

**STUDENTS' ABILITY IN USING ENGLISH
PREPOSITIONS**

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

**Submitted by
Shankar Bahadur Kunwar**

**Faculty of Education
Tribhuvan University
Kirtipur, Kathmandu, Nepal
2011**

T.U. Regd.: 7-2-327-809-2002

Campus Roll No.: -77/2064

2nd Year Exam Roll No.: 280705/2066

Date of Approval of

Thesis Proposal 2067-11-19

Date of Submission: 2068/1/22

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2011

DECLARATION

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

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.....

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RECOMMENDATION FOR ACCEPTANCE

This is to certify that **Mr. Shankar Bahadur Kunwar** has prepared this thesis entitled '**Students' Ability in Using English Prepositions**' under my guidance and supervision.

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DEDICATION

Affectionately Dedicated

To

All My Family Members and Relatives

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my genuine gratitude to my respected thesis supervisor **Dr. Tapasi Bhattacharya**, Reader, the Department of English education for her patience, kindness, proper guidance, enlighten ideas and invaluable suggestions. Without her help, inspiration, cooperation and encouragement, I would not have been able to present this thesis in this form.

Similarly my sincere gratitude goes to **Dr. Chandreswar Mishra**, Professor and Head of the Department of English Education, for his invaluable suggestion to carry out this research. **Dr. Laxmi Bahadur Maharjan**, Reader of the Department of English Education, also deserves my thankfulness and gratitude for his constructive suggestion during my research as a member of research guidance committee.

I am highly indebted to **Dr. Jai Raj Awasthi**, Professor, the Chairperson of the English and Other Foreign Languages Education Subject Committee for his impressive lectures in ELT during the classes and invaluable academic advice that led me to accomplish this thesis.

My sincere gratitude also goes to **Prof. Dr. Govinda Raj Bhattarai**, **Prof. Dr. Tirth Raj Khaniya**, **Prof. Dr. Anju Giri**, **Mr. Vishnu S. Rai**, **Dr. Bal Mukunda Bhandari**, **Dr. Anjana Bhattarai**, **Mrs. Madhu Neupane**, **Mr. Prem Bahadur Phyak**, **Mrs. Saraswati Dawadi**, **Mr. Bhesh Raj Pokharel** and **Mrs. Hima Rawal**, whose contribution to me has not only brought this research work in its complete form but also their untiring academic helps and suggestions.

I am grateful to the teachers and students of all schools where I collected my data for my research study of Achham district for their support for completing thesis work

Likewise, I would like to express my deep respect to **Mrs. Madhavi Khanal**, Librarian of the Department of English Education for her kind cooperation and regular help in issuing the required books.

My thanks also go to my friends **Mr. Basu Dev Upaddhaya, Mr. Niraj Prasad Gyawaly, Mrs. Nisha Khanal** and **Mrs. Sarita Bogati**. Finally, I would like to thank my brother **Mr. Sunil Kunwar** for his cooperation and every sort of help he provided me while I was busy in writing this thesis.

Baisakh, 2068

Sankar Bahadur Kunwar

ABSTRACT

The present study is entitled '**Students' Ability of Using English Prepositions**'. The main purpose of this study was to find out the ability of using preposition in grade XII, to compare sex-wise ability in using preposition and to suggest some pedagogical implications. For the purpose of this study, grade XII students of Achham district were selected. The sample population for the study was only eighty students (40 girls and 40 boys). The respondents were selected by using random and judgmental sampling procedures. The only tool for data collection was a set of test items consisting selection test items and picture description tool. The finding of the study showed that the ability of using prepositions by grade XII students was not satisfactory.

This study is divided into four chapters. Chapter one introduces the study in terms of general background, review of the related literature, objectives and significance of the study. Chapter two deals with methodology under which sources of data, tools for data collection, procedures for data collection and limitations of the study are presented. Similarly, Chapter three presents the analysis and interpretation of the data obtained through primary sources. Chapter four includes findings and recommendations which are derived and suggested with the help of analysis and interpretation of data. References and appendices are included at the end of this work to make the work more valid.

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List of Abbreviations and Symbols

%	Percentage
B.Ed.	Bachelor in Education
CUP	Cambridge University Press
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
e.g.	For Example
E.L.T.	English Language Teaching
etc.	Et Cetera
FoE	Faculty of Education
i.e.	that is
M.Ed.	Master in Education
NELTA	Nepal English Language Teachers' Association
NESP	National Educational System Plan
OUP	Oxford University Press
p.	page
T. U.	Tribhuvan University
UN	United Nations
UNMIN	United Nations Mission in Nepal

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This study is about the 'Students' Ability in Using English Prepositions'. It aims at finding out the appropriateness in the use of prepositions of time and place. The subjects were randomly selected from XII. The logic behind this is that I consider grade XII a crucial period for language perfection.

1.1 General Background

Language is an asset uniquely possessed by human beings. It is the most highly developed and most frequently used means of human communication through which we express our thoughts, feelings, emotions desires ideas etc. It is one of the unique properties of human society which separates the human creatures from other animals as they use this system in this daily communication to transmit ideas cultures religion, norms and values as well as to preserve the social institutions to change, modify and control the things. It is a social phenomenon which is used in our society to establish the relationship among the human beings.

Language is a universal phenomenon too. We must acknowledge that it is essential set of items what Hudson (1996, p.21) calls ‘Linguistic Items’ because it is systematic arrangement of linguistic units like sounds, words, phrases clauses etc. According to Wardhaugh (1996, p. 24) “Language can be used to refer either to single linguistic norms or to a group of related norms.”

From the above definitions, though, we can say that language is a special gift of god to humankind because it is a special entity. A language is at least understandable to the group of people living together in a society.

1.1.1 English Language Teaching in Nepal

Nepal needs English for the acquisition and transmission of the scientific and technological knowledge because Nepali does not have access to the scientific and technological world. It is also the window to western literature, cultures and thoughts. In Nepal, it is not seen only as a language through which the culture of another nation is observed but also as a language through which Nepal can express her own culture. English is absolutely necessary to introduce

us to the rest of the world. Moreover, English is undoubtedly of vital importance for keeping Nepal in touch with advancement and the modern world. As education is an agent in such a process, the place of English in Nepalese education as a foreign language is indispensable.

Keeping these needs in mind, ELT holds a very strong place in Nepal. The main contribution for spreading English education in Nepal is made by Jesuits, United Missions to Nepal (UNMIN), The British Council etc. Similarly, an entirely professionals' organization Nepal, English Language Teachers' Association (NELTA)'s role is unforgettably significant which has been informing to the working force about the modern advancement taking place in pedagogic areas.

The introduction of ELT in Nepalese education started only in 1971 with the implementation of National Education System Plan (NESP) and it started in 1971 when FOE of TU, initiated B.Ed. Programme in English Education. In this context, Bhattarai (2006, p. 13) says:

Almost half of the numbers of schools are English medium. Nepalese people have always given higher importance to the teaching and learning English. The reason behind this is that it is helping them to grow and grab equal opportunities available within and beyond the border area.

English has been prescribed in the curriculum of primary level to university level of education in Nepal. Now, our government has taught that English as a compulsory subject from grade one to Bachelor level. The need and demand for English in Nepal is strong and likely to become stronger. It has to be learnt not only because of its prestige, value but also for its practical reality.

1.1.2 English Language as a Global Language

More than six thousand languages in this world are used for communication in these days. Among them English as a global language occupies a dominant position in the world. It is an international language, which functions as a lingua franca throughout the world. So that English is a language which belongs not only to certain countries and communities of the world but it has become the property of the universe today.

To prove this Karn (2006, p.73) shows a statistics data:

The latest statistics shows one in every four human being can speak English to some degree of competence. Today, English is spoken by around 1400 millions of population which amounts approximately to a quarter of the world population.. It has been estimated that some 400 millions people speak English as their first language, Same is the figure of the people who use it as a second or additional language but some 600 million use it as their foreign language.

English is the main language of books, newspaper, airports, international business, academic conference, science and technology, medicine, politics, economics, marketing, law, broadcasting, diplomacy, advertising and so on. In the same way, English is one of the five official languages of the UN. Thus, it has become an obligatory as well as a prestigious language.

The modern civilization of the western world is being transmitted to the eastern world via the English language. That is the way English is serving as an important vehicle for the transmission of civilization and culture and it is regarded as an inevitable means to link with the outer world. It has a significant influence in education system of each country. Thus, we find the significant influence of the English language in Nepal is growing rapidly it has occupied an important place in the education system of Nepal. A good number of books, journals, newspaper, magazines are found in English medium in Nepal.

1.1.3 Teaching Grammar

Every language of the world has its own grammar. It is a system of rule of a framework that gives the language structure. The formation of the word and sentence making is connected with rules of grammar. For effective communication one should be competent in the language he/she uses.

Moreover, knowledge of grammar is essential for competent user of a language. The aim in teaching grammar should be to ensure that students are communicatively efficient with the grammar, they have at their level. As regards English grammar, there are different classes of words to be taught as the building blocks of sentence construction.

Different scholars define grammar variously. Generally, grammar is defined as the connection of words, and words groups in an acceptable structure. It is one of the aspects of language that should be taught and learnt. Ur (1996, p.76) defines it as "how words are combined or changed to form acceptable units of meaning within a language."

According to Palmer (1971, p.9) "Grammar is a device that specifies the infinite set of well formed sentences and assigns to each of them one more structural description." That is to say, it tells us just that all the possible sentences of a language and their description.

Hence, grammar is the core of each language. According to Richards et al. (1985, p.125) "Grammar is a description of the structure of the language and the way in which linguistic units such as words and phrases are combined to produce sentences in the language."

Similarly, grammar is regarded as an integral part of the language. It means that it is very important in order to manipulate the language in speech and writing. The main purpose of teaching grammar is to help students to choose structure which expresses the meaning they want to create. Hence, teaching grammar is meant for improving language. According to Lado (1961, p.144)

"Grammar governs the central structure of an utterance." It means the central structure means the way of arranging the morphemes into words and words into the sentences.

Harmer (2007, p. 32) says, "Grammar is not just concerned with syntax, however, the way words are formed- and can change their form in order to express different meanings. Grammar is also at heart of grammatical knowledge." He further says that grammar can thus be partly seen as a knowledge of what words, can go where and what form these words should take. Studying grammar means knowing how different grammatical elements can be strung together to make chains of words

Grammar is classified into two types i.e. theoretical, which concerns with the description of the theories and grammatical analysis and pedagogic grammar, that uses the grammatical structures in a appropriate situations.

1.1.3.1 Importance of Teaching Grammar

Grammar plays a pivotal role in language . It helps in the production of infinite number of new structures. To get mastery over any language, one needs to know its underlying grammar and structures. In this context, Chosmky (1957, p. 25) says:

Any grammar of a language will project the finite and some what accidental corpus of observed utterances, a set (presumably infinite) of grammatical utterances. In this respect, behaviors of speakers, who on the basis of a finite and accidental experience with language can produce or understand an infinite number of new utterances.

So, grammar is the basis for the production of any correct utterances which makes the language meaningful. It enables learners to use the language

accurately and appropriately in the meaningful language background. Each language has its own grammar. So it is taught for:

- Developing accuracy.
- Systematic analysis of language forms.
- Rules in order to generate all and only grammatical sentences.
- Developing communicative efficiency.

1.1.3.2 Approaches to Teaching Grammar

Teaching of grammar has always been a controversy in foreign language teaching situation. There are two types of approaches to teaching grammar.

A. Inductive Method

Inductive method is rule discovery method. Thornbury (1999, p. 64) says, "An inductive approach starts with some examples from which a rule is inferred. "In this method, without having met the rule, the learner studies examples and from these examples derives an understanding of the rule. The inductive method would seem to be the way ones first language is required: simply through exposure to a massive amount of input the regularities and patterns of the language become evident, independent of conscious study and explicit rule formation.

There are typical stages of inductive method. They are given below:

- Presentation of examples.
- Analysis of examples to written or oral practice.
- Principles/rules formation.
- Generalization of rules that grow out of the previous activity.
- Written and oral practice.

- Application or verification.

B. Deductive Method

Deductive method is as a rule driven method. Thornbury (1999, p. 64) says, "A deductive approach starts with the presentation of rules and is followed by examples in which the rule is applied. "This method starts with presentation of grammatical rules and then is followed by examples and explanations of the rules. The teacher can also translate second language into students' first language. There are typical stages of deductive method. They are given below:

- Presentation of rules/patterns/principles.
- Description and explanation rules/patterns/ principles.
- Providing some examples to reinforce the rules.
- Explaining underlying rules mostly by using mother tongue.
- Asking students to practice the rules orally or writing.
- Contrasting the areas of difference between mother tongue and target language.
- Memorization of rules.

Many people, including language teachers, listen to the word grammar and think of a fixed set of word forms and rules of usage. They associate good grammar with the prestige forms of the language such as those used in writing and in formal oral presentation.

1.1.4 Teaching of Writing

Writing is one of the most important skills in learning a new language. It is a productive skill, which means to manipulate its mechanism, structuring them into sensible words or the units in order to make reader understand the meaning of such complex effort. Through writing, we are able to share ideas, arouse feelings, persuade and convince people. It further helps to transmit human

beings accumulated culture from one generation to another. Writing is a skill that improves with practice with regular writing practice; the writer will become more comfortable and fluent in organizing her/his thoughts exactly on paper. Thus, writing skill is a most indispensable ingredient in getting a command over any language.

1.1.4.1 Importance of Teaching of Writing

Writing is the fourth of the skills of language. Written form of language uses visual symbols (graphic symbols) to represent the sound used in speaking. So writing like speaking, should be thought of as a powerful medium of expression. Writing means putting down graphic symbols. Only producing graphic symbol is not enough to define writing because different words, phrases, clauses and sentences should be arranged in their correct order to produce acceptable forms of language with different kinds of meanings and information.

The main purpose of teaching of writing is to enable the learners for expressing their feelings, thoughts and ideas with appropriate meanings in graphic form. Keeping the importance of teaching writing skill into consideration, HSEB has mentioned a wide range of writing assignments in the present compulsory English Syllabus of the Higher Secondary level. Writing has been given a lot of weighting and duration. Therefore, it is the actual teaching learning activity of the writing skill at this level. So that, it is said that reading makes a man conference a ready man and writing an exact man.

1.1.4.2 Components of Writing

Writing is a system of written symbols, which represents of language. It is not merely an activity of encoding verbal thought in printed symbols. Instead, it consists of a number of other components. They are as follows:

a. Mechanics

It is also known as ‘graphological system’ which refers to those components writing such as spelling, use of punctuation marks, capitals, abbreviation and numbers which are often dealt with the revision or editing stage of writing. Learners should get special training for writing.

b. Coherence

Coherence is the relationship between an utterance and the meaning it conveys. It is the semantic relationship of different sense units between and among the utterances. Appropriate methods to adjust coherence in writing are chronological order, spatial order and logical order.

c. Cohesion

Cohesion is the intra-textual relation of grammatical and lexical items that make the parts of the text together as a whole to convey the complete meaning of a text. This may be the relationship between different sentences or between different parts of a sentence.

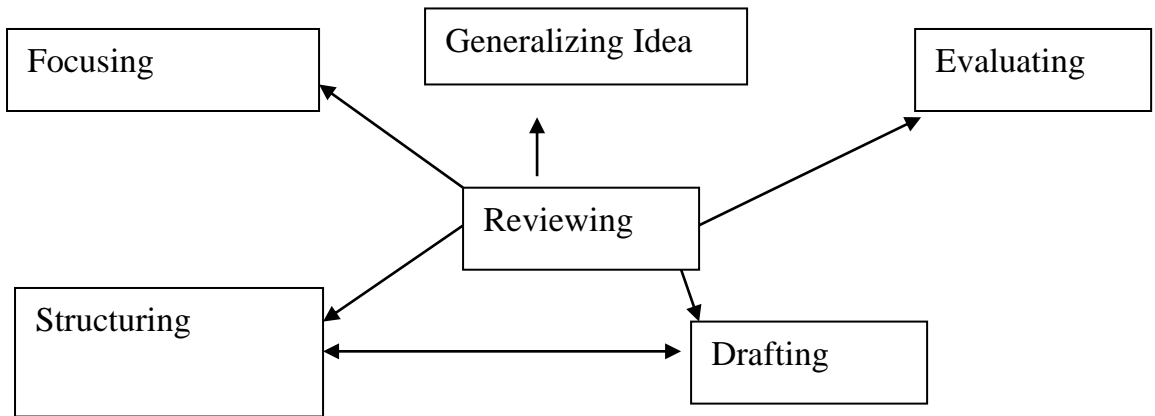
1.1.4.3 Stages of Teaching of Writing

Writing is far from being a simple matter of transcribing language into symbols. It is a thinking process in its own right. It needs conscious intellectual efforts. Regarding the stages of teaching writing, Krashen (1984, p.17) says:

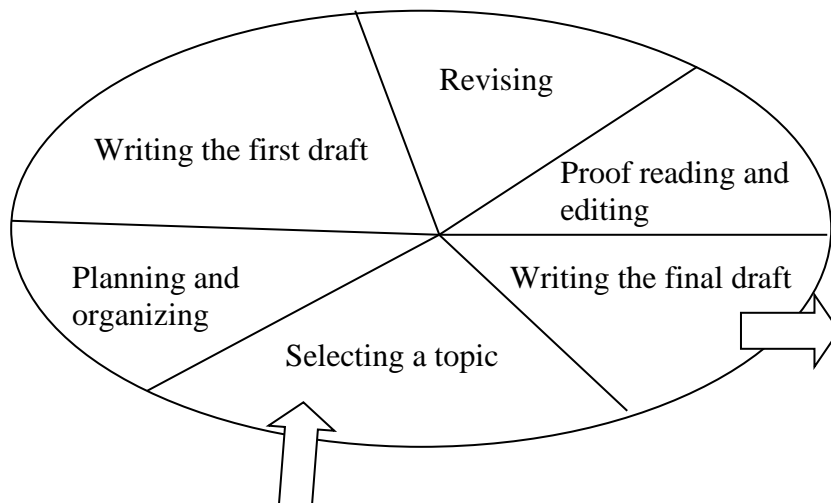
The process approach to teaching, which mainly consists of four basic stages: planning, making an outline, preparing first draft and revising, editing and producing the final draft. The stages are neither sequential nor orderly. In fact, as research has suggested, many good writers employ a recursive, non-linear approach where writing of a draft may be interrupted by

more planning and revision may lead to reformation with a great deal of recycling to earlier stages.

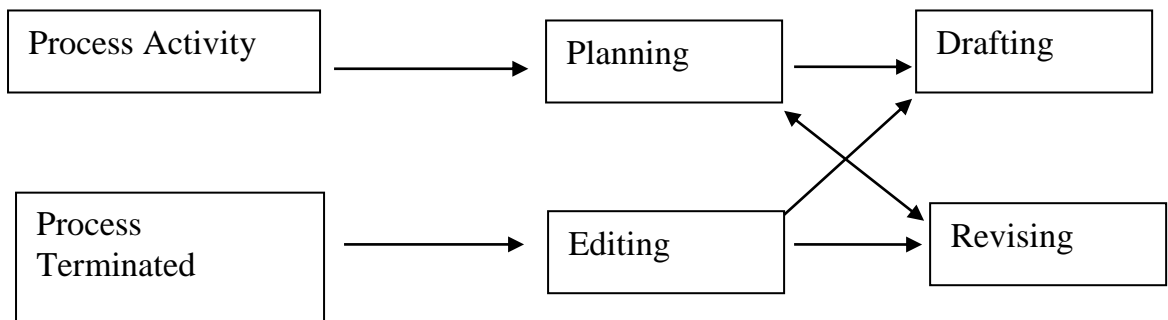
Similarly, White and Arndt (1991, p.11) present the following model of process writing:



Likewise, Strauch (2005, p.17) presents the following figure of the process writing.



Richards and Rendandya (2010, p. 315) make the following figure for writing process.



Based on these ideas, the stages of teaching process writing can be outlined as follow:

a) Planning

Planning is a pre-writing activity that encourages students to write. In the planning stage, ideas and structured are effectively organized. In this stage students moves toward generating tentative ideas and gathering information. The following activities are provided to the learners at this stage.

- Brainstorming
- Consulting resources for data/information
- Making notes
- Organizing of notes

b) Making an Outline

Making outline is a second stage of teaching writing process. In this stage, the writer makes an outline on the basis of the organized notes. The organized ideas are not to be set in certain order and relationship. Outline is written in legible order where it is written in short phrases and incomplete sentences.

Outlines are valuable tools based on it the writer can add, drop, explain and substitute the ideas later.

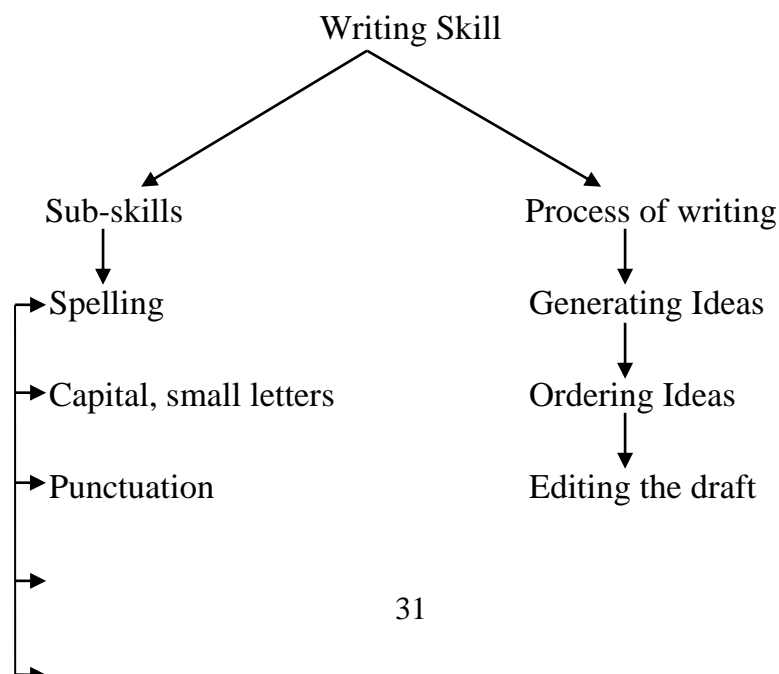
c) Preparing the First Draft

A writer moves from prewriting activities to actual writing process. The writer focuses on the fluency of writing and is pre occupied with grammatical accuracy or the neatness of the draft.

d) Revising, Editing and Producing the Final Draft

First draft can never be the final product. The writer can change the words, sentences or even some part of organization. The final draft of writing requires to be free from conceptual gap. It is done to improve global context and the organization of ideas so that the writer's intent is made clearer to the readers. Although there are numbers of conflicting theories of planning and teaching a course in writing. There should be interrelated between sub-skills and process in writing. Bhattarai (2006, p.40) says, "To produce this piece one has to develop some sub-skills and go through a long interrelated process." She further adds that unless or until students learn and practice those sub-skills and process, they cannot write independently.

She has given a diagrammatical chart to make the English language learners independent writers.



Linking Words

Replacing the words

(Bhattarai 2006, p. 44)

Apart from this sub-skills and processes students need to develop the skills of the correct use of vocabulary and grammatical aspects like articles, prepositions, tense, aspects and so on.

1.1.5 Word Classes

Traditionally, words can be grouped into classes, which are called parts of speech. Richard et al. (1985) define word class as “a group of words which are similar in function, words are grouped into classes according to how they combine with other words, how they change their form” so that words are assigned to the same class if they share a number of properties. Words classes can be divided into two groups:

- i) Major Word Classes: Noun, adjectives, adverb, and verb.
- ii) Minor Word Classes: Preposition, pronoun, auxiliary verb, conjunction, interjection, determiner, intensifier and classifier.

1.1.6 Preposition

Prepositions are morphemes, which are free in form. Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1999, p. 402) say that English prepositions are free morphemes that are not bound inflectional affixes. The reason is that preposition have the name they do is that they precede nouns. They are called prepositions. Therefore, any member of a class of words found in many languages that are used before nouns, or adjectives to form phrases functions as

modifiers of verbs, nouns adjectives and that typically express a spatial temporal or other relationship. Imam (2010, p. 176) defines preposition as:

Preposition is a word used to show the way in which other words are connected. It is used to express basic relationship between words we can express the relationships of time and place by the use of a preposition, for example;

- i) I'll meet you *in* Kathmandu.
- ii) I can see *on* Sunday.

Besides the relationships of time and place, we can use prepositions to express many other different kinds of relationships, such as:

Manner- She spoke *in* a sweet tone.

Means- she came *on* foot.

Reason- I did it because *of* my country-men.

Reaction- I was shocked *by* his cruel joke.

Similarly, a preposition is, then, link in the chain of a sentence. It lies a noun or pronoun to the rest of sentence. For example:

Write your address *in* the message box.

There is a ball *under* the table.

This piece of biscuit is *for* you.

1.1.6.1 Types of Preposition

Various scholars have identified different types of preposition. Among them Aarts and Aarts (1986, p.44) classify the preposition mainly in two types: simple and complex preposition.

a. Simple Preposition

A preposition consisting of single word is known as simple preposition. Most of the common English prepositions are simple. They are also called one word preposition. Some common simple prepositions are: at, before, in, between, of, by, on, since, despite, from, until, up and so on.

b. Complex Preposition

A preposition consisting of more than one word is called complex preposition. Complex prepositions are also called multi word prepositions .Some common complex prepositions are: according to, in front of, because of, in spite of, by means of, in term of, in addition to, on account of and so on.

According to Wren and Martin (2004, p.128) there are three types of preposition, which are as follows:

a) Simple Prepositions

Simple prepositions are as similar as Aarts and Aarts. For example: at, by, for, from, in, of, off, on and so on.

b) Compound Prepositions

According to them, compound prepositions are generally formed by prefixing a preposition (usually a= no, be=by) to a noun, an adjective or an adverb. For example: about, along, above, among, across, around, before, behind, between, beyond, outside, within, without and so on.

c) Phrase Prepositions

According to them, phrase prepositions are groups and words used with the force of a single preposition. For example: according to, in place of, in case of, in spite of, in order to, in addition to and so on.

Similarly, the latest types of the prepositions are given here which are proposed by Imam (2010, p. 177). They are of six types:

a. Simple Preposition

A preposition which consists of one word is called simple preposition. They are: through, in, by, at, over, under, and so on. For example:

The sun shines *over* the earth.

This road is *under* repair.

b. Double Preposition

Prepositions consisting two (or more than one) words are called double prepositions. They are: out of, up to, upon, next to, on to and so on.

A voice came *from within* my heart.

We saw a poisonous snake emerging *from under* the water.

c. Compound Preposition

Compound prepositions are like across, along, above about, before, behind, beyond, without and so on.

e.g The train starts *before* six o'clock.

The bus is *behind* its time.

d. Phrase Preposition

Phrase prepositions are like an account of, in course of, on the point of, on the brink of, with an eye to, with reference to, and so on.

e.g His scheme failed *on account of* the failure of the crops.

The patient is *on the point of* death.

e. Participial Prepositions

According to Imam, participial prepositions are like: concerning, considering, regarding, during pending and so on.

e.g We will go home *during* the Puja holidays.

Let us talk with the chairman *concerning* this matter.

f. Disguised Prepositions

It refers to the weakened forms of prepositions. They are on, or, of etc.

e.g. He has gone a fishing (on fishing).

It is 10 o'clock (of the clock).

1.1.6.2 Position of Preposition

Imam gives the position of preposition as:

1. Generally a preposition comes before its object and it should be placed at the end of the sentences. A preposition comes at the end of the clause of a sentence in the following cases:

a. Prepositions are frequently placed at the end in questions beginning with what who, where etc.

e.g. What is he looking *at*?

Who did you go *with*?

b. Prepositions are placed at the end of passive structures.

e.g. He loves being talked *about*.

He has already been operated *on*.

c. Prepositions often come at the end of clauses having infinite structures:

e.g. I have no pen to write *with*.

It is a lively place to live *in*.

d. A preposition must come at the end of the clauses of sentences when it governs a relative pronoun that is (i) expressed (ii) represented by *as* or *that*.

e.g. This is the room I slept *in*.

This is the place (that) I am fond *of*.

e. A preposition comes at the end of a contact clause. It is necessary when the preposition is felt to be more intimately connected with some verbs or other words of phrase in the clauses than with the relative itself.

e. g. There is one more help which she cannot do *without*.

You love in return, which I cannot do *without*.

f. Sometimes the object is placed first and other preposition last for the sake of emphasis.

e. g. He is famous all the world *over*.

He is busy all the year *round*.

2. Some prepositions are always placed before a relative pronoun. They are: *beyond*, *as to*, *besides*, *except*, *during*, *opposite*, *outside*, *considering*, *concerning* etc.

e.g. It is the place *beyond* which we cannot go.

It is point *round* which the story revolves.

3. A preposition is generally placed before *whose*.

e.g. The woman *round* whose waist she had seen his arm.

4. *Up* and *down* are generally placed first (before a relative pronoun) except sometimes in short clauses.

e.g. There was a short cross way, *up* which one saw the iron foundry.

5. Than is generally placed first, (before a relative pronoun) expect sentences in short in short clauses.

e.g. As old as woman's guile *than* which nothing human can be older.

6. In more formal style a preposition is placed before a question word.

e.g. *To* whom is this letter addressed?
By whom is the chairman chosen?

7. Phrases of time like morning, afternoon and evening are placed by the preposition in whereas dawn, day break, noon, midday, and midnight are preceded by the preposition at.

e.g. The sun is the hottest *at* midday.
I met him *in* the morning.

Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1999, p.401) state that prepositions are notoriously difficult to learn. Long after students have achieved a high level of proficiency in English, they still struggle with prepositions. The use of preposition in written composition is the most difficult and enormously used grammatical item.

As a researcher, I am interested in identifying the prepositions, their classifications and their sources.

1.2 Review of the Related Literature

Every new task needs the knowledge of previous background, which can help and direct one to reach the new target for finding out new things or ideas. There are several researches which are related to grammar and preposition or writing in the Department of English Education. They are in connection with grammar, free and guided composition and so on. Some related research works are reviewed in the following lines:

Barakoti (2001) has carried out a research entitled "Errors Committed by PCL Second Year Students in Writing Free Composition." The main purpose of this study was to identify the errors committed by the students and compare the proficiency between students of humanities and education stream. He found that the students of humanities stream committed more errors than the students of education.

Chauhan (2002) has attempted "A Study on the Use of Prepositions." The major objectives of his study was to establish the hierarchies of prepositions based on their frequency used by the students in the answer sheets. His finding was that the students used altogether forty-one items of prepositions. Among them 'on' had the highest frequency i.e. 797 (12.26%) and 'beneath' had the lowest frequency i.e. 12 (0.18%), out of 6496 prepositions.

K.C.(2005) has attempted to find out the "Proficiency in the Use of Adverbs by Grade X" she compared the proficiency in terms of sex, school, and area. Her research has concluded satisfactory performance in totality. The students of urban area were far better than the students of rural; similarly, the boys were found ahead than the girls.

Aryal (2006) has made a research on "A Study on the Proficiency of Grade VIII Students in the Use of Preposition." in which he attempted to compare the proficiency in the use of prepositions between private and government-aided schools . According to his study, he found that private school students scored better than those of government-aided school. He suggested that teachers should be provided with enough teaching training as how to teach different prepositions.

Acharya (2007) has made a research on "A Study on the Proficiency of the 10th Graders in the Use of Articles." The main purpose of this study was to compare the proficiency in the use of articles in terms of sex and area (rural and urban). He found that the boys are more proficient than the girls. In addition, the students of the schools of urban area were more proficient than those from rural

areas. He suggested the girls should be encouraged to take part in teaching and learning activities.

Uprety (2008) carried out a research entitled "The Use of Adverbs by Different Linguistic Groups." The purpose of the study was to compare their proficiency in terms of linguistic groups. He found that the speakers of Nepali mother tongue were most proficient whereas the speakers of Gurung mother tongue were the least proficient in using adverbs among five different linguistic groups. Similarly, Newari speakers were better than those of Tamang speakers and Maithili speakers displayed slightly better proficiency than those of the Gurung Speakers.

Rijal (2009) has carried out a research entitle 'Grade Eight Students Ability in Essay Writing'. The main purpose of this study was to find out the descriptive essay writing proficiency of grade eight students. The population of the study was the students of grade eight in Kirtipur Municipality of both private and public schools. He found that the descriptive essay writing proficieny of the grade eight students was satisfactory. Similarly, the writing proficiency of the students of private schools was found better than that of the students of public schools. He suggested that students should be encouraged to participate in the descriptive essay writing.

All the aforementioned studies compared different aspect of language. None of them is related to the use of prepositions in written composition. In this way, my research work is different from that of other mentioned above.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were as follows:

- a. To identify the ability of grade XII students in using English prepositions.
- b. To compare gender wise ability in using English prepositions.

- c. To suggest some pedagogical implications.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The study will provide some insight on the evaluation of status of teaching in Higher Secondary schools of the rural areas. Because this study attempts to identify the performance of students in these areas of country through the use of prepositions in written composition. So, the findings of this study will be extremely helpful in the field of language teaching. The findings will be significant to language students, teachers, textbook writers, curriculum and syllabus designers, sociologists and those who are involved in the field of English language teaching. This study will also act as a guide for further study of prepositions in written composition.

CHAPER TWO

METHODOLOGY

In order to accomplish the objectives of this study, the researcher adopted the following methodological strategies:

2.1 Sources of Data

To conduct this research, the researcher used both primary and secondary sources of data.

2.1.1 Primary Sources of Data

The primary sources for this study were the students of grade twelve in Achham district.

2.1.2 Secondary Sources of Data

For the facilitation of the study, the researcher consulted Palmer (1971), Aarts and Aarts (1986), Murphy (1989), Wren and Martin (2004), Harmer (2007), Imam (2010), some previous theses, articles, and other written documents available in printed form and electronic media which are related to the study.

2.2 Population of the Study

The population for this study included all the students of grade twelve of four higher secondary schools of Achham district.

2.3 Sampling Procedure

The sample population of this study was taken from four different higher secondary schools that were selected by using purposive judgmental sampling procedure. Eighty students were selected. The sample population was selected using random sampling procedure. Twenty students from each higher

secondary school were sampled. Out of twenty, ten were girls and other ten were boys.

2.4 Tools for Data Collection

The tool for data collection for the study was a set of test items related to prepositions. They were prepared on the vbasis of grade twelve English textbook ‘Meanings into Words’. The test item contained nineteen prepositions.

2.5 Process of Data Collection

To collect the data from primary sources, the researcher followed the following stepwise procedures:

- i) First of all, the researcher visited the field; contacted the authority and the concerned people. Then he built rapport with them.
- ii) Then, he explained and clarified his purpose and terms of the test item to the respondents.
- iii) Then, he selected twenty students and among them ten were girls and ten were boys.
- iv) He took the students to a separate room and instructed them about the time limitations, and activities they were supposed to do.
- v) Then he administered the test with proper guidance.

2.6 Limitations of the Study

The study had the following limitations:

- a) This study was limited within nineteen prepositions.
(on, in, at, by, to, from, of, since, for, under, between, behind, among , in front of, with, until, after, towards, against)
- b) This study was limited to Achham district only.
- c) The study was limited to grade twelve only.
- d) The study was limited within four higher secondary schools only.
- e) The study was limited within eighty students.
- f) This study was limited to the use of prepositions in written composition.

CHAPTER THREE

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This chapter deals with the analysis and interpretation of the collected data to measure the specified objectives. The data were collected with the help of the test items. The test items contained four set of questions. The full mark of these test items was forty. The first test item was 'select the suitable preposition from the given list to complete the passage'. The second test item was 'select the suitable preposition from the brackets and complete the passage' and third and fourth test items were 'picture description using the given prepositions'. Each set of questions contain equal marks, i.e. ten.

While analyzing the data, responses were assigned marks. For one correct response, one mark was given. The assessment of using prepositions was done following band score table. There are four band scales. They are (i) excellent, (ii) good, (iii) average and (iv) poor.

After arranging the band score, they were tabulated under various headings. The tabulation was done according to the objectives and the variables. The data was analyzed by using simple statistical tools, i.e. means and percentage. After the analysis, the data showed that the students did not have the same ability of using prepositions in written composition. None of them was found to be under the band excellent; some of them were good and some were average and some poor.

The analysis is divided into the following sub-headings:

3.1 Holistic Analysis

3.2 Item Wise Analysis

3.3 Analysis of Picture Description and Selective Items

3.1 Holistic Analysis

The ability of using English prepositions in written composition by grade XII students was observed, analyzed and interpreted on the basis of variables specified.

Table No. 1

Holistic Analysis of the Data Obtained

S.N.	Obtained Score (X)	Number of Students (f)	Total (fX)
1	13	5	65
2	14	5	70
3	15	4	60
4	16	10	160
5	17	9	153
6	18	5	90
7	19	6	114
8	20	11	220
9	21	5	105
10	22	6	132
11	23	2	46
12	24	5	120
13	25	5	125
14	26	1	26
15	27	1	27
Total		N= 80	$\sum fX = 1513$

$$\text{Mean } (X) = \frac{\sum fX}{N} = \frac{1513}{80} = 18.91$$

Average = 19

Average proficiency in percentage

$$= \frac{19}{40} \times 100 = 47.50\%$$

The above table shows that the overall ability of using prepositions in written composition by grade XII. The students could obtain average 19 mark out of 40. The percentage of the students scoring was 47.5. The students scoring more than 27 and less than 13 were not found. Out of total population of study, i.e. 80, 44 informants (students) obtained the score below the average, i.e. 19. These students obtained the score below the 50 per cent. The majority of the students were below average, and the ability of using preposition in written composition by grade XII was not considered satisfactory. However, some of the students did well in using preposition.

3.1.1 Overall Ability of Using Preposition in Rating Scale

The ability of using prepositions is shown on the basis of a scale in which the students who scored above 80% were considered excellent, 60%-79% were good, 40%- 59% were average and below 40 % were considered as poor. The following table presents the data.

Table No. 2

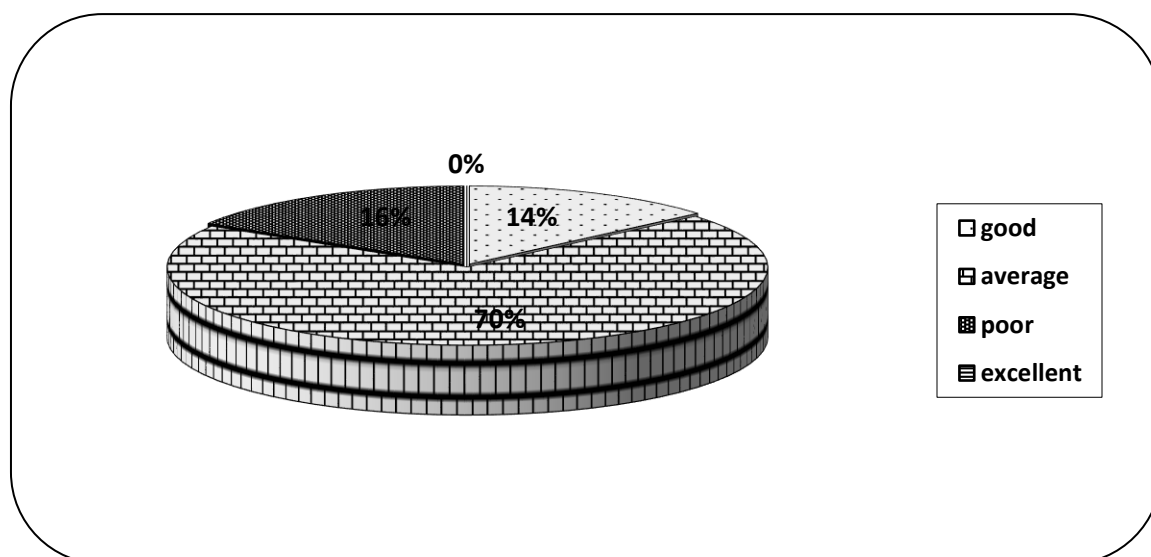
Total Average Score in Percentage

S.N.	Rating	No. of students	Percentage
1	Excellent	0	0
2	Good	11	13.75
3	Average	56	70
4	Poor	13	16.25

The above table shows that overall ability of using prepositions. There was no percentage of excellent students in the ability of using prepositions in written composition, 13.75% of the total students are good and 70% are average students. The table also shows that 16.25% of the total students are poor. The majority students fall in average in the ability of using prepositions. Overall ability of using preposition-rating scale can be shown in pie chart.

Figure No. 1

Preposition Rating Scale



3.2 Item Wise Analysis

For this, there were 40 questions related to using prepositions in written composition. There were nineteen prepositions, which were used to find out the ability of using prepositions. The responses of the students, correct responses and incorrect ones were described separately on the basis of obtained data.

3.2.1 Ability of Using Preposition ‘at’

The ability of using preposition ‘at’ in written composition by grade twelve students was observed and analyzed. The following table presents the obtained data.

Table No. 3

Ability of Using Preposition ‘at’

S.N.	Students	Responses in Number	Correct Responses (%)	Incorrect Responses (%)
1	Boys	112	56.25	43.75
2	Girls	102	51	49

The above table shows the ability of using preposition ‘at’ by grade twelve students. The boys obtained 56.25% correct responses and 43.75% incorrect responses. Similarly, 51% girls’ responses are correct and 49% incorrect. The table shows that boys have better performance than the girls in preposition ‘at’.

3.2.2 Ability of Using Preposition ‘in’

The second preposition is ‘in’. In this section, the ability of using preposition ‘in’ is tried to find out the proficiency of the students. Whether the grade twelve students used preposition correctly or incorrectly. The following table shows the data.

Table No. 4

Ability of Using Preposition ‘in’

S.N.	Students	Responses in Number	Correct Responses (%)	Incorrect Responses (%)
1	Boys	260	65	35
2	Girls	240	62.5	37.5

The table no 2 shows the ability of using preposition ‘in’ by grade twelve students. There are 65% correct responses and 35 % incorrect once produced by boys, out of 260 responses. Similarly, 62.5% correct and 37.5% incorrect responses have been produced by girls out of 240 responses. The above table shows that the girls have less responses than the boys in using preposition ‘in’. The boys have better ability than the girls in using preposition ‘in’ in written composition.

3.2.3 Ability of Using Preposition ‘on’

Here, I tried to find out the ability of using preposition ‘on’ by grade twelve students. The following table presents the obtained data.

Table No. 5

Ability of Using Preposition ‘on’

S.N.	Students	Responses in Number	Correct Responses (%)	Incorrect Responses (%)
1	Boys	120	58	42
2	Girls	111	52	48

The table no. 3 shows that 58% correct and 42 % incorrect responses have been made by boys, out of 120 responses. In the same way, girls have made 52 % correct and 48 % incorrect responses out of 111 responses. So that, according to the result, the participation of the boys is greater than girls in using preposition ‘on’.

3.2.4 Ability of Using Preposition ‘under’

Another preposition is ‘under’ which is categorized as the preposition of place. Here, students tried to find out their ability in using preposition ‘under’. The following table displays the data.

Table No. 6

Ability of Using Preposition ‘under’

S.N.	Students	Responses in Number	Correct Responses (%)	Incorrect Responses (%)
1	Boys	38	76	24
2	Girls	34	71	29

From the above table, it can be concluded that 76% responses are correct and 24 % are incorrect given by boys out of 38 responses. Similarly, girls have made 71% correct and 29% incorrect responses out of 34. On the basis of above table, the performance of the students seems satisfactory.

3.2.5 Ability of Using Preposition ‘between’

The students were asked to use the preposition ‘between’ in the test item namely description. I tried to find out the ability of using preposition ‘between’ by grade twelve students. The following table presents the data:

Table no. 7

Ability of Using Preposition ‘between’

S.N.	Students	Responses in Number	Correct Responses (%)	Incorrect Responses (%)
1	Boys	38	79	21
2	Girls	34	71	29

The above table reveals that 79% correct and 21% incorrect responses have been made by boys, out of 38 responses. Whereas, girls have made 71% correct

and 29% incorrect responses out of 34. So, it can be concluded that the ability of students in using preposition 'between' is good.

3.2.6 Ability of Using Preposition 'with'

The item no. 6 is the ability of using preposition 'with'. Here, I tried to find out the ability of using this preposition in grade twelve students. The following table presents the obtained data:

Table No. 8

Ability of Using Preposition 'with'

S.N.	Students	Responses in Number	Correct Responses (%)	Incorrect Responses (%)
1	Boys	37	54	46
2	Girls	32	59	41

The above table shows that the total responses made by the boys is 37. Out of it, 54% responses are correct whereas 46 % responses are incorrect. Similarly, the number of girls' responses is 32. Out of which, 59 % responses are correct and 41% responses are incorrect. It means that boys have greater number of responses than the girls but the girls made more right responses than boys.

3.2.7 Ability of Using Preposition 'towards'

The use of preposition 'towards' is measured among grade twelve students. They are asked to use this preposition in picture description item test. The following table reveals the obtained data:

Table No. 9

Ability of Using Preposition ‘towards’

S.N.	Students	Responses in Number	Correct Responses (%)	Incorrect Responses (%)
1	Boys	32	66	34
2	Girls	30	60	40

The table no 7 shows that out of 32 responses made by boys, 66 % are correct and 34 % are incorrect. Similarly, out of 30 responses made by girls, 60 % are correct and 40 % are incorrect. It is concluded that there is less number of correct responses made by girls than boys.

3.2.8 Ability of Using Preposition ‘among’

In this section, preposition ‘among’ is used to check the ability of students in using preposition. For this, the following table displays the obtained data:

Table No. 10

Ability of Using Preposition ‘among’

S.N.	Students	Responses in Number	Correct Responses (%)	Incorrect Responses (%)
1	Boys	23	63	37
2	Girls	28	61	39

The table no 8 indicates that out of 30 responses made by boys, 63% are correct whereas 37% are incorrect. Similarly, out of 28 responses 61% are correct and

39% are incorrect. From this, it can be concluded that both boys and girls have almost equal ability in using preposition ‘among’.

3.2.9 Ability of Using Preposition ‘behind’

Here, I tried to identify the ability of grade twelve students in the use of preposition ‘behind’. On their written composition. The following table presents the obtained data:

Table No. 11

Ability of Using Preposition ‘behind’

S.N.	Students	Responses in Number	Correct Responses (%)	Incorrect Responses (%)
1	Boys	28	64	36
2	Girls	23	83	17

From the above table, it can be summarized that 64% correct and 36% incorrect responses have been made by boys, out of 28 responses. Similarly, out of 23 responses are made by girls, 83% are correct and whereas 17% responses are incorrect. The table shows that the girls have better performance than the boys even though less number of girls participated.

3.2.10 Ability of Using Preposition ‘against’

Here, the preposition ‘against’ is asked to be used for picture description. The following table displays the obtained data:

Table No. 12

Ability of Using Preposition ‘against’

S.N.	Students	Responses in Number	Correct Responses (%)	Incorrect Responses (%)
1	Boys	20	75	25
2	Girls	18	78	22

From the table no 10, it can be found that 20 responses have been made by the boys. Among them, 75% are correct and 25 % responses are incorrect.

Similarly, girls have made 18 responses while using preposition ‘against’ in their picture description. Out of 18 responses 78% are correct and 22 % are incorrect. The table shows that least number of students are participated in using this preposition.

3.2.11 Ability of Using Preposition ‘in front of’

The preposition ‘in front of’ deals with the preposition of place. So that it is asked the students to use it to find out their ability of using this preposition.

The following table reveals the data:

Table No. 13

Ability of Using Preposition ‘in front of’

S.N.	Students	Responses in Number	Correct Responses (%)	Incorrect Responses (%)
1	Boys	25	64	36
2	Girls	21	62	38

The above table shows that 64% responses are correct whereas 36% are incorrect out of 25 responses have been made by boys. In the same way, girls have been made 21 responses. Among hem, 62 % responses are correct and 38% are incorrect. In can be concluded that greater number of the boys are participated in using preposition ‘in front of’ than the girls.

3.2.12 Ability of Using Preposition ‘to’

In this section, I tried to find out the ability of using preposition ‘to’ in their written composition. The following table presents the obtained data:

Table No. 14

Ability of Using Preposition ‘to’

S.N.	Students	Responses in Number	Correct Responses (%)	Incorrect Responses (%)
1	Boys	158	69	31
2	Girls	163	62	38

The table no 12 shows that 69% responses are correct whereas 31% are incorrect of the boys out of 158 responses .Likewise, 62% responses are correct and 38% are incorrect of the girls out of 163 responses. It shows that the boys have been made correct responses in comparison to the girls.

3.2.13 Ability of Using Preposition ‘by’

The preposition ‘by’ is asked to the students to use this preposition to find out the ability in using this preposition. The following table presents the obtained data:

Table No. 15

Ability of Using Preposition ‘by’

S.N.	Students	Responses in Number	Correct Responses (%)	Incorrect Responses (%)
1	Boys	101	62	38
2	Girls	98	58	42

The above table displays that 62% responses are correct and 38% are incorrect that have been made by boys out of 101 responses. Likewise, 58% responses are correct and 42% are incorrect have been made by the girls out of 98 responses. The ability of using preposition ‘by’ of boys is little bit better than girls.

3.2.14 Ability of Using Preposition ‘for’

Here, I tried to find out the ability of using preposition ‘for’ in written composition by grade twelve students. The students are asked to use it. The following table presents the obtained data:

Table No. 16

Ability of Using Preposition ‘for’

S.N.	Students	Responses in Number	Correct Responses (%)	Incorrect Responses (%)
1	Boys	134	75	25
2	Girls	121	64	36

The table no 14 shows that the boys have 134 responses while using preposition ‘for’. Among them, 75% responses are correct and 25% are wrong.

On the other hand, 121 responses have been made by girls. Among them 64% responses are correct and 36% are incorrect. It can be concluded that boys have better performance than the girls because boys used this preposition more and more correct responses.

3.2.15 Ability of Using Preposition ‘from’

Here, the preposition ‘from’ is used to check the students' ability in written composition. So that students are asked to use this preposition. The following table presents the data:

Table No. 17

Ability of Using Preposition ‘from’

S.N.	Students	Responses in Number	Correct Responses (%)	Incorrect Responses (%)
1	Boys	67	63	37
2	Girls	60	63	37

The above table displays that boys used the preposition ‘from’ 67 times. Among them, 63% responses are correct and 37% are incorrect. In the same way, 63% responses are correct and 37% are incorrect of girls out of 60 responses.

3.2.16 Ability of Using Preposition ‘since’

Another preposition ‘since’ is asked to find out the ability of using preposition in grade twelve. The following table presents the obtained data:

Table No. 18

Ability of Using Preposition ‘since’

S.N.	Students	Responses in Number	Correct Responses (%)	Incorrect Responses (%)
1	Boys	109	63	37
2	Girls	89	55	45

The above table shows that there are 109 responses that have been made by boys and among them 63% responses are correct and 37 % are incorrect.

Likewise, 55% responses are correct and 45 % are incorrect of girls out of 89 responses. The table helps to conclude the better performance of boys than girls.

3.2.17 Ability of Using Preposition ‘until’

Another preposition of time is ‘until’. It is asked to find out the ability of using it by grade twelve. The following table displays the obtained data:

Table No. 19

Ability of Using Preposition ‘until’

S.N.	Students	Responses in Number	Correct Responses (%)	Incorrect Responses (%)
1	Boys	32	62.5	37.5
2	Girls	30	70	30

From the above table, it can be concluded that boys use preposition ‘until’ in 32 times. Among them, 62.5% responses are correct and 37.5% are incorrect.

In the same way, 30 are made by girls, among them 70% are correct and 30 %

are incorrect. According to this table it can be concluded that the ability of girls in using preposition ‘until’ is better than boys.

3.2.18 Ability of Using Preposition ‘after’

Here, I tried to find out the ability of using preposition ‘after’ in grade twelve students. So that students are asked to use the preposition. The following table displays the obtained data:

Table No. 20

Ability of Using Preposition ‘after’

S.N.	Students	Responses in Number	Correct Responses (%)	Incorrect Responses (%)
1	Boys	40	47.5	52.5
2	Girls	32	48	52

The table shows that 40 responses are made by boys and among them, 47.5% responses are correct and 52.5 % are incorrect. It means that they have made more incorrect than correct responses. Similarly, 32 responses are made by girls and 48% responses are correct and 52 % responses are incorrect. It can be concluded that students have less ability of using preposition ‘after’ than other preposition.

3.2.19 Ability of Using Preposition ‘of’

The last but not the least preposition, i.e. ‘of’. The preposition ‘of’ is asked to the students to check their ability. The following table reveals the obtained data:

Table No. 21

Ability of Using Preposition ‘of’

S.N.	Students	Responses in Number	Correct Responses (%)	Incorrect Responses (%)
1	Boys	67	60	40
2	Girls	52	67	33

It shows that there are 67 responses made by boys and among these responses, 60 % responses are correct and 40 % responses are incorrect. On the other hand, 52% responses are made by girls. Among them, 67% were correct and 33% are incorrect. The above table shows that the more responses are made by boys than girls but girls have better ability of using preposition ‘of’.

3.3 Analysis of Picture Description and Selective Items

For this, there are forty questions related to using preposition in using written composition. The first and second items are selective items test, which contains twenty marks, and the third and fourth items contain twenty marks which we call picture description item. So, analysis of items first and second are presented below.

3.3.1 Students’ Ability in Picture Description Item

Using preposition in written composition by grade XII boys and girls was analyzed and interpreted with the help of average marks and percentage they obtained, which is given in the following table:

Table No. 22

Students' Ability in Picture Description Item

S.N.	Students	No. of Students	F.M.	Average	Percentage
1	Girls	40	20	8.8	44
2	Boys	40	20	10.15	50.75

The above table shows the sex-wise ability of grade XII students in written composition. Here, the average ability of girls is found 8.8 average score and boys' 10.15 score, i.e. 44% and 50.75%, respectively. The table shows that boys have better performance than that of the girls in picture description items.

3.3.2 Students Ability in Selective Items

Using ability of preposition in written composition by grade XII boys and girls was analyzed and interpreted with the help of average marks and percentage they obtained, which is given in the following table:

Table No. 23

Students Ability in Selective Items

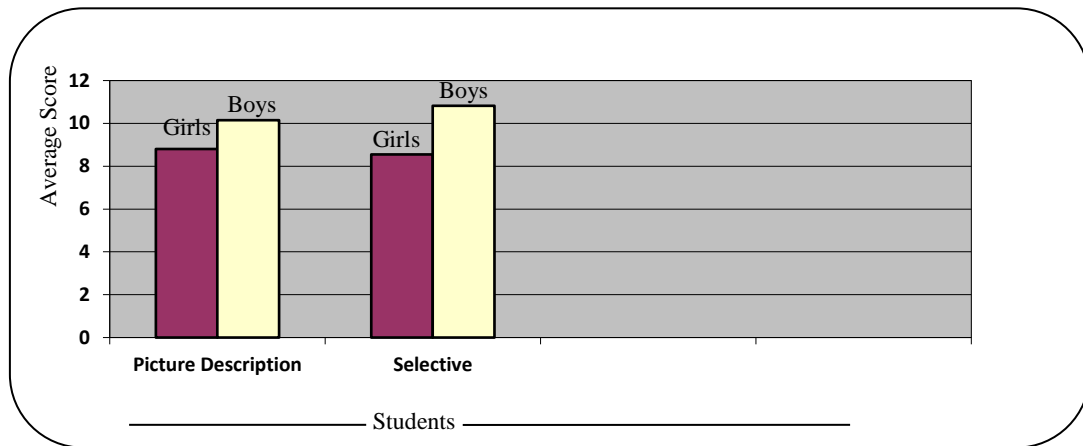
S.N.	Students	No. of Students	F.M.	Average	Percentage
1	Girls	40	20	10.82	54.1
2	Boys	40	20	8.55	42.75

The above table shows sex wise ability of grade XII students. Here, boys obtained greater proficiency than the girls in using preposition in written composition. The average marks of boys was 10.82 out of 20 marks and of girls

were 8.95 out of 20 marks, i.e. 54.1 % and 42. 75% respectively. Therefore, the table shows that boys have better ability of using prepositions than as the girls in selective test items. The total ability of using preposition by students can be shown in the chart as follows.

Figure No. 2

The Total Ability of Using Preposition



CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The major concern of this study was to identify the ability of using prepositions in written composition. The students were taken from grade XII in Achham district. The data were collected by administering a text in collected population. According to the objectives, the data were analyzed by using simple statistical tools. On the basis of the analysis and interpretation, the following findings can be pointed out.

4.1 Findings

- 1.a) The ability of using prepositions in written composition by XII students was not found satisfactory.
 - b) Most of the students were below the average score. In total, 55% students were below average and 45 % were above average.
 - c) Most of the students responded the preposition 'in' i.e. 600 times whereas most of the students did not respond to the preposition 'against' i.e. 38 times only.
 - d) The boys responded to all prepositions (i.e. 19) 1448 times whereas girls were found using 1319 times.
2. a) The ability of using preposition by XII grade students was 48% average in the selective items test and 47% in picture description item test.
 - b) The ability of using preposition in selective item was found better than the picture description test.

3. a) The ability of using prepositions by boys found better than that of girls in each test items.
- b) Overall ability of using prepositions by boys was 50.75 % and girls was 44% in the picture description test.
- c) Similarly, overall ability of using prepositions by boys was 54.10% and girls was 42.75% in selective test item.
4. None of the students could obtain the excellent position in overall ability of using prepositions. Only 13.75% students was found good division, 70 % students were found average and 16.25% students were found poor.
5. Most of the students did not have appropriate knowledge about prepositions until, since, for, and by in use.
6. The outstanding ability of using prepositions was found 67.5% and the least ability of using prepositions was found 32.5%.

4.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher has made the following recommendations and pedagogical implications, which could be useful for the betterment of the education system of Nepal.

1. Students should be encouraged to participate in written composition.
2. They should be given a chance to practise compositions with prepositions.
3. The students should be exposed to varieties of texts, which are not included in the course based materials only.
4. Interesting pictures on different topics should be presented to the students in order to encourage them in using prepositions in written text (free writing).

5. Girls should be encouraged to practise in more exercises in using prepositions in written text.
6. Free writing should be encouraged with appropriate prepositions.
7. Teachers should give those types of topics which can use more and more prepositions in texts.
8. Teachers are required to take necessary teaching materials and use them while teaching the use and prepositions in composition.
9. The teachers should be provided enough teaching training on how to teach different prepositions in written composition.
10. Translation of prepositions should be avoided which may create further confusions.
11. Students should be taught the rules of omission of prepositions. Moreover, it is better to teach prepositions in combination with nouns rather than teaching in isolation.
12. Teacher should provide the students with sufficient exposure regarding the use of prepositions.
13. Further researches are to be carried out in this field that will contribute to the improvement of the present ability of students in using prepositions in written text (composition).

If these above mentioned recommendations are taken into consideration by concerned persons and officials, the status of teaching in Higher Secondary school of rural areas can be increased, the gap between boys and girls can be minimized.