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**Evaluating the Text Book on Integrated Skill:
Reading and Writing****Farmud Miya**

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Abstract

The research attempts to find out the relation to reading and writing skill from grade 9 textbook. There are four basic skills i.e. listening, speaking, reading, and writing which are strongly prescribed in the textbook. Here, the researcher has tried to explore the two major skills, namely reading and writing and their relation while practicing in the textbook. This research uses a descriptive qualitative research. The data source of this research is English textbook entitled 'English 9'. The text has allotted marks for each skills in the syllabus. The reading text of grade 9 comprises 40% marks while writing comprises 35% of total marks. There are ten outcomes that are supposed to be achieved by students under reading section. This number is equal in writing section as well. By this, the course has adopted the sequential approach to reading and writing instruction, i.e. reading leading to writing. However, most of the contents given in the reading section do not collaborate with the writing part. There are ample examples where the students feel difficulties while producing writing part given in the text book. The collected data was interpreted using descriptive approach. It was found that most of the tasks given in the text book in relation to reading and writing are in segregated form. This idea of segregation is quite different from what the modern scholar say about skills of language learning.

Keywords: Relation; source; collaborate; examples; literate

Introduction

Textbooks are undoubtedly most crucial resources (Topalov & Bojanic, 2016) in the field of teaching and learning for students and teachers especially leaning a language in general and

English language in particular. The textbooks become even more vital in our context where there are diversities in relation to access, approach, and physical facilities. They are undoubtedly proved as a boon for the students where they can enjoy multiple activities through them. Textbooks provide work-sheet, learning activities and many more to the learners. According to Richards (2001:251) Instructional material serve as the basis for much of the language input since learners receive and the language practice in the classroom. English is used in Nepal as compulsory subject from grade one to bachelor level. There are some common objectives of all the levels: enable the learners to be good enough in four skills. The four skills are listening, speaking, reading and writing. The researcher here only discusses the two major skills, i.e. reading and writing. Conventionally they were regarded as receptive and productive skill in the process of language learning. Reading skill comes prior to writing was the concept deep rooted to academia few decades ago.

Reading

Reading is one of the primary skills for whole language development. Reading opens multiple opportunities especially those who learn it as a second or foreign language. The ability to read encourages readers to get acquainted with world's literature, culture and many more (Pysarchyk & Yamshyaska, 2015, P. 79). The teacher can encourage the readers to read with a number of activities and warm up the students to explore further in the area of reading. Different stages of reading like: pre-reading, while-reading and post-reading can be well observed by the students when they are assigned tasks related to it.

As Snow (2002) states reading is the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language (p. 11). According to him reading involves three major interrelated elements: the reader, the text, and the activity of reading task and all of these situated to a broader sociocultural context. Therefore, a reader must have knowledge ability to understand the text which is based on specific tasks given in the textbook. To put in other words, the readers must be engaged in different tasks to comprehend the text (Snow, 2002).

Writing

Writing is one of the prominent skills of language. Conventionally, it is regarded as productive skill and final stage of language learning. This skill is important to learn because there is well structured examination based on this skill. This skill helps learners to be independent, fluent and creative in writing. It is an important ability to put one's thoughts in a meaningful form (Sim, 2010, p. 134).

Syllabus from school to college level has allotted marks for writing skill. The students are engaged through different tasks to develop their writing ability from reading passage to writing comprehensible answers. This is important because it improves level of confidence, widen knowledge and finally improves communication skill.

But dichotomizations of these skills have left the learners behind to achieve the real goals of these skills. In general it is understood that the two skills listening and reading are receptive skill and the other two: i.e. speaking and writing are productive skills. This trend presents language skills as being tied in a natural order, i.e., the order of acquisition of skills (Krashen, 1981).

Although there are many modern media that are invented to support teachers and students in teaching-learning process, such as tape recorder, overhead and LCD projector, video, and book, many schools still buy and use printed textbook and references. The probably reason why schools still buy and use textbook is that the textbook is cheaper and easy to carry.

Students need a textbook to support their learning. English textbooks support the teachers to provide materials. As Mikk (2000: 17) highlights, “students have many sources of information available, if their textbooks are dull, they are unwilling to study them. Interesting and enthusiastic textbooks develop curiosity and interest in the subject”.

According to Tarigan (1986:13) “textbooks are books of lesson in certain field of study as a standard book arranged by the experts of field for instructional purposes and compiled by harmonious teaching media and easy understood by the user in schools and colleges to receive teaching program”. Therefore, textbooks can be a real means for both the learners and the teachers. They are designed to achieve specific goals at particular level. One should not forget to include the materials that are relevant to language skills, particularly reading and writing. Their spiral movement can bring changes among the learners.

Textbooks are widely accepted as a common feature of classrooms worldwide and are important vehicles for the promotion of curricula. Consequently their content and structure are very important for the promotion of a specific vision of curriculum.

Given the above thinking, the English textbook that has been analyzed using this criteria shown that in general all the materials had integrated all these four skills in each topic. Take for example, in unit I about Poon Hill Yoga Trek in Nepal, these four skills were integrated as well.

After presenting the reading content, the learners asked to write a similar type of writing. The given exercise in the writing section is relevant to the reading section. For example; the writing section demands to write the plans for going a three-day trek. The researcher claims that such writing will not be difficult for the learners as they have reading lesson related to this. This is a good example of integrated learning task.

The Agency for Textbook Development

Curriculum Development Centre (CDC), an academic center, under the Ministry of Education is established with an aim to develop curricula, textbooks along with other instructional materials for school education in order to achieve the national goals of education.

The present curriculum of grade nine has been revised and developed in line with the aims and objectives of the National Curriculum Framework for School Education, 2076 BS.

The present textbook based on Secondary Education Curriculum (2078) of grade nine aims to bring the following outcomes under reading and writing skills:

Reading Outcomes

1. Understand texts that consist of high-frequency everyday language
2. Understand straightforward factual texts
3. Understand the description of events
4. Extract relevant information from texts
5. Understand and identify main ideas

Writing Outcomes

- 1) Describe experiences, feelings and events
- 2) Write stories, letters, emails, notes, notices, advertisements, and recipes
- 3) Write account of experiences describing feelings, experiences and reactions in connected texts
- 4) Write short descriptive, narrative, expository and persuasive essays
- 5) Interprets charts, tables and diagrams

Although curriculum has allotted 10/10 outcomes for reading and writing skills, the researcher has taken five from each to make a collaborative study between the syllabus the course has designed and the activities given in regard to achieve them in the textbook.

The external assessment of reading skills contains 40marks and writing is of 24 marks. When grammar part (11 marks), is included, writing skills comprises altogether 35 marks which is of course less than reading skill (CDC, 2078). The curriculum although tries to integrate reading and writing, writing has less weightage than reading.

When we see the units given in the text book, particularly the reading and writing sections, most of the lessons have less collaboration with the reading and writing section. The reading sections presents one item while the writing sections demands the students to write something different. We know reading and writing have a mutual effect on students' cognitive development as reading builds the foundation for readers to write and of course writing provokes readers to build schemata to read with (Tuan, 2012).

Based on this claim, the researcher claims that there should be integration between reading and writing tasks. It is believed that to improve writing, one has to improve reading

and eventually there should be skills that demand the integrated skills of both reading and writing.

Statement of the Problem

The writing part of students either in school or college level is not found very strong (Bhandari, 2024) in the context of Nepal. There may be many reasons behind it. But one of the striking reason is lack of integration between reading and writing skills. Therefore, there is dual need for enhancing students' engagement with reading texts and integrating reading and writing activities in everyday lessons.

Several literatures emphasize the integration of reading and writing skills that oppose Krashen (1985) theories of language learning which advocate about learning language skills separately. The dichotomizations of the language skills have put the learners to adapt the skills in segregated way and most of the tasks in textbook are not in relation with each other. They are presented in segregated form. The reading tasks do not match with writing tasks in several places. The current school textbook has included the tasks i.e. reading and writing in quite different ways. As a result we see the performances in these language skills are not very satisfactory. The reading sections do not demand the writing sections. In other words, the learners do not feel easy to write the assignment after reading the text. Thematically organized, these units first should engage students in intensive reading activities before engaging them reading based writing activities. But, there is a big gap what has been presented in reading section and writing section. Although scholars have discussed largely about different skills of language learning, very few have discussed about the integrated skills of learning language.

Literature Review

Several scholars have demanded for the integration of the language skills to boost up knowledge of the learners. People with well reading comprehensibility can undoubtedly do better in writing skill. Tuan (2012), for example, argues that reading and writing have a mutual effect that reading produces knowledge of diverse kinds of writing, and writing reinforces knowledge in a way that builds schemata to read with'. This can be achieved by the integrated lessons which must be in the textbook. The reading comprehensive paragraphs must lead to writing. The students would enjoy writing, of which in most of the occasions they avoid, if the writing texts would be related to reading. We know writing is constantly anchored into reading and it is the process of writing that conceptualizes the reading. In this regard they are interwoven with each other. In the words of Morely (2007) reading and writing have 'the double helix'(x). It means reading leads to writing. And writing feeds to reading. These two skills cannot be segregated as they have been proved beneficial for the learners for the long run.

Yang and Shi (2003) suggest that students engage in a sequence of interrelated tasks help the learners to interpret contents, select key ideas, connect related ideas, and overall structure

the writing skill. Once the learners become familiar with the reading tasks, they feel easy to interpret and present in their own ways in the writing sections.

Similarly different studies conducted on reading integrated writing show that these two cultivate positive learning environment among the students. For instance, in Plankan's (2008) experimental study, 'reading-to-write' tasks engaged students in a more interactive process of writing –only approach. The result shows that students get engaged in writing tasks after reading the tasks. In other words, they prefer reading-writing to writing only tasks. The students are found interactive while giving to them tasks based on reading. They bring varieties in their writings and actually love to write when they are assigned the tasks in accordance with reading.

Reading courses focused on subskills, such as identifying main ideas versus supporting details, understanding organizational patterns, identifying facts versus opinions, making inferences, and drawing conclusions which pave the path for writing.

There was a similar study conducted by Yuan and Zhang (2022) which demonstrated that integrated reading-writing tasks can be used to engage ESL/EFL students in the continuous and interactive process of discovery meaning. These study show that the integrated approach can be utilized to guide students to comprehend and develop both vital skills, i.e. reading and writing.

Another study carried by Smith (2009) presents natural dependency between the skills. According to him, reading and writing activities are important to child's learning to read and write. The children can perform better when the activities are assigned in integrated form i.e. reading integrated writing tasks.

While summarizing research on the connectivity of reading and writing skills, Stotsky (1984) found some consistent correlation, namely, "better writers tend to be better readers" that "better writers tend to read more than poorer writers," and that 'better readers tend to produce more syntactically mature writing than poorer reader (7-24)'. This is only possible when the tasks given in the textbook are in the integrated form. In other words, the tasks to develop reading and writing should be in mutually interlinked.

Similarly, it was found that lack of integration between reading and writing skills reduce the performance of the students (Adhikari&Shrestha, 2023). The achievement of learners in these two primarily skills can be effected if the tasks are not designed in collaboration to each other. One effects other was seen in most of the research works carried out by the above researchers.

Methodology

This research was carried out by using descriptive qualitative research design focused on analyzing and describing the data collected from the textbook of grade 9. Descriptive qualitative research is used to describe the textbook based on the existing literature. Maxwell

(1996: 17) states that the strength of qualitative research is: It derives its data from inductive approach. It focuses on specific situation or people and its emphasis is on words rather than the numbers. The researcher used textbook entitled 'English 9' for ninth grade of secondary level and it was analyzed on the basis of two different skills of language; i.e. reading and writing. Therefore, the source of data collection was the textbook. There was a short focused group discussion with the learners regarding the two skills.

Findings and Discussion

This part is intended to elaborate the findings and discussions of the data obtained from the textbook of ninth grade. The vital research question that is going to be discussed is: **Do the lessons follow the principle of integrated learning tasks, i.e. reading and writing?** There are many lessons presented in the text that do not follow the principle of integrated task of reading and writing. The research claims they do not make the learners as independent writers since the textbook contains different reading and writing task. There is no mutual effect, as even demonstrated by experiences of ELT teachers including the researcher himself. For example: units 3, 5, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18 present some irrelevant writing to reading skills for the learners. For example, the following writing is given in page n. 197 as writing task after presenting chapter: 'The Rautes'.

Write an essay on the effects junk foods have on children. Use the clues given below.

Introduction to junk food

causes: advertising, lack of education, etc.

Negative / harmful effects of junk food on health (headache, heart attacks, dental problems, high blood pressure, obesity, high cholesterol, etc.)

Effects on the economy (more expenditure / extra burden to family, etc.)

Effects on other factors like socialisation, poor academic achievement, etc.

Similarly, a writing task presented in page n. 114 demands the students to study and interpret the chart which is of course not related to the lesson given in unit 9 'Work and Leisure'. There is no something that encourages the learners to write the text related to the reading text. Actually, these irrelevant tasks discourage the learners to learn skills of writing rather than help to teach to write.

In unit 3, there has been presented a story about a family but learners are asked to write a letter to the head teacher. Beyond this, the writing task demands to write something about sports and games which the researcher thinks is irrelevant to the reading task.

3 Family, Market and Public Places

ng started

do you think these pictures are related to? How do people make requests in these situations?



ng!

Look at the picture below and answer the following questions.

What do you see in the picture?

What is more important for you; family or work or both? Why?

Thomas and Jerry

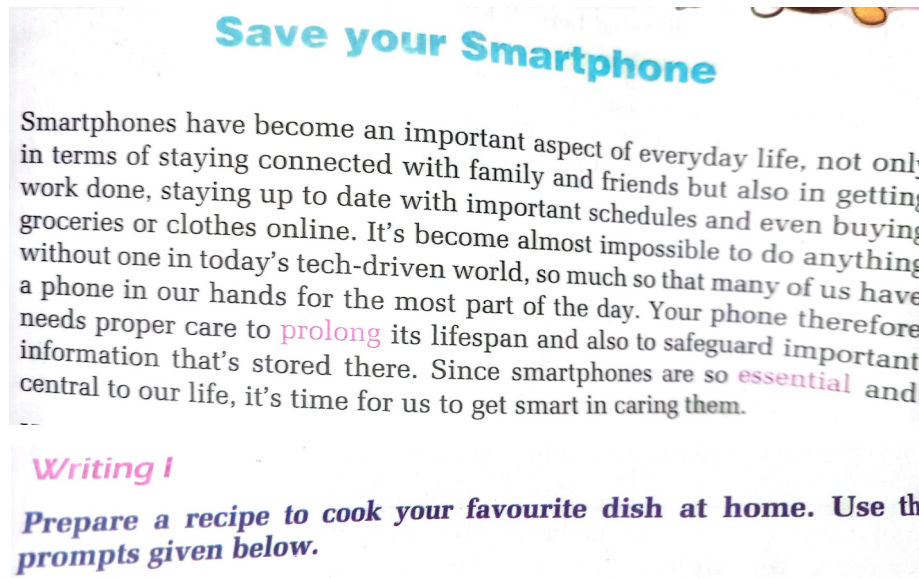
Upon a time in a village, there was a man named Jerry. He hadn't seen a friend who lived in the city for a few years and wanted to meet him. He started



Writing!

Write a letter to the head teacher of your school on behalf of your class requesting him/her to organise an inter-house volleyball tournament in your school. Make requests for managing all required sporting goods for the tournament.

An interesting example that shows irrelevant task based on reading is smartphone. The chapter talks about the ways to protect the smartphones which is undoubtedly very important reading section but the writing part that follows it is quite irrelevant.



The above few examples show that there is dire need of revisions of the tasks given in the reading related writing tasks. The dichotomization of language skills otherwise is sure to be practiced which is of course against the present trend of teaching language skills in integrated form (Tuan, 2012).

Similarly, Stein, Dixon and Isaacson (1994) suggest that 'many writing weakness may derive from too little time allocated to writing instruction or from writing instruction inadequately designed around the learning needs of the learners' (p.392).

Therefore the writing tasks must be designed in the peripheral of reading tasks so that the learners do not feel any difficulties for writing tasks especially in our context where reading and writing tasks are rarely welcomed either by learners or instructors. While discussing with students including the researcher's daughter, it was found that they face difficulties to present writing task particularly the topics, they are unknown about. They appreciated some of the unit which have integrated task i.e. reading to writing.

Grabe and Zhang (2013) suggest that the teachers' lectures in particular should model how to integrate reading/writing and how to paraphrase in their classes. There should ample tasks where learners get opportunities to practice these skills. They suggest scaffold-integrated reading and writing tasks can accelerate learners' performance. Therefore, the writing tasks should be designed accordance with the reading tasks.

Whatever the reasons may be, the major thing is that students do not possess the skills necessary to communicate effectively in a written format. The exercises that are provided in the writing sections against the norms of integrated tasks. There is a significant need for students at all levels not only to be good communicators in written form, but also to understand the importance of good writing skills.

Conclusion

Reading and writing have multi-dimensional and multi—modal processes, commonly aimed at developing these two skills in students' level of learning language skills. In this sense, reading and writing have a mutual effect, as reading builds the foundational knowledge for readers to write, and writing reinforces the knowledge in way that builds schemata to read with. There are multiple benefits of integrated skills approach of teaching and learning skills primarily reading and writing. These two skills maximize the effectiveness of studying language. Actually, integrated skills enables the learners to use the language skills effectively in different contexts. When tasks are presented in collaboration to different skills, they not only encourage the learners to communicate effectively but also they bring confidence among the learners. The tasks therefore presented in the text should be in relation to each other. The interrelated tasks encourage the learners to accelerate their performance in different skills particularly in reading and writing.

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