

2. Hypothesis and Research Design :

The object of this work is to evaluate as precisely as possible the proficiency in English of the first year Arts undergraduates of Solapur Region. There is a general feeling that the first year Arts undergraduates these days are very deficient in their knowledge of English. One often hear remarks like 'they are incapable of writing a single correct sentence in English'. This charge is clearly vague and does not tell us anything precisely about either their deficiencies or their strengths.

The hypothesis of this investigation was that the first year Arts undergraduates of Solapur region largely fail to attain the standards that they are expected to attain. In order to test this hypothesis the following research design was evolved.

2.1 Design

A test of attainments of the first year Arts undergraduate of Solapur region was planned to be

as comprehensive as possible covering the important aspects of language ability. It was decided to test the size of vocabulary, structures, Reading comprehension and pronunciation including stress, weak forms and intonation. The test evolved thus was designed to assess their overall language ability. The present investigation was expected to provide a rough estimate of the first year Arts undergraduates of Solapur region and their language equipment.

An elaborate battery of tests comprising items to test a large part of the prescribed vocabulary and certain proven items for testing the overall language ability was constructed. The test was administered to a sizeable, stratified representative sample of the first year Arts undergraduates of Solapur region of Shivaji University of the year 1992. The findings of the investigation are reported in this work.

2.2 Methodology

Both for written and spoken English the test was designed to evaluate language skills of the students. The vocabulary test was designed to test mainly active vocabulary and the items such as fill in the blanks and multiple choice were given. For testing grammatical structures items set were supposed to test the areas of grammar such as question forms, tag questions, tense forms, use of prepositions and modal auxiliaries etc. In the reading comprehension test a passage was given and questions were asked on the basis of what is stated or implied in the passage. To test the over-all language ability of the students a passage was given for cloze test in which twenty blanks were kept.

For spoken English test, the items were given to test sound discrimination, word stress, weak forms, and intonation. For the sound discrimination, twenty pairs of words were given and the students were asked to read the pairs of words aloud.

This was to see if they could make sound discrimination between two words recognizing/using correct vowels as well as consonant sounds. In the word stress test, thirty words were given for loud reading. To test the weak forms ten sentences were given and they were asked to read them aloud. And in the intonation test twenty sentences were given for reading aloud so that their use of tones would be tested.

2.3

Testing Language Proficiency :

The proficiency test thus designed measures what students have learned and its aim usually is to determine whether the ability displayed by the testees in the test corresponds to specific language requirements. The test has pre-determined set of the following categories with the weightage in terms of marks shown against them.

| Sr.No. | C a t e g o r y | Marks. |
|--------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1) | The use of vocabulary items .. | 20 |
| 2) | The use of structural components .. | 20 |
| 3) | Reading comprehension .. | 10 |
| 4) | Cloze test .. | 20 |
| 5) | Sound discrimination .. | 20 |
| 6) | Word stress .. | 30 |
| 7) | Sentences for weak forms .. | 10 |
| 8) | Sentences for intonation .. | 20 |
| | | ----- Total .. 150 ----- |

Out of 150 items almost all the items are of multiple choice type designed to elicit specific responses from the students. In all (100) hundred F.Y.B.A. students from Solapur region of Shivaji University took the test.

2.4

Subjects and procedure :

The test was administered to the first year Arts undergraduates of Solapur region of Shivaji University. Ten colleges were selected to cover

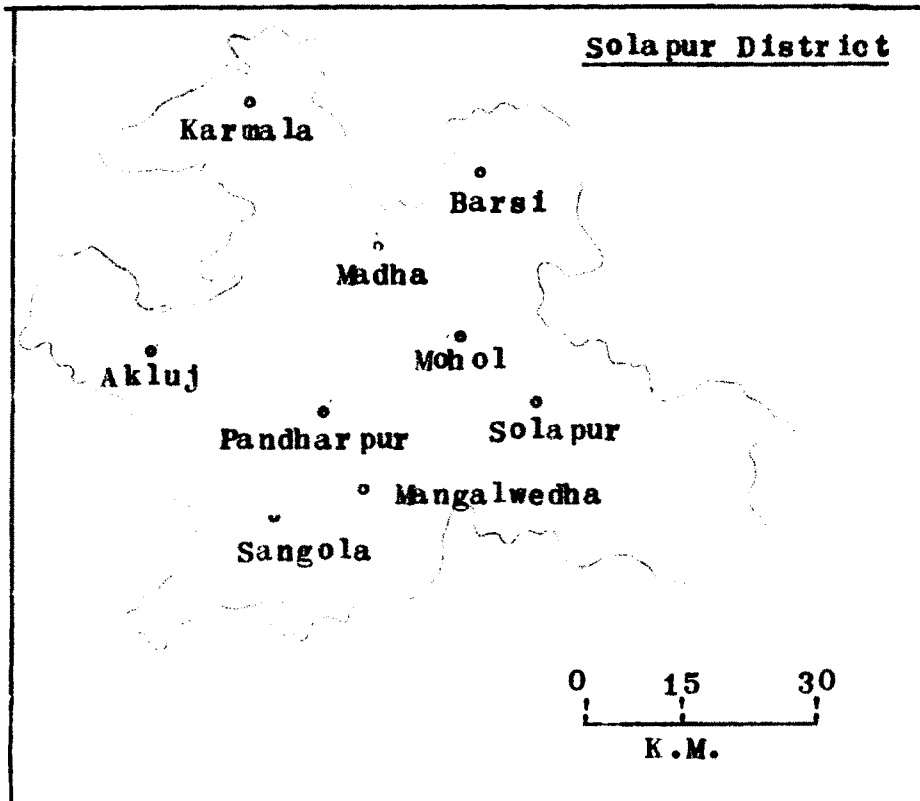
the total district and the test was given to the randomly selected ten students from each of the following colleges :-

| Sr.No. | Name of the College |
|--------|----------------------------------------------------|
| 1. | Shri.Sant Damaji Mahavidyalaya, Mangalwedha, |
| 2. | Sangola College, Sangola. |
| 3. | Pandharpur College, Pandharpur. |
| 4. | Shankarrao Mohite Mahavidyalaya, Akulj |
| 5. | D.B.F.Dayanand College of Arts & Science, Solapur. |
| 6. | Chhatrapati Shivaji Night College, Solapur. |
| 7. | Deashbakt Sambhaji Garad Mahavidyalaya, Mohol. |
| 8. | Arts and Commerce College, Madha. |
| 9. | Shriman Bhausahab Gadbuke Mahavidyalaya, Barghi. |
| 10. | Yashwantrao Chavan College, Karmala. |

The written test of forty five minutes duration was administered at different times from October 1991 to February 1992 and from the above mentioned ten colleges hundred samples were collected. At the same time, simultaneously spoken test samples were also recorded.

It will be noticed that out of 16 Arts Colleges from the Solapur district as many as 10 colleges have been represented in our sample. The scatter of these colleges over the geographical area is shown in the figure No.1.

Solapur District with colleges plotted.



Thus it is clear that our sample satisfies the major conditions for being considered as a stratified random sample representative of the student population i.e. the Solapur district F.Y.B.A. students.

The results obtained on the basis of the test could be used for making general statements regarding the language ability of the first year Arts undergraduates of Solapur region as a whole.

2.5 Results And Discussion of Writing Skills :-

2.5.1 Vocabulary :

Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English by A. S. Hornby defines vocabulary " as a total number of words which make up to a language words known to, or used by a person in a trade, profession etc.⁹" New Webster's Dictionary of the English language defines vocabulary "as the stock or words used by a people, or by a particular class or person, a list or collection of the words of a language, book, author branch of science or like usually in alphabetical order and defined the words of a language a word-book glossary, dictionary or lexicon, the sum or scope of one's expressive techniques as in the arts.¹⁰"

While selecting the items for the students at B.A.I level, it is believed that the words from the General Service List are supposed to have been covered by the students. In this test what is aimed at is to assess their ability to recognize the meaning of the words in meaningful contexts. Most of these words are in 'General Service List' that is a head word, and all its most frequent connotative meanings.

Vocabulary test -- Section -- I (A)

In this section the item consists of an incomplete sentence. Below the sentence are 3 choices. And the students were asked to find the one choice which best completes the sentence and marks the answer with a tick mark.

The following is the list of correct answers :-

1. recognize,
2. steep,
3. vary,
4. agony
5. frantically
6. deceptive,
7. scatter,
8. impressive,
9. accommodate,
10. management.

Item No. 1 : I was able to ----- my friend
though I met him after many years.

Choices : (a) see (b) recognize, (c) reach,
is answered correctly by 42% students.

Item No. 2 : The sides of the mountain are very
----- and therefore difficult
to climb.

Choices : (a) steep (b) plain (c) reach
is answered correctly by 57% students.

Item No. 3 : Prices ----- from shop to shop
in this city.

Choices : (a) rise (b) fall (c) vary
is answered correctly by 23% students.

Item No. 4 : He could not bear the ----- of
separation.

Choices : (a) agony (b) happiness (c) honesty
is answered correctly by 29% students.

Item No. 5 : The drowning man was ----- shouting
for help.

Choices : (a) anxiously (b) frantically
(c) honesty,
is answered correctly by 40% students.

Item No. 6 : Don't go by looks, appearances
are often -----

Choices : (a) deceptive (b) lovely
(c) interesting.

is answered correctly by 43% students.

Item No. 7 : The police had to fire several tear
gas shells to ----- the mob.

Choices : (a) attract (b) collect (c) scatter

is answered correctly by 52% students.

Item No. 8 : He is a good writer and a very -----
speaker.

Choices : (a) impressive (b) talkative
(c) regular.

is answered correctly by 73% students.

Item No. 9 : The examination hall can easily -----
ten more candidates.

Choices : (a) arrange (b) accommodate
(c) conform

is answered correctly by 18% students.

Item No. 10 : What this Departmental Store needs
is a stronger -----

Choices : (a) stock (b) resolution (c) management
is answered correctly by 59% students.

Item-wise marks

| Item Nos. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|---------------------------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Answered correctly (out of 100) | 42 | 57 | 23 | 29 | 40 | 43 | 52 | 73 | 18 | 59 |

The chart shows that the highest number of students find the item No.8 the easiest as it is answered correctly by 73% students and Item No.9, the most difficult as it is answered correctly by only 18% students. Similarly, Items No.3 & 4 were difficult to answer as these were answered correctly by 23% and 29% students respectively. Item Nos. 1,5 and 6 were neither difficult nor easy for the students as these were answered correctly by 42%, 40% and 43% respectively. Items No.2, 7 and 10 were rather easy for them as these were answered correctly by 57%, 52% and 59% respectively. It will be seen from the chart that the word 'accommodate' is quite difficult for the students and the same case is with words such as 'vary' and 'agony'. The average students have the knowledge of the words like 'recognize', 'frantically', 'deceptive' and it is seen from the result sheet that the words like 'steep', 'scatter', 'impressive' and 'management' are quite familiar to them.

Vocabulary Test Result into 3 subgroups

| Upper Group (above - 50) | Middle Group (40 to 50) | Lower Group (below 40) |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 73 | 43 | 29 |
| 59 | 43 | 23 |
| 57 | 40 | 23 |
| 52 | -- | -- |
| ----- 40% | ----- 30% | ----- 30% |

It will be seen from the above division that 40% students are in the upper group, 30% in the middle group and 30% in the lower group. This shows that 60% students are in the middle and lower group.

Vocabulary Test Section-I (B)

In the second section of ten items in each sentence of this section the word is underlined. Below each sentence are 3 choices. The students were asked to choose the one which would be a substitute for the underlined word.

The following is the list of correct answers.

11 Notice, 12 Make known, 13. Want, 14. Sad,
15. Courage, 16. have a strong wish, 17. Complain,
18. Copy the behaviour of, 19. tired, 20. entertainment.

Item No. 11 : She noted that his hands were dirty.

Choices : (a) notice (b) write down (c) hate
is answered correctly by 55% students.

Item No. 12 : The doctor did not reveal to her his
hopeless condition.

Choices : (a) make known (b) display (c) show.
is answered correctly by 24% students.

Item No. 13 : I wish there to be no misunderstanding
on his matter.

Choices : (a) argue (b) say (c) want.

Item No. 14 : Don't look on the dark side of things

Choices : (a) black (b) sad (c) unclear
is answered correctly by 22% students.

Item No. 15 : He is a man of great enterprise

Choices : (a) courage (b) understanding
(c) honesty
is answered correctly by 45% students.

Item No. 16 : We are all dying for a drink.

Choices : (a) become weak (b) come to the
end of life (c) have a strong wish.
is answered correctly by 21% students.

Item No. 17 : He grumbled at the low salary offered
to him.

Choices : (a) complain (b) make a sound
(c) refuse.
is answered correctly by 30% students.

Item No. 18 : You should imitate great men

Choices : (a) deceive (b) copy the behaviour of
(c) mimic
is answered correctly by 55% students.

Item No. 19 : At the end of the game the players
were exhausted.

Choices : (a) cheered (b) honoured (c) tired
is answered correctly by 55% students.

Item No. 20 : Bill couldn't hide his amusement at
his foolish mistakes.

Choices : (a) anger (b) entertainment
(c) happiness.
is answered correctly by 31% students.

Item-wise Marks

| Item Nos. | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
|------------------------------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Answered correctly (out of 100) | 55 | 24 | 55 | 22 | 45 | 21 | 30 | 55 | 55 | 31 |

The result sheet shows that the students found item Nos.12, 14, 16, 17 and 20 difficult. Item Nos. 11, 13, 15, 18, and 19 were rather easy for them. It will be seen from the above result sheet that most of the students could not substitute 'reveal' by 'make known' 'dark' by 'sad' 'dying' by 'have a strong wish' 'grumbled' by 'complain' 'amusement' by 'entertainment' in the contexts provided. On the contrary, they had no difficulty in identifying the substitutes for noted by 'notice', wish by 'want' enterprise by 'courage; imitate by 'copy the behaviour of' and exhausted by 'tired!

Vocabulary Test Result into 3 sub-groups.

| Upper Group (above 50) | Middle Group (40 to 50) | Lower Group (below 40) |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 55 | 45 | 31 |
| 55 | -- | 30 |
| 55 | -- | 24 |
| 55 | -- | 22 |
| -- | -- | 21 |

In this result sheet the students are grouped into three groups namely (1) upper group (2) Middle group and (3) Lower Group. It will be noticed from the chart that 40% students are in the upper group, 10% in the middle group and 50% in the lower group. Again the majority of the students are placed in the lower group.

2.5.2

Structure

It is believed that by the time the students come to B.A.I, they would have learnt all the essential structures of English. Menon and Patel (1957) suggest that the essential structures of English should be taught within the first four years. In 1964, A.E. Subramanian claimed that experienced teachers found it possible to teach the essential structures of English in the first four years of English.

In the seminar on text books held at the central institute of English and foreign languages. Hyderabad in December 1972, George proposed that, "The essential principles of English sentence structure should be taught alongwith the first thousand to fifteen hundred

(1000 to 1500) words selected for the teaching.

B.A. I Students have studied English for eight years. And it is taken for granted that they have mastered all the essential structures of English. That is why, while selecting the items there is no restriction of the limited structures.

In this structure test twenty items were selected. Each problem in this section consists of an incomplete sentence. Three words marked A.B.C. were given beneath the sentence and the students were asked to choose the one word that best completes the sentence. The items set are supposed to have the following areas of grammar, question form, tag questions, tense forms, use of prepositions, modal auxiliaries etc.

The correct answers are as follows :-

21. have, 22. since, 23. hasn't she, 24. will,
25. had known, 26. speak, 27. do, 28. could, 29. ever,
30. theirs, 31. as high to, 32. do you, 33. for,
34. their, 35. to, 36. would have, 37. he is doing,
38. to sleep, 39. anything, 40. if I will be late

Item No. 21 : ----- you ever been to Madras ?

Choices : (a) were (b) did (c) have
is answered correctly by 58% students.

Item No. 22 : Let's go to the cinema. I haven't
seen a film ----- 1980.

Choices : (a) for (b) since (c) till
is answered correctly by 52% students.

Item No. 23 : She has lovely eyes, ----- ?

Choices : (a) isn't it (b) doesn't it
(c) hasn't she.
is answered correctly by 74% students.

Item No. 24 : Unless you work hard, you ----- not
pass the examination.

Choices : (a) will (b) should (c) shall.
is answered correctly by 47% students.

Item No. 25 : If I ----- about the test I would have
come prepared.

Choices : (a) have known (b) had known
(c) was knowing
is answered correctly by 42% students.

Item No. 26 : Does your mother ----- English ?

Choices : (a) speak (b) speaks (c) spoken.
is answered correctly by 48% students.

Item No. 27 : How many novels ----- you read a month ?

Choices : (a) have (b) are (c) do

is answered correctly by 18% students.

Item No. 28 : When I was young I ----- dance very well.

Choices : (a) could (b) should (c) can

is answered correctly by 45% students.

Item No. 29 : Can't you ----- understand what has

been said.

Choices : (a) never (b) rather (c) ever

is answered correctly by 34% students.

Item No. 30 : It's not our ball. It must be -----

Choices : (a) their (b) theirs (c) there

is answered correctly by 29% students.

Item No. 31 : In Nagpur the temperature raises -----

45°c. in summer.

Choices : (a) as high as (b) so high as

(c) as high to

is answered correctly by 37% students.

Item No. 32 : You don't know this lesson properly, --- ?

Choices : (a) isn't it (b) do you (c) haven't you

is answered correctly by 70% students.

Item No. 33 : He was not qualified ----- the job.

Choices : (a) to (b) for (c) in

is answered correctly by 50% students.

Item No. 34 : The crowd rushed forward to have a
glimpse of ----- leader.

Choices : (a) their (b) its (c) his.
is answered correctly by 61% students.

Item No. 35 : India is committed ----- the policy
of non-alignment.

Choices : (a) to (b) for (c) with
is answered correctly by 23% students.

Item No. 36 : If I had the choice, I ----- stayed
on.

Choices : (a) had (b) had had (c) would have
is answered correctly by 70% students.

Item No. 37 : I asked him what -----

Choices : (a) he has done (b) he is doing
(c) he had done.
is answered correctly by 36% students.

Item No. 38 : He took liking ---- the whole day.

Choices : (a) to sleep (b) to have slept
(c) to sleeping.
is answered correctly by 66% students.

Item No. 39 : He couldn't see ----- as it was very dark.

Choices : (a) anything (b) nothing (c) none.
is answered correctly by 53% students.

Item No. 40 : ----- don't wait for me.

- Choices : (a) If I shall be late
(b) If I will be late
(c) If I am late.

is answered correctly by 31% students.

Item-wise marks.

| Item Nos. | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 |
|---------------------------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Answered Correctly (out of 100) | 58 | 52 | 74 | 47 | 42 | 48 | 18 | 45 | 34 | 29 |

| Item Nos. | 31 | 32 | 33 | 34 | 35 | 36 | 37 | 38 | 39 | 40 |
|---------------------------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Answered correctly (out of 100) | 37 | 70 | 50 | 61 | 23 | 70 | 36 | 66 | 53 | 31 |

The result sheet shows that the maximum and minimum marks obtained were 74% and 18% respectively.

Structure Test Results into 3 sub-groups.

| Upper group (above 60%) | Middle group (between 45 to 60) | Lower group (below 45) |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------|
| 74 | 58 | 42 |
| 70 | 53 | 37 |
| 70 | 52 | 36 |
| 66 | 50 | 34 |
| 61 | 48 | 31 |
| -- | 47 | 29 |
| | 45 | 23 |

25% students belong to the 'Upper Group', 35% students to the 'Middle Group' and 40% students to the 'Lower Group'. This means 75% students belong to the middle and lower groups and only 25% students are in the upper group. From these figures, we may conclude that the students encounter problems in the use of structures.

It is noticed that the tag question form is easier for the students. There are two tag question forms in the structure test items and these are answered correctly by 74% and 70% students respectively.

It is seen that the question forms are difficult for the students. There are two basic auxiliary tense forms and these are answered correctly by 58% and 18% students respectively.

It is found that the modal auxiliary question forms are neither easy nor difficult for the students. They are answered correctly by 47% and 45% students respectively.

There are three questions on the use of prepositions. They are answered correctly by 52%, 50% and 23% students. The use of prepositions is found to be somewhat difficult for the students.

The students found the use of reflexive pronouns somewhat difficult. There are two items used in the structure test. They are answered correctly by 29% and 61% students.

The result indicates the use of degree is also somewhat difficult for the students. There are two items in the structure test. They are answered correctly by 67% and 37% students. To conclude, we can say that the following items were quite easy for the students. Item Nos. 23, 32, 34, 36, 38. These were answered correctly by 74% students, 70%, 61%, 70%, 66% respectively. On the contrary, the following items were difficult for the students. Item Nos. 27, 29, 30, 35, 37 and 40. These were answered correctly by 18%, 34%, 29%, 23%, 36%, & 31% students respectively.

2.5.3 Reading comprehension :

No two persons agree on the definition of "reading comprehension". Comprehension is a construct i.e. it cannot be directly observed or measured. Each one conveniently defines it according to what is most suitable to him.

It is, for our purpose, defined as a complete interactive and intellectual process involving a number of abilities. The two major abilities involved are 'word meanings' and 'verbal reasoning' without these two, there would be no reading comprehension and subsequently without any reading comprehension there would be no reading.

^fPerhaps, it is not irrelevant to quote
"Thorndike here. He observed that "reading (comprehension) is a very elaborate procedure, involving a weighing of each of many elements in a sentence, their organization in the proper relation one to another and the co-operation of many forces to determine final response". Today, investigators are still exploring reading comprehension in attempts to

understand it better and through the years many have expounded upon Thorndike's theory.

"Psycholinguistics and cognitive psychology have influenced researches done on the process of understanding the studies, however, are neither conclusive nor comprehensive. It is not easy to say that if a reader were to follow certain prescribed rules, s/he would most assuredly have better comprehension. What is evident from these researches is the growing attention given to text structure and reader."

In this reading comprehension test a passage of about 110 words was given which runs into 10 lines and has nearly 9 difficult words. There is one difficult word after every 12 words. The students were asked to read the passage carefully and answer all the questions following the passage on the basis of what is stated or implied in the passage. Ten questions were framed on the basis of the passage. Each item is followed by three choices marked (a), (b), (c) and the students were asked to mark the correct choice.

Passage for Reading Comprehension

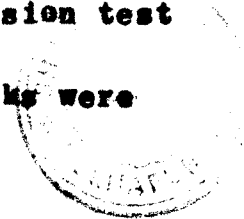
Do you ever think of the rivers of India ?

They are our greatest natural assets. Aren't there hundreds of them watering our land and making it green and fertile ? Aren't they natural highways linking the towns with the villages ? And isn't they great beauty in them ? There is such variety too. There are navigable rivers especially in Bengal and Kerala. There are raging torrents which leap from the mountains down to the deep gorges. There are huge rivers which sometimes burst their banks and flood the side. And in tribute to their strength and beauty. We have always held them sacred. To love India is to love her rivers, big and small.

Item-wise Marks.

| Item Nos. | 41 | 42 | 43 | 44 | 45 | 46 | 47 | 48 | 49 | 50 |
|---------------------------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Answered correctly (out of 100) | 72 | 64 | 95 | 60 | 52 | 67 | 37 | 19 | 36 | 35 |

Result sheet of the reading comprehension test shows that maximum 95% and minimum 19% marks were obtained.



The following are the correct answers given below.

41. India's river, 42. hundreds of, 43. Bengal and Kerala, 44. Mostly useful but sometimes harmful, 45. respected greatly, 46. anything valuable, 47. where ships and boats can sail, 48. an opening between hills, 49. branch of a river, 50. something considered as religious.

Item No. 41 : Which of the following titles suit the passage best ?

- Choices : (a) Rivers and their uses
(b) Rivers and their dangers,
(c) India's rivers,
is correctly answered by 72% students.

Item No. 42 : There are ----- rivers in India ?

- Choices : (a) only a few (b) indefinite number of
(c) hundreds of
is answered correctly by 64% students.

Item No. 43 : Rivers in which ships can sail are mostly in -----

- Choices : (a) Bengal only
(b) Kerala only
(c) Bengal and Kerala
is answered correctly by 95% students.

Item No. 44 : Rivers in India are -----

Choices : (a) harmless and useful
(b) mostly useful but sometimes harmful,
(c) mostly harmful but sometimes useful.
is answered correctly by 60% students.

Item No. 45 : Indian rivers are -----

Choices : (a) always flooded
(b) respected greatly,
(c) loved but not respected,
is answered correctly by 52% students.

Item No. 46 : Choose the best explanation according
to the context ?

"Assets"

Choices : (a) anything agreeable
(b) anything valuable
(c) anything desirable,
is answered correctly by 67% students.

Item No. 47 : 'Navigable'

Choose : (a) where ships and boats can sail,
(b) where ships and boats can be
properly guided,
(c) where ships and boats can be
in danger
is answered correctly by 37% students.

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Item No. 48 : 'George'

Choices : (a) an opening between hills,
(b) a most beautiful hill side,
(c) waterfalls from high mountains,
is answered correctly by 19% students.

Item No. 49 : 'Tribute'

Choices : (a) branch of a river,
(b) payment extracted from another
government,
(c) something done to show admiration
is answered correctly by 36% students.

Item No. 50 : 'Sacred'

Choices : (a) something not to be shared with
others,
(b) something considered as religious,
(c) something that is most loveable,
is answered correctly by 35% students.

Reading comprehension result sheet shows that
out of ten items students found four the easiest and
four difficult.

Reading comprehension Test Results
into three sub-groups.

| Upper Group (above 60) | Middle Group (40 to 60) | Lower Group (below 40) |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 95 | 60 | 37 |
| 72 | 52 | 36 |
| 67 | -- | 35 |
| 64 | -- | 19 |
| 40% | 20% | 40% |

40% students belong to upper group and 20% to the middle group and 40% to the lower group. In general, the students found the test rather easy. This might be because of the help of the passage. Students answered the questions based on the passage correctly. The vocabulary used in this passage is simple for the students and it is related to the geographical terms. Only one word 'gorge' which means an opening between hills is unknown to the students. Out of hundred (100) students just 19% have answered it correctly.

We may conclude from the above analysis that the Reading Comprehension Test is neither easy nor difficult for the students. However, considering the level of learning the students were expected to do better.

2.5.4 Cloze Test

In the cloze test portions of a written passage are blanked out and the student is asked to provide the missing words or words. The cloze technique is becoming popular and useful as an overall language proficiency test as well as a reading comprehension test. (Darnell 1968, Anderson 1971, Jongsma 1971, Oller 1972, Robinson 1972)

The term 'Cloze' was first used by Taylor¹⁹ (1953) to refer to a type or test originally designed to measure the readability of a passage of prose. The procedure was to select a reading passage and delete every 7th word in it and replace it with a blank space. The students were required to complete the passage by filling in the blanks with suitable words. The average scores over a large group of students

obtained in this test were used to measure the readability or suitability of the passage for reading at a given level. "The term 'cloze' was used with the notion of Gestalt's 'Closure'_c in mind referring to the natural human Psychological tendency to fill in the gaps in patterns. Initially the cloze procedure came to be adopted as a tool for measuring the reading comprehension of native students. Now it is being used to measure not only comprehension but overall language ability also in the case of second language. This is due to new interpretations of the rationale behind cloze procedure. To decode the message cloze procedure requires the reader to construct the mutilated language pattern by making the most likely replacement in the light of his language system and the grammatical and semantic cues that are available.¹² (Anderson 1971)

From the discussions above it would appear that the cloze technique holds great promise for testing overall language ability including perhaps the size of vocabulary. For using the cloze technique to assess the size of students vocabulary it would be

necessary to develop batteries of cloze tests appropriate for different levels.

The correct answers of the test given are as follows :-

- | | | | |
|------------|--------------|--------------|-----------|
| 1. it, | 2. out | 3. inside | 4. a |
| 5. a | 6. twelve | 7. woman's | 8. and |
| 9. station | 10. sergeant | 11. sergeant | 12. and |
| 13. the, | 14. me, | 15. dinner | 16. mine, |
| 17. a | 18. be | 19. woman's | 20. not. |

Passage for cloze test

Read the following passage carefully and fill in the blanks with appropriate word. Do not fill more than one word in each blank.

While I was walking along the road, the other day I happened to notice a small brown leather purse lying on the pavement. I picked it up and opened----- to see if I could find ----- the owner's name. There was nothing ----- it except some small change and ----- rather old photograph a picture of ----- woman and a young girl about ----- years old, who looked like the ----- daughter. I put the photograph back -----took the puurse to the police

----- where I handed it to the ----- in charge.
Before I left the ----- made a note of my name -----
address in case the owner of ----- purse wanted to
write and thank -----

That evening I went to have ----- with an
uncle and aunt of ----- They had also invited
another person, ----- young woman, so that there
would ----- four people at table. The young -----
face was familiar, but I could ----- remember
where I had seen it.

Item-wise Marks.

| Item Nos. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|------------------------------------------|----|----|----|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Answered correctly (out of 100) | 42 | 10 | 28 | 5 | 48 | 28 | 14 | 31 | 36 | 11 |

| Item Nos. | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
|------------------------------------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Answered correctly (out of 100) | 18 | 87 | 44 | 27 | 02 | 05 | 22 | 32 | 39 | 73 |

The above result sheet shows that maximum marks
obtained were 73% and minimum 2%.

Item No. 1 : Blank word 'It' is filled correctly
by 42% students.

Item No. 2 : Blank word 'out' is filled correctly
by 10% students.

Item No. 3 : Blank word 'inside' is filled correctly
by 28% students.

Item No. 4 : Blank word 'a' is filled correctly
by 5% students.

Item No. 5 : Blank word 'a' is filled correctly
by 48% students.

Item No. 6 : Blank word 'twelve' is filled correctly
by 28% students.

Item No. 7 : Blank word 'woman's' is filled
correctly by 14% students.

Item No. 8 : Blank word 'and' is filled correctly
by 31% students.

Item No. 9 : Blank word 'station' is filled correctly
by 36% students.

Item No.10 : Blank word 'sergeant' is filled correctly
by 36% students.

Item No.11 : Blank word 'sergeant' is filled correctly
by 18% students.

Item No. 12 : Blank word 'and' is filled correctly
by 57% students.

Item No. 13 : Blank word 'the' is filled correctly
by 44% students.

Item No. 14 : Blank word 'me' is filled correctly
by 27% students.

Item No. 15 : Blank word 'dinner' is filled correctly
by 2% students.

Item No. 16 : Blank word 'mine' is filled correctly
by 5% students.

Item No. 17 : Blank word 'a' is filled correctly
by 22% students.

Item No. 18 : Blank word 'be' is filled correctly
by 32% students.

Item No. 19 : Blank word 'woman's' is filled
correctly by 39% students.

Item No. 20 : Blank word 'net' is filled correctly
by 73% students.

Close Test Result into three sub-groups

| Upper Group (above 50) | Middle Group (35 to 50) | Lower Group (below 35) |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 73 | 48 | 32 |
| 57 | 44 | 31 |
| -- | 42 | 26 |

| Upper Group | Middle Group | Lower Group |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| -- | 39 | 28 |
| -- | 36 | 27 |
| -- | -- | 22 |
| -- | -- | 18 |
| -- | -- | 14 |
| -- | -- | 11 |
| -- | -- | 10 |
| -- | -- | 05 |
| -- | -- | 05 |
| -- | -- | 02 |
| ----- 10% ----- | ----- 25% ----- | ----- 65% ----- |

It will be seen from the above analysis that 10% students belong to the upper group, 25% students to the middle group and 65% students to the lower group. The cloze test technique is somewhat new to the students. To the majority of the students it was difficult one and majority of the students failed in the cloze test. They failed in producing a contextually meaningful word. The cloze test passage

is simple one but it is noticed that out of 100 (hundred) students 35 haven't attempted this cloze test. They filled up the blanks randomly, without paying much attention to the contextual meaning. Of all the total written tests this cloze test is somewhat new and difficult for the students.

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