

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 General Background

Language is "purely human and non-instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions and desires by means of a system of voluntarily produced symbols", Sapir (1978). It is one of the most powerful means of human communication. It is often said that anthropoid is transformed into human being through language acquisition. Animals do not acquire language, only human do. Language is a dynamic open system that allows humans to communicate their thoughts, feelings, desires, emotions, experiences and ideas. Language is also used to convey messages and to impart factual information. Language functions as a bridge to connect an individual to society. It is a social phenomenon.

It is a means by which we can perform several things; communication, thinking, group solidarity and so on. We can not think of any social academic or artistic activities without language. It is perhaps the most significant asset of human life. Among the languages in the world, English is the most widely used international language. It is also one of the major languages of the UN. English has its world wide presence and the speed of its spread is unprecedented. Considering the socio-cultural prospective it is evident that people every where depend on English to have access to the benefits offered by the English speaking world and in this regard it seems convenient to have English as a lingua franca. So, language is the unique gift that sets human beings.

Among the various aspects of language the four basic ones are pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar and communicative function. Yet, semantics was neglected in the past and now it is given emphasis. But, various researches should be carried out on it because of it's wider prospective. Where semantics is the study of meaning not in isolation but in context.

All words existing in a given language constitute the vocabulary of that language. Every word has a meaning or a set of meaning associated with it. And a sentence is sequence of words. It is therefore necessary to understand the meaning of words used in the sentence in order to understand or express a message or linguistic text. Every language has it's own vocabulary of varying sizes. English has extremely rich vocabulary. The number of words recorded in the Oxford English Dictionary is more than half a million.

To know all these words is neither possible, nor desirable. Not even a native speaker is supposed to know all of them. A person's requirement is to know the words that are frequently used in speech and writing and also the words pertaining to his own sphere of specialization. To fulfill this purpose, s/he needs only a few thousands words. According to Shishir Kumar Sthapit the first 4000 more common words cover about 97.5 percent of the vocabulary of a given language.

The vocabulary of a language is one of it's most important aspect. No language can be learnt without learning it's vocabulary. It serves as the backbone of our ability to communicate in a language. Hence, it must be included as an integral part of language learning.

1.2 Vocabulary

1.2.1 Definition

Broadly speaking, vocabulary refers to the words that we use in our day-to-day life in order to express our thoughts and feelings. According to Richards et al. (1985, p. 307), "Vocabulary refers to a set of lexemes including single word, compound words and idioms".

According to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of current English (1996), the term 'vocabulary' has been defined as the total number of words in a language.

According to this Dictionary, it can also be defined as all the words known to a person or used in a particular book, subject etc".

Likewise, Harmer (1991, p. 153) defining the term 'vocabulary' says "If language structures make up the skeleton of language, then it is vocabulary that provides the vital organs and the flesh".

It is obvious that vocabulary is a vital aspect of language. Without a good command of vocabulary, we can not communicate well even if we have a good knowledge of other systems of the language in question. Wallace (1982, p. 9) says, "it's possible to have a good knowledge of how the system of language works and yet not be able to communicate in it, where if we have the vocabulary we need it is usually possible to communicate".

Vocabulary items play an important role in framing our ideas in a continuous flow. In order to communicate our thoughts effectively we need to select the appropriate vocabulary items and combine them together with the help of underlying rules. Unless we select the right vocabulary items even the grammatically correct sentences fail to express the intended meaning.

Thus, vocabulary is the important aspect of language. So, without mastering its minimum amount communication is rather impossible even if one has an ability to manipulate grammatical structures of that language. It is now clear that acquisition of vocabulary is just as important as the acquisition of grammar.

1.3 Paronyms or Pairs of Words

There is a lot of confusion in young minds about words, similar in form or in sound but different in meaning. Thus, 'statue', a sculptured figure', is confused with, statute, 'a law' and both of them are confused with 'stature', 'height' such words are called Paronyms or pairs of words.

There are pairs of words that belong to different word classes such as one noun and one verb, both similar in sound but different in meaning. As for example, Lead (Noun) and Led (Past Tense of the verb 'Lead'), Lid (Noun) and Lead (verb).

Examples: Lead: Led

This casket is made of lead (Noun)

He led a happy married life (verb)

He led the procession of workers (verb)

A paronym or paronyme in linguistics may refer to two different things:

1. A word that is related to another word and derives from the same root, e.g.: a cognate word;
2. Word which are almost homonyms, but have slightly differences in spelling or pronunciation and have different meanings.

Some paronyms are truly synonyms but only under the rarest of conditions. They often lead to confusion.

1.4 Some examples of Paronyms

Affect / Effect

Alter / Altar

Bring / Take

Coarse / Course

Collision/ collusion

Conjuncture/ conjecture

Continuous/ contiguous

Dairy / Diary

Deprecate/ depreciate

Diseased / Deceased

Dyeing / Dying

Eligible / Illegible

Expect / Wait
Farther/ further
Feel / Fill
Killed / Died
Loose / Lose
Magnet / Magnate
Pick / Peak
Practice / Practise
Principal / Principle
Prolepsis/prolepses
Robbed / Stole
Say / Speak
Sensible / Sensitive
Stationary / Stationery
Up most/ utmost
Wave / Waive

Abstain (from a thing). You should abstain from alcoholic drinks.

Vs

Refrain (from an action). Please refrain from spitting in public.

Accede (to agree). He did not accede to my request.

Vs

Concede (to admit). You must concede that I have tried hard.

Source; Adapted from Central Department of English ,2000. Link English, Sajha Prakashan, Kathmandu

1.4 Review of Related Literature

A few researches were carried out to measure the proficiency of the students in vocabulary of lower secondary and secondary level at the Department of English

Education in T.U. in the past. However, the studies are not alike. The following paragraphs present an overview of literature that the researcher has reviewed.

Chudal (1997) undertook a research entitled "A study of English vocabulary Achievement of the students of Grade Six in Jhapa District" on the basis of sex and locality.

He found that the students' English vocabulary achievement was poor in total. The boy's proficiency of English vocabulary was found better than that of girls. Similarly, urban colleges' student's proficiency in the achievement of English vocabulary was found more satisfactory than these of rural college students. However, it has not attempted to find out the proficiency in the use of paronyms of the PCL level students.

Khatri (2000) carried out a research on 'A study of English Vocabulary Achievement of the Students of Grade Eight. The findings of his study revealed that the English vocabulary of the students of Grade Eight was found satisfactory in total. The achievement in nouns was found better than the achievement in verbs.

Tiwari (2001) undertook a research on 'A study on English Vocabulary Achievement by the Students of Grade X'. The result of his study showed that most of the students were below the average. Hence they were not found satisfactory in the achievement of English Vocabulary.

Shrestha (2005) carried out a research on 'Relation between Frequency of Occurrence of Vocabulary Items in the Textbook and their Learning', The finding of the study are: Although the vocabulary items have high frequency in the text book their achievement is not high , the vocabulary items which have low frequency in the textbook have low achievement level, i.e. as expected although the vocabulary items have high frequency in the textbook their achievement by the students is not satisfactory.

Poudyal (2005) carried out a research study entitled "A Study on English Vocabulary Achievement by the Students of Grade 'IX'. He wanted to investigate the students achievement of English vocabulary items used in the English Textbook of grade 'IX'. He found that the student's achievement of English vocabulary in content words in total was satisfactory.

The present research is slightly different from that of the above reviewed researches in the sense that it is based on analyzing students' achievement in the use of Paronyms (pairs of words) of the PCL level students of urban and rural areas of Kaski District. Moreover, no study has been carried out using the term Paronyms in this Department. So, the researcher was interested to carryout a research on it.

1.5 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the present study were as follows:

- a. To find out the proficiency of the PCL level students in the use of Paronyms.
- b. To make a comparative study of the students on the use of Paronyms in terms of the following variables:
 - i. Boys Vs Girls
 - ii. Urban Vs Rural
 - iii. Technical Vs Non Technical institutes
- c. To suggest some pedagogical implications.

1.6 Significance of the Study

Teaching and learning vocabulary especially the pairs of words is common and of great importance in every language. Thus, this study will be helpful to investigate the students' achievement in the use of Paronyms This study will have multifold significance. It will be helpful to the perspective researchers who want to

undertake researches on the different facets of vocabulary in future. The findings of the study will also be important to the students, teachers, textbook writers, syllabus designers methodologists, and also for all those who are directly or indirectly involved in teaching and learning English as a foreign/second language in the context of Nepal.

CHAPTER TWO

METHODOLOGY

This chapter deals with the methodology of the research study.

2.1 Sources of Data Collection

This research study is based mainly on the primary source but plenty of secondary sources are used to support the study.

2.1.1 Primary Sources

The primary source of data is the PCL level students studying in both public and private colleges of Kaski district.

2.1.2 Secondary Sources

The secondary sources of data used are the textbook of English PCL First year , different books, magazines, Journal of NELTA Bhattarai A (2001) Chudal (1997), Khatri (2000), Shrestha (2005) and Imam, (2005).

2.2 Population of the Study

The population of the study is 100 students of PCL level of 10 colleges consisting of 5 urban and 5 rural areas of Kaski district in which the urban colleges represent the technical institutes.

2.2.1 Sampling Procedure

Among the students of PCL level studying in ten different public and private colleges of rural and urban areas of Kaski district, ten students consisting of equal number of boys and girls, were selected from each college using random stratified sampling procedure for the sake of data collection.

2.3 Tools of the Study

The investigator prepared a set of test items having the following types of questions to assess the students' proficiency in the use of Paronyms.

a. Multiple choice item

The question which consists of a stem and four options from which the respondents had to select the right one. Altogether 13 questions were included in multiple choice items. This test consists of 13 marks out of 50 full marks.

b. Fill in the blanks

Pairs of confusing but related words were asked and the respondents had to fill in the sentence with correct word. This test consisted of 20 marks out of 50 full marks.

c. Choose the right word out of the two

Altogether 13 questions with its option was given and the students had to choose the right word. This test consists of 13 marks out of 50 full marks .

d. Sentence Matching

Two groups of words were prepared, each item in the first group had to be linked to the different item in the second. This test consists of 4 marks out of 50 full marks.

2.4 Process of Data Collection

Having prepared a set of objective questions, the investigator visited the selected colleges. He took the selected sample population on the basis of random stratified sampling procedure. The test was administered in the classroom for 45 minutes in

consecutive days. The instructions for the test were given verbally by the researcher at the beginning. The students were required to write their answer on their test papers.

2.5 Tabulation of the Data

The researcher collected the test papers from the students and corrected them. The scores obtained by the students were tabulated and interpreted using simple statistical tools of mean and percentage.

2.6 Limitation of the Study

The following were the limitation of the present study:

1. This study was limited to a small area of Kaski district.
2. The medium of language was limited to written variety.
3. The population of the study was limited to:
 - i. 100 students of PCL level from 10 colleges
 - ii. 5 girls and 5 boys from each college
 - iii. 5 rural and 5 urban colleges
4. Comparison was done based on the following variables:
 - i. Boys Vs Girls
 - ii. Rural Vs Urban
 - iii. Technical Vs Non Technical institutes

CHAPTER THREE
ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This chapter deals with the analysis and interpretation of the data. Analysis and interpretation of the data were carried out under the following headings:

- a. Analysis of the total Paronyms achievement of the students on the whole test.
- b. Analysis of the total Paronyms achievement of the students according to their sex.
- c. Analysis of the total Paronyms achievement of the students according to locality.
- d. Analysis of the total Paronyms achievement of the students according to the institute to which they belong.

3.1 Analysis of the total paronyms achievement of the students on the whole test.

Table No. 1
Status of paronyms achievement by the students in the whole

Total Sample	Total Average	Above Average		Below Average	
		No of student	Percentage	No of student	Percentage
100	30.36	42	42	58	58

The above table shows that the total sample of the students was 100 and the total average was 30.36. Percentage of the students scoring above average was 42% and the students scoring below average was 58%. The majority of the students were found below the average. Therefore, the Paronyms achievement of the students was found poor.

3.2 Analysis of the total Paronyms achievement of the students according to their sex

Table No. 2

Status of paronyms achievement by sex; boys Vs girls

Variables	Sample	Total mean	Above Average		Below Average	
			No of student	Percentage	No of student	Percentage
Boys	50	32.14	24	48	26	52
Girls	50	28.58	20	40	30	60

The table above shows that the average score of the boys was 32.14 and the girls 28.58. Among 50 boys, 48% of them were above the average and 52% of them were below average. Likewise, the average score of all the girls was 28.58. Among 50 girls 40% of them were found above average and 60% of them were below average. The majority of the girls were below average in their own group. Similarly, the number of boys above average was 24 and than 20 of the girls. Therefore, the status of the boys was more satisfactory to its counterpart.

3.3 Analysis of the total paronyms achievement of the students according to the locality

Table No. 3

Status of paronyms achievement by locality; urban Vs rural

Variables	Sample	Total mean	Above Average		Below Average	
			No of student	Percentage	No of student	Percentage
Urban	50	36.72	35	70	15	30
Rural	50	24.00	20	40	30	60

The table mentioned above shows that the average score of the students of urban colleges was 36.72. Among them 70% were found above average and 30% is below average. The majority of the students were above average.

Likewise, the average score of the students of all the rural colleges was 24.00. Among the 50 students only 40% were found above average and 60% below average. The majority of the students were found below average. So, the status of paronyms achievement of rural colleges' students was not satisfactory.

This shows that the status of paronyms achievement was more satisfactory in the urban students than the rural college students.

3.4 Analysis of the total paronyms achievement of the students according to the institute to which they belong.

Table No. 4

Status of paronyms achievement by in terms of the institute; technical Vs non-technical

Variables	Sample	Total mean	Above Average		Below Average	
			No of student	Percentage	No of student	Percentage
Technical	50	36.94	33	66	17	34
Non-tech	50	23.78	27	54	23	46

The table above shows that the average score of the students of technical institute was 36.94. Among 50 students from the technical institute. 66% were above average and 34% below average. Therefore, the status of the students from the technical institutes in paronyms achievement was satisfactory.

Likewise the average score of the students of non-technical institutes was 23.78. Among 50 students from the non-technical institutes 54% were above the average and 46% below average.

This shows that the status of paronyms achievement was more satisfactory in the technical institutes students' than the non-technical college students.

3.5 Analysis of the paronyms in terms of different variables

Table No. 5

Comparison of different variables with the total average

Variables	Sample	Total mean	Above Average		Below Average	
			No of student	Percentage	No of student	Percentage
Boys	50	30.36	25	50	25	50
Girls	50		17	34	33	66
Urban	50		40	80	10	20
Rural	50		2	4	48	96
Technical	50		38	76	12	24
Non.Tech	50		4	8	46	92

The above table shows the relative position of students with respect to combined total average. The combined total average was 30.36. The sample of boys, girls and the institute to which they belong, consisted of 50 each. The percentage of the boys scoring above the total average was 50% against 34% and hence, the achievement of the boys were found better than that of the girls.

The percentage of students scoring above the total average in urban colleges was 80% against 4% in rural colleges and hence the urban college students were found better in paronyms than the rural colleges.

Likewise, the percentage of the students of technical institutes scoring above the total average over 76 against 8 of the students of non-technical institute and hence the students of technical institutes were found better than the non-technical institutes.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents the summary of the study followed by the conclusion and recommendations.

4.1 Findings

- a. From the study the investigator found out that the students achievement in English paronyms was poor in total.
- b. The boys proficiency of the English paronyms was found better than the girls.
- c. Urban colleges students' achievement in paronyms was found better than that of the rural college students.
- d. Similarly, the paronyms achievement of the students of the technical institutes was found better than that of the students of non- technical institutes.

4.2 Recommendations

The investigator has made some recommendations with a view to bring about an improvement in teaching and learning of such confusingly related pairs of words.

- 1 The pairs of words which are often used in English should be taught inductively through context from the beginning level of the learners.
- 2 Selection and gradation of such pairs of words should be done taking into account the intellectual maturity of the prospective students and principles of selecting and grading the vocabulary should not be neglected while designing the textbook.
- 3 Apart from the present English textbook another supplementary English textbook should be included in the secondary level of the public colleges with a view to providing sufficient exposure to the students.

- 4 In the rural colleges, adequate facilities such as trained and qualified teachers, audio-visual aids, economic support, transportation etc. should be provided to uplift their present status.
- 5 Parental attitudes towards daughters should be changed by making them conscious of and educated so that they should not make any sex based discrimination against the girls. The girls and the boys should enjoy equal social status.
- 6 Teacher training programmes should be conducted by the concerned authority so as to help the teachers in their teaching techniques. Grammar translation method should strictly be avoided by the teachers.
- 7 Students should be involved in some sort of creative activities so as to increase their knowledge in building the vocabulary such as;
 - A. Use these words in the sentences of your own
 - a. principal _____
 - b. stationery _____
 - c. diary _____
 - d. bank _____
 - e. wave _____
 - B. Defining meaning in the context
 - a. He led a happy marriage life. (Verb)
 - b. This casket is made of lead. (Noun)
 - c. He drew money from the bank.
 - d. He walked through the bank.
 - C. Playing different flash games, etc.

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Appendix-1
Test Items

Name : Date :
College Name : Time : 1 hrs.
Level : District : Kaski
Roll No : F.M : 50

I. Choose the correct word to fill in the blank: 13×1=13

1. I've had more than a fair..... of troubles in my time.
a. sheer 4b. share c. shear
2. Let me through the mist to help find out the right path.
a. pear b. pare c. peer
3. Before you cut up the onions, please them off.
a. peel b. pill c. pale
4. The wax began to melt as soon as thestarted burning.
a. wick b. whisk c. week
5. There were of unemployed persons at the gate of the Employment Exchange.
a. herd b. rows c. rays
6. His funeral were performed by his eldest son.
a. riots b. rights c. rites
7. The boat capsized and all the pilgrims were
a. bunch b. drowned c. drenched
8. There was a of green grass in that sandy tract of land.
a. sunk b. twig c. drenched
9. He . his hands to greet us at the airport.
a. waved b. waived c. weighed
10. Gird up your to face the situation manfully.

- a. mien b. lion c. loin
11. The downfall of this dictatorial regime is
- a. imminent b. eminent c. urgent
12. Don't me to distraction
- a. boar b. wore c. bore
13. He is sitting
- a. idle b. ideal c. idol

II. Select words from those given in brackets to fill in the blanks: 20×1=20

1. We get milk from the nearby(dairy , diary)
2. The of love never runs smooth. (coarse , course)
3. You are not..... for this post. (eligible , illegible)
4. The has left no property. (diseased , deceased)
5. Nothing can ,,,,, my opinion now. (alter , altar)
6. Let us what we preach. (practice , practise)
7. He is willing to his claim to this property (wave , waive)
8. ... the right word from this list. (Pick , Peak)
9. Birla is a business..... (magnet , magnate)
10. That old lady is .. her hair. (dyeing , dying)
11. She was enough to carry an umbrella during the monsoon period. (sensible , sensitive)
12. Please could you me your book? (borrow , lend)
13. What did youto her? (say, speak)
14. He was in the earthquake last year. (killed, died)
15. She said she was in playing badminton. (interested, interesting)
16. The thiefthe bank. (robbed, stole)
17. I will for you near the entrance. (expect, wait)
18. Don't get off the bus until it is (stationery, stationary)
19. Mary was greatlyed by her father's death. (effect, affect)
20. Could you me some tea, please? (bring, take)

III. Tick the right word: 13×1=13

1. The sun sets in the *west / waste / waist*.
2. He was *cot/ quote / caught* red – handed.
3. Who will twist the *tale / tail* of this monkey?
4. He has *re-covered / recovered* from his illness.
5. He *rowed / rode* me across the Ganges.
6. The judge sent him to *gaol / goal*.
7. Price seems to *raise / rise* every year.
8. He arranged to see her *late r/ latter* in the day.
9. I would strongly *advice / advise* you to see the dictionary.
10. She writes in her *dairy / diary* everyday.
11. He expected to *lose / loose* the election.
12. She had some difficulty in understanding the *principal / principle* of acceleration.
13. You will *feel/ fill* better after a night's sleep.

IV. Match the following: 4×1=4

- | | |
|---|------------|
| 1. I'm sorry but your hand writing is | illiterate |
| 2. The man can not read or write he is | eligible |
| 3. Ram wrote a letter and put it inside the | fridge |
| 4. He purchased a new | freeze |
| | envelop |
| | envelope |
| | illegible |
| | literate |

Answers

- | | | | | | |
|------|--------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|-------|
| | 1.b | 2.c | 3.a | 4.a | 5. b |
| | 6. c | 7. b | 8. b | 9. a | 10. c |
| | 11. a | 12. c | 13. a | | |
| II. | 1. dairy | 2. course | 3. eligible | 4. deceased | |
| | 5. alter | 6. practise | 7. waive | 8. pick | |
| | 9. magnate | 10. dyeing | 11. sensible | 12. lend | |
| | 13. say | 14. killed | 15. interested | 16. robbed | |
| | 17. wait | 18. stationary | 19. affect | 20. bring | |
| III. | 1. west | 2. caught | 3. tail | 4. recovered | |
| | 5. rowed | 6. goal | 7. rise | 8. later | |
| | 9. advise | 10. diary | 11. lose | 12. principle | |
| | 13. feel | | | | |
| IV. | 1. illegible | 2. illiterate | 3. envelope | 4. fridge | |