

A STUDY OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE COMPETENCY IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

Cerena Aurin D’cunha, Ph. D.

*Asst. Professor, St. Teresa’s Institute of Education., S.V. Road, Santacruz (West), Mumbai-54,
Maharashtra, India*

Abstract

Skills of English language are particularly important for knowing what is generally recognised as information interpretation. Students require a lot of vocabulary expansion and instruction of comprehension strategies as English is a foreign language.

Though English is imparted as a compulsory subject from primary level to the secondary and even in higher education yet, it is a test of evolving expertise and interest which is the chief need of the hour. Hence the researcher decided to study the English language Competency of secondary school students in order to find out their level of competency in the language.



Scholarly Research Journal's is licensed Based on a work at www.srjis.com

Language is the means employed by humans for any form of communication with one another. As an outcome, the capacity to effectively use noteworthy language skills can make a narrator either effective or fail in communicating their message and attaining their fixed purpose. For most learners of foreign language reading and speaking is a skill that creates more difficulty. Reading and speaking in a specific language is a complicated, purposeful, collaborative, comprehending, flexible activity that involves substantial time and means to progress. Language is said to be proficiently used when the speaker is able to maintain the flow of information at a sufficient rate and with appropriate comprehension.

Language is an interactive activity wherein the reader makes use of information from his or her experience, present information acquired as well as information from the published sources. Many aids work together concurrently in this process. Normally, speaking and reading are concerned with comprehension of written texts. But understanding is a multifaceted activity that comprises both perception and thought.

For any speaker to be a fluent language user, competency is essential in all four language skills viz. listening, speaking, reading and writing. It is essential to make complete sense of words, sentences and text to make complete comprehension a possibility.

English language learners may have problems mastering concepts because they may not understand the textbooks. At all levels of English proficiency and literateness, students will profit from explicit teaching of comprehension skills for example: summarizing, equating, contrasting, self-questioning etc.

Skills of English language are particularly important for knowing what is generally recognised as information interpretation. Students require a lot of vocabulary expansion and instruction of comprehension strategies as English is a foreign language.

Though English is imparted as a compulsory subject from primary level to the secondary and even in higher education yet, it is a test of evolving expertise and interest which is the chief need of the hour. Hence the researcher decided to study the English language Competency of secondary school students in order to find out their level of competency in the language.

Statement of the problem:

A study of English Language Competency among the secondary school students.

Objective:

The main objective of this study is to assess the level of English language competency of the secondary school students.

Methodology of the present study:

For this research the researcher has selected Descriptive Research Design, wherein the researcher collected data from the students using a questionnaire.

Sample of the study:

Thus, for the present study the sample size was 155 students of secondary schools of SSC Board from Greater Mumbai.

Tools used in the study

The researcher used a self-prepared questionnaire for the purpose of collection of data for this study.

Significance of the study:

The study focuses on the English competencies of the students and it will benefit the students by providing information about different levels of English comprehension skills and whether they are able to achieve their goals. The study is also may prove important to the teachers and parents to understand the motivation and encouragement provided to the students help to

improve their English competencies. The Pprincipal and managers may get insights to enlarge their horizons to provide scope to the teachers to use techniques that are required to improve students' ability and the standard of the school at large. The implication of the study would help the curriculum framers to supplement activities that will help students to build good vocabulary, level of reading and writing competencies.

Findings of the study:

The level of English language competency of the secondary school students was assessed using a questionnaire. Following is the question-wise analysis:

1] I enjoy paying attention during English periods

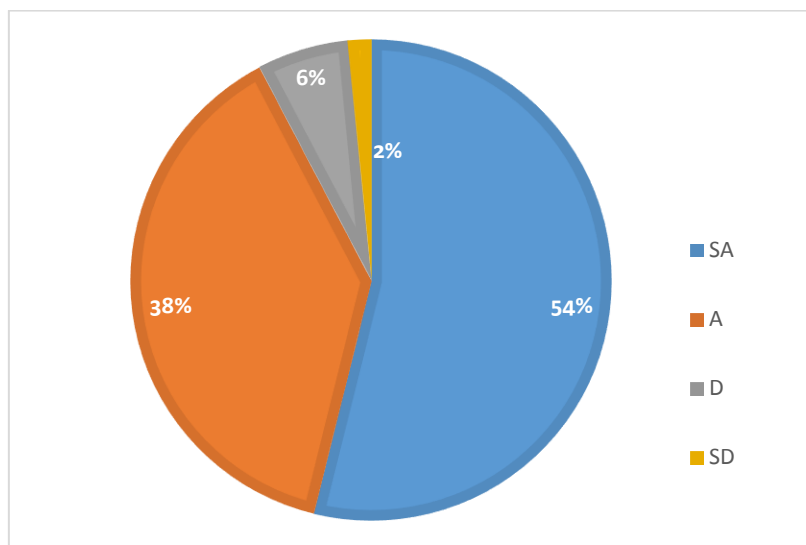


FIGURE 1

Interpretation: In the above statement, 54% students strongly agree that they enjoy paying attention during English periods. 38% students agree with the statement whereas others disagree that they enjoy paying attention during English periods.

2] I wish to have more opportunities to learn English.

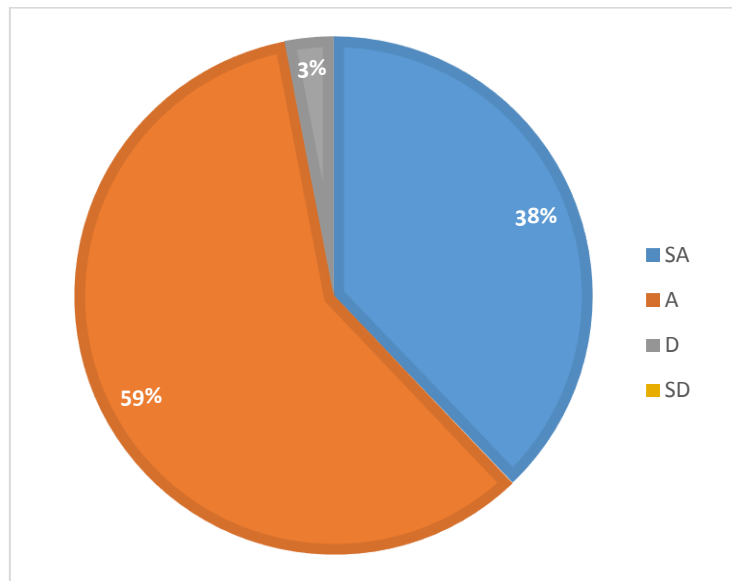


FIGURE 2

Interpretation: In the above statement, 38% students strongly agree that they wish to have more opportunities to learn English. 59% students agree with the statement whereas 3% students disagree that they wish to have more opportunities to learn English.

3] I do not invest much time and efforts in studying English as compared to other subjects.

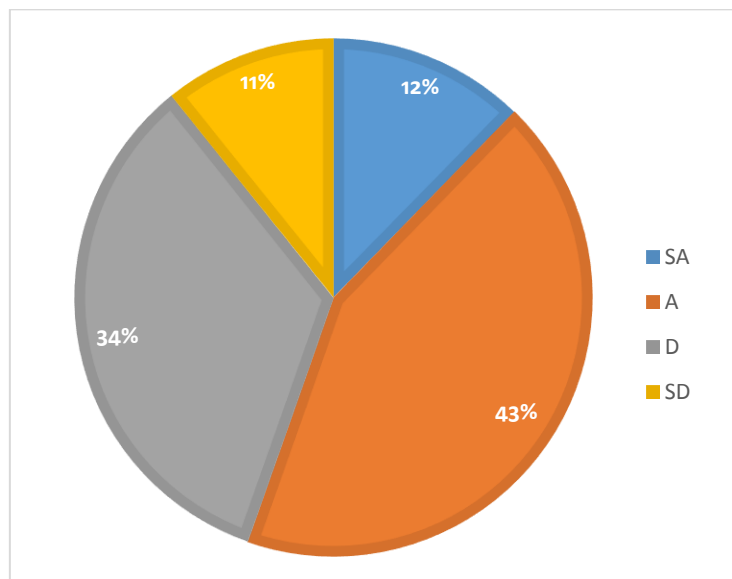


FIGURE 3

Interpretation: In the above statement, 12% students strongly agree that they do not invest much time and efforts in studying English as compared to other subjects. 43% students agree with the statement, whereas 34% students disagree and 11% students strongly disagree that do not invest much time and efforts in studying English as compared to other subjects.

4] I feel more comfortable to speak in my native language in the class.

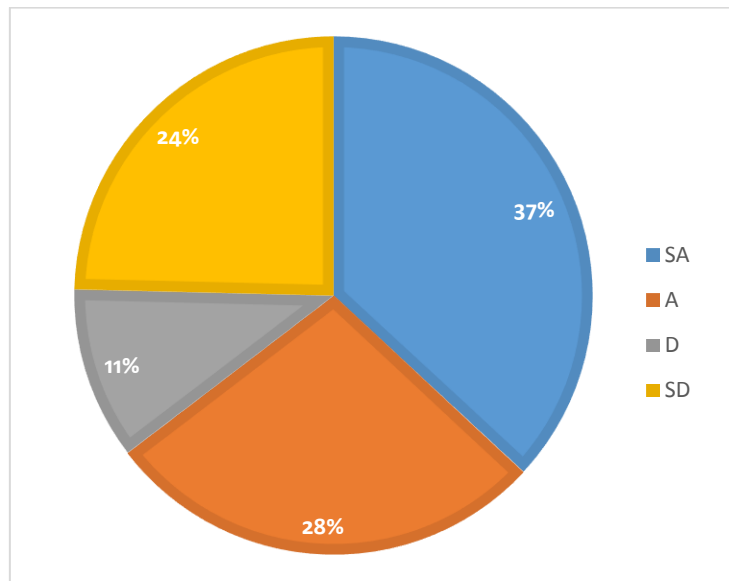


FIGURE 4

Interpretation: In the above statement, 37% students strongly agree that they feel more comfortable to speak in their native language in the class. 28% students agree with the statement, whereas 11% students disagree and 24% students strongly disagree that they feel more comfortable to speak in their native language in the class.

5] I cannot solve problems in grammar without my teacher's help.

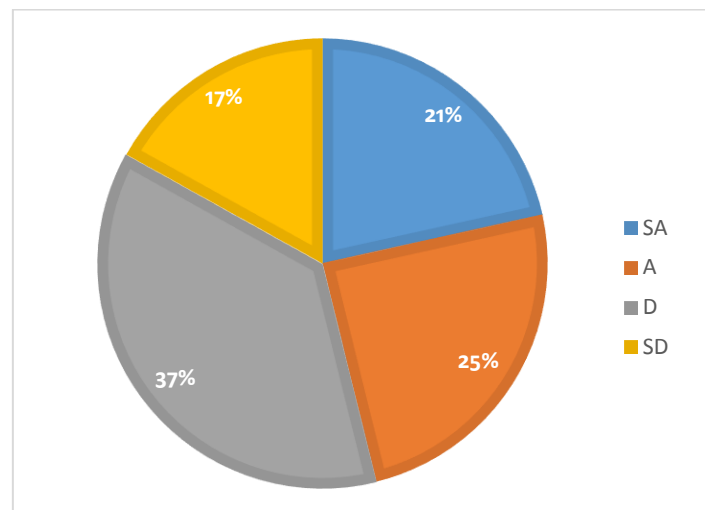


FIGURE 5

Interpretation: In the above statement, 21% students strongly agree that they cannot solve problems in grammar without their teacher's help. 25% students agree with the statement, whereas 37% students disagree and 17% students strongly disagree that they cannot solve problems in grammar without their teacher's help.

6] I am afraid to speak in English because my friends make fun of me when I make mistakes.

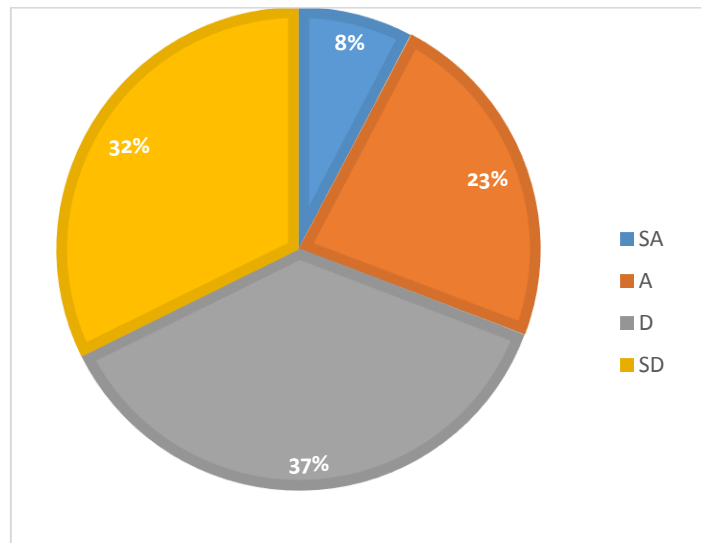


FIGURE 6

Interpretation: In the above statement, 8% students strongly agree that they are afraid to speak in English because their friends make fun of them when they make mistakes. 23% students agree with the statement, whereas 27% students disagree and 32% students strongly disagree that they are afraid to speak in English because their friends make fun of them when they make mistakes.

7] I feel that English grammar is difficult to understand.

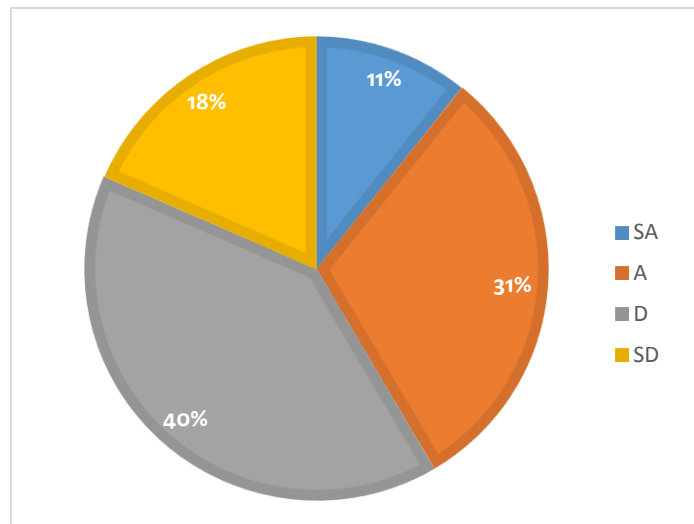


FIGURE 7

Interpretation: In the above statement, 11% students strongly agree that they feel English grammar is difficult to understand. 31% students agree with the statement, whereas 40% students disagree and 28% students strongly disagree that they feel English grammar is difficult to understand.

8] I use slang words while speaking and writing in English.

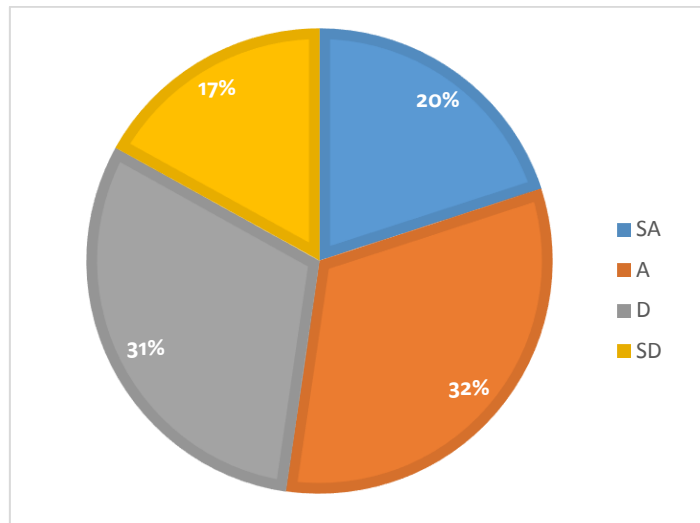


FIGURE 8

Interpretation: In the above statement, 20% students strongly agree that they use slang words while speaking and writing in English. 32% students agree with the statement, whereas 31% students disagree and 17% students strongly disagree that they use slang words while speaking and writing in English.

9] I find it difficult to pronounce big and difficult words in English.

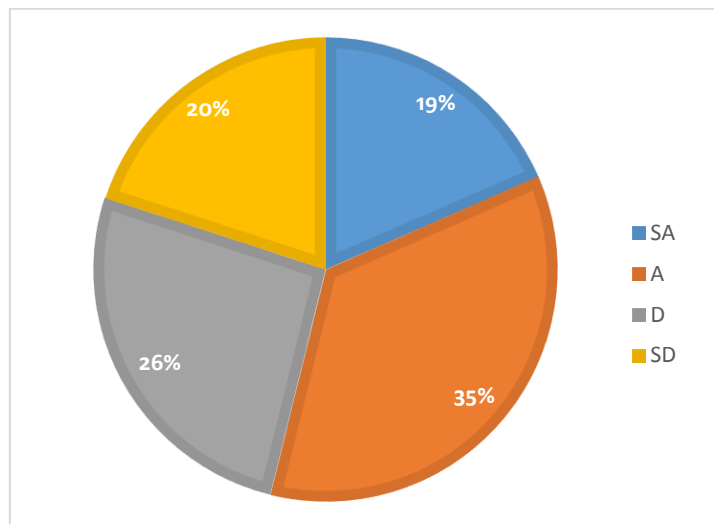


FIGURE 9

Interpretation: In the above statement, 19% students strongly agree that they find it difficult to pronounce big and difficult words in English. 35% students agree with the statement, whereas 26% students disagree and 20% students strongly disagree that they find it difficult to pronounce big and difficult words in English.

10] I am unable to express myself well in English.

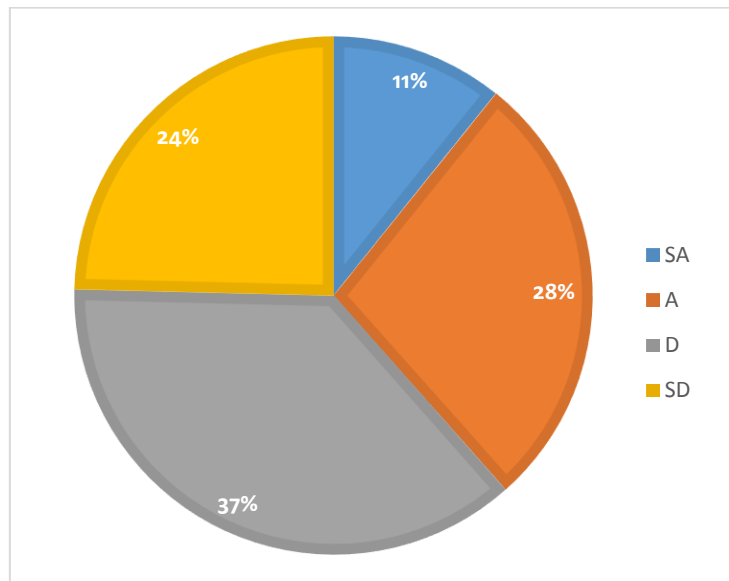


FIGURE 10

Interpretation: In the above statement, 11% students strongly agree that they are unable to express themselves well in English. 28% students agree with the statement, whereas 37% students disagree and 24% students strongly disagree that they are unable to express themselves well in English.

11] I cannot understand my teacher's English.

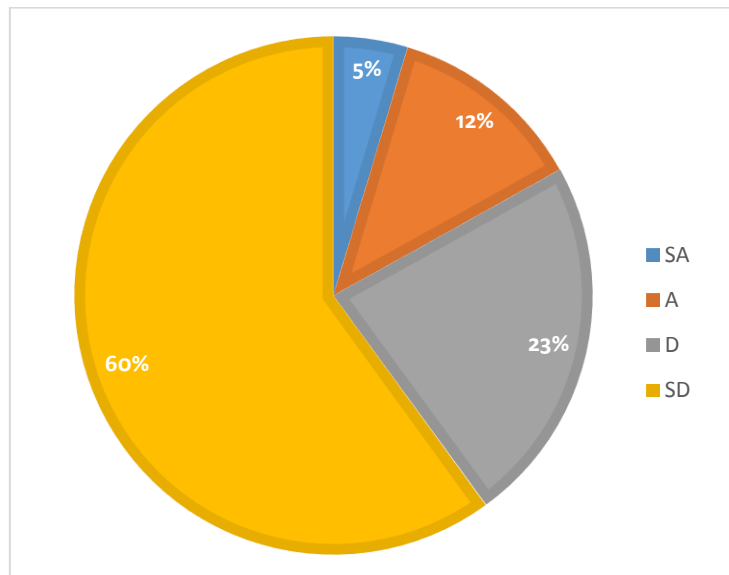


FIGURE 12

Interpretation: In the above statement, 5% students strongly agree that they cannot understand their teacher's English. 12% students agree with the statement, whereas 32% students disagree and 60% students strongly disagree that they cannot understand their teacher's English.

12] I have confidence in my ability to learn English.

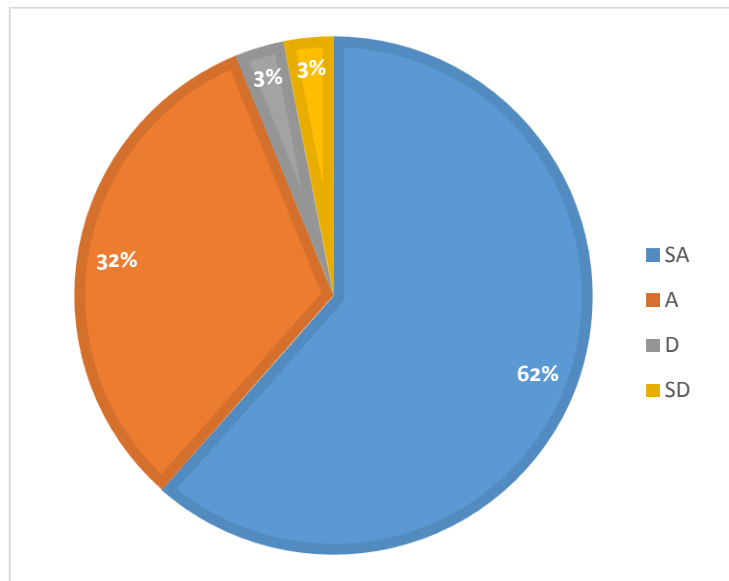


FIGURE 12

Interpretation: In the above statement, 62% students strongly agree that they have confidence in their ability to learn English. 32% students agree with the statement, whereas 3% students disagree and 3% students strongly disagree that they have confidence in their ability to learn English.

13] I am the first person learning English in my family.

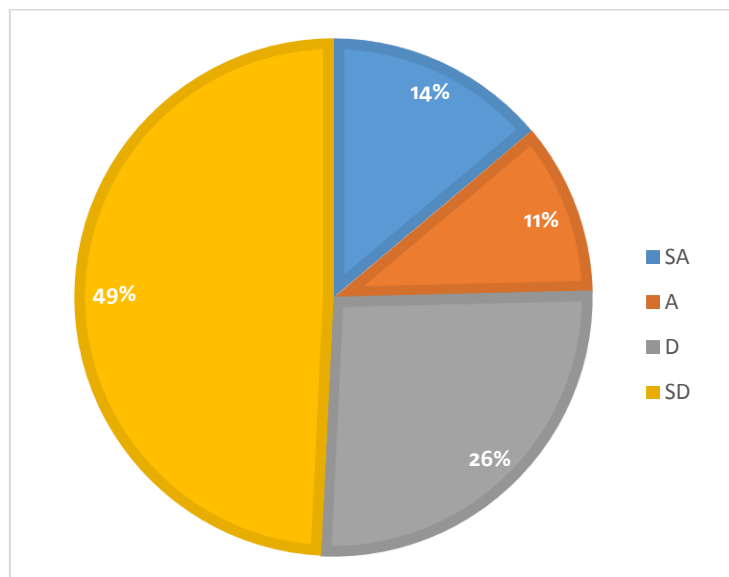


Figure 13

Interpretation: In the above statement, 14% students strongly agree that they are the first person learning English in their family. 11% students agree with the statement, whereas 26% students disagree and 49% students strongly disagree that they are the first person learning English in their family.

Conclusions and Discussion:

1. Majority of the students strongly agree that they enjoy paying attention during English periods. There were many students who agreed to the statement These students are able to comprehend what is being taught. Thus they find the subject interesting. Those students who do not enjoy paying attention during English period need to develop their skills in order to be able to understand the language well. This will help them to pay attention during English periods.
2. Most of the students wished to have more opportunities to learn English. This shows that they are aware of the importance to develop competence in English language. The students who do not wish to have more opportunities to learn English should be encouraged to develop interest in developing their competence in English language.
3. The findings show that most of the students agreed that they did not invest much time and efforts in studying English as compared to other subject while there were few who strongly agreed to the statement. One of the reasons for this is that they find the subject easy to understand and they do not realize that they can further develop their language skills by putting in efforts. These students must try to improve their language skills with constant practice. Those students who disagreed or strongly disagreed to the statement are ensuring that they give enough time to study English. This shows that they are aware of the importance of studying and practicing English.
4. The findings show that majority of the students feel comfortable to speak in their native language. These students can express themselves with great ease in their native language. It is also seen from the findings that students are well versed with grammar rules and are capable of solving problems in grammar on their own without their teacher's help. A few students do need the help of their teacher.
5. Majority of the students are confident to speak English and are not afraid of committing mistakes or being ridiculed by their friends. This shows high self-esteem of the students. Those students who have agreed and strongly agreed that they are afraid to speak in English because their friends make fun of them when they make mistakes have low self-confidence. They should be made to realize that mistakes are a part of learning. The fellow students should encourage their friend in order to boost their confidence.
6. Most of the students do find English grammar easy to understand. This shows a good foundation of English Grammar and a probable effect of good teaching skills of the teachers. The findings also show that most of the students are confident and have the

required skills and competency to express themselves well in English. This may be a reflection of strong school culture wherein English language skills are majorly focused upon.

7. Majority of the students understand their teacher's English and are able to comprehend and interpret their teacher's language easily. This points toward a good foundation of English language as well as care taken by teachers to ensure good understanding.
8. The findings suggest that majority of the students have confidence in their ability to learn English. This shows that they have mastered the basic skills required to understand English language. They have the confidence to enhance these skills and hence they have confidence in their ability to learn English. Also, most of the students are not first generation learners of English language. These students have an advantage of family members who know English language and can seek their guidance if required.

References:

- Krashen, S. (1982). *Principles and practices in second language acquisition*. Retrieved from http://www.sdkrashen.com/content/books/principles_and_practice.pdf
- McClintock, K. (2014). *Acculturation process and its implications for foreign language learners and teachers*. *International Journal of Innovative Interdisciplinary Research*, 2(3). Retrieved from <http://www.auamii.com/jiir/Vol-02/issue-03/1McClintock.pdf>