Evaluating the Competency in Creative Writing and Essay Writing of the Rural Area PG Students of Coimbatore District

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ABSTRACT :

English Language plays dominant role in education sector as most of the researches, inventions, discoveries and technological advancements. Many methods and approaches were introduced to teach English to ESL students. In spite of these methods and approaches, there were some basic problems like family background, economy, and religion and some important challenges such as inappropriate introduction of language, memorizing the language, lack of interest for learning the language among the students, lack of competency for the English teachers, careless teachers and students' ignorance about the importance of English. This study is conducted to analyse the subject knowledge, fluency and competency of the PG students who wish to become English teachers in future. The objective of the research is to analyse the sample's writing, interpreting and creative skills, grammatical skills, and their competency in employing technological tools.

Key words: ESL students – writing skills, grammar, competency in technology.

English has been taught in India, as a second language or foreign language. Currently, it has increased to a prominent status, where it is taught as a compulsory subject. Although it is made compulsory, the students have not worked on the subject sincerely and several students did not gained good competency in English. As an alternative, they have deliberately study English for being qualified in the examination. In contrast to the past, the position of English in India is completely transformed in the current period. Due to the universal requirement and the maturity of Science and Technology, business and commerce, the magnitude of English language have raised promptly. At this instant, English is converted into a global language; its existence and necessity are enlarging massively. The employment opportunities like Business Process Outsourcing, Medical transcript and Information Technology are enhancing the status and impact of English.

The Indian educational system has been developing gradually, and the students are acquiring a moderate knowledge in the language, after learning it for several years. Initially, it is trained simply as a library language, but currently it had transformed entirely. With the aim of producing skilled students, academicians had formulated few methods such as Grammar Translation Method, Direct Method, Bilingual Method, Audio Lingual Method and Silent way are followed by the teacher, for teaching a language. Now teaching English has become a tough task and the teachers must enrich their knowledge with the requirement. The teachers are facing lot of challenges to teach Indian students because of the reasons like family background, parents' mentality, growth of their brain and many more. In few situations, negligent teachers are appointed and they do not teach the students properly.

In a newspaper article it was stated that Sanjay Kumar Agarwal, a District Magistrate in Bihar, was shocked by the answer given by Kumari Anita, a government Primary School teacher in Dumri, Bihar. She approached him with a request for transfer to her native, as it was an area affected by Maoist. She had an anxiety because of some problematic incidents occurred earlier. Agarwal tried to test the knowledge of the teacher and he asked few questions to her. Anita wrote Pratibha Patil as our President and Smriti Irani as the Governor of India. These answers by the Government school teacher shocked the Magistrate and he ordered to inspect the authenticity of her degree. Another incident that happened a few years before in Samastipur, Bihar. A local channel caught a Primary School teacher, while she was informing to the students that there were 360 days in a year and Patna was the capital of India. She also pronounced January as "Junuary", Apple as "apil", and Saturday as "shatrdey" and education as "aduketion". After these incidents, authenticity of the school teachers' degree was scrutinized and 1000 fake degree teachers were caught.

Based on the outcome of the study conducted by Unissa, the main factors responsible for the low achievement of students in English are inadequate exposure for the students, there are few problems with teachers such as inadequate proficiency in English, negligible understanding of the teaching-learning objectives, apparent negative attitude of teachers' towards the learners' abilities, most of the teachers lack knowledge in theories and basic issues related to the teaching of L2. Though this study relates to the privately run English medium schools of the old city of Hyderabad the factors sorted out are of universal nature. They are likely to lead to low achievement in learning English at the secondary level, irrespective of the medium of instruction followed by the schools in different places.

The study has been conducted based on quantitative method. It adopts experimental and computational methods. The samples chosen for the study belong to Postgraduate students whose desire is to become English teacher. A question paper enclosing the exercises based on comprehension, grammar, technology, essay and creativity were given to the samples. They have been offered a time limit of one and half an hour, for the questions containing 50 marks. Later, the marks scored by the samples are converted into 100. The question paper was divided into five segments, namely, comprehension, grammar, creativity, technology and Essay writing.

1.1 Segment I

In this segment, Comprehension tasks are given to the samples to check their understanding intensity and to examine their efficiency to read and interpret a passage in English. Ten marks were fixed for this segment out of 100 marks. After the meticulous assessment of the answers, the results of the samples in this segment were represented in chart form
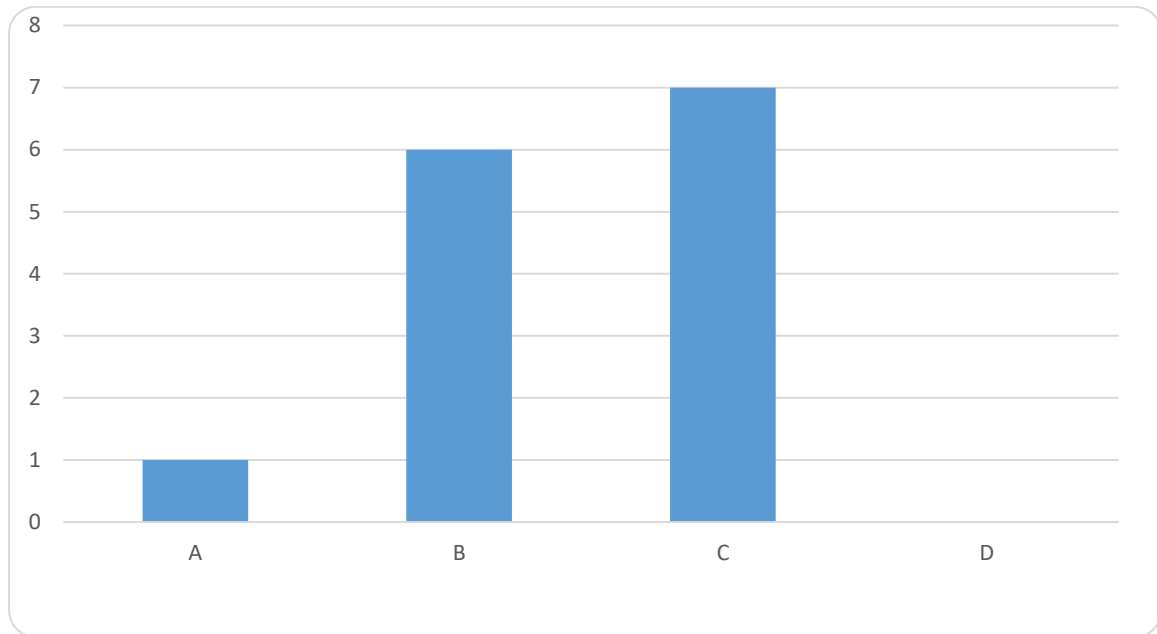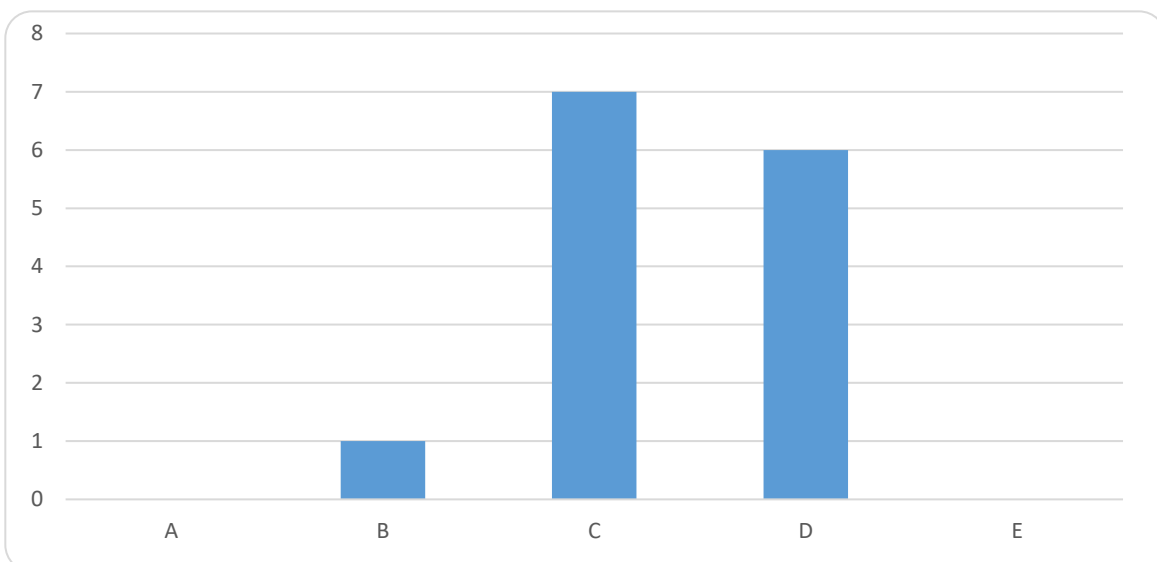

Illus 1.1 represents the samples comprehensive ability

In this chart, alphabets in x-axis represents the score obtained by the samples in   segment I, where A position is fixed to the sample who scored 10 - 6 marks, B position is fixed to the samples who scored 5 - 3 marks, C position is fixed to the samples who scored 2 - 1 mark(s), and D position is fixed to the samples who scored 0 mark. The numerals in the y-axis represent number of samples. One sample had scored A position, six samples had scored B position, seven samples had scored C position and none of the samples had scored D position.

In this segment, two samples failed to attempt poem comprehension. Some samples hardly attend any questions in poem comprehension. They were not proficient to interpret the poem in the proper manner. They have solved merely few direct questions. This illustrates the inability of the samples to read, interpret and comprehend a text.

1.2 Segment II

In this segment, grammar exercises are given for the samples to check their syntax, vocabulary, phrases and idioms. In order to ensure the sample's fluency in language, grammar exercises were given. Ten sections were assigned to the samples in this segment, where each section is allotted two marks. Twenty marks were fixed for this segment out of 100 marks. After the meticulous assessment of the answers, the results of the samples in this segment were represented in chart form.

Illus 1.2 represents the samples potential in grammar.

In this chart, alphabets in x-axis represents the score obtained by the samples in segment II, where A position is fixed to the sample who scored 20 - 14 marks, B position is fixed to the samples who scored 13 - 10 marks, C position is fixed to the samples who scored 9 - 5 marks, D position is fixed to the samples who scored 4 - 1 mark(s), and E position is fixed to the samples who scored 0 mark. The numerals in the y-axis represent number of samples. None of the sample samples had scored A position, one sample had scored B position, seven samples had scored C position, six samples had scored D position and none of the sample had scored E position.

In this segment, many samples had complication in clause analysis. Great sum of samples were incompetent to spot the definite article. Few felt complexity in voices and speeches. Samples felt intricacy in answering the grammar questions. This is an evidence for the inability of the samples and also their inadequate skill to construct an appropriate syntax in English.

1.3 Segment III

In this segment, the samples were expected to write a poem to examine their creative competency. The topics are,

    a) Facebook (or)
    b) Political situation of Tamilnadu

The samples must choose any one of the topics in the questionnaire. Ten marks were fixed for this segment out of 100 marks. After the meticulous assessment of the answers, the results of the samples in this segment were represented in chart form.
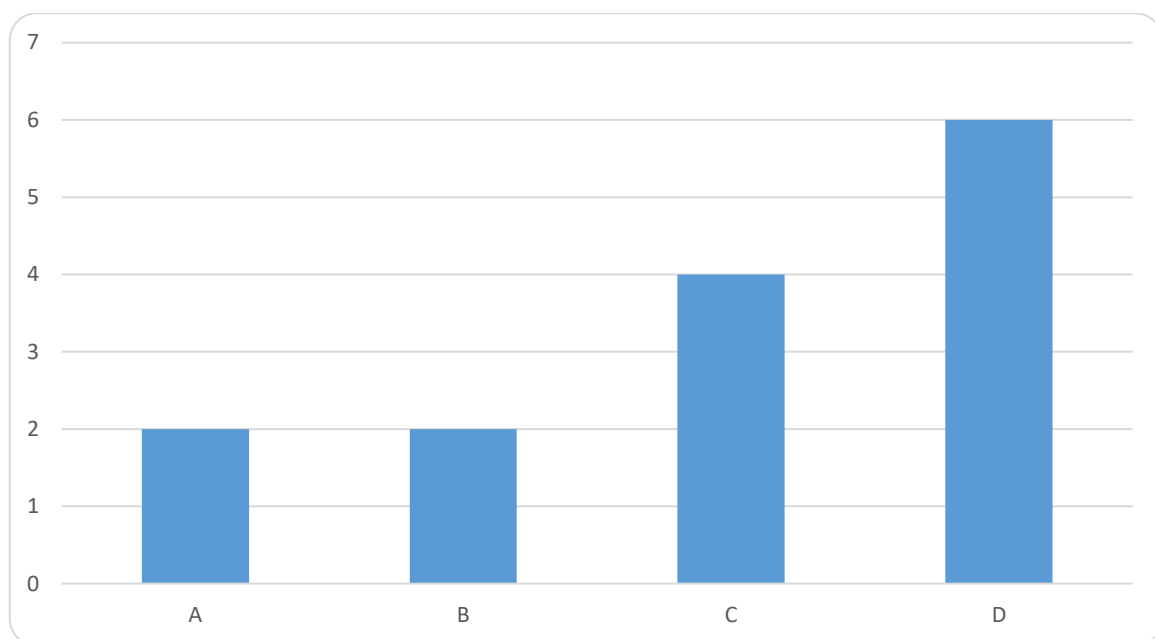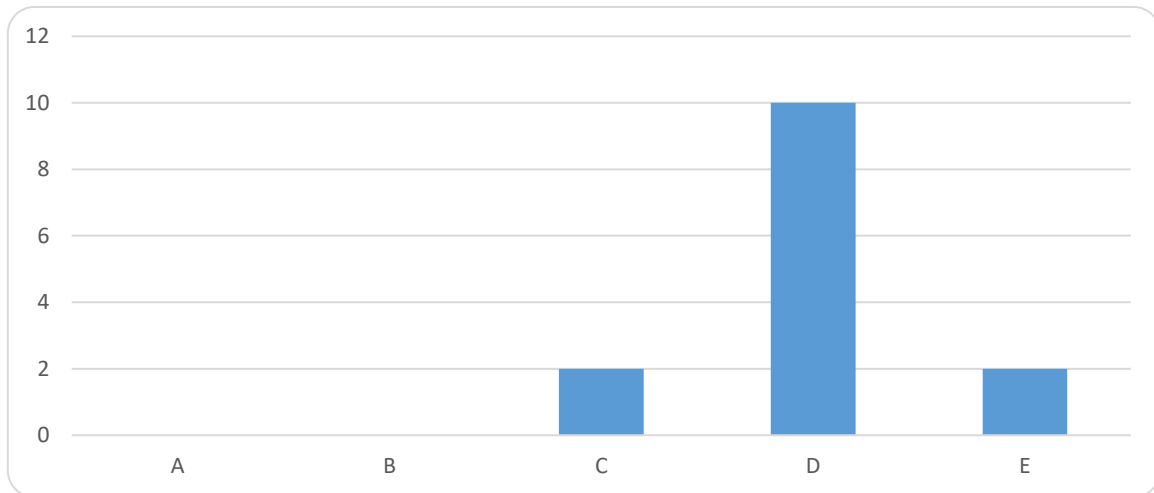

Illus 1.3 represents the creative ability of the samples

In this chart, alphabets in x-axis represents the score obtained by the samples in segment III, where A position is fixed to the sample who scored 10 - 6 marks, B position is fixed to the samples who scored 5 - 3 marks, C position is fixed to the samples who scored 2 - 1 mark(s), and D position is fixed to the samples who scored 0 mark. The numerals in the y-axis represent number of samples. Two samples had scored A position, two samples had scored B position, four samples had scored C position and six samples had scored D position.

In this segment, few samples made an attempt to write a poem with rhyming words and poetic devices, few wrote without rhyming words. Two samples wrote in a paragraph format which illustrates the samples insufficient idea about the structure of a poem. None of the samples made an attempt to use poetic devices in their poem. Two samples failed to attend poetry writing. This analysis reflects the samples deficiency in vocabulary power and writing skill.

1.4 Segment IV

In this segment, the sample's idea about technology in ELT is tested. In order to promote English language teaching, the teacher must exploit advanced technologies in their teaching. Forty marks were fixed for this segment out of 100 marks. After the meticulous assessment of the answers, the results of the samples in this segment were represented in chart form
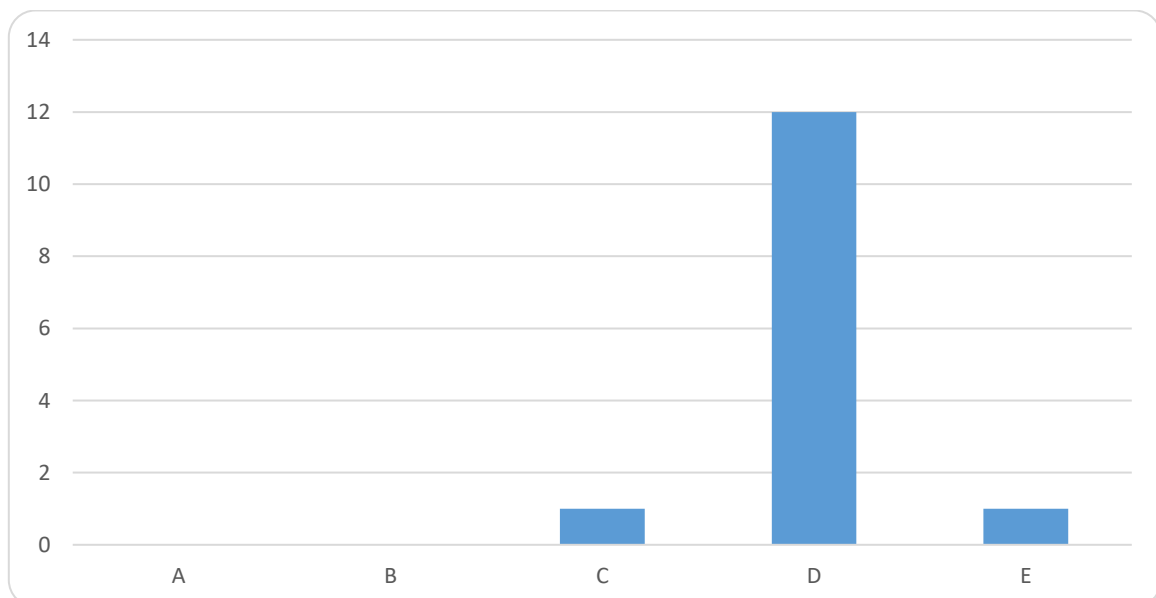
Illus 1.4 represents the samples technical knowledge

In this chart, alphabets in x-axis represents the position obtained by the samples in segment IV, where A position is fixed to the sample who scored 40 - 31 marks, B position is fixed to the samples who scored 30 - 21 marks, C position is fixed to the samples who scored 20 - 11 marks, D position is fixed to the samples who scored 10 - 1 mark(s), and E position is fixed to the samples who scored 0 mark. The numerals in the y-axis represent number of samples. None of the sample had scored A position, none of the sample had scored B position, two samples had scored C position, ten samples had scored D position and two samples had scored E position.

In this segment, the technical knowledge of the samples is analysed. They were unable to write suitable answer for the questions asked. Four samples failed to attend two questions and four samples failed to attend one question. This illustrates the deficiency of sample's technical knowledge, which is much needed to teach the students at current scenario. Incuriosity is the root cause of inadequate technical knowledge of these samples.

1.5 Segment V

In this segment, the sample is asked to write an essay based on Library and its resources. This task helps us to analyse the samples' language and writing skill. The samples are expected to write an essay on the fixed topic. Twenty marks were fixed for this segment out of 100 marks. After the meticulous assessment of the answers written by the samples, the results of them were analysed and represented in chart form.
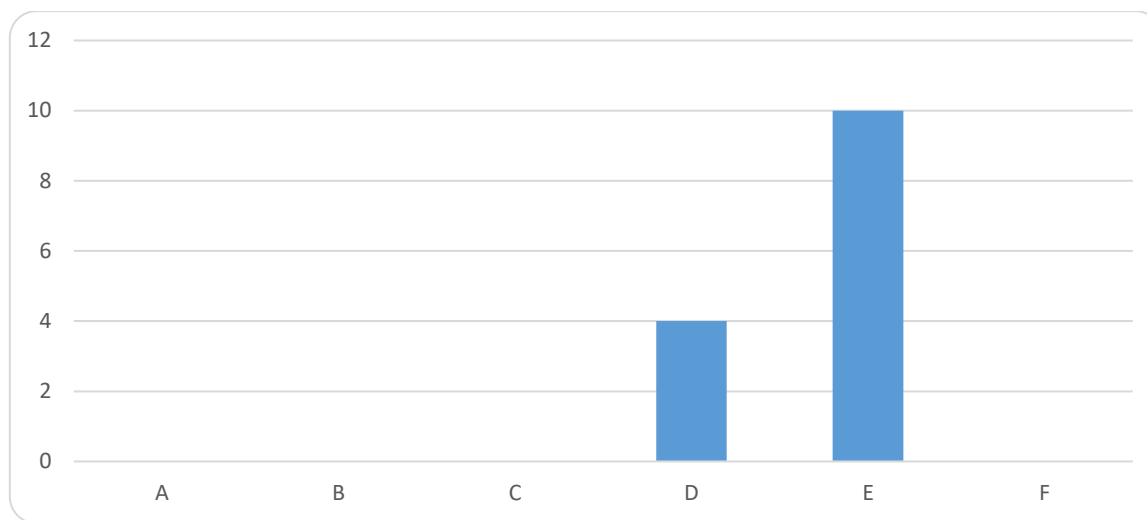

Illus 1.5 represents the sample's ability to write an essay

In this chart, alphabets in x-axis represents the score obtained by the samples in segment V, where A position is fixed to the sample who scored 20 - 14 marks, B position is fixed to the samples who scored 13 - 10 marks, C position is fixed to the samples who scored 9 - 5 marks, D position is fixed to the samples who scored 4 - 1 mark(s), and E position is fixed to the samples who scored 0 mark. The numerals in the y-axis represent number of samples. None of the sample had scored A position, none of the sample had scored B position, one sample had scored C position, twelve samples had scored D position and one sample had scored E position.

In this segment, language of the sample is tested. Few are not able to explain the ideas in a detailed manner. Few samples failed to follow the format of the essay. One sample hadn't attended this segment. They had many problems in syntax. They also had much grammar inaccuracy in their essay. None of the samples wrote about referring books, types of library and how to search for books in the digital library. None of the sample wrote more than two pages. They had no firm idea about library and its recourses.

The consolidated analysis of all the five segments is represented in chart form.

Illus 2.6 represents the consolidation of all the segments

In this chart, alphabets in x-axis represents the position obtained by the samples in segment VI, where A position is fixed to the sample who scored 100 - 80 marks, B position is fixed to the samples who scored 79 - 60 marks, C position is fixed to the samples who scored 59 - 40 marks, D position is fixed to the samples who scored 39 - 20 marks, E position is fixed to the samples who scored 19 - 1 mark(s) and F position is fixed to the samples who scored 0 mark.. The numerals in the y-axis represent number of samples. None of the samples had scored A position, none of the samples had scored B position, none of the samples had scored C position, four samples had scored D position, ten samples had scored E position and none of the samples had scored F position.

Illustration represents the whole performance of the samples. None of the students have scored good marks which reveal the deficient knowledge of the samples in English. This will lead to a great disaster, as these samples are the future teachers. If they themselves lack competency in English, then the next generation students' language would be very worse.

1.6 Findings in the study

1. Most of the students are from rural area so they talk rarely in English.
2. Family background also plays a vital role; their parents cannot take part in conversing English.
3. They had minimal opportunity to have a good conversation in English.
4. Few are not interested to learn English.
5. Some students are eager to learn, but they lack in confidence.
6. Students fail to understand the language as they learn only in examination point of view.
7. Few teachers fail to encourage students to converse in English.
8. Few students from government sector have less opportunity to learn English as they have only English paper in English and the other subjects are taught in regional language.

1.7 Recommendations

1. A lack competency of the samples in English is due to minimum usage of English in day to day life. Usage of English in routine life should be increased from primary classes.
2. A new language must be introduced to the beginners gradually. The teacher must introduce listening, speaking, reading and writing accordingly.
3. The teacher must encourage the student to use English and make him understand the importance of learning English.
4. Teacher must utilize modern and trending methods and approaches to make the class dynamic.
5. Advancement in technology makes the student to listen the class. So some technological aids must be used in teaching.
6. Proper training and enhancement programs must be conducted periodically for the teachers to make them updated.
7. The students' fascination to learn English must be stimulated by introducing CALL, online learning and benefits in learning English.
8. Ask the learner to watching video and listen to audio in English.
9. Make the learners to reading books and newspapers. This facilitates the learner to acquire English without his knowledge.

10. Make the learners to converse in English. The teacher must correct their language if they are wrong. Encouragement gives determination for them to learn a language.

According to the study conducted, the samples were incompetent in English. They were not able to interpret and comprehend. They have difficulty in working with grammar due to memorizing grammar rules rather than understandings. They felt difficulty in constructing a sentence and using appropriate vocabularies. Due to inappropriate use of vocabulary, complete sense of the sentence was changed. In technical knowledge, the samples were very poor and they had difficulty in using technology. The samples were unable to write an essay with proper structure and do not have proper knowledge about the recourses of library. The tasks given to the samples were very simple for Postgraduate level. However, the samples were not able to score good marks. Samples had many reasons like medium of education, family background; but it is their responsibility to enrich their competency in English. If they fail to develop their competency, then the students of next generation would suffer more in learning English.

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