

5. To make the students know how to maintain communication despite having limitations in one's language knowledge (e.g. through using different kinds of communication strategies)

CHAPTER 5

DIFFICULT AREAS OF LEARNING ENGLISH BY THE 12TH STANDARD ASSAMSE MEDIUM STUDENTS OF BARPETA DISTRICT, ASSAM

Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher analyzes and interprets the data which were collected for the study. The data were collected on personal observation, discussion, and through recording and questionnaires. Total six sets of questionnaires were prepared for the collection of data. One set was for teacher and the remaining five sets were for the students. Amongst the five sets of the students' questionnaires, one set was prepared for the students' over all information and the remaining four sets of the students questionnaires were prepared skill wise, one questionnaire for each skill (i.e. Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing) for diagnostic test to find out their difficult areas of English language learning. For the present task, skill wise four questionnaires (each one for each skill) were prepared. The data collected for each skill viz. speaking, writing, reading and listening and the data of overall information of the students and the teachers were processed and analyzed separately. The speaking performance of the students were recorded during the field works and were transcribed; and then the transcribed items were analyzed keeping in view with the finding communication strategies followed by the students while they encountered

linguistic gap and the strategies were classified. The data of the writing skill were systematically analyzed and errors were identified and classified in all the linguistic aspects of second language. The data of reading comprehension and of listening comprehension were analyzed and classified as comprehensible and non-comprehensible items. Eventually, the remedies were given for all the problems encountered by the students in the process of learning English.

5.1. Interpretation of the Responses of Teachers' Questionnaire

It has already been mentioned in the methodology that the survey was conducted among 20 English teachers and 200 students of different Assamese medium higher secondary schools of Barpeta district of Assam. Total six sets of questionnaires were prepared to collect the required data for the present study. One set of questionnaire was prepared to elicit the various problems encountered by the teachers in the course of teaching English. The teachers' questionnaire contains various issues and aspects of teaching English like syllabus, use of methods, use of audio-visual aids, use of mother tongue, evaluation system, infrastructure etc. Here the responses of the teachers' questionnaire has been interpreted from the various aspects of their teaching problem along with the researcher's own observation and personal discussion with the teachers as well as the students during data collection

5.1.1. Sex Wise Distribution of the Teacher

The study was conducted among 20 teachers of the higher secondary schools from the different part of Barpeta district. Among them, 90% of the teachers were male and only 10% of them were female.

Table no. 5.1 reveals the above mentioned points with regard to the sex wise distribution of the teachers.

Table: 5.1

Sex	Number of teachers	Percent (%)
Male	18	90
Female	02	10
Total	20	100

5.1.2. Age Group of the Teachers

Various age groups of the teachers were selected for the study area from the higher secondary schools of Barpeta district. Majority of the teachers (30%) belong to the age group of 50-54. 25% of the teachers belong to the age group of 40-44 years and 20% teachers belong to the age group of 45-49 years old. The teachers belonging to the age group 35-40 consists of 15%. There is no teacher belong to the age group below 35 which indicates the govt. of Assam did not recruit teachers for a long time.

Table no. 5.2 reveals the above mentioned points with regard to the age group of English teachers in the study area.

Table: 5.2

Sl. No.	Range of age	No of teachers	Percent (%)
1	25-29	0	0
2	30-34	0	0
3	35-39	3	15
4	40-44	5	25
5	45-49	4	20
6	50-54	6	30
7	55+	2	10
Total		20	100

5.1.3. Teaching Experience of the Teacher

The teachers who took part in the research study belong to a wide range of teaching experience from 6 years to more than 20 years. A large number of the teachers that is 40 percent have more than 20 years of teaching experience and another 35% of the teachers have 11-15 years. Only 10% of the teachers have 6-10 years of teaching experience. It is noteworthy that all of the teachers are having more than five years of teaching experience.

Table no. 5.3 reveals the above mentioned points with regard to the teaching experience of English teachers in the study area.

Table: 5.3

Sl. No.	Range of experience	No. of teachers	Percent (%)
1	1-5	0	0
2	6-10	2	10
3	11-15	7	35
4	16-20	3	15
5	20+	8	40

5.1.4. Educational Qualifications of the Teachers

Among all the 20 teacher respondents majority of the teachers, that is 65% are qualified with only M.A. in English degree. The remaining 35% of the teachers are qualified with M.A. in English and B.Ed. before 2016 the B.Ed was not considered as a requisite degree for the recruitment in the higher secondary schools in Assam. The educational policy of the government of Assam has made the B.Ed degree mandatory for the recruitment of the teachers in the higher secondary schools of Assam from 2016. However, most of the states of India made the B.Ed. degree compulsory since earlier.

Table: 5.4 reveals the above mentioned points with regard to the educational qualification of English teachers of the sample higher secondary schools.

Table: 5.4

Sl. No.	Qualification	No. of teachers	Percent (%)
1	M.A. with B.Ed.	07	35
2	M.A. without B.Ed.	13	65
Total		20	100

5.1.5. Teachers' Opinion on the Necessity of English

The teachers of the higher secondary schools were humbly asked their opinion of the necessity of English learning by their students. 40% of the teachers' view is that

English is the key to the bank of world knowledge as most of the books are written in English, and it is the language of computer and internet. 30% of the teachers' view is that English is necessary as the Knowledge of English helps to get a job. Another 15% of the teachers' view is that the students need English, as the knowledge of English is essential for day-to-day life. 10% of the teachers' view is that it is necessary, as it is an international language, to communicate with the people around the world. And the remaining 5% of the teachers view is that knowledge of English gives respect in the society.

Table: 5.5.reveals the above mentioned points with regard to the opinion of the English teachers on the necessity of English.

Table: 5.5

Sl. no.	Statements	No. of respondents	Percent (%)
1.	English is an international language; therefore, to communicate with the people around the world, everyone needs English.	2	10%
2.	Knowledge of English helps to get a job.	6	30%
3.	English is the key to the bank of world knowledge as most of the books are written in English, and it is the language of computer and internet.	8	40%
4.	Knowledge of English is essential for our day-to-day life, so we need it.	3	15%
5.	Knowledge of English gives respect in the society.	1	5%
	Total	20	100%

5.1.6. Teachers' Response on the Goal of Teaching English

The teachers were humbly asked for their response regarding the goal of teaching English to the students. Most of the teachers that is, 60% support that enabling the students to communicate in English in different real life situations should

be the main goal of teaching English. 25% of the teachers support that enabling the students to write English for different purpose should be the main goal of teaching English. Another 10% of the teachers think that enabling the students to score good marks in the examination should be the main goal teaching English and the remaining 5% of the teachers' support that enabling the students to read and comprehend English should be the main goal of teaching English.

Table: 5.6. reveals the above mentioned points with regard to the opinion of the goal of teaching English to the students.

Table: 5.6

Sl. no.	Statements	No. of respondents	Percent (%)
1.	To enable the students to score good marks in the exam.	2	10%
2.	To enable the students to write English for different purpose.	5	25%
3.	To enable the students to read and comprehend English.	1	5%
4.	To enable the students to communicate in English in different real life situations.	12	60%
	Total	20	100%

5.1.7. Teachers' Perception of the Importance of the Four Language Skills

An attempt has been made to evaluate the teachers' perception of the important of English language skills, i.e. Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing for their students. The teacher respondents were asked to grade the four skills from one to four, where 1 (one) stood for most important; 2 (two) stood for important, 3 (three) for least important and 4 (four) for can't say.

Writing skill was preferred by 85% of the teacher respondents as the most important and by 15% of the teacher respondents as important skill. There was not a

single teacher who graded writing as the least important skill. It indicates that all of the teacher respondents were well aware of the practical importance of the writing skill. As they believe in scoring good marks in the examination they acknowledged the practical value of writing skill.

Regarding the reading skill is 80% of the teachers graded reading as an important skill. No one among the teachers grades the reading skill as the most important one. Another 20% of the teachers graded it as the least important skill.

Regarding speaking skill, 20% of the teacher respondents grade speaking as the most important skill and 60% of the teachers' grade it as important skill. Another 20% of the teachers grade reading skill as the least important one.

Most of the teacher respondents are well aware of the importance of the listening skill too. Regarding the listening skill 70% of the teacher respondents graded the listening as important and 5% of them regarded as most important skill. Another 25% of the teachers grade the listening skill as the least important.

Table: 5.7 reveals the above mentioned points with regard to the teachers' perception of importance of the four language skills for their students.

Table: 5.7

Skills	Most important		Important		Least important		Uncertain	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Listening	1	5	14	70	5	25	0	0
Speaking	4	20	12	60	4	20	0	0
Reading	0	0	16	80	4	20	0	0
Writing	17	85	3	15	0	0	0	0

5.1.8. Required Qualification of the English Teacher

An attempt has been made to know from the higher secondary school teachers of Barpeta district regarding the requisite qualification for recruiting the English teachers for the higher secondary level in Assam. 60% of the teachers were disagree and 5% of the teachers were strongly disagree that only the M.A. degree is not sufficient to teach English in the higher secondary level. On the contrary, 25% of the teachers were agree that only M.A. degree is enough to teach in the higher secondary level. And another 10% of the teacher respondents did not have any clear cut idea regarding the necessary qualification of a teacher of higher secondary level.

Table: 5.7 reveals the above mentioned points with regard to the required qualification of the English teacher in the higher secondary level.

Table: 5.8

Sl. No.	Rating	No. of respondents	Percent (%)
1	Strongly agree	0	0
2	Agree	5	25
3	Not certain	2	10
4	Disagree	12	60
5	Strongly disagree	1	5

5.1.9. Necessity of Professional Training of the English Teacher

Regarding the necessity of professional training for the English teacher, a substantial number of the teachers responded in favor of it. 80% of the teachers were agree and 5% of the teachers were even strongly agree that some kind of training in ELT is absolutely necessary for the teachers who have only M.A. in English. Another 15% of the teacher respondents were disagree to it, according to them only an M.A. degree is sufficient to teach in the higher secondary level. It is remarkable that a large number of the teachers had only M.A. (in English) degree without B.Ed. and any other professional training in ELT.

Table: 5.9. reveals the above mentioned points with regard to the necessity of professional training of the English teacher.

Table: 5.9

Sl. No.	Rating	No. of respondents	Percent (%)
1	Strongly agree	1	5
2	Agree	16	80
3	Not certain	0	0
4	Disagree	3	15
5	Strongly disagree	0	0
	Total	20	100

5.1.10. Teachers with Pre-Service Training In Teaching English

The teachers who have generally taken some professional training or any degree/ diploma in the ELT profession are generally regarded as teachers with pre-service training. DIET or the B.Ed. colleges are the institutes where one can take such kind of degree, diploma and some short term training course. There was not even a single teacher who got any kind of pre-service training in English language teaching.

Table: 5.10 states the above mentioned points with regard to the teachers' pre-service training in teaching English.

Table: 5.10

Sl. no.	Status	No. of respondents	Percent (%)
1	Yes	0	0
2	No	20	100
	Total	20	100

5.1.11. Teachers with In-Service Training in Teaching English

Most of the English teachers of the sample higher secondary schools of Barpeta district are qualified with in-service training in teaching English. 85% of the teachers have more or less short term training in teaching English. Another 15% of the teachers neither have B.Ed. nor any other in-service training in teaching English. The training received by the teachers working in the higher secondary schools and Junior colleges of Assam proves hardly adequate because the teachers who have taken the short term training in teaching English.

Table: 5.11 states the above mentioned points with regard to the teachers' in-service training in teaching English.

Table: 5.11

Sl. No.	Status	No. of respondents	Percent (%)
1	yes	17	85
2	No	03	15
	Total	20	100

5.1.12. Notion of the Teachers on Objectives of the English Syllabus

After passing the higher secondary school, a large group of the learners have to prepare themselves for the higher education and also some of the students have to prepare for the professional course. So, the syllabus of 12th standard has been prepared in such a way that the students can cop up with the next phase of their education. A large number of the teacher respondents understood the aims and objectives of the English syllabus. 15% of the teachers were strongly agree and 55% of the teachers were agree to the point that the syllabus of the higher secondary level spell out clearly the aims and objectives of English language teaching. Though 20% of the teachers were disagree, no teacher was strongly disagree to it. But it is worth mentioning that 10% of the teacher respondents did not have any clear cut idea regarding the aims and objectives of the syllabus, where as the background and the aims and objectives of the syllabus have been clearly and elaborately mentioned in the text book. And the proper materials (for reading, writing, listening and speaking) to support the aims and objectives of the syllabus have been prescribed accordingly. In this regard, the ignorance of the English teachers regarding such a prime matter like syllabus is remarkable.

Table: 5.12 states the above mentioned points with regard to the objectives of the English syllabus.

Table: 5.12

Sl. No.	Rating	No. of respondents	Percent (%)
1	Strongly agree	3	15
2	Agree	11	55

3	Not certain	2	10
4	Disagree	4	20
5	Strongly disagree	0	0
	Total	20	100

5.1.13. Usefulness of the English Syllabus According To the Teachers

A large majority of the teacher respondents were in favour of the view that the present English syllabus is helping in improving their students' English language skills namely listening, speaking, reading and writing. In the syllabus of 12th standard though no mark is allotted to test the students' oral proficiency, the syllabus extensively cover the various aspects of the writing and reading skill of the students. 5% of the teacher respondents were strongly agree and 70% of them were agree to it. Though there was no teacher who felt strongly disagree, yet another 25% of the teachers were disagree to it because, to them the present English syllabus does not cover all the four skills equally, especially the speaking and listening skill.

Table: 5.13 reveals the above mentioned points with regard to the usefulness of the English syllabus.

Table: 5.13

Sl. No.	Rating	No. of respondents	Percent (%)
1	Strongly agree	1	5
2	Agree	14	70
3	Not certain	0	0
4	Disagree	5	25
5	Strongly disagree	0	0
	Total	20	100

5.1.14. Relevance of the English Text Books According To the Teacher

The teacher respondents' express almost mixed perception regarding the view whether the prescribed English textbooks are relevant to the students' need and for job requirement. Though there was no teacher to support it as strongly agree, some 45% of them were agree that the prescribed text books are relevant to the students' need. 5% of the teachers were strongly disagree and 30% of the respondents were disagree to it. They feel that job requirement is something irrelevant and different from the quality and relevance of the text books of higher secondary level. No doubt, the quality of education may be based upon the prescribed syllabus and text books. Another 20% of the respondents were even not certain regarding the relevance of the prescribed text books. This group of the teacher respondents wants to opine that going through the same syllabus and text books, the performance of the students varies to a great extent. The students' scoring varies from zero (0) to more than 95% in the examination by following the same text book. Thus, it is not the text book where problem lies. The problem might be in the domestic, socio-economic, environmental or somewhere else.

Table: 5.14 reveals the above mentioned points with regard to the relevance of the English text books.

Table: 5.14

Sl. No.	Rating	No. of respondents	Percent (%)
1	Strongly agree	0	0
2	Agree	9	45
3	Not certain	4	20
4	Disagree	6	30
5	Strongly disagree	1	5
	Total	20	100

5.1.15. Content of the English Course as Per the Teachers' View

Majority of the teachers expressed their negative view when an attempt was made to assess whether the existing English course is interesting or not. Though there was no teacher to strongly disagree, 60% of the teachers were disagree to it. They expressed that some of the prescribed lessons (texts) they have been teaching since

more than two decades. 5% of the teachers were strongly agree and another 35% of the teacher were agree to the point that the content of the English course is interesting.

Table: 5.15 states the above mentioned points with regard to the content of the English course.

Table: 5.15

Sl. No.	Rating	No. of respondents	Percent (%)
1	Strongly agree	1	5
2	Agree	7	35
3	Not certain	0	0
4	Disagree	12	60
5	Strongly disagree	0	0
	Total	20	100

5.1.16. Teachers' Opinion on Effectiveness of Teaching English

In order to know the teachers' view the teachers were asked that, if the existing text books are taught properly the students would be able to improve the English languages proficiency.

Most of the teachers express almost mixed perception to it. 55% of the teacher respondents were agree that, if the existing textbooks are taught properly the students would be able to improve the English language proficiency. They want to say that whatever text/grammar has been prescribed in the syllabus, they have to complete it within stipulated time. In the English syllabus, the numbers of period have been mentioned against each segment of the lesson. So, they have to mind the time also when they render their teaching. 5% of the respondents were strongly disagree and 35% respondents were disagree that if the existing textbooks are taught properly the students may not be able to improve the English language proficiency. According to them the prescribed syllabus they teach, they teach properly and to the best of their capacity. They believe that being teacher they never divide their teaching as 'properly

and not properly teaching'. But it is remarkable that only teaching the prescribed texts should not be the end of teaching from the teachers' side. Because, as the researcher observes and come to know from the informal discussion with the teachers as well as with the students, most of the teachers do not go through the exercises that are given along with all the lessons of the text book. Most of the teachers' prime concern is to prepare the students for the final examination.

Table: 5.16 reveals the above mentioned points regarding the effectiveness of teaching English.

Table: 5.16

Sl. No.	Rating	No. of respondents	Percent (%)
1	Strongly agree	0	0
2	Agree	11	55
3	Not certain	1	5
4	Disagree	7	35
5	Strongly disagree	1	5
	Total	20	100

5.1.17. Provision of Spoken English Class in the Schools

There was no provision for any spoken English class in any one of the sample higher secondary school/junior college. Most of the teacher respondents opine that as it is not within the syllabus and they have to maintain the time schedule for the classes of other subjects too, so they do not think it necessary. Moreover, it is beyond the government educational policy to conduct such extra class for spoken English in the name of English class. 100% of the teachers responded in negative. Table: 5.17 reveals the above mentioned points regarding the provision of spoken English class in the schools.

Table: 5.17

Sl. no	Status	No. of respondents	Percent (%)
1	Yes	0	0
2	No	20	100

	Total	20	100
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As the next one is an open ended question having relation with the previous question regarding the spoken English, the teacher respondents express their mixed opinion to a great variety. One of the teachers expresses that through interaction in the classroom, he tries to develop his students' ability to speak correctly with a minimum degree of fluency. Another respondent says he teaches properly the rules and regulations of grammar and makes the students practice to speak English language, as there is no any provision for teaching spoken English. Another teacher expresses that the atmosphere and the environment of the school compel him to adopt Grammar Translation method to develop his students' ability to speak English correctly.

5.1.18. Source of Reading Materials in the Schools

Literally most of the higher secondary schools do not have any library. Whatever they have is only one or two steel almirah which they regard as library. It is observed that most of the teachers are not interested to keep them up date with the latest information available in English. English news papers, weekly/monthly magazines, articles, and other sources of English reading materials are not available even for the English teachers too. 65% of the teacher respondents were disagree and 5% of the respondents were strongly disagree to the point that their school/college have available reading materials besides the text books. On the contrary, only 20% teachers were agree to it.

Table: 5.18 mentioned below reveals the above mentioned points regarding the source of reading materials in the schools.

Table: 5.18

Sl. No.	Rating	No. of respondents	Percent (%)
1	Strongly agree	0	0
2	Agree	4	20
3	Not certain	2	10
4	Disagree	13	65
5	Strongly disagree	1	5

	Total	20	100
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5.1.19. Students' Understanding of English Class Conducted In English

According to the teachers, most of the students' mother tongue is Assamese and on the other hand, the medium of instruction in the school is also Assamese. So, it is almost impossible to understand for the students while the teachers teach only in English even in the English class.

Moreover, now a days, the students who are a bit good and financially sound, preferred to study in the privately managed schools /colleges where they believe to get better education. And we can't simply deny the fact that the results of the privately managed institutions are comparatively far better than that of the government schools and colleges. So, most of the good and financially sound students prefer private sector after passing HSLC examination whether science, arts and commerce to study. The remaining so called average and low quality students have to go to the Govt. higher secondary schools and junior colleges of their locality. This is the truth. So, they cannot expect that this category of the students will follow the class while the teachers explain lesson only English. A question was put forwarded to know how much the students understand while the teachers explain lessons only in English. Only 5% respondents were agree to the point that their students understand while they explain lessons only in English. On the other hand, 20% of the teacher respondents were strongly disagree and another 75% of them were disagree to the point that their students understand while they teach them only in English.

Table: 5.19 mentioned below reveals the above mentioned points regarding students' understanding of English class conducted in English.

Table: 5.19

Sl. No.	Rating	No. of respondents	Percent (%)
1	Strongly agree	0	0
2	Agree	1	5
3	Not certain	0	0
4	Disagree	15	75

5	Strongly disagree	4	20
	Total	20	100

5.1.20. Use of English Language in the Class by the Teachers

As far the researcher's knowledge is concern, most of the teachers' use of English is very restricted. They speak only fragmentary type of English or only English words in their conversation. Literally most of the teachers use English to illustrate any certain concept, except reading out the English main text. Keeping this in mind the teachers were asked to respond to the question 'How often do you speak English in the English classroom to interpret the lesson?' 35% of the teacher respondents always use English to interpret the lesson in the English class. 60% of the respondents sometimes and remaining 5% of the respondents' often use English in the classroom.

Table: 5.20 reveals the above mentioned points regarding the use of English language in the class by the English teachers.

Table: 5.20

Sl. No.	Rating	No. of respondents	Percent (%)
1	Always	7	35
2	Sometimes	12	60
3	Oftenly	1	5
4	Rarely	0	0
5	Not at all	0	0
	Total	20	100

5.1.21. Communicative Activities Organized By the Teacher

As far as the researcher's observation goes, most of the teachers do not organize any communicative activity such as group discussion, pair work etc. in the English class. No teacher was found who regularly organized such communicative

activities which are important part of language teaching and can be an effective means of exposure to the concerned language. Some of the teachers say that they rarely organize communicative activities. From the personal discussion with the student respondents the researcher came to know that they do not know such communicative activities except the as usual English class. Thus, it becomes clear that the students' source of exposure is limited to the prescribed English text books and to some extent to the English teachers who are little bit interested in creating English speaking environment inside the classroom. Though only 15% of the teachers admitted that they sometimes organize such communicative activities, their acknowledgement was not beyond suspect. 15% of the teachers frankly admitted that they do not organize any communicative activity in the class. 70% of the teachers rarely organize any communicative activity in the class.

Table: 5.21 reveals the above mentioned points regarding the communicative activities organized by the teacher.

Table: 5.21

Sl. No.	Rating	No. of respondents	Percent (%)
1	Always	0	0
2	Sometimes	3	15
3	Oftenly	0	0
4	Rarely	14	70
5	Not at all	3	15
	Total	20	100

5.1.22. Use of Audio-Visual Aids in the English Class

As the audio-visual aids are the important factors in the process of teaching second language, the researcher intended to observe the use of audio-visual aids by the teachers. The teachers were asked whether they use any audio-visual aids in the English class. Some of the teachers reported that their schools did not equip with any audio-visual aids as well as any extra English reading materials, which indicates that the students have only source of English language exposure through their text books along with the teachers. So the efficiency of the English teacher is imperative. But it

is observed that some of the English teachers lack the requisite efficiency in all the four language skills, especially in speaking. 90% of the teachers never use any audio-visual aids in the classroom, though it is an essential part of language learning and only 10% of the teachers rarely use audio-visual aids in order to supplement the learning process.

Table: 5.22 reveals the above mentioned points regarding the use of audio-visual aids in the English class.

Table: 5.22

Sl. No.	Rating	No. of respondents	Percent (%)
1	Always	0	0
2	Sometimes	0	0
3	Oftenly	0	0
4	Rarely	2	10
5	Not at all	18	90
	Total	20	100

5.1.23. Lesson Plan Prepared By the Teacher

Almost all the teachers responded in affirmative when they were asked the question ‘do you plan and prepare your lesson before you go to the class?’ But practically what do they mean by ‘plan and preparation’ of the lesson and how do they ‘plan and prepare’ their lesson is a matter of question. From the informal discussion with the teacher respondents, the researcher comes to know that the concept of ‘plan and preparation of the lesson’ vary from teacher to teacher. But most of the teachers expressed almost same view that before going to the class, they study the lesson thoroughly so that they could impart the lesson nicely. 85% of the teachers always plan and prepare their lesson before going to the class. And another 10% teachers sometime and 5% teachers’ oftenly plan and prepare the lesson before they go to the class. In fact, No teacher was found who ever plan and prepare their lesson before teaching.

Table: 5.23 reveals the above mentioned points regarding the lesson plan prepared by the teacher.

Table: 5.23

Sl. No.	Rating	No. of respondents	Percent (%)
1	Always	17	85
2	Sometimes	2	10
3	Oftenly	1	5
4	Rarely	0	0
5	Not at all	0	0
	Total	20	100

5.1.24. Use of Method by the English Teachers

Method is an important factor in any teaching-learning process, especially in the process of learning second language. So, for the teachers of second language a thorough knowledge of various kinds of second language teaching methods is imperative. In case of using methods most of the teachers responded that they use one or the other methods in teaching English either regularly or irregularly. But from the informal discussion with the teachers, the researcher comes to know that most of the teachers do not have any solid concept regarding the second language teaching methods. 20% of the teachers regularly, 60% teachers sometime, and some 15% of the teachers' oftenly use methods in their teaching. It is observed that no teacher uses any method in teaching English.

Table: 5.24 reveals the above mentioned points regarding the use of method by the English teachers.

Table: 5.24

Sl. No.	Rating	No. of respondents	Percent (%)
1	Always	4	20
2	Sometimes	12	60
3	Oftenly	3	15
4	Rarely	1	5
5	Not at all	0	0
	Total	20	100

5.1.25. Status of the Present Evaluation System

The teachers were asked their opinion regarding the status of the present evaluation system. Though a large number of the teachers were in favour of the existing evaluation system, many of them expressed their dissatisfaction regarding the evaluation system. The teachers who are not satisfied with the present evaluation system want to say that though the present evaluation system covers a wide range of learning, it fails to cover all the four language skills equally. They opined that unless the students get mastery over all the four language skills equally, their command on the concern language will be definitely limited. Here the researcher also observes that only 10 marks is allotted to test the students' oral proficiency in the 11th standard English syllabus which is very nominal to enhance the students' oral proficiency. Moreover, the researcher comes to know that 10 marks of oral test is almost given to the students without assessing their proficiency. And remarkably no mark is allotted to test the oral proficiency in the syllabus of 12th standard. Only 10% of the teachers felt the evaluation system as very good. 55% of the teachers regarded it as good and the remaining 35% of the teachers were not satisfied with the present evaluation system.

Table: 5.25 reveals the above mentioned points regarding the status of the present evaluation system.

Table: 5.25

Sl. No.	Rating	No. of respondents	Percent (%)
1	Excellent	0	0
2	Very good	2	10
3	Good	11	55
4	Fair	0	0
5	Not at all	7	35
	Total	20	100

5.1.26. Area of Students' Knowledge Tested By the Examination

Most of the teacher respondents do not want to comment on what the examination should test. From the personal discussion with the respondents, the researcher comes to learn that it does not mean that they do not know what the examination should test as some of them have chosen the 'not certain' option. They also express that they do not have anything to do with the examination system as it is totally under the provision of Assam Higher Secondary Education Council. The syllabus, text books, question pattern and the examination system are prepared and monitored by the Assam Higher Secondary Education Council only. The teachers are bound to complete the syllabus within the stipulated time and make the students get ready for the examination. But it is evident that unless and until the examination covers all the four skills namely, listening, speaking, reading and writing equally, development of the students' English proficiency cannot be expected. But a minute study of the syllabus makes it clear that the scope is not available to develop the students' oral proficiency in the 12th Standard English syllabus. No doubt the syllabus covers various aspects on the students' reading and writing skill to a great extent.

65% of the teachers express that they are ‘not certain’ and 35% of them express that they do not know what the examination should test.

Table: 5.26 reveals the above mentioned points regarding the teachers’ opinion about the area of knowledge tested by the examination.

Table: 5.26

Sl. No	Status	No. of respondents	Percent (%)
1.	Yes	7	35
2.	No	0	0
3.	Not certain	13	65
	Total	20	100

The last question of the teachers’ questionnaire is an open ended question where the teacher respondents were asked about the evaluation system adopted by the Assam Higher Secondary Education Council. Responding to this, the teacher respondents put forward their varied opinion along with some valuable suggestions. To quote one of the respondents exactly as “The present evaluation system adopted by the AHSEC is comparatively better than that of the system existed some ten years back. However, in the present system of evaluation certain marks, at least 10 marks, should be allotted for home assignment to testify the students’ comprehension and writing skill. Besides, the AHSEC should organize some orientation class on teaching method and evaluation system for the newly appointed teachers. Moreover, the teacher-student ratio should be maintained strictly, otherwise imparting proper knowledge of English shall be retarded.

5.2. Interpretation of the Responses of Students’ Questionnaire

It has already been mentioned in the methodology, that total six set of questionnaire were prepared to collect the required data for the present study. Among the six sets of questionnaires one set of questionnaire was prepared to elicit the various learning problems encountered by the students in the course of learning English. The students’ questionnaire contained various issues and aspects of learning

English such as, syllabus, use of methods, use of audio-visual aids, use of mother tongue, English teacher's proficiency, infrastructure etc.

Here the responses of the students' general questionnaire has been interpreted from the various aspects of their learning problem along with the researcher's own observation and personal discussion with the respondents during data collection.

5.2.1. Need of Learning English on the Students' perspective

The students were asked the necessity of learning English by giving several options. The most important reason felt by the students for why they were learning English was to develop their personality. 69.5% of the students felt strongly agree that they need English to develop their personality whereas 28% of the students were also agree to it. Great deals of the students were of the view that they learn English to pursue higher education. 60.5% of the students were strongly agree and 27% of the students were agreed to this point that they learn English to pursue higher education. Again, another higher percentage of the students express their opinion that they need English 'to get good job'. 58.5% students were strongly agree and 26% students were agree in favour of the view that they learn English to get job. Another large number of the students group felt that they were learning English 'to complete their graduation'. 44% of the students strongly agreed and 26% of the students agreed to it. Out of the eight statements, 'to read English newspaper, novels, books etc.' was the least favoured one among the respondents. Only 25% students were strongly agree and 22% students were agree to it. The students were also not favourable for the statements such as- 'to communicate with non-Assamese speakers'; 'to know about English culture and society' and 'to get social respect'. Only 27.5% of the respondents strongly agreed and 30% of the respondents agreed that they learn English to communicate with non-Assamese speakers. 29.5% respondents strongly agreed and 37% of the respondents agreed that they learn English to know English culture and society. And 35% of the students strongly agreed and 38.5% of the students agreed to the point that they learn English to get respect in the society.

Table: 5.27 reveals the above mentioned points regarding the students' necessity of learning English.

Table: 5.27

statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Uncertain		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Frequ	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
To get a good job	117	58.5	52	26	5	2.5	20	10	6	3
To develop personaliti	139	69.5	56	28	3	1.5	2	1	0	0
To comple- te graduation	88	44	52	26	22	11	38	19	0	0
To pursue higher education	121	60.5	54	27	17	8.5	8	4	0	0
To read Eng. newspaper,novels etc.	50	25	44	22	46	23	52	26	8	4
To communicate with non-Assamese speaker	55	27.5	60	30	24	12	46	23	15	7.5
To know about English culture &society	59	29.5	74	37	30	15	32	16	5	2.5
To get social respect	70	35	77	38.5	13	6.5	34	17	6	3

5.2.2. Students' Perception of Importance of English Language.

Nobody can deny the importance of English language for a better and up to date life. That is why the English has been introduced from the first standard in the government schools too. English occupies a unique place as a core subject up to 12th

standard in the education system of Assam as well in the other states of India. So, practically knowledge of English has become essential to keep pace with the world around. But the researcher is astonished observing the deplorable English knowledge of the 12th standard Assamese medium students of Barpeta district. Though most of the students' English knowledge is not up to the mark, they are well aware of the necessity of English in their life.

So, almost all the students express highly positive response when they were asked their views whether they think that knowledge of English is very important for them. 60% of the students were strongly agree and 32.5% of the students were agree that the knowledge of English is very important. Only a few students (7.5%) were disagree to it. To them, without the knowledge of English, many people are living comfortably.

Table: 5.28 reveals the above mentioned points regarding the importance of the knowledge of English for the students.

Table: 5.28

Sl. no.	Rating	No. of respondents	Percent (%)
1.	Strongly agree	120	60
2.	Agree	65	32.5
3.	Uncertain	0	0
4.	Disagree	15	7.5
5.	Strongly disagree	0	0
6.	Total	200	100

5.2.3. The Students' Main Aim of Learning English in the Classroom

In a wider sense most of the students realize the importance of English language and so want to learn it to cope up with the world around them. But the researcher comes to know from observation and informal discussion with the teachers as well as the students, that the aim of learning English in the classroom is to be efficient in English as a whole. But when the students fail to fulfill the target, Most of them aim to decorate their mark sheet scoring good marks in English. As a result, it

is observed that many of the students scoring good marks in English in the examination fail to use it in their practical life.

The students were given three options to know their main aim of learning English in the classroom. Most of the students are in favour of scoring good marks in the examination than acquiring the ability to communicate in English. 64.5% of the students are in favour of scoring good marks; 8.5% of them are in favour of acquiring ability to communicate in English and 27% of them are in favour of scoring good marks as well as ability to communicate in English are equally important.

Table: 5.29 reveals the above mentioned points regard to the main aim of learning English.

Table: 5.29

Sl. no.	statements	No. of respondents	Percent (%)
a.	Scoring good marks in English in the exam.	129	64.5
b.	Ability to communicate in English	17	8.5
c.	Both are equally important	54	27
	total	200	100

5.2.4. Usefulness of the Present English Syllabus

As far as the researcher's knowledge is concern, the 12th Standard English syllabus covers almost all the language skills except the speaking one. For the students reading comprehension, each unit is interspersed with 'Think as you read questions' to the factual comprehension of the text. Moreover, this is followed by end-of-unit global questions and text related issues to be taken up for discussion. Moreover another 10 mark is allotted for passage writing from an unseen passage to test the students reading comprehension. Language work on vocabulary and sentence patterns is followed by writing tasks. Useful vocabulary is presented at the beginning of each unit for learners to notice them in the text and understand their meaning from the context. Moreover, in the English syllabus 25 marks was allotted for advance writing skill, where the students have to practise how to write notice, advertisement, posters, report writing, functional description of any fact, letter to editor, job

application etc. There is a genuine reason for not giving enhance on the speaking skill. 10 mark is allotted to test the students oral proficiency in the 11th standard English syllabus. The students are expected to be well verse in oral proficiency as soon as they come to 12th standard.

30.5% of the respondents strongly agreed and 20% of the respondents agreed that the present English syllabus is helping in improving their English language skills. 41.5% of the respondents were disagree to it. Another 8% of the students were not certain about it.

Table: 5.30 states the above mentioned points regarding the usefulness of the present English syllabus.

Table: 5.30

Sl. No.	Rating	No. of respondents	Percent (%)
1	Strongly agree	61	30.5
2	Agree	40	20
3	Uncertain	16	8
4	Disagree	83	41.5
5	Strongly disagree	0	0
6	Total	200	100

5.2.5. Students' View on Their English Teachers

The researcher comes to know through observation and informal interaction with the students that many of the students do not want to come across with the English teacher under any circumstance without any special reason. But in any teaching-learning situation, a healthy relation between the teacher and the learners is imperative. Here the researcher would like to refer the statement of Anderson and Brewer. Anderson and Brewer say that there are two types of teachers: dominative and integrative. A dominative teacher thinks that he knows the best issues, orders and decisions, expects obedience and conformity; dislikes discussions and criticism and trends to blame or threatens. An integrative teacher on the other hand, requests rather than orders, consults, encourages co-operation, delegates responsibilities, welcomes

pupils' ideas, creativity and initiative. His pupils contributed more to the lesson; they are more friendly and co-operative, less inattentive and aggressive and resistant to instruction than the pupils of dominative teachers. According to Anderson and Brewer, it is the teacher, who is the principal creator of the classroom climate. Therefore, they claim that the students' response largely determined by the teachers' style of functioning.

To assess the students' attitude towards their English teacher, the students were given four options to choose regarding the personality of the teachers. 31% of the students say that their teachers are very helpful and co-operative. Another 37% of them opine that their English teacher is helpful and co-operative. On the contrary, 20.5% of them do not comment about their English teacher and some 11.5% of them do not regard their teacher as helpful and co-operative.

Table: 5.31 reveals the above mentioned points regarding the students' comment on their English teachers.

Table: 5.31

Sl. No.	Statements	No. of students	Percent (%)
1.	Very helpful and co-operative	62	31
2.	Helpful and co-operative	74	37
3.	Not helpful and co-operative	23	11.5
4.	No comment	41	20.5
	Total	200	100

5.2.6. The English Teachers' Proficiency

Lack of adequate proficiency on the part of the teacher imposes negative influence on the learners as the learners regard teacher as their role model. The researcher observes that most of the students of the sample higher secondary schools hold their English teacher in high esteem. In order to assess the English teachers' proficiency the students were given four statements on the aspect of the English teachers. Regarding the proficiency of English teacher, 38.5% of the students say that their English teacher can speak as well as teach English well and 56% of them say

that their English teacher can teach well, but cannot speak fluently. On the contrary, some 5.5% of them feel that their English teacher can neither speak fluently nor teach effectively

Table: 5.32 reveals the above mentioned points regarding the English teachers' proficiency.

Table: 5.32

Sl. No.	Statements	No. of respondents	%
1.	Our English teacher can speak as well as teach English well.	77	38.5
2.	Our English teacher can teach well, but cannot speak fluently.	112	56
3.	Our English teacher can speak English fluently, but cannot teach well.	0	0
4.	Our English teacher can neither speak fluently nor teach effectively.	11	5.5
	Total	200	100

5.2.7. Use of Mother Tongue in the Classroom by the English Teachers

In the process of learning any second language as much exposure as the learner will get, the learner would learn the target language as earlier. So, in the second language learning process struggling to communicate in the target language is imperative for the learner as well as for the teacher too. But the researcher observes that almost all the English teachers teach English by using Assamese language extensively either to translate the content or to clarify some concept. which may cause direct negative influence upon the learning process. The researcher comes to know from the personal discussion with the teachers that if they do not translate the textual matters into Assamese in detail, the students do not understand. Even the students dare to complaint for not discussing the textual matters in Assamese. So, though some of the teachers want to maintain the English language environment in the English

class, they cannot maintain it. The teachers are compelled to compromise with mother tongue. Thus, the teachers who could work as one of the agents to improve the students' listening skill have failed to do so.

In response to the question 'how often does your teacher speak Assamese language in the English class?' surprisingly most of the students responded in affirmative. No teacher was found who never use Assamese language in his/ her English class. 67% of the students say that their teacher always uses Assamese language in the English class to make the students understand the textual matter. Further, 24.5% of the students say sometime and 7.5% students say that their teachers use Assamese language often. Only 1% of the students say that their English teacher rarely uses Assamese in the class.

Table: 5.33 reveals the above mentioned points regarding the use of Assamese language by the English teachers in the classroom.

Table: 5.33

Sl. No.	Rating	No. of respondents	Percent (%)
1	Always	134	67
2	sometime	49	24.5
3	Often	15	7.5
4	Rarely	2	1
5	Not at all	0	0
6	Total	200	100

5.2.8. Students' Attitude towards the English Class

As far as the researcher's knowledge is concern, many students are there among the student community who usually do not feel easy towards English. Gradually, in the course of time this uneasiness develops into phobia. On the contrary, it is observed that some students develop special interest towards English subject. In order to know the students' attitude towards the English class, the students were given five statements to choose. 42% of the students' feel that English class is equally interesting with the other classes. They do not have any problem with the English

class. 26.5% of them feel English is more interesting than the other classes. On the contrary, 20.5% of them feel English class is less interesting and 6% of them feel that the English class is not interesting at all and 5% of them scare the English class.

Table: 5.34 reveals the above mentioned points regarding the students' attitude towards the English class.

Table: 5.34

Sl. No.	Statements	No. of respondents	%
1.	The English class is equally interesting to other the classes.	84	42
2.	The English class is more interesting than other the classes.	53	26.5
3.	The English class is less interesting than the other classes.	41	20.5
4.	The English class is not interesting at all.	12	6
5.	I scare the English class.	10	5
	Total	200	100

5.2.9. Students' View on Teaching of English by the English Teacher

From the students' point of view if the existing text books are taught properly, they would be able to improve their English language proficiency. The students opine that they do not get enough scope to practice the English language skills that is available in the exercise section followed by every lesson. The teachers are not interested to go through all those language items. Most of the students believe that those exercise items should be practiced properly to develop the English language proficiency of the students. But the researcher observes that the prime aim of the teachers as well as the students is to score good marks in the examination. So, practically they are far behind from the actual aims and objectives of learning English.

Majority of the students believed that if the existing text books are taught properly, they would be able to improve their English language proficiency while they responded the question ‘Do you think that if the existing text books are taught properly, you would be able to improve your English language proficiency?’ 21% students were strongly agreed and 55% students were agreed to it. Only 21.5% of the students felt disagree to it and there was only 2.5% students who were not certain about it.

Table: 5.35 reveals the above mentioned points regarding the effectiveness of the classroom teaching.

Table: 5.35

Sl. No.	Rating	No. of respondents	Percent (%)
1	Strongly agree	42	21
2	Agree	110	55
3	Uncertain	5	2.5
4	Disagree	43	21.5
5	Strongly disagree	0	0
6	Total	200	100

5.2.10. Students’ Understanding of English Class Conducted in English

Realizing the practical value of English language most of the students are interested to acquire the mastery over English language. Moreover, the standard in which they are studying demands a fair English proficiency in the students. Being students of 12th standard almost all of them fail to follow the English of the English teacher.

The students were asked the question ‘do you understand when your teacher explains lesson only in English?’ in order to know the students’ English listening comprehension. Majority of the students felt it difficult to accept, and thus, obviously the result was not satisfactory. Unfortunately there was no respondent among the two hundred sample students who understand everything while the teacher explains lesson only in English. Only 14.5% of the students are able to follow the teacher’s English in

the class. On the contrary, majority of the students replied in negative. 69% of the students cannot follow the English spoken by the teacher and 13.5% of the students do not understand at all the English spoken by the teacher.

Table: 5.36 reveals the above mentioned points regarding the students' understanding of English class conducted in English.

Table: 5.36

Sl. No.	Rating	No. of respondents	Percent (%)
1	Strongly agree	0	0
2	Agree	29	14.5
3	Uncertain	6	3
4	Disagree	138	69
5	Strongly disagree	27	13.5
6	Total	200	100

5.2.11. Teaching of Oral Communication by the English Teacher

No teacher of the higher secondary level teaches their students how to speak English using proper pronunciation, stress and intonation. The same question when the researcher asked to the teachers, they also replied in dead negative by saying that as there is no any provision for it. But the researcher minutely going through all the contents of the text books comes to know that one excerpt namely 'The Interview Part I & Part 2 edited by Christopher Silvester has been included in the text book to introduce the students to the subject of media writing and conversation. So the students' oral practice should deserve special attention to make them proficient. The teachers should not give up their responsibility blaming the syllabus maker. If necessary, they should take some extra care for the students' language proficiency.

The students were asked whether their teacher teaches them how to speak English using proper pronunciation, stress and intonation. No teacher of the higher secondary level teaches their students how to speak English using proper pronunciation, stress and intonation. Only 4% of the students say that their teachers

rarely teach, and 96% of them say that their teachers never teach them how to speak English.

Table: 5.37 reveals the above mentioned points regarding the teaching of oral communication by the English teacher.

Table: 5.37

Sl. No.	Rating	No. of respondents	Percent (%)
1	Always	0	0
2	Sometime	0	0
3	Often	0	0
4	Rarely	8	4
5	Not at all	192	96
6	Total	200	100

5.2.12. Use of Audio-Visual Aids by the Teachers

Audio-visual aids are essential parts of any teaching-learning process especially in learning second language. Now a days the Govt. is taking initiative to upgrade the education system from the primary level. Every now and then the Govt. releases various grants to develop the infrastructure of the schools. But as far as the researcher's knowledge is concern, no higher secondary school or junior college is equipped with any audio-visual aids suitable to supplement the learning of English. As the students' only source of language exposure is their text books and the teacher, so, the efficiency of the English teacher is imperative. But it is observed that a sizeable number of the teachers lack the requisite efficiency in all the language skills especially in speaking one.

The students were asked how much their English teacher use the audio-visual aids to supplement the English learning. Only 6% of the students' say that their

teachers rarely use any audio-visual aids in the class. And the remaining 94% of them say that their teacher never use any audio-visual aids.

Table: 5.38 reveals the above mentioned points regarding the use of audio-visual aids by the teachers.

Table: 5.38

Sl. No.	Rating	No. of respondents	Percent (%)
1	Always	0	0
2	Sometime	0	0
3	Often	0	0
4	Rarely	12	6
5	Not at all	188	94
6	Total	200	100

5.2.13. Class-Task and Home Assignment Assigned By the Teachers

Practice makes perfect. So, to earn mastery over anything definitely deserves incessant practice. Likewise, in the process of learning a second language like English requires regular drill and practice. Only the classroom learning of English cannot make the students proficient in English. Classroom learning is the base upon which the students have to strengthen their English knowledge. Unless and until the students practice besides the classroom learning, their chance of acquiring mastery over English language is very less. So the researcher intends to learn whether the students get scope to practice English besides the classroom.

A large number of the students feel affirmative when they were asked whether their teacher give class task and home assignment to make them practice. As the students state every teacher more or less, give class-task and home assignment. 18.5% of the students say that their teacher regularly; 32.5% of them say that their teacher

sometime and 31% of them say that their teacher oftenly give class-task and home assignment to make them practice.

Table: 5.39 reveals the above mentioned points regarding class-task and home assignment assigned by the teachers.

Table: 5.39

Sl. No.	Rating	No. of respondents	Percent (%)
1	Always	37	18.5
2	Sometime	65	32.5
3	Often	62	31
4	Rarely	36	18
5	Not at all	0	0
6	Total	200	100

5.2.14. Students' Practice of Various English Activities

As far as the researcher's knowledge is concern, a large number of the students do not study properly the prescribed English text books. But they also want to be efficient user of English. There are many students who study seriously and express their longing to be proficient in English, but they state that they do not get sufficient study materials of English. Anyway, most the students do not involve in various usage of English. It is evident from the finding that the students' use of English language in different activities is very limited. Whatever the extent of use, they use it for entertainment like watching movies, listening English songs etc., but they hardly give any active interest in reading English books magazines and news papers.

The data reveals the surprisingly poor and limited English usage among the Assamese medium students of 12th standard. Regular English usage of any kind is

almost nil among the students though a very limited number of the students sometimes involve with English usage. According to the table the dominant activity of English usage seems to be watching English movies. 12.5% of the students regularly and 18.5% of the students frequently watch English movies; and 19% of the students have never seen any English movie. It is followed by reading English news paper. 2.5% Of the students regularly and 3.5% of the students frequently read English news paper. Though 7% of the students occasionally read English news paper, 74% of them do not have any relation with it. The table also indicates that the student respondents hardly read English magazines, books etc. There were no respondents who regularly read English magazines and books. Only 3% of the respondents frequently and 8.5% of the respondents occasionally read English magazine and remaining 81% of the respondents never read any English magazine. Likewise, 4.5% of the respondents frequently and 6.5% of the respondents occasionally read English books; and 78.5% of the respondents never read any English book. Similarly, listening English music is not exceptional. 6.5% of the respondents frequently and 8.5% of the respondents occasionally listen to English music. Watching English programme on TV was the least preferred domain among the students. Only 2.5% of the students frequently and 7.5% of the students occasionally watch English programme on TV.

Table: 5.40 reveals the above mentioned points regarding the students' practice of various English activities.

Table: 5.40

Activities	Always		Frequently		Occasionally		Seldom		Never	
	Frequ	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Read Eng. newspapers	5	2.5	7	3.5	14	7	26	13	148	74
Read Eng. magazines	0	0	6	3	17	8.5	15	7.5	162	81
Read Eng. Books	0	0	9	4.5	13	6.5	21	10.5	157	78.5
Watching	25	12.5	37	18.5	44	22	56	28	38	19

Eng. movie										
Listen E. music	0	0	13	6.5	17	8.5	28	14	142	71
Watching E. prog. on TV	0	0	5	2.5	15	7.5	22	11	158	79

5.2.15. Use of English Language by the Students in and Around the School Campus

It is observed that almost all the students speak in their mother tongue in and around the school campus and in the classroom too. The students' English speaking practice is alarmingly poor inside as well as outside of the school campus. No student regularly or even often practices English speaking in the school. Even, in the English classroom also, they do not want to speak in English. They prefer to keep quiet rather to ask to clarify any text related concept. Only 2.5% of them sometimes and 9% of them rarely speak English. 88.5% of the students never speak English under any circumstance.

Table: 5.41 reveals the above mentioned points regarding the use of English by the students in and around the school campus.

Table: 5.41

Sl. No.	Rating	No. of respondents	Percent (%)
1	Regularly	0	0
2	Sometime	5	2.5
3	Often	0	0
4	Rarely	18	9
5	Not at all	177	88.5
6	Total	200	100

5.2.16. Reason behind the Students' Unwillingness of Speaking English

Whatever reasons the students express for not speaking English, the prime reason is their lack of English proficiency. They are not up to that level to communicate in English where they can smoothly do by using their mother tongue. In order to know the reason behind the students' unwillingness of speaking English, the students were given five statements to classify their problems. 19.5% of the students are unwilling to speak English because of their fear of committing mistake. 16.5% of them feel shy to be an object of laughter, and 14% of them consider it as showing too much. Another 23.5% feel that without speaking English they can smoothly do; and some 26.5% of them feel that their knowledge of English is too poor to communicate, as they are unwilling to speak English.

Table: 5.42 reveals the above mentioned points regarding the reason behind the students' unwillingness of speaking English.

Table: 5.42

Sl. No.	Statements	No. of respondents	%
1.	Afraid of committing mistake	39	19.5
2.	Feel shy to be an object of laughter	33	16.5
3.	Using English is not essential	47	23.5
4.	Consider it as showing too much	28	14
5.	Knowledge of English is too poor to speak	53	26.5
	Total	200	100

5.2.17. Students' Proficiency in English Language Skills

These results of the students' proficiency in English language skills were obtained through the use of a five point link card scale questionnaire with 5 = very good, 4= good, 3= satisfactory, 2= poor, 1=very poor.

The sample students exhibited very limited language proficiency in all language skills. May be it is perhaps the outcome of inappropriate syllabus design, lack of motivation, and lack of exposure. The least proficient skill among the students was speaking. Unfortunately, there was no one among all the two hundred

respondents to categorize as very good in speaking English. Only 5.5% of the students were found as good in speaking English. Even 52% and 7.5% of the students were poor and very poor respectively in speaking English. Listening is another skill where students felt very difficulty. In case of listening skill also, no student was rated as very good. Only 18% of the students were good and 34% of the students were found satisfactory. Some 30.5% and 17.5% of the students were found poor and very poor in listening skill respectively. A higher percentage of the students felt reading and writing skills better than that of listening and speaking skills. There were 6% and 48.5% of the students who were very good and good respectively in reading skill and 12.5% students were very good and 34.5% students were good in writing skill. Moreover 44% of the students were satisfied with their writing skill. The numbers of poor and very poor students were also remarkably limited in writing skill. Only 10.5% students were recorded as poor and 4.5% students were recorded as very poor in writing skill.

Table: 5.43 reveals the above mentioned points regarding the students' proficiency in English language skills.

Table: 5.43

Skills	Very good		Good		Satisfactory		Poor		Very poor	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Listening	0	0	36	18	68	34	61	30.5	35	17.5
Speaking	0	0	11	5.5	70	35	104	52	15	7.5
Reading	12	6	97	48.5	39	19.5	28	14	24	12
Writing	25	12.5	69	34.5	88	44	21	10.5	9	4.5

5.2.18. Students' Efficiency in English

The students were asked whether they are good in English to assess their efficiency in English. Responding to the question 'are you good in English', only 4.5% of the students say that they are good in English. And another 95.5% students are not confident about their English knowledge.

Table: 5.44 reveals the above mentioned points regarding the students' efficiency in English language.

Table: 5.44

Sl. no.	Response options	No. of the respondents	Percent (%)
1.	Yes	9	4.5
2.	No	191	95.5
	Total	200	100

The students express various reasons behind their poor knowledge of English. Most of them say that they cannot speak even a few simple and sentences. They have a very limited vocabulary knowledge for which they neither can speak nor understand while some one speaks English. Moreover, many of the students are weak in grammar. In every sphere of grammatical items they commit error. Being students of 12th standard, they commit mistake/error in numbers and articles too.

5.3. Difficult Areas of Learning English as a Second Language

Knowing a language depends on acquiring detail knowledge of the four language skills namely, listening, speaking, reading and writing. Listening is regarded as a passive skill along with the reading skill. These two skills are also known as receptive skills. On the other hand, speaking and writing is considered as active skills as well as productive skills. Listening is necessary to develop the speaking skill. Listening prepares the students to understand the speech of the native speakers of English as they speak naturally in a normal speed and normal manner.

The mastery over four language skills is the utmost importance to bring perfection in learning a second language. The ultimate goal of second language learning is to enable the learner to communicate his/her thoughts, ideas and feelings via oral and written mode of the language. Acquiring proficiency in a second language like English is not an easy task, and therefore, in order to acquire a thorough knowledge of the four language skills of English, the learners have to face innumerable problems in the course of learning. A systematic study of those areas of difficulty and their analysis is very necessary to overcome those problems and to bring perfection in learning.

Like any other second language learners the Assamese medium students also face various kinds of problems in acquiring the knowledge of the four skills of the language. They consider that learning English is a difficult process and therefore they usually scare to handle the language. In this study the researcher's main concern is to find out those areas of difficulty and study them in a systematic way so that a permanent solution of those problems can be brought to light.

5.3.1. Listening Skill

Listening is the first and foremost language mode that children acquire which provides the basis for the other language skills. Listening plays an important role in the process of learning/acquiring a language whether it is a first or second Language. In the process of first language acquisition, a natural environment prevails where the children get the opportunity of listening to the language around them. That is, they involve in the activity of listening passively for about one year right from the birth, and then they actively participate in the linguistic society in which they dwell. But in the process of second Language learning (L2), the listening is voluntarily made activity. Thus, in the deliberate learning, learners are made to involve in listening to L2 where the linguistic nuances are taught step by step.

Listening is complex process and an integral part of the total communication process. Listening is one of the most challenging skills for ESL learners to develop as it is probably the least explicit of all the four language skills (Vandergrift 2004). Vandergrift (2004), also states that listening plays a very important role in the learning of a second language. It is listening which gives the learner adequate information from which to build the sufficient knowledge for using a language. It also provides the necessary input for the learners needed for practicing a language later. So, it is the first step or skill required while learning a language. Roost (1990), points out that understanding spoken language is a necessary condition for language acquisition. It has been observed that listening is the most neglected among the four language skills. Even in the English classroom too listening has been given little attention. But the activity of listening is not just as easy as an act of recording the

speaker's utterances and repeating them as they are. It is a process of making meaning out of spoken language.

5.3.1.1. Listening Process

Listening is a complex, multistep process by which spoken language is converted into meaning in the mind (Lundsteen, 1979). Wolvin and Coakly (1985) have identified three steps in the process of listening which are receiving, attending and assigning meaning. In the first step, listeners receive the aural stimuli or the combined aural and visual stimuli presented by the speaker. In the second step, listeners focus on or attend to select stimuli while ignoring other distracting stimuli. Because so many stimuli surround the students in the classroom, they must be attractive to the speaker's message, focusing on the most important information in that message. In the third step, listeners assign meaning to or understand the speaker's message.

Further, Anderson and Pamela (1986) have identified three phases or stages of listening process. They are- perception, parsing and utilization. In the perceptual phase, language learners focus on the sound of language and store them in their memory. In the parsing phase, listeners use words and phrases to construct meaningful representations. They recognize the formation of words as meaningful units that can be stored in short term. The size of the chunk that listeners retain depends on several factors including knowledge of language, knowledge of topic and the quality of the signal. In the final phase or utilization phase, the listeners probe long term memory to connect what they hear with what they already know. Stored information is in the form of proposition or schemata. They must therefore rely on the quality of their background knowledge. Perception, parsing and utilization stand for different levels of processing. Of the three levels of processing, perception is the lowest. All three phases are recursive and connected closely, and can occur simultaneously during a single listening event.

5.3.1.2. The Process of Encoding and Decoding

An act of communication requires encoder, the speaker and decoder, the listener. The speaker encodes the concept or message through a set of code. The listener decodes the concept or message from the set of code used by the speaker.

That is, on the one hand, the act of encoding involves coherence of the sounds into words, words into sentences, sentences into discourses. On the other hand, the act of decoding involves identifying the sounds, understanding the utterances and their meanings, and recognizing the prosodic features like tone, intonation, pitch, stress, etc. used by the speaker.

It is a common notion that the speaker provides meaning and the listener receives it. That is the speaker conveys the meaning and the listener receives the meaning as it is conveyed by the speaker. But in certain context, the listener cannot understand the speaker's utterances. Because he takes direct literal meaning of the word instead of contextual meaning, where the speaker's meaning differs from the listener's meaning. In a conversational discourse, both the speaker's and the hearer's co-operation in sending and receiving meaning is important. If the speaker is deviant from the context, the listener's responsibility is less than speaker's. Segardahal (1996) has distinguished two types of meaning. One is constant linguistic meaning and the other one is varying situational meaning. That is, in a given context, the linguistic element provides one meaning, the constant linguistic meaning to the listener. In another context, the listener takes another meaning, the contextual meaning, to the same linguistic element used in other context.

5.3.1.3. The Speaker-Listener Polarity

The event of communication very much depends on two polarities- the speaker and the listener. These two polarities are essential requirements of communication. Communication is in fact a confrontation between two individuals with a view of exchanging some information or getting some intention fulfilled. For the effective exchange of information, both the speaker and the listener are expected to be equipped with the competence of the language which is used. That is, same level of competence is expected from the listener and the speaker as well. Any short coming in the linguistic competence of the listener or the speaker, would affect the communication. So, both the polarities should be more or less equally equipped with the linguistic competence of that language for effective and efficient communication.

5.3.1.4. Relationship between Speaking and Listening

Speaking and listening are interdependent process. The activity of speaking requires at least a listener, an individual or an audience. The speaker speaks keeping certain objectives in his mind. That is, speaking involves conveying meaning using a code and listening involves understanding the meaning with the help of code that the speaker used. If it is transaction, one way listening, the speaker does not receive feedback, but if it is interaction, two way listening, the speaker receives feedback from the listener. In transactional or conversational discourse, sending-receiving and receiving-sending are alternative phenomena.

5.3.1.5. Teaching Listening Comprehension

In the classroom atmosphere, the students generally listen to the teacher who gives directions and instructions to the classmates during discussion and to someone reading stories and poems aloud. Listening is not neglected; however, the students are in need of teaching listening strategies. Teaching listening can be categorized into two modes. The first one is teaching linguistic nuances like phonemic variations, discrimination of similar sounds in words, recognizing word boundaries, recognizing morphemes, distinguishing grammatical and lexical items in a sentence, etc. The second one is teaching how to listen a context, how to deduce meaning for an unfamiliar word, how to recognize theme over a discourse, etc. These two modes are important and inseparable for teaching of listening comprehension. If any shortcoming is found in teaching of either of this mode, its consequence will be seen in other skills of the language.

5.3.1.6. Difficulties Faced in Listening:

Effective listening in the classroom is about more than hearing and a working knowledge of language. If students struggle with listening comprehension, they will struggle to learn material presented orally. The lack of emphasis on listening skill leads the students to face difficulty in listening comprehension. After the analysis of the data of the students' listening skill, the researcher has identified certain areas of the students' difficulty that hinders their listening comprehension.

The difficulties in speaking faced by the Assamese medium students are discussed as below:

i. Difficulty In Deducing Meaning of Unfamiliar Words

Due to the poor knowledge of vocabulary most of the Assamese medium students are failure in deducing meaning of any kind of information; it may be either news item or simply an announcement of any kind. The limited vocabulary and problem with the perception of acoustic forms, the students often face difficulty in processing audio input. The students often do not know the meaning of the words that appear in the spoken discourse, or they are not able to recognize them in the string of connected speech. Failure in understanding the input correctly also makes the learners face difficulties in anticipating the upcoming discourse. Whenever they encounter an unknown word, they stop to think about the meaning of that word and thus miss the next part of the speech.

ii. Difficulty In Deducing Meaning of Implicit/Explicit Information

Inferring implicit information includes implicit understanding and drawing inferences from input texts. Sometimes the information required is not clearly stated, and the listener must go beyond the surface information to see other meanings which are not explicitly stated in the text. The Assamese medium students have difficulty in this area. Because while listening, they are unable to deduce a speaker's intention or attitude towards a topic, relate utterances to their social and situational contexts, or recognize the communicative function of those utterance, and so on. Most of the student cannot follow even a simple announcement, which meaning is very much explicit. Of course, some of the students have simple ability to understand words in a familiar context but almost cannot follow the connected speech. Some of the students have the ability to follow short connected utterance in a familiar context with limited accuracy.

iii. Difficulty In Recognizing Grammatical Error

The Assamese medium students face difficulty in recognizing sentence level various kind of grammatical error. The student cannot recognize even a very simple sentence containing a common grammatical error when the sentence is uttered. But it does not mean that they do not know these very simple and common grammatical rules at all. Their performance is good to some extent in writing skill regarding these common and simple grammatical rules. But in case of listening, their performance in this regard is poor, because they cannot immediately cohere the words into sentence

to comprehend the sentence as a whole. As a result they fail to detect any grammatical error of a sentence.

iv. Difficulty In Recognizing Phonemic Contrast

The Assamese medium students also face immense difficulty in recognizing the difference between voiced and voiceless sounds. Many a time they cannot distinguish the difference between /t/ and /d/, /k/ and /g/, /p/ and /b/ etc. As most of the students' word level articulation is not accurate, they usually tend to commit error in case of differentiating some voiced and voiceless sounds in word. As a result, they fail to comprehend the intended meaning of the speaker which hampers the communication process.

v. Difficulty in Recognizing and Recalling Numbers

As the Assamese medium students have difficulty in all level of listening comprehension, they face a lot of problems in recognizing and recalling numbers. Lots of the students fail to produce exact word order and miss some parts (words) from the sequence.

In simple discourse level also most of the students show very poor expertise. They fail to respond to a simple question which is made of all their known words. For instance, in the question 'what do you do on a holiday?' all the words are well familiar to almost all the students. But most of them fail to make a meaning out of the sentence as soon as it uttered. Instantly they cannot make sentence level meaning out of the words.

5.3.1.7. Interpretation of the Students' Responses of Listening Skill

5.3.1.7.1. Test item 1. Testing the students' ability in inferring implicit information of unfamiliar words

The researcher intends to test the students' ability of inferring implicit information of unfamiliar words. In order to do so, the researcher read out a very small paragraph from the news item. The students were instructed to listen to the read out news item carefully and write down the answers of the questions in the answer

sheet. The students were asked three questions to fill up the blank with the options provided.

The students' performance of inferring the implicit information and deducing meaning of unfamiliar words is remarkably poor. Majority of the students responded incorrectly to the first and third question due to the failure in understanding the meaning of the words 'missile' and 'lethal' in the given news item. Most of students responded incorrectly to the questions because of the hard words like 'test-fired', 'lethal', 'missile', 'interim', and so on found in the news item and basically because of the poor comprehending ability of the learners. According to the objectives of the 12th Standard English syllabus, the students are expected to acquire a fair degree of reading comprehension as soon as they come to the 12th standard. But their reading comprehension proficiency proves futile when they come across with a few unfamiliar words. 38% of the student scored zero (0), 45.5% of the students scored only one mark and 12.5% of the students scored 2 marks out of 3. On the contrary, only 4% of the students scored 100% mark showing their expertise.

The students' performance of inferring implicit information of unfamiliar words is presented below in the table and graph.

Table: 5.45 Students' performance in inferring implicit information

Marks obtained	No. of students	Percent (%)	Cumulative %
0	76	38	38
1	91	45.5	83.5
2	25	12.5	96
3	08	4	100
---	200	100	---

Performance presented in graph:

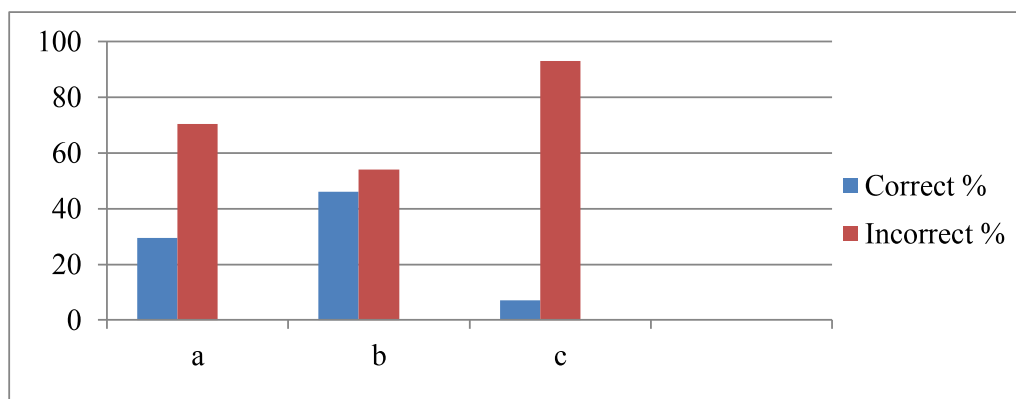


Figure: 5.1 Students' performance in inferring implicit information

5.3.1.7.2. Test item 2. Testing the students' performance of inferring explicit information

The students' ability of inferring explicit information from an as usual announcement is being tested. In order to do so, the researcher read out a familiar railway announcement to the students. The students were instructed to listen to the announcement carefully and write down the answers of the questions in the answer sheet. The students were asked 5 objective type questions such as, the name and number of the train, platform number, departure hour etc. based on the announcement to know the students' listening comprehension regarding explicit information.

The overall performance of the students is not up to the mark. 11.5% of the students scored zero (0) and 19% of the students scored only one mark out of 5 marks in inferring the explicit information from the announcement. 30% of the students scored 2 marks, 24% of the students scored 3 marks. On the contrary, 11% of the students scored 4 marks and 4.5% of the students scored 5 marks out of 5 marks showing their mastery in inferring explicit information. Most of the students that is, 71.5% responded incorrectly to the second question where they were asked the train number. On the other hand, a substantial number of the students that is, 56% responded correctly to the last question where they were asked the name of the train. This is due to the failure in distinguishing and observing the train number as well as the time pronounce in the announcement. This is by virtue of the unfamiliarity with the railway announcement even though the answers are found explicitly in it.

The students' performance of inferring explicit information is presented below in table and in graph.

Table: 5.46 Students' performance in inferring explicit information

Marks obtained	No. of respondents	respondents %	Cumulative %
0	23	11.5	11.5
1	38	19	30.5
2	60	30	60.5
3	48	24	84.5
4	22	11	95.5
5	09	4.5	100
---	200	100	---

Performance presented in graph:

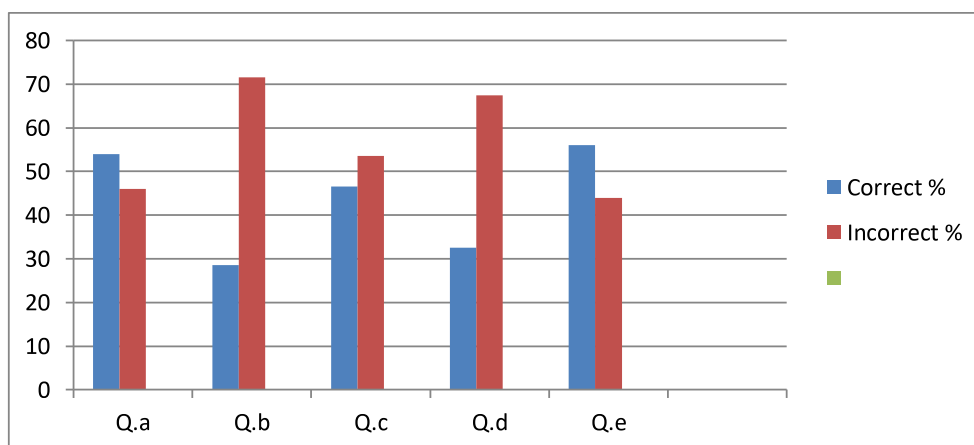


Figure: 5.2 Students' performance in inferring explicit information

5.3.1.7.3. Test item3. Testing the students' performance in recognizing sentence level grammatical error.

In test item 3 the researcher intends to test the students' ability in recognizing grammatical error in sentence level. In order to do so, the researcher read out five sentences one after another (such as 'one of my sisters are doctor', 'he play cricket yesterday', 'she go to school daily' etc.). The students were instructed to write down right or wrong depending upon the grammar of the sentence.

The average performance of students' regarding the recognition of sentence level grammatical error is not remarkably poor. 3% of the students scored 0, and 8.5% of the students scored only 1 out of 5 marks. 35% of the students scored 2 marks and 36.5% of the students scored 3 marks. On the contrary, 10.5% of the students scored 4 and some 6.5% of the students scored 5 out of 5 marks. Most of the students (57%) responded incorrectly to the first question where the sentence was 'one of my sisters are doctor'. On the other hand the highest number of the students (59%) responded correctly to the fourth question where the sentence was 'he play cricket yesterday'. It has been observed that most of the students were not able to recognize the grammatical errors which were found in the given items due to the poor grammatical knowledge of the students. For instance, the students know that grammatically the plural subjects are bound to be followed by are/were according to the tense. So, most of the students get confused to identify the subject of the sentence 'one of my sisters are doctor' and commit mistake. In this way students commit mistake in such a common grammatical factor which they have been learning since when they were introduced with English grammar. For instance, the use of '-s' or '-es' with the 3rd person singular subject is essential if the tense is present indefinite. Thus many students committed mistake by writing 'she go to school daily' instead of 'she goes to school daily'.

The students' performance of recognition of grammatical error is presented below in the table and graph.

Table: 5.47 Students' performance in recognizing sentence level grammatical error

Marks obtained	No. of respondents	respondents %	Cumulative %
0	6	3	3
1	17	8.5	11.5
2	70	35	46.5

3	73	36.5	83
4	21	10.5	93.5
5	13	6.5	100
Total	200	100	---

Performance presented in graph:

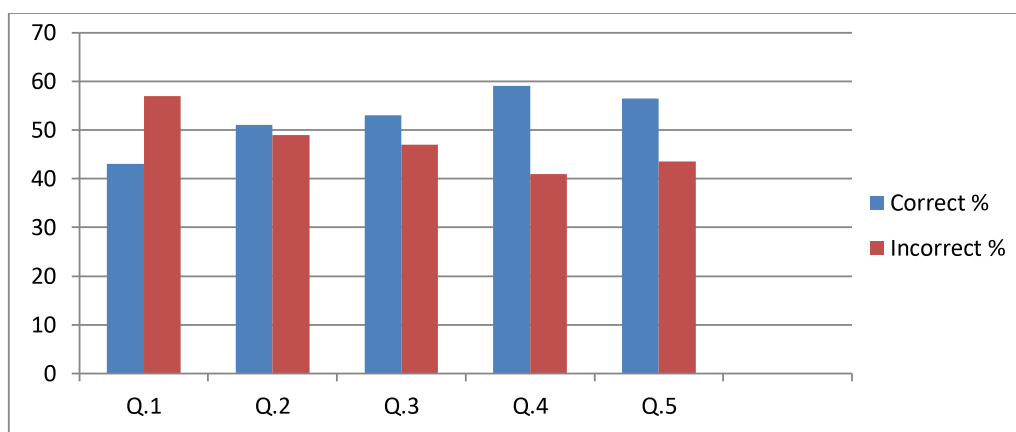


Figure: 5.3 Students' performance in recognizing sentence level grammatical error

5.3.1.7.4. Test item 4. Testing the students' performance in discriminating phonetic change

The researcher intends to test the students' ability in discriminating phonetic change. In order to do so, the researcher read out 5 groups of words containing one odd word in each group (such as 'caught, taught, ought, thought, doubt' / 'fight, kite, light, sought, right' etc.) The students were instructed to listen carefully the read out words and trace out the word which is odd in pronunciation from the group of words.

The students' show limited expertise in identifying the phonetic change. This is because students were not well acquainted with all the English phonemes. Moreover, most of the students were not familiar with the adequate pronunciation of the words given for test. 8% of the students scored 0 and 24% of the students scored only 1 out of 5 marks showing their poor performance. 33.5% of the students scored 2 marks and 21% of the students scored 3 marks. On the contrary, 9.5% of the students scored 4 and some 4% of the students scored 5 marks out of 5 showing their mastery in identifying the phonetic change. The third question was the least scored (only

29.5% students responded correctly); where the readout words were ‘care, near, wear, fear, tear’; and the highest scored question was the last one (47% students responded correctly) where the readout words were ‘fight, kite, light, sought, right’. This type of poor performance of the students may be due to the fact that the students are not able to discriminate the slight variation in the pronunciation of the words or the phonetic changes of the words.

The students’ performance in discriminating phonetic change has been presented below in the table and graph.

Table: 5.48 Students’ performance in discriminating phonetic change

Marks obtained	No. of respondents	respondents %	Cumulative %
0	16	8	8
1	48	24	32
2	67	33.5	65.5
3	42	21	86.5
4	19	9.5	96
5	08	4	100
Total	200	100	---

Performance presented in graph:

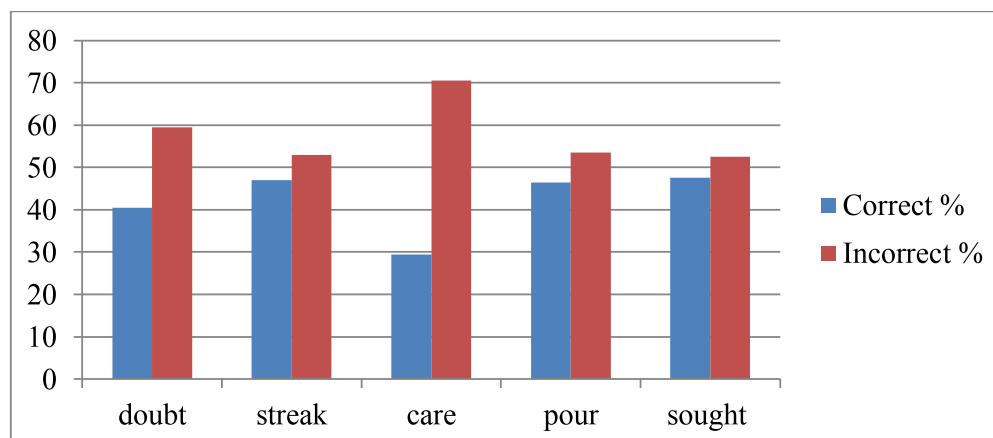


Figure: 5.4 Students’ performance in discriminating phonetic change

5.3.1.7.5. Test item 5. Testing the students’ performance in recognizing the phonemic contrast (voiced and voiceless sound)

The researcher intends to test the students’ ability in recognizing the phonemic contrast (voiced and voiceless sound). The researcher read out 5 sentences one by one

such as a) I wonder why he hit/hid the dog. b) please put all these things in the back/bag etc.). In each sentence the researcher uses one of the two underlined words. The students were instructed to listen to the sentences carefully and encircle the words which are phonemically contrasted.

The students show their moderate expertise in recognizing phonemic contrast (voiced/voiceless) of a sound. This is a common problem for the Assamese medium student to differentiate between the voiced and voiceless sound in English. 7% of the students scored '0' (zero) and 14.5% of the students scored only 1 out of 5 marks. 24% of the students scored 2 and some 26% of the students scored 3marks. On the contrary, 19.5% of the students scores 4 and some 9% of the students scored 5 marks out of 5 showing their proficiency in recognizing phonemic contrast. The correct responses against all the five questions were almost average. The reason for the incorrect response was the failure in recognizing and differentiating the voiced and voiceless sound clearly.

The students' performance in recognizing the phonemic contrast (voiced and voiceless) has been presented below in the table and graph.

Table: 5.49 students' performance in recognizing the phonemic contrast

Marks obtained	No. of respondents	respondents %	Cumulative %
0	14	7	7
1	29	14.5	21.5
2	48	24	45.5
3	52	26	71.5
4	39	19.5	91
5	18	9	100
Total	200	100	---

Performance presented in graph:

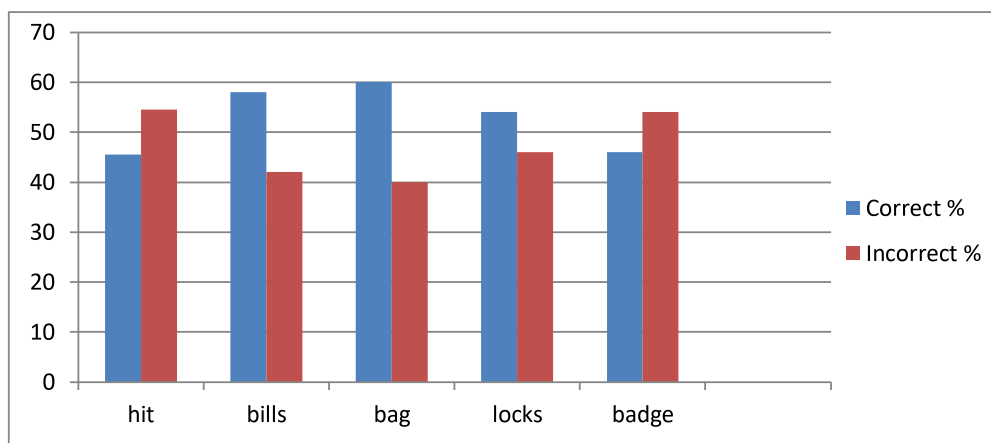


Figure: 5.5 Students' performance in recognizing the phonemic contrast

5.3.1.7.6. Test item 6. Testing the Students' performance in recognizing the phonemic variation

The researcher intends to test the students' ability in recognizing the phonemic variation between aspirated and unaspirated sound. In order to collect the students' response the researcher read out 5 pairs of words (such as nice/niece, was/wash, fish/fees, sip/ship, shock/soak). Pair of words was read out once to decide whether the two words of the pair are same or different in pronunciation. The students were instructed to listen carefully and write 'S' against the pair, if the pronunciation of the two words are same; to write 'D' if the pronunciation of the two words of the pair is different.

The students show moderate expertise in recognizing the phonemic variation of the word pairs. 5.5% of the students scored zero (0) and 15% of the students scored only 1 out of 5 marks showing their poor performance. 25.5% of the students scored 2 marks and 32% of the students scored 3 marks. On the contrary, 14% of the students scored 4 and 8% of the students scored 5 out of 5 marks showing proficiency in recognizing phonemic variation. Among all the 5 questions, the second one (was/wash) was the maximum scoring question. This is because most of the students are familiar with both the words. 57.5% of the students responded correctly to it. On the other hand, the least scoring question was the last one (shock/soak). Only 42% of the students responded correctly to it. This type of moderate performance may be because of the failure in recognizing the difference between aspirated and unaspirated fricative sounds.

The students' performance in recognizing the phonemic variation has been presented below in the table and graph.

Table: 5.50. Students' performance in recognizing the phonemic variation

Marks obtained	No. of respondents	respondents %	Cumulative %
0	11	5.5	5.5
1	30	15	20.5
2	51	25.5	46
3	64	32	78
4	28	14	92
5	16	8	100
Total	200	100	---

Performance presented in graph:

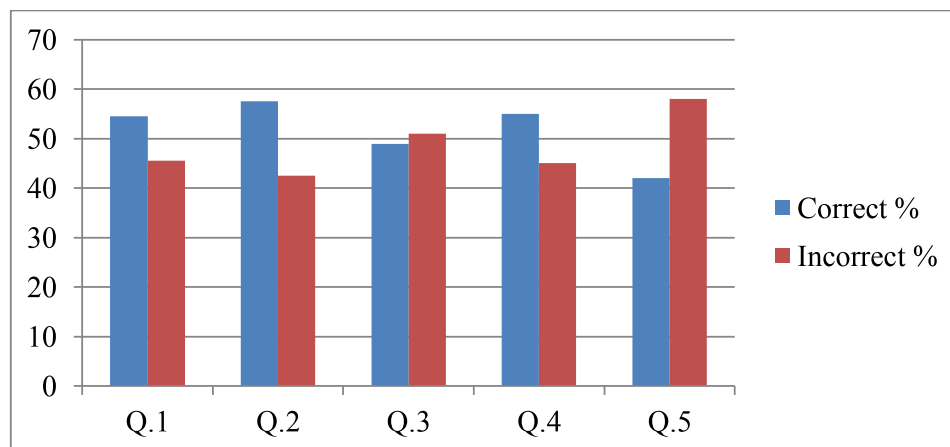


Figure: 5.6 Students' performance in recognizing the phonemic variation

5.3.1.7.7. Test item 7. Testing the students' performance in recognizing and recalling number

The researcher intends to test the students' ability in recognizing and recalling number. In order to collect the students' response the researcher read out loudly 5 separate numbers one after another with time gap. Among the five numbers, three numbers contained 2 digits, one number contained 3 digits and other one contained 4 digits (such as seventy, fourteen, twenty seven, five hundred eight and three thousand eight hundred four). Listen carefully and write down the numbers in words. Most of the students committed mistake in the larger numbers in comparison with the smaller ones.

Most of the students show poor expertise in recognizing and recalling the numbers in English. Only 2.5% of the students' responded correctly to all the five items. 15% of the students scored zero (0) and 20.5% of the students scored 1 out of 5 marks. 23% of the students scored 2 and 27% of the students scored three marks. On the other hand, 12% of the students scored 4 and only 2.5% of the students scored 5 out of 5 marks. Among all the five questions, the first one (seventy) was the maximum scoring question. As it was an only two digit and one of the most frequently used number, so the students' response was better than the larger numbers. 48.5% of the students' responded correctly to it. On the other hand, the least scoring question was the last one (five hundred and eight). Only 38% of the students' responded correctly to it. The reason for the wrong responses of the students was due to the failure and carelessness of the students in listening to the readout numbers. Further they failed to differentiate the ending of numbers like seventy, forty, eighty, seven and so. Moreover, a good deal of the students' answered in number instead of word without considering the instruction given.

The students' performance in recognizing number boundaries and recalling has been presented below in the table and graph.

Table: 5.51 Students' performance in recognizing and recalling number

Marks obtained	No. of respondents	respondents %	Cumulative %
0	30	15	15
1	41	20.5	35.5

2	46	23	58.5
3	54	27	85.5
4	24	12	97.5
5	05	2.5	100
Total	200	100	---

Performance presented in graph:

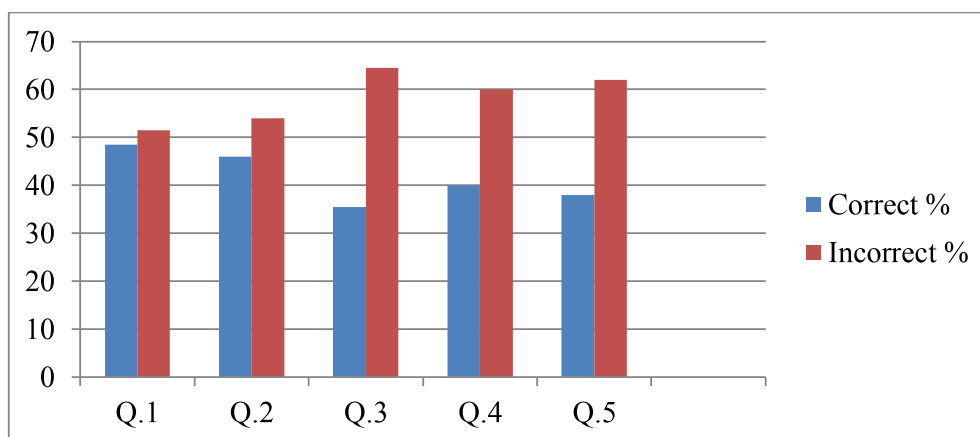


Figure: 5.7 Students' performance in recognizing and recalling number

5.3.2. Speaking Skill

Speech is the biological behaviour which is endowed only upon human being among all other living beings. It is the first and foremost form of communication which occupies a predominant position in enlightening the minds of the people. Information is understood and processed easily through speech rather than writing. It is an active skill, and more complicated than it seems to be and involves more than just pronouncing words.

Speaking is an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing and receiving and processing information (Brown, 1994; Burns & Joyce, 1997). Its form and meaning are dependent on the context in which it occurs, including the participants themselves, their collective experiences, the physical

environment, and the purpose for speaking. It is often spontaneous, open ended, and evolving. Speaking requires that learners not only know how to produce specific points of language such as grammar, pronunciation, or vocabulary (*linguistic competence*), but also that they understand when, why and in what ways to produce language (*sociolinguistic competence*). Finally, speech has its own skills, structures and conventions different from written language (Burns & Joyce, 1997; Carter & Mc Cathy, 1995; Cohen, 1996). The speaker must think of an idea he wishes to express before making an utterance. A good speaker synthesizes this array of skills and knowledge to succeed in a given speech act. The activity of speaking involves:

- ability to speak with a correct pronunciation and present the content in understandable way
- knowledge of grammar, lexical and culture features of the language,
- ability to speak without grammatical errors,
- where, when, why, how, what to speak awareness

Spoken language has wider range of functions to perform than the written language. It starts from casual spontaneous conversation ending with formal speeches and so on. Written language tends to serve rather specialized functions at the formal level. In the process of learning spoken mode of a second language, the learners encounter difficulties because of inter and intra lingual factors, language shock, cultural shock, and so on. However, difficulties and problems are inevitable in the process of learning spoken or written mode of the L2.

5.3.2.1. Process of Communication

The term ‘communication’ can be defined as the process through which inner thought of the communicator is conveyed to others. This process can be termed as human communication or oral communication. The activities of the communication maintain eco balance, co-operation, tolerance, and bring the people in a common line. It is a wander way through human co-operation is brought about. It is the means by which the diverse activities of man are coordinated and correlated with each other for the attainment of common and reciprocal ends (De Lauguna, 1927).

The complete communicative process is the hierarchial arrangement of the various components of communication. They are as follows:

- a. Intended message
- b. Encoder
- c. Signals
- d. Decoder
- e. The received message

In order to explain the above components briefly, it can be thought that the intended message can be abstract ideas and feelings of speaker who wishes to communicate. The encoder is the person who has intended messages in the form of words and gestures. Signal is the encoded message transmitted in the form of the mechanical impulse. Channel is the medium through which a signal travels. Decoder is the person who receives communication signals into meaning and ideas. Received message is the result of decoding communication signals. Psychologically speaking, after receiving the message, the nervous system of the receiver is activated and subsequently interpreted, and appropriate meanings are assigned to the received codes to make the communication process complete.

5.3.2.2. Communicative Competence

The term 'communicative competence' is viewed by the scholar (Hymes, 1961) as the competence in communication which covers all modes of competence in linguistic behaviours by the speech community. This includes both social and grammatical behaviours. The term 'all modes of communication' (Hymes, 1962) can further be explained as the language competence that has total comprehension and total verbal exposition in all modes of society, which includes group interaction – interpersonal interaction involving different dialectal areas. Also, the verbal exposition will encompass the non-verbal behavior which has cultural compatibility. From the above discussion, it becomes obvious that there are two different kinds of competences, viz. grammatical competence and communicative competence. Grammatical competence can be achieved by the way of exposing one to the structure of language; whereas the communicative competence can be achieved by exposing oneself both to the structure of the language as well as the social behavior which pivots around certain conventional rules as put forth by the society.

5.3.2.3. Communication Strategy

Communication strategy is a systematic attempt by the learner to express or decode meaning in the target language in the situations where the appropriate systematic target language rules have not been formed (Tarone et al., 1983). Ellis (1985) defines ‘communication strategies are psycholinguistic plans which exist as part of the language user’s communicative competence. They are potentially conscious and they serve as substitutes for production plans which the learner is unable to implement’. In the process of learning speaking, the learners adopt some kind of strategies like drawling, self repairing, semantic avoidance etc., to conceal their linguistic inadequacy as well as to achieve the task of communication. Various scholars (Tarone, 1980; Blaly Stick, 1984; Fzerch and Kasper, 1980) have formulated different typologies for the types of communication strategies adopted by the learners.

Cook (2001) says that the learners adopt certain strategies when they try to express things just beyond their current level of functioning L2. Further, he says communication strategy of L2 learners will enhance the learning’, and the learners’ strategy indicates that the learners are encountering the linguistic problems in the process of learning. The learners knowingly and unknowingly use inter and intra lingual strategies to convey their message to others. But they fail to convey the message as they intended due to their linguistic inadequacy. By using the strategy they get satisfaction, assuming that they have conveyed the meaning completely to the questions asked by the researcher. The learners adopt the strategies whenever they encounter problems at all the levels of language like phonological, morphological, syntactical and discourse.

In the second language research, should be paid to the related area of communicative behavior. So, here concentration has been paid on communication strategies of the second language learners. Further, communication strategy is not dealt with here as a learner’s ability to communicate effectively and efficiently. It is only a tactic followed by the learners to conceal a gap in their communication. So, here the main objective is to test and identify when and how the learners make use of such strategies in speech.

5.3.2.4. Difficulties Faced in Speaking by the Students

Zhang (2009) argued that speaking remains the most difficult skill to master for the majority of the English learners, and they are still incompetent in

communicating orally in English. Rababa'h (2005) pointed out that there are many factors that cause difficulties in speaking English among EFL learners. Some of these factors are related to the learners themselves, the teaching strategies, the curriculum and the environment. For instance, many learners lack the necessary vocabulary to get their meaning across, and consequently, they cannot keep the interaction going. Inadequate strategic competence and communicative competence can be another reason as well for not being able to keep the interaction going. Some learners also lack the motivation to speak English. They do not see a real need to learn or speak English. Motivation indeed is the crucial force which determines whether a learner embarks in a task at all, how much energy he devotes to it, and how long he preserves (Littlewood, 1984, p.53). The development of communicative skills can only occur if learners have the motivation and opportunity to express their own identity and relate with the people around them (Littlewood, 1981). Teaching strategies also contribute to this problem as they are inadequate, and they do not emphasis on speaking, which results in a meager development of this skill. Besides, vocabulary items are taught in isolation. Teacher training programmes were found to be not very successful in changing the teachers' methodology (Rababa'h, 2005). Furthermore, all the other subjects are taught in Assamese only, and English is seen as an academic subject only, which again explicitly indicates the exposure to the English language is less than insufficient. The lack of target language environment can be considered another problem, which of course results in a lack of involvement in real life situations. Not allowing learners to participate in discourse can be another reason for speaking difficulties. Children need both to participate in discourse and to build up knowledge and skills for participation in order to learn discourse skills (Cameron, p.36). furthermore, language is best learned when the learners' attention is focused on understanding, saying and doing something with language, and not when their attention is focused explicitly on linguistic features (Kumaravadivelu, 2003, p.27). It is worthy to mention that researchers recognize that learners can improve their speaking ability by developing learning strategies that enable them to become independent learners (Nakatani, 2010). Littlewood (1981) argued that some teachers use L1 for class management. Nevertheless, this can be another factor that contributes to the problem of speaking difficulties. This is because using L₁ means sacrificing valuable opportunities for well-motivated foreign use. In addition, it tends to devalue the foreign language as a vehicle for communication. Learners see it as allocated to

communicatively nonessential domains such as drills or dialogue practice, while the mother tongue remains the appropriate medium for discussing matters of immediate importance. Another main reason for other teachers to use L₁ is vocabulary and grammar. Although their attitudes are of disagreement with L₁, this is not reflected in their practice (Al-Busaidi, 1998).

The difficulties in speaking faced by the Assamese medium students are discussed as below:

5.3.2.4.1. Defective Pronunciation

Assamese medium students do not have appropriate English pronunciation. It has been observed that a lack of adequate knowledge of English sound, L₁ interference and other related negative transfers while speaking contribute to this situation.

I. Phonological Interference: The Assamese medium students face difficulty in pronouncing some particular vowels and consonants. Some vowels and consonants are not found in Assamese language and the Assamese medium students tend to replace with the nearest similar sounds present in their mother tongue.

Monophthongal Correlation between (RP) English Received Pronunciation and Assamese.

i. /i:/ is a close front long vowel. As far as articulation, /i:/ is concerned the tongue is held tightly. Again /ɪ/ is a front just above half close unrounded vowel. The Assamese students find difficult to articulate both these two vowels and substitute /i/ for both /i:/ and /ɪ/. For instance-

Words	RP	students' pronunciation
is	/ ɪz /	/iz/
ease	/ i:z /	/iz/
lip	/ lp /	/lip/
lead	/ li:d /	/lid/

ii. RP /æ/ is a front unrounded half open vowel which is absent in Assamese. Therefore the Assamese speakers tend to substitute the sound with a closely related sound /e/ or /a/. For instance-

Words	RP	students' pronunciation
sad	/sæd/	/sed/
attack	/ətæk/	/etak/

iii. RP /ʌ/ is a back unrounded half open vowel which seems to be substituted by /a/ and /o/ sound while pronouncing in words. For instance-

Words	RP	students' pronunciation
flush	/flʌʃ/	/flaʃ/
government	/gʌvənmənt/	/gobhərnment/

iv. RP /ə/ is a mid central short vowel with a neutral lip position just between half close and half open. It is a frequent vowel in English vocabulary which is also available in Assamese phonemes. But due to the lack of phonemic contrast between /ə/ and /æ/, Assamese students tend to have difficulties distinguishing in some word pairs substituting with their nearest possible sound /e/. When /ə/ occurs in initial position, Assamese students tend to pronounce it either with their nearest possible sound mid-central /e/. But when /ə/ occurred in medial position, they tend to substitute and pronounce with the close front vowel /i/ or mid-front vowel /e/, instead of /ə/. For instance-

Words	RP	students' pronunciation
account	/əkaunt/	/ekaunt/
company	/kʌmpəni/	/kəmpini/
famous	/feɪməs/	/femes/

v. RP /ɑ:/ is a back open unrounded long vowel which seems to be substituted by the front open unrounded short vowel /a/. For instance,

Words	RP	students' pronunciation
Card	/kɑ:d /	/kard/
Father	/fɑ:ðə (r)/	/faðar /

vi. /ɔ: / is a back half opened positioned rounded vowel which seems to be substituted by the mid back short rounded vowel /o/ and the low front unrounded short vowel /a/ by the Assamese medium students as no equivalent sound is present in Assamese.

Words	RP	students' pronunciation
All	/ɔ:l/	/al/
Talk	/tɔ:k/	/tok/
Board	/bɔ:d	bord/

vii. RP /ɜ:/ is a central half open positioned long vowel which seems to be substitute by the low front unrounded short vowel/a/. For instance,

Words	RP	students' pronunciation
Serve	/sɜ:v /	/sarbh/
Fur	/fɜ: (r)/	/far/

viii. RP /ɒ/ is a back open rounded vowel which is mostly substituted by its nearest similar sound the back mid rounded short vowel /o/ while pronounced in words. For instance-

Words	RP	students' pronunciation
Got	/gɒt/	/got/
Hot	hɒt/	/hot/

ix. RP /u: / is a long back close rounded vowel. Though this phoneme is also present in Assamese, most of the Assamese medium students articulate /u/ for the production of both /u: / and /u/ sound. For instance-

Words	RP	students' pronunciation
Loose	/lu:s /	/lus/
Look	/ luk /	/luk/

Diphthongal Correlation between RP and Assamese

All the diphthongs found in RP are not present in Assamese. So they are substituted by other diphthongs and sometimes by monophthongs while pronouncing English words by the Assamese students.

a. RP /eɪ / begins slightly below the half close position moving towards RP /ɪ / with the lips being spread which is substituted by /e/, /a/, /o/ and /ei/ while pronounce in words. For instance-

Words	RP	students' pronunciation
Late	/ leit/	/let/
Say	/ seɪ /	/se/
Data	/deɪtə /	/data/

b. RP /aɪ / is a glide from the front open position towards RP /ɪ / with the lips being neutral to a loosely spread position. The students tend to replace it by /i/. For instance-

Words	RP	students' pronunciation
Christ	/kraɪst/	khrist
Tiny	/tami/	/tini/

c. RP /əʊ / is a glide which begins at a central position just below half close moving

towards /u/ with the lips being neutral in the beginning and to a loosely spread position. Most of the time, the Assamese students tend to replace it with /o/ while they pronounce in words. For instance-

Words	RP	students' pronunciation
Home	/həʊm/	/hom/
Go	/gəʊ/	/go/

d. RP / aʊ / begins between the front and the back open position and proceeds towards the direction of /u/ with the lips being neutral in the beginning and weakly rounded at the end. This vowel glide is replaced with /au/ and /o/ by the Assamese medium students. For instance-

Words	RP	students' pronunciation
Now	/naʊ/	/nau/
House	/haʊf/	/haus/

e. RP /ɪə / is a glide which begins above the half close position and proceeds towards /ə/ with the lips being neutral. The Assamese medium students tend to substitute this vowel glide by its nearest similar sounds such as /ia/, /i/ etc. For instance-

Words	RP	students' pronunciation
Near	/nɪə /	/niar/
Cheer	/tʃɪə /	/ciar /

f. RP / eə / is a glide from the front open position towards /ə/ with the lips being neutral to a loosely spread position. The Assamese medium students tend to replace it with /ia/, /ea/ etc. For instance-

Words	RP	students' pronunciation
Hair	/heə(r) /	/hear/

tear /teə(r)/ /tiar/

g. RP / uə / is a glide begins nearly from the back half close position moving towards /ə/ with the lips being weakly rounded in the beginning and neutral at the end. The Assamese medium students tend to substitute this sound with /u/, /iu/, /ou/ etc. For instance-

Words	RP	students' pronunciation
Sure	/ʃuə/	/ʃiur/
Poor	/puə/	/pur/

h. RP / ɔɪ / is a glide begins near the back half-open position and moves in the direction of /ɪ/. The lips are open-rounded at the beginning and neutral at the end. The Assamese medium students tend to substitute it with / æ /, /əɪ / etc. For instance-

Words	RP	students' pronunciation
Point	/pɔɪnt/	/pænt/
Toy	/tɔɪ/	/təɪ/, /tæ/ etc.

Consonantal Correlation between RP and Assamese

Assamese language differs widely from Standard British English in the context of consonants too, and these differences create obstacles when the Assamese medium students try to speak in Standard English as they simply cannot resist the L₁ influence. It is obvious that we cannot avoid the effect of mother tongue in learning second language and this effect of mother tongue can be clearly heard in the pronunciation of second language. The errors committed by Assamese medium students related to the consonant sounds are presented below.

i. RP /v/ is a voiced labio-dental fricative which the Assamese medium students tend to substitute with /bh/ sound anywhere in words. For instance-

Words	RP	students' pronunciation
Vest	/vest/	/b ^h est/
Move	/mu:v/	/mub ^h /

ii. RP /f/ is a voiceless labio-dental fricative which is replaced by aspirated bilabial plosive /p^h/ by the Assamese medium students. For instance-

Words	RP	students' pronunciation
Face	/feɪs/	/p ^h es/, /p ^h ec/
Fact	/fækt/	/p ^h ekt/

iii. RP /tʃ/ is a voiceless palato- alveolar affricate which the Assamese medium students tend to replace by palatal plosive /c/. For instance -

Words	RP	students' pronunciation
Chalk	/tʃɔ:k/	/cək/
Furniture	/fɜ:nɪʃə(r)/	/farnisar/

iv. RP /dʒ/ is a voiced palato- alveolar affricate which the Assamese students tend to replace by palatal plosive /ʃ/. For instance -

Words	RP	students' pronunciation
Jam	/dʒæm/	/ʃem/
Age	/eɪdʒ/	/eʃ/

v. RP /z/ is a voiced velor fricative which is replaced by /ʃ/ by the Assamese medium students. For instance -

Words	RP	students' pronunciation
Zoo	/zu:/	/ʃu/
Zebra	/zebrə	/ʃebra/

vi. RP /ʒ/ is a voiced palato alveolar fricative which the Assamese medium students tend to replace with /ʃ/. For instance-

Words	RP	students' pronunciation
Measure	/meʒə/	/miʃar/

Vision /vɪʒn/ /b^hiʒon/

vii. RP /ʃ/ is a voiceless palato alveolar fricative which is replaced by /s/ sound when the Assamese medium students pronounce in words. For instance -

Words	RP	students' pronunciation
Shade	/ʃeɪd/	/sed/
Shampoo	/ʃæmpu:/	/sempu/
Sheep	/ʃi:p/	/sip/

viii. RP /θ/ is a voiceless dental fricative which is replaced by the voiceless dental plosive [t^h] by the Assamese medium students. For instance-

Words	RP	students' pronunciation
Thin	/θɪn/	/t ^h ɪn/
Oath	/əʊθ/	/ɔ:t ^h /

ix. RP /ð/ is a voiced dental fricative which is tend to be replaced by the voiced dental fricative [d] by the Assamese medium students. For instance-

Words	RP	students' pronunciation
They	/ðeɪ/	/deɪ/
Father	/fɑ:ðə(r)/	/fadar/

II. Diminishing Diphthong (Monophthongisation)

In Assamese some diphthongs are not available and therefore they are substituted with the available pure vowels in order to pronounce them. For instance, English diphthongs [uə, eə, ɪə, ɔɪ,] are not found in Assamese and therefore the Assamese medium students tend to replace these diphthongs with certain monophthongs.

The conversion of diphthongs into monophthongs is often found among the Assamese medium students causing them mispronunciation. For instance-

English Words	RP	students' pronunciation
Late	/ leɪt /	/let/
Say	/ seɪ /	/se/
Gate	/geɪt/	/get/

III. Diphthongization

Diphthongization is the conversion of monophthongs into diphthongs. The following kinds of diphthongizational errors are found among the Assamese medium students.

Words	RP	students' pronunciation
Pronunciation	/prənʌnsieɪʃn/	/pronaunsieson/
Forteen	/fɔːtiːn/	/p ^h ourtin/

IV. Addition of Vowel Sound at the Initial Position

The Assamese medium students tend to insert an additional vowel sound / I / at the initial position. For instance-

English Words	RP	students' pronunciation
Smart	/smɑ:t/	/ismart/
Skull	/skʌl/	/iskal/
Sky	/skaɪ/	/iskai/

V. Addition of a Vowel Sound in the Interior of a Word

The Assamese medium students tend to insert an additional vowel sound in the interior of a word. For instance-

Words	RP	students' pronunciation
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Evening	/i:vnɪ ^ɔ /	/ibhɪɪ ^ɔ /
Bottle	/bɒtɪ/	/bətəɪ/
Film	/fɪlm/	/p ^h ɪlm/

VI. Addition of Consonant Sound in the Interior of a Word

The tendency of adding a sound or sounds to the interior of a word is often found among the Assamese medium students. For instance -

Words	RP	students' pronunciation
Modern	/mɒdn/	/modern/
Listen	/lɪsən/	/listen/
Postpone	/pɒspəun/	/pəstpən/

VII. Elimination of Sound from the Interior of a Word

Some common errors of this type found among Assamese medium students are as below.

Words	RP	students' pronunciation
Handshake	/hændʃeɪk/	/hensek/
Government	/gʌvənmənt/	/gobhment/, /gormənt/ etc
Superintendent	/su:pərɪntendənt /	/suparenten /

VIII. Elimination of Sound at the End of a Word

In case of some words, the tendency of eliminating sound at the end of a word is often found among the Assamese medium students. For instance -

Words	RP	students' pronunciation
Last	/lɑ:st/	/laf/
Demand	/dɪmɑ:nd/	/diman/

IX. Devoicing of the Voiced Consonants

In phonology, devoicing is a sound change where a voiced consonant becomes voiceless due to the influence of its phonological environment. The following devoicing errors are found among the Assamese medium students.

Words	RP	students' pronunciation
Dogs	/dɒgz/	/dɔ̃gs/
Eyes	/aɪz/	/aɪs/
Visa	/vi:zə/	/b ^h isa/

X. Re-arranging of sounds in a word:

Most commonly it refers to the switching of two or more contiguous sounds that often occur with the Assamese medium students. For instance-

Words	RP	students' pronunciation
Risk	/risk/	/riks/
Flask	/flɑ:sk/	/p ^h laks/
Task	/tɑ:sk/	/tɑ:ks/

5.3.2.4.2. Wrong stress and intonation pattern:

Stress and intonation are important features of English. Stress indicates the speakers' emphasis on certain word while intonation implies speaker's wish, intention, eagerness, query etc. Wrong use of stress and intonation therefore may lead to misunderstanding of the message. Most of the Assamese medium students under study were observed to use stress and intonation in an improper way. Most of the time they did not use stress on the right syllable while dealing with disyllabic or polysyllabic words. Most of them were unable in using stress on the right word while uttering a sentence. It has also been noticed that some of the students while try to speak, it seems to some extent, they are speaking a foreign language in Assamese tone which is even not acceptable by the standard Indian English too. Therefore, for the

international intelligibility, the standard of our spoken English must be developed to a great extent.

5.3.2.4.3. Inadequate Vocabulary

The students under study struggle to find the appropriate vocabulary when trying to speak in English with the researcher which reflects their insufficient vocabulary repertoire. Almost all the students under study were agree with the researcher that lack of adequate vocabulary is the major problem for their poor performance in speaking English. It has been observed that among the Assamese medium students there is a gap between the vocabulary range when they write and speak i.e. when they write, they have enough time to figure out the most appropriate words and phrases. But in case of speaking, some words and phrases may never come to their mind instantly. So, they remain unable to deliver the intended meaning precisely. Most often, the students face a shortage of vocabulary and cannot express accurately what they want to express. Almost all the students agreed that they have vocabulary problem which is the major reason why they cannot express themselves clearly and appropriately, which directly contribute to their oral communicative deficiency.

5.3.2.4.4. Lack of fluency:

Whatever might be the causes, most of the students of Assamese medium schools are badly poor in speaking skill in comparison with the other language skills such as reading, writing and listening skill. As soon as the students come to know that they have to speak in English with the researcher, they get confused and nervous. It has been observed that even most of the students of Higher Secondary level after learning English as a core subject for almost 10 years fumble in the name of English speaking. Their English competency is not up to the mark, rather worse, because they are less oriented to listening and speaking skill in the English classroom. Whatever English they speak cannot be termed as 'English language' indeed. The students adopted some strategies in order to make up their oral communicative deficiency which can be discussed as below:

a. Avoidance:

It has been observed that 16% of the sample students avoided speaking with the researcher in English. Moreover, most of the students do not have any interest in speaking English with the researcher. Reasons for the avoidance are that the students do not want to show their inadequacy in speaking English to others. So, to conceal their linguistic inadequacy, they follow the strategy of avoidance. Further, anxiety, language and cultural shock are yet the other factors for their avoidance.

Sentence avoidance is a strategy adopted by the students to conceal their linguistic inadequacy. Upon questioning, the students generally prefer to give short or even one word answer instead of constructing sentence or giving complete answer as mentioned below-

Only name i.e. Alina, Alex etc. in response to the question '*what is your good name?*'

Businessman, teacher, etc. in response to the question '*what do you want to become in future?*' 'Happy' in response to '*What will you do if you get 1st division in 12th standard final examination?*'

The above samples are a part of conversation taken place between the researcher and the student under study. Before starting the conversation, the students were instructed to respond elaborately to the questions. But most of the students' responses were in elliptical form instead of giving elaborate response. For instance, many students' response was 'happy' for the question '*What will you do if you get 1st division in 12th standard final examination?*' The question itself expects answer in complex form; such as, 'If I get 1st division, I will be happy' etc. The expected answer is a complex sentence consisting of a main clause and a subordinate clause. Of course, the subordinate clause is not imperative as it exists in the question itself: however, the main clause which only carries the expected answer is obligatory. The students without taking risk of producing or repeating the sentence, the crux of meaning was conveyed by using only one word 'happy'. In the similar way, most of the students responded to all the questions in an elliptical form.

b. Drawling:

c. Drawling or lengthening of the syllables is another strategy adopted by the students when they are unable to find the appropriate word as well as correct structure to form a sentence. For instance,

I like....music,...gamesss....good friendsss....etc.

On a holiday.... I.... play game.....watch TV.... Etc.

c. Repetition:

Sometimes the learners tend to repeat a sound, word or several words and take time to think of the next word. For instance-

I am eighteen...eighteen years old.

I... I like music... music,

In the afternoon I play... I play cricket..cricket, football etc.

From the above sample it can be observed that the words repeated by the students belong to various grammatical classes. After repeating either one of these words, the students continue the speech as shown in the above samples. Repetition is not only found in the word level, but also at the sentence level. That is to say that in certain contexts a part of sentence too is repeated. For instance-

I do not like... I do not like bad friends.

I enjoy movies.. I enjoy movies.. music, at the time of leisure.

d. Fillers:

This is another type of peculiar strategy adopted by the students to fulfill the linguistic developmental gap they face in the process of communication. In certain cases the students use this strategy (filler) to conceal the internal process taking place in their mind. It has been observed that the students initiated to speak on a given topic, but while they face difficulty in the process of communication, they use sounds like mmm... and sometimes L1 words and then again they continue their speech. So, the use of fillers indicates the learners' mental

search. After getting linguistic elements and information from their memory, they continued their linguistic behavior. For instance-

I come to school mmm.. by bus.

In a rainy day mmmm.. I read at home.

mmmm.. in my family mmm... I have one brother, one sister and mmm... my parents. Etc.

5.3.2.4.5. Difficulties in Grammar

Almost all the Assamese medium students have problems of a mixed variety in the area of grammar which stands as a stumbling block in their oral communication. They frequently commit error in the area such as tense (past and past participle marker of the verbs), nouns (plural marker), articles, subject-verb agreement etc. It has been observed that the ratio of errors differ in case of speaking skill in comparison to the writing skill of the students. In case of writing skill, they are better to some extent in comparison to speaking. Many of the students are able to write some most commonly used simple sentences, but they commit various kinds of grammatical error when they speak those very simple and commonly used sentences. For instance,

I have two brother and one sister. (brothers)

My father is a teacher and my mother__housewife. (my mother is a housewife)

My school name is Chenga HS School. (school's) etc.

Some time they get confused even in case of some common and simple grammatical rules. For instance, most of the students have the concept of using 's' or 'es' with the principal verbs in present indefinite tense in case of 3rd person singular subject. But when they speak, they fail to maintain the rule and end up without 's' or 'es' with the principal verb.

In the area of morphology, students adopt the strategy of intra lingual transfer wherever they find irregularities in the rules of target language. For instance, many students have the tendency to add simply 's' to all the singular nouns when they are used as plural nouns in a sentence. For instance-

tooths for teeth;

childs for children, etc.

Another strategy adopted by the students is analogical creation. For instance, as far as English is concerned, the suffix 'ed' is most commonly used in order to

change a present form of a verb into a past form. But some verbs are exceptional to this rules which are known as irregular verb. For instance-

Present tense	past tense
Eat	ate
Run	ran, etc.

Most of the students have acquired the knowledge of same rule in case of changing the form of tense namely, adding ‘-ed’ to the verb while making a present form of verb into past form. But the exceptions are not properly learned, or even after learning, they have difficulty in using them appropriately. As a result, the irregular verbs are conjugated by following the general rule of adding the past tense marker ‘-ed’ with the basic present tense form. For instance-

Goed	for	went	
Speaked	for	spoke	
Buyed	for	bought	etc.

5.3.2.4.6. Inhibition:

Inhibition is another serious problem of the students in the way of learning English as a second language. Most of the students either scare or feel shy to interact in English with the researcher as well as the English teacher because of their inhibition. Students explain that their fear of making mistakes in front of their classmates as well as the teacher is the main reason for not speaking in English in the classroom as well as in the school campus with their classmates and friends. They feel that people will laugh at them if they make mistake. Moreover, some of them feel that to some people to speak English means to show too much. Moreover, without speaking English they can do everything smoothly even in their English class. So, they do not feel the need of speaking English.

5.3.2.4.7. Use of Mother Tongue

Use of mother tongue is another problem found among the Assamese medium students. During the class observation, it was noticed that students tend to speak in

Assamese when they discuss anything regarding the topic of English class with their teacher as well as their classmate. The students expressed that they do not know how to discuss their ideas in English. Moreover, their English teacher also does not encourage them to speak only in English even inside the classroom. So, they switch over to Assamese as they feel unlimited comfortable in communication. Due to this extensive use of mother tongue, the students generally deprived of listening English which directly hindrance their speaking skill as we know without listening we cannot develop the speaking skill.

5.3.3. Reading Skill

Reading is one of the language skills and one of the gateways of getting worldly knowledge. It is a complex and conscious activity where using the written symbols meaning and ideas are obtained. However, the reader's background knowledge is necessary for complete understanding of a text. Education of a child is incomplete unless he is equipped with the ability to read, to decipher, to interpret and to understand properly the content of a reading material. The intellectual advancement of a child is strictly limited, if he is unable to read (Yadav, 2002). Reading is a good source of self education. By reading a person can keep himself/herself informed of all the worldly knowledge.

Widdowson (1979) says that "reading is the process of getting linguistic information 'via-print' through reading; the information conveyed by the writer through the print medium is retrieved by the reader". Needless to say that the amount of information retrieved from the printed matter may differ from reader to reader. Written text not only provides linguistic meaning, but also contextual meaning. Linguistic meaning involves represented information and this is called literal meaning. Contextual meaning includes the socio-cultural and intentional meaning incorporated in the text. A literal meaning of a text is accessible to the ordinary reader whereas to obtain the pragmatic meaning of the encoded matter, one must have rich exposure to the ethno linguistic aspect of the reading materials. The efficient reader can only retrieve both the literal and pragmatic meanings from a text.

5.3.3.1. Psychologists and Sociolinguists views of Reading

Psychologists consider that reading is a guessing game and a sort of thinking activity. Reading activity includes perception, recognition, association, understanding, organization and finding meaning. So, the process of reading is complex in nature and related to mental ability of the reader. Hence, reading is a psycholinguistic process. It starts with a linguistic representation encoded by a writer and ends up with meaning, which a reader constructs. Thus, it is an interaction between the language and thought. The writer encodes thought in the form of language through the words. If the reader is not able to interact with the words, the meaning will be lost.

According to sociolinguist views, the experience of the reader, interest and effort play a vital role in decoding process. When a reader starts to read, he feels comfortable, and he easily understands the meaning. Hence, he gets meaning, and easily matches the information he gets from the text with that which is within his fund of knowledge he possesses.

5.3.3.2. Reading and Reading Skill

Generally reading is an ability. The reader decodes meaning from the printed or written words. In the process of reading, the reader employs his reading skill. The degree of reading skill varies from person to person according to the linguistic competence and background knowledge he/she possesses. The following are some of the important components of reading skill.

- a. Recognition of the graphemes.
- b. Recognition of the correlation of graphemes within words.
- c. Recognizing word boundaries and sentence boundaries.
- d. Recognizing the meaning of words and its relationship in sentences.
- e. Recognizing relationship between and among sentences in a discourse.
- f. Deducing meaning of unfamiliar words.
- g. Inferring implicit and explicit information and ideas of text, etc.

5.3.3.3. Reading Comprehension

Reading means reading with comprehension. In the process of reading comprehension, the printed words are not just decoded as it is, but it is decoded by a reader using his linguistic competence, socio linguistic and existing knowledge about the topic. It is the fact that one's comprehension ability can be decided by some of the

internal and external factors. Under the internal factors, linguistic competence (what the reader knows about the language), motivation (how much the reader cares about the task at hand as his general mood about reading), schooling and accumulated reading ability, how well the reader can read are included. Under the external factors, the elements on the printed page, the qualities of the reading environment, factors related to textual characteristics like text readability and text organization are included.

5.3.3.4. Teaching/Learning Reading

The learning of reading is a conscious process which is taught to learn deliberately. One cannot become an effective or fluent reader as soon as he/she starts to learn reading. He has to pass through several stages to become an effective reader. Generally the stages of learning reading are categorized as: at first stage, the learner learns to read the alphabetic orders abc up to xyz. Then he learns to read its combinations (like m y; c a t). In the third stage, the learner learns to read the words and its combination with other words in a sentence and understand its meaning. In the fourth stage, he extends his reading ability at the sentence level. In the fifth stage, he begins to comprehend the discourses. Only at this stage, he uses his both linguistic and socio linguistic knowledge for complete understanding of the text.

5.3.3.5. Difficulties Faced in Reading

Like the other language skills the Assamese medium students face a lot of problem in reading too. For a substantial number of the students, reading is a many faced problem. Though they are definitely familiar with all the letters of the English alphabet, many of them do not know the combination of the letters into words; the combination of words into sentences. As a result, their pronunciation of some words become odd listening and sometimes horrible. And in the sentence level reading they lost the English (melody) sweetness of the sentences. Moreover, it has been observed that the influence of L1 becomes evident while reading English. They read English with a poor reading competency. It seems that they are reading Assamese while reading English text. Though a lot of emphasis has been given by the teachers in developing the reading skill, yet, lots of problems are still prevail among the Assamese medium students.

The difficulties in speaking faced by the Assamese medium students are discussed as below:

5.3.3.5.1. Difficulty in Pronunciation

English has around 44 sounds which are represented by only 26 letters in the written form. Evidently these 26 letters (which represent the written mode) cannot represent all the 44 distinctive sounds exactly when they are used in writing. But anyway according to the rule, we have to represent all these 44 sounds by these 26 letters in the writing mode of English. Therefore, there is no exact correspondence between the English alphabet and their sounds. As a result spellings of the words are not similar to their pronunciation. Hence, adequate knowledge of the spelling system of English is necessary for correct reading. But the Assamese medium students are lagging behind in this regard. It has been noticed that Assamese medium students are victims of English spelling/sound inconsistency, because learning to read the word becomes easier if the language is written as it sounds; whereas English does not follow this system. So, the Assamese medium students face difficulty while reading the following types of words.

a. Different Letters Representing Single (Same) Sound

In English there are lots of letters which represent more than one sound. The words like 'sea', 'see', 'she', etc create problem to the Assamese medium students as in these words different letters like 'ea', 'ee', and 'e' represent the same sound i.e. /u:/. Likewise, in the words like 'can' and 'keep', the 'c' and the 'k' letters represent the same sound i.e. /k/. The students get confused when they come across these types of words and try to pronounce different words in different way.

b. Single Letter Representing Different Sounds

There are some letters in English which represent more than one sound. The words where single letter represents different sounds create problem to the Assamese medium students.

For instance, in the words 'account', 'sad', 'late', 'card' and 'chalk', the letter 'a' represents five different sounds. In the word 'account' the vowel 'a' is pronounced as /ə/, in 'sad' as /æ/, in 'late' as /eɪ/, in 'card' as /ɑ:/, in 'chalk' as /ɔ:/. Again in the

words like 'but', 'put', 'look', 'flood' the vowels play just opposite role in pronunciation. In 'but' the vowel 'u' represents /ʌ/ sound whereas in 'put' the vowel 'u' represents /u/ sound. Likewise in the words 'look' and 'flood' the vowel 'oo' represent /u/ and /ʌ/ respectively. These are the regular irregularities of the English spelling system. Thus most of the students usually commit mistake while reading maintaining accurate sound of the letters.

c. Combination of Letters Represents One Sound

In English there is a system in spelling where combination of more than one letters represents a single sound which also causes difficulty for the Assamese medium students.

For instance, in the words like 'shoe', 'sea', 'father', 'tough', 'passion', 'ball', 'caution', 'fruit' etc combination of two/three letters represents a single sound. In the word 'shoe' 'sh' and 'oe' represent /ʃ/ and /u:/ respectively. In the word 'sea' 'ea' represents /i:/; in 'father' 'th' represents /ð/; in 'passion' 'ss' and 'io' represent /ʃ/ and /ə/ respectively; in 'caution' 'au' represents /ɔ:/ and in 'fruit' 'ui' represents /u:/. Thus it seems an inborn problem for the Assamese medium students in English spelling system which is not found in their Assamese spelling system.

d. Letters Having No Sound

In the spelling system of English some letters always remain silent in the pronunciation of some specific words. Many words are there of this category.

For instance, words like listen, often, doubt, calm, palm, know, lamb, resign, neighbor, island, hour, honour, through, reign etc where certain letters are silent and have no sound at all in the words. The Assamese medium students get confused while pronouncing these words.

The above mentioned words are the area of difficulty for Assamese medium students. They always try to pronounce words based on the spelling. But the spelling of a word does not always match with the sounds in English. So the students are not able to pronounce them properly. Pronunciation of words is related to their meaning which means that when a reader mispronounces such words, this might affect his /her

comprehension as a reader, and confused others as listener. So, the Assamese medium students due to their wrong pronunciation suffer from miscomprehension of the text.

5.3.3.5.2. Difficulty in Putting Stress and Intonation

The Assamese medium students are often found struggling while dealing with the stress pattern of English. Due to their inability to understand the stress pattern of English they are often seen to put stress on the wrong syllable leading to mispronunciation. Understanding of primary and secondary stress is also an area of difficulty for them which often make them confused while reading. In the same way they cannot maintain adequate intonation while reading sentence or in a discourse. As a result the accuracy of the sentence is lost to some extent along with the melody of the sentence. Perhaps this is why, most of the time the English spoken by some of the students remain unintelligible to the listener.

5.3.3.5.3. Lack of Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension means understanding by reading. Lack of reading comprehension is another serious problem for the Assamese medium students. Most of the Assamese medium students do not understand while reading even a simple and short text. The students struggle with their very limited and insufficient vocabulary which is the reason for their inability to comprehend the reading materials. Moreover, a reader's proficiency depends upon his /her linguistic competence, background knowledge about the subject and the words employed in the text. A successful reader is a person who can handle large amount of written material. In this regard, the Assamese medium students are lagging far behind. Having rich vocabulary knowledge is another key element to better reading comprehension (Hudson, 2007). So, second language learners need to develop their English vocabulary in depth and width. As English is a very flexible language, most of the English words have more than one meaning. Moreover, in English same word bear separate meaning in different sentence as noun, verb, adjective etc. Lots of such words are present in English language which confuses the Assamese medium students because they do not consider the meaning of the word in the context.

5.3.3.5.4. Lack of Fluency

Lack of fluency in reading is another common problem found among the Assamese medium students. Though they are definitely familiar with all the letters of the English alphabet, many of them do not know the combination of the letters into words; the combination of words into sentences. The students while reading get stuck in the middle of words and sentences as they cannot assimilate the letters into words. Comprehension difficulties also disrupt fluency. When the Assamese medium students encounter unfamiliar vocabulary, they misinterpret the usage or meaning of the words, lose the thread of the sentence, or fail to identify the contextual significance of other words in the passage.

5.3.3.5.5. Lack of Reading Competence

The Assamese medium students do not have adequate reading competency that makes them efficient reader. This lack of competency seems to be the result of insufficient reading practice and lack of exposure to English whether through reading, writing, speaking or listening. The students do not have enough scope to English exposure either in the classroom or outside the school campus in their wider community. There is no other source of reading material except their text books. Besides, how much they practice reading is a matter of question. There is no provision of any library in the Higher Secondary Schools/junior colleges from the government which is regarded as a principal source of reading materials. So, most of the time, they feel difficulty whenever they confront with a new text except their lessons of the text book.

5.3.3.6. Interpretation of the Students' Responses of Reading Skill

5.3.3.6.1. Test item 1. Testing the Students' performance in completing the incomplete sentence

The researcher wants to test the students' knowledge in completing the incomplete sentence where a fair degree of knowledge regarding compound and complex sentence is required. The students were given five incomplete sentences along with three options for each sentence (such as, Though Ravi is poor, he is ----

wealthy/ honest/ bad man). The students were instructed to complete the incomplete sentence with the appropriate option.

Most of the students' knowledge in completing the incomplete sentence is found limited. 12.5% of the students scored zero (0) out of five marks, i.e. these 12.5% students could not respond correctly even to a single question. 14.5% of the students scored one, 25.5% of the students scored 2 and 31% of the students scored 3 out of 5 marks. On the contrary, 10.5% of the students scored 4 and 6% of the students scored 5 out of 5 marks showing their fair expertise in completing the incomplete sentences. The fifth one (Though Ravi was poor, he is....) was the maximum scoring item which was responded correctly by 67.5% of the respondents; and the second one (He heard an explosion, so he....) was the least scoring item which was responded correctly by 31% of the respondents only. The poor performance may be because of the failure of understanding of the meaning of conjunctions. The students assume that the conjunctions merely link the sentences and words. The students are not familiar with the grammatical functions of the conjunctions which compare or contrast or add the ideas between sentences and between words.

Thus, the given conjunction 'however' carries with it the idea of contradiction. It connects the two independent clauses of having contrast information or ideas. Of the given options to the complete sentence 1, the option (a) 'accepted it' is only carrying the contrast information to the sentence 'He did not like their help'. The remaining options are not carrying contrast idea to the given sentence. So, the conjunction 'however' only the option (a) which the contrast meaning to the sentence preceded to it. Similarly, conjunction 'so' is used in the 2nd sentence (He heard an explosion, so ---), that expected an immediate result to the preceding part of it. So, the required response to the conjunction 'so' is the given option (c) -'rang up the police' (He heard an explosion, so he rang up the police). Further in the given 3rd incomplete sentence the verb 'escape' is placed in between the 'either' and 'or' (either....or). So it requires another verb of having an alternative information or idea to express alternatives emphatically. So the required option to complete the incomplete sentence is the given option (a) 'surrender' (He must either escape or surrender). In the fourth incomplete sentence the verb 'sing' is placed in between the 'both' and 'and' (both....and). So, to complete the sentence (She can both sing and ---

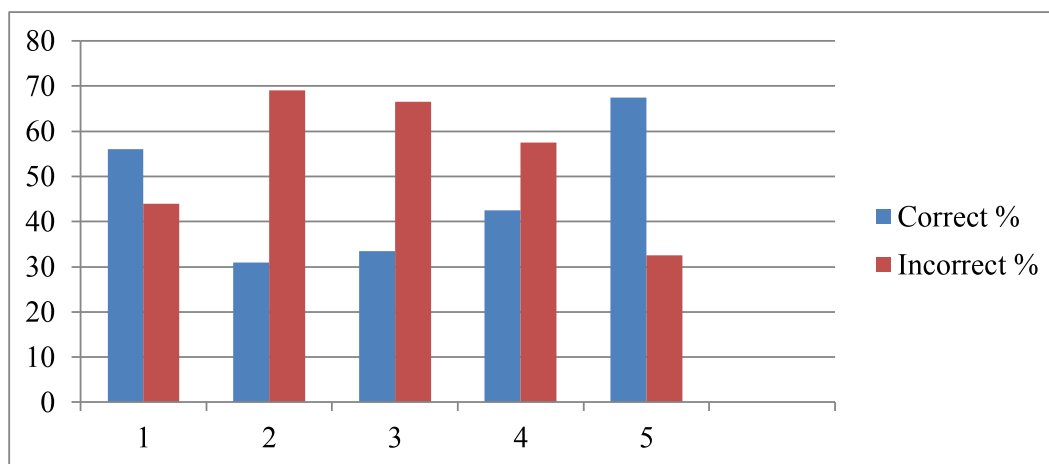
-) another verb is required for combined expression. The verb 'dance' is the acceptable one and remaining options are not used in combination. So, it is evident that the failure of understanding the meaning of the conjunction leads to failure of understanding not only the sentences but also the discourses.

The students' performance in completing the incomplete sentence has been presented below in the table and graph.

Table: 5.52 Students' performance in completing the incomplete sentence

Marks obtained	No. of respondents	respondents %	Cumulative %
0	25	12.5	12.5
1	29	14.5	27
2	51	25.5	52.5
3	62	31	83.5
4	21	10.5	94
5	12	6	100
Total	200	100	---

Performance presented in graph:



NB: 1=he accept it; 2=he rang up the police; 3= surrender; 4= dance; 5= honest.

Figure: 5.8 Students' performance in completing the incomplete sentence

5.3.3.6.2. Test item 2. Testing the students' performance in reading comprehension

The researcher assesses the students' knowledge in reading comprehension. The students were given a simple passage followed by 5 statements. The students were instructed to write whether the statements were true or false based on the passage.

Most of the students show good expertise in reading comprehension of a simple discourse. 10.5% of the students scored 100% marks and some 22.5% of the students scored 80% marks showing their conceptual clarity of the discourse. 34.5% of the students scored 3 and 21% of the students scored 2 marks. On the contrary, 8% of the students scored only one and 3.5% of the students scored (zero) 0 out of 5 marks in such a test where they had to choose whether the statements were true or false after reading a very simple passage. The first one (Siva is an English teacher) was the highest scoring item which was responded correctly by 70.5% of the respondents and the fourth one (Both the teachers have no experience in teaching.) was the least scoring item which was responded correctly by 45% of the respondents. This sorry state of affair may be because of the failure on the part of the students in understanding the words like 'both...and' 'so' 'in spite of being' and 'except'. Due to the inability of understanding these words, they could not perceive inter sentential relationship existing within the given discourse. So, it is evident that to understand

inter sentential relationship, the knowledge of connectives is imperative. Lack of it leads to the misunderstanding of the discourse.

The students' performance in reading comprehension is presented below in the table and graph:

Table: 5.53 Students' performance in reading comprehension

Marks obtained	No. of respondents	respondents %	Cumulative %
0	7	3.5	3.5
1	16	8	11.5
2	42	21	32.5
3	69	34.5	67
4	45	22.5	89.5
5	21	10.5	100
Total	200	100	---

Performance presented in graph:

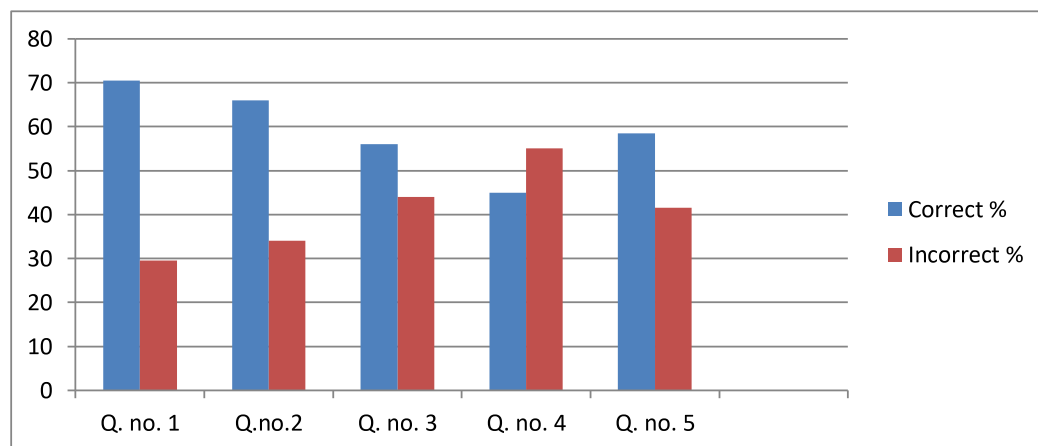


Figure: 5.9 Students' performance in reading comprehension

5.3.3.6.3. Test item 3: Testing the students' performance in matching the parts of sentences

The researcher intends to assess the students' knowledge in matching the part of sentence with another meaningful part. The students were given a table of five fragmentary sentences. The students were instructed to match the fragments of sentences to make meaningful sentence.

Most of the respondents failed in matching the table. 19.5% of the respondents scored zero (0) and 21% of the students scored only 1 out of 5marks, expressing their poor performance in matching the table. 33.5% of the students scored 2 and 21.5% of the students scored 3 marks. On the contrary, 4.5% of the students scored 100% marks, i.e. they responded correctly to all the five items showing their expertise. The fifth one was the highest scoring item which was responded correctly by 49% of the respondents; and the third one was the least scoring item which was responded correctly by 22% of the respondents only. It is the consequence of the students' experience problems in understanding the collocation complexity of the phrasal verbs like 'gave up', 'climbed up', 'called on' etc. Yet another reason may be their poor vocabulary and their inability to infer the delicate shades of meaning of words occurring in different contexts. Thus, the students tend to trace out the meaning to the phrasal verbs without considering the particles, 'up', 'on' etc. which are conjugated with verbs. They pay their heed on only the main parts of the verbs and not on the particles. Taking the meaning of the main part of the verbs alone, they try to trace out the equivalent parts which are given in the options. So, this kind of habit leads them not only to the failure of understanding the meaning of the phrasal verbs, but also failure of finding equivalents to them. Moreover, without considering the sentence meaning, they have matched the parts of the given sentences blindly as indicated above.

The students' performance in matching the parts of the sentences has been presented below in the table and graph:

Table: 5.54 Students' performance in matching the parts of the sentences

Marks obtained	No. of respondents	respondents %	Cumulative %
0	39	19.5	19.5
1	42	21	40.5
2	67	33.5	74
3	43	21.5	95.5
4	00	00	95.5
5	9	4.5	100
Total	200	100	---

Performance presented in graph:

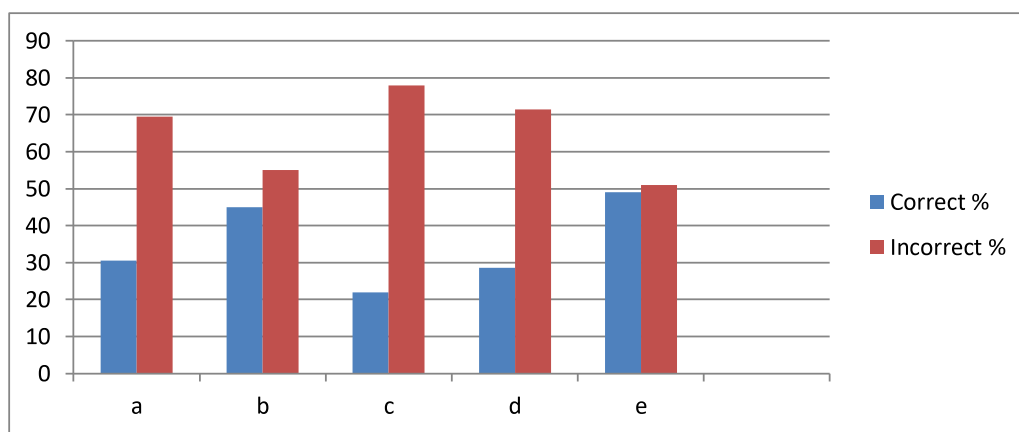


Figure: 5.10 Students' performance in matching the parts of the sentences

5.3.3.6.4. Test item 4: Testing the students' performance in vocabulary

The researcher intends to assess the students' knowledge in vocabulary. The students were given 5 sentences followed by 3 options with each sentence. Each sentence contains one under lined word and the students were instructed to tick the correct synonym for the underlined words. For instance, Sachin Tendulkar is a famous sportsman. options given: a) popular b) active c) unpopular

The students exhibited moderate expertise in their vocabulary. 11% of the respondents scored 4 and 6.5% of the students scored 5 out of 5 marks showing their proficiency in vocabulary. 21.5% of the respondents scored 3 and 25.5% of the students scored 2 marks. On the contrary, 21.5% of the respondents scored 1 and 14% of the respondents scored zero (0) out of 5 marks showing their poor expertise in

vocabulary. The 4th one (SachinTandulkar was a famous sportsman) was the highest scoring item which was responded correctly by 52.5% of the respondents; and the 5th one (The library.....expensive books.) was the least scoring item which was responded correctly by 30% of the respondents only. Being the students of 12th standard they show the minimum command upon vocabulary and their contextual meaning, where their performance ought to be a fairly high degree according to the objectives of their English syllabus. There is a possibility of not understanding the contextual meanings of the underlined words (co-worker, dusk, fruitful, famous and expensive) in the sentences, though synonymous words were given in the options. So, failure of understanding either the contextual meaning or the underlined words or the meaning of the optional words should have driven them to choose incorrect synonymous words.

The students' performance in vocabulary has been presented below in the table and graph:

Table: 5.55 Students' performance in vocabulary

Marks obtained	No. of respondents	respondents %	Cumulative %
0	28	14	14
1	43	21.5	35.5
2	51	25.5	61
3	43	21.5	82.5
4	22	11	93.5
5	13	6.5	100
Total	200	100	---

Performance presented in graph:

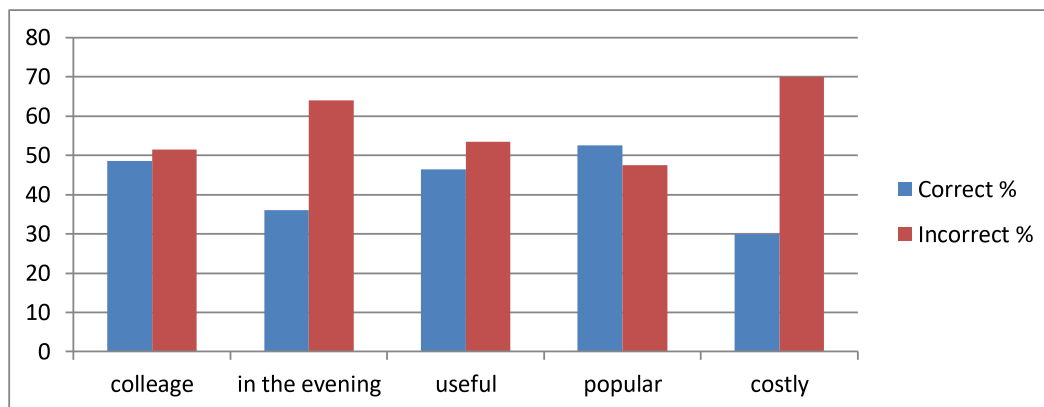


Figure: 5.11 Students' performance in vocabulary

5.3.3.6.5. Test item 5: Testing the Students' performance in vocabulary (homonym)

The researcher intends to assess the students' knowledge in vocabulary (homonym). In order to collect the students' response, they were given 5 sentences containing blank space in every sentence. The students were instructed to fill in the blanks choosing the correct word given in the brackets. For instance, India is a ____ (peace/piece) loving country, The ____ (kettle/cattle) are grazing in the field, etc.

Though almost half of the students show their expertise yet, the overall performance in homonym was not satisfactory. 5% of the respondents scored zero (0), i.e. they could not respond correctly even to a single question out of five questions. Another 12.5% of the students scored only 1 exhibiting their poor knowledge in vocabulary. 20% of the students scored 2 and 32.5% of the students scored 3 marks. On the contrary, 22.5% of the students scored 4 and 7.5% of the students scored 5 out of 5 marks showing their expertise. The fifth one (heir/hair) was the highest scoring item which was responded correctly by 68% of the respondents; and the third one (kettle/cattle)s was the least scoring question which was responded by only 43% of the respondents. The students not only have poor vocabulary but also cannot recognize the orthographical differences and the corresponding phonetic sounds. Due to their inadequate vocabulary skill, the respondents fail to filter the word meaning from the given context and have made an incorrect choice. The inability to recognize the phonetic sounds confirms the shortcomings of bilingual and Grammar Translation Method which are frequently used in the classroom.

The students' performance in vocabulary (homonym) has been presented below in the table and graph:

Table: 5.56 Students' performance in vocabulary (homonym)

Marks obtained	No. of respondents	respondents %	Cumulative %
0	10	5	5
1	25	12.5	17.5
2	40	20	37.5
3	65	32.5	70
4	45	22.5	92.5
5	15	7.5	100
Total	200	100	---

Performance presented in graph:

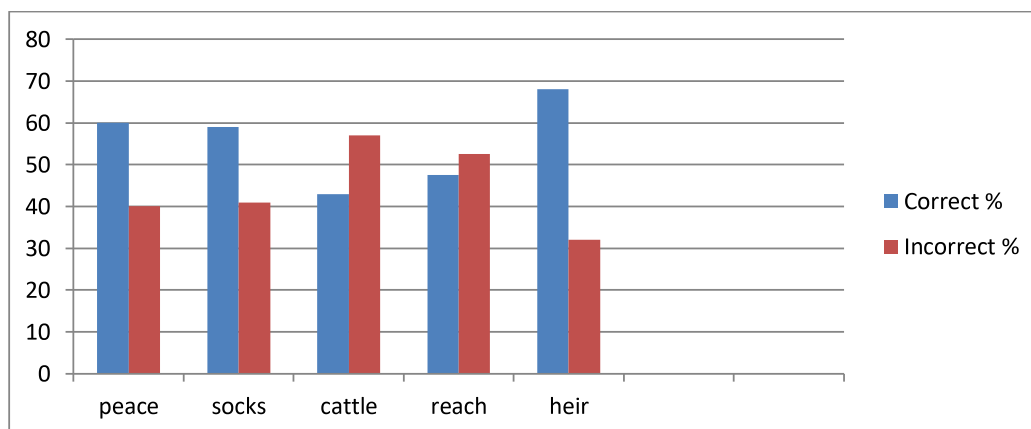


Figure: 5.12 Students' performance in vocabulary (homonym)

5.3.3.6.6. Test item 6: Testing the students' performance in subject-verb agreement

The researcher intends to assess the students' knowledge in subject-verb agreement. In order to collect the students' response, they were given 5 sentences. Each sentence contained 2 verbs in bracket. The students were instructed to tick the correct verb from the bracket. For instance, a) Tom and Jerry (are/is) ready now b) Today no news (is/are) good news, etc.

In case of subject verb agreement though many of the students' responded correctly, many of them lack the conceptual clarity regarding the number and person of a sentence. They do not seem to know that if two different nouns refer to two parts of a whole or two closely related things they may be considered as a singular subject. Such a state of learning may be the result of short time memory or rules and ignorance of the exception of the rules. Only strict adherence to a couple of selected grammatical rules tend to make the learners ignore other possibilities. Moreover, teachers teach the target language grammar through Grammar Translation Method which is likely to confuse the learners with the structures of his/her L1 and the target language i.e. English.

4.5% of the students scored 0 and 15.5% of the students scored only one out of five marks. 31% of the students scored 2 and 21.5% of the students scored 3. On the contrary, 16% of the students scored 4 and 11.5% of the students scored 5 out of 5 marks i.e. 11.5% students responded correctly to all the five questions. The first one (Tom and Jerry are/is ready.) was the highest scoring item which was responded correctly by 66.5% of the respondents; on the other hand, the fourth one (Neither you nor I nor.....) was the least scoring item which was responded correctly by 32.5% of the respondents only.

The students' performance in subject-verb agreement has been presented below in the table and graph:

Table: 5.57 Students' performance in subject-verb agreement

Marks obtained	No. of respondents	respondents %	Cumulative %
0	9	4.5	4.5
1	31	15.5	20
2	62	31	51
3	43	21.5	72.5
4	32	16	88.5
5	23	11.5	100
Total	200	100	---

Performance presented in graph:

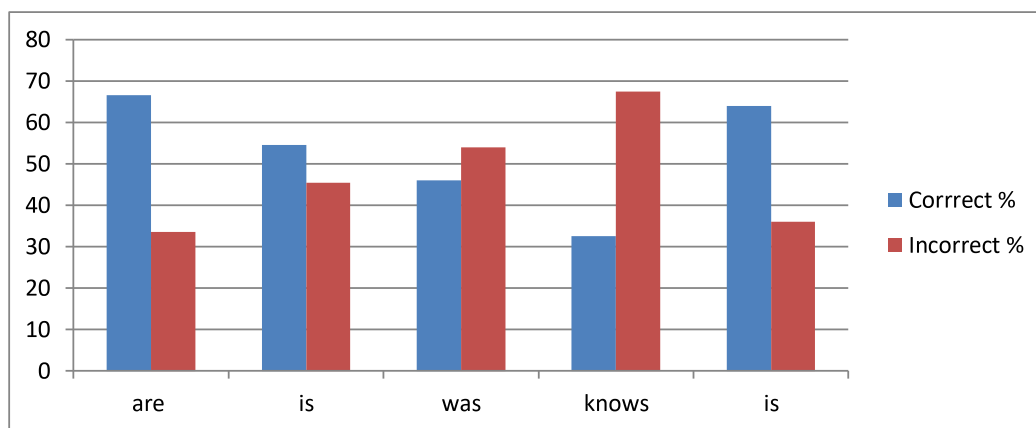


Figure: 5.13 Students' performance in subject-verb agreement

5.3.3.6.7. Test item 7: Testing the students' performance in verb correction

The researcher intends to assess the students' knowledge tense. In order to collect the students' response, they were given a small passage to correct the tense of the verbs given in bracket. For instance, 'Bhutan _ (be) in a rugged mountainous area, covered in many parts by dense forests. It _ (be) only in 1968 that an airstrip was constructed in Thimphu. etc.

Majority of the respondents failed to determine the correct forms of verbs. Among the incorrect responses the respondents choose not only incorrect forms of verbs such as, 'haved', 'haven', and 'hav', but for verbs they also used different lexical and functional items like preposition (to, in), pronoun (we), articles (the, an) etc. The responses obtained indicate that the students are confused with tense and its lexical representation. The error committed by the students emphasizes the effect of rule learning as well as the students' lack of exposure to the language. Moreover, the errors like 'haved' 'hav' reconfirm the learners' inadequate grip over English vocabulary which in turn is indicative of limited exposure to the language. The learners are totally reliant on the rules of grammar taught by the teachers and do not seem to be independent users of English.

14.5% of the students scored zero (0) out of five marks; i.e. this 14.5% students could not respond correctly even to a single item. And another 18% of the students scored only 1 mark showing their poor knowledge in tense. 25% of the students scored 2 and 23.5% of the students scored 3 marks. On the contrary, 15.5% of the students scored 4 and 3.5% of the students scored 5 out of 5 marks. The first

one was the highest scoring item (Bhutan __ (be) in a rugged mountainous area) which was responded correctly by 54.5% of the respondents; and the fourth one was the least scoring item which was responded correctly by 33.5% of the students only.

The students' performance in verb correction has been presented below in the table and graph.

Table: 5.58 Students' performance in verb correction

Marks obtained	No. of respondents	Respondents %	Cumulative %
0	29	14.5	14.5
1	36	18	32.5
2	50	25	57.5
3	47	23.5	81
4	31	15.5	96.5
5	7	3.5	100
Total	200	100	---

Performance presented in graph:

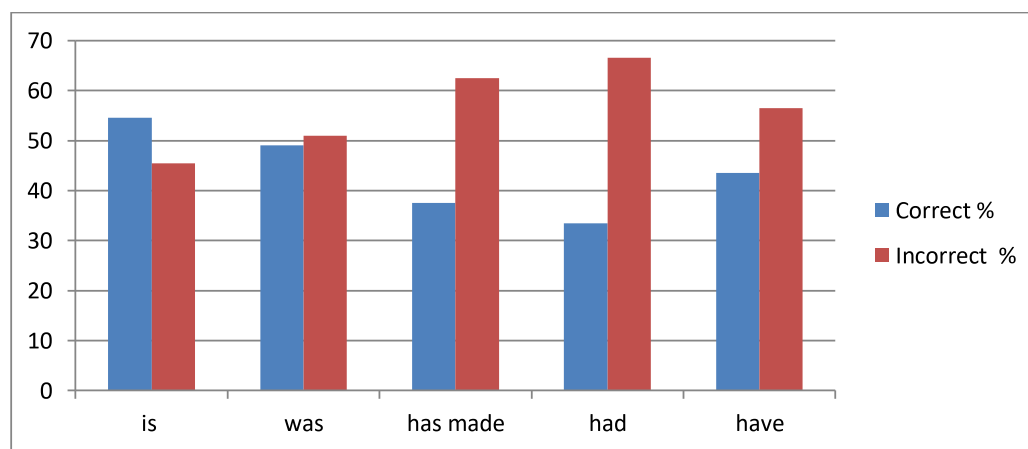


Figure: 5.14 Students' performance in verb correction

5.3.4. Writing Skill

Writing is a conscious, deliberate and planned activity. It has been regarded as an alternative medium of language, as it gives permanence to utterances. Applied linguistics inherited the view of language as speech and writing as an orthographic. It involves not just a graphic representation of speech, but the development and presentation of thought in a structured way. It too, is more complicated, seems to be the hardest of the skills. Bloomfield (1993) says that “writing is not language but merely a way of recording language by means of visible marks.” It needs a systematized form by making use of the components namely graphemes, vocabulary, syntax etc. so as to make a decoder understand it clearly. Writing is a form of encoded symbols in the form of print or impression.

5.3.4.1. Writing and writing skill

Writing is an outcome of a writing skill which refers to the writer’s linguistic ability in making use of the mechanics of writing. Writing is permanent, but writing skill is transitory. The use of writing skill differs according to mental ability and language proficiency of the writer. A writer cannot produce the same kind of work which he already produced a few years back. The external experience realized by the five senses of the writer and the intellectual delight attained by the five senses of the writer develops or undergoes some changes. As this is the backbone of the writing skill, the outcome also changed accordingly. As a writer learns new themes by every moment that new knowledge makes him to change his views and approaches while practicing the writing skill. This in turn, enables him to steer the language in the written medium in an innovative fashion. Due to this, the writer’s writing style assumes various shapes.

The writing skill includes a number of sub skills. The sub skills are (Sobana, 2003):

1. Mechanics- handwriting, spelling, punctuation.
2. Word selection- vocabulary, idioms, tone
3. Organization- paragraphs, topic and support, cohesion and unit
4. Syntax- sentence structure, sentence boundaries, stylistics etc.
5. Grammar- rules of verbs, agreement, articles, pronouns etc.
6. Content- relevance, clarity, originality, logic, etc.
7. The writing process- getting ideas, getting started, writing drafts, revising etc.

8. Purpose- the reason for writing, justification

5.3.4.2. Mechanics of Writing

Mechanics of writing plays an important role in the productive of writing. Mechanism of writing involves the following activities:

- a. ability to shape the letters (graphics),
- b. knowledge of right combinations of letters (spelling),
- c. ability of cohering words (sentence),
- d. ability of composing sentences (discourse)
- e. ability of writing without grammatical error. And
- f. control over punctuation (full stop, semicolon, colon, comma, etc.)

However, in the mechanism of writing, the mechanism of reading is also found. That is, one can acquire to write a particular letter after acquiring to read that one. Acquiring to write a letter without acquiring to read will be merely a process of copying.

5.3.4.3. Writing Process

The task of writing is not a single stage process. After writing down one's inner speech on paper, it should be polished properly. Topkins and Hoskisson (1995) provide five stages of writing process. They are: prewriting, drafting, revising, editing and publishing.

Prewriting is the stage of getting ready to write. In this stage, the student or young writer chooses a topic, considers function, generates and organizes ideas for writing. The second stage, drafting stage is the time to pour out ideas with little concern about spelling, punctuation and other mechanical errors. The third one is revision stage; in this stage the writer refines ideas in his compositions. The word revision means 'seeding again' and in this stage the writer sees his/her composition again with the help of classmates and teachers. Activities in this stage are reading the rough draft, sharing the rough draft in a writing group and revising on the basis of feedback. Next, the editing stage is the stage of putting the peace of writing into its final form. Until this stage, the focus has been primarily on the content of writing. The writer moves through three activities in this editing stage: getting distance from the

composition, proof reading to locate the errors and correcting errors. The final stage is publishing. In this stage, a young writer brings his/her compositions to life by publishing them or sharing them orally with appropriate audience. When he/she shares his writings with the real audience of classmates, other students, parents, and the community, the student comes to think of himself as an author in this stage.

5.3.4.4. Difficulty Faced In Writing by the Assamese Medium Students

Errors are the real indicators of the problem encountered by the learners. By identifying the errors committed by the learners, the researcher can easily point out such areas which need to be focused more. It is generally observed that the students commit errors in almost all level of language, namely,

- a. morphological level,
- b. syntactical level,
- c. semantic level, etc.

5.3.4.4.1. Morphological Level

In the field of language, morphology can be understood as the study of structure and formation of words, and how the different parts of a word fit together. Morphology along with syntax is of great significance in second language acquisition of learning, because through it students' performance is monitored and evaluated based on their morphological and syntactic productions.

The L2 learners face difficulty in morphological level as they are unable to distinguish the words following separate morphological rules and commit mistake in word formation. The Assamese medium students of Barpeta district face difficulty in morphological level due to their insufficient knowledge of morphological markers and word formation process of English.

5.3.4.4.1.1. Difficulty Faced In Using Past/Past Participle Form of the Verb

The past and past participle form of the irregular verbs create a lot of difficulty among the students as they are liable to generalize the rules for all the verbs by adding '-ed' to the root in their past and past participle form. Most of the learners are unknown of the fact that there are some verbs in English which do not follow the regular morphological process. Instead of taking '-ed' as past tense marker, some of

them take zero morpheme or change internally and sometimes completely in their past and past participle form. The students tend to over generalize the verb forms due to the irregularity found in the formation of the past and past participle form of the verb. Because of this deviant morphological process, the learners tend to over generalize the already learned rule of affixing ‘-ed’ with the present form of the verb to make past form. The following irregular verbs are found to create problem for the students.

Root	correct form	past form used by the students
Hurt	hurt	hurted
Cut	cut	cuted
Give	gave	gaved
Think	thought	thinked
Break	broke	brokeed etc.

5.3.4.4.1.2. Difficulty Faced In Using Plural Marker (Singular and Plural Number)

Nouns or noun phrases typically function as subject, direct objects, indirect objects, and subject compliments. A noun that denotes a single person or thing is known as singular form and that which denotes more than one person or thing is known as plural form. Plural nouns are formed by the addition of the suffixes which are otherwise called as plural morphemes (like ‘-s’, ‘-es’, ‘-en’, ‘-ren’ etc.) to the singular form of noun.

In order to learn how to use a noun, one needs to pay sincere attention to a variety of grammatical factors. Particularly, one needs to know whether a noun is countable or uncountable and if countable, what will be the plural form and so on. So, it is quite complex and difficult to the learners in processing all the nuances of noun simultaneously and to select a particular noun to use in a particular context. The errors committed by the respondents in this context are presented below.

The students tend to over generalize the rules where there is an irregularity in forming plural number. For instance,

Root	correct form	plural form used by students
Child	children	chids
Foot	feet	foots
Mouse	mice	mouses
Sheep	sheep	sheeps
Furniture	furniture	furnitures, etc.

The words like news, furniture etc. are widely used and treated as countable in Assamese but they are uncountable in English. Because of these differences in the morphological process of Assamese and English, the English learners whose mother tongue is Assamese make a negative transfer on certain elements to English morphology importing from Assamese morphology unknowingly. Majority of the students concept is that the plural nouns are generally made by adding only ‘-s’ and ‘-es’ to the singular noun. So, more than an average number of the students indiscriminately added ‘-s’ and ‘-es’ to make the plural form of a singular noun. Especially the students get confused and committed error in the irregular plural form (such as womans, foots, etc.) and plural form with zero morpheme (such as sheep, deer etc.).

5.3.4.4.2. Syntactical Level:

Syntax is a subfield of grammar which studies the principles and rules for structuring phrases and sentences in a language and focuses on the word order of a language and the relationship among words. It is primarily concern with the ways in which words re put together in sentences. In linguistics the study of the rules that govern the ways in which words combine to form phrases, clauses and sentences is called syntax. It is the arrangement of words and phrases to create well formed sentences in a language.

The Assamese medium students face various kinds of difficulties in syntax while developing their English writing skill due to mother tongue interference and inconsistency of the rules in the target language. Like any other L2 learners, the Assamese medium students too face lots of difficulties in syntactic level due to their

inability to grasp the syntactic process of English. It has been observed that the most persistent grammatical errors occur in the area of subject-verb agreement, articles, prepositions, numbers, verb and punctuations which hamper their learning to a greater extent.

5.3.4.2.1. Difficulty Faced In the Use of Article

The forms like a, ‘an’ and ‘the’ are usually called as article. In English, articles belong to a sub-class of determiners. ‘a’ and ‘an’ are known as indefinite articles and ‘the’ is known as definite article. Usage of both the indefinite and definite articles depends upon the nature of the words that follow. The indefinite article ‘a’ is used before a word beginning with consonant or a vowel with a consonant sound, and ‘an’ is used before words beginning with a vowel and words beginning with mute ‘h’. The definite article ‘the’ occurs in the position where a person or thing or one already referred to. The students’ responses regarding articles are presented below.

Wrong substitution: Some of the students committed mistake in using article whenever there is an exception in the grammatical rule. For instance, ‘an’ instead of ‘a’ and vice versa.

a) ‘an’ instead of ‘a’

Error committed by the students

This is an unique story.

Please give me an one rupee note.

There is an university in Silchar.

correct form

This is a unique story.

Please give me a one rupee note.

There is a university in Silchar.

b) ‘a’ instead of ‘an’

Error committed by the students

Gandhiji was a honourable person.

My brother is a M.A. in English.

correct form

Gandhiji was an honourable person.

My brother is an M.A. in English etc.

The data show that the article ‘an’ is used before words beginning with vowels and ‘a’ before words beginning with consonants without considering the quality of

letter or phoneme that begins in a word. It is evident that ‘an’ is used before the consonant ‘h’ which is silent or mute in the beginning of word, and ‘a’ is used before the vowels which have sound quality of consonant. The reason for the wrong substitution might be the strong pressure of the continuous drilled rules that ‘an’ is used before nouns begin with vowels and vice versa. Due to such habit formation, the students extend these rules as ‘a Sun’, ‘a Mahabharat’ etc.

5.3.4.4.2.2. Difficulty Faced In Preposition

Error relating to the use of preposition found in the students’ performance are classified as substitution, omission and addition of preposition and discussed as below.

i. Substitution (wrong selection of prepositions): A substantial number of the students substitute wrong preposition instead of the intended one. For instances,

Error committed by the students’ prepositions	correct
a) The programme is <u>in</u> / <u>at</u> 22 nd November.	on
b) Everybody feels good and fresh <u>at</u> / <u>on</u> the morning.	in
c) Children are generally fond <u>for</u> / <u>to</u> chocolate.	of
d) I was surprised <u>by</u> / <u>to</u> her conduct.	at
e) It has been raining <u>since</u> three hours.	for
f) The governess looks <u>at</u> / <u>for</u> the Duke’s baby.	after etc.

This type of wrong selection of prepositions may be because of the semantic multiplicity of preposition. For instance, the preposition ‘of’ has sixty three meaning listed in the Oxford dictionary, and the other prepositions have almost as many meanings as ‘of’ has.

ii. Dropping / omission of preposition: In this type of error the students do not put any preposition where it is required. For instance,

Error committed by the students	correct response
a) Bye, see you Sunday.	Bye, see you on Sunday.

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| b) Yesterday they went Guwahati.
Guwahaty. | Yesterday they went to
Guwahaty. |
| c) I listen English music. | I listen to English music. |

iii. Addition of preposition: In the discourse comprehension level, the students under study put preposition where it never requires. For instance,

Error committed by the students

correct response

- | | |
|---|----------------------------------|
| a) I went home <u>on</u> last month. | I went home last month. |
| b) We are going to Delhi <u>in</u> next week. | We are going to Delhi next week. |

5.3.4.4.2.3. Difficulty Faced In the Use of Auxiliary Verb

Auxiliary verb is subordinate to main/principal verb. It helps to make distinction in mood, tense, voice etc. It is used to frame questions especially tag questions. Generally a verb consists of a main verb preceded by one or more auxiliary verbs. In a sentence the appropriate selection of the auxiliary verb form is important for maintaining subject-verb agreement. Most of the students have difficulty in using the verbs too. To verify the students' performance regarding the use of auxiliary verb, their performance in the discourse level was also minutely observed and checked. Some of the students under study have performed well. But lots of the students committed several kinds of mistake related to the use of auxiliary verbs.

A large number of the students have wrongly substituted the auxiliary verbs 'am' instead of 'was', 'are' instead of 'were', 'do' instead of 'does', 'is' instead of 'was' and vice versa. This type of performance occurred due to the ignorance of the linguistic features of auxiliary verb and failure in understanding the meaning of the given sentences. For instance, in the sentence 'I ___ working when he arrived' as soon as the students saw '-ing' with the verb, they tended to use 'am' without considering the action of the other verb (arrived) of the remaining sentence. The errors found in the students' other writing are classified and presented below.

i. Sentence without auxiliary verbs

Many a students constructed sentences without any auxiliary verb where it is utmost necessary. For instance,

Error committed by the students'	correct response
My name Dipak Nath	My name is Dipak Nath
My father farmer	My father is a farmer
We happy	We are happy.

ii. Addition of auxiliary verb: Many of the students use auxiliary verbs where it never requires. For instance-

Error committed by the students'	correct response
I <u>am</u> listen music on a holiday.	I listen to music on a holiday.
I <u>am</u> go to school by bicycle.	I go to school by bicycle.

The students under study have unnecessarily added the auxiliary verbs 'am' in between the subject 'I' and verb.

iii. Deletion of auxiliary verb: But some of the students do not tend to use any auxiliary verb where it's necessary is utmost important. For instance-

Error committed by the students	correct response
When you went to Guwahati?	When did you go to Guwahati?
How you come from Barpeta?	How do you come from Barpeta?

The above mentioned samples show that the students have dropped the auxiliary verbs in the interrogative sentence. This deviant structure is unacceptable. The reason for the dropping of auxiliary verb in interrogative sentence is the mother tongue interference.

iv. Wrong substitution of auxiliary verb: For instavce-

Error committed by the students	correct response
One of their sisters are doctor.	One of their sisters is doctor.
I am reading when he came.	I was reading when he came.
Many people are injured in the accident yesterday.	Many people were injured in the accident yesterday.

The wrong substitution of auxiliary verbs ‘are’ instead ‘is’, ‘am’ instead of ‘was’, ‘are’ instead of ‘were’ and vice versa is due to the ignorance of the linguistic features of auxiliary verb and failure in understanding the meaning of the given sentences. As soon as the students see the verb in the ‘ing’ form, they tend to use auxiliary without considering the tense which is implied by the adverb

5.3.4.4.2.4 Difficulties in the Use of Verb.

The verb or the verb phrase is the heart of a sentence. Most of the English sentences contain at least one verb that carries a great deal of information. They describe actions, events and states and place in a time frame. They state whether the actions or events have been completed or going on and say whether a state is current or regulative. They help to command, request, speculate, wish and predict.

The students under study have not properly handled the verbs as well. Their performance was not up to the mark regarding the function of verbs in a sentence. Most of the sentences produced by the students (whether in speech or in writing) have lost their meanings and functions due to inappropriate use of the verb forms. Such types of erroneous sentences are discuss bellow:

i. Use of double past in interrogative sentence: the use of double past in single interrogative sentence, a peculiar kind of error, found in the students’ writing. This type of error occurs due to the fact that in Assamese, tense is expressed in main verbs without splitting the verbs whatever may be the sentence type. But in negative and interrogative sentence of English, the tense is expressed with the help of both auxiliary and main verb. Many of the learners know the rule of using tense in

auxiliary. However, by the influence of Assamese language, the learners are satisfied only when tense is expressed through main verb. Thus, they use double tense in their writing, especially while writing interrogative and negative sentences.

- (a) Did you played?
- (b) When did you came?
- (c) Did they returned yesterday? Etc.

ii Use of past form where the past participle required: This type of error has appeared in the writings of the students understudy because of the fact that in English, some verbs have certain identical forms for the categories of past tense and past-participle (work-worked - worked), most of the verbs have this pattern. Learners extent this rule to all types of the verbs and consequently, 'a past tense' form is substituted for past participle form of irregular type also (see-saw-seen). For instance-

- 1. He has already went home? (gone)
Have you did the work? (done)

iii. Wrong lexical selection: In any language, certain linguistic elements share commonness semantically, that is to say that all languages have synonymous, but there will not be any complete synonyms in any language. So certain words can be used in certain contexts. The students under study have also wrongly substituted a word for another. For instance-

- 1. I bought the book from library and then study in my house. (borrow)
- 2. Air pollution attacking our body (affects)
- 3. Use of mobile phone by the students is danger. (harmful)

iv. Overgeneralization of the irregular verb forms: The learners tend to over generalize the verb forms due to the irregularity found in the formation of the past tense. Many of the English verbs do not follow the regular morphological process. Instead of taking -'ed' as past tense marker they internally get changed or they take zero morphemes in the formation of past form. Because of this deviant morphological process, the learners tend to over generalize the already learned rule of affixing -ed with the present verb form to make past form of the verb. For instance-

Sample	Correct form
Becomed	became
Bited	bit
Thoughted	thought

Writed	wrote
Buyed	bought
Gived	gave etc.

5.3.4.4.2.5. Difficulty Faced In Composition

To some extent almost all the students have problems in different areas of composition such as, content, spelling, use of cohesive device, articles, preposition, subject-verb agreement etc. Majority of the students' content is unsatisfactory. It reflects their inadequate reading and listening habit which generally provide the resources of ideas. Almost all of them have spelling mistake as well as error. Cohesion is also absent in most of the composition, which again reflects the learners lack of writing skill. Even if the students gather some facts relating to the topic, they were not able to express them for the want of moderate command over the target language. As revealed in the unstructured interview of the learners, they hardly get required practice and reinforcement in the classroom in writing. The imbalanced student-teacher ratio in most of the institutions does not allow any teacher to address the individual learner's error. Moreover, the learners are not trained in controlled writing as communicative approach is not adopted by the teachers. The learners, therefore, cannot attain fluency in situational writing. Writing within specific time limit needs rigorous practice which is available to the learners only during examination. Grammar-Translation Method may have acquainted the learners with various grammatical rules but the non-functional approach of the method sabotages the learners' ability to apply the acquired grammatical rules in an appropriate context. Moreover, most of the learners seem to have very limited vocabulary which again emphasizes the absence of exposure. In fact, to master the productive skill such as writing, the enhancement of the technical ability to combine grammatical, inferential and vocabulary skills are imperative. Such ability can only be inculcated in learners by trained and innovative teachers.

5.3.4.4.2.6. Syntax

Syntax includes the ways words are combined into larger structures including sentences. The distinction between the subject and predicate is the basic division within the sentence.

The syntactical errors committed by the students are categorized and presented as below.

i. Word Order change in question: The samples mentioned below show that the interrogative sentences have been used in the reverse order as where + sub + aux + verb (where he was going) instead of where + aux + sub + verb (where was he going). This is due to the influence of spoken form on writing. The deviant word order of question found in the learners' performance is least acceptable in the spoken mode of Indian English. For instance-

1. Where he was going?
2. When you will come from Bombay?
3. Why you didn't come yesterday?
4. When they will go to Guwahati?

ii.a. Incomplete sentences: Most of the students' sentences were fragmentary or incomplete. For instance-

1. My bought to the by cycle
2. I am decide to the bag
3. My house 7 family.
4. My sister is in class oreading.
5. I ran to the people

ii. b. Discourse with full of incomplete sentences: The researcher observes that the incomplete sentence is one of the major problem found in the students' article writing. Many of the students were unable to write 2/3 consecutive sentences correctly, either for grammatical problem or vocabulary problem. A few sample of such incomplete and incorrect sentences has been mentioned below.

*'My life ambis a teacher I can't be any life or vization so I cannot be teacher of life so happy
the childrens life the teacher life I am like the childrens I am hat reati reavs the life of teachers my life is the last time of teacher the childrens the tomorrow do yesterday so was
doind my life tomorrow the saffaden are mtelyert s and late they happy is my life amision'.*

Reason for the projection of the incomplete sentences is that some L2 learner at the initial stage, just memorize the passage or linguistic elements for the examination purpose then they try to project it completely in the examinations, but it seems to them impossible to project completely what they have memorized. Then,

they import the linguistic elements improperly whatever it comes from their memory as shown in the above sample. This type of error may be considered as error due to linguistic vomiting or it is an outcome of rote learning.

5.3.4.4.2.7. Spelling

Spelling plays an important role in the formation of words. Meaning of a word depends on the graphemes or letters which occupy in it. Graphemes also distinguish and differentiate the meaning of words. The spelling rules of the language enable both the encoder and decoder to comprehend appropriately in the written mode. The spelling rules of English are quite complex, and there are some regularities and irregularities and exceptional nature in the rules. Further, one or more than one letters correspond to one sound. In addition to the first language system, the complexity of the spelling rules too tends the students or learners to produce misspelt words. If the letters used in the words are changed or altered, the meanings of the words will be lost. Alternations or dropping of letters in words lead to confusion. Sometimes, misspelt words will make one comprehend some other meanings. The erroneous words found in the students' corpus are classified and discussed as follows.

i) Influence of spoken form on spelling: The students have transferred their incorrect speech habits to writing. For instance-

Sample words	correct form
Meeting	miting
Verbally	barbaly
parasonal	personal
facotories	factories
doctor	dacter
president	pesiden
risk	riks etc.

ii) Words showing dropping letters: This is also a common problem found in the students' writing. Sometimes the students dropped more than one letter in a word. Moreover, sometimes they are found jumbling the letters to form words. For instance-

Sample words	Correct form	Dropping
betiful	beautiful	au
droped	dropped	p
equalent	equivalent	iv
impretive	imperative	e

iii) Words showing addition of letters: This is also a peculiar kind of error committed by the students. Sometimes the students are found to add some additional letters in a word where it is not necessary at all. For instance-

Sample words	Correct form	Addition
playying -----	playing	y
distrouid -----	distroid	u
dailiy -----	daily	i
becomeing -----	becoming	e
parrants	parents	r

iv) Words showing modification of letters: In some words, the students tend to use an alternative letter which is not appropriate for the concern word. For instance-

Sample words	Correct form	Transfer
heppy	happy	a-e
parrants	parents	e-a
haleday	holiday	i-e
impretive	imperative	a-e
famile	family	y-e
discriped	described	e-i

5.3.4.5. Data Analysis and Interpretation of Writing Skill

5.3.4.5.1. Test item 1: Testing the Students' performance in preposition

The researcher intends to assess the students' knowledge in preposition. In order to collect the students' response, they were given 8 sentences (such as a. The programme is __22nd November, b. Everybody feels good and fresh __ the morning, etc.). The students were instructed to fill up the blank with appropriate preposition.

Preposition as a word or group of words is often placed before a noun or a pronoun to indicate place, direction, source, method etc. Moreover, it connects a noun or pronoun with some other words in a sentence and makes clear the relationship between the two. In English certain verbs co-occur with prepositions while certain other verbs do not. The verbs which do not occur with preposition can occur with article in the same slot. The students under study could not distinguish and

differentiate these two types of verbs and have used them identically. Consequently in many a context, they have omitted prepositions. It is identified from the data that the students tend to learn certain co-occurring elements as a unit and as a result, they used two prepositions in their writing. However, one can attribute improper learning and semantic multiplicity as the dominant reasons for the students 'unsatisfactory performance.

Regarding the performance in preposition, 10.5% of the students scored zero (0) and 8% of them scored only 1(one) out of 8 marks showing their complete lack of proficiency in the use of preposition. 15% of the students scored 2; 21.5% of the students scored 3; 17.5% of the students scored 4; 9.5% of the students scored 5 and 7% of the students scored 6 out of 8 marks. However, 6.5% students scored 7 marks and 4.5% students scored 8 marks (i.e. 100% marks) out of 8 marks in the test showing their fair mastery in the field.

The students' performance in preposition is presented below in the table and graph.

Table: 5.59 Students' performance in preposition

Marks obtained	No. of respondents	respondents %	Cumulative %
0	21	10.5	10.5
1	16	8	18.5
2	30	15	33.5
3	43	21.5	55
4	35	17.5	72.5
5	19	9.5	82
6	14	7	89
7	13	6.5	95.5
8	9	4.5	100
Total	200	100	---

Performance presented in graph:

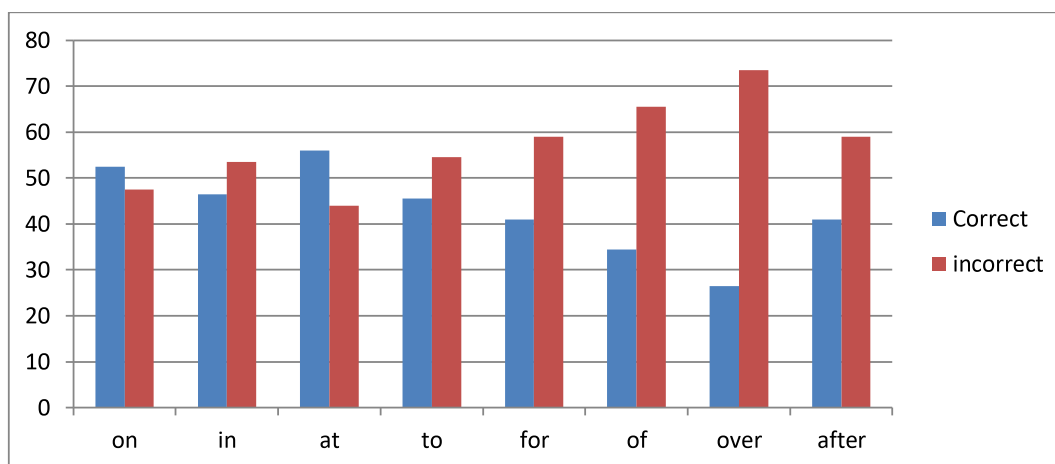


Figure: 5.15 Students' performance in preposition

5.3.4.5.2. Test item 2: Testing the students' performance in punctuation

The researcher intends to assess the students' knowledge in punctuation. In order to collect the students' response regarding punctuation the students' were given a small passage devoid of any punctuation mark. The students were instructed to put the adequate punctuation marks where necessary.

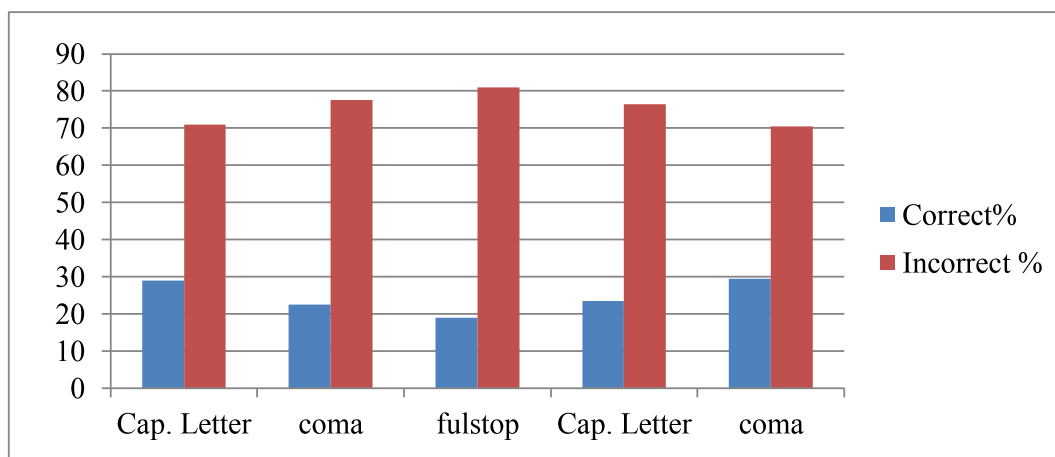
A limited number of the students have punctuated the passage correctly. Some of them may be aware of the rules of using capital letters, comma, full stop etc. to isolated sentences, but have failed to apply them in a contextual passage. The responses further indicate that the learners do not have conceptual clarity to use different punctuation marks in the right combination in a given passage. 32% of the students scored zero (0) and 30.5% of the students scored only 1 (one) in punctuation showing remarkably poor knowledge in punctuation. 24.5% of the students scored 2; 8% of the student scored 3 and some 5% of the students scored 4 out of 5marks. No one among the students scored 5 out of 5 marks.

The students' performance in punctuation has been presented below in the table and graph.

Table: 5.60 Students' performance in punctuation

Marks obtained	No. of respondents	respondents %	Cumulative %
0	64	32	32
1	61	30.5	62.5
2	49	24.5	87
3	16	8	95
4	10	5	100
5	---	---	---
Total	200	100	---

Performance presented in graph:

**Figure: 5.16 Students' performance in punctuation**

5.3.4.5.3. Test item 3: Direct and Indirect Speech.

The researcher intends to assess the students' knowledge in direct and indirect speech. In order to collect the students' response regarding the direct and indirect speech, students were given a conversation that took place between Pori and Juri. The students were instructed to report their conversation to a 3rd person called Mina.

A few respondents could change the speech correctly. The errors they have committed while changing the sentences from direct to indirect speech are mostly related to tense, adverb of time and place and pronouns. It is important to note that this very lesson of direct and indirect speech these students have been learning for

more than 5 years; i.e. when they were in 8th standard. This shows that though the rules of changing the speeches are taught to the learners, it is mostly done with the help of prescriptive method. Isolation sentences are used as illustrative examples as well as for practice. Contextual passages with dialogues are not used. They could have given the learners a more practical knowledge of the use and the conversion rules of the direct and indirect speech.

Regarding the performance in direct and indirect speech, 34% of the respondents scored zero (0) and 24.5% of the students scored only 1 (one) out of 5 marks showing lack of conceptual clarity. 17.5% of the students scored 2 and 12% of the students scored 3 out of 5 marks. However, 8.5% of the student scored 4 i.e. 80% marks and some 3.5% of the students scored 5 out of 5, i.e. 100% marks. It may be inferred that a significant population has understood this grammatical concept and were able to apply their knowledge in this context. However, a substantial number of them still waits for remedial teaching.

The students' performance in direct and indirect speech has been presented below in the table and graph.

Table: 5.61 Students' performance in direct and indirect speech

Marks obtained	No. of respondents	respondents %	Cumulative %
0	68	34	34
1	49	24.5	58.5
2	35	17.5	76
3	24	12	88
4	17	8.5	96.5
5	7	3.5	100
Total	200	100	---

Performance presented in graph:

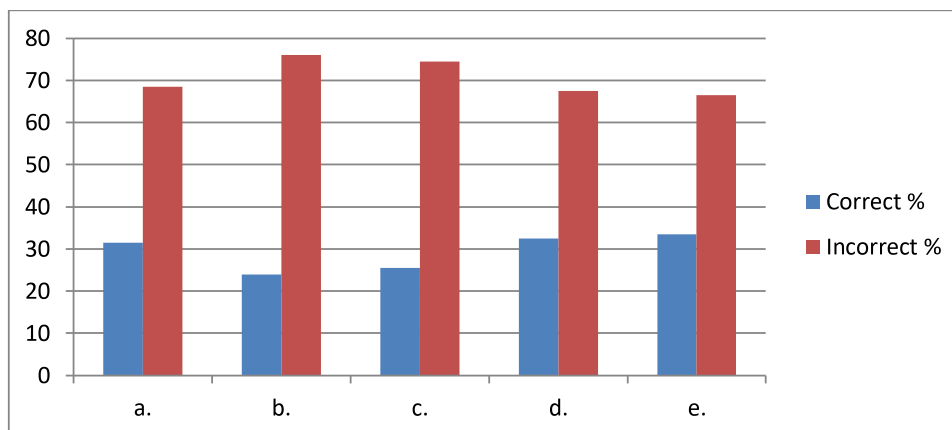


Figure: 5.17 Students' performance in direct and indirect speech

5.3.4.5.4. Test item 4: Testing the Students' performance in writing composition

The researcher intends to assess the students' knowledge in writing composition. In order to collect the students' response regarding the writing of composition, students were given 3 different topics such as, 'Air pollution'; 'You and your family' and 'Use of mobile phone by the students'. The students were instructed to write an article on any one of the given topics within 150 words.

Almost all the students have problems in different areas of composition such as, content, spelling, use of cohesive device, articles, preposition, subject-verb agreement etc. Majority of the students' content is unsatisfactory. It reflects their inadequate reading and listening habit which generally provide the resources of ideas. Almost all of them have spelling mistake as well as error. Cohesion is also absent in most of the composition, which again reflects the learners lack of writing skill. Even if the students gather some facts relating to the topic, they were not able to express them for the want of moderate command over the target language.

Regarding the performance in writing composition, 8% of the respondents scored zero (0) and 29.5% of the students only one (1) out of 5 marks reflecting their serious deficiency in writing composition. 44% of the students scored 2. 17.5% of the students scored 3 and only 1% of the students scored 4 out of 5 marks showing their moderate mastery over writing composition. But a large number of the students really need some special attention to develop the art of composition writing.

The students' performance in composition has been presented below in the table and graph.

Table: 5.62 Students' performance in writing composition

Marks obtained	No. of respondents	respondents %	Cumulative %
0	16	8	8
1	59	29.5	37.5
2	88	44	81.5
3	35	17.5	99
4	2	1	100
5	--	--	
Total	200	100	--

Performance presented in graph:

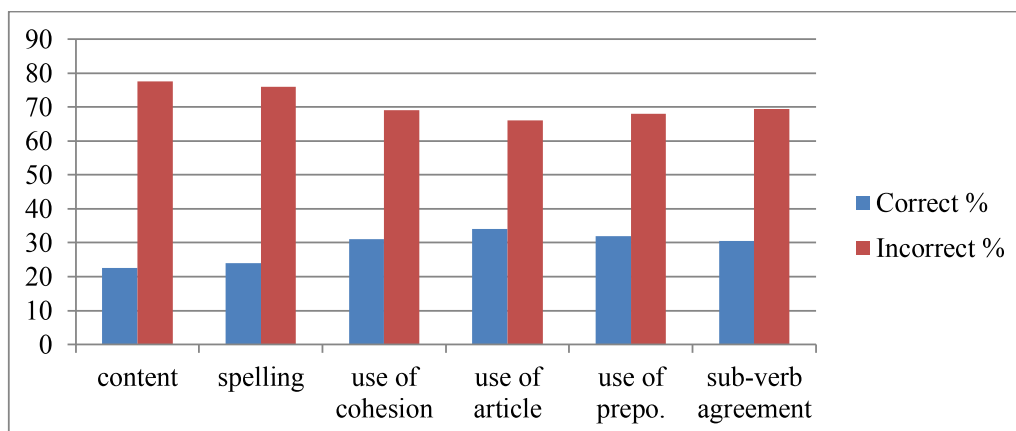


Figure: 5.18 Students' performance in writing composition

5.3.4.5.5. Test item 5: Testing the Students' performance in article

The researcher intends to assess the students' proficiency in article. In order to collect the students' response regarding article, the students were given 10 incomplete sentences. Further, they were instructed to supply the articles in the given incomplete sentences.

The definite and indefinite articles are indiscriminately used before noun/noun phrases and sometimes unnecessarily omitted where they were required. The article

‘the’ has not been used where it was necessarily required in the place of cataphorical reference. These types of errors have appeared due to the ignorance of the grammatical features of articles and influence of the first language. Moreover, it is found that ‘a’ is dominantly used by the students rather than ‘an’ and ‘the’. This may be because of the fact that ‘a’ is simple as well as first learnt element.

The data presented below reflects the students’ moderate expertise in the use of articles. Unlike the other test items, here no students has scored zero. 9% of the students scored 1; 13% of the students scored 2; 11.5% of the students scored 3; 16% of the students scored 4; 10.5% of the students scored 5; and again 10.5% of the students scored 6 and some 9% of the students scored 7 out of 10 marks. However, 5.5% respondents have scored 100%; 6.5% of the respondents scored 90% and some 8.5% of the respondents scored 80% marks showing their conceptual clarity in the use of articles.

The students’ performance in article has been presented below in the table and graph.

Table: 5.63 Students’ performance in article

Marks obtained	No. of respondents	respondents %	Cumulative %
0	0	0	0
1	18	9	9
2	26	13	22
3	23	11.5	33.5
4	32	16	49.5
5	21	10.5	60
6	21	10.5	70.5
7	18	9	79.5
8	17	8.5	88
9	13	6.5	94.5
10	11	5.5	100
Total	200	100	---

Performance presented in graph:

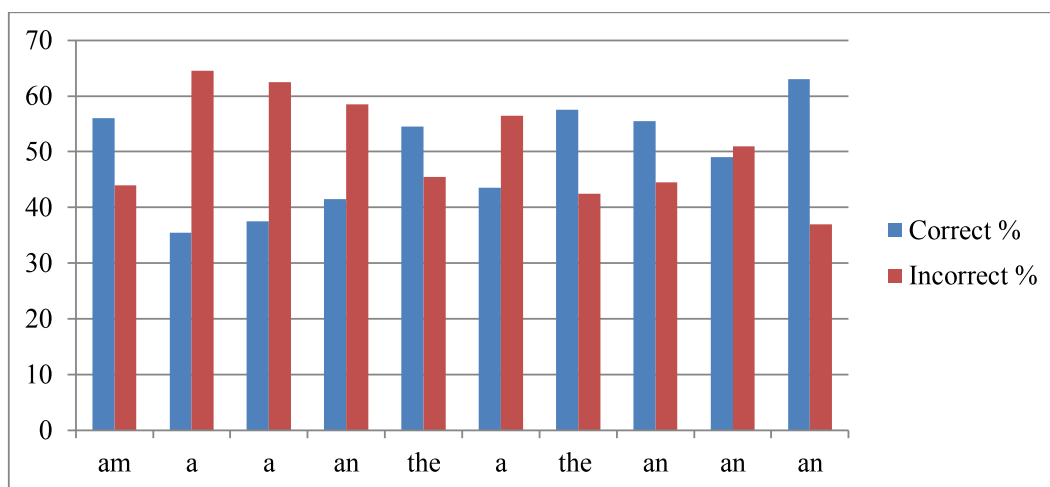


Figure: 5.19 Students' performance in article

5.3.4.5.6. Test item 6: Testing the Students' performance in (singular and plural) number

The researcher intends to assess the students' proficiency in the use of singular and plural number. In order to collect the students' response regarding number, the students were given 10 singular nouns such as, child, mouse, sheep etc. and they were instructed to write the plural forms of those singular nouns.

Majority of the students concept is that the plural nouns are generally made by adding only '-s' and '-es' to the singular noun. So, more than an average number of the students indiscriminately added '-s' and '-es' to make the plural form of a singular noun. Especially the students get confused and committed error in the irregular plural form (such as womans, foots, etc.) and plural form with zero morpheme.

It seems to be a good symptom that no respondents has scored zero in the test of number). But there is nothing to be astonished as there was no student to score zero out of 10 in such an area of learning which they have been learning since when they have been learning English. 7.5% of the students scored 1; 10.5% of the students scored 2; 13.5% of the students scored 3; 15.5% of the students scored 4; 16.5% of the students scored 5; 8% of the students scored 6, and 6% of the students scored 7 out of 10 marks. However, 6.5% of the students scored 80%; 8.5% of the students

scored 90% and some 7.5% of the students scored 100% marks reflecting their fair expertise in this field.

The students' performance in singular and plural numbers is presented below in the table and in graph.

Table: 5.64 Students' performance in (singular and plural) number

Marks obtained	No. of respondents	Respondents %	Cumulative %
0	0	0	0
1	15	7.5	7.5
2	21	10.5	18
3	27	13.5	31.5
4	31	15.5	47
5	33	16.5	63.5
6	16	8	71.5
7	12	6	77.5
8	13	6.5	84
9	17	8.5	92.5
10	15	7.5	100
Total	200	100	---

Performance presented in graph:

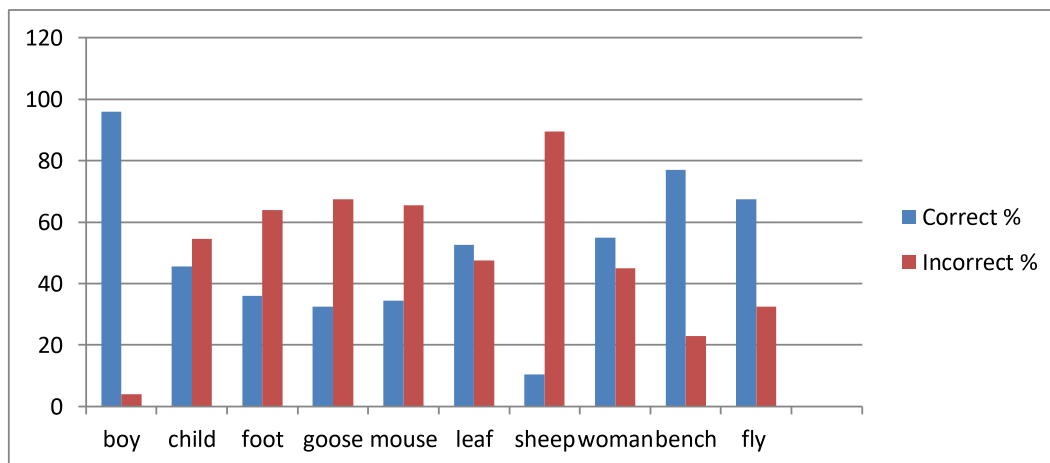


Figure: 5.20 Students' performance in (singular and plural) number

5.3.4.5.7. Test item 7: Testing the Students' performance in auxiliary verb

Instruction: Supply the relevant auxiliary verb in the blank of the following sentences.

The researcher intends to assess the students' proficiency in the use of auxiliary verb. In order to collect the students' response regarding auxiliary verb, the students were given 10 incomplete sentences. They were instructed to supply the relevant auxiliary verb in the blank of the sentences.

The wrong substitution of auxiliary verbs 'are' instead 'is', 'am' instead of 'was', 'are' instead of 'were' and vice versa is due to the ignorance of the linguistic features of auxiliary verb, and failure in understanding the meaning of the given sentences. As soon as the students see the verb in the 'ing' form, they tend to use auxiliary without considering the tense which is implied by the adverb. The students' responses reveal mediocre expertise in the use of auxiliary verbs.

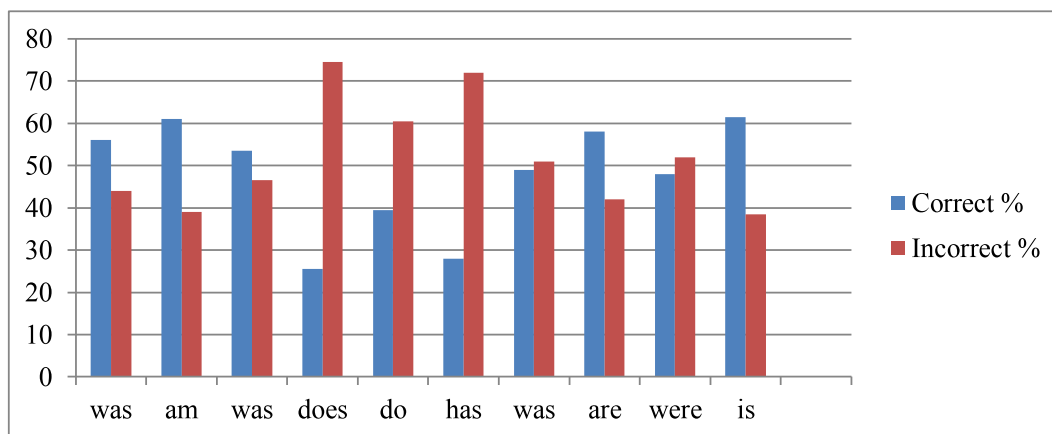
2.5% of the students were failed to provide correct response even to a single item. 6.5% of the students scored 1; 7.5% of the students scored 2; 14.5% of the students scored 3; 15% of the students' scored 4; 17% of the students scored 5; 14% of the students scored 6 and some 8% of the students scored 7 out of 10 marks. However, 7% of the students scored 80%; 6% of the students scored 90% marks reflecting their expertise in this field; and 2% of the students scored 100% marks showing their Excellency. Yet, being the students of 12th standard, their average performance was far behind the general expectation. So, in this regard special attention seems to be imperative.

The students' performance in auxiliary verbs has been presented below in the table and graph.

Table: 5.65 Students' performance in auxiliary verbs

Marks obtained	No. of respondents	respondents %	Cumulative %
0	5	2.5	2.5
1	13	6.5	9
2	15	7.5	16.5
3	29	14.5	31
4	30	15	46
5	34	17	63
6	28	14	77
7	16	8	85
8	14	7	92
9	12	6	98
10	4	2	100
Total	200	100	--

Performance presented in graph:

**Figure: 5.21 Students' performance in auxiliary verbs**