As the name suggest, action research incorporates two words: 'action' and 'research'. In general sense, 'action' refers to the new activities that teachers or researchers do in the classroom to solve the problem and 'research' refers to the sense of enquiring or exploring new knowledge and ideas

Cohen and Manion (as cited in Cohen, Manion and Morrison 1994) define action research as "a small scale intervention in the functioning of the real world and a close examination of the effects of such an intervention." (pp. 226-227). Action research incorporates two words 'action' and 'research' which mean the new activities that teachers do in the classroom to solve the problem and the sense of enquiring or exploring new knowledge and ideas respectively. Therefore, it aims to make teacher researchers for their own professional development.

Action research is 'a process of investigation, reflection and action which deliberately aims to improve, or make an impact on, the quality of the real situation which forms the focus of the investigation. It is a form of inquiry which involves self-evaluation, critical awareness and contributes to the existing knowledge of the educational community. Watts(1985) gives the following assumptions of action research:

- teachers and principles work best on problems they have identified for themselves
- teacher and principle become more effective when encouraged to examine and assess their own work and then consider ways of working differently
- teachers and principals help each other by working collaboratively

- working with colleagues helps teachers and principals in their professional development (p.118)

Action research for teachers is about studying what is happening in our school and deciding how to make it a better place by changing what and how we teach and how we relate to students and the community. It can be carried on by a single teacher or by a group of teachers working collaboratively out a given problem area. The purpose of action research is to solve classroom problems through the application of scientific method. It is concerned with the local problems and is conducted in a local setting. It is not concerned with whether the results are generalizable to any other setting and is not characterized by the same kind of control evident in other categories of research. The primary goal of action research is the solution of a given problem.

It is often initiated by teachers to solve their practical problems in the classroom with the help of their colleagues, students, parents and other stakeholder. Thus, action research begins and strengths collaborative learning and teaching activities among the teachers. One of the most important characteristics of action research is its reflective nature. It encourages language teachers to know where they and their students stand in terms of language teaching and learning that provides valuable directions for future activities. So it makes teachers able to evaluate their own action. It is a form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situation in order to improve the rationality and justice of their practice.

Cohen et al. (2007) summarize action research in the following points.

- i. It works on, and tries to solve real, practitioner- identified problems of everyday practice.
- ii. It is collaborative and builds in teacher involvement.
- iii. It seeks causes and tries to work on those causes.
- iv. The solutions are suggested by the practitioner involved.
- v. It involves a divergent phase and a convergent phase.
- vi. It plans an intervention by the practitioners themselves.

- vii. It implements the intervention.
- viii. It evaluates the success of the intervention in solving the identified problem. (p. 307)

Action research is not what usually comes to mind when we hear the word 'research'. It is not a library project where we learn more about a topic that interests us. It involves people working to improve their skills, techniques and strategies. Action research is about how we can do things better. It is about how we can change our instruction to impact students.

1.1.7.1 Importance of Action Research in Language Classroom

As action research is conducted in order to solve some immediate problem or change the existing situation, it is very much important in the language classroom because it helps both teacher and practitioners to improve their professional skills and to solve the immediate problem of their classroom.

We generally assume that teacher are just consumers who should adopt the new approaches, methods, and techniques generated by the researcher or experts no matter how relevant they are to the need of the students and classroom context. But sometimes it is very difficult to apply all the methodologies generated by the researcher of experts which creates difficulty in the language classroom. Sometimes the so called new techniques do not work in the classroom. So, the first thing for the teacher is to find out what the real problem (s) is/are with his her students.

In this concern, Elyildirim and Ashton (2006, p.297) opine that "classroom action research occurs when teachers reflect critically about the teaching situations, identifying learning or instructional problems, and institute methods to solve them" . It is related to a local problem and is conducted in local setting therefore, the main purpose of action research is to solve classroom problem through the application of scientific method.

It is often the teacher who initiates action research to solve their practical problems in the classroom with the help of their colleagues, students, parents and other stake holders. Therefore, action research begins and strengthens collaborative learning and teaching activities among the teachers.

From the above mention discussion, we can conclude that action research in language classroom is a tool for teacher and curriculum development which incorporates both theory and practice and it helps language teachers to find their problems and the ways for their solution which bring change in their teaching.

1.1.7.2 Characteristics of Action Research

Action research is transformative means of responding to the changing profiles of the classes and developing new teaching strategies and approaches to meet the students' heterogeneous needs. It is carried out to bring changes in the existing situation and mostly carried out by the practitioners to improve their current practices and to find out the solution for their immediate classroom problems. Thus, we can say that 'collaborative', or 'participatory nature', 'problem oriented', 'critical and reflective', etc. are some of the identifying characteristics of action research.

Similarly, Kember (2000) gives the following characteristics of action research:

- Social practice
- Aimed towards improvement
- Cyclical
- Systematic enquiry
- Reflective
- Participative
- Determined by the practitioners (as cited in Norton,2009, pp. 54-56)

Likewise, according to Mckernan (1991 as cited in Cohen et al, 2007 p.299), characteristics of action research are:

- It is collaborative
- Seeks to understand particular complex social situations.
- Seeks to understand the process of change with in social systems.
- Makes for practical problem solving action as work as expanding scientific knowledge.
- Focuses on those problems that are of immediate concern to practitioners.
- It is participatory.
- It includes evaluation and reflection.

One of the basic principles of action research is that researchers need each other's ideas for stimulation and depend on other people's perspectives to enrich their own. Research and reflection allow teachers to grow and gain confidence in their work. Action research projects influence thinking skills, sense of efficiency, willingness to share and communicate, and attitudes toward the process of change. Through action research, teachers learn about themselves, their students, their colleagues, and can determine ways to continually improve.

1.1.7.3 Process of the Action Research

Different scholars have recommended their own stages of action research. Among several sets of stages recommended by different scholars, I have mentioned selected set of stages of action research here.

According to Nunan (1992, p.19), the stages of action research are:

Step-1: Initiation

Here, a teacher / practitioner outline a problem of classroom teaching.

Step-2: Preliminary investigation

Data is collected through the closer inspection of situation. For example, actual classroom setting is taken to collect data.

Step-3: Hypothesis

Assumptions are formed based on the data collection from observation.

Step-4: Intervention

Now, the teacher comes up with a new strategy in teaching by intervening current system.

Step-5: Evaluation

After that, assessment about the intervention is done after some time.

Step-6: Dissemination

Findings of research are presented in a workshop or at conference.\

Step-7: Follow up

Still, the teacher goes on finding out other strategies. (ibid, p. 306)

In the same way, Sagor (2005, p. 4) sets out a straightforward four step model of action research as:

- i. Clarify vision and targets.
- ii. Articulate appropriate theory.
- iii. Implement plan and collect data.
- iv. Reflect on the data and plan informed action

Moreover, Norton (2009, p, 70) mentions the following stages of action research:

Step-1: Identifying a problem/paradox/issues/difficulty.

Step-2: Thinking of ways to tackle the problem.

Step-3: Doing it.

Step-4: Evaluating it. (Actual research findings)

Step-5: Modifying future practice.

Although there are many types of research that may be undertaken, action research specially refers to a disciplined inquiry done by a teacher with the intent that the research will inform and change his or her practices in the future. This research is carried out within the context of the teacher's environment – that is, with the students and at the school in which teacher works.

1.2 Review of the Related Literature

Regarding speaking skill a number of studies have been carried out. The studies related to the present study are reviewed here:

Pokhrel (2000) carried out a research entitled 'Teaching Communicative Functions, Inductively and Deductively: A Practical Study' aimed at finding out which strategy inductive or deductive is better to teach language functions. He followed an experimental research design. He found out that the inductive method was relatively more effective than the deductive method for teaching communicative functions.

Timsina (2005) carried out a survey research entitled 'Students' Ability to Communicative Skills in English' to determine the students' ability to communicate orally in English and to compare the achievement of the students in terms of different variables. The study included both primary and secondary sources for data collection and randomly selected ninety students of Kathmandu, Lalitpur and Bhaktapur districts. The test items were based on S.L.C curriculum. He found out that although syllabus of compulsory English of Secondary Level was communicative, students' performance was not satisfactory. There was not significant difference between male and female students' skill in communicating in English. The students of urban area produced more appropriate sentences than the students of semi-urban and rural area.

Pandey (2007) carried out a survey research on 'Teaching of Speaking at the Secondary Level: An Analysis of Classroom Activities' to identify the activities used for teaching speaking at the secondary level classroom. She found out that group work, pair work and discussion are commonly used speaking activities.

Oli (2007) did a research to find out the impact of information gap activities developing speaking skills. It was found that the information gap activities had relatively a better and positive impact in teaching speaking.

Paudel (2007) conducted a research on the proficiency of grade twelve students in speaking skill. It was found that the situation of speaking skill proficiency of students in Nepal is not satisfactory and adequate to meet the specified objectives of English curriculum.

Paudel (2007) carried out a research about testing quality of speaking test. It was found the SLC speaking test was not of high quality in terms of contents, contexts, material and process. It was also found that the students of government school faced problems in understanding the content, but the students of private schools felt easy to answer the question.

Only a little research has been carried out on speaking skill and none the research has been carried out on use of communicative method in speaking skill. So the researcher selected this topic for study.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were as follows:

- a. To find out the effectiveness of communicative method in teaching speaking skill.
- b. To suggest some pedagogical implications.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The study will be significant to those who are interested in language teaching and learning (particularly English language). Language teacher can teach language using communicative method appropriately in language classroom. It will also be significant for the students that they can learn language through communicative method. Similarly, the study will be equally significant for the textbook writers syllabus designers, publishers, methodologists, researchers, linguists and those who are directly and indirectly involved in the field of ELT.

CHAPTER TWO

METHODOLOGY

This research used the following methodology.

2.1 Source of Data

This research study made use of both primary and secondary sources of data.

2.1.1 Primary source of Data

The primary sources of data were the students of grade nine from a school of Kathmandu district.

2.1.2 Secondary Sources of Data

The researcher used various books, articles, journals, related to the study as secondary sources of data. Rivers (1968), Grellet (1981), Nunan (1992), Larsen-Freeman (2000), Richards and Rodgers (2001), Harmer (2008) and various websites are some of them.

2.2 Population of Study

The population of my study comprised the students of grade IX of a school of Kathmandu district. Thirty students of Mount Glory Secondary School were selected for population of study.

2.3 Sampling Procedure

All students of grade nine from Mount Glory Secondary school of Kathmandu district were selected for teaching and testing purposes purposively as the sample of research.

2.4 Tools for Data Collection

Tests were used as the tool for the data collection. The researcher used pre-test, two progressive tests and post-test in order to elicit the required data. The same test items were used for both pre-test and post-test while progressive tests were constructed depending upon how the lessons were in progress. The test items were made from class IX compulsory English book. There were only oral test items consisting of 50 full marks. Five test items were constructed consisting of five different language functions and each item carried ten marks.

2.5 Process of Data Collection

In order to collect the required data, the researcher followed the following process:

- a. The researcher visited the selected school and asked the authority for permission to carry out the research.
- b. He constructed the test items for pre-test and prepared post-test and lesson plans for teaching. The pre-test was conducted before teaching the students to identify their current level of competence in speaking skill.
- c. He made use of communicative method to teach speaking skill to the students. For this he taught different language functions viz. giving directions, asking for permission describing people and places are some of them.
- d. He taught twenty lessons using communicative method.
- e. He conducted progressive test once a week to measure the students' progress.
- f. Finally, he administered the post-test. The same test items used in the pre-test were used for the post-test. Then, the result of the tests was compared to determine the effectiveness of communicative method in teaching speaking skill.

2.5 Limitations of the Study

This study had the following limitations:

- a. The study was limited to only one school, Mount Glory Secondary School, Kathmandu.
- b. Only grade nine students of the school were taken as the population for the study.
- c. The number of students was limited to thirty.
- d. The study was limited to the learning of English in a classroom setting.
- e. The study was based on communicative method in teaching different language functions, viz. directing, asking for permission, describing propose and function, describing people and places and giving advice.
- f. There was only one group which was taught for twenty one days.
- g. The primary data for the study was collected only from oral test i.e. pre-test, two progressive tests and post-test.

CHAPTER THREE
ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This chapter deals with the analysis and interpretation of the data obtained from the primary sources. This study was carried out to find out the effectiveness of communicative method in teaching speaking skill. For this purpose, I selected thirty students of grade nine of Mount Glory Secondary School, Kathmandu where he taught twenty one lessons through the communicative method.

In this chapter, I have tabulated, analyzed, interpreted and compared the data in the following order:

- a. Comparison of the results of the pre-test and post-test
- b. Analysis and interpretation of the data obtained through test results.
- c. Comparative analysis of the data obtained through test results.

3.1 Comparison of the Results of the Pre-Test and Post-Test

The pre-test was conducted before starting any experimental teaching. After teaching twenty lessons through communicative method to develop students' proficiency on speaking skill, the post-test was administered. The test items of both the tests were the same having same full-mark i.e. fifty. The comparisons between these two tests have been presented in the following table:

Table No. 1
Comparison of the Results of Pre-Test and Post-Test

Test	No. of the Students	Obtained Marks	Percentage	Difference	Difference %
Pre-test	30	336	44.8%	210	62.50
Post-test	30	546	72.80%		

(Note: In the above table, "Difference" refers to the difference between the result of the pre-test and post-test. "Difference in per cent" refers to the difference score's percentage of two tests. Difference of percentage between the score in the pre-test and that of post-test is calculated by dividing the difference in score by the pre-test score and multiplying by 100).

The above table reveals the fact that the post-test score was increased by 208 i.e. 61.90 percent and the post-test's percentage is increased by 28.45. Therefore, from this comparison, it was proved that communicative method was effective to develop the students' proficiency on the speaking skill.

3.2 Analysis and Interpretation of the Data Obtained through Test Results

This section includes the analysis of the scores of the students on the pre-test, two progressive tests and post-test.

3.2.1 Analysis and Interpretation of the Pre-test

I administered a set of oral test-items (that is pre-test) to the students before I started any experimental teaching in order to determine the students' proficiency on speaking skill. The pre-test consisted of fifty full marks having five test items from different language functions viz. giving directions, asking for permission, describing purpose and functions, describing people and places and giving advice. The following table clearly shows the students' score on the pre-test:

Table No. 2
Students' Score on the Pre-Test

S.N	No. of the students (in group)	Full marks	Marks obtained in frequency	Percentage
1	01	50	26	52
2	01	50	28	56
3	02	50	24	48
4	02	50	25	50
5	02	50	22	44
6	02	50	21	42
7	01	50	23	46
8	02	50	20	40
9	01	50	18	36
10	01	50	17	34
Total	15	750	336	44.8
Average Score			22.4	

The above table indicates that the total full-mark of the pre-test was 750. Out of 750, the total obtained mark was 336 that is 44.8 percent. Similarly, the average score of test was 22.4.

The highest secured score was 28 that is 56 percent which was obtained by two students and the lowest secured score was 17 that is 34 percent which was also obtained by only two students. Four students obtained average score. In the same way, fourteen students have obtained lower while sixteen students have obtained higher than the average score. Thus, the result of the pre-test is not poor.

3.2.2 Analysis and Interpretation of First Progressive Test

After conducting the pre-test, I taught seven lessons through communicative method to develop students' proficiency on speaking skill. Those lessons consisted of giving direction and asking for permission. After teaching those lessons, I administered the first progressive test. The following table shows the score of the students on the first progressive test:

Table No. 3
Students' Score on the First Progressive Test

S.N	No. of the Students (in group)	Full Marks	Marks Obtained in Frequency	Percentage
1	01	50	31	62
2	01	50	34	68
3	02	50	28	56
4	02	50	29	58
5	02	50	26	52
6	02	50	25	50
7	01	50	27	54
8	02	50	23	46
9	01	50	22	44
10	01	50	20	40
Total	15	750	396	52.8
Average Score			26.4	

As the above table indicates that the total full-mark of the first progressive test was 750. Out of 750, the total obtained score was 396 that is 52.8 percent. In the same way, the average score of this test was 26.4.

Thirty-four out of 50 that is 68 percent was the highest score which was obtained by only two students and twenty out of 50 that is 40 percent is the lowest score which is also obtained by two students. Sixteen students have obtained lower score and fourteen students have obtained higher score than the average score. Thus, the result of the second progressive test seems satisfactory as more students have obtained higher than the average score and the percentage is increased here.

3.2.3 Analysis and Interpretation of the Second Progressive Test

After administering the first progressive test, I taught seven lessons to develop students' proficiency on the speaking skill through communicative method. Those lessons included describing purpose and function and describing people and places. Then the second progressive test was administered. The following table shows the record of the second progressive test:

Table No. 4
Students' Score on the Second Progressive Test

S.N	No. of the Students (in group)	Full Marks	Marks Obtained in Frequency	Percentage
1	01	50	36	72
2	02	50	39	78
3	02	50	33	66
4	03	50	31	62
5	01	50	30	60
6	01	50	29	58
7	02	50	32	64
8	02	50	26	52
9	01	50	25	50
Total	15	750	473	63.07
Average Score			31.53	

It is clear in the above table that the total full-mark of the second progressive test was 750 and out of it, the total obtained score was 473 i.e. 63.07 percent . Similarly, the average score of this test was 31.53.

Two students obtained 39 that is 78 percent out of 50 which is the highest score and the lowest score was 25 that is 50 percent which was also obtained by two students. Fourteen students have obtained higher and sixteen students have obtained lower than the average score. As the average score and the total obtained marks are increased in this test, it can be claimed that the result of this test is satisfactory.

3.3.4 Analysis and Interpretation of Post-Test

After completion of the first progressive and the second progressive tests and the record was kept, I taught other seven lessons to develop the students' proficiency on the speaking skill through communicative method. Those lessons incorporated describing people and places and giving advice. The test items of the post-test were similar to the pre-test which were constructed including all the language functions taught during the experimentation. The scores of the students on the post-test have been displayed in the following table:

Table No. 5
Students' Score on the Post-Test

S.N	No. of the Students (in group)	Full Marks	Marks Obtained in Frequency	Percentage
1	01	50	42	84
2	02	50	45	90
3	01	50	39	78
4	02	50	37	74
5	03	50	35	70
6	01	50	33	66
7	02	50	38	76
8	01	50	30	60
9	01	50	29	58
10	01	50	28	56
Total	15	750	546	72.80
Average Score			36.40	

As the above table shows that the total full-mark of this test is 750. Out of 750, the total secured score was 546 that is 72.80 percent. In the same way, the average score of this test was 36.40.

The highest score of the post-test was 45 that is 90 percent which was obtained by four students. On the other hand, the lowest score of this test was 28 that is 56 percent which was obtained by two students.

From the analysis and interpretation of the tests' results, it has been proved that the post-test has better result than the others. The post-test's total score and the average score are higher than the other tests. Therefore, it can be claimed that the post-test's result is better than the other tests.

3.3 Comparative Analysis of the Data Obtained Through Test Results

Here, the result of all the tests viz. pre-test, first progressive test, second progressive test and post-test are compared and analyzed with each other.

3.3.1 Comparative Analysis of the Pre-Test and First Progressive Test

The score of the pre-test was also analyzed and compared with the score of the first progressive test which is presented in the following table:

Table No. 6

Comparison of the Pre-Test and First Progressive Test

Test	No. of the Students	Obtained Marks	Percentage	Difference	Difference %
Pre-test	30	336	44.8%	60	17.86
First progressive test	30	396	52.8%		

The above table indicates the fact that the total secured marks of the pre-test was 336 that is 44.8 per cent . The increased mark in the first progressive test was 72

that is by 17.86 per cent reaching 396 that is 52.8 per cent. Therefore, this different between the percentage of the two tests indicateds that there was improvement.

3.3.2 Comparative Analysis of Pre-Test and Second Progressive Test

Here, the sore of the pre-test and second progressive test are analyzed, interpreted and compared. The following table displays the comparison of the scores of both tests:

Table No. 7
Comparison of the Pre-Test and Second Progressive Test

Test	No. of the Students	Obtained Marks	Percentage	Difference	Difference %
Pre-test	30	336	44.8%	136	40.48
Second progressive test	30	473	63.07%		

The above table indicates that the total score of the pre-test was 374 that is 44.8% and the total score of the second progressive test was 473 that is 63.07%. Similarly, the increased mark of the second progressive test over the pre-test was 136 that is 40.48%.

Therefore, this difference between the percentage of the two tests indicates that the proficiency of grade nine students on speaking skill was developed from teaching language functions through communicative method.

3.3.3 Comparative Analysis of the First Progressive Test and Second Progressive Test

Here, the score of the first progressive test and the second progressive test are analyzed and compared with each other. The following table presents the comparison of these two tests:

Table No. 8

Comparison of the First Progressive Test and the Second Progressive Test

Test	No. of the Students	Obtained Marks	Percentage	Difference	Difference %
First progressive test	30	396	52.8%	77	19.44
Second progressive test	30	473	63.07%		

The above table indicates that the total score of the first progressive test was 396 that is 52.8% and the total score of the second progressive test was 473 that is 63.07%. The increased marks of the second progressive test over the first progressive test was 77 that is 19.44%. Thus, it is obvious that using communicative method in teaching speaking helped in developing grade nine students' proficiency on speaking skill.

3.3.4 Comparative Analysis of the First Progressive Test and the Post-Test

The score of the first progressive test and the post-test are analyzed and compared in the following table:

Table No. 9

Comparison of the First Progressive Test and the Post-Test

Test	No. of the Students	Obtained Marks	Percentage	Difference	Difference %
First progressive test	30	396	52.80%	150	37.88
Post-test	30	546	72.80%		

As the above table shows that the total score of the first progressive test was 396 that is 52.80% and the total score of the post test was 546 that is 72.80%. The increment of the post-test score over the first progressive test was 150 that is 37.88%.

3.3.5 Comparative Analysis of the Second Progressive Test and the Post-Test

Here, the score of the second progressive test is analyzed and compared with the score of the post-test. The comparison of the both tests have been shown in the following table.

Table No. 10

Comparison of the second Progressive Test and the Post-Test

Test	No. of the Students	Obtained Marks	Percentage	Difference	Difference %
Second progressive test	30	473	63.07%	73	15.43
Post-test	30	546	72.80%		

The above table shows that the total score of the second progressive test was 473 that is 63.07% while the total score of the post-test was 546 that is 72.80%. The post-test's score was increased by 73 that is 15.43% to the second progressive test. This increment in the percentage of the post-test reveals the fact that the use of communicative method in teaching speaking skill seems effective.

3.3.6 Comparative Analysis of the Pre-Test and the Post-Test Score

The score of the pre-test is analyzed and compared with the score of the post-test. The comparison of the both tests have been shown in the following table.

Table No. 11

Comparison of the Results of Pre-Test and Post-Test

Test	No. of the Students	Obtained Marks	Percentage	Difference	Difference %
Pre-test	30	336	44.80%	210	62.50
Post-test	30	546	72.80%		

As the above table shows that the total score of the pre-test was 336 that is 44.80% while the total score of the post-test was 546 that is 72.80%. There was high increment of the mark from the pre-test to the post-test. The post-test's score increased by 210 that is 62.50% which was very high than that of the pre-test. It shows that communicative method helped to develop students' proficiency on the speaking skill.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The present research has made an effort to find out the effectiveness of communicative method in teaching speaking skill. In order to fulfill the objectives, the researcher selected Mount Glory Secondary school of Kathmandu district where he taught twenty-one lessons through communicative method to thirty students of grade nine. Those lessons included different language functions viz. directing, asking for permission, describing purpose and function, describing people and places and giving advice. The pre-test was administered before beginning any experimental teaching. After giving the pre-test, other two progressive tests viz. first progressive test and second progressive test were administered and then the post-test was conducted. The score of every test was analyzed and compared with each other. The findings of the study have been listed below:

4.1 Findings

The following findings have been drawn on the basis of the analysis and interpretation of the data:

- a. After analysis and comparison of the pre-test and the post-test results, it was found that the average score and the percentage of the post-test were higher than that of the pre-test. Therefore, on the basis of this analysis, it can be observed that the use of communicative method in teaching speaking skill is effective.
- b. In analyzing the pre-test result, it was found that the total mark of all the students was 336 that is 44.8 per cent. The highest score of the pre-test was 28 that is 56 per cent, the lowest score was 17 that is 34 per cent and the average score was 22.4. Therefore, the result of the pre-test was not satisfactory.

- c. The total percentage of the pre-test was 44.80 per cent and the total percentage of the first progressive test was 52.80 per cent. The percentage of the first progressive test was increased by 8 per cent. Thus, it is proved that the first progressive test's percentage was higher than that of the pre-test.
- d. In comparative analysis of the first progressive test and the second progressive test, it was found that the total percentage of the first progressive test was 52.80 per cent and the total percentage of the second progressive test was 63.07 per cent. The percentage of second progressive test's was increased by 10.27 per cent. Thus, the increased percentage indicates that there was difference between the first and second progressive tests.
- e. It was found that the total percentage of the second progressive test was 63.07 per cent and the total percentage of the post-test was 72.80 per cent. The post-test's percentage was increased by 9.73 per cent. Thus, the increment in the percentage proves that the students' performance was better in the post-test in comparison to the second progressive test.

On the basis of the above findings, it can be concluded that the use of communicative method in teaching speaking skill will be fruitful.

4.2 Recommendations

On the basis of the above findings, the following recommendations have been suggested for pedagogical implications:

- a. Based on the analysis, interpretation and comparison of the data, it was found that the students had increasing result in all the four tests. Thus, it is proved that communicative method is effective in teaching speaking skill to the students. Therefore, the teachers are advised to use communicative method in teaching communicative functions to the students as far as possible.

- b. Communicative method was found to enhance the students' proficiency in developing speaking skill. Therefore, the teachers are suggested to use this method.
- c. Communicative method is co-operation oriented which helps to develop interpersonal skills. Therefore, to enhance co-operation and interpersonal skills among the students, this method is suggested to be implemented in the class.
- d. Syllabus designers, methodologists and textbook writers should encourage the use of communicative method in teaching speaking skill.
- e. Systematic organization and management of the classroom are crucial factors for implementing communicative method. So, the teachers should pay due emphasis on these matters. However, paying full attention on these matters too, the teachers may face various difficulties. Thus, the following practical suggestions are made to the teachers to cope with the likely problems:
 - i. The method should be selected according to the level and the capacity of the students.
 - iii. To minimize the unnecessary noise, the students should be encouraged to avoid the native-talk and to whisper while communicating with each other
 - iv. This method may require prior preparation. For this, the teacher can share the burden with the students and prepare the materials in advance.
 - v. The teacher should divide the students into different pairs, groups and /or teams based on the nature of the topic.
- f. The present study is limited to thirty students of grade nine from a school of Kathmandu district. Different language functions were taught through communicative method. Thus, it cannot be claimed that the findings of the study are applicable to all the schools of Nepal. Therefore, it is desirable to carry out the further studies involving more number of the students and schools to verify the findings of the study.

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