SPELLING PROFICIENCY OF GRADE NINE STUDENTS

A Thesis Submitted to the Department of English Education

In Partial Fulfillment for the Master of Education in English

Submitted by

Manju Dhami

Faculty of Education

Tribhuvan University

Kirtipur, Kathmandu, Nepal

2022

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RECOMMENDATION FOR ACCEPTANCE

This is to certify that **Mrs. ManjuDhami**has prepared this thesis entitled**Spelling Proficiency of Grade Nine Students** under my guidance and supervision.

I recommend this thesis for acceptance.

Date: 01-05-2019

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare to the best of my knowledge that this thesis is original; no part of it was earlier submitted for the candidature of research degree to any university.

Date: 30-04-2019

_____

ManjuDhami

DEDICATION

Dedicated

to

my family members and teachers

who have devoted their whole life

to make me what

I am today.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABSTRACT

This research entitled **Spelling Proficiency of Grade Nine Students** examined spelling proficiency of grade nine students studying in different institutional and community schools of Surkhet district. It was survey research where sample of the study were 40 students studying in grade nine in Surkhet district. The participants for the study were selected by using non-random purposive sampling technique. In order to reach requirement of the sample size ten students: five girls and five boys were selected from each schools; two institutional and two community schools. Similarly, the required data were collected through dictation and spelling contest using a paragraph and a list of words. The answers of the respondents were analyzed and interpreted quantitatively. It was found out that the spelling proficiency of grade nine students was good (based on predetermined marking criteria) as they achieved more than 50%. In comparison to institutional and community school, the students of institutional schools were found better at spelling and among boys and girls, the boys were more proficient than the girls in their spelling proficiency.

This thesis consists of five chapters. The first chapter incorporates background of the study. It also presents statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, delimitations of the study and operational definitions of the key terms. Similarly, the second chapter consists of the review of the theoretical literature, review of empirical literature, implications of review for the study, and theoretical framework. The third unit consists of design of the study, population and sample, sampling procedure, data collection tools and procedures of data collection. In the same way, chapter four consists of analysis and interpretation of the information obtained from the selected respondents. The final fifth chapter deals with summary, conclusion, and implications along with some recommendations.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

ASS   -   Araniko Secondary School

BSS   -   Bhairabh Secondary School

CUP   -   Cambridge University Press

e. g.   -   Example

et. al.   -   And other people (Latin, eta llialia)

etc.   -   Etcetera

ELT   -   English Language Teaching

ICA   -   International Cooperative Academy

i. e.   -   That is

KSS   -   Kalika Secondary School

KSS   -   Krishna Secondary School

M. Ed.   -   Masters of Education

No.   -   Number

NRSS   -   Nepal Rastriya Secondary School

OUP   -   Oxford University Press

P.   -   Page Number

Prof.   -   Professor

Regd. No.   -   Registration Number

T. U.   -   Tribhuvan University

%   -   Percentage

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This study is on **Spelling Proficiency of Grade Nine Students**. This is an introductory part that incorporates background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, delimitation of the study, and operational definition of the key terms.

Background of the Study

Simply saying language is a means of communication. Here communication means the exchange of message, information and ideas. So, language is a means through which information and ideas are exchanged among human beings. It is also unique gift for human civilization that sets them apart from the rest of living beings. According to Crystal (2003, p. 225), "language at its most specific level refers to the concrete act of speaking, writing or singing in a given situation." The Cambridge Encyclopedia (2000, p. 627) defines language as "a species- specific communicative ability restricted to human which involve the use of sounds, grammar and vocabulary according to system of rules". Similarly, Wardhaugh (1972, p. 3) defines language as "a system of arbitrary vocal symbols used for human communication."

To become a competent language user, a student needs to practice all the skills (i.e. listening, speaking, reading, and writing) and aspects (i.e. grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation) of language. Out of four skills, writing is a complex and challenging job for everyone. Writing in academic field is again much more challenging because it is regarded with certain structure and format based on accuracy, formality, and objectivity. But it is no more impossible if classroom activities are focused more upon different activities based on skills so that they can be improved slowly and gradually.

Teaching of the English language is different from teaching of other subjects because the focus is on developing learner's communicative competence. Language also has many components to be completed and meaningful. Here components refer to pronunciation, spelling, vocabulary, communicative functions, and grammar. While teaching English language to non- native speakers of English the teacher should be aware of all these skills and aspects of languages. It means all the activities to improve them should be done in the classroom teaching. For example, to make the

studentscompetent in spelling, some games like puzzle, quiz, and dictation as well as other techniques are required in the language classroom.

Statement of the Problem

Writing is a fundamental skill of language. Learners need to have good competence over other skills to master it. To keep the words or language for a long time or permanent, writing plays vital role rather than other skills. It is observed that most of the time teachers of Nepal only focus on teaching from books with the purpose of completingthecourse in time. They are said to rarely involve the students in different activities like presentation, debate, speech, spelling quiz, paper presentation, discussion and dictation. They see that whether the exercises in the books have been done or not rather than improving all the skills of students focusing on different activities. Teachers do not concentrate much on punctuation marks in writing. The most important aspect of writing is spelling. Until and unless the spelling is correct, the piece of writing is not considered correct at all. Inmost of the schools of Nepal, teachers solve all the exercises by writing on the whiteboard only. They think that if they dictate the lessons and exercises to the students then students will not make noise and ask each and every spelling of the words. So, for the easiness of the teachers they come to write everything on the whiteboard. These cases are found in all the levels in both institutional and public schools of Nepal. This research therefore is conducted keeping those above mentioned things in mind, particularly, to quench the thirst of my queries to find out spelling proficiency of the secondary level students of institutional and community school of Surkhet district.

This research study is different from other research studies for example Pant (2017)and Joshi (2013) because no other researchers have gone through the micro level of the study to find out the spelling proficiency using dictation technique which is very important in teaching writing skill.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this research study were as follows:

    i.   To find out spelling proficiency of ninth graders of institutional and community schools of Surkhet district.

ii. To compare students' spelling proficiency in terms of type of school and gender.

Research Questions

This research study was based on the following questions:

- What is spelling proficiency of ninth grade students of Surkhet district?

- Which types of schools either institutional or community have better proficiency in spelling?

- Who are better? Boys or girls?

Significance of the Study

This research study might be helpful and beneficial to all the language teachers of secondary level to improve their teaching of spelling. It will also be helpful to curriculum designers to design textbooks focusing on different classroom activities to improve different skills by using various techniques. Similarly, the finding of the study will be beneficial to selected and non-selected schools to know the proficiency of the students and improve the spelling proficiency of the students by applying different techniques of teaching spelling. Moreover, the study will also be supportive to further researchers to get different ideas and do research in other related topics. It helps to teachers as well as students to improve their writing skill by improving their spelling in their writing.

Delimitations of the Study

This study had the following delimitations:

- It was a comparative study which was limited to spelling proficiency of ninth graders.

- This study was confined to 40 ninth grade students of four different secondary schools of Surkhet district.

- The data were collected from two institutional and two community secondary schools, from each school 10 students (5 boys and 5 girls) were selected with the help of non-random purposive sampling method.

- This study measured the students' spelling proficiency on the basis of pre specified criteria.

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〕 The primary data were collected with the help of test (dictation technique and spelling contest).

〕 The data collected were analyzed quantitatively.

Operational Definition of Key Terms

Dictation	:	It is an activity in school where the teacher reads a text aloud and the students write it down.
Mechanics	:	Mechanics consists of capitalization, punctuation and spelling in writing.
Proficiency	:	In this study, it refers to students' ability to spell words correctly in writing.
Testing	:	It is a form of assessment intended to measure the respondents' knowledge or ability.
Vocabulary Games	:	Vocabulary games are those activities which are used to teach words in language classes to make the learning effective.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter deals with the review of theoretical literature, review of empirical literature, implication of review for the study and theoretical framework.

Review of Theoretical Literature

Theoretical aspect is the main basis which provides the space to understand and see what and how something has already been done. So, in order to get its strong theoretical background, I have reviewed various books, articles, and unpublished theses.

English Language and its Importance

English in the today's world has appeared as an international as well as global language. It is spoken all over the world as a link language. Many people are learning it as first, second or foreign language. Hence, learning English is very common nowadays. The English language speakers or users are growing day by day because it covers wide range of communication sector (Harmer, 2007). In Nepal, it is taught and learnt as a compulsory subject in schools and colleges from grade 1 to bachelor level. It is also taught and learnt as a major or optional subject in schools, colleges and universities.

English is an international language and it is one of the six official languages of UNO. English is the mostly spoken language in the world. It is spoken as a native language in Britain, Canada, America, and Australia. In this regard, Verghes (1990, as cited in Pant 2017, p. 9) says, "Without English no one can achieve the peak of success in the field of science and technology".It means, English language has been a powerful weapon in all the field of development in the world.

In the context of Nepal, English is used as an international language and it is taught and learnt from primary to higher level as a foreign language. Especially when we talk about the development of the English language, we have to consider about the establishment of Durbar school which is the first English school of Nepal. The first Prime minister of Rana rule was JangaBahadurRana. He visited England and was influenced by the English Language. So he realized that English language was

important to establish good relationship with foreigners or English people. Therefore, he established Durbar school for Rana and Royal families in 1910 B.S. It was opened for public after thirty years. After the establishment of Tri-Chandra College, English became the compulsory subject as well as the medium of instruction in higher education in Nepal (Sharma, 2012).

Similarly, realizing the importance of the English language, Sthapit et al. (1994) say:

> English is the most widely used language in history of our planet; one in every seven can speak it. More than the half of the books and three quarter of international mails are in English, of all languages. English has the largest vocabulary perhaps as many as two million words (p.1).

The statement above clarifies that English language has covered its wide field. It means, one among every seven speaker, speaks English. In the world, more than half percent books have been written in English language. So, it has been a medium language to unite the people of the world and to run every day activities.

Language Skills

Listening, speaking, reading and writing are the four basic skills of language. Every normal child naturally acquires language followed by sufficient amount of exposure. It means that they can learn to speak and understand the spoken message naturally without any formal teaching. It happens so naturally that they themselves are unaware about their learning. This is how every normal people can communicate with each other. Listening and speaking, therefore, are called the primary skills. Similarly, reading and writing are a bit higher level of skills and they are also called secondary skills since no one can learn to read or write without practicing listening and speaking (Harmer, 2008).

In the present world,the English language has become the prominent language. Its use is becoming wider and wider where all the skills have become so much important. Now English language is being the passport to visit any place of the world. With its many functions, it has been taught as a compulsory subject in school level curriculum in Nepal. Now all the skills of language are given equal priority.Similarly, listening skill is taught to make the students competent in listening where they can have listening ability mainly to receive native sounds and or any recorded items to make it

communicative by understanding the meaning of the utterances. Likewise, to express our views, feelings, ideas, opinions and emotions and to communicate effectively speaking skill is more focused. Next, to make the students able for orthographic writing and understanding the language items the reading skill is practiced. Writing as a permanent and academic skill is considered as more serious and important skill of language (Sharma,2012). To develop students' skill in all orthographic symbols and express the language through words writing skill is given more priority. The writing skill involves the subskillsrelation punctuation,the selection of vocabulary, appropriate use of andgrammar, coherence and cohesion, and accurate spelling errors. It is also used to fulfill the academic course as a curriculum of different levels. The following section describes four skills of writing that is listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

➢ **Listening**

Listening is the first language skill. A child cannot produce language if he does not hear it in a meaningful context. Listening is followed by speaking which is inevitable and a pre-requisite to learn to read and write. Listening is a receptive skill in which we receive the message or information by listening. In other words, listening refers to the ability to identify and understand speech of someone (Harmer, 2008). Speech involves pronunciation of consonant and vowel sounds, stress, system and intonation. Therefore listening is an activity of playing attention to and trying to get meaning from something wehear.In this sense, Harmer (2007) writes,

> Listening is good for our students, pronunciation, too in that the more they hear and understand English being spoken, the more they absorb appropriate pitch and intonation, stress and the sounds of both individual words and those which blend together in corrected speech. When a learner listens soundly he can do right performance in the response of what he listens either in the form of written or spoken. (p.133)

So, it is an active process of perceiving and constructing a message from a stream of sounds. One knows about the phonological, grammatical, lexical and cultural systems of language through listening. So, listening is the ability to identify and understand what others are saying.

➢ **Speaking**

Speaking is primarily a productive skill because language is primarily manifested in speech. Simply, speaking can be defined as the ability to express oneself fluently in that language. Speech consists of pronunciation, stress, rhythm juncture and intonation. Teaching 'Speaking' does not only mean to teach those factors separately but to teach the learners how to communicate in the target language. A speaker does not speak without any purpose; there must be as internal motive to make him speak. He speaks as he wants to express his desires, opinions, experiences and to establish social relationship as well. In this regard, Harmer (2007) writes:

> There are three main reasons for getting students to speak in the classroom. Firstly, speaking provides rehearsal opportunities, changes to practice real life speaking in the safety of the classroom. Secondly, speaking tasks in which students try to use any or all of the languages they know provide feedback for both teacher and students. And finally, the more students have opportunities to activate the various elements of language they have stored in their brain, the more automatic their use of these elements becomes(p. 123).

So,the basic aim of speaking skill in language is to help students acquire communicative skills that they need at various situation. Speaking a language requires to have mastery over different sub skills like pronunciation, stress, intonation and spontaneous selection of words. The knowledge of consonants and vowels helps the learner in the skill of pronunciation.

➢ **Reading**

Reading skill is a complex cognitive process of decoding symbols for the intension of deriving meaning and/ or constructing meaning. Written information is received by the retina, processed by the primary visual cortex and interpreted in wernicke's area. Reading is a means of language acquisition, of communication and of sharing information and ideas. In this sense, Harmer (2008, p.99) says, "Reading is useful for language acquisition. Provided that students more or less understand what they read, the more they read, the better they get at it. Reading also has a positive effect on students' vocabulary knowledge, on their spelling and on their writing." It means, good reading helps to promote learners' vocabulary, spelling proficiency and writing skill.

➢ **Writing**

Writing is the productive skill of language. It is an amalgamation of spelling system, punctuation marks, grammar and styles as well as structure of writing mainly to put orthographic symbols in the proper format. Writing is the permanent skill of language. It is just representation of graphic symbols by which the message is received and understood. There are different types of writing activities such as controlled writing, guided writing, and free writing. The definitions of writing are variously stated by some experts. According to Rivers (1968, p.294) "Writing is conveying information or expression of original ideas in a consecutive way in the new language." In addition, from brainstorming to final draft writing stage many corrections are needed in writing. Writing process always has its relation with other skills too. In the preface Narayanaswami (1993, p. 5) mentioned, "The skills of writing cannot be isolated from other language skills". "Writing skill is an important part of communication. Good writing skill allows communicating message with clarity and ease to a far larger audience than through face-to- face or telephone conversation.

Teaching Writing Skill

In general, writing process is done through two stages: exploring ideas and processing the ideas into readable texts. Rivers (1981, p. 294) claimed,"Writing in the language becomes a complicated activity because writing involves meaningful segments of language: words, sentence, grammar, and how to transfer those segments into written forms."

Most students who come for help with literacy will have difficulties with writing. It may be something they have avoided for years after negative experiences at school. They feel that they cannot express clearly what they wish to write. Many people are embarrassed about their handwriting or spelling and do not want to appear foolish in front of family and friends. Others may be reluctant to seek employment, promotion or embark on further education and training for fear which will involve writing. Writing is a complex process that requires a different range of skills from reading. Similarly, the skill of visual recognition is important in reading. Many students find it a daunting task precisely because it demands the co-ordination of so many elements: from clarifying their purpose, planning and sequencing their thoughts, to the technical aspects, such as handwriting or word processing, spelling, structure, layout and understanding information technology (Harmer 2007). Writing should always arise from the student's needs and interests. In the early stages, these are often functional,

for example letters, application forms, notes to school. It is worth giving time to encourage expressive or imaginative writing. In addition, many institutions regularly test student achievements through publishing collections of student writings. These provide a rich source of ideas, as well as encouragement and inspiration for other learners. "Word study" is an alternative to traditional spelling instruction. It is based on learning word patterns rather than memorizing unconnected words. The roles of the teacher in the writing skill may be manager, controller, guide, model, facilitator, participant, counselor, advisor, resource person, or dictator.

Aspects of Writing

Writing is a complex process that requires different range of skills from reading. Similarly, the skill of visual reorganization is important in reading. It is done through two stages: exploring ideas and processing the ideas into readable texts. Following Harmer (2007), different types of aspect of writing can be discussed as below:

➢ **Grammar**

The term grammar is often used by non-linguists with a very broad meaning. Linguists use it in a much more specific sense. Speakers of a language have a set of internalized rules for using that language. This is the vast majority of the information which is acquired at least in the case of one's native language not by conscious study or instruction, but by observing other speakers; much of this work is done during early childhood. Grammar is the whole system and structure of a language or of languages in general, usually taken as consisting of syntax and morphology (including inflections) and sometimes also phonology and semantics. The term "grammar" can also be used to describe the rules that govern the linguistic behavior of a group of speakers.It has been defined variously by various scholars. Cowan (2008, p.3) says, "Grammar is the set of rules that describes how words and groups of words can be arranged to form sentences in a particular language." Similarly, Hornby (1989, p. 21) defines grammar as "a study or sciences of rules for forming words and combining them into sentences." Analyzing these definitions we can say that grammar is the set of rules for forming sentences in a language. It is the set of rules that describes how words and groups of words can be arranged to form sentences in a particular language.

➢ **Vocabulary**

A person's vocabulary is the set of words within a language that are familiar to that person. A vocabulary usually develops with age, and serves as a useful and fundamental tool for communication and acquiring knowledge. Acquiring an extensive vocabulary is one of the largest challenges in learning a second language. Vocabulary is commonly defined as all the words known and used by a particular person. Knowing a word, however, is not as simple as merely being able to recognize or use it. There are several aspects of word knowledge that are used to measure word knowledge.Defining vocabulary, Richards et.al. (1999, p.400) say, "Vocabulary refers to a set of lexemes including single words, compound words and idioms." It means, the word vocabulary includes a single word or word combination.

➢ **Punctuation**

Punctuation is one of the important mechanics of writing. Simply speaking, punctuation refers to the use of standard marks and signs in writing to separate words into sentences, clauses, and phrases in order to clarify the meaning. Different scholars have defined punctuation in different ways. Carter and Carthy (2006, p. 838) say,"Punctuation exists in order to indicate the boundaries of grammatical units and to indicate grammatical information that is marked in spoken language by means of intonation, pitch, etc." This definition shows that punctuation marks help to make meaning clear in spoken form of language. In the same way, Hard et al. (1941, p. 410) point out that "Punctuation marks are useful tools without which no writer could hope to convey his meaning to his reader with immediacy and accuracy."Punctuation is used to create sense, clarity and stress in sentences. Using punctuation marks to structure means organized writing. Punctuation in the English language helps readers understand a sentence through visual means other than the letters of the alphabet.The punctuation rules in English are e.g. the period (or full stop in British English), the comma, the exclamation mark, the question mark, the colon, the semicolon, the quotation mark, the apostrophe, the hyphen and the dash, parentheses, brackets, etc.

➢ **Spelling**

Spelling is the writing of a word or words with the necessary letters and diacritics present in an accepted standard order, the conventions which determine how the graphemes of a writing system are used to write a language. It is one of the elements of orthography and a prescriptive element of language. Following OALD (7th edition) spelling is "the process or activity of writing or naming the letters of a word."

Spellings attempt to transcribe the sounds of the language according to the alphabetical principle, but fully phonetic spellings are exceptions in many languages for various reasons. Pronunciation changes over time in all languages, yet spelling is irregular in most languages and rare in some. In addition, words from other languages may be adopted without being adapted to the spelling system, non-standard spellings are often adopted after extensive common usage, and different meanings of a word or homophones may be deliberately spelled in different ways to differentiate them visually (Rivers, 1968).

Teaching Spelling

Simply, teaching spelling is to make students practicing words twice, thrice in a written form with different techniques and classroom activities. Rivers (1968, p. 243) says, "If recognizable units of foreign language are involved, the process may be called spelling". In this process, the writer can recognize the meaning of units of target language. Following Rivers(ibid), traditional spelling teaching is considered as a wrong from modern teaching as following ways;

) Rote memorization is not an effective way to learn and remember where many students forget their spelling words as soon as they finish the test.

) With traditional spelling instruction, students are passive learners, spelling is boring-for both the students and the teacher so that we need to give students an active role while teaching spelling.

) Children move through the stages of spelling development at a different pace, so it gets students overload, therefore, rule generalization must be followed.

By the 1980s, a trend away from direct, explicit spelling instruction began with the theory that teachers did not have to teach spelling directly, because this knowledge would ultimately be "caught" as children immersed themselves in reading and writing. There is considerable evidence that this approach failed to instill literacy in millions of children. Notably, in schools teachers stopped paying attention to spelling, test scores dropped and schools began to failure with literacy education. But by 1994 California's fourth grade proficiency scores had slid almost to the bottom of the 41 states and territories that participated in the 1994 National assessment of Education Progress.

As a result, an increasing number of parents advocate a "back to basics" approach to literacy and strongly desire spelling instruction for their children. Back -to- the-basics

spelling instruction makes sense. A huge part of basics formula includes explicit spelling instruction. An extensive and evolving body of research shows that direct and explicit spelling instruction is required if all students are to master the mechanics of reading and writing. As these skills including spelling becomes automatic. Students are freer to concentrate on the higher-level thinking and communication skills needed for success in school education. Spelling is not being taught well in many schools in Nepal. It's true that until and unless students are competent in spelling they are not considered as good in writing.

Testing Spelling

At times, spelling has been marginalized in education, presumably because teachers either place more importance on other reading and writing skills or believe that the English language spelling system is too irregularand unpredictable to make instruction profitable (Simonsen& Gunter, 2001). When primary teachers were asked to self-report whether they teach spelling, nearly all indicated they do (Graham et al., 2008). Nevertheless, direct observation of first- and second-grade teachers reveal that less than 4% of the reading instructional block is devoted to spelling or spelling-related activities (Cooke, Slee, & Young, 2008). Further, an examination of students' spelling development found significant monthly growth in grades three to seven but no significant growth in grades eight to twelve, suggesting   a more pronounced lack of spelling instruction for adolescents compared to younger students .

Recommendations for providing effective reading instruction include components of spelling such as spelling-sound relationships,the orthographic system,and morphological components of words(Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). In addition, a meta-analysis conducted by them summarizing the effects of instructional practices in writing on reading outcomes found that teaching and testing spelling had a strong effect on reading fluency among students. So, testing spelling is the most important from beginning to advance level.

Techniques of Testing Spelling

Spelling is the writing a word or words with the necessary letters and diacritics presents in an accepted standard order. The conventions which determine now the graphemes of writing system are used to write a language. It is one of the elements of

orthography and perspectives elements of language. There are different techniques of teaching spelling, following Lee (1979, p.32), some of the ways are as below:

➢ **Spelling Quiz**

A spelling bee is a competition in which contestants are asked to spell a broad selection of words, usually with a varying degree of difficulty. The concept is thought to have originated in the United States and spelling bee events, along with variants. But they are now also held in some other countries around the world. The first winner of an official spelling bee was Frank Neuhauser, who won the 1st National Spelling Bee in Washington, D.C in 1925 at age eleven. Classes compete against other classes in the same grade, or level, and the winning class is determined by the score of each class. On an individual level, school spelling bees determine which child will represent his or her school at district, state and national competitions.

➢ **Spelling Games**

Spelling Games are collection of typing games, quizzes and word games that help children develop their spelling skills. Good spelling has been found to enhance fluency in reading and writing. It also helps boost confidence and academic ability. Good spelling skills continue to be important as students grow older and begin writing piece of paper and other materials academically. Regular readers usually have good spelling and vocabulary skills. Online spelling games for students are a good way of improving both spelling and vocabulary. Spelling games include typing games, word games and quizzes. These fun games enhance different aspects of spelling in different ways. For example, typing games primarily test typing skills, but children playing these games must also pay close attention to the spellings of the words in order to win. Word games develop both vocabulary as well as spelling, since misspelled words do not earn points. The World Capitals Quiz familiarizes students with the names and spellings of different places around the world. The students' spelling games from knowledge adventure are a great way for students to have fun while learning to spell.

➢ **Dictation Technique**

Dictation is the transcription of spoken text: one person who is "dictating" speaks and another who is "taking dictation" writes down the words as they are spoken. According toRai (2003, p.64), "dictation refers to a person reading some text aloud so that the listeners can write down what is being said". Among speakers of several languages,

dictation is used as a test of language skills, similar to spelling bees in the English-speaking world. Secondary to teaching language skills, the exercise of dictation has also been used to introduce students to literary works, and to instill morals.

Some reasons behind using dictation techniques in the classroom are as follows;

Dictation helps to improve spelling skills.

Dictation is safe and easy to conduct for non-native teachers.

Dictation is technically useful for English.

Dictation is helpful to develop memory power.

Dictation is helpful in mixed group abilities.

Dictation deals with large groups.

Students are active during the exercise.

Dictation supports unconscious thinking.

Dictation will focus the dictated items.

Dictation often calms groups.

Dictation is helpful to teach short text, new vocabularies, spelling etc.

Dictation as a whole is mixture of all language skills.

(Source:https://www.myenglishpages.com/blog/why-dictation)

Review of Empirical Literature

Many different studies have been conducted on the department of English education to test the writing proficiency as well as to test other language skill proficiency of the students at various levels. The researches carried out in the department have been reviewed as below:

Shah (2003) conducted the study on the topic "A Study on Proficiency of Class Nine Students in Writing Skill." The main objective of his study was to find out students proficiency in writing skill. It was survey design where the tool for data collection was a written test. The researcher sampled 30 students with the help of non-random judgmental sampling technique from class nine. After that he conducted a written test and collected the required data. The researcher analyzed the collected data both quantitatively and qualitatively. He found that the students committed mistakes in use

of comma than in the use of other specific punctuation marks i.e. capital letter, apostrophe, and question mark and so on.

Subedi (2008) carried out research entitled "Proficiency in Writing Skill: A Case of Letters." The main objective of this study was to find out grade nine students writing proficiency in terms of holistic description, personal letters and condolence/ sympathy letters. It was survey study where 40 participants were sampled non-randomly and the main tool of data collection was test. The data collected were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively and it was found that students perform better in writing personal letters than the sympathy or condolence letters.

Sharma (2009) also did the research on the title "Writing Proficiency of the Students of Higher Secondary Level." The main objective of the study was to find out writing proficiency in punctuation, articles, subject- verb agreement, and preposition in the writing of 12th graders of the faculty of education in the Kathmandu valley. The major tool for data collection was a written test and the data collected were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively and it was found that the students were better in the use of punctuation than in the use of article, subject verb agreement and preposition. The research showed that the overall proficiency of grade 12 students in the use of punctuation.

Budha (2012) carried out a study on "Writing Proficiency in Essay Writing." This study was concerned to find out the proficiency in essay writing in English language of Bachelor level students in Kanchanpur district. The tool for data collection was a set of written test and he used judgmental non-random sampling procedure in his study. After collecting data, he analyzed them both quantitatively and qualitatively. From his study he found that boys were more proficient than girls with the average marks 34.6 and 30 respectively.

Similarly, **Joshi (2013)** carried out a research on the topic "Writing Proficiency of Secondary Level Students: A Case of Essay Writing."The main aim of this study was to find out writing proficiency of the secondary level students in essay writing on the basis of holistic, schools wise, gender wise and test item wise performance. The finding of this study was that most of the students lacked the organizing skill even if they have good ideas upon problem. They were unable to organize their ideas. Some students were poor in vocabulary; they could not express their ideas due to poor vocabulary.

Pant (2017) carried out a research on the topic "Spelling Proficiency of Grade Ten Students". It carried out aiming to find out spelling proficiency of grade ten students studying in different public and private schools of Kanchanpur district. It was survey research where sample of the study were 40 students studying in grade ten those were selected with the help of non-random purposive sampling. In order to reach requirement of the sample size ten students: five girls and five boys were selected from each school and required data were collected by text writing through dictation technique. The responses of the respondents were analyzed and interpreted both quantitatively and qualitatively. So, it was found out that the spelling proficiency of grade ten students was satisfactory. In comparison to private and government-aided school, the students of private schools were found better at spelling and among boys and girls, the boys were slightly better than the girls in their spelling proficiency.

Even though different studies have been conducted in the field of writing proficiency but none of the studies deals with the analysis of spelling proficiency of grade nine. Therefore, this study will attempt to find out the spelling proficiency of ninth grade students through dictation.

Implications of Review for the Study

Theoretical and empirical both literatures are the fundamental support for the present research. Here, theoretical literature review guides the present researcher to the particular direction for the study as well as provides in-depth knowledge on the topic of the study. On the other hand, empirical literature review guides this research by showing the area to find out the processes of conducting research focusing methodology, data collection process, sampling, analysis process etc. To be more specific, from the study of Sharma (2009), Harmer (2007), Rivers (1968) I got some basic ideas to lead my study ahead. From Joshi (2013) I got the ideas for my conceptual framework. Similarly, from Pant(2017)I got detail concept to lead my research work ahead from beginning to its end.

Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is the relationship between different variables. After the intensive study of a number of theories and researches I came up with a conceptual framework which can be presented diagrammatically as follows:

```
                    ┌─────────────────────────┐
                    │ Teaching English Language│
                    └─────────────────────────┘
                                 │
                                 ▼
                       ┌──────────────────┐
                       │ Language Skills  │
                       └──────────────────┘
         ┌──────────────┬──────────┴──────────┬──────────────┐
         ▼              ▼                      ▼              ▼
   ┌───────────┐  ┌───────────┐        ┌───────────┐  ┌───────────┐
   │ Listening │  │ Speaking  │        │  Reading  │  │  Writing  │
   └───────────┘  └───────────┘        └───────────┘  └───────────┘
                                                            │
                                                            ▼
                                              ┌─────────────────────┐
                                              │  Aspects of Writing │
                                              └─────────────────────┘
        ┌──────────────┬───────────────┬──────────┴─────────────────────┐
        ▼              ▼               ▼                                 ▼
  ┌───────────┐  ┌───────────┐  ┌───────────┐                  ┌────────────────┐
  │  Grammar  │  │ Vocabulary│  │  Spelling │                  │ Pronunciation  │
  └───────────┘  └───────────┘  └───────────┘                  └────────────────┘
                                      │
                                      ▼
                            ┌──────────────────┐
                            │ Testing Spelling │
                            └──────────────────┘
                                      │
                                      ▼
                        ┌──────────────────────────────┐
                        │ Techniques of Testing Spelling│
                        └──────────────────────────────┘
                                      │
                                      ├────────►┌───────────┐
                                      │         │ Dictation │
                                      │         └───────────┘
                                      │
                                      └────────►┌───────────┐
                                                │   Quiz    │
                                                └───────────┘
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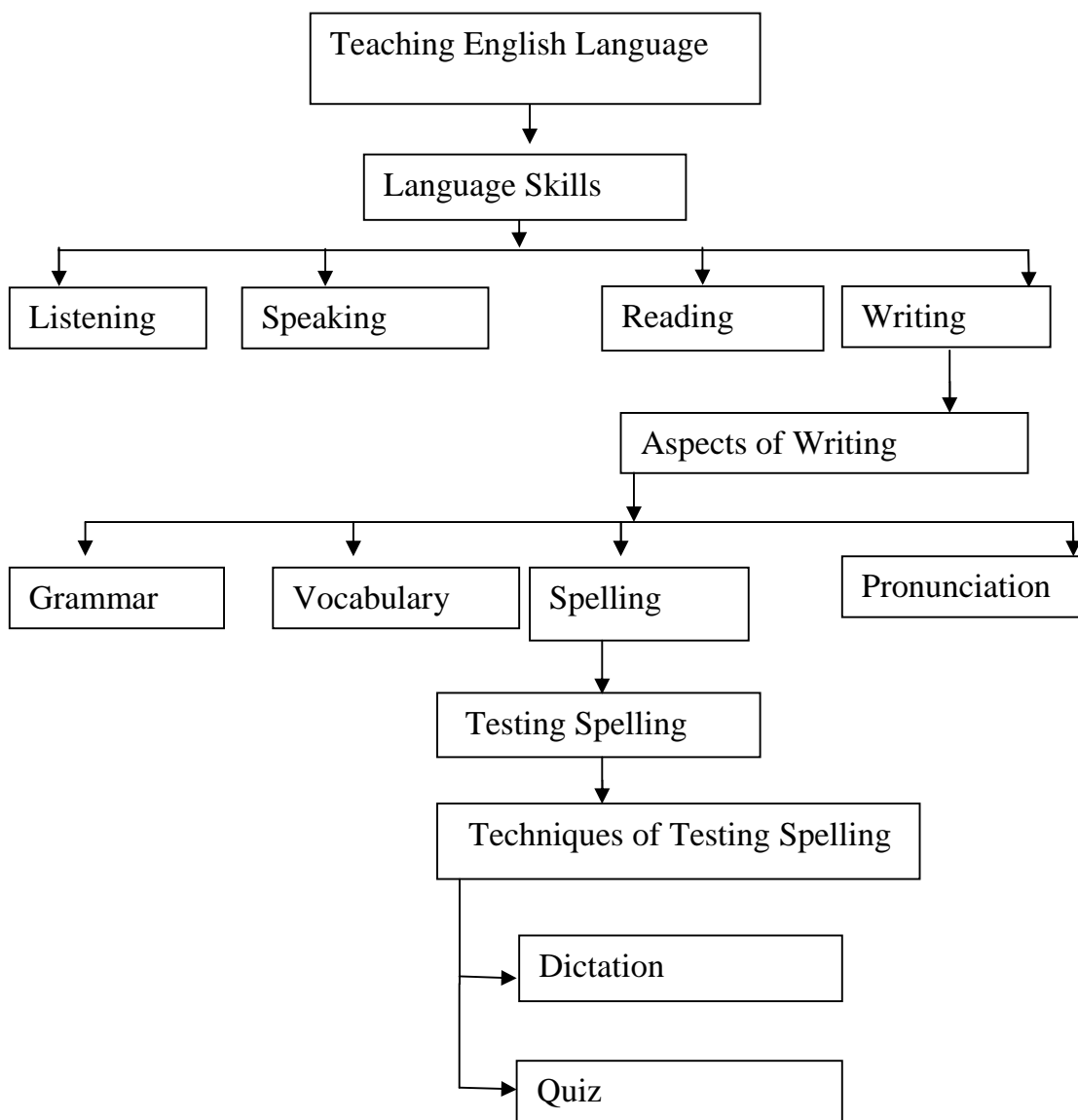
CHAPTER THREE

METHODS AND PROCEDURES OF THE STUDY

This chapter includes design of the present study, sources of the data, population and sampling, sampling procedure, data collection tools, data collection procedure and data analysis and interpretation procedure.

Design of the Study

A research design is a fixed set of procedures for conducting a research. There are several designs that are practiced in research activities. This study follows survey research design.

Survey research is the most popular research design in social science including the field of education. According to Rosiers (1988, as cited in Joshi 2013, p.28) survey research :

> in education " involves the collection of information from members of a group of students, teachers or other persons associated with the educational process and the analysis of the information to illuminate important educational issues".

Therefore, this design was appropriate to answer the research questions raised in this study.

Sources of Data

Both the primary and secondary sources of the data were used for the study. This study was mainly based on primary data obtained from 40 ninth grader students studying in institutional and community schools in Surkhet district. In order to accomplish my research work, I used several books, articles, journals; previous research works and so on available in printed form and online sources. Some of them include the works of Crystal (2003), Shah (2003), Harmer (2008), Sharma (2009), Budha (2012), and Pant (2017).

Population and Sample

The study population for this study was ninth grade students studying in institutional and community schools of Surkhet district. It was not possible for me to involve all the students. Therefore, the study population was sampled into a smaller group. The

sample consisted of 40 ninth grade students of four schools of Surkhet district. Those four schools are: NRSS, BSS, ASS and ICA.

Sampling Procedures

I used non-random purposive sampling procedure to sample the study population. I visited the schools and with the help of class teachers, I collected information about students' performance in the classroom. I had baseline information about the population that is their performance and participation in academic activities with ranking and purposively tried to make the sample as representative as possible to it.

Data Collection Tools

In this research study the tool was a test item and a spelling contest containing 40 marks for each. A paragraph taken as unseen passage from class nine English Practice Bookhaving 40 a bit difficult words was used on the basis of difficulty level of secondary level students. The paragraph was selected on the basis of personal observation. Actually, the paragraph underlining the focused words was dictated to the purposively selected students for collecting the data where they were assigned 1 mark for each correct spelling. Similarly, the spelling contest was also conducted in the same way where there were total 40 words taken from glossary of class nine English textbook. In the contest, each group was asked to spell 10 words from the list 1-40 which they chose calling for the number themselves. They were assigned 1 mark for each correct spelling. Likewise, spelling contest was also conducted between boys and girls in the same way where there were total 20 words. In the contest, each group was asked to spell 10 words from the list 1-20 choosing from the list. They were assigned 1 mark for each correct spelling.

Data collection Procedure

I followed the following stepwise procedure for data collection.

- Z First of all, I went to the field and contacted the respondents after taking permission from authority.

- Z After establishing rapport with them, I familiarized them with the research problem and purpose of the study.

- Z Then, I administered the test depending on predetermined time period.

Z Similarly, I organized spelling contest systematically among those students calling all 4 groups from 4 different schools (2 groups of boys and girls for gender wise proficiency) who were selected purposively.

Z After that, I collected the answer sheets and result of spelling contest and I evaluated them systematically and objectively.

Z Then, the collected data were analyzed quantitatively.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

This chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of data. The analysis is presented under different sub-headings.

Holistic Proficiency

The main purpose of carrying out holistic analysis of proficiency was to find out spelling proficiency of ninth grade students of Surkhet district. A question set of 40 marks was asked to spell each student and spelling contest of 40 marks (10 marks for each group) was conducted and the marks that they have achieved has been analyzed and presented here on the following table.

Table 1

Students' overall performance in dictation

S.N.	No. of Sts.	FM	Obtained Marks	Average Marks	Mark Percentage	Above Average		Below Average	
						No. of Sts.	Per	No. of Sts.	Per
01	40	1600	840	21	52.5	20	50%	20	50%

Table 1 shows that the total numbers of informants of this research were 40 and the full mark of the test was 40. The average score of the total obtained mark was 21. Only 20 students crossed the average level whereas 20 students remained below the average level. If we calculate this in percentage, 50% students were above average level whereas 50% students were below the average level.

So, it is concluded that the holistic spelling proficiency of grade nine students of Surkhet district was good (based on predetermined marking criteria) as they achieved more than 50% score in total.

Table 2

Students' overall performance in spelling contest

S.N.	No. of words	Correct	Percentage	Incorrect	Percentage
01	40	26	65%	14	35%

Table 2 shows students total performance on spelling contest. It is clear that among all 40 words used in contest, students produced 26 words (i.e., 65%) correctly and 14 words (i.e. 35%)incorrectly.

So, it can be concluded that students' performance on spelling contest was very good (based on predetermined marking criteria) as they correctly produced 26 words among 40 which is 65%.

Table 3

Score of students in spelling contest

School	No. of Sts.	F.M.	OM	AM	Percentage
NRSS(A)	10	10	6	0.6	60%
BSS(B)	10	10	5	0.5	50%
ASS(C)	10	10	7	0.7	70%
ICA(D)	10	10	8	0.8	80%
Total	40	40	26	0.65	65%

Similarly, in order to find out spelling proficiency of grade nine students, spelling contest was conducted. In the contest each group was asked 10 words to spell and they scored total 26 marks i.e. 65% which is above average percent. So, the holistic spelling proficiency of grade nine students of Surkhet district is quite satisfactory as they scored above average level.

School-wise Proficiency

To test variation in proficiency level of the students of different schools, same test item was administered to all 40 informants of four different schools of Surkhet district. Only ten students were taken from each school. Among them five were boys and five were girls. The marks obtained by those informants were analyzed by using simple statistical tools i.e. mark percentage. The following table shows the school-wise spelling proficiency of grade nine students.

Table 4

School-wise Proficiency (Dictation)

S.N.	Schools	Name of Schools	Full Marks	Total Obtained Marks	Percentage (%)
1	Institutional Schools	ASS	400	230	57.5 %
2		ICA	400	222	55.5 %
	Total	-	800	452	56.5%
3	Community Schools	NRSS	400	192	48 %
4		BSS	400	196	48.75 %
	Total	-	800	388	48.5%

Table 3 shows comparative analysis of spelling proficiency of institutional and community schools based on dictation as a tool for data collection. It depicts that the percentage of spelling proficiency of institutional schools was higher than that of community school i.e. 56.5 and 48.5%. To be specific, institutional schools; ASS and ICA achieved 57.5 and 55.5% whereas community schools; NRSS and BSS achieved 48 and 48.75%. In this way, the proficiency of institutional school was higher with 8% than that of community school.

Table 5

School-wise Proficiency in Spelling Contest

S.N.	Schools	Name of Schools	Full Marks	Total Obtained Marks	Percentage (%)
1	Institutional Schools	ASS	10	7	70 %
2		ICA	10	8	80 %
	Total	-	20	15	75%
3	Community Schools	NRSS	10	6	60 %
4		BSS	10	5	50 %
	Total	-	20	11	55%

Table 4 shows school-wise comparison of spelling proficiency of institutional and community schools based on spelling contest. The table clearly shows that there is difference in average score of different schools. The participants of ASS scored 7 marks i.e.70% and the participants of ICA secured 8 marks i.e.80%. Similarly, the participants of NRSS secured 6 marks i.e. 60% and BSS scored 5 i.e. 50%. So, it clearly shows that institutional school scored more than that of community school which is 75 and 55%.

In the same way, in both the medium of analysis i.e. dictation and spelling contest institutional schools were found comparatively better than that of community school.

Gender-wise Proficiency

On the basis of the objective of this research study, comparison was made between the total proficiency of boys and girls. Among 40 sample students 20 students were boys and 20 students were girls. Their gender -wise proficiency in total is presented as follows:

Table 6

Gender-wise Proficiency (Dictation)

S.N.	Variables	No. of Students	FM	OM	AM	Percentage
1	Boys	20	800	510	25.5	63.75%
2	Girls	20	800	330	16.5	41.25%

Table 6 shows total gender wise proficiency of students of four selected schools. Boys secured 510 marks whereas the girls managed to secure 330 marks. The average mark of boys was 25.5 which was 63.75% whereas the average mark of girls was 16.5 which was 41.25%.

After analyzing average marks percentage of boys and girls, it was found that boys were more proficient in spelling than the girls. Boys' average mark and percentage of mark was higher with 9 and 22.5% respectively than that of girls.

Table 7

Gender-wise Proficiency (Spelling Contest)

S.N.	Variables	No. of Students	FM	OM	Percentage
1	Boys	20	10	7	70%
2	Girls	20	10	6	60%
	Total	40	20	13	65%

Table 7shows gender wise proficiency of students of four selected schools in spelling contest.Spelling contest was organized to find out gender-wise proficiency among the sampled students. It was of 10 marks for each group where boys secured 7 marks and the girls managed to secure 6 marks. The mark percentage of boys was 70 whereas the mark percentage of girls was 60 which was 10% less than the boys.

So, it is concluded that boys were more proficient in spelling than the girls. Boys' marks and percentage of mark was higher with 1 which was 10% than that of girls.

Table 8

Total Gender-wise Proficiency of Institutional and Community Schools

S.N.	Sector	Variables	NOS	FM	OM	AM	Percentage
1	Institutional S	Boys	10	400	310	31	77.5%
		Girls	10	400	290	29	72.5%
Total			20	800	600	30	75%
2	Community	Boys	10	400	150	15	37.5%
		Girls	10	400	90	9	22.5%
Total			20	800	240	12	30%

Table 8 shows the gender-wise proficiency of community and institutional school students in spelling contest. Total average mark of boys and girls of institutional school was 30(75%), where boys' average mark and percentage was 31(i.e., 77.5%) whereas girls' average mark and mark percentage was 29(i.e., 72.5%).And total average mark of both boys and girls of community school was 12(i.e.,30%), where boys' average mark and mark percentage was 15 (i.e., 37.5% whereas girls' average mark and mark percentage was 9 (i.e., 22.5%).

On the basis of above analysis of proficiency of boys and girls of institutional and community schools, boys were more proficient than the girls in spelling contest. The boys of institutional schools were more proficient than girls and it was so in the case of community schools.

While comparing the proficiency between boys-boys and girls-girls of institutional and community schools, both boys and girls of institutional schools were more proficient than boys and girls of community schools. Total average mark and mark percentage of boys of institutional school was higher with 16 (i.e., 40%)than that of boys of community schools. Similarly, the total average mark and mark percentage of girls of institutional schools was higher with 20(i.e. ,50%) than that of girls of community schools.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND IMPLICATION

This chapter is dealt with the major findings of this research. Here it consists of major summary of the study and conclusion drawn from the analysis and interpretation of the information obtained from the selected informants and some useful implications recommended for the future betterment.

Summary

This research entitled **Spelling Proficiency of Grade Nine Students**was carried out aiming to find out spelling proficiency of grade nine students studying in different institutional and community schools of Surkhet district. It was survey research where sample of the study were 40 students studying in grade nine those were selected with the help of non-random purposive sampling. In order to reach requirement of the sample size ten students: five girls and five boys were selected from each school and required data were collected by text writing through dictation and spelling contest. The answers of the respondents were analyzed and interpreted quantitatively. So, it was found out that the spelling proficiency of grade nine students was good (based on predetermined marking criteria) as they scored more than 50%. In comparison to institutional and community school, the students of institutional schools were found better at spelling and among boys and girls, the boys were more proficient than the girls in their spelling proficiency.

Findings

The major findings of the research on the basis of analysis and interpretation of the data has been concluded below:

) The holistic proficiency of grade nine students of Surkhet district was good (based on predetermined marking criteria) as they achieved more than 50%. In spelling contest students spelled 65% words correctly, which was very good in its marking norms.

) Regarding the school-wise spelling proficiency the highest score has been obtained by the institutional schools of Surkhet district. The highest marks has been secured by ASS has secured 230 marks in 400 full marks (i.e., 57.5%).

) ICA has secured 222 marks in 400 full marks (i.e.,55.5 %). It is the second highest marks.

- NRSS has secured 192 in 400 full marks which is 48% and BSS secured 196(i.e., 48.75%)in dictation.
- Similarly, in spelling contest, institutional school secured 15 marks(i.e., 75%)and community school secured 11 marks (i.e., 65%)out of 20 full marks. The marks percentage of institutional school was higher with 10% than that of community schools. So, the spelling proficiency of institutional schools is better than that of community in Surkhet district.
- Regarding the gender-wise proficiency the highest percentages is obtained by boys from all the selected schools in comparison to the girls of grade nine of Surkhet district.
- The boys achieved 510 marks(i.e. 63.75%)in full marks 800 whereas girls achieved 330 marks (i.e. 41.25). It clearly depicts that the boys' proficiency was 22.5% higher than that of girls in dictation.
- Similarly, in spelling contest also boys scored higher than the girls which was higher with 10% than that of girls. Therefore, it can be proved that the spelling proficiency of boys is better than the girls of grade nine students of Surkhet district.

Implications

On the basis of the findings of the study, the following recommendations or pedagogical implications have been suggested:

➢ **Policy Level**

The implication of the study would be very helpful for policy makers in following ways:

- Policy makers should design the activities related to spelling and should keep in the curriculum with more priority which could be benefited for both: students and teachers.
- Text books and other references should be developed in such a way that more and more teaching materials are included to facilitate teaching spelling.

➢ **Practice Level**

- Students should be motivated to involve and participate in different activities regarding spelling test and games.

⟩ Regularity and continuity in practicing spelling through dictation technique and spelling contest and other games and activities should be prioritized.

⟩ Regular Spelling test should be taken throughout the session.

> **Future Research Level**

This research is based on only one aspects of language. There are many other aspects of language where further researchers can go through other aspects of language. This study can also become much helpful for literature review of similar sorts of topics of further research. In the same way one can go through different references for other researches through reference part. It has opened the path for following research topic:

⟩ Spelling Proficiency of Intermediate, Bachelor and Masters' Level Students.

⟩ Case study and other qualitative design can be used to find out spelling proficiency.

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Selected Text for Dictation

School Uniform Code

The schooluniformcodes are very important to maintain a sense of oneness, unity and uniformity. Therefore, students must come to school in their stipulated uniform. They may wearcolored/colouredclothes of their choice on their birthdays but they have to maintain the regulations for sport wear, formal wear and Fridayclothing accordingly. As the bottom line for clothing is comfort and decency, students are not allowed to wear jewelleries or make-up. Similarly, hair must be of naturalcolor/colour, decentlength and style. Next they should trim their nails. Furthermore, they need to wear trousers and skirts according to specifications.

Name of Student: **F.M.-40**

Name of School: **Time- 25 min.**

Class: Nine

Boys [　　]   **Girls** [　　]

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Marking Criteria

Categories	Rank in Percentage (%)
i. Outstanding	86-100
ii. Excellent	71-85
iii. Very Good	56-70
iv. Good	41-55
v. Satisfactory	26-40
vi. Poor	11-25
vii. Very Poor	Below 10

Words for Spelling Contest

-Group-4(A,B,C,D)

- Each group will be asked 10 words to spell that they choose from the list 1-40.

-For each correct spelling they will be assigned 1 mark.

1. Accommodation
2. Advocate
3. Announcement
4. Audience
5. British
6. Catchphrase
7. Cherish
8. Condolence
9. Cornerstone
10. Depression
11. Diarrhea
12. Dynamic
13. Exploitation
14. Foreign
15. Interest
16. Generate
17. Hemorrhage
18. Holistic
19. Immunity
20. Intellectual
21. Jealousy
22. Meadow

23. Mysterious

24. Obituary

25. Obtain

26. Pathogenic

27. Premature

28. Punctual

29. Quest

30. Remote

31. Slogan

32. Symptom

33. Trademark

34. Victory

35. Standstill

36. Strive

37. Wonderful

38. Meditation

39. Narrate

40. Profound

(Source: glossary of class nine textbook)

Words for Spelling Contest (Gender wise)

-Group-2(A, B)

- Each group will be asked 10 words to spell that they choose from the list 1-20.

-For each correct spelling they will be assigned 1 mark.

1. Ransom

2. Acceptance

3. Amendment

4. Techniques

5. Badminton

6. Colleague

7. Community

8. Stress

9. Dismiss

10. Furnace

11. Vitamin

12. Philosophy

13. Expansion

14. Fetch

15. Pandemic

16. Cigarette

17. Rampant

18. Talent

19. Tuition

20. Vehicle

(Source: glossary of class nine textbook)

Bay's Group

1 - Ransom
2 - Badminton
3 - Amandmaut ✗
4 - stress ✓
5 - dismiss ✓
6 - vitamin ✓
7 - talent ✓
8 - tution ✗
9 - Pandamic ✗
10 - Vehicle ✓

$$\frac{7}{10}$$

Grils Group

i. aueptencex
ii. tekniquesx
iii. community
iv. philosophy
v. expansion
vi. fetch
vii. ugareetex
viii. rampant
ix. lollaguex
x. furnace

$\frac{6}{10}$

Name of Student: Basnti Gauad   F.M.-40

Name of School: Nepal Rastriya   Time- 25 min.
               Secondary school

Class; Nine

Boys ☐   Girls ☑

School uniform code

The school code are very important to maintain sence of ousles unity and uniformity. There fore students most came to school in there stipuated uniform. They may ware colored cloke of there choice on there the dads have to maintain the regulation for saye! were formal were and friday. Clothing recordins. It as the bottom line for clothing each comford and disgraces, student arenot aloud to were jewelaries or mackup. Similarly hate must be of natural coloured destirlly length and style nest they should trim there makes. for the more they need to ware stones and skirts according to spicification.

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56

International Co-operative

Academy, Birendranagar, surkhet

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Dynamic—
Explotation ✗
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Immunity
Intelluctual

$$\frac{7}{10}$$