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Reading Problems of Secondary School Students in English Language

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Date-14.02.2019

Abstract

English is accepted as a universal language across the world. Its popularity is increasing drastically almost in all sectors. People speak this language, to unify themselves in this diverse world. Overall, the aim of teaching English, as a second language is to encourage the learners to sharpen the skills of communication, for both academic and professional purposes and to make communication easy for them. Subsequently the learners must have the command over language. But do the students learn English appropriately at elementary and secondary stage? Generally, students lack appropriate reading strategies in English at secondary stage. As secondary school education is a crucial stage of transition of career for students, the investigators tried to explore the reading problems of secondary school students and the status of students at different developmental stage of reading English language. Concurrent Triangulation Design was used for the present study. In this study a sample size of 210 class IXth students, 6 teachers and 6 headmasters of schools was taken for the study. It is concluded that IX class students are still at beginner stage of reading developmental stage. After reading English for 5 years till class IX they are not able to reach reading stage of class IX. Most of the students have reading capabilities of class Vth and VIth class students. This problem needs to be addressed immediately by English teachers of IXth class.

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1. Introduction.

English is accepted as a universal language across the world. Its popularity is increasing drastically almost in all sectors. People speak this language, to unify themselves in this diverse world. Overall, the aim of teaching English, as a second language is to encourage the learners to sharpen the skills of communication, for both academic and professional purposes and to make communication easy for them. Subsequently the learners must have the command over language. But do the students learn English appropriately at elementary and secondary stage? Generally, students lack appropriate reading strategies in English at secondary stage (Subbiah & Singh, 2019). As secondary school education is a crucial stage of transition of career for students, the investigators tried to explore the reading problems of secondary school students and the status of students at different developmental stage of reading English language developed originally by Collier (2016).

2. Objectives of the Study

- To identify the reading problems of secondary school students in learning English language.

3. Research Questions

- What are the reading problems faced by secondary school students in learning English language?
- What are the reading problems faced by secondary school students in learning English language as observed in the classroom by the researchers?

4. Method of the Study

Studying the review of literature and considering the objectives of the study, mixed method design was found to be most suited for the present study. Concurrent Triangulation Design was found to be most suited for the present study. In this design, qualitative and quantitative data are collected concurrently in one phase. The data are analyzed separately and then compared and/or combined. The research design is presented as follows:

Quantitative Method
Descriptive Survey

Qualitative Method
Case Study

Quantitative Data
Collection
1.Questionnaire for
students
2. Questionnaire for
teachers

Qualitative
Data
Collection
1.Focus
Group
Discussion
with Students

Quantitative Data Analysis
Outcomes compared for
Identification of students'
problems in learning
English language

Qualitative
Data Analysis
Outcomes
How
stakeholders
experience
regarding the

Mixed method Data
Analysis
Results Compared to:
Describe what are the
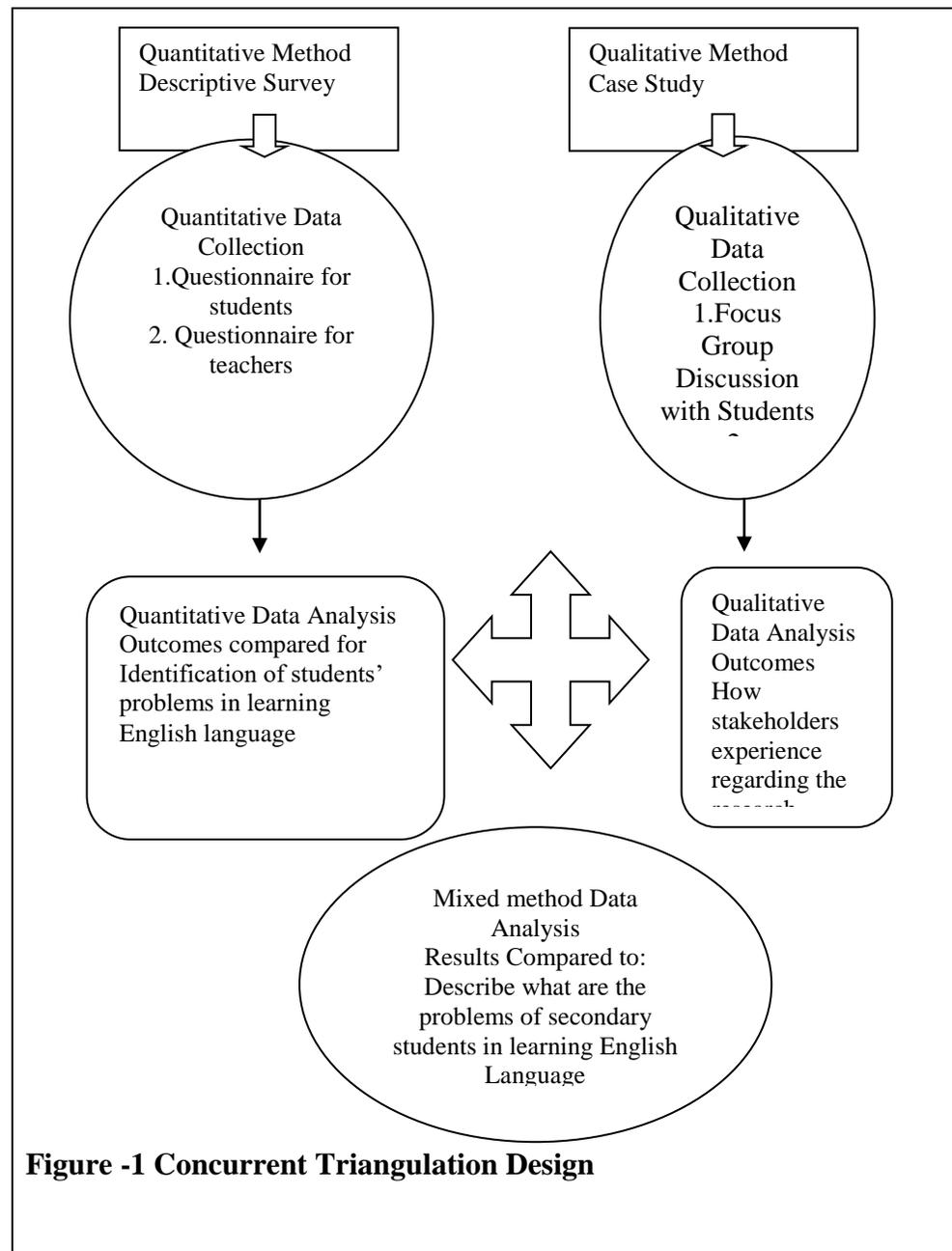problems of secondary
students in learning English
Language

Figure -1 Concurrent Triangulation Design

4.1 Sample of the Study

In this study a sample size of 210 class IXth students, 6 teachers and 6 headmasters of schools was taken for the study. The sample for the study is taken from Khurdha and Cuttack districts of Odisha,India. In the first phase the selection of schools was done by convenient sampling and in the second phase all the students of class IX, their English teachers, and headmasters of selected schools were taken as sample for the study, therefore selection of teachers was done through batch sampling.

Table No 4.1:- List of the Sample Schools

Sl. No	Name of the School	Number of Students	Number of English Teacher	Number of Headmaster/Headmistress
1	Government Boys' High School, Unit-8, BBSR, Khurda,Odisha-India	40	1	1
2	Government Girls' High School, Unit-8, Khurda, Odisha-India	34	1	1
3	MP Corp Government High School, Baramunda, Khurda, Odisha-India	37	1	1
4	Secondary Board High School, Cuttack, Odisha-India	44	1	1
5	Madhusudan B/P Girls' High School, Cuttack, Odisha-India	20	1	1
6	Ranihat High School, Cuttack, Odisha-India	35	1	1

4.2 Tools and Techniques

For collecting required data for the present study following tools were developed by the researchers. Content validity of the tools was established. Classroom Language Interaction Checklist (CLIC) for Students was adapted for Indian version from the original work of Dr. Catherine Collier (2016). The source is

http://www.k12.wa.us/MigrantBilingual/pubdocs/CLIC2016.pdf. Data collection was done from the academic session 2017-2018.

- Classroom Language Interaction Checklist (CLIC) for Students
- FGD with Students
- Questionnaire for Students
- Field Note Diary

5. Analysis and Interpretation

5.1 Analysis of Research question-1 Problems faced by students in reading English language as perceived by students

Table-5.1: Problems in reading the English language as perceived by students (N=210)

Sl. No	Reading	Never	Almost Never	Occasionally Sometimes	Almost Everytime	Every time
1	Difficult to read in English	46(22%)	46(22%)	46(22%)	59(28%)	13(6%)
2	Recognizing most words in English just by looking at them	36(17%)	4(2%)	111(53%)	46(22%)	13(6%)
3	Reading fast in English	23(11%)	17(8%)	59(28%)	65(31%)	46(22%)
4	Reading ability is good in comparison to peers	40(19%)	17(8%)	69(33%)	53(25%)	31(15%)
5	Difficulty in learning English in school	99(47%)	36(17%)	36(16%)	40(19%)	0

The above table shows that out of the total 210 students 34% students always face difficulties in reading English where as 44% students never face any difficulties in reading English. The above findings are presented in the following graphical figure.

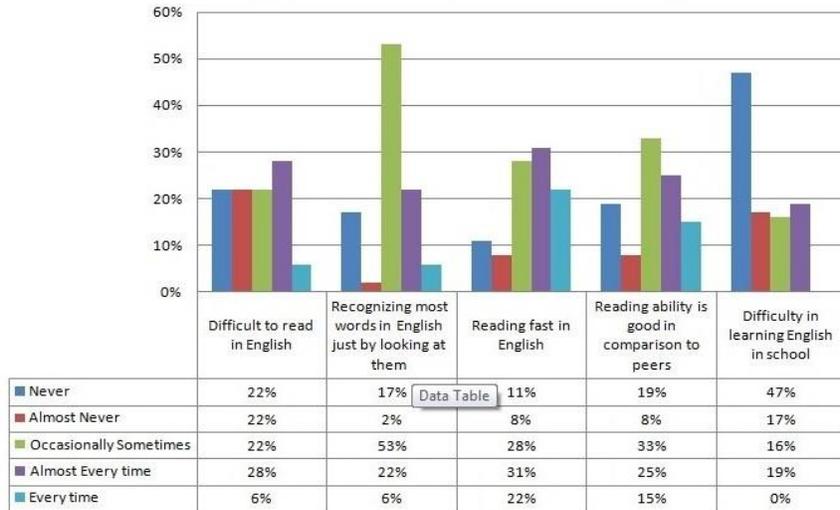## Problems in reading English language as perceived by students

	Difficult to read in English	Recognizing most words in English just by looking at them	Reading fast in English	Reading ability is good in comparison to peers	Difficulty in learning English in school
■ Never	22%	17%	11%	19%	47%
■ Almost Never	22%	2%	8%	8%	17%
■ Occasionally Sometimes	22%	53%	28%	33%	16%
■ Almost Every time	28%	22%	31%	25%	19%
■ Every time	6%	6%	22%	15%	0%

Figure-2: Problems of class IXth students in reading English language

5.2 **Analysis of Research Question- 2** problems faced by secondary school students in learning English language as observed in the classroom. The analysis is presented stage wise:

- Stage 1- Pre-production stage (when attended 0-6 months in school)
- Stage 2- Early production developmental stage (attended 6months-1 year in school)
- Stage 3- Speech Emergent Developmental Stage(attended 1-2 years in school)
- Stage 4- Intermediate Fluency Developmental Stage (attended 2-3 years in school)
- Stage 5- Advanced Intermediate Developmental Stage (attended 3-5 years in school)
- Satge6- Advanced Fluency Developmental Stage (attended 5-7 years in school)

Table-5.2: Reading problems of students at pre-production developmental stage (N=210)				
Sl. No.	Aspect (Reading)	To a Great Extent (Number of Students Responded)	Some Extent (Number of Students Responded)	Not At All (Number of Students Responded)
1	Read the topic loudly	98 (47%)	64 (30%)	48 (23%)
2	Identify symbols and icons	80 (38%)	54 (26%)	76 (36%)
3	Connect print to visuals	79 (38%)	68 (32%)	63 (30%)
4	Match objects to labels	65 (31%)	62 (29%)	83 (40%)
5	Follow directions using diagrams or pictures	51 (24%)	74 (35%)	85 (41%)
6	phonics skills	71 (34%)	78 (37%)	61 (29%)
7	Participate in shared reading	108 (51%)	44 (21%)	58 (28%)
8	Rely on pictures for understanding	79 (38%)	53 (25%)	78 (37%)
9	Retell using gestures, expressions, and illustrations	45 (21%)	67 (32%)	98 (47%)
10	Read the sentences with pause	85 (40%)	52 (25%)	73 (35%)
11	Feel free to ask question in English	44 (21%)	51 (24%)	115 (55%)

The above table shows that 47% students read the topic loudly; thirty eight percent students can identify symbols and icons, 38% connect print to visuals, 31% match objects to labels, 24% follow directions using diagrams or pictures, 34% learnt phonic skills, and 51% participate in shared reading. Thirty eight percent students rely on pictures for understanding, 21% retell using gestures, expressions, and illustrations, 40% read the sentences with pause and 21% feel free to ask questions in English.

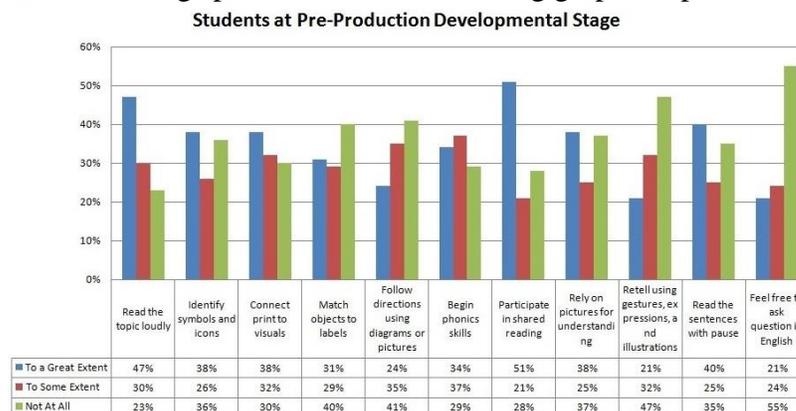The above findings presented in the following graphical presentation

	Read the topic loudly	Identify symbols and icons	Connect print to visuals	Match objects to labels	Follow directions using diagrams or pictures	Begin phonics skills	Participate in shared reading	Rely on pictures for understanding	Retell using gestures, expressions, and illustrations	Read the sentences with pause	Feel free to ask question in English
To a Great Extent	47%	38%	38%	31%	24%	34%	51%	38%	21%	40%	21%
To Some Extent	30%	26%	32%	29%	35%	37%	21%	25%	32%	25%	24%
Not At All	23%	36%	30%	40%	41%	29%	28%	37%	47%	35%	55%

Figure- 3: Identification of class IX Students' reading problems

Table-5.3: Reading problems of students at Early production Developmental Stage (N=210)				
Sl. No.	Aspect (Reading)	To a Great Extent (Number of Students Responded)	Some Extent (Number of Students Responded)	Not At All (Number of Students Responded)
1	Participate in shared reading and predict	79 (38%)	42 (20%)	89 (42%)
2	Recall facts and details	59 (28%)	59 (28%)	92 (44%)
3	Identify main idea	49 (23%)	58 (28%)	103 (49%)
4	Draw conclusions	28 (13%)	55 (26%)	127 (61%)
5	Make connections	47 (23%)	55 (26%)	108 (51%)
6	Retell stories using simple sentences	39 (18%)	50 (24%)	121 (58%)
7	Use picture cues and initial letter sounds to predict text	36 (17%)	50 (24%)	124 (59%)
8	Search for pictures associated with word patterns	35 (17%)	50 (23%)	125 (60%)
9	Follow simple written directions	37 (18%)	61 (29%)	112 (53%)

From the above table, it is found that at early production stage 38% students participate in shared reading and predict to a great extent. About 28% students recall facts and details, 23% of students identify the main idea to a great extent, 13% of students draw conclusions, 23% of students are able to make connections, 18% students retell stories using simple sentences, 17% students use picture cues and initial letter sounds to predict text, 17% students search for pictures associated with word patterns. The above findings presented in the following graphical presentation:
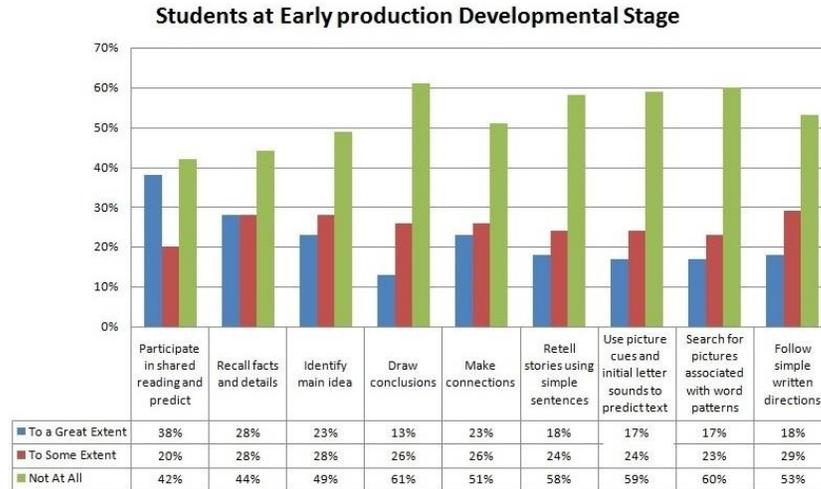
Students at Early production Developmental Stage

	Participate in shared reading and predict	Recall facts and details	Identify main idea	Draw conclusions	Make connections	Retell stories using simple sentences	Use picture cues and initial letter sounds to predict text	Search for pictures associated with word patterns	Follow simple written directions
To a Great Extent	38%	28%	23%	13%	23%	18%	17%	17%	18%
To Some Extent	20%	28%	28%	26%	26%	24%	24%	23%	29%
Not At All	42%	44%	49%	61%	51%	58%	59%	60%	53%

Figure -4: problems of students at early production Developmental Stage of English language

Table-5.4: Reading problems of students at Speech Emergent Developmental Stage (N=210)				
Sl. No.	Aspect (Reading)	To a Great Extent (Number of Students Responded)	To Some Extent (Number of Students Responded)	Not At All (Number of Students Responded)
1	Draw conclusions	28 (13%)	55 (26%)	127 (60%)
2	Make connections	47 (22%)	55 (27%)	108 (51%)
3	Retell stories using simple sentences	39 (18%)	50 (24%)	121 (58%)
4	Use picture cues and initial letter sounds to predict text	36 (17%)	50 (24%)	124 (59%)
5	Follow simple written directions	37 (18%)	61 (29%)	112 (53%)

From the above table, it is found that in speech emergent stage 13% students can draw conclusions, 22% of students can make connections, 18% students can retell stories using simple sentences, 17% students can use picture cues and initial letter sounds, and 18% students do follow simple written directions. The above findings presented in the following graphical presentation.
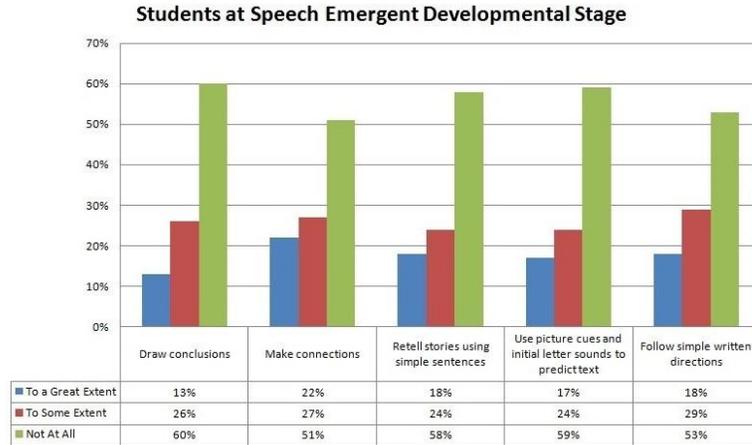
Figure -5: reading problems of students at Speech Emergent Developmental Stage of English language

Table-5.5: Reading problems of students at Intermediate Fluency Developmental Stage (N=210)				
Sl. No	Aspect (Reading)	To a Great Extent (Number of Students Responded)	To Some Extent (Number of Students Responded)	Not At All (Number of Students Responded)
1	Use complex phonics and contextual clues to identify words	NR	NR	NR
2	Summarize and sequence events	20(10%)	45(21%)	145(69%)
3	Describe time and setting	18(9%)	53(25%)	139(66%)
4	Explain themes and feelings	25(12%)	62(30%)	123(59%)
5	Use text features to gain information	Not Responding (NR)	Not Responding (NR)	Not Responding (NR)
6	Explain, describe, compare and retell in response to literature	Not Responding	Not Responding	Not Responding
7	Engage in independent reading based on oral fluency and prior experiences with print	Not Responding	Not Responding	Not Responding

From the above table found that in Intermediate Fluency stage students do not use complex phonics and contextual clues to identify words at all. About 10% of students can summarize and sequence events to a great extent whereas 69% of

students do not summarize and sequence events and 25% students summarize and sequence events to some extent. About 9% students describe time and setting to a great extent whereas 665% students cannot describe time and setting at all and 25% of students can describe time and set to some extent. About 12% of students can explain themes and feelings to a great extent whereas 59% of students do not explain themes and feelings at all and 30% students explain themes and feelings to some extent. The above findings presented in the following graphical presentation
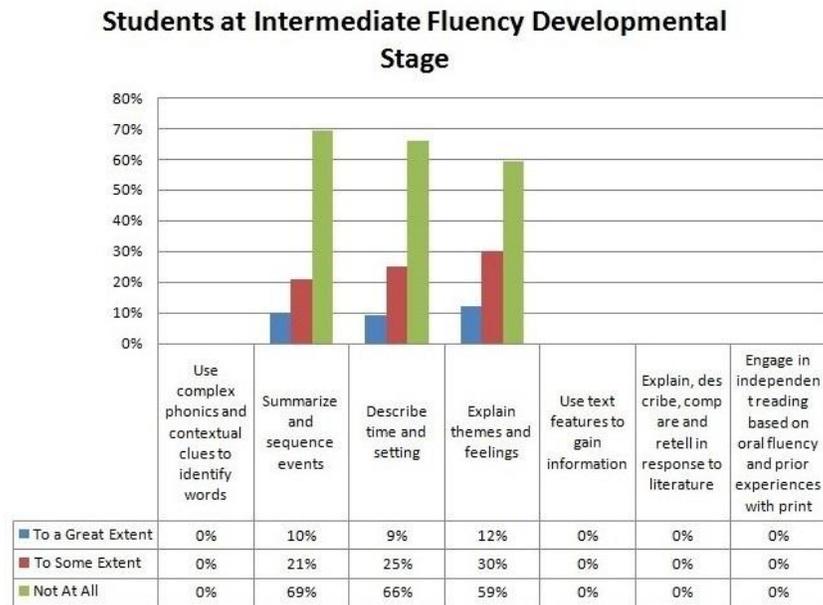

Figure- 6: Reading problems of students at Intermediate Fluency Developmental Stage of English language

Table-5.6: Reading problems of students at Advanced Intermediate Developmental Stage (N=210)				
Sl. No.	Aspect (Reading)	To a Great Extent (Number of Students Responded)	To Some Extent (Number of Students Responded)	Not At All (Number of Students Responded)
1	Follow more complex written directions	NR	NR	NR
2	Independently read and interpret a wider range of narrative and content texts with increasing	NR	NR	NR
3	Comprehension	51(24%)	62(30%)	97(46%)
4	Express opinion	32(15%)	53(25%)	85(40%)
	Explore concepts in the	NR	NR	NR

	subject matter in greater depth			
5	Locate information/resources to conduct research projects	NR	NR	NR
6	Read grade-level text with English Language Development support through pre-teaching (vocabulary and structure)	NR	NR	NR

It is found from the above table in Advanced Intermediate stage students do not follow more complex written directions. Students do not independently read and interpret a wider range of narrative and content texts with increasing. About 24% of students make comprehension to a great extent whereas 46% students do not make comprehension at all and 30% students make comprehension to some extent.

About 15% of students express an opinion to a great extent whereas 40% of students do not express an opinion at all and 25% students express an opinion to some extent. Students do not explore concepts in the subject matter in greater depth at all. Students do not locate information/resources to conduct research projects at all. Students do not read grade-level text with English Language Development support through pre-teaching (vocabulary and structure).

The overall table shows that in Advanced Intermediate stage students do not follow more complex written directions. Students do not independently read and interpret a wider range of narrative and content texts with increasing. Most of the students do not make comprehension at all. Most of the students do not express an opinion at all. Students do not explore concepts in the subject matter in greater depth at all. Students do not locate information/resources to conduct research projects at all. Students cannot read grade-level text with English Language Development support through pre-teaching (vocabulary and structure).

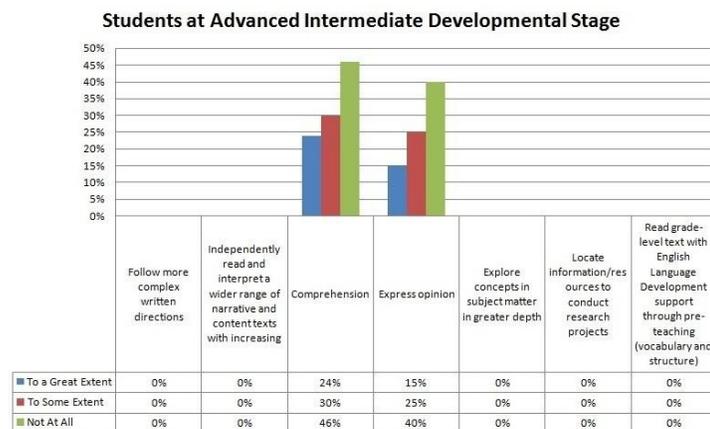The above findings presented in the following graphical presentation

Figure- 7: reading problems of students at Advanced   Intermediate Developmental Stage of English language

Table-5.7: Reading problems of students at Advanced Fluency Developmental Stage (N=210)				
Sl. No.	Aspect (Reading)	To a Great Extent (Number of Students Responded)	To Some Extent (Number of Students Responded)	Not At All (Number of Students Responded)
1	Read competently to meet both social and academic demands for specific purposes and audiences	NR	NR	NR
2	Read with considerable fluency	49(23%)	55(26%)	104(50%)

The above table shows that in Advanced Fluency stage students do not read competently to meet both social and academic demands for specific purposes and audiences. About 23% of students read with considerable fluency to a great extent whereas 50% of students cannot read with considerable fluency at all and 26% students read with considerable fluency to some extent.

The overall table shows that in Fluency stage students do not read competently to meet both social and academic demands for specific purposes and audiences. Most of the students do not read with considerable fluency at all.

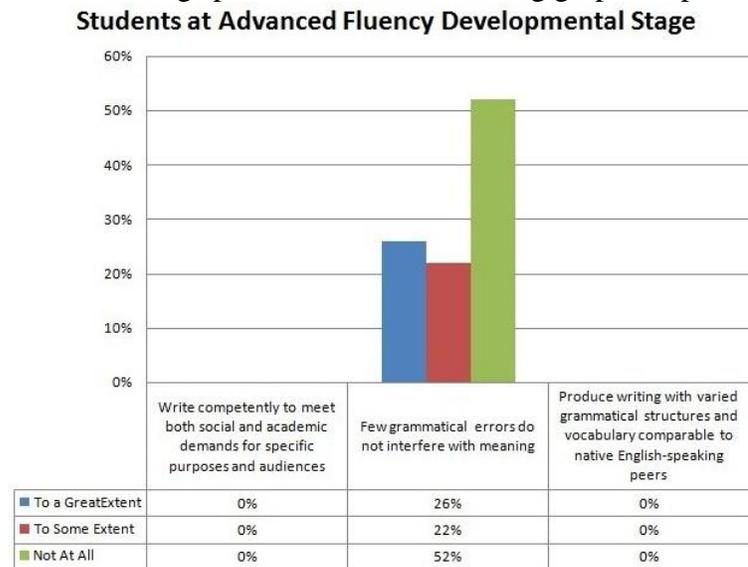The above findings presented in the following graphical presentation

Students at Advanced Fluency Developmental Stage

	Write competently to meet both social and academic demands for specific purposes and audiences	Few grammatical errors do not interfere with meaning	Produce writing with varied grammatical structures and vocabulary comparable to native English-speaking peers
To a GreatExtent	0%	26%	0%
To Some Extent	0%	22%	0%
Not At All	0%	52%	0%

Figure-8: Reading problems of students at Advanced Fluency Developmental Stage of English language

6. **Conclusion**: - It is concluded that IX class students are still at beginner stage of reading developmental stage. After reading English for 5 years till class IX they are not able to reach reading stage of class IX. Most of the students have reading capabilities of class Vth and VIth class students. This problem needs to be addressed immediately by English teachers of IXth class.

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