Teaching Grammar using Literary Texts: An Action Research Study with Class Eight students in Paro

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Abstract

The school English curriculum framework in Bhutan mandates the teaching of grammar to be integrated with teaching of literary texts. This has become an issue as teachers find it difficult to integrate. A pre-survey using a questionnaire and a class test was administered to 76 Class Eight students (one student was absent) to examine their perceptions on using literary texts to learn grammar and test their grammar knowledge. Based on the findings of the pre-survey and the pre-test, this action research was designed to adapt and implement Ellis's (2002) practice and conscious-raising approaches to grammar teaching, Celce-Murcia and Olshtan's (2014) a discourse-based approach to teaching second language grammar and Larsen-Freeman's (2014) a three-dimensional grammar framework to effectively teach both content of the text as well as the grammar. After six months of intervention, a post-survey using the same questionnaire and a post-test (n=77) were conducted to explore if there were any differences in students' perceptions and test scores. In order to further validate students' quantitative responses, semi-structured interviews were conducted with students (n=6) and teachers (n=2). Findings showed that the intervention strategies have made an impact on students' understanding of both content of the literary texts and grammar. Recommendations for further improvement of teaching grammar in context and for future research are also provided.

Keywords*: ESL, Literary Texts, Grammar Instruction, Teaching and learning, grammar in context*

Introduction

English is the medium of instruction in the Bhutanese education system ever since the modern education was introduced in the early 1960s. From social linguistics perspective a language is considered to be the second language as it is used along nation's national language in schools and colleges, for business transactions and official use (Saville-Troike, 2006). English language plays a pivotal role in Bhutanese education system, thus the Ministry of Education (MoE) emphasises on periodic review of English curriculum. The Curriculum and Professional Support Division (CAPSD now changed to Royal Education Council) revised the English curriculum in 2006 and it is currently under review process.

The current English curriculum mostly consists of modern literary genres; essays, poems, and short stories focusing on four strands (Reading and literature, Writing, Listening and Speaking, and Language). Teachers are expected to integrate all these strands with the literary texts provided for every class level. Recent studies have shown that teaching grammar has become an issue in the Bhutanese schools for several reasons as shared in the literature review section (Sherab, et. al. 2017; Tshomo & Sherab, 2017).

Teaching language using literary text emerged with the emergent of communicative language teaching approach. Literary texts are considered effective materials to develop students' communication skills through critical, analytic, and interactive activities (Kramsch, 1985). In the process of learning language, students are expected to learn the grammar structures of the target language subconsciously. The linguist like Karshen (1982) in favour of communicative approach believe knowing the rules subconsciously enhances students' usage of language by creating infinite sentences. Grammar is referred to as a systematic form of language.

It is a dynamic system of rules for students to learn through authentic ways in which meanings are encoded into wordings where structure of words, phrases, clauses, and sentences are used to structure a meaning of a communication (Celce-Murcia, Briton & Snow, 2014; Harmer, 2001; Larsen-Freeman, 2014).

Situational Analysis

English language teachers are expected to teach grammar in context with the literary text. There is lack of research into this new system of teaching grammar in the Bhutanese context. However, limited research indicates that it is mostly ignored (Tshomo & Sherab, 2017) and this has become debatable in the schools (Sherab, et. al. 2017). These researches and also anecdotal evidence from more than ten years of English teaching experience indicate that grammar is taught in isolation to prepare students for only examination. As English teachers, we have failed to make teaching of grammar through literary texts meaningful and effective. If this issue is not addressed, it is likely that our students will be weak in grammar and hence perform poorly both in their overall English language development and also likely to negatively impact their learning in other subjects as the medium of instruction in the schools is in English.

Earlier research by Tshomo and Sherab (2017) has found that the teachers and students positively perceived the use of literary texts in ESL classroom. However, it was found that too much focus on content of the text and other four language skills made it challenging for the teachers to focus on teaching grammar. Existing literature indicates (Kacar & Zengin, 2013; Odetallah, 2013) that the teaching

and learning of grammar in English lessons is considered important and core-essence of the language learning. There is lack of literature in Bhutanese context to show how grammar could be best taught in context. Therefore, this action research was intended to find ways to improve teaching of grammar in context.

Literature Review

Literature support the idea of teaching grammar in context since learning the grammar rules should be a natural process allowing the students to apply correctly. For instance, Mart (2013) highlights that learning grammar in isolation limits students to infer grammar functions in sentences and this results into ineffective communication. Therefore, literary texts could be one effective material for teaching grammar in context as it provides authentic form and application of the grammar topics. Similarly, Ellis (2002) states that making students capable of demonstrating correct metalinguistic knowledge could help them apply the syntactical rules correctly in their communication. In line to Ellis's concept of teaching and learning grammar, a study by Groeneveld (2011) identified that teaching a form and usage of grammar through literary texts like stories and folktales is as one effective way to enhance students' knowledge on grammar and its usage in their communication. For instance, Groeneveld (2011) used an anecdotal version of 'Alice in Wonderland' to teach the concept of demonstrative pronoun where students had to describe the usage of grammar rules using the text. The study concluded that students improved their knowledge on the targeted concept and also enjoyed the lesson.

Kacar and Zengin's (2013) study with the pre-service teachers demonstrated the importance of grammar practice in developing communicative ability and fluency. It was suggested that contextual grammar course with a strong conceptual basis could benefit the students to learn and use grammar effectively. For instance, Odetallah (2013) used the story 'Alice in the wonderland' to teach regular and irregular verbs. It was found that the story provided multiple exercises on various grammar topics and active involvement of students in learning the culture and the target language.

Limited research in Bhutanese context (Sherab, et. al. 2017; Tshomo & Sherab, 2017) and also anecdotal evidence indicate that teaching of grammar in context to literary texts have been a challenge for several reasons. Firstly, Bhutanese education system is content oriented and is highly focused on performance in the examination (REC, 2009; Sherab, 2013). So, teachers focus on syllabus coverage and preparation for examination than the appropriate implementation of such innovative programmes. Secondly, earlier research has shown that English language teachers are not adequately trained to teach grammar in context to literary texts (Sherab et al. 2017). Hence, it is being neglected.

Existing literature suggest several approaches to teaching grammar in context to literary texts: 'practice' and 'consciousness-raising' approach (Ellis, 2002), 'a discourse-based' approach (Celce-Murcia & Olshtan, 2014), 'a three-dimensional grammar framework' (Larsen-Freeman,2014), 'a language-based' approach (Lazar,1993), and 'teacher feedback on errors' approach (Frodesen, 2014). Each of these approaches is examined to evaluate if it is appropriate and applicable to the Bhutanese context.

According to Ellis (2002), 'practice' and 'consciousness-raising' are vital for students to have ample opportunities to practice the grammar structures and rules practically in their daily communication. Students are also encouraged to explore grammatical generalisation from the given situations. In a nutshell, practice is behavioural and consciousness-raising is concept forming.

A discourse-based approach to teaching second language grammar states that cohesion is regarded as the most important component of the grammar (Celce-Murcia & Olshtan, 2014). These authors comment that "through the appropriate use of cohesive devices, textual cohesion facilitates discourse coherence i.e., the manner in which individual sentences or utterances are connected to each other to form a meaningful whole" (p. 427). In a discourse-based language classroom, essays, cloze passages, error detection, and correction exercises can be used as assessment tools.

Larsen-Freeman (2014) underpins a conceptual framework called 'a three-dimensional grammar framework' to help students learn grammar. It takes a form of pie chart with three dimensions of: structure or form, semantics or meaning, and use or pragmatics. The structure or form dimension gives an information on constructed and sequenced lexicogrammatical, morphosyntactic, and phonemic patterns. The meaning or semantic dimension deals with the information on grammatical meanings and examples. Lastly, use or pragmatics dimension deals with the use of language in context where students distinguish the grammatical features from similar structure and also, make students look for its usage in text.

A language-based approach to using literary text involves integrating language and literary texts (Lazar, 1993). The texts are seen as a resource to develop and study linguistic features of the texts where students develop grammatical knowledge through activities such as predicting, making interpretations, improvising role plays with dialogues and cloze passages developed from the content of the text.

Frodesen (2014) suggested teacher feedback on errors in student writing as an approach to successful teaching of grammar in context to literary texts. The teacher could use the following guidelines:

1.   Providing an error analysis checklist to the students at the beginning of the session;
2.   Using indirect feedback to correct errors; and
3.   Providing feedback on frequently appearing errors.

Prior studies mentioned above indicate that learning grammar in context is an effective strategy in enhancing students' metalinguistic knowledge. Knowing the functions and usages of the grammar topics allow students to use grammar correctly in their communications. The approaches of teaching grammar as suggested by Ellis (2002), Celce-Murcia and Olshtan (2014), Larsen-Freeman (2014), Lazar (1993), and Frodesen (2014) are consciously selected to be implemented as a part of this action research project. These selected approaches are found useful in teaching and learning grammar, selecting texts for teaching various grammar topics and providing effective feedbacks in various other contexts. Although teaching grammar using literary texts is considered effective, there is not research being conducted in the Bhutanese context. Therefore, this study was conducted to provide insights into how grammar could be effectively taught using literary texts.

Research Questions
This action research aimed to answer following research questions:

Overarching Question:
How can we effectively teach grammar to Class Eight students in context to literary texts?

Sub-questions:
What is the level of students' perception on general practice of English lessons, teaching grammar using literary texts, teaching grammar in isolation, and importance of grammar?
Were the mean differences between pre- and post- surveys significant?
How can ESL teachers help their students learn grammar rules from literary texts to apply in speaking and writing?
Would teaching grammar in context to literary texts help students use grammar rules accurately beyond the classroom situations?
Is there a significant difference between pre-test and post-test scores of the students?

Methodology

This action research employed a concurrent mixed methods approach (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011; Cooksey & McDonald, 2011; Crewell, 2014). A quasi experimental (without a control group) with pre-test and post-test design was used (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011). The participants (N=76) were all class eight students of the principal author who taught English at a lower secondary school for more than 10 years.

Baseline data were collected through a census survey using self-designed questionnaire (N=76) from all class eight students except for one who was absent that day. The survey questionnaire was designed to understand students' perceptions and experiences of English lessons with a particular focus on teaching of grammar in context to literary texts (see Appendix 1). Semi-structured interviews with class eight students (n=6) and other English teachers (n=2) of the school who were purposefully selected were conducted to gain in-depth insight into the existing practices of grammar teaching (see Appendix 2 for interview guide). A class test (see Appendix 3) in the beginning of the academic year was also conducted to test students' grammar knowledge. The teacher participants had 10-18 years of English teaching experiences. These data collection methods helped the students to easily reflect on the grammar lessons from the previous year. These tools also explored the grammar teaching and learning practices in the school along with teachers' and students' perception on these practices.

After the baseline data collection, intervention strategies were administered (see the section on intervention phase for details on the intervention strategies) to the students for six months starting from April (July was excluded due to summer vacation). In between the intervention stage, second class test was conducted in June. Post intervention data were collected in November from the same group of class eight students using the same survey questionnaire (N=77), semi-structured interviews with students (n=9), and a final class test.

Baseline Data Analysis and Findings

The self-designed questionnaire was based on a five-point Likert type scale ranging from 1= strongly disagree; 2= Disagree; 3= Neither agree nor disagree; 4= Agree; and 5= Strongly agree. There was a total of 28 items that measured students' perceptions on general practice of English lessons (6 items), teaching grammar using literary texts (8 items), teaching grammar in isolation (8 items) and general perception on importance of grammar (6 items). The scores for each of the items under each theme have been computed using SPSS to generate an overall mean and standard deviation. Interview data were analysed through identification of themes and were later triangulated and merged with survey themes. Pseudonyms PG, YD, PP, AM,

CY and TW are used to hide student interviewees' identity. Similarly, Pseudonyms Tr. A. and Tr. B. are used for teacher participants. The key findings from the baseline data are presented in the following sections.

General practices in English lessons

Findings from the baseline data showed that English lessons were all about reading stories, essays, and poems. Activities used by the teachers in their English lessons helped students to practice and improve four language skills (Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking) and grammar as shown by a higher overall mean (M= 4.07; SD= 0.47).

Student pre-perception on learning grammar through literary texts

Students were doubtful about the effectiveness of learning grammar through literary texts (M= 3.02; SD=0.48). Their perceptions about whether their English teachers taught grammar using literary texts, gave grammar examples from the literary texts, corrected their grammar errors in writing and speaking were just about average. In alignment to this survey findings, all the six student participants mentioned in their interviews that their teachers never used literary texts to teach the grammar concepts. Students had a preconception that learning grammar infused into literary texts could confuse them. For instance, PP preferred learning grammar in separate class. She said, "…separate, to get rid of confusion- Confusion between text and grammar." In contradiction, TW asserted that, "I don't think so. Because we will be able to remember the grammar rules, if grammar and text were taught together. It can help learn grammar easily."

Teaching and learning grammar from other grammar sources

Students neither agreed nor disagreed about teachers using separate grammar lesson and learning grammar from a grammar builder text provided by the school helped them learn grammar (M=2.68; SD=0.49). The survey questionnaire specified the text but, in an interview, teachers and students revealed that the teachers used neither grammar builder text provided by the school nor the literary texts. Rather, teachers used other materials from Internet and library to teach grammar concepts. For instance, PP mentioned that, "Our English teacher taught us grammar and gave exercises from grammar tree books. This book gave us some meaningful definitions and questions." Tr. A. also confirmed that, "I usually borrow worksheets from google and sometimes I also use Grammar Tree Books for exercises and information."

Although teachers used other grammar materials, students tried to find application of grammar learnt in literary texts. PP explained in her interview, "I look at how pronouns and nouns are used while reading short stories, essays and poems."

TW also commented, "I look at when and how punctuation marks are used in short stories, essays and poems."

Students' perception on importance of learning grammar

Students appeared to slightly agree that learning grammar is important (M=3.78; SD=0.48) as it helps them to use correct grammar structures in writing and speaking. Findings also showed that correct use of grammar rules help them gain confidence in writing and speaking. Interestingly, findings from the interviews corroborated with that of the survey findings that the students liked studying grammar concepts to improve their language and avoid communication gaps. For instance, AM emphasised, "I love learning grammar. It helps to improve my language." Similarly, PP agreed, "Yes, I like studying grammar because if there is problem with the sentence then there is [are] high chances of communication gap."

Teachers' perception and challenges of teaching grammar in context with literary texts

As per the mandate of the MoE, English teachers are supposed to teach grammar in context to the literary texts, however the teachers are confused about how to do it. For instance, Tr. A argued, "There has been an instruction from the Ministry to teach or infuse grammar with the text we are teaching I would like to say that, for me teaching grammar infusing with texts is quite a difficult task." This argument is further substantiated by Tr. B, "I think teaching grammar in context is little difficult for higher grades."

Findings from the baseline data corroborates with earlier study that teachers consider teaching grammar in context to the literary texts as one of the biggest challenges (Sherab, et al. 2017). According to Tr. A, "My major challenge is when teaching the text, students are supposed to look at two things. Their focus is diverted. They will have to firstly look at the content of the story and grammar concepts simultaneously. In the process, the focus is being lost."

Discussing the difficulties associated to teaching grammar in context, Tr. B also highlighted, "The focus is being lost. The focus is neither on the text nor on the grammar. The attention is diverted. So, I think, if we teach grammar in isolation then there is a focus." Also, findings from the baseline data include that selecting an appropriate text for teaching a specific grammar concept was a challenge for the teachers. Tr. B declared, "Sometimes, it so happens that you know we have to wait for the text where the examples are appropriate to the grammar topics we are supposed to teach."

It is apparent from the findings that these teachers did try to teach grammar in context to literary texts but they have a perception that the strategy of teaching grammar in context with literary texts further confused the students as well as the teachers themselves. For instance, Tr. A clarified, "It isn't that I did not teach grammar infusing with literary texts. I tried but looks like it did not work for me. So, I went back to the method we were taught [during my schooling], teaching grammar in isolation, the method I was quite comfortable with." Therefore, these teachers recommend for professional development programmes for English teachers which could enhance the skills to teach grammar in context with the literary texts.

Teacher interviews indicate that they did want to infuse grammar lessons into their normal lessons using literary texts but failed. The reason could be their limited skill and knowledge on infusing grammar into literary texts. They considered syntactical rules significant in language learning and made their best effort in teaching them through grammar materials but not with literary texts in their normal lessons. Such practice of teaching grammar rules, is ineffective since it limits students to infer grammar usage to communicate effectively (Mart, 2013). Linguists such as Krashen (1982), Savignon (1997), and Lightbown and Spada (1999) assert simply teaching syntactical forms neither enhance the second language learning nor communicative competence. Based on the findings from the baseline data, the following interventions were designed to implement.

Intervention Phase
In order to overcome the above-mentioned challenges of teachers in teaching grammar in context to literary texts, three intervention approaches were designed. These three approaches were designed by adapting Ellis's (2002) practice and conscious-raising approaches to grammar teaching, Celce-Murcia and Olshtan's (2014) a discourse-based approach to teaching second language grammar and Larsen-Freeman's (2014) a three-dimensional grammar framework. These scholars' approaches were blended in a content (literary texts) based classroom in teaching the concept of grammar. Also, idea of Lazar's (1993) a language-based approach was borrowed to test students' usage of concept taught. Finally, to provide the feedbacks to the students on grammar learning, we followed Larsen-Freeman's (2014) guidelines.

During the intervention stage, we taught grammar topics reflected in the curriculum standards and also those frequently occurring incorrect grammar topics. According to the standards, some of the grammar topics that students of class eight should be able to learn and use are; relative pronouns, correlative conjunctions, passive and active sentences, phrasal verbs, direct and indirect speeches, and

adverbial clauses. In addition to these suggested topics, we also taught tenses and preposition since students frequently committed errors while using them.

Intervention strategies were carried out for about six months (April to October) to teach various grammar topics through different literary genres: The short stories- *Which Way?*, *The Nest*, *The magic Brocade* and *A Red Sweater*; biography- *Ghandhi and the Salt March*; , essay- *Prayer flags blowing in the wind*; and poems- *Drop a Pebble in the Water*, and *Mending a Wall*. These literary genres were selected to teach both content and targeted language topics.

Teaching grammar concept through literary texts involved introducing the target language through examples extracted from the texts. Then students drew inferences on its usage through the examples. Once the students were able to evaluate the usage of the grammar topic, they used the target language in a different context. After the completion of the tasks, students presented their work to the class and the teacher along with the whole class evaluated the given responses. Further, an extended activity was provided to test students' learning through exercises like cloze test, transforming the sentences, creating dialogues, filling gaps, and combining the sentences.

Intervention Strategies
Step 1: Select right text to teach the target language
While teaching the literary genre, we selected a grammar topic that could be taught using the text. Since we were trying to integrate grammar teaching with literary texts, we made sure that the texts had ample examples of the target language to allow students to acquire enough knowledge and practice from its repeated occurrence. We were mindful that the chosen texts were relevant to students' language proficiency, provided authentic example of target language, and stimulated numerous activities to practice them both in and outside the classroom.

Step 2: Design activities to teach the target language
Ellis' (2002) consciousness-raising in teaching grammar and Larsen-Freeman's (2014) three-dimensional grammar framework guided us to design activities to teach the grammar topics from literary text. As an introductory to each lesson, we gave brainstorming activities to explore students' prior knowledge on the grammar topics. Students were given sentences with the target language and asked to discuss and share the meaning, form and function of the given examples.

In the lesson development stage, as an information input to grammar topic, some rules and new ideas on the topic were presented. Activities such as discussing and sharing elements of short stories, constructing dialogues, role plays, creating

comics, writing summaries, explaining figurative languages, and answering analytical and critical questions were generated for students to use the target language along with the content of the texts. They wrote two or more sentences that contained the grammar topic discussed and explained the forms, meanings, and functions of their sentences which helped to infer and use the language correctly.

As a follow-up to the activities for the lesson development, students explained and presented their sentences containing the grammar topic. We helped the students with the errors in the sentences by aligning the grammar rules and corrected with inferences. Feedbacks from Frodesen (2014) guidelines (refer literature review) were provided on errors committed.

Step 3: Evaluation
To evaluate the grammar knowledge taught and learnt, exercises like cloze test, gap filling, restructuring sentences, joining sentences, and editing were designed. These tasks were given either as extended learning activities or homework. This helped us to check students' knowledge and made students practice what they have learnt. All the activities and exercises designed for teaching grammar topics aligned with the content of the literary texts. This helped us to teach not only the content of the text but also practice grammar.

To carry out the intervention process successfully critical friends observed the lessons twice in that entire six months. The observers used an observation checklist while observing the lessons. The checklist consisted of five sections- consciousness-raising in teaching grammar, a discourse-based approach to teaching second language grammar, a three-dimensional grammar framework, feedback on the errors and language- based approach. The observation checklist was to check our way of teaching the grammar topic, evaluating students' learning, providing feedback, and checking the relevancy of texts to teach the grammar topic.

Post Intervention Data Findings
The findings of the post intervention data are categorised based on the five research questions. The research questions are answered through data collected from student survey questionnaire (similar to the baseline), observation checklists, teacher diary, and test scores of three tests administered at three different phases. Semi-structured interviews with students tried to explore students' opinion on their grammar lessons that were taught using literary texts. Pseudonyms used to refer to these students are YW, YD, PP, NC, KB, TW1, SJ, NS and TW2. In addition, data were collected through teachers' diary and test scores. Throughout the intervention stage, teachers kept a diary to record the strengths and challenges of the lessons and recommendation for future lessons. A total of three tests were conducted- firstly before the intervention

phase in the beginning (baseline), secondly in the middle of the process and finally at the end of the year (post-intervention).

Data from all these sources were triangulated to provide answers to each research question:

What is the level of student perceptions on general practice of English lessons, teaching grammar using literary texts, teaching grammar in isolation, and importance of grammar?

Pre- and post-survey findings and post semi-structured interviews with nine students answer the above research question. The overall means and standard deviations of two surveys conducted before and after intervention strategies are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Mean and SD of pre- and post- survey

Theme	Pre-survey		Post-survey	
	M	SD	M	SD
General practice of English lessons	4.07	0.47	3.83	0.45
Teaching grammar using literary texts	3.02	0.48	3.97	0.47
Teaching grammar using grammar teaching and learning materials	2.68	0.49	2.60	0.68
General perception on importance of grammar	3.78	0.49	3.91	0.50

The overall post survey means are just above average except for the teaching grammar using grammar teaching and learning materials (below average) indicating that the level of student perceptions on the four themes is high. However, teacher's diary (dated 16 May 2018) indicated one room for improvement that needed teachers to work harder to make grammar teaching using literary texts meaningful and effective to the students.

Were the mean differences between pre- and post- surveys significant?

Paired samples t-test were produced to check if there were any significant differences between the pre- and post-surveys among the four themes. The mean difference between general practice and teaching grammar using literary text were significant (p<.05. The mean for students' perception on *general practice of English lesson* could have probably decreased because the English lessons during the intervention period included practices not only on four language skills and grammar knowledge as reflected in the questionnaire but also on activities such as creating comic books,

enactments, and singing. This was confirmed by YW "I have studied English since class PP but I never did a presentation, debate, role plays, comic and singing in my English lessons. I would like to ask my teacher to continue doing the same for future students too as it improves our confidence to use English language."

On the other hand, students' perception on *teaching grammar using literary texts* have increased with significant mean difference (p<.05) after intervention phase. This could be because in the beginning students were skeptical about the benefits of learning grammar through literary texts. However, at the time of post data collection, they were familiar with the benefits of learning grammar through literary texts. For instance, PP's pre-perception that learning grammar would be confusing if taught with literary texts has changed after the intervention phase, "I thought it would be confusing to learn grammar with literary texts since my previous teachers used grammar texts to teach grammar. But it was not. In fact, literary texts help us to get lots of grammar examples and use them."

Increased mean difference between the pre- and post-surveys showed no significant difference (p > .05) for third (p=.54) and fourth (p=.16) themes. Since the beginning, they found learning grammar in isolation have not helped them to use grammar in their communication. NS asserts, "I could understand grammar more easily when taught through literary texts with explanation. I cannot understand grammar when it is taught separately through grammar builder text."

In addition, grammar is considered important by the students to converse confidently and to learn rest of the subjects. For instance, YW said, "It is important to learn and know correct grammar rules. We need it in our daily lives even for job interviews and for next grade level." Additionally, TW1 affirms, "Since all the other subjects are in English, it is important to know and understand grammar usage correctly." They further emphasised that if grammar is not used accurately, it could create a communication gap. One of the students (SJ) stressed, "Just knowing how to communicate is not enough. We have to know the correct form of grammar if not it can cause a huge communication gap. If grammar is wrong, whole meaning of the sentence will be changed."

How can ESL teacher help students learn grammar rules from literary texts to apply in speaking and writing?
Learning grammar through literary texts could be effective if teachers design appropriate task for the students. Findings from both observation checklist and teachers' diaries showed that teachers should firstly select the literary text that could give ample examples and opportunities for students to practice the target language. According to the observation checklists recorded by the critical friends, literary texts

gave opportunities for students to learn grammar topics and also draw inferences on its usage. Drawing inferences on the usage and errors could help students use the target language learned correctly in their speaking and writing. Therefore, in follow-up activities, teacher need to design some tests and activities based on the content of the literary texts that require students to use the target language learnt. For example, a grammar topic 'adverbial clauses' was taught through Mahatma Gandhi's biography *'Gandhi and the Salt March'* written by *Gerald Gold*. This text had ample adverbial clauses used that could serve as authentic examples for students. The procedures followed were:

Step 1: Students were given some examples of adverbial clauses related to Gandhi's life.

Step 2: In groups, they were asked to provide their inferences on rules and functions of highlighted adverbial clauses in the example.

Step 3: Then some sentences related to the content of the text were given to each group to identify the errors and to correct them using the inferences they have drawn.

Step 4: Students wrote a paragraph using adverbial clauses on the lesson they have learned from Gandhi's life.

Step 5: A cloze test was given to check whether they could use words such as 'since, after, when, while and until' to convert the sentences into adverbial clauses.

Step 6: Five pairs of sentences that needed to be converted into adverbial clause using joining words given in brackets were provided as homework.

As mentioned above findings suggest that learning grammar through literary texts helped students understand content of the texts easily. Since students were learning both content and grammar together, the teachers focused on one concept at a time because it could be challenging for teachers to teach and students to comprehend if multiple and advanced concepts were taught at once.

However, our experiences show that it is stressful for the teachers to teach grammar through literary texts even though the students enjoyed and were able to apply the rules learned (Research Diary, 11 October 2018). The following are some of the challenges that teachers face while teaching grammar in context to literary texts:
•   finding a relevant target language or grammar topic from the given texts.

•   extra effort from teachers and time consuming in preparation of activities to integrate both content and grammar topics after the selection of target language as exercises and activities have to be newly generated.

•   As English is a second language, teachers have to refer to several grammar references for correct use of grammar rules which is time consuming.

Would teaching grammar in context to literary texts help students use grammar rules accurately beyond the classroom situations?

Students were embarrassed of making grammar errors in their communication. Grammar accuracy indicated their intellectual and academic status. According to YW, "When grammar rules are not learnt, we land up using broken English. This is embarrassing in front of others…my friends tease me when I use broken English. They say I have not learned anything at school." Comparatively use of literary texts for learning grammar has boosted students' confidence and how to use them consciously. Since grammar structured used in literary texts were authentic, students learn from literary texts and also communicate confidently beyond their classroom situations. Further KB mentioned, "Last year, I was not able to communicate with tourist due to my grammar structures. But this year, I am comfortable interacting with tourists since I am aware about structures and how it works."

The findings from the interviews further affirm that literary texts not only helped students understand the content of the texts but also developed their language structures. This also helped them to use grammar correctly in their communications. For instance, NS asserts, "After learning grammar from literary texts, I was able for progress much more. We were able to cover and comprehend the content of the literary texts easily. We learn content and grammar at the same time." PP assured that, "When we get chance to use the grammar, we use the ideas we got from the story. We are able to understand the rules and apply them in our conversations." SJ further confirmed that, "I enjoy learning grammar through literary texts since it helps me to communicate effectively avoiding broken [incorrect grammar] English."

Is there a significant difference between pre-test and post-test scores of the students?

Three class tests were conducted to test whether students could apply the grammar topics learned correctly. First test was conducted in the beginning of the year, second was in the middle of intervention process and the third one was at the end of the intervention. The tests had similar pattern and a total score of 25.

Students' grammar test scores have improved with every test and the mean differences were significant. Mean of second test was higher than the first test and

mean for third test was higher than the second test. Students have achieved higher scores with every test which is an indication that teaching grammar in context helped students score more in grammar tests (see Table 2)

Table 2: Paired Sample Test of Students' Test Score

		Paired Differences							
				Std. Error Mean	**95% Interval Difference**	**Confidence of the**			**Sig. (2-tailed)**
		Mean	**SD**		**Lower**	**Upper**	**t**	**Df**	
Pair 1	test1 test2	-4.653	3.464	.408	-5.467	-3.839	-11.398	71	.001
Pair 2	test1 test3	-6.870	3.932	.467	-7.800	-5.939	-14.723	70	.001
Pair 3	test2 test3	-2.207	3.179	.365	-2.934	-1.481	-6.053	75	.001

Discussion and conclusion

Krashen (1982) and Ur (2011) recommended that real mastery and internalisation of grammar in natural process could be achieved through students' extensive exposure to comprehensible input. According to Krashen's proposed model of second language acquisition, the input must be comprehensible and little higher than students' level (i+1). In line to this, literary texts could be one input that has features of Krashen and also expose students to extensive usage of grammar since there are texts at varied levels consisting variety of sentences with accurate grammar use.

However, simply exposing students to grammar information input (teaching grammar technically without its functional aspect) would not help students acquire correct grammar. They should be taught how grammar works in the sentences. Therefore, they should be aware of the grammar components in the sentences. It is significant to know both form and meaning, and function of grammar structures. In contrast to Krashen's hypothesis, participants of this study revealed that consciously learning grammar helped them with their communication skills. Students are at the stage of learning and they try to apply the rules learned in their communication and this finding is compatible to Ellis' (2002) conscious-raising model of grammar teaching.

In teaching the grammar concepts, teachers can be mindful of what and when to teach since the concept taught would not be beneficial if the students are not ready to learn the new structure. This aligns to Pienemann's (1984) the teachability hypothesis that states teaching and learning grammatical structure is developmental sequence where students will be able to acquire new grammar concepts if they have mastered the preceded concept.

Students' readiness to learn the grammar concepts could also be determined through the errors they commit. If students are found committing frequent grammatical errors in their speaking and writing, teachers should understand that students are experimenting with new structures and need to guide them. This might help them learn and apply those grammatical structures accurately and correctly in their communication.

Prior research has shown that literary texts provided opportunities to improve and practice students' four language skills (Tshomo & Sherab, 2017). Also, the texts provide lots of grammar examples and their usage. Therefore, when the texts could cater to variety of communicative activities, it could provide students with opportunities to learn and acquire grammar structures. The texts enable the students to familiarise with the form and meaning of grammar structures and its functions. These two processes enable students to apply the acquired grammar consciously in their communication.

Students should be able to firstly learn the structures before applying them extensively in their daily conversation. It is an assumption of the researchers that the beginners (students of classes PP-II) acquire language simply by getting exposed to language extensively and use them without considering too much focus on the structures. Once they have acquired fluency over the language, they need to know form and meaning of grammar structures to apply them in their communication. This could be applicable for the students at an intermediate level (classes IV-VIII).

Corroborating to Tshomo and Sherab (2017), the findings of this action research indicated that most of the teachers who taught grammar using the grammar-related texts were taught for examination purpose. Teachers mostly followed traditional grammar teaching that involved presentation-practice-production (PPP) process. According to Ur (2011), this form of teaching grammar is a common experience of many teachers and could make students perform well in test but not in language production. It does not help students in producing accurate form of grammar in their communication and as a result, students make several errors in their production of language.

Simply focusing on form and conscious raising is not enough, students should be able to use these forms meaningfully in their communication. Larsen-Freeman (2014) stresses on practicing grammar through communication situations rather than focusing on accuracy-focused drills. Students would be able to do this if they were exposed to activities that needed transfer of knowledge to communicative situations. Literary texts help teachers to create variety of such communication situations to practice their grammar knowledge. Following the guidelines that we implemented in this study helps ESL teachers and students teach and learn grammar for examination purpose as well as use grammar accurately for their communication.

Bhutanese students who learn English as second language do not use the language frequently outside their classroom context. It is rather used in formal situations when required. They would be mostly communicating in their native language or national language. Thus, they do not get enough time to drill on the grammar they have learned. Ur (2011) posits that grammar in such situation is learned with best results through systematic explanation and drills using communicative input such as stories and fun activities.

Grammar teaching has been quite challenging for long time in the field of second and foreign language. Different strategies have been adopted to teach grammar structures for ESL and EFL students. To name some of the popularly used approaches, it started with grammar-translation method to audiolingual to cognitive and finally to communicative (Terrell, 1991). Aligning to Terrell (1991), the findings of this action research confirm that acquiring and learning language exposed to communicative input is not sufficient. Students do learn from them by drawing analogy and noticing the use of language. However, in the process of drawing analogy, students might apply wrong form of language structure because of overgeneralization. Therefore, there is a need to familiarize and expose students to various forms and functions of grammar structures.

Thus, the findings of this study suggest teachers of lower classes to focus only on one form of grammar concept from one text since these students would not be able to acquire multiple concepts at a time. If students are at intermediate or advanced levels then the teachers could teach varied concepts from one text. They would be able to learn and know the function of multiple grammar concepts from just one text.

Recommendations

While teaching grammar in context with literary texts, the focus of teaching and learning is both on content and grammar language. In the process of doing so, multiple tasks need to be designed and requires time for teachers to prepare the

lesson before teaching the students. Teachers need to learn adequate grammar knowledge referring various sources and design the activities aligned to literary texts as mentioned in the intervention stage. They need to put in extra effort. However, the effort is worth since students learn grammar significantly when infused with literary texts.

Future researchers could experiment these strategies with controlled and treatment groups to find how literary texts could help in learning and acquiring language accurately. The researchers could also carry out longitudinal studies to find accurate results. Teachers could have longer intervention phase for valid and reliable findings.

Limitations of the study

Given the current issue of teaching grammar using literary texts in the Bhutanese education system, this action research was designed to try out various intervention strategies to teach grammar using literary texts. Like any other action research, this research had several limitations. This study is about one teacher's practices administered with her own class eight students. Interpretation of the results could be biased. Therefore, it may not be possible to generalize the findings to other settings. Moreover, this study did not have any control group to infer any kind of causal effect.

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