

Pedagogical Strategies employed by Literature and Linguistic teachers: A case study in Banke, Nepal

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Date of reception: 07-01-2023

Date of accepted: 12-03-2023

Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the techniques employed by Literature and Linguistic English teachers in teaching grammar to 11th-grade students and to compare their teaching strategies. The research design adopted a qualitative method, collecting data from four randomly selected public and private schools in the Banke district. Observation checklists and diary writing for classroom observations served as the primary tools for data collection. Thematic analysis was applied to interpret the gathered data.

The results revealed that literature and linguistic teachers predominantly utilized similar techniques. However, linguistic teachers did not employ expected grammar teaching techniques, suggesting that pedagogical competence in grammar has limited utility. Instead, teachers tended to rely on methods that facilitated their teaching process. The study's findings imply a necessity for additional professional development for English language teachers, particularly in the domain of grammar teaching pedagogy. Furthermore, these results could inform curriculum development and teacher training programs, aiming to enhance grammar instruction and ultimately improve students' language proficiency.

Keywords: Literature, Linguistic, Grammar, Pedagogy, Professional Development

1. Introduction

Background of the study

Grammar is a fundamental aspect of language that governs the rules for constructing meaningful sentences and plays a significant role in discourse construction and conveying intended meaning. It serves as the backbone of a language, primarily concerned with the proper combination and ordering of words into sentences using appropriate rules. The application of grammar ensures that language is not deviated, rendering it more comprehensible and purposeful.

Grammar is an integral component of language teaching and learning, and its inclusion is essential for the overall success of language education. According to Ur (1999), knowledge and application of grammatical rules enable learners to construct and comprehend sentence patterns. As such, grammar occupies a central role in language teaching and learning.

Effective teaching and learning require careful planning and preparation on the part of teachers. Similarly, the teaching of grammar necessitates the use of specific techniques. Techniques such as awareness-raising, controlled drills, meaningful drills, guided meaningful practices, free sentence creation, discourse composition, and free discourse composition are among the strategies described by Ur (2009).

These techniques represent specific approaches to teaching grammar. Therefore, this study aims to investigate whether Linguistic English teachers employ these techniques and, if not, which techniques they utilize when teaching grammar to Grade 11 students. The study seeks to identify the teaching strategies employed by Literature Linguistic English teachers in teaching grammar.

Statement of the Problem

In the field of education in Nepal, two distinct types of English teachers exist: Literature English teachers and Linguistic English teachers. As a lecturer of English, I encountered various grammar teaching strategies, including awareness, controlled drills, meaningful drills, guided meaningful practice, free sentence composition, discourse composition, and

free discourse types, as defined by Ur (2009). However, Literature English teachers typically do not study the techniques of teaching grammar, despite being involved in the teaching profession. Students are exposed to both types of teachers, raising the question of whether it is possible to teach grammar without knowledge of the techniques or if such knowledge is necessary. This question prompted me to conduct research into the techniques used by Literature English teachers and Linguistic English teachers in teaching grammar. My study focuses on the techniques employed by secondary-level Literature English teachers and Linguistic English teachers in teaching grammar to 11th-grade students.

Research Objective

The primary objectives of the research were to:

- Explore the various techniques employed by Literature English teachers and linguistic English teachers at the higher secondary level in the teaching of grammar
- Compare and contrast the techniques used by literature English teachers and linguistic English teachers in their teaching of grammar.
- Provide recommendations based on the study's findings for pedagogical practices in the teaching of grammar.

Research Questions: The primary focus of this research was to investigate the answers to the following questions:

- What specific techniques are utilized by Literature English teachers and Linguistic English teachers in teaching grammar at the secondary level?
- In what ways do the techniques employed by Literature English teachers differ from those used by Linguistic English teachers in teaching grammar?

Significance of the Study

Grammar study is necessary for successful language usage in speech and writing, and



grammar instruction is necessary to assist students communicate meaning and improve their communication abilities. Grammar instruction use a variety of strategies to attain learning objectives. The current study is to investigate the significance of Linguistic teachers' understanding of approaches used in teaching grammar and if it differs from literary English instructors. The study's findings will be beneficial to individuals engaged in the teaching and learning of English grammar, such as language instructors, students, textbook writers, and curriculum and syllabus designers. The study will provide valuable information about the use of grammar teaching techniques and their awareness among teachers, which will contribute to the field of English language teaching. This research has the potential to shed light on the effectiveness of different teaching techniques and to inform teacher training programs and curriculum development in the field of English language teaching.

Delimitations of the Study

This study exclusively explored grammar teaching approaches for 11th-grade students. The total population of the study was limited to English teachers in secondary-level schools in Banke. Only four secondary-level English teachers were selected as the sample for this study. The data was collected through diary writing, only from two public and two private schools. Only the 11th-grade classes were observed for data collection. Similarly, only forty classes of four teachers (ten classes for each teacher) were observed. The design of the study was limited to a mixed-method approach.

Literature Review

a. English Language Teaching

English language teaching is a global phenomenon, and in Nepal, English has been used as a means of instruction and medium of writing by the educated and elite circles since the Rana Regime. According to Richard and Rodgers (2001), language teaching emerged as a profession in the twentieth century, as Applied Linguists and others sought to develop principles and procedures for teaching methods and materials

based on the developing fields of linguistics and psychology. The practice of teaching English as a foreign language in Nepal began in 1989 AD, with the foundation of Durbar High School. Since then, people have been learning English to enhance their career prospects, personality development, access to world knowledge, and to participate in international programs and conferences.

Richard and Rodgers (2004) emphasize the significance of the four language acquisition skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing, which must be connected to make communication meaningful and successful. These skills are divided into two categories, receptive and productive, and language aspects like vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar are crucial to utilizing language skills. Various methods and techniques are used in English language teaching, such as inductive and deductive methods, lecture, explanation, pair work, group work, and personal questioning. Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL), Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL), Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), and English for Specific Purposes are all terms used to describe English Language Instruction (ESI) English is taught as a foreign language in Nepal, although practically all schools and institutions have accepted English as a means of instruction in the classroom, and its usage is growing by the day.

b. Teaching Grammar

In the study of any language, grammar plays a fundamental role as it provides the necessary framework and rules for constructing words and sentences. According to Palmer (1971), grammar is a system that ensures a set of well-formed sentences, each having a structural description. Similarly, Yule (2006) defines grammar as the analysis of the structure of phrases and sentences, which helps ensure the proper combination and ordering of words to produce meaning. Grammar is thus an essential component of language teaching and learning, enabling learners to arrange morphemes, words, phrases, clauses, and sentences into a meaningful form by following the rules and principles of the language. As such, it is

considered the backbone of language and a crucial aspect of effective communication.

Grammar plays a crucial role in the instruction and acquisition of languages and is simultaneously a challenging and debatable element of language teaching. Within the field of language teaching, there is often a misunderstanding about grammar, with the incorrect belief that it consists of arbitrary rules dictating a fixed structure within a language. The mastery of language requires an understanding of grammatical rules, and a comprehensive knowledge of grammar is vital for learners who wish to utilize language creatively. Numerous studies and scholarly articles have emphasized the importance of grammar instruction in language learning. A solid understanding of grammar contributes to effective communication and language proficiency. Nassaji and Fotos (2015) suggest that explicit grammar instruction positively influences learners' writing accuracy, contributing to more effective communication. Similarly, Norris and Ortega (2000) in "Language Learning" indicate that explicit grammar instruction can lead to improved language proficiency, especially when combined with other language skills.

Thornbury (1999) provides seven arguments supporting the inclusion of grammar in language teaching. These arguments include the idea that grammar is a sentence-making machine, teaching grammar helps develop correct sentence-making habits, mastery of grammar is necessary for linguistic competence, developing a formal system of language from the beginning leads to better language acquisition, cutting language into different grammatical items reduces misunderstanding, grammar provides a structured system that can be taught and tested, and learners expect to learn grammatical items in language teaching. Zhang (2009) highlights the importance of grammar instruction for English language learners, as without it, they are unable to use the language accurately and fluently. Teaching grammar is beneficial for language learning as it improves mastery of the language and is necessary for all four language skills, as well as for analyzing literary and non-literary texts. Grammar teaching is an essential part of classroom activities and procedures and must be consistent with the overall method and approach used by the teacher. Techniques are the specific

tricks or contrivances used to achieve immediate teaching objectives within the classroom and must be in harmony with the overall approach and method.

A study was conducted by Pokhrel (2008) aimed to investigate the effectiveness of inductive and deductive methods in teaching tense to 10th-grade students through an experimental research design. The findings of the study revealed that the inductive method was more effective in teaching tense than the deductive method. The second study conducted by Shah (2010) focused on determining the effectiveness of teaching grammar through the inductive method in specific areas of grammar, such as tenses, prepositions, tag questions, and subjective verb agreement. The study was conducted on 20 students of 9th-grade students of Ram Secondary School, Nepalgunj, and found that the majority of students made errors in the use of tag questions in the pre-test, and the inductive method was found to be more effective than the deductive method in teaching grammar. Gautam (2011) conducted an experimental study with the aim to determine whether pair work techniques were effective in teaching grammar. The study was conducted on 25 students of 9th-grade students from Gulmi district using a pre-test and post-test as the data collection tool. The students were randomly selected based on their pre-test results and divided into an experimental group and a control group. The results revealed that both groups improved their overall marks, although the experimental group improved faster than the control group. The study determined that pair work strategies were more successful in teaching grammar than lecture techniques. Dahal (2016) investigated English teachers' views and behaviors about vocabulary and grammar teaching strategies using a non-random sample of 12 secondary level English teachers in the Jhapa district. Research tools included a questionnaire and observation checklist, and the findings revealed that explanation, inductive and deductive methods, realia, picture, pair work, and translation techniques were frequently used. Neupane (2011) researched the "Effectiveness of Teaching Grammar through Texts" and found that using texts for teaching grammar was more effective than using individual sentences. The sample size for the study was 30 grade nine students from the Sunsari district, and data



were gathered using assessments that included multiple-choice, fill-in-the-blank, and true or false questions. The research concluded that grammar teaching becomes effective through teaching literary texts.

Despite the relatedness of the aforementioned studies to my research, no practical investigation has yet been conducted on the instructors focusing on Literature and Linguistic instruction in the Banke district. Therefore, my study differs from the reviewed research in terms of its objectives, methodology, and research tools, among other factors. To date, no similar study has been carried out on this issue. For that reason, this research is a different comparative study in this field.

2. Methodology

To accomplish this study, this researcher used qualitative method.

The population of this research study included four secondary level English instructors focusing in Literature and Linguistic instruction in the Banke district. The sample for the study included two teachers from each category of secondary level, specifically Literature and Linguistic education, teaching at the secondary level in a school. The selection of teachers and schools was carried out using purposive non-random sampling procedures. An observation checklist was prepared, and each teacher's ten classes were monitored across two private schools in Banke district - GVN Secondary School, Holy Land Secondary School; and two public schools - Dhambojhi Secondary school and Narayan Secondary school.

Research Tools and Techniques

The data collecting strategies used in this study were diary writing and observation checklists, both of which were regarded successful and beneficial in accomplishing the study's objectives according to the research design. Classes were observed with the checklist and data were collected.

The present research collected information from both primary and secondary sources. The primary data source consisted of secondary level

Literature and Linguistic English teachers from Banke District, from whom data was collected using observation checklists and diary writing.

The secondary data source involved consulting various printed and electronic resources such as books, journals, articles, research works, including Richard and Rodgers (2001), Ur (2005), Thornbury (1999), and other relevant documents related to the study.

Data Collection Procedures

In order to gather the required data, a meticulous plan was developed. Initially, the researcher obtained permission from the school authorities in Banke district to conduct the study. Subsequently, the selected secondary level English teachers were approached for their consent to observe their grammar classes for a period of ten days. During the observation, the researcher diligently took notes in a diary of all activities performed by the teachers and the corresponding instructions given to the students. After the completion of the observation period, the data collected from the diary and observation checklist was analyzed and interpreted to draw meaningful conclusions.

Ethical Considerations

In order to conduct this research, I obtained permission from both the individual teachers and the school administration. Prior to beginning this study, this researcher clearly explained the objectives and purpose of my research to all parties involved. This researcher was respectful of the privacy of my respondents, including their personal and professional ethics, and ensured that all identifiable personal information, such as names, addresses, and personal details, were omitted from my notes. As a researcher, I assured the participants of my study that their personal information would remain confidential. For anonymity, the teachers involved in the study are referred to as Teacher A, B, C, and D. Teachers A and B are Linguistic teachers, while Teachers C and D are Literature teachers.

Data Analysis and Interpretation of Results

The data collection process for this study involved observing the classes of four different

secondary level English teachers who taught 11th grade in Banke district. The research used both observation checklists and diary writing to identify the various techniques used by the teachers to teach grammar. The data obtained were subjected to qualitative analysis, the results of which are presented below.

The section on the techniques used by the teachers in teaching grammar is based on the observation of forty classes of secondary level English teachers in Banke district who were teaching grammar in grade 11. Ten classes were observed for each teacher, and all the activities carried out during the teaching of grammar were recorded in a diary. Both Linguistic and Literature teachers were observed to determine their approaches to teaching grammar.

By properly exploiting the opening and ending moments of a course or class, instructors have the ability to increase student enthusiasm, provide clarity on anticipated learning paths, and build conceptual awareness. According to Love (2013), beginning a course with a discussion of complex questions can help students become engaged in the learning process, while concluding with a dynamic review or discussion of future content can help students integrate content into larger conceptual understandings. According to Ambrose et al. (2010), connecting ideas across class sessions, even briefly, can contribute to the development of students' conceptual knowledge. To encourage "student buy-in" and solicit contributions towards class learning objectives, instructors can utilize various start-finish strategies.

Qualitative Analysis of the Data

To conduct data analysis, this researcher has identified the following issues:

1. Techniques used by Teacher 'A' in teaching grammar: This theme focuses on the methods employed by Teacher 'A' in commencing the lesson. The teacher started the class by writing the topic of the lesson without any warm-up activities or motivational questions or reviewing of the previous lesson.
2. Techniques used by Teacher 'B' in teaching grammar: This theme explores the

techniques employed by Teacher 'B' in the beginning of the lesson. The teacher started the class by writing the topic of the lesson, followed by writing old questions related to the topic. This approach may have attracted students' attention, but it could also be perceived as an examination-focused class. To some extent, the teacher attempted to motivate the students.

3. Techniques used by Teacher 'C' in teaching grammar: This theme concerns the techniques utilized by Teacher 'C' in initiating the lesson. The teacher began the class by writing the topic of the lesson without any warm-up activities or motivational questions or reviewing of the previous lesson.
4. Techniques used by Teacher 'D' in teaching grammar: This theme pertains to the methods employed by Teacher 'D' in commencing the lesson. The teacher began the class by writing the topic of the lesson without any warm-up activities or motivational questions or reviewing of the previous lesson.

Explanation of the Subject Matter

a. Techniques used by 'A' teacher in teaching grammar

The instructional approach of the 'A' teacher for teaching grammar is primarily based on the deductive method. At the outset of the class, the teacher presented the structure of the lesson and followed up with an illustrative example to explain the structure.

Subsequently, the teacher assigned class work related to the topic and checked it after a while. The teacher randomly evaluated the work and provided feedback by solving a question on the board. In one of the classes, the teacher taught the lesson "judging from appearances." During this session, the teacher introduced the structure of the lesson as follows:

- Subject + look(s) + adjective
- Subject + look(s) + like + noun
- Subject + look(s) + as if / as though + clause

To illustrate the structure, the teacher provided



an example from the textbook and assigned questions from the book for the students to practice. After some time, the teacher checked the class work, identified and corrected errors, and provided feedback. Overall, the teacher employed the deductive method to effectively explain the subject matter to the students.

b. Techniques used by 'B' teacher in teaching grammar

Despite the availability of diverse teaching methods for grammar, the instructor opted for a deductive approach to elucidate the lesson. Initially, the instructor presented a previous question related to the topic, followed by writing the structure concerning the lesson's subject matter. The instructor then proceeded to clarify the structure by providing an example. Subsequently, the students were required to complete in-class assignments, and the instructor checked them periodically, providing feedback by solving any errors on the board. In this manner, the instructor facilitated comprehension of the subject matter in the class.

c. Techniques used by 'C' teacher in teaching grammar

Initially, the instructor inscribed the framework, following which they proceeded to address the problem in the book without imparting any elucidation regarding the structural principles. The instructor predominantly resolved numerous exercises from the book without expounding on the rules governing the structure.

d. Techniques used by 'D' teacher in teaching grammar

Although there exist diverse pedagogical approaches to teaching grammar, the instructor employed the deductive method to explicate the lesson. Initially, the instructor inscribed the structure, following which they clarified it with an illustration. Upon exemplifying the structure, the teacher assigned classwork to the students. After a certain interval, the instructor enquired if the students had completed the task and randomly checked some of the assignments. Subsequently, the teacher provided feedback to the students by addressing questions on the board.

Summing up the Class

At the end of the class all these four teachers did not revise the class and ended the class by giving homework.

In summary of the grammar classes taught by four different teachers - A, B, C, and D, it was observed that none of the teachers conducted a revision of the class at the end of the session. Instead, all the teachers concluded their classes by assigning homework to the students.

A qualitative analysis was conducted to examine the pedagogical techniques employed by English Language and Literature teachers when teaching grammar. The research was carried out by observing the classes of four teachers. An observation checklist was prepared, and each teacher's ten classes were monitored across two private schools in Banke district - GVN Secondary School, Holy Land Secoondary School; and two public schools- Dhambojhi Secondary school and Narayan Secondary school. While there are various techniques to teach grammar, such as awareness, control drills, meaningful drill, free composition, and free discourse type, the Linguistic and Literature teachers utilized a limited set of techniques.

Based on the analysis and interpretation of the data gathered from classroom observations and diary writing, the following findings have been drawn in relation to the research objective of identifying and comparing the techniques used by secondary level linguistic and literature teachers in teaching grammar to 11th grade students:

- Teachers A, C, and D commenced the subject matter directly without any prior motivation of the students.
- The technique of explanation used by all teachers was similar, with each introducing the rule first and then providing an example.
- Throughout the 40 days of classroom observation, Teacher A and B consistently used control drills, meaningful drills, and deductive techniques, while Teacher D employed controlled drills and deductive techniques. In contrast, Teacher C used no specific techniques and merely solved questions from the book and instructed students to copy them.

- Teachers A, B, and D primarily focused on controlled drills and the deductive method for teaching grammar.
- None of the teachers utilized awareness, free sentence composition, free discourse type, or inductive methods of teaching grammar.
- Student-centered teaching techniques were not emphasized by any of the teachers, and student engagement in activities was minimal.
- Linguistic teachers used an additional technique for teaching grammar known as meaningful drills.

3. Conclusion

In conclusion, this comparative study delved into the pedagogical strategies employed by Literature and Linguistic English teachers in teaching grammar to 11th grade students in selected schools in Banke, Nepal. The investigation revealed that while both Literature and Linguistic teachers utilized similar techniques to a significant extent, there were notable disparities in their approaches.

The findings indicated that Linguistic teachers, despite their designation, did not employ grammar teaching techniques as extensively as expected. Instead, they tended to adopt methods that facilitated their own teaching process, raising concerns about the adequacy of their pedagogical competence in grammar instruction. On the other hand, Literature teachers, who generally do not undergo formal training in grammar teaching techniques, were observed using comparable methods to their Linguistic counterparts.

In essence, this research contributes valuable insights to the field of English language teaching, shedding light on the current practices and suggesting avenues for improvement. The outcomes of this study could serve as a foundation for future interventions aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of grammar teaching in Nepalese secondary schools, ultimately benefiting both teachers and students.

Recommendations

The study underscores the need for further professional development for English language teachers, specifically in the area of grammar

teaching pedagogy. The disparity in the use of specific techniques suggests potential gaps in teacher training and highlights the importance of equipping educators with effective and diverse strategies for teaching grammar. Moreover, the research findings advocate for potential improvements in curriculum development and teacher training programs to enhance the teaching of grammar in secondary education. Recognizing the significance of grammar in language proficiency, the study encourages a more comprehensive and student-centered approach to grammar instruction.

Practice Related Recommendations

- Teachers should motivate students before beginning the lesson to create interest and engagement.
- Inductive method should be used while introducing the subject matter, followed by other suitable techniques.
- All lessons should be taught with the aim of developing grammatical competence, regardless of their importance in exams.
- Modern ICT tools such as computers, the internet, and projectors should be used to enhance the effectiveness of the class.
- Teachers should provide examples from sources other than the textbook, and students should be given opportunities to practice similar exercises.
- Teachers should incorporate suitable techniques such as awareness, free composition, and free discourse in teaching grammar.

Further Research Related Recommendations

It is important to note that no research is ever complete in and of itself. This study, too, may have some limitations. During the course of this study, various topics and ideas were encountered, and as such, several related areas have been identified for further study. The following recommendations are therefore proposed for future research:

- The current study was limited to two secondary level linguistic teachers and two secondary level literature teachers in Banke district. It would be interesting to see how secondary level linguistic and



- literature teachers from other districts compare.
- This research can serve as a significant secondary resource for further study.
- This study is both qualitative and quantitative in nature. Future research can be carried out using either only quantitative or only qualitative data.
- The current research is limited to the techniques used by secondary level linguistic and literature teachers in teaching grammar. Future research can focus on other aspects of language such as vocabulary, pronunciation, reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills.
- Further research can be carried out to obtain the views of students regarding linguistic and literature teachers at any level.

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