CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY, SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

6.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter includes a brief summary of the present study and the educational implications of the study for the teachers, educational administrators and the policy planners. The chapter also makes suggestions of a few areas for further research by future researchers beyond the scope of the problem investigated and finally concludes the whole study. The summary and conclusion section is the most widely used part of the research report as it reviews all the information that has been presented in its previous chapters.

6.1 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

Language is a creation of man’s social needs. It enables people to express their thoughts, desires, ideas and experiences to others. It is said that a first language is acquired while a second language is learnt. A child acquires his/her first language (mother tongue) without much deliberate effort unlike the second language. Whenever he/she wants to express something in the second language, there is always an influence of his/her mother tongue and when the patterning in the two languages differs, he/she produces ungrammatical structures and commits errors.
Committing error is the most natural part of learning. But negligence of students’ difficulties in lower grade develops into a chronic weakness in the subject and leads to hatred or monotony. If the difficulties are found out, right kind of help given in the early stages can prevent weakness and failure in the later stages. In India English is taught as second language and instead of oral communication, written communication is given much more importance and expected that students, while writing, should not commit any grammatical errors. The present research therefore, has been undertaken to study the Syntactic Errors in English Committed by the Students of Vernacular Medium Secondary Schools of Dibrugarh District, Assam with the following objectives: (i) to find out the syntactic errors in writing English committed by Vernacular Medium Secondary School students of Class IX of Dibrugarh District, (ii) to make a comparative study of the syntactic errors in English committed by Vernacular Medium Secondary School students of Class IX of Dibrugarh District in respect to (a) medium (Assamese, Bengali and Hindi), (b) gender (Boys and Girls) and (c) habitation (Urban and Rural schools) and (iii) to study the causes of the syntactic errors in English committed by Vernacular Medium Secondary School students of Class IX of Dibrugarh District.

The investigator reviewed 23 foreign and 21 Indian studies which are very relevant to the present research. The previous researchers carried out research on learning difficulties in spoken and written English, major areas of syntactic errors, causes behind the errors and provided remedial suggestions to improve English as a second language in teaching and learning environment.
The investigator tried to identify the gaps which had been observed from the previous studies and attempted to work on these gaps. Only a few aspects of errors had been found out by the previous researchers, such as, errors in lexical items, prepositions, tense, verb and articles (Marwein, 1977), errors in spellings, punctuation, capitalization, morphology and syntax (Parida, 1985), errors in verb, tense, passivisation, articles and prepositions (Sharma, 1990), errors in use of vocabulary, semantics and grammar (Khan, 1995), verb and noun related errors (Bowden, 2000), discourse errors, factual errors, word errors and syntactic errors (Lee, 2003), errors in verb, relative clause, articles, fragments, noun modifiers, and preposition (Haifa, 2006), omissions, additions and regularization (Ahmadvand, 2008), errors in use of sentence, auxiliaries, passive voice and tense (Khansir, 2008), errors in modal auxiliaries, verb form, subject-verb agreement and tense (V.K.Singh, 2009), errors in tense, prepositions, articles and spellings (Mungungu, 2010), grammatical, orthographical, syntactic lexical and morphological errors (Jayasundara, 2011), errors in tense and voice (Liu, 2013), lexical and semantic errors, syntax, morphology and spellings (Stella, 2015), errors in spellings, punctuations, sentence fragments, syntax, prepositions and verbs (Ngangbam, 2016). The present study attempts a detailed study of ten aspects of grammatical or syntactical errors committed by the vernacular medium students of secondary level.

Though the previous researchers tried to study the only psychological factor, i.e., the cognitive style of the subjects, they ignored some
other aspects which also affect in the learning process of English such as students’ age, educational qualification of the students’ parents, use of English by the students in sociolinguistic context, proficiency in the communicative skills, methods of teaching and role of teachers in developing the four fold skills of language learning, the learning style and classroom evaluation and monitoring. However, a few researchers stated students’ illiterate parents (Bose, 2005), lack of exposure to a multi-lingual background (Mungungu, 2010), lack of teachers’ preparedness to facilitate the target group (Khan, 2011) and students’ lack of motivation (Ali, 2011), (Jdetawy, 2011) which affect the learning process of the second language.

No standardized self developed tool was prepared in the previous studies except Al Zoubi (2014) who found out reliability of his tool through Cronbach Alpha Test. The present study is therefore attempted to find out data on the basis of self developed standardized tool. Moreover, the previous studies did not focus on a comparative study of errors committed by the students.

A few of the studies did investigation on secondary level students such as Parida (1985), Sistla (1985), Sharma (1986), Hourani (2008), Singh (2009), Ali (2011), Zawahreh (2012), Kader (2013) and Faisyal (2015) but they did not primarily focus on the students of Class IX. Moreover, in Assam, there has been rare study of syntactic errors of the Vernacular medium school students of secondary level. The investigator, therefore, attempted to conduct a study on these gaps in her present study.
A detailed research design for the present study has been presented by the investigator in Chapter III where the method of the study, population, sample, tools used, construction and standardisation of the tools and procedure of data collection have been carried out. Descriptive survey method was used by the investigator for the present study and the sample consisted of twenty four (24) Assamese, Bengali and Hindi Medium Secondary Schools, selected from five Development Blocks, two Town Committees and one Municipal Board of Dibrugarh district under S.E.B.A. and six hundred students; both Boys and Girls from Rural as well as Urban areas studying in Class IX in the year 2014. The tools used were a Grammar Diagnostic Test Booklet and a Questionnaire with closed ended questions for students.

Responses obtained from the tools have been discussed together in details to arrive a holistic approach to the problems under study. The discussion part was tried by the investigator to analyse the possible causes or reasons against the findings and are compared with the findings of the previous researchers.

6.2 SUGGESTIONS

Based on the findings of the present study, the following suggestions may be put forward as educational implications for eliminating the problems of syntactic errors committed by the Vernacular Medium Secondary School students:

i) Classroom language practices could be a possible suggestion for solving learners’ grammatical errors. Learners need to be taught more on the
grammatical part with basic focus on communicative aspects. The following suggestions may be given to reduce these errors:

- **Composition exercises** should be given to the students to learn the sentence patterns. They should also be introduced to frequent drill work for conjugation of Verb and substitution table in different tense forms to learn about $S + V$ concord.

- **In case of reducing Lexical errors,** students should be provided with clear instruction in structural input with an emphasis on the usage and practice. The teacher should not use excessive jargon, over repetition, wrong word form, inaccurate lexical bundles, inappropriate affixes or suffixes and immature word choice while he/she teaches vocabulary in the classroom.

- **In order to remedy vocabulary problem,** more emphasis should be given to direct vocabulary teaching. Vocabulary should be taught in context because in order to grasp the full meaning of a word or a phrase, the learner must be aware of the linguistic environment in which the word or phrase appears. They should also be encouraged to read prose pieces and consult a dictionary of contemporary English having definitions of words along with their usage.

- **To avoid errors in spelling,** knowledge of sound-letter correspondence and storage of a large amount of words are very necessary. Special care has to be taken about vowels and consonants in teaching reading and writing. Problem words should be repeatedly drilled and displayed on students’ notebooks or the school wall in attractive ways. The idea of
mnemonics or simple memory sentences, insertion of missing letters, letters to form meaningful words, writing synonyms, antonyms, matching exercises, dictation, frequent spelling tests, cross-word puzzle, picking out odd one or incorrect from the group, rote learning, syllabification, visual memory testing with the help of flash cards etc should be drilled to reduce the errors of spelling.

- The errors in punctuation could be remedial through practice. The teacher should set passages or lines to the class to put correct punctuation marks and ask for self correction. A few separate classes could be allotted in the session to make the students familiar with the punctuation marks and would be given general rules with examples for correctly using these marks.

- Tense can best be taught through situational presentation. Language items should be presented in situations in the classroom to ensure that their meaning is clear and then practiced as formal structures by means of exercises and drilling.

ii) Students’ hesitation to speak the second language for communicative purpose is basically due to the lack of practice in listening the target language. It can be assumed that more interaction leads to more language development and learning the language. The teachers should, therefore, use the target language more and more correctly and provide constructive feedback while the students try to speak and thus boosting morale and reinforcing learning.
iii) To make speaking interesting, it is very necessary to implement brainstorming debates, role play etc in the pedagogical language classroom. They should also be encouraged to read English newspaper to add extra value in their performance while gaining general knowledge and reducing the frequency of committing errors in grammar and syntactic perspectives.

iv) To reduce the influence of mother tongue, a conscious effort should be made by the teachers as well as the students. Students should read English newspaper loudly everyday, read few homonyms and try to understand, be a habitual listener to the TV channel, speak loudly English tongue twisters, listen to others who speak fluently and stand before a mirror and speak in English and keep a pocket dictionary. Moreover, the teachers should encourage them to think in English to become fluent and spontaneous in expression. Concentration should be given on pronunciation. This will further enable the students to write more accurately in English.

v) Communicative approach helps the students pick up the language unconsciously. From that point of view the teacher should keep patience to listen to the message conveyed by the students with erroneous expressions. But he/she should always try not to repeat that error by the students afterward. If the activity is for improving accuracy in English, correction should be done immediately and if fluency based, it should be done afterwards. High frequency and generality errors should be corrected more often than less frequent errors, for eg. The omission of the third person singular-s is an error of high frequency.
vi) The teacher should draw the students’ attention to linguistic elements which arise incidentally in lessons and focus should be put on the meaning of communication. Teacher-student / student-student classroom interaction, both via oral and written modes, should consume the majority of the class time. Likewise, evaluation should centre on students’ abilities to actively engage in communication, using the forms they have learned during interaction.

vii) Reading is an important part of learning English. To increase the proficiency level in reading, the teacher should democratically ask the students to read and learn correct stress, intonation pattern and rhythm. Opportunities should be provided to do as much reading as possible so that students are able to recognise common words and phrases and gradually become fluent readers.

viii) While evaluating students’ writing, the teacher should highlight the problems and provide some informative feedback instead of just correcting the errors or punishing them. He/she should encourage them and ask them to check the correction work and notice how it has been done. It could help them not to repeat the same mistake. They should also be encouraged for self-correction so that they can carefully go through their errors.

ix) Since in the vernacular medium schools, the use of L1 (mother tongue) can not altogether be eliminated, some guidelines ought to be framed by the teachers themselves to use L1 liberally in the classroom. Even when the
teacher needs the support of L1, he/she should mix it with much comprehensible English vocabulary as possible.

x) The English teachers should be trained properly to have sound knowledge on all aspects of the language. Moreover, teachers must be equipped with discovering new ways of creative teaching and designing interesting grammar games to make the students familiar with the rules unconsciously in the primary stage of second language learning.

6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

In the present study, an attempt was made by the investigator to find out the syntactic errors in English committed by the Vernacular Medium Class IX Students studying in Secondary Schools of Dibrugarh District, causes of syntactic errors along with some possible solutions to eliminate those errors. But due to limitations, it did not cover all aspects of syntactic level. No research is ever accomplished totally. There always remain some facets of the problem to be examined. Hence, the future research scholars may carry out the following research work:

- A comparative study with other language speakers could be taken up to study the Syntactic Errors in English.
- A study can also be carried out to find out the other areas of Syntactic Errors in the process of second language (L2) learning.
- A study can be carried out to compare and contrast the impact of medium in committing the syntactic errors and learners’ socio
economic and cultural background on their performance in English as second language.

6.4 CONCLUSION

The present study aimed at identifying, describing, categorising and diagnosing the types of syntactic errors made by the Vernacular Medium Secondary School students of Class IX in written English and the sources of these errors. As a result, a number of different syntactic errors were found and these were limited to ten major errors: word order, Wh-sentence, omission of articles, insertion of articles, use of verb in tense, auxiliaries, preposition, lexical items, punctuation marks and spellings. After analysing the errors, it has been found out that almost same number of students from Vernacular Medium committed errors in syntactic level. Students’ mother tongue interference, false analogy, overgeneralization, wrong strategy, redundancies in the SL, confusion, failure to observe the restrictions on usage of grammar in sentences and intrinsic difficulties in English were found as the main causes of the syntactic errors. Moreover, parents’ illiteracy, students’ little exposure of English as second language, poor proficiency level in the communicative skills, teachers’ failure to create a congenial environment for students in learning English as second language and student’s lack of interest were the other informative items which also affected the learning of the students and they committed errors.

This result of the study reveals that errors that the Vernacular Medium Secondary School students of Class IX of Dibrugarh district committed were both interlingual transfer based and intralingual transfer based.
They also had a relatively weak vocabulary and their sentences were sometimes incomprehensible due to their parallel form of words from their first language. They committed errors in applying sentence structure rules. It can be concluded, therefore, that these students have problems in acquiring normal grammatical rules in English. It further shows that the classification of errors provides information on common problems in process of language learning. Also, by being able to describe and predict errors, the teachers can inform their students to know their errors and the way how to reduce these errors in the process of language learning.

Moreover, the errors were due to different learning strategies like over generalisation, simplification and redundancy reduction. Reasons for this state of affairs are numerous. However, the main reason is lack of opportunities for an active use of English. The teaching and learning of English as a compulsory subject at this level have become kind of ritual. Secondly, there is no relevance between what our students really need and what they are taught. Most of the teachers use L₁ in teaching English in the classroom situation rarely take spelling test, dictation or encourage using English in English period.

Our experience shows that little or no efforts are made at this level to find out whether students have acquired the basic syntactic structures or not. We feel, if error analysis of this type, testing the developmental strategies used in the acquisition of many more syntactic structures, is carried out and remedial courses are prepared in the light of its findings, they may help our students. Moreover, developmental errors found in such type of studies may
help us in evolving certain definite norms which may help us simplify inherent difficulties in English syntactic structures that pose problems for the second language learners.

English, at Vernacular Medium schools, has still been remained as a subject – not as a language for communication. So it can not be expected to remove the errors totally due to the very less exposure to the language in the classroom situation. Moreover, as most of the parents are illiterate or they never use English at home, the students also don’t get any congenial environment to use the language. The classroom is the only place where they can get the opportunity to expose themselves. It is, therefore, the teachers who need total dedication and involvement to provide such an environment and teach the students to minimise these errors and try to improve the poor background in learning the second language.

REFERENCES


