

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This study is about the learning strategies used by the lower secondary level students of grade eight in community- aided Schools. This chapter consists of general background, review of the related literature, objectives and significance of the study.

1.1 General Background

Language is a means of communication. It is the system through which we can share our ideas, emotions, feelings, thoughts and desires. There are many living languages in the world. However, English is considered as one of the dominant languages. It is spoken as a first or second language in many countries. It is also a lingua franca in many countries. It occupies a significant role worldwide no matter whether it is used as a second or foreign language. The English language has been used for many purposes. One out of seven people in the world speaks English with some level of competence. Similarly, more than fifty percent of textbooks and print media of the world in any discipline are published in this language. Thus, the English language is used to get world-wide knowledge in various fields like literature, culture, religion, education, science and technological discovery. It is not only language for international communication but also a gateway to the world body of knowledge. We can have the access to the advanced scientific technology, world civilization, medicine, economics and other areas of knowledge by means of English. Instead, it is a vehicle that is used globally and will lead to more opportunities. In the context of Nepal, English has been given priority over other international languages. It is taught and learnt as a compulsory subject from primary to bachelor level and also as an optional or specialized subject in the faculties of education and humanities. In addition, a number of English medium schools have been established in private sector under the supervision, guidance and

control of the ministry of education. So learning the English language has become the cry of the day in Nepal.

Many learners are learning English as a second language from school level to university level in Nepal and elsewhere. It has become a research area in this context to identify how they learn English. Therefore, it seems very important to find out the learning strategies used by them.

1.1.1 Learning Strategies

The word “strategies” comes from the ancient Greek word “strategia”, which means steps or actions taken for the purpose of winning a war. The war like meaning strategia has fortunately fallen away, but the control and goal directedness remain in the modern version of the word (Oxford, 1990, p.8).

Tarone (1983, as cited in Lessard-Clouston, 1997, p.1) defined a learning strategy as “an attempt to develop linguistic and sociolinguistic competence in the target language to incorporate these into one’s interlanguage competence”. Rubin (1987, as cited in Lessard-Clouston, 1997, p.1) later wrote that language learning strategies “are strategies which contribute to the development of the language system which the learner constructs and affect learning directly”.

Learning strategies are defined as “specific actions, steps, or techniques -such as seeking out conversation partners, or giving oneself encouragement to tackle a difficult language task used by students to enhance their own learning” (Scarcella & Oxford, 1992, p. 63, as cited in Oxford, 2003 p.2). A given strategy is neither good nor bad; it is essentially neutral until the context of its use is thoroughly considered. A strategy is useful if the following conditions are present: (a) the strategy relates well to the L2 task at hand, (b) the strategy fits the particular student’s learning style, preferences to one degree or another, and (c) the student employs the strategy effectively and links it with other relevant strategies. Strategies that fulfil these conditions “make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more

transferable to new situations” (Oxford, 1990, p. 8). Learning strategies can also enable students to become more independent, autonomous, lifelong learners (Allwright, 1990; Little, 1991, as cited in Oxford. pp.8-9). Similarly, (O’Malley and Chamot 1990, as cited in Lessard-Clouston1997 p.1) defined Learning Strategies as “the special thoughts or behaviours that individuals use to help them comprehend, learn, or retain new information”.

According to Stern (1992,as cited in Hismansglu,2000, p.2), "the concept of learning strategy is dependent on the assumption that learners consciously engage in activities to achieve certain goals and learning strategies can be regarded as broadly conceived intentional directions and learning techniques." All language learners use language learning strategies either consciously or unconsciously when processing new information and performing tasks in the language classroom. Since language classroom is like a problem-solving environment in which language learners are likely to face new input and difficult tasks given by their instructors, learners' attempts to find the quickest or easiest way to do what is required, that is, using language learning strategies is inescapable.

Brown (1994, p.104) states that "Strategies are specific methods of approaching a problem or task, modes of operation for achieving a particular end, planned designs for controlling and manipulating certain information." Learning strategies are special tricks or ways learners adopt for learning a language. Ellis (1985, p.165) uses more comprehensive term 'Learner Strategies' which include; reception strategies, production strategies and communication strategies. Learning strategies are mainly reception strategies and to some extent production strategies. But communication strategies are social strategies that one uses to establish interaction.

Making differences between learning strategies and communication strategies Brown (1994) states "While learning strategies deal with the receptive domain of intake, memory, storage and recall; communication strategies pertain to the employment of verbal or nonverbal mechanisms for the productive

communication of information" (p.118). Learning strategies are not the strategies that are used for communication but they are the ways learners adopt to receive input, store intake and produce as output.

1.1.2 Importance of Learning Strategies for Second Language

Learning and Teaching

Language learning strategies play an important role in second language learning. Learning strategies can help language learners to make their learning more efficient and enjoyable. Cognitive strategies help learners to use the language more or learn more efficiently. These strategies can directly facilitate learning so as to help achieve a specific learning goal. Metacognitive strategies, on the other hand, help the learners to plan and monitor their learning. They help the learners become more independent and personalize their learning by allowing them to take control over the learning process. Besides, social and affective strategies can help the learners to find opportunities to use the language and learn the new culture. Oxford (1991) found that a fair number of learners receiving strategy training had shown greater improvement in language performance than those who were not trained in strategy use. Wenden (1985) asserts "Learner strategies are the key to learner autonomy, and that one of the most important goals of language training should be the facilitating of that autonomy" (as cited in Brown, 1994, p.124).

Brown (ibid) states:

With many styles and strategies operating within a person, hundreds of cognitive "profiles" might be identified, if we could discover some overriding and all pervading variable that classifies learners neatly into categories of "successful" and "unsuccessful", then of course we could make a case for typing language learners" (p.125).

For all L2 teachers who aim to help develop their students' communicative competence and language learning, then, an understanding of language learning strategy is crucial.

Oxford (1990a, as cited in Lessard- Clouston, 1997, p. 2) puts, Language learning strategies ".....are especially important for language learning because they are tools for active, self-directed involvement, which are essential for developing communicative competence."

To sum up, learning strategies play a vital role in second language acquisition. They make the learner conscious about their learning style. Language learning strategies are good indicators of how learners approach tasks or problems encountered during the process of language learning. Language learning strategies adopted by the learners are important for a language teacher. These strategies help the teacher to make his/her lesson according to the strategies of the learners. Language learning strategies give language teachers valuable clues about how their students assess the situation, plan, select appropriate skills so as to understand, learn, or remember new input presented in the language classroom. Learners also take benefit from learning strategies as they can leave some strategies and adopt new strategies to become successful learner and learn language easily. The success mainly depends on the strategy used by the learners. Thus, language learning strategies are important for teachers, learners, course designers and all other related people.

1.1.3 Types of Learning Strategies

There are literally hundreds of different, yet often interrelated learning strategies. Oxford has developed a fairly detailed list of language learning strategies in her taxonomy. Oxford (1990 b) categorizes language learning strategies into two types and three sub-types of each.

i. Direct Learning Strategies

Direct learning strategies are those strategies which directly involve the subject matters. The direct strategies are beneficial to the students because they help store and recover information. These strategies help learners to produce language even when there is gap in knowledge. They also help to understand

and use the new language. Oxford outlines three main types of direct language learning strategies:

a. Memory Strategies

Memory strategies aid in entering information into long term memory and retrieving information when needed for communication. It includes the activities such as grouping, imagery, rhyming and structure interviewing.

b. Cognitive Strategies

Cognitive strategies are mental strategies the learner uses to make sense of learning. They enable the learner to manipulate the language material in direct ways. When manipulating cognitive strategies, the learner is involved in practicing, receiving and sending messages, reasoning, analyzing, note-taking, summarizing, synthesizing, outlining, reorganizing information to develop stronger schemas (knowledge structures), practicing in naturalistic settings, and practicing structures and sounds formally.

c. Compensation Strategies

Compensation strategies are those, which enable students to make up for limited knowledge. They are needed to overcome any gaps in knowledge of the language. Examples of such strategies include guessing from the context in listening and reading, using synonyms and “talking around” the missing word to aid speaking and writing and strictly for speaking, and using gestures or pause words.

ii. Indirect Learning Strategies

Indirect learning strategies are those strategies which do not directly involve the subject matter itself, but are essential to language learning nonetheless.”

Indirect language learning strategies work together with the direct strategies.

They help the learner to regulate the learning process. These strategies support and manage language learning without direct engagement and therefore called indirect strategies.

a. Metacognitive Strategies

Metacognitive strategies are those strategies, which are related to how students manage the learning process. Metacognitive strategies “help learners’ exercises executive control through planning, arranging, focusing and evaluating their own learning.”

b. Affective Strategies

Affective strategies are related to students’ feelings, emotions etc. They enable learners to control feelings, motivations and attitudes related to language learning. Anxiety reduction, self-encouragement and self-reward come under affective strategies.

c. Social Strategies

Social strategies are those, which involve learning by interaction with others. Social strategies help the learner work with others and understand the target culture. They lead to more interaction with the target language through cooperating with others, empathizing with others, asking questions to get verification, asking for clarification of a confusing point, asking for help in doing a language task, talking with a native-speaking conversation partner, and exploring cultural and social norms.

Similarly, O’Malley and Chamot (1983, as cited in Ellis, 1994, pp.537-38) discuss about three types of learning strategies that learner use to foster their acquisition and learning.

i. Metacognitive Strategies:

It includes attempts to regulate language learning by means of planning, monitoring and evaluating. They are strategies about learning rather than learning strategies themselves.

ii. Cognitive Strategies:

Cognitive strategies are more limited to specific learning tasks and involve more direct manipulation of the learning material itself. Repetition, resourcing,

translation, grouping, note taking, deduction, recombination, imagery, auditory representation, key word, contextualization, elaboration, transfer, inferencing are among the most important cognitive strategies.

iii. Social Affective Strategies:

This involves the strategies the learners use to interact with the other learners and to native speakers. They mediate various socio-linguistic strategies. This includes working together, co-operating with each other, obtaining and giving feedback, asking for different activities in their own favor.

Rubin, (1987, as cited in Hismansglu, 2000) who pioneered much of the work in the field of strategies, makes the distinction between strategies contributing directly to learning and those contributing indirectly to learning. According to Rubin(1987), there are three types of strategies used by learners that contribute directly or indirectly to language learning. These are:

- i. Learning Strategies
- ii. Communication Strategies
- iii. Social Strategies

i. Learning Strategies

They are of two main types, being the strategies contributing directly to the development of the language system constructed by the learner:

- a. Cognitive Learning Strategies
- b. Metacognitive Learning Strategies

a. Cognitive Learning Strategies

They refer to the steps or operations used in learning or problem-solving that require direct analysis, transformation, or synthesis of learning materials. Rubin identified six main cognitive learning strategies contributing directly to language learning:

-) Clarification / Verification
-) Guessing / Inductive Inferencing
-) Deductive Reasoning
-) Practice
-) Memorization
-) Monitoring

b. Metacognitive Learning Strategies

These strategies are used to oversee, regulate or self-direct language learning. They involve various processes as planning, prioritising, setting goals, and self-management.

ii. Communication Strategies

They are less directly related to language learning since their focus is on the process of participating in a conversation and getting meaning across or clarifying what the speaker intended. Communication strategies are used by speakers when faced with some difficulty due to the fact that their communication ends outrun their communication means or when confronted with misunderstanding by a co-speaker.

iii. Social Strategies

Social strategies are those activities learners engage in which afford them opportunities to be exposed to and practise their knowledge. Although these strategies provide exposure to the target language, they contribute indirectly to learning since they do not lead directly to the obtaining, storing, retrieving, and using of language.

1.1.4 Factors Influencing the Choice of L2 Learning Strategies

All language learners use language learning strategies in the learning process. Since the factors like age, gender, personality, motivation, self-concept, life-experience, learning style, excitement, anxiety, etc. affect the way in which language learners learn the target language, it is not reasonable to support the idea that all language learners use the same good language learning strategies. Oxford (1990a) synthesized existing research on how the following factors influence the choice of strategies used among students learning a second language.

i. Motivation

More motivated students tended to use more strategies than less motivated students did, and the particular reason for studying the language (motivational orientation, especially as related to career field) was important in the choice of strategies.

ii. Gender

Females reported greater overall strategy use than males in many studies (although sometimes males surpassed females in the use of a particular strategy).

iii. Cultural background

Rote memorization and other forms of memorization were more prevalent among some Asian students than among students from other cultural backgrounds. Certain other cultures also appeared to encourage this strategy among learners.

iv. Attitudes and beliefs

These were reported to have a profound effect on the strategies learners choose, with negative attitudes and beliefs often causing poor strategy use or lack of orchestration of strategies.

iv. Type of task

The nature of the task helped determine the strategies naturally employed to carry out the task.

vi. Age and L2 stage

Students of different ages and stages of learning L2 used different strategies, with certain strategies often being employed by older or more advanced students.

vii. Learning style

Learning style (general approach to language learning) often determined the choice of L2 learning strategies. For example, analytic-style students preferred strategies such as contrastive analysis, rule-learning, and dissecting words and phrases, while global students used strategies to find meaning (guessing, scanning, predicting) and to converse without knowing all the words (paraphrasing, gesturing).

viii. Tolerance of ambiguity

Students who were more tolerant of ambiguity used significantly different learning strategies in some instances than did students who were less tolerant of ambiguity. Learning a language can be a difficult and at times ambiguous endeavor, and students who can more readily tolerate ambiguity often show the best language learning performance.

To sum up, the above are the different factors that influence the choice of language learning strategies. The most successful learners tend to use learning strategies that are appropriate to the material, to the task, and to their own goals, needs, and stage of learning. Learners that are more proficient appear to use a wider range of strategies in a greater number of situations than do less proficient learners. Language learners at all levels use strategies, but that some or most learners are not fully aware of the strategies they use or the strategies that might be most beneficial to employ.

1.2 Review of the Related Literature

Researchers at several universities in the world are carrying out research works on learning strategies. Two studies which produced findings on nationality – related differences in language learning strategies incidental to the main research thrust were those reported by Politzer and Mc Groarthy (1985) and by O’ Malley (1987, as cited in Griffiths, 2004, p.16). Politzer and Mc Groarthy discovered that Asian students exhibited fewer of the strategies expected of “good” language learners than did Hispanic students while O’ Malley ascribed the lack of success of Asian students to the persistence of familiar strategies.

One study which researched the effect of the teaching of cognitive and metacognitive strategies on reading comprehension in the classroom was conducted by Tang and Moore (1992, as cited in Griffiths, 2004, p. 16). They concluded that, while cognitive strategy instruction improved comprehension scores, the performance gains were not maintained upon the withdrawal of the treatment. Metacognitive strategy instruction, on the other hand, involving teaching of self monitoring strategies, appeared to lead to improvements in comprehension ability which was maintained beyond the end of the treatment. This finding accords with that of O'Malley et. al (1985) who discovered that higher level students are more able than lower level student to exercise metacognitive control over their learning.

Nunan(1995, as cited in Griffith, 2004, p. 17) conducted another classroom based study which aimed to research whether learner strategy training makes a difference in terms of knowledge. He involved sixty students in a twelve week program designed to help them reflect on their own learning, to develop their knowledge of and ability to apply learning strategies, to assess their own progress, and to apply their language skill beyond the classroom. He concluded that his study supported the idea that language classroom should have a dual focus, teaching both content and an awareness of language processes.

In the Department of English Education, Faculty of Education, T.U, there are a few studies conducted on learning strategies that learners adopt while learning English as a second language. But no research study on learning strategies used by the lower secondary level students is carried out so far.

Devkota (2003) carried out a research on learning strategies. His purpose was to find out strategies employed in studying literacy text by the students of B.Ed. specializing English. He used questionnaire to collect data from students and structured interview to collect information from the teachers. He found that one of the causes of students' failure is due to lack of writing practice.

Similarly, Rain (2006) conducted a research on language learning strategies used by Maithili learners of English at secondary level. The purpose of his study was to find out how Maithili learners of English learn English as third language. He found that the learners used very few techniques to learn English language.

In the same way, Bista (2008) carried out a research on "Reading Strategies Employed by the Ninth Graders." The purpose of her study was to find out the Reading strategies used by the government-aided school students. She used test items and interview schedule as a research tool. She found out that all students used guessing strategy: asked question themselves while reading, read determining the important points and made notes for exam.

Chaudhary (2009) carried out a research on "Learning Strategies used by the Class Toppers". Her purpose was to find out the learning strategies used by class topper of higher education to learn English language. She used a set of questionnaire as a tool for data collection. She found that the class toppers of higher education used Metacognitive strategies largely.

Poudel (2010) carried out a research on 'Learning Strategies Adopted by the Grade Ten Students. He aimed to identify the learning strategies used by the grade ten students of government-aided schools and private boarding schools. He used questionnaire and observation checklist as a tool for data collection.

He found that teacher-student interaction was better in the private schools in comparison to government-aided schools. Students of private schools are active in comparison to government-aided schools to learn the English language. Students used textbooks, guides, guess papers and class notes extensively to learn the English language and prepare for examination.

Although some researches are conducted on the area of learning strategies, no research is carried out to find the learning strategies used by grade eight students of lower secondary level in community- aided schools. Therefore, my study will be different from any researches carried out in the department so far.

1.3 Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study were as follows:

- i. To find out the learning strategies used by grade eight students in community- aided schools.
- ii. To suggest some pedagogical implications.

1.4 Significance of the Study

Any research work is done to have some influence on the related fields. It is expected that the present study will be significant to the students of grade eight. This study will help the teachers to suggest their students to use the effective learning strategies. It will help the course designers to design the course according to the strategies used by the students of this level.

1.5 Definitions of the Specific Terms

The specific terms used in this thesis have been defined as follows:

Learning strategy: It refers to particular ways, actions or techniques used by the learners to make their learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more effective and more transferable.

Direct language learning strategy: Direct language learning strategy refers to the strategy which directly involves the subject matter.

Indirect language learning strategy: It can be defined as a strategy, which does not involve the subject matter but is essential to learn language.

Cognitive strategy: It is used for forming and revising internal mental models and receiving and producing message in target language such as analyzing, summarizing and practicing.

Metacognitive strategy: It can be defined as strategy, which help the learners to control their own recognition by co-ordinating the planning, organizing and evaluating the learning process.

Memory strategy: It refers to the ways, which aid in entering information into long term memory and retrieving information when needed.

Compensation strategy: It is used to overcome any gaps in Knowledge of language. It is used to compensate for limited knowledge.

Social strategy: It refers to the strategy, which facilitates interaction with others often in discourse situation.

Affective strategy: It can be defined as a strategy, which enables learners to control feelings, motivations and attitudes related to language learning.

CHAPTER TWO

METHODOLOGY

The chapter on methodology is an important phase in any kind of study. In the absence of it, the research remains incomplete. So, this chapter deals with the methodology adopted during the study. The study had the following study design:

2.1 Sources of Data

I used both primary and secondary sources of data. The primary sources were used for collecting data and the secondary sources were used to facilitate the study.

2.1.1 Primary Sources of Data

The primary sources of this study were the grade eight students and teachers teaching in lower secondary level in Community aided schools of Dang District.

2.1.2 Secondary Sources of Data

The secondary sources of data were different books, especially Brown (1994), Ellis (1985), Ellis (1994), Griffiths (2004), Gass and Selinker (2010), Lessard-Clouston (1997) journals, reports, articles, research studies, internet discoveries related to the topic.

2.2 Population of the study

I selected eighty students and four teachers from four community- aided schools of as my sample population for this study.

2.3 Sampling Procedure

For this study, I purposively selected Dang district as a research area of my study. I selected four community-aided schools of Dang district using random sampling procedure through fish bowl draw. For that purpose, I wrote the names of all community- aided schools of Dang Deukhury in the pieces of

paper and put them in a small box. I took out four pieces out of them and wrote the names of the schools. The students of grade eight and the teachers teaching in lower secondary level were my study population. I selected only eighty students and four teachers as my sample from the students and teachers. Twenty students from each school were selected using simple random sampling procedure through fish bowl draw. Four teachers were selected purposively who were teaching in lower secondary level.

2.4 Tools of Data Collection

The main tools for the collection of data were a set of questionnaire. Questionnaire for the students was close ended and for the teachers was open-ended. Structured observation tool was used to collect information from observation.

2.5 Process of Data Collection

I followed the following procedure to collect the primary data.

- i. First, I prepared the research tools then I went to the selected schools and built rapport with concerned people.
- ii. I told the purpose of my study to the English teachers and requested them for class observation.
- iii. After that, I filled- up the prepared observation form.
- iv. After observing the class, I selected 20 students randomly and told them the purpose of my study.
- v. I distributed the questionnaires to the selected students and teachers.
- vi. Then, I analyzed and interpreted the collected data and presented them in different pictorial forms.

2.6 Limitations of the Study

The study had the following limitations:

- i. The study was limited to the four community- aided schools of deaikhury valley of Dang district.
- ii. It was limited to the grade eight students only.
- iii. It was limited to the tutorial setting of the second language learning.
- iv. It was limited to the learning strategies only.

CHAPTER THREE

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETION

Analysis and interpretation is the another focal part of the study; it deals with the presentation, analysis and interpretation of the data, which the researcher gathered from four community aided schools of Dang district. The present study deals with the strategies adopted by the grade eight students to learn the English language. The data for this study were collected using two research tools, i.e. questionnaire and observation. The data has been analyzed and interpreted under the following three main headings followed by several sub-headings:

1. Analysis of the data obtained from the questionnaire for the students
2. Analysis of the data obtained from the questionnaire for the teachers
3. Analysis of the data obtained from the class observation

3.1 Analysis of the data obtained from the questionnaire for the students

All together seventeen questions were asked for the sampled students. The responses of the students on each item were analyzed and interpreted under separate title.

3.1.1 The Strategies Used to be Familiar with New Words

Four items were incorporated in the questionnaire to find out the strategies that the students used to be familiar with new words.

a. Know the Meaning of the New Words

Figure No.1

Knowing the Meaning of New Words

The first item in the questionnaire was asked to identify how the students know the meaning of the new words, which come in the text. In this item, 27.5% students replied that they knew the meaning of the new words by using dictionary. On the other hand, only a few students, i.e., 7.5% replied that they knew the meaning of the new words by guessing. Around 65% students replied that they knew their meaning by asking to the teachers. The above data shows that, a large number of students depended on the teacher to know the meaning of the new words.

b. Learn the Meaning of the Words

Figure No. 2

Learning the Meaning of the Words

The second item was incorporated in the questionnaire to identify how students learn the meaning of the words. Observing the students' response, 32.5% learned the meaning of the words by memorizing the meaning while 20% responded that they learned the meaning by using it in writing. Only a few students, i.e., 5% learn the meaning by using it in speech. But 42.5% students responded that they learned the meaning of the words by translating into their mother tongue. Analyzing the responses given by the students, it is found that students preferred to learn the meaning of the words by translating into mother tongue and by memorizing the meaning.

c. Learn the Grammatical Items

Figure No. 3

Learning the Grammatical Items

The third item was related to how students learn the grammar. According to their response, 47.5% students preferred to learn the grammatical items by memorizing the rules while 6.25% students responded that they learned the grammatical items by using them in communication. Around 18.75% students replied that they learned the grammatical items by generalizing rules from the context. Similarly, 27.5% preferred to learn the grammar by translating it into their mother tongue. It shows that the students liked to learn the grammatical items by memorizing the rules to great extend.

d. Write the New Words

Figure No. 4

Writing the New Words

The above item was asked to find out whether the students wrote the new words that they learn or not. In response, half of the sampled students, i.e., 50% replied that they always wrote the new words that they learn. Similarly, 42.50% students sometimes and 7.50% students occasionally wrote the new words that they learn. No students choose the last option, i.e., never. Analyzing the above data, it is found that, students preferred to write the new words that they learn to be familiar with the new words.

3.1.2 The Strategies Used to Develop Listening Skill

There were four items in the questionnaire to identify the strategies used by the students to develop listening skill.

a. Listening practice

Figure No. 5

Listening practice

The above item in the questionnaire was related to how students prefer to do listening practice. Analyzing their responses, 32.5% students preferred teachers' imitation for listening practice whereas 35% preferred recorded materials. Only 11.25% students replied that they liked to talk to native speaker. Similarly, 21.25% students responded that they preferred to do listening practice with reading by friends to develop listening skill. The above data shows that most of the students liked to do listening practice by imitating the teachers and listening to the recorded materials to develop their listening skill.

b. Try to Speak with the Native Speakers of English

Figure No. 6

Trying to Speak with the Native Speakers of English

The above item incorporated in the questionnaire was to ascertain whether they tried to speak with the native speaker or not when they got chance. In response of this, 8.75%, of the sampled students replied that they always tried to speak with the native speakers of English. Similarly, 37.5% of the sampled students replied that they sometimes tried to speak with the native speaker of English while 28.75% of the sampled students responded that they occasionally used this strategy but 25% students responded that they never used this strategy to develop listening skill.

c. Listen to BBC World Service

Figure No. 7

Listening to BBC World Service

The above item in the questionnaire was asked to identify how frequently the students listened to BBC world service to develop their listening skill. The above diagram shows that a very few, i.e., 3.75 % of the sampled students always listened to the BBC world service to develop their listening skill. Similarly, 25% students sometimes listened to BBC world service to develop their listening skill, while 51.25% of the sampled students occasionally used this strategy. But 20% of the sampled students replied that they never used this strategy to develop their listening skill.

d. Listen to English Songs

Figure No.8

Listening to English Songs

The above item was incorporated in the questionnaire to ensure whether or not they listened to English songs to develop listening skill. Observing the responses given by the students it is found that, only 10% of them always listened to English songs. Similarly, 43.75% of the sample students replied that they sometimes used this strategy to develop listening skill, while 32.50% of the sampled students occasionally used this strategy. But 13.75% students replied that they never used this strategy to develop listening skill. Observing the above data, it is found that students often listened to the English songs to develop listening skill.

3.1.3 The Strategies Used to Develop Speaking Skill

Three items were incorporated in the questionnaire to find out the strategies that the students of grade eight employed to develop speaking skill.

a. Speaking Practice

Figure No. 9
Speaking Practice

The above diagram shows that to develop speaking skill, about 33.75% preferred to do speaking practice by imitating the teacher's speech. However, 25% students preferred interaction technique for speaking practice. Similarly, 26.25% students preferred discussion technique for speaking practice to develop speaking skill. But only 15% students preferred the games and songs for practicing speaking skill. Analyzing the above data it is found that students liked to do speaking practice through teachers' imitation to a great extent

b. Talk in English

Figure No. 10

Talking English

The above item in the questionnaire was related to talking in English. Observing the data, only 13.75% students responded that they used to talk in English only at the school compound, whereas 38.75% students responded that they used to talk in English only in the classroom to develop speaking skill. Similarly, 31.25% students preferred using English while talking with teachers. On the other hand, 16.25% of the sampled students responded that they preferred to talk in English with all people who can talk in English to develop their speaking skill. Analyzing the above data, it is found that most of the students preferred speaking in English only in the classroom and with teachers only.

c. Take Part in Speech or Debate Context

Figure No.11

Taking Part in Speech or Debate Context

The above diagram shows that only a few students, i.e., 12.5% of the sampled students always liked to take part in speech or debate contest to develop speaking skill. Similarly, 38.75% of the sampled students sometimes liked to take part in speech or debate contest whereas 32.5% students occasionally took part in speech or debate contest to develop speaking skill. But 16.25 % of the sampled students never liked to use this strategy to develop speaking skill. Analyzing the above data, it is found that students often took part in speech or debate contest to develop their speaking skill.

3.1.4 The Strategies Used to Develop Reading Skill

There were three items in the questionnaire to identify the strategies used by the students to develop reading skill.

a. Reading Comprehension

Figure No. 12

Reading Comprehension

For reading the text and understanding it, large number of sampled students, i.e., 52.5% responded that they liked the teacher's loud reading and explaining it. Similarly, 25% preferred silent reading for reading comprehension to develop reading skill, while 22.5% of the sampled students preferred reading themselves loudly for reading comprehension to develop reading skill.

Analyzing the above data, it is found that students liked teachers' loud reading and explanation for reading comprehension to develop reading skill.

b. Read English Newspapers and Magazines

Figure No. 13

Reading English Newspapers and Magazines

The above item in the questionnaire was incorporated to find whether or not the students read English newspapers and magazines beside their textbook to develop reading skill. Observing their responses, 12.5% of the sampled students replied that they always do so, while 33.75% of the students replied that they sometimes read English newspapers and magazines besides their textbook. Similarly, 22.5% students occasionally preferred reading English newspapers and magazines to develop reading skill. But, 31.25% students replied that they never read English newspapers and magazines besides their textbook to develop reading skill.

c. Read English Stories

Figure No. 14

Reading English Stories

The above item was incorporated in the questionnaire to ensure whether the students read English stories or not to develop reading skill. Observing their responses, about 26.25% of the sampled students responded that they always read English stories whereas 46.25% students responded that they sometimes read English stories to develop reading skill. Similarly, 17.50% students replied that they occasionally read English stories but 10% students responded that they never used this strategy to develop reading skill.

3.1.5 The Strategies Used to Develop Writing Skill

Three items were incorporated in the questionnaire to identify the strategies used by the students to develop writing skill.

a. Doing Homework

Figure No. 15

Doing Homework

The above chart shows that to develop writing skill most of the students liked to do their homework. Majority of the sampled students, i.e., 82.5% responded that they always preferred this strategy to develop writing skill. Similarly, 17.50% students responded that they sometimes preferred to do their homework to develop writing skill. Analyzing the above data, it is found that students preferred to their homework to a great extent to develop writing.

b. Writing Practice

Figure No. 16

Writing Practice

For practicing writing skill, more than half, i.e. 60% students responded that they preferred to practice writing skills by copying it from the teacher. Similarly, 17.5% of the sampled students replied that they preferred guided writing activities to develop writing skill, whereas 22.5% preferred free writing activities for writing practice to develop writing skill. Analyzing the above data, it is found that students preferred to copy from the teachers for writing practice to develop writing skill.

c. Note Down Main Points

Figure No. 17

Note Down Main Points

The above item in the questionnaire was asked to identify whether the students noted down the main points during teachers explanation or not. The above chart shows that 66.25% of the sampled students always while 21.25% students sometimes noted down the main points during teacher's explanation to develop writing skill. Similarly, 8.75% of the sampled students responded that they occasionally noted down the main points during teacher's explanation to develop the writing skill. But 3.75% students responded that they never used this strategy to develop writing skill.

3.2 Analysis of the Data Obtained from the Questionnaire for the Teachers

In order to make the study more authentic and reliable, I developed a set of questionnaire for the teachers also. I selected four teachers of same four schools who were teaching in lower secondary level, and collected their opinion. Based on their responses the analysis and interpretation are done below.

The first question was asked to find out which methods do their students preferred for learning English. In this question 75% teachers replied that their students preferred communicative method for learning English. On the other hand, 25% teachers responded that their students preferred grammar translation method for learning English.

Similarly, the second question was asked to identify the reason why their students preferred that method. The supporters of communicative method replied that it is student-centered method, so it enabled the learners to talk in the classroom and become active. The supporters of Grammar translation method replied that their students feel easy to learn foreign language in their mother tongue.

The third question was asked to find out which materials the teachers recommend the students. All the teachers gave the same responses that they recommend the textbooks, practice books, real materials, pictures, cassettes, and newspapers to their students.

The fourth item in the questionnaire was asked to identify which methods their students preferred for learning grammar. Observing their responses, 50% of the sampled teachers responded that their students preferred deductive method for learning grammar. Rest of the 50% teachers responded that their students preferred inductive method for learning grammar.

The fifth question was asked to find out how they teach new vocabulary items. Observing their responses, 75% teachers replied that they taught new

vocabulary items by translating it into their mother tongue and using dictionary. But only 25% teachers responded that they taught new vocabulary items by using pictures, realia, gesture, explanation and their use in real context.

The sixth item incorporated in the questionnaire was asked to ensure that their students preferred the method or not that they used. The supporters of translation method replied that their students preferred their method because it is easy and quick way. The supporters of teaching vocabulary using pictures, realia, and explanation replied that their students preferred that method because students guess the meaning of words themselves and become active in learning.

The seventh item in the questionnaire was to choose the strategies that their students preferred in the class. Same strategies were chosen by all the teachers, i.e., role-play, group discussion, translation, presentation, use of realia and use of pictures.

3.3 Analysis and Interpretation of Class Observation Check List

In course of my study, I went to four different community aided schools of Dang, Deukhury to observe four different lower secondary English teachers classes. The sole purpose behind that was to find out how students learn the English language in the classroom.

a. Checklist

A checklist with four options i.e. excellent, good, average and poor was designed to identify the different learning activities in the classroom. The whole checklist along with the activities chosen while observing the classroom is presented in the following tabular form:

Ten items were developed in the observation check list to find out the activities of teachers and students and their learning strategies in the class room. The analysis and interpretation of the observation is shown in the following table.

Table no. 1

Learning activities

S.N.	Items	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor
1	Motivation technique	50%	25%	-	25%
2	Teacher-student interaction	-	50%	25%	25%
3	Asking questions	-	75%	25%	-
4	Answering questions	-	25%	25%	50%
5	Students activeness	-	50%	25%	25%
6	Teaching style	-	50%	50%	-
7	Teachers' use of Nepali	-	25%	50%	25%
8	Students' use of Nepali	-	-	25%	75%
9	Active on group work	-	50%	25%	25%
10	Feedback to the students	-	100%	-	-

The first item in the observation checklist was developed to find out whether or not the motivation technique of the teachers was good or not. It was found that 50% teachers' motivated the students very well. Twenty five percent teachers' motivation technique was good but 25% teacher did not motivate the students well. The second item incorporated in the observation check list was to find out whether the teachers-students interaction was good or not. From the above data, it was found that 50% of the sampled teachers student interaction was good. It was found that 25% teachers student interaction was average. But 25% teachers and students were found poor in interacting in the classroom.

The third item was developed in the check list was to ensure, whether the students asked question to the teacher or not. In this item 75% students were

found good in asking question. But 25% students were average in asking question.

Similarly, the fourth item was to find, whether or not the students answered the teacher's question, from the observation, 25% students were found good while 25% were average in answering teachers' questions. But 50% students were found very poor in answering teachers' questions.

The fifth item was to find out the activeness of students in learning English in the classroom. From class observation, 50% students were found good in learning. They were active in learning while 25% students were average but 25% students' activeness was found poor.

The sixth item was to find out whether or not the teachers teaching style were good. It was found the teaching style of 50% teachers was good while 50% teachers teaching style was average.

The seventh item incorporated in the checklist was to found whether the teacher use Nepali in appropriate time or not. From the Observation, 25% teachers were found good while 50% were found average but 25% teachers were found very poor in using Nepali,i.e., they used Nepali all the time in the class.

Similarly, the eighth item was developed to find whether the students use the Nepali language in appropriate time or not. From the class observation, 25% students were found average in using Nepali in appropriate time while, 75% students were found poor in using Nepali in appropriate time. They used the Nepali language a lot in the class.

The ninth item was to identify, whether or not the students were good in group works. It was found that 50% students were found good in group work while 25% students were found average. But 25% students were found very poor in group work.

The tenth item was developed to find out whether the teachers give feedback to the students or not. From the observation, all the sampled teachers i.e. 100% teachers were found good in giving feedback.

Item number eleven was incorporated on the observation form to list some learning activities in the classroom. All together 210 student's activities were observed in the classroom which are pointed down. In general, it was found that all the teachers using Nepali language a lot in the class. It was found that most of the students learn the English language through rehearsal technique. Teachers speak a lot but students speak less. Students use English only with the teacher but not with their friends.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The principal aim of the present study was to find out the Learning Strategies Adopted by the Grade Eight Students in Community Aided Schools to be familiar with new words, to develop listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. The data was collected from eighty students of class eight who were studying in four community aided schools of Dang district and the teachers who were teaching English in grade eight of selected schools. The data was collected using two research tools i.e. questionnaire and observation. Two sets of questionnaire were used, one for the students and another for the teachers. Class observation was recorded in the observation form. The collected data were coded, transcribed, analyzed and interpreted rigorously. On the basis of the analysis and interpretation, the findings are derived and some pedagogical implications are suggested in the following parts:

4.1 Findings

It would be fair to say that to a greater or lesser extent, grade eight students of community-aided schools selected in the study used language learning strategies of all kinds. The following findings have been drawn after the completion of analysis and interpretation.

A. Findings of the Data Obtained from the Questionnaire for the Students

a. To be familiar with new words, grade eight students mostly used the following strategies:

- I . asked the meaning of the new words to the teachers
- ii. consulted dictionary
- iii. translated into their mother tongue
- iv. memorized the rules

v. wrote the new words that they learn

b. To develop listening skill, grade eight students mostly used the following strategies:

i. imitate the teachers' speech

ii. listened to the recorded materials

iii. listened to the English songs

c. To develop speaking skills, grade eight students mostly used the following strategies:

i. spoke English with teachers' imitation

ii. often took part in speech or debate contest

d. To develop reading skill, grade eight students mostly used the following strategies:

i. practiced reading text and understood it through teacher's loud reading and explanation

ii. read English stories

iii. read the text themselves silently

e. To develop writing skill, grade eight students mostly used the following strategies:

i practiced writing skill coping from the teachers.

ii. did their homework regularly

iii noted down the main points during teacher's explanations

B. Findings of the Data Obtained from the Questionnaire to the Teacher

- i. Students preferred communicative method for learning English.
- ii. Teachers mainly recommended textbooks and practice books for teaching English.
- iii. Students liked to learn vocabularies by translating the meaning into their mother tongue.

C. Findings of the Data Obtained from the Class Observation

- i. Most of the teachers were found using translation method in teaching.
- ii. Students were good in asking questions to the teachers but they were somehow poor in answering teachers questions.
- iii. Students were well motivated in the classroom.
- iv. Teacher were found very poor in performing different kinds of student-centered activities like pair work, group work, role play and performing language games.
- v. Students spoke Nepali a lot in the classroom.

4.2 Recommendations

After analyzing the findings of the study as well as the researcher's own intuitions, some recommendations have been suggested as follows:

1. The teachers should use different updated teaching methods instead of using translation all the time.
2. Students frighten and hesitate to speak the English, so the teachers should encourage the students to speak.
3. The teaching methods must be student centered.
4. Teachers should use ELT materials for teaching the English.
5. The class must be interactive to activate the students.
6. Grammatical items should be taught inductively.
7. Teachers need to become more aware of learning strategies through appropriate teacher training.
8. Second language learners are often unaware of learning strategies, so teachers have to raise such awareness and teach appropriate strategies.
9. The teachers should conduct group work, pair work, in the classroom and encourage the students to take part in it.
10. English learners should realize the importance of selecting appropriate strategies for various learning tasks.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX: A

Observation Checklist

School:

Date:

Name of Teacher:

Time:

No. of Students:

S.N	Statement	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor
1	Teacher's motivation technique				
2	Teacher-student interaction				
3	Students asking question				
4	Answering teacher's questions				
5	Students activeness				
6	Teacher's teaching style				
7	Teacher's use of Nepali				
8	Students use of Nepali				
9	Active on group work				
10	Teacher's feedback to the students				

11. Some points about learning activities in the classroom.

APPENDIX: B

Questionnaire for the Students

School:

Class:

Name:

The following statements are related to you. Please tick (✓) the option, which you think, is appropriate:

To be familiar with new words

1. If any new words come in the text, I know the meaning of that word by.....
 - a. Using dictionary
 - b. guessing meaning
 - c. asking to the teacher
 - d. others (Mention)

2. I learn the meaning of the words by
 - a. memorizing the meaning
 - b. using in writing

- c. using in speech
- d. translating into mother tongue

3. I learn the grammatical items by
- a. memorizing rules
 - b. using in communication
 - c. generalizing rules from the context
 - d. translating into mother tongue

4. I write the new words that I learn
- a. Always
 - b. Sometimes
 - c. Occasionally
 - d. Never

To develop listening skill

5. I like to do listening practice with
- a. teachers imitation
 - b. recorded materials
 - c. talking to native speaker
 - d. reading by friends

6. whenever I get chance I try to speak with native speaker of English

- a. Always
- b. Sometimes
- c. Occasionally
- d. Never

7. I listen to the BBC world service

- a. Always
- b. Sometimes
- c. Occasionally
- d. Never

8. I listen to English songs

- a. Always
- b. Sometimes
- c. Occasionally
- d. Never

To develop speaking skill

9. I prefer to do speaking practice through

- a. teachers imitation
- b. interaction with teachers
- c. discussion
- d. games and songs

10. I use to talk in English

- a. only at the school compound
- b. only in the classroom
- c. only with teachers
- d. with all people who can talk in English

11. I take part in speech or debate contest

- a. Always
- b. Sometimes
- c. Occasionally
- d. Never

To develop reading skill

12. I like to practice reading text and understanding it through.....

- a. teachers loud reading and explanation
- b. reading silently
- c. reading myself loudly
- d. others (mention)

13. Besides my textbook, I read English newspapers and magazines

- a. Always
- b. Sometimes

- c. Occasionally
- d. Never

14. I read English stories

- a. Always
- b. Sometimes
- c. Occasionally
- d. Never

To develop writing skill

15. I like to do my homework

- a. Always
- b. Sometimes
- c. Occasionally
- d. Never

16. I prefer to practice writing skills by

- a. copying from the teacher
- b. guided writing activities
- c. free writing activities
- d. others (mention.....)

17. I note down the main points during teachers explanation

- a. Always
- b. Sometimes
- c. Occasionally
- d. Never

APPENDIX: C

Questionnaire for the teacher

Dear Sir/Madam

This questionnaire is a part of my research study entitled 'Learning Strategies Adopted by the Grade Eight Students' under the supervision of Mr. Raj Narayan Yadav, the Reader of the Department of English Education, TU, Kirtipur. Your co-operation in completion of the questionnaire will be more valuable for me. Your answer will help us to identify the different strategies learners use to learn English language.

1. Which method do your students prefer for learning English?

2. Why do they prefer this method?

3. Which materials do you recommend to your students?

4. Which method do your students prefer for learning grammar?

5. How do you teach new vocabulary items?

6. Do your students prefer this method?

7. What of the following strategies do your students prefer in the class?

	Yes	No
a. Role-play	_____	_____
b. Group discussion	_____	_____
c. Teach only summary	_____	_____
d. Translation	_____	_____
e. Presentation	_____	_____
f. Use of picture	_____	_____
g. Use of realia	_____	_____

APPENDIX: D

Sample Schools

1. Shree Adarsh Higher Secondary School, Lalmatiya, Deukhury, Dang
2. Bal Janata Higher Secondary School, Bangaun, Deukhury, Dang
3. Shree Higher Secondary School, Mourighat, Deukhury, Dang
4. Shree Nepal National Secondary School, Bhaluwang, Deukhury, Dang

APPENDIX: E

Sample Students

I. Shree Adarsh Higher Secondary School, Lalmatiya, Deukhury, Dang

1. Ajaya chaudhary
2. Ram Chaudhary
3. Shisir Puri
4. Laxman Chaudhary
5. Shyam Sundhar Chaudhary
6. Prakash Subedi
7. Binod Adhikari
8. Prakash Nepali
9. Santosh Chaudhary
10. Sunil Acharya
11. Dilip Kumal
12. Ashok Khanal
13. Hari Narayan Chaudhary
14. Sudarshan Chaudhary
15. Tulsi Ram Chaudhary
16. Dipak Chaudhary
17. Laxmi Chaudhary
18. Sanju Chaudhary
19. Bashanta Chaudhary
20. Chandra Bahadur Roka

II. Bal Janata Higher Secondary School, Bangaun, Deukhury, Dang

1. Bikram Magar
2. Puspa Rawat

3. Nirmala Kumal
4. Sarita Chaudhary
5. Prava Roka Magar
6. Soran Chaudhary
7. Bashanta Puri
8. Ram Autar Chaudhary
9. Nira Chaudhary
10. Mangali Chaudhary
11. Amrita Chaudhary
12. Sabita Chaudhary
13. Youb Raj kumal
14. Saraswati Chaudhary
15. Sita Rana
16. Goma Kumal
17. Hemlal Thapa
18. Asha Kumari Chaudhary
19. Dipesh Chaudhary
20. Keshav Oli

III. Shree Higher Secondary School, Mourighat, Deukhury Dang

1. Ananta Giri
2. Asha Chaudhary
3. Binita Chaudhary
4. Gita Shrestha
5. Bir Bahadur Budha
6. Bijaya Sharma
7. Deepak Chaudhary
8. Chandramati Chaudhary

9. Dipa Chaudhary
10. Dilmaya Chaudhary
11. Giraja Gywali
12. Keshav Khanal
13. Laxmi K.C.
14. Manju Chaudhary
15. Mahabir Chaudhary
16. Pampha Chaudhary
17. Balika Adhikari
18. Nir Kumar Chaudhary
19. Nirmala Giri
20. Kishor Chaudhary

**IV. Shree Nepal National Secondary School, Bhaluwang, Deukhury,
Dang**

1. Santosh Damai
2. Rabina Khatun
3. Sabir Oli
4. Arjun Khatun
5. Madhu Chhetri
6. Santosh Pariyar
7. Iswor K.C.
8. Jubeda Khatun
9. Arjun Chaudhary
10. Hari Ram Chaudhary
11. Bhagawata Pun
12. Gita Karki
13. Hem Raj Budhathoki
14. Radha Thapa
15. Susma Chaudhary
16. Nabin Pandey
17. Uma Yogi

18. Bhabana G.M.

19. Sunil Nepali

20. Laxmi Kumari Bogal

APPENDIX: F
Sample Teachers

S.N.	Name	School
1	Mr. Jeev Raj Sharma	Shree Adarsh Higher Secondary School, Lalmatiya, Deukhury, Dang
2	Mr. Govinda Bahadur D.C.	Bal Janata Higher Secondary School, Bangaun, Deukhury, Dang
3	Mr. Minketan Chaudhary	Shree Higher Secondary School, Mourighat, Deukhury Dang
4	Mrs. Kula Kumari G.C.	Shree Nepal National Secondary School, Bhaluwang, Deukhury, Dang

APPENDIX: G

OBSERVATION CHECKLIST

S.N.	Schools	H.S.S Mourighat	A.H.S Lalmatiya	B.J.H.S Bangaun	N.S.S Bhaluwang
	Statement				
1	Motivation technique	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Good
2	Teacher-student interaction	Good	Average	Poor	Good
3	Asking questions	Good	Good	Good	Average
4	Answering questions	Average	Good	Poor	Poor
5	Students activeness	Good	Average	Poor	Good
6	Teaching style	Good	Good	Average	Average
7	Teachers' use of Nepali	Poor	Average	Good	Average

8	Students' use of Nepali	Average	Poor	Poor	Poor
9	Active on group work	Good	Good	Average	Poor
10	Feedback to the students	Good	Good	Good	Good