

# **CHAPTER - ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter includes general background which consists of discussion on langue and parole, speech and writing, writing, mechanics of writing, punctuation, importance of punctuation marks, types of punctuation marks, function and use of punctuation marks, error analysis, steps of error analysis and errors related to the use of punctuation marks. Likewise, the review of the related literature, objectives and significance of the study and definition of terms have also been included in this chapter.

### **1.1 General Background**

English is an international language. In the present day world, it is also known as the lingua franca because most of the people from different speech communities or nations share their ideas, feelings, emotions and information through the use of the English language.

Language has mainly two aspects: speech and writing. Speech and writing are two modes of communication through which we can perform our task in the different situations. Speech is oral form of language in which we can perform our task with the help of speech sounds and writing is the graphic form in which we can perform our task with the help of letters of the alphabet.

#### **1.1.1 Langue and Parole**

Brooks (1964, p. 13) states that "Ferdinand de Saussure, a linguist of the late nineteenth century, who proposed the word 'Langue' for the social or

group manifestation and 'Parole' for the individual manifestation, the two being subsumed under the term language".

Lingue denotes the abstract systematic principles of language, without which no meaningful utterance would be possible. Lingue represents the internal image of the real objects of the surrounding environment and the feelings of the individuals. Every individual has mental image or concept about the real world, with the help of which, he will utter something.

Brooks (1964, p. 11) points out that "a verbal symbol is double ended, with typically a real object at one end and the conception of the object by the brain at the other." The two end structure are, of course, absolutely interdependent. All human beings have same common internal image related to the outside world, what we call Lingue. In other words, Lingue is general with the help of which we can find similarities among different languages in the world. Whereas individual acts, statements and utterances differ from language to language, what we call parole.

He further compares the terms 'Lingue' and 'Parole' with the terms 'Concept' and 'Conception'. Since the meaning of a symbol is so personal, there would be little likelihood of only two people being sure that they were referring to the same object unless there were a common sense of identity in their separate meanings. To this common sense of identity may be given the name concept, which is all that a symbol conveys. Concepts are publicly agreed upon, standardized and relatively limited and constant; our conceptions are our own.

Similarly, Robins (1967, p. 220) says that:

While parole constitutes the immediately accessible data, the linguist's proper object is the lingue of each community, the

lexicon, grammar, and phonology implanted in each individual by his upbringing in society and on the basis of which he speaks and understands his language.

Every normal native child can get the common sense of the surrounding environment from his/her early stage of life span. So he/she can speak his/her language without any kind of formal instruction.

Lyons (1981, p. 10) introduces the term 'language-system in place of 'langue' and 'language behaviour' in place of 'Parole'. A language system is a social phenomenon which is purely abstract, in that it has no actual physical existence but which is actualized on particular occasions in the language behaviour of individual members of the language community.

### **1.1.2 Speech and Writing**

Speech and writing are the two modes of communication through which language can function in the society. Speech is oral form of making use of phonetic substance, i.e. speech sounds and writing is the graphic form making use of graphic substance, i.e. written symbols, like the letters of the alphabet. Speech may be considered the primary mode of communication in the sense that we speak before we can write. Many communities have no written form of their spoken language and it is estimated that forty percent of the world's population is illiterate.

Perrera (1984) says "Speaking is as fundamental a part of being human as walking upright but writing is an optional extra".

(<http://www.blurtit.com/4965069.htm>). Speech is usually unplanned and can be full of body language, gesture and facial expressions one of the advantages of speech is that it is more personal than writing and this is the reason people do not have conversations with each other via letters.

All communication includes the transfer of information from one person to another, and while the transfer of information is only the first step in the process of understanding of a complex phenomenon. In oral communication both speaker and listener are normally physically present at the same place, and they normally have considerable amount of background knowledge about each other, the things talked about etc. parts of this knowledge may be shared by both interlocutors. The message is conveyed or shown in several ways simultaneously. The speaker's speech behaviour is continuously accompanied and supplemented by various non-verbal signals and prosodic features. The listener responds to all the time verbally or non-verbally and this feedback continuously influences the speakers' behaviour. The speaker can produce his utterances quickly and listener also respond rapidly in social atmosphere of the face to face interaction.

Generally oral form of language is the primary socialization of normal individuals, which starts and largely develops in early childhood. It is first used by small child to fulfil his immediate desire related to the everyday culture. So, oral communication uses words with fewer syllables than the written language, the sentences are shorter, incomplete sentences and self-referencing pronouns such as I are common. Thus, communication through speech is primary source available for all normally equipped human beings across different social groups and cultures.

On the other hand, unlike speech, written texts are typically not perceived and interpreted at the same time and places as they are produced because the writer is detached in time and space from readers. Various conventions of punctuation and paragraph division make the written text more complex than speech. The acquisition of the ability to read and

write is quite different from learning to speak and understand speech. To get complete mastery over written form of language, we need considerable amount of explicit instruction. Thus, the acquisition of the written form of language belongs to the secondary socialization of the normal human child.

### **1.1.3 Writing**

Writing is one important medium of communication through which we can exchange our ideas, feelings, emotions and information from one person to another, one place to another. It makes the use of graphics i.e. written symbols like letters of alphabet. We can get freedom in writing to select subject matter, put our ideas, to organize those ideas in proper order and to provide clear reflection among the readers. Thus, to be a good writer we must think about the reader for whom we are writing, otherwise, it may not give any meaning or sense among the readers.

It is most complex language skill because it uses various grammatical systems, punctuation conventions and paragraph divisions. We can say that writing is more grammatical, in the sense that it indicates grammatical relationship more clearly and the writer is generally more careful about grammar than the speaker. No one definition of writing can cover all the writing systems that exist in this world. Instead a complete writing system should care about its purpose of communication, artificial graphic marks on a durable or electronic surface and the systematic arrangement of those graphics. We can opine that writing is the ability to put pen and paper to express ideas through symbols. Representations on the paper will have meaning and content that could be communicated to the reader by the writer.

Hockett (1958, p. 547) points out that "Writing serves as a sort of external memory, supplementing what people can keep inside their heads". The technological importance of this is beyond calculation. The functioning of such 'external memory' need not take much time to prove its usefulness. Some of the earliest writing produced by the human beings were put on durable materials, stone, bone, shell, baked clay which have survived thousand years and can still be examined. As a result, we can easily point out the importance of writing.

In the past writing was neglected, considering the fact that speech is primary and writing is secondary form of language. According to the change in time and human civilization, writing becomes more formal and legal than speech. Nowadays, it is widely used in the field of law, religion, trade, poetry, philosophy, history, offices, libraries, books, magazines and all kinds of mass media.

Writing itself is most complex skill of language among other skills. So, teaching writing to the second language learner is so challenging job for the teacher. There are numbers of different approaches, methods and techniques to the practice of writing skill both in and outside the classroom. Only a good teacher can choose an appropriate methods of teaching and provide considerable amount of time for practice.

#### **1.1.4 Mechanics of Writing**

Mechanics of writing refers to those aspects of writing such as spelling, use of punctuation marks, capitals, abbreviations and numbers which are often dealt within the revising or editing stage of writing.

Spelling is one of the important mechanics of writing which helps us to grasp the meaning of a word or sentence. If we use wrong spelling of a



as, Leggett, et al. (1954, p. 81) suggest that 'personal names are never abbreviated in formal writing.'

Inappropriate; Geo., a student from Eng. joined the class last wed.

Revised: George, a student from England, Joined the class last Wednesday.

Numbers have also fixed conventions in formal writing such as:

- a. Figures should ordinarily be used for dates.  
e.g. May 4, 1913; July.
- b. Numbers at the beginning of a sentence should ordinarily be spelled out.  
e.g. Inappropriate: 17 houses were lost in the fire.  
Revised: Seventeen houses were lost in the fire.

In writing, we have different types of systems which help us to make the writing meaningful and interesting. Those systems are the mechanics of writing.

Thus, to get mastery over the writing skill for second language learners is difficult because the writing conventions of their mother tongue and English is very different from each other.

### **1.1.5 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. e.g. Having been a teacher for fifty years, he felt perfectly relaxed among young people. Those marks or signs are called



punctuation marks. Different scholars have defined punctuation in different ways. Such as:

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."

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."

Likewise, Leggett et al.(1954, p. 355) state that :

When speaking, we use pouses and gestures to get emphasis, and we use changes in tempo and inflection to mark the beginning and ending of units of thought. We punctuate writing for the same purpose, but are restricted to devices that can be shown on the printed, typed, or hand written pages.

To quote Turner (1964,p. 94) "Formal technical writing requires exact punctuation as a safeguard against ambiguity."

Above mentioned definitions are given by different scholars in different occasions. They conclude that punctuation marks help to make the writing meaningful like supra-segmental features in speech help to make the meaning clear among the speakers.

### **1.1.6 Importance of Punctuation Marks**

Punctuation marks function as a director, which direct the writer to express his ideas, feelings and information in certain ways. Punctuation plays a vital role in the written form of the message. If we are unable to

use appropriate punctuation marks, it will mislead the reader while reading. Partridge (1953, p. 8) points out that “punctuation is not something that one applies as an ornament, for it is part of the structure. So much a part that, without it, the structure would be meaningless”.

Similarly, Meyers (1986, p. 225) opines that:

Punctuation marks may seem to fall upon a page of writing like insects that lodge in the right spots magically, to help our understanding. But in fact, every tiny bar black dot represents a choice by the writer to emphasize this, to help the progress of that, to pause a moment, to do any number of things.

In the same way, Allen (2002, p. 12) says that "Punctuation has an important role to play in replacing the intonation we would use in speech." In speech humans use their voices not just to express sounds but to express them in certain ways and in certain relationship to one another, giving special emphasis to important words, using intonation and varying the volume of their utterances. In writing, we do not use the voice and we cannot use intonation and volume as a means of making our meaning clear. These roles are taken by punctuation in written form of language.

He further says "Punctuation is to writing and printing what stitching is to a piece of clothing stitches hold a garment together and help to give it its shape, and punctuation in a sense holds together the words on a page". Punctuation helps us to organize our ideas and structure them in proper order through which we can get the meaning clearly.

Perrin (1950, p. 132) puts his views as, "Punctuation marks are one aid toward getting out exact meaning on the page". Punctuation marks help

us to separate words and thoughts through which we can present them distinctly to a reader.

Wares and Wares (1974, p. 25) argue that:

Punctuation is to writing what intonation and pauses are to speaking, just as it is difficult to understand someone who speaks in a monotone and runs words and sentences together. So, it is difficult to follow the meaning of written text that lacks punctuation or is incorrectly punctuated.

Different types of punctuation marks have their own values in writing. They reflect their function in their own ways. Such as, sentence final marks of punctuation function as a boundary marker showing the reader the limits of each complete thought. Punctuation marks within the sentence show the relationship of parts of the sentence to each other and make the writer's meaning clear to the reader.

Finally, I would like to quote Moore (1956, p. 46) "When we write, we are trying somewhat clumsily to put into black marks on white paper all the Kaleidoscopic richness of the human voice and oral delivery". The experienced and skilful writer varies his sentence patterns, chooses words that reflect his meaning. But even the least experienced writer has at his command upon the major devices of writing which help to convey the tone, pace, interrogation, pauses and pitch of the oral speech. For these effects, all the writers must learn the commonly accepted conventions of punctuation.

Thus, a good writer chooses an appropriate punctuation mark to the sentence, clause, phrase and word which helps the writer to represent the flexibility of the human voice.

### 1.1.7 Types of Punctuation Marks

Allen (2002) gives following types of punctuation marks:

- (i) Fullstop ( . )
- (ii) Comma ( , )
- (iii) Semicolon ( ; )
- (iv) Colon ( : )
- (v) Brackets ( ) [ ]
- (vi) Dash ( — )
- (vii) Slash ( / )
- (viii) Question Mark ( ? )
- (ix) Exclamation mark ( ! )
- (x) Quotation marks ( " " )
- (xi) Apostrophe ( ' )
- (xii) Hyphen ( - )
- (xiii) Omission marks ( . . . )
- (xiv) Capital letters

### 1.1.8 Function and Use of Punctuation Marks

#### (i) The Fullstop ( . )

The fullstop is one of the three sentence final marks of punctuation, and the one most commonly used. It has several uses, which are as follows:

- a. To mark the end of sentence when this is a statement:  
e.g. The weather is clear
- b. It is used at the end of indirect question and at the end of polite request made in the form of the question.:  
e.g. The committee asked when the next meeting will be held.  
Would you kindly send me five copies of this book.

- c. It is used in abbreviations :  
e.g. K. L. Pike, Ph.D.
- d. It is used without parentheses after numbers or letters used to indicate items in a vertical list. e.g.
 

1. Verbs	A. Book
2. Nouns	B. Copy

**(ii) The Comma ( , )**

Comma is the most frequently used mark of internal punctuation. It indicates the smallest interruption in continuity of thought or sentence structure. It has several uses which are as follows:

- a. The comma is used to separate elements in series consisting of three or more units.  
e.g. He had apples, peaches, and pears in his basket.
- b. a direct speech is orderly set up commas.  
e.g. Hari said to me, "the earth is round".
- c. Main clauses joined with a coordinating conjunction (and, but, or, nor, for, get and so) are usually separated with a comma.  
e.g. The patrol planes were delayed by a heavy rain, and they barely had enough fuel to get back to the carrier.  
Exception : In short compound sentences, the comma is usually omitted  
e.g. I caught the morning train but my neighbour missed it.

**(iii) The Semicolon ( ; )**

The semicolon is used to mark and division in thought some what greater than that represented by a comma and some what smaller than that

represented by a period. It may indicate that two statements are separate units grammatically, but single unit logically. It has several uses, which are as follows:

- a. The semicolon is used to separate two independent clauses when the conjunction is omitted.  
e.g. The books were there on the table; only the papers had disappeared.
- b. It is used to separate elements of a series when the elements themselves contain commas.  
e.g. From all parts of the country - From Ilam, Jhapa; from Palpa, Baitadi; and from Surkhet.

#### **(iv) The Colon ( : )**

The colon marks a discontinuity of thought greater than that indicated by the semicolon and less than that indicated by the period. It has several uses, which are as follows:

- a. It is used before concrete illustrations of a general statement.  
e.g. The day was sunny: the sun shone, the birds sang, the flowers sent forth their fragrance.
- b. It is used to introduce a list, or series:  
There are seven days in a week. e.g.  
(1) Sunday (3) Tuesday (5) Thursday (7) Saturday  
(2) Monday (4) Wednesday (6) Friday

#### **(v) The Brackets ( ) [ ]**

Brackets are used to add an explanation or extra comment. Material not essential to sense or construction of a sentence may be included in brackets. It has several uses which are as follows:

- a. Parenthesis brackets are used to set off amplifying explanatory or digressive elements.  
e.g. The agent showed us a smaller house (It had only four rooms), but the cost was still beyond our means.
- b. Squire brackets are used chiefly as parentheses, within parentheses for an interpretation in a quotation.  
e.g. "It [the institution of private property] is in our time under attack in most parts of the world".

#### **(vi) The Dash ( — )**

- a. Dashes may be used to denote interruptions, hesitations, or abrupt changes in sentence structures.  
e.g. The binoculars – Where did you put them ?
- b. Dash may be used instead of parentheses to set off matter within the sentence.  
e.g. When John struck at the snake — it was big.

#### **(vii) The Slash ( / )**

Slash is also called oblique.

- a. It is used to mark alternatives to or in certain contexts. e.g.

Dear Sir/Madam

Name of parents / guardian

he/she

- b. It is used in some abbreviations.  
e.g. km/h [Kilometres per hours]
- c. It is used to show arrange of places or dates. e.g.  
The tourism year 2011/12  
The London / Paris flight.

**(viii) The Question Mark ( ? )**

- a. The question mark indicates that the sentence that precedes it is interrogative or it asks a question.  
  
e.g. What does it matter ?
- b. It is used at the end of an interrogative sentence.  
e.g. What will he do next ?

**(ix) The Exclamation mark ( ! )**

It is used to show in writing something that is normally said loudly or strongly in speech.

- a. It is used to attract attention.  
e.g. John ! where are you ?
- b. It is used to give a command or warning.  
e.g. Do as I say !  
or watch out !



### **(x) The Quotation marks ( " " )**

They are also called inverted commas. Their chief role is to indicate speech and quotations, in which words used by someone else are quoted in their original form.

a. It is used in direct speech.

e.g. He said, "I'm happy".

b. Words used in special senses or for special purposes are sometimes set off by quotation marks.

e.g. He referred to me as "briar hopper".

Is this what you call "functional" architecture.

### **(xi) The Apostrophe ( ' )**

It is used to show a possessive form and to mark letters that have been omitted in forms as contraction. e.g.

Mary's hair.

I'm happy.

### **(xii) The Hyphen ( - )**

The hyphen is used to play linking role at word and phrase level.

a. It is used to form compound words.

e.g. Table - lamp.

Mouse - plant

b. It is used to avoid an ambiguous union of letters.

e.g. re-enter, re-address

pre-election

- c. It is used to form compound numbers.  
e.g. twenty-nine, Fifty-five

### **(xiii) The Omission marks ( . . . )**

Omission marks are series of dots to show that something has been left out. It is used to show that word or words have been omitted from a quotation. So as to make it shorter. e.g.

Others . . . comforted themselves with homely proverbs that, being hanged at all, they might as well be changed for a sheep as a lamb.

### **(xiv) The Capital letters**

The capital letters are used in the following situations:

- a. Beginning of the sentences:  
An initial capital is used for the first word of a sentence.  
e.g. My brother is six years old.
- b. Proper nouns  
Initial capitals are used for proper nouns - Such as the name of:
- |                   |   |                                  |
|-------------------|---|----------------------------------|
| a person          | - | <u>G</u> opal, <u>S</u> ita      |
| a country         | - | <u>N</u> epal, <u>A</u> merica   |
| a day of the week | - | <u>T</u> uesday, <u>F</u> riday  |
| a month           | - | <u>A</u> pril, <u>N</u> ovember  |
| a town or city    | - | <u>K</u> athmandu                |
| a language        | - | <u>N</u> epali, <u>E</u> nglish  |
| a race            | - | <u>N</u> epalese, <u>A</u> sians |
| a festival        | - | <u>C</u> hristmas etc.           |
- c. The Deity:

Initial capitals are used for names of the deity

e.g. God, the Almighty, Allah

d. Adjectives from proper nouns:

Adjectives from proper nouns begin with a capital letter.

e.g. Chinese, Indian

e. Family relationships - such as father, mother, uncle, aunt etc.

e.g. I hope Uncle will not be too late, because

Grandmother is rather tired, and so is Father.

f. Personal titles

Use initial capitals for a personal title alone or with proper name.

e.g. Well, Doctor, Is my sister better ?

Queen Elizabeth, King George

(Source: Gordon, 1978)

### **1.1.9 Error Analysis**

Error analysis is a branch of applied linguistics which refers to the systematic study and analysis of the errors committed by the L<sub>2</sub> learners.

Corder (1981, p. 18) says that "erroneous are those which are the result of some failure of performance". Sometimes learners can commit errors due to the minor reasons. These may contain slips of the tongue, slips of the pen, false starts, changes of mind and so on. But sometimes they may commit errors due to incomplete knowledge of the target language.

Crystal (1980, p. 165) points out that "error analysis is a technique for identifying, classifying and systematically interpreting the unacceptable forms produced by someone, learning a foreign language". Thus, it helps to identify the errors committed by the learners and classify them

according to their nature. In the same way, Ellis (1994, p. 48) says that "Error analysis provided a methodology for investigating learner language". It is carried out to find out how well someone knows a language, to identify the causes of learners errors and to obtain information on common difficulties in language learning and it gives information about how a person learns a language.

### **1.1.9.1 Steps of Errors Analysis**

Error analysis is a systematic procedure. One has to follow the steps in order to carry out error analysis. Ellis (1994, p. 48) has given following steps of error analysis.

- i. Collection of sample of learner language.
- ii. Identification of errors.
- iii. Description of errors.
- iv. Explanation of errors.
- v. Evaluation of errors.

#### **i. Collection of sample of learner language**

Collection of a sample of learner language is the first step of EA. In this stage, different data are collected from the learners. Learner can present answers on the basis of his own experience of using the target language. So that clear statements can be made regarding what kind of errors the learners produced and under what conditions.

#### **ii. Identification of errors**

After collecting the data, we have to identify the errors. That is to say, we should find out whether the deviation is error or mistake, whether it is major or minor one and so on. Ellis (1994, p. 51) says that "An error can

be defined as a deviation from the norms of the target language". An error takes place when the deviation arises as a result of lack of knowledge. A mistake occurs when learners fail to perform their competence. Minor mistakes are those which include the language deviation due to the some organic defects, tongue slip, pen slip, false starts and so on. On the other hand major mistakes refer to such deviation which involve serious breaking of grammatical rules.

### **iii. Description of errors**

After finding out the errors, we have to describe and classify the errors according to their nature. Errors can be described and classified differently on the basis of various criteria. Such as, group and individual, productive or receptive, interlingual or intralingual, overt or covert, local or global errors and so on.

### **iv. Explanation of errors**

This is the fourth stage of error analysis. This stage is the most important for SLA research as it involves an attempt to establish the processes responsible for L<sub>2</sub> acquisition. Ellis (1994, p. 57) says that "explanation is concerned with establishing the source of the error, i.e. accounting for why it was made". There are several sources which are responsible to commit the errors. Such as, L<sub>1</sub> interference, over generalization, hyper-correction, erroneous input, analogical creation etc.

### **v. Evaluation of errors**

This is the last stage of error analysis. Evaluation of errors refers to the determination of seriousness of errors. The seriousness of error is also termed as 'error gravity'. The greater the degree of error gravity, the more

serious the error tends to be. Some errors affect the whole communication while some errors normally affect the process of communication.

Ellis (1994, p. 67) says that "The same error may be evaluated very differently depending on who made it and where, when and how it was made." Thus, error evaluation is directly influenced by the context in which the errors occurred.

### **1.1.9.2 Errors Related to the Punctuation**

In English punctuation plays a vital role to make the meaning clear among the readers. Inappropriate use of punctuation can mislead the reader while reading. To make our writing meaningful we have to use the punctuation marks properly. Thus error related to the punctuation are called the errors in the use of punctuation marks in written text.

Generally, learners make three types of punctuation errors. Such as, firstly, they may commit errors by leaving out the required punctuation mark to be used. It is also called omission of required punctuation mark. e.g. 'I'd love too but I have to go another place'. The correct form of this sentence is 'I'd love too but I have to go another place'. Secondly, they may commit error by using punctuation mark unnecessarily. In other words, they may use punctuation mark where it is not necessary e.g. 'I am fine and what about you ?' The correct form is 'I am fine and what about you ?' Thirdly, they may commit error by using punctuation mark inappropriately. It is also called wrong use or they may use one punctuation instead of another e.g. 'I am fine and what about you.' The correct form of this sentence is 'I am fine and what about you ?'

## 1.2 Review of the Related Literature

A lot of researches have been carried out in the field of error analysis, specially related to the writing skill as well as grammatical items all around the world. But the attitude towards English language teaching and writing skill changes day by day. In the same way, nature of the errors and use of particular item or convention also changed according to the contemporary situation. Some of the researches carried out on error analysis specially related to the punctuation as well as grammatical items which are related to the present study are as follows:

Shrestha (1980) carried out a research entitled "A study of errors in the use of the prepositions made by grade x students of English having Nepali and Newari as a first language". The main objective of his research work was : to study the influences of the mother tongue of Nepali and Newari speaking students in using English preposition correctly. He used both primary and secondary sources of data collection. He selected 36 students of the tenth grade by using lottery system. He used test item to collect required information. He came to the conclusion that the mother tongue background does not matter in the acquisition of English preposition.

Bhattarai (2001) carried out a research on 'the use of punctuation in free writing'. The objectives of his research work were to establish hierarchies of punctuation marks used in free writing, to establish hierarchies of errors on the use of punctuation marks, and to suggest some pedagogical implications. He used both primary and secondary sources for the collection of required data. He selected 120 students of twelfth grade for the study. The main research tool for the data collection was a

questionnaire. After analysing and interpreting the data, he found that only eleven items of punctuation were found to be erroneously used.

Similarly, Khatri (2001) carried out a research on 'a study of errors in punctuation committed by x<sup>th</sup> graders'. His objectives of the study were: to identify the errors in the use of punctuation marks committed by x<sup>th</sup> graders, to determine the frequency of errors, and to suggest some pedagogical implications. He used both primary and secondary sources of data collection. He selected 180 students of x<sup>th</sup> grade of Dolakha district. He used subjective test as a major tool for data collection. He came to the conclusion that the students tended to commit more errors in the use of punctuation marks in free writing than in guided writing.

Ghimire (2005) carried out research on the 'Grey areas in English Grammar, Spelling and Punctuation'. His objectives of the study were: to determine grey area of grammar, spelling and punctuation in terms of sex, profession, age and nationality variables, to find out the frequency of occurrence of the alternate items in each grey area, and to suggest some pedagogical implications. He used both primary and secondary sources for data collection. He selected 58 native speakers of different nationalities in Kathmandu valley. A structured questionnaire was the main tool for data collection. He concluded that Nepalese students preferred the use of single to double inverted commas and inside fullstop to outside fullstop with inverted commas.

Bista (2009) carried out a research "Errors in the use of punctuation". The objectives of her research work were : to find out the frequency of punctuation errors committed by the students in guided and free writing, to compare the frequency of punctuation errors between: Male students Vs female students, students from English background Vs. from non



English background and to suggest some pedagogical implications. She utilized both primary and secondary sources for data collection. The total sample of her study were 100 students of eleventh grade. She used both random and non random sampling procedure. She used test item for guided and free writing as a tool for data collection and found that non-English background students committed more errors in guided writing than in free writing but English background students committed less errors in guided writing than in free writing.

Besides this, several other studies have been carried out on error analysis especially related to the writing skill but no study has been done to find out the proficiency of the secondary level students, specially ninth graders on the use of punctuation marks. So, the researcher claims that the present study is different from others in terms of objectives, class, methodology, research tool, marking scheme, findings and recommendations.

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of the present study were as follows:

- i) to find out the total use, correct use and erroneous use of punctuation marks.
- ii) to compare boys and girls in terms of
  - total use of punctuation marks,
  - correct use of punctuation marks and
  - erroneous use of punctuation marks.
- iii) to suggest some pedagogical implications.

## **1.4 Significance of the Study**

Writing is one the important skills of language through which we can exchange our ideas, feelings, emotions and information from one person to another, one place to another. It makes the use of graphics i.e. written symbols like letters of the alphabet. We can get freedom in writing to select subject matter, put our ideas, to organize those ideas in proper order and to provide clear reflection among the readers. Thus, to make the students perfect in writing skill, present syllabus of the secondary level included different writing exercises in each unit. The students need to construct short sentences as well as long essays to complete those writing exercises. Writing includes various grammatical systems, punctuation conventions and paragraph divisions. Punctuation is one of the key mechanics of the writing which plays a very important role to make the writing meaningful. If we are unable to use appropriate punctuation marks, it will mislead the reader while reading.

This study gives short introduction of all the punctuation marks that may be reference materials, for students, teachers and others. It points out the correct use; total use and erroneous use of punctuation marks which can be foundation for further study in this field. The findings and recommendations of this study will be fruitful for students teachers, textbook writers, syllabus designers and others who are involved in the English language teaching and learning. More specifically, the present study will be significant to the secondary level students, teachers, text book writers and syllabus designers.

## **1.5 Definition of Terms**

**Proficiency :** The term 'proficiency' refers to the ability of students in using the punctuation marks appropriately or correctly in their written work.

**Erroneous:** The term 'erroneous', in this study, refers to the inappropriate, no use and over use of punctuation marks. In other words, 'erroneous' refers to the use of one punctuation marks instead of another, omission of punctuation mark and unnecessary use of punctuation mark.

**Written Work :** Here, the term 'written work' refers to the work of writer anything expressed in letters of the alphabet, especially it refers to the guided writing.

**Punctuation Marks :** The term 'punctuation marks' refers to individual punctuation marks. e.g. fullstop, comma, etc.

## **CHAPTER - TWO**

### **METHODOLOGY**

This chapter deals with the systematic procedures adopted during the study. The methodology adopted to conduct this study was as follows:

#### **2.1 Sources of Data**

The researcher used both primary and secondary sources of data to conduct this study. The primary source was used for collecting data and secondary sources were used to facilitate those data.

##### **2.1.1 Primary Sources of Data**

Primary sources of this study were eighty students of the ninth grade from four different schools of Baitadi district. Such as: Sigash Secondary School Museraute, Rauleshwar Secondary School Kalagaun, Janata Secondary School Arubata, Saraswati Higher Secondary School Sellebasa, Baitadi.

##### **2.1.2 Secondary Sources of Data**

While carrying out this research, different books, journals, articles, theses and websites related to the present research were utilized as a secondary sources of this study. Some of them were Partridge (1953), Moore (1956), Wares and Wares (1974), Gordon (1978), Meyers (1986), Allen (2002), Carter and McCarthy (2006), etc.

#### **2.2 Sample and Sampling Procedure**

The total sample of the study was eighty students of ninth grade from different schools of Baitadi district. The researcher applied both random and non-random sampling procedure to select required number of schools

and sample population. He used judgemental non-random sampling procedure to select four public schools and simple random sampling procedure for sample population. Under this, first of all, he took the list of total number of students of ninth grade from each school. Then, he prepared two separate lists of boys and girls of each school. At last the researcher used fishbowl drawing technique to select 50% boys and 50% girls from each school.

### **2.3 Tools for Data Collection**

Test item was the major tool for data collection. The researcher used the test item for written work (guided writing) as given in appendix 1.

### **2.4 Process of Data Collection**

The researcher adopted the following processes to collect the data:

- i. At first, he collected the names of the schools. Then, he selected 4 public schools by using judgemental non-random sampling procedure.
- ii. After the selection of schools, he visited the respective schools one by one.
- iii. He requested the school authority (head teacher) for sample population.
- iv. He took the list of the students and selected the required sample population by using simple random sampling procedure.
- v. Then, he established a rapport with the school authority and sample population.
- vi. He made them clear about the purpose and significance of the study.
- vii. After that, he administered the test items to collect required information.

- viii. Finally, he checked the answer sheets focusing on the punctuation marks.

## **2.5 Limitations of the Study**

The researcher carried out the present research within the following limitations:

- i. This study was limited to only 4 public schools of Baitadi district.
- ii. Only 80 students of ninth grade were the sample population.
- iii. Out of 80, 50% were boys and 50% were girls.
- iv. The test item was pre-determined.
- v. Only total correct and erroneous use of punctuation marks were taken into account while checking the answer sheets.
- vi. Only following eleven punctuation marks were taken for the study:
  - a. Fullstop ( . )
  - b. Comma ( , )
  - c. Colon ( : )
  - d. Parenthesis ( )
  - e. Slash ( / )
  - f. Question Mark ( ? )
  - g. Exclamation mark ( ! )
  - h. Quotation mark ( " " )
  - i. Apostrophe ( ' )
  - j. Hyphen ( - )
  - k. Capital letters

## **CHAPTER - THREE**

### **ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

This chapter deals with the analysis and interpretation of the data obtained from primary sources. To make the research study more reliable and convenient, this chapter is divided into seven sections. The first section deals with the holistic analysis of the data, second section deals with the example sentences, third section deals with analysis of total punctuation marks, fourth section deals with the analysis of proficiency, fifth section deals with the analysis of erroneously used punctuation marks, sixth section deals with itemwise analysis of punctuations and seventh section deals with the comparison between male and female students in terms of total, correct and erroneous use of punctuation marks. Fifth and sixth sections are accompanied by different sub-sections and all sections are accompanied along with tables, charts and quantitative data.

#### **3.1 Holistic Analysis**

This section deals with the holistic analysis and interpretation of correct, erroneous and total punctuation marks used by the students. It includes holistic frequency of each individual punctuation marks. Correct use of punctuation includes those punctuation marks which were correctly used by the students. Erroneous use of punctuation marks includes those punctuation which were inappropriately used by the students and total use of punctuation includes both correctly and inappropriately used punctuation marks. This is presented in the following table:

**Table No. 1**

**Holistic analysis of punctuation marks**

S.N.	Sex	Full stop			Comma			Apostrophe			Question marks			Quotation mark			Slash			Parenthesis			Exclamation			Colon			Capitalization			Hyphen		
		CU	EU	TU	CU	EU	TU	CU	EU	TU	CU	EU	TU	CU	EU	TU	CU	EU	TU	CU	EU	TU	CU	EU	TU	CU	EU	TU	CU	EU	TU	CU	EU	TU
1	Male	710	616	1326	119	456	575	458	321	779	115	148	263	33	149	182	8	32	40	3	40	43	23	119	142	38	79	117	202	89	291	7	43	50
2	Female	556	679	1235	105	504	609	270	452	722	97	170	267	27	151	178	5	31	36	4	39	43	21	98	119	21	98	119	181	81	262	3	39	42
3	Grand Total	1266	1295	2561	224	960	1184	728	773	1501	212	318	530	60	60	300	13	63	76	7	79	86	44	217	261	59	177	236	383	170	553	10	82	92



The above table shows the summary of all the analysis of correct, erroneous and total punctuation marks used by the students of ninth grade. Seven hundred and ten fullstops, 119 commas, 458 apostrophes, 115 question marks, 33 question marks, 8 slashes, 3 pretheseses, 23 exclamation marks, 38 colon, 202 capital letters and 7 hyphens were correctly used by the male students. On the contrary, 616 fullstops, 456 commas, 321 apostrophe, 148 question marks, 149 quotation marks, 32 slashes, 40 parentheses, 119 exclamation marks, 79 colons, 89 capital letters and 43 hyphens were erroneously used by the male students. One thousand three hundred and twenty-six fullstops, 575 commas, 779 apostrophes, 263 question marks, 182 quotation marks, 40 slashes, 43 parentheses, 142 exclamation marks, 117 colons, 191 capital letters and 50 hyphens were totally used by the male students.

In the same way, 556 fullstops, 105 commas, 270 apostrophe, 97 question marks, 27 quotation marks, 5 slashes, 4 parentheses, 21 exclamation marks, 21 colons, 181 capital letters and 3 hyphens were correctly used by the female students. On the contrary, 679 fullstops, 504 commas, 452 apostrophes, 170 question marks, 151 quotation marks, 31 slashes, 39 parentheses, 98 exclamation marks, 98 colons, 81 capital letters and 39 hyphens were erroneously used by the female students. One thousand two hundred and thirty-five fullstops, 609 commas, 772 apostrophe, 267 question marks, 178 quotation marks, 36 slashes, 43 parentheses, 119 exclamation marks, 119 colons, 262 capital letters and 42 hyphens were totally used by the female students.

Thus, 2561 fullstops, 1184 commas, 1501 apostrophe, 530 question marks, 360 quotation marks, 76 slashes, 86 parentheses, 261 exclamation marks, 236 colons, 553 capital letters and 92 hyphens were totally used

by the total students. In the same way, 1266 fullstops, 224 commas, 728 apostrophe, 212 question marks, 60 quotation marks, 13 slashes, 7 parentheses, 44 exclamation marks, 59 colons, 383 capital letters and 10 hyphens were correctly used by the total students. One thousand two hundred and ninety-five fullstops, 960 commas, 773 apostrophe, 318 question marks, 300 quotation marks, 63 slashes, 39 parentheses, 217 exclamation marks, 177 colons, 170 capital letters and 82 hyphens were erroneously used by the students of ninth grade.

### **3.2 Example Sentences**

This section deals with the example sentences of eleven punctuation marks which were taken from the answer sheets of the students. In other words, it includes example sentences of correctly and erroneously used punctuation marks. They are as follows:

#### **i. Fullstop**

Correct: A hungry wolf was walking along the bank of a river.

Erroneous : A hungry wolf was walking along the bank of a river

#### **ii. Comma**

Correct: The wolf asked the lamb, "Why are you making the water dirty ? "

Erroneous : The wolf asked the lamb. "Why are you making the water dirty ?"

#### **iii. Apostrophe**

Correct: It isn't as though we will be alone.

Erroneous : It isnt as though we will be alone.

**iv. Question Mark**

Correct: What's wrong ?

Erroneous : What's wrong

**v. Quotation Mark**

Correct: He said, "then it must have been your father."

Erroneous : He said, then it must have been your father.

**vi. Slash**

Correct: Dear Aunt / My dear aunt,

Erroneous : Dear Aunt My dear aunt,

**vii. Parenthesis**

Correct: We will finish our badminton at about 11:30 (half passed eleven).

Erroneous : We will finish our badminton at about 11:30 half passed eleven.

**viii. Exclamation Mark**

Correct: Hello ! It's me, Amit.

Erroneous : Hello it's me, Amit

**ix. Colon**

Correct: We will finish our badminton at about 11:30.

Erroneous : We will finish our badminton at about 1130.

**x. Capitalization**

Correct: How are you ?

Erroneous : how are you ?

**xi. Hyphen**

Correct: My father won't let me go on an outing with twenty-three other friends.

Erroneous : My father won't let me go on an outing with twenty three other friends.

**3.3 Analysis of Total Punctuation Marks**

This section deals with the analysis and interpretation of all the punctuation marks used by the total informants. In other words, the total frequency of each individual punctuation marks (i.e. fullstop, comma, etc.) used by the eighty students of grade nine. The total number refers to the correct and erroneous use of punctuation marks. To find out the total number of punctuation marks, the following formula was used:

Total use of punctuation marks = Correct use + Erroneous use of punctuation marks

This is presented with the help of the following table:

**Table No. 2**  
**Analysis of total punctuation marks**

Items of punctuation	Frequency	Percentage
Fullstop	1266+1295=2661	34.42
Comma	224+960=1184	15.91
Apostrophe	728+773=1501	20.17

Question mark	212+318=530	7.12
Quotation mark	60+300=360	4.83
Slash	13+63=76	1.02
Parenthesis	7+79=86	1.19
Exclamation mark	44+217=261	3.51
Colon	59+177=236	3.17
Capitalization	383+170=553	7.43
Hyphen	10+82=92	1.23
Total	7,440	100

The above table shows 34.42% fullstop, 15.91% commas, 20.17% apostrophe, 7.12% question marks, 4.43% quotation marks, 1.02% slashes, 1.19% parentheses, 3.51% exclamation marks, 3.17% colons, 7.43% capital letters and 1.23% hyphens were totally used by the total informants.

Thus, the highest number of fullstop and the lowest number of slashes were used. In between them, apostrophe, comma, capital letters, question mark, quotation mark, exclamation mark, colon, hyphen and parenthesis were found in the second third, fourth and so on respectively.

### **3.4 Analysis of Correctly Used Punctuation Marks**

This section deals with the analysis and interpretation of different items of punctuation which were correctly used by the total informants. This is presented with the help of the following table:

**Table No. 3**

#### **Analysis of correctly used punctuation marks**

Items of punctuation	Frequency	Percentage
Fullstop	1266	42.12

Comma	224	7.45
Apostrophe	728	24.22
Question mark	212	7.05
Quotation mark	60	1.99
Slash	13	0.43
Parenthesis	7	0.23
Exclamation mark	44	1.46
Colon	59	1.26
Capitalization	383	12.74
Hyphen	10	0.33
Total	3,006	100

The above table shows 42.12% fullstop, 7.45% comma, 24.22% apostrophe, 7.05% question mark, 1.99% quotation mark, 0.43% slash, 0.23% parenthesis, 1.46% exclamation mark, 1.96% colon, 12.74% capital letters and 0.33% hyphen were correctly used by the students.

### **3.5 Analysis of Erroneously Used Punctuation Marks**

This section deals with the analysis and interpretation of erroneously used punctuation marks by the students of ninth grade. It includes the punctuation marks which were inappropriately used, missed out and unnecessarily used by the students. This is presented with the help of the following table:

**Table No. 4**  
**Analysis of erroneously used punctuation marks**

Items of punctuation	Frequency	Percentage
Fullstop	4295	29.21
Comma	960	21.65

Apostrophe	773	17.43
Question mark	318	7.17
Quotation mark	300	6.77
Slash	63	1.42
Parenthesis	79	1.78
Exclamation mark	217	4.89
Colon	177	3.99
Capitalization	170	3.83
Hyphen	82	1.85
Total	4434	100

The above table shows 29.21% fullstop, 21.65% comma, 17.43% apostrophe, 7.17% question mark, 6.77% quotation mark, 1.42% slash, 1.78% parenthesis, 4.89% exclamation mark, 3.99% colon, 3.83% capital letters and 1.85% hyphen were used erroneously by the students.

### 3.6 Itemwise Analysis of Punctuations

This section deals with the itemwise analysis and interpretation of punctuation used by the students.

#### 3.6.1 Fullstop

**Table No. 5**

**Correct, erroneous and total used fullstops**

S.N.	Sex	Correct %	Erroneous %	Total %
1	Male	9.54	8.23	17.82
2	Female	7.47	9.13	16.59

The above table shows that in the use of fullstop, 6.54% were correctly used, 8.28% were erroneously and 17.82% were totally used by the male

students. Similarly, 7.47% were correctly used, 9.13% were erroneously used and 16.59% were totally used by the female students.

### 3.6.2 Comma

**Table No. 6**

**Correct, erroneous and total used commas**

S.N.	Sex	Correct %	Erroneous %	Total %
1	Male	1.60	6.12	7.72
2	Female	1.41	6.77	8.18

The above table shows that in the use of comma, 1.60% were correctly used, 6.12% were erroneously and 7.72% were totally used by the male students. Similarly, 1.41% were correctly used, 6.77% were erroneously used and 8.18% were totally used by the female students.

### 3.6.3 Apostrophe

**Table No. 7**

**Correct, erroneous and total used apostrophes**

S.N.	Sex	Correct %	Erroneous %	Total %
1	Male	6.16	4.31	10.47
2	Female	3.63	6.07	9.7

The above table shows that in the use of apostrophe, 6.16% were correctly used, 4.3% were erroneously and 10.47% were totally used by the male students. Similarly, 3.63% were correctly used, 6.07% were erroneously used and 9.70% were totally used by the female students.



### 3.6.4 Question Mark

**Table No. 8**

**Correct, erroneous and total used question marks**

S.N.	Sex	Correct %	Erroneous %	Total %
1	Male	1.55	1.99	3.54
2	Female	1.30	2.28	3.38

The above table shows that in the use of question mark, 1.55% were correctly used, 1.99% were erroneously and 3.54% were totally used by the male students. Similarly, 1.30% were correctly used, 2.28% were erroneously used and 3.38% were totally used by the female students.

### 3.6.5 Quotation Mark

**Table No. 9**

**Correct, erroneous and total used quotation marks**

S.N.	Sex	Correct %	Erroneous %	Total %
1	Male	0.44	2.00	2.44
2	Female	0.36	2.02	2.38

The above table shows that in the use of quotation mark, 0.44% were correctly used, 2.00% were erroneously and 2.44% were totally used by the male students. Similarly, 0.36% were correctly used, 2.02% were erroneously used and 2.38% were totally used by the female students.

### 3.6.6 Slash

**Table No. 10**

**Correct, erroneous and total used slashes**

S.N.	Sex	Correct %	Erroneous %	Total %
1	Male	0.10	0.43	0.53
2	Female	0.06	0.41	0.47

The above table shows that in the use of slash, 0.10% were correctly used, 0.43% were erroneously and 0.53% were totally used by the male students. Similarly, 0.06% were correctly used, 0.41% were erroneously used and 0.47% were totally used by the female students.

### 3.6.7 Parenthesis

**Table No. 11**

**Correct, erroneous and total used parentheses**

S.N.	Sex	Correct %	Erroneous %	Total %
1	Male	0.04	0.53	0.57
2	Female	0.05	0.52	0.57

The above table shows that in the use of parenthesis, 0.04% were correctly used, 0.53% were erroneously and 0.57% were totally used by the male students. Similarly, 0.05% were correctly used, 0.52% were erroneously used and 0.57% were totally used by the female students.

### 3.6.8 Exclamation Mark

**Table No. 12**

#### **Correct, erroneous and total used exclamation marks**

S.N.	Sex	Correct %	Erroneous %	Total %
1	Male	0.30	1.59	1.89
2	Female	0.28	1.31	1.59

The above table shows that in the use of exclamation mark, 0.30% were correctly used, 1.59% were erroneously and 1.89% were totally used by the male students. Similarly, 0.28% were correctly used, 1.31% were erroneously used and 1.59% were totally used by the female students.

### 3.6.9 Colon

**Table No. 13**

#### **Correct, erroneous and total used colons**

S.N.	Sex	Correct %	Erroneous %	Total %
1	Male	0.51	1.06	1.57
2	Female	0.28	1.31	1.59

The above table shows that in the use of colon, 0.51% were correctly used, 1.06% were erroneously and 1.57% were totally used by the male students. Similarly, 0.28% were correctly used, 1.31% were erroneously used and 1.59% were totally used by the female students.

### 3.6.10 Capitalization

**Table No. 14**

#### **Correct, erroneous and total used capitalization**

S.N.	Sex	Correct %	Erroneous %	Total %
1	Male	2.71	1.19	3.90
2	Female	2.43	1.08	3.51

The above table shows that in the use of capital letters, 2.71% were correctly used, 1.19% were erroneously and 3.90% were totally used by the male students. Similarly, 2.43% were correctly used, 1.08% were erroneously used and 3.51% were totally used by the female students.

### 3.6.11 Hyphen

**Table No. 15**

#### **Correct, erroneous and total used hyphens**

S.N.	Sex	Correct %	Erroneous %	Total %
1	Male	0.09	0.57	0.66
2	Female	0.04	0.52	0.56

The above table shows that in the use of hyphen, 0.09% were correctly used, 0.57% were erroneously and 0.66% were totally used by the male students. Similarly, 0.04% were correctly used, 0.52% were erroneously used and 0.56% were totally used by the female students.

### 3.7 Comparison between Male and Female Students

This section deals with the comparison between male and female students in terms of correct, erroneous and total used punctuation marks.

#### 3.7.1 Comparison Between Male and Female Interms of Correctly Used Punctuation Marks

This sub-section deals with the comparison between male and female students in terms of correctly used punctuation marks. This is presented with the help of the following table:

**Table No. 16**  
**Comparison between male and female in terms of correctly used punctuation marks**

Items of punctuation	Frequency		Percentage		Difference
	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Fullstop	710	556	23.61	18.49	M (5.12%) > F
Comma	119	105	3.95	3.49	M (0.46%) > F
Apostrophe	458	270	15.23	8.98	M (6.25%) > F
Question mark	115	97	3.82	3.22	M (0.6%) > F
Quotation mark	33	27	1.09	0.89	M (0.2%) > F
Slash	8	5	0.26	0.16	M (0.1%) > F
Parenthesis	3	4	0.09	0.13	M < F (0.04%)
Exclamation mark	23	21	0.76	0.69	M (0.07%) > F
Colon	38	21	1.26	0.69	M (0.57%) > F
Capitalization	202	181	6.71	6.02	M (0.69%) > F
Hyphen	7	3	0.23	0.09	M (0.14%) > F
Total	1716	1290	57.01	42.88	

The above table shows the comparison between male and female students in terms of correctly used punctuation marks.

About twenty four percent fullstop, 3.95% comma, 15.23% apostrophe, 3.82% question mark, 1.09% quotation mark, 0.26% slash, 0.09% parenthesis, 0.76% exclamation mark, 1.26% colon, 6.71% capital letters and 0.23% hyphen were correctly used by the male students.

In the same way, 18.49% fullstop, 3.49% comma, 8.98% apostrophe, 3.22% question mark, 0.89% quotation mark, 0.16% slash, 0.13% parenthesis, 0.69% exclamation mark, 0.69% colon, 6.02% capitalization and 0.09% hyphen were correctly used by the female students.

Thus, male students used 5.12% fullstop, 0.46% comma, 6.25% apostrophe, 0.6% question mark, 0.2% quotation mark, 0.1% slash, 0.07% exclamation mark, 0.527% colon, 0.69% capitalization and 0.14% hyphen more correctly than the female students.

In the same way, female students used 0.04% parenthesis more correctly than the male students.

### **3.7.2 Comparison Between Male and Female Students Interms of Erroneously Used Punctuation Marks**

This sub section deals with the comparison between male and female students in terms of erroneously used punctuation marks. This is presented with the help of the following table:

**Table No. 17**  
**Comparison between male and female students in terms of**  
**erroneously used punctuation marks**

Items of punctuation	Frequency		Percentage		Difference
	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Fullstop	616	679	13.89	15.31	Male < Female (1.42%)
Comma	456	504	10.28	11.36	Male < Female (1.08%)
Apostrophe	321	452	7.23	10.19	Male < Female (2.96%)
Question mark	148	170	3.33	3.83	Male < Female (0.5%)
Quotation mark	149	151	3.36	3.40	Male < Female (0.04%)
Slash	32	31	0.72	0.69	Male (0.03%) > Female
Parenthesis	40	39	0.90	0.874	Male (0.03%) > Female
Exclamation mark	119	98	2.68	2.21	Male (0.47%) > Female
Colon	79	98	1.78	2.21	Male < Female (0.43%)
Capitalization	89	81	2.00	1.82	Male (0.18%) > Female
Hyphen	43	39	0.96	0.87	Male (0.09%) > Female
Total	2092	2342	47.13	52.76	

The above table shows the comparison between male and female students in terms of erroneously used punctuation marks.

About fourteen percent fullstop, 10.28% comma, 7.23% apostrophe, 3.33% question mark, 3.36% quotation mark, 0.72% slash, 0.90% parenthesis, 2.68% exclamation mark, 1.78% colon, 2.00% capitalization and 0.96% hyphen were used erroneously by the male students.

In the same way, 15.31% fullstop, 11.36% comma, 10.19% apostrophe, 3.83% question mark, 3.40% quotation mark, 0.69% slash, 0.87%

parenthesis, 2.21% exclamation mark, 2.21% colon, 1.82% capitalization and 0.87% hyphen were used erroneously by the female students.

Thus, male students used, 0.03% slash, 0.03% parenthesis, 0.47% exclamation mark, 0.18%, capitalization and 0.09% hyphen more erroneously than female students.

In the same way, male students used 1.42% fullstop, 1.08% comma, 2.96% apostrophe, 0.5% question mark, 0.04% quotation mark and 0.43% colon less erroneously than the female students.

### **3.7.3 Comparison Between Male and Female Students Interm of Totally Used Punctuation Marks**

This sub-section deals with the comparison between male and female students in terms of totally used punctuation marks. Total used involves correctly used and the erroneously used punctuation marks. This is presented with the help of the following table:

**Table No. 18**  
**Comparison between male and female students in terms of totally used punctuation marks**

Items of punctuation	Frequency		Percentage		Difference
	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Fullstop	1326	1235	17.82	16.59	Male (1.23%) > Female
Comma	575	609	7.73	8.18	Male < Female (0.45%)
Apostrophe	779	722	10.47	9.70	Male (0.77%) > Female
Question mark	263	267	3.53	3.58	Male < Female (0.05%)
Quotation mark	182	178	2.45	2.39	Male (0.06%) > Female
Slash	40	36	0.54	0.48	Male (0.06%) > Female



Parenthesis	43	43	0.58	0.58	Male = Female
Exclamation mark	142	119	1.91	1.59	Male (0.32%) > Female
Colon	117	119	1.57	1.59	Male < Female (0.02%)
Capitalization	291	262	3.91	3.52	Male (0.39%) > Female
Hyphen	50	42	0.67	0.56	Male (0.11%) > Female
Total	3808	3632	51.18	48.76	

The above table shows the comparison between male and female students in terms of totally used punctuation marks. About eighteen percent fullstop, 7.73% comma, 10.47% apostrophe, 35.5% question mark, 2.45% quotation mark, 0.54% slash, 0.58% parenthesis, 1.9% exclamation mark, 1.57% colon, 3.9% capitalization and 0.67% hyphen were totally used by male students. In the same way, 16.59% fullstop, 8.18% comma, 9.70% apostrophe, 3.58% question mark, 2.39% quotation mark, 0.48% slash, 0.58% parenthesis, 1.59% exclamation mark, 1.59% colon, 3.52% capitalization and 0.56% hyphen were totally used by the female students.

Thus, in terms of totality, male students used 1.23% fullstop, 0.77% apostrophe, 0.06 % question mark, 0.06% slash, 0.32% exclamation mark, 0.39% capitalization and 0.11% hyphen more than the female students. In the same way, male students used 0.45% comma, 0.05% question mark, and 0.02% colon less than female students but in the case of parenthesis, both male and female students used equal number.

## **CHAPTER- FOUR**

### **FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Analysis, interpretation and comparison of correct, erroneous and total punctuation marks used by the students of ninth grade were the major concern of this study. The required data were collected by administering test items related to guided writing. The data collected from the students were analyzed, interpreted and compared in previous sections of this study. So, this section deals with the major findings and recommendations of the study.

#### **4.1 Findings**

On the basis of analysis and interpretation of data the following findings have been drawn:

- i. Among eleven punctuation marks, the researcher found that fullstop has the highest frequency (i.e. 34.42% of the total use) and slash has the lowest frequency (i.e. 1.02% of the total use).
- ii. The total frequency of the correct use of punctuation marks was found 3,006, which was 40.40% of the total use.
- iii. The total frequency of the erroneous use of punctuation marks was found 4,434, which was 59.59% of the total use.
- iv. The frequency of the total punctuation marks used by the male students was found 51.78% of the total use.
- v. The frequency of the total punctuation marks used by the female students was found 48.76% of the total use.
- vi. Male students used 23.06% punctuation marks correctly whereas female students used 17.33% correctly. Thus, male students were found more proficient than female students.

- vii. Female students committed more errors than male students. Female students used 31.47% and male students 28.12% punctuation marks erroneously.

## **4.2 Recommendations**

- i. Female students are found less proficient in the use of punctuation marks appropriately than male students. So, they need more encouragement and help to develop writing skill as well as punctuation marks.
- ii. Punctuation marks should be taught along with other skills. e.g. while teaching reading passages, the teacher should make the students aware about the use of punctuation marks.
- iii. Punctuation marks should be prescribed as a separate course while designing the language syllabus.
- iv. To get the perfect mastery over punctuation marks as well as other mechanics of writing, writing skill should be given more priority in language syllabus.
- v. Only 40.40% punctuation marks were correctly used by the students. Thus, to increase the proficiency level of the students, the teacher should provide sufficient amount of time to practice writing activities in the ELT classroom.
- vi. The syllabus designers as well as textbook writers should include appropriate exercises on the use of punctuation marks.
- vii. Punctuation marks should be taught from elementary level. So, that it helps to develop writing skill in the proper way.

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<http://www.blurtit.com/4965069.html>.

## Appendix - I

Stamp of the School .....

### Research Tool

Dear Informants,

This test item is prepared to collect authentic data for the purpose of a research work entitled "A Study on the Use of Punctuation Marks" of the 9<sup>th</sup> graders of Baitadi district to fulfil the Master's degree of Education in English. The present research work is going to be carried out under the direct supervision of Dr. Tapasi Bhattacharya, Reader of the Department of English Education, T.U., Kirtipur, Kathmandu, Nepal. This is not for recording your progress and achievement. So, you are humbly requested to give the information needed in different questions without any hesitation. I promise that your creation will be valuable to me and hope that you will answer all the questions in the following format.

Name: .....

Date:.....

Grade: Nine (9<sup>th</sup>)

Time: 1:30 hrs.

School: .....

District: .....

Full Marks: 50

Sex: Male / Female

Pass Marks: 16

Q.N.1. This is a story of the wolf and the lamb. Fill in the blank spaces with your own words or sentences and appropriate punctuation marks to construct a readable story. (15)

### The Wolf and the Lamb

A hungry wolf was walking along the bank of a river. He saw a lamb who was drinking water below him on the bank. The wolf wanted to eat ..... up. He started to ask Stupid questions ..... asked lamb why are you Making the water dirty ..... replied Sir the Water is flowing down from you to me ..... the wolf asked again why did you call me a thief a year ago. The ..... answered ..... The wolf wanted to ..... So he said then it must have been your father. He jumped and attacked upon the lamb and ate him up.

Moral .....

Q.N. 2.

This is a letter written by Anil to his aunt in which he described about his plan. Put appropriate punctuation marks where it is necessary to make it meaningful. (23)

Kabhre

October 28

**Dear Aunt my Dear Aunt**

I m very unhappy because My father wont let me go on an outing with twenty three other friends They are going to a hillside bungalow which my friends father has rented for a week we are planning to go there after games practice on friday that is after we will finish our badminton at about 11 30 half passed eleven we planned to spend the whole of friday afternoon there stay the night and then have the whole of saturday there as well I asked my father but he refused to let me go What he objected to most was my spending the night there He said I couldn t go there because I was too young to stay away from home for so long



I think he is being unreasonable what could happen anyway He shouldn't worry because my friends parents will be there too It isn't as though we will be alone I think my father is very unfair because when he wants me to do something then I'm big enough but when he objects to something then I'm too young when I wanted to join the National Library he couldn't be bothered to take me He said can't you go on your own you're big enough you aren't a baby anymore But when it comes to things like this weekend away he says No you're too young to stay away from home why is he so unfair I feel so upset what do you think I should do

Love Anil

(Source: Shah, et al. 2010)

Q.N. 3. Two friends are talking on the phone about a party. Fill in the blank spaces in their conversation with your own words and appropriate punctuation marks. (12)

Amrita : Hello

Amit : .....its me .....

Amrita : Hi Amit .....

Amit : I am fine are you free today I'm having a party today and .....

Amrita : I'd love to but .....

Amit : ..... what's wrong

Amrita : Suffering from a nasty cold watery eyes and nose violent sneezes you know

Amit : ..... take care

Amrita : Bye thanks for calling

**!!! Thanks for your cooperation !!!**

The Researcher  
Mr. Dev Raj Awasthi  
Department of English Education  
T.U., Kirtipur, Kathmandu

## Appendix - II

### Punctuation Marks Used in Written Work

S.N.	Students	Full stop			Comma			Apostrophe			Question marks			Quotation mark			Slash			Parenthesis			Exclamation			Colon			Capitalization			Hyphen		
		CU	EU	TU	CU	EU	TU	CU	EU	TU	CU	EU	TU	CU	EU	TU	CU	EU	TU	CU	EU	TU	CU	EU	TU	CU	EU	TU	CU	EU	TU	CU	EU	TU
1	M	24	15	39	1	9	10	16	4	20	2	3	5	2	3	5	-	1	1	-	1	1	1	4	5	2	1	5	7	1	8	-	1	1
2	M	9	17	26	6	7	13	16	1	17	3	3	6	1	3	4	-	1	1	-	1	1	1	3	4	1	2	3	6	1	7	-	1	1
3	M	19	10	29	4	9	13	15	5	20	3	2	5	1	3	4	-	1	1	-	1	1	2	5	7	1	1	2	3	3	6	-	1	1
4	M	16	13	29	4	15	19	19	2	21	4	4	8	1	4	5	-	1	1	-	1	1	1	4	5	1	1	2	5	2	7	-	1	1
5	M	12	20	32	5	14	19	16	1	17	3	-	3	1	6	7	1	-	1	1	-	1	-	3	3	1	1	2	5	3	8	1	-	1
6	M	15	18	33	1	6	7	15	2	17	3	1	4	1	3	4	-	1	1	1	-	1	1	11	12	1	1	2	3	4	7	-	1	1
7	M	21	10	31	3	5	8	18	1	19	4	1	5	2	1	3	-	2	2	-	1	1	1	10	11	1	1	2	8	1	9	1	-	1
8	M	7	12	19	6	9	15	18	3	21	2	6	8	-	6	6	1	-	1	1	-	1	-	10	10	1	1	2	3	4	7	1	-	1
9	M	20	9	29	4	7	11	18	4	22	3	-	3	1	4	5	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	4	5	1	2	3	4	3	7	-	2	2
10	M	14	15	29	3	11	14	17	1	18	4	5	9	2	5	7	-	2	2	-	1	1	1	7	8	1	2	3	4	2	7	-	2	2
11	M	17	12	29	3	17	20	2	17	19	2	3	5	-	4	4	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	2	2	1	2	3	6	2	3	-	-	-
12	M	22	10	32	1	14	15	12	4	16	4	6	10	-	3	3	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	2	2	-	3	3	5	3	8	-	1	1
13	M	19	12	31	1	13	14	13	8	21	2	6	8	-	4	4	-	2	1	-	1	1	-	2	2	-	3	3	6	3	9	-	1	1
14	M	12	20	32	2	13	15	-	14	14	2	9	11	-	5	5	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	2	2	-	4	4	6	2	8	-	-	-
15	M	21	16	37	3	8	11	20	-	20	5	3	8	-	3	3	1	-	1	1	-	1	-	4	4	1	3	4	4	1	5	1	1	2
16	M	26	6	32	-	14	14	17	2	19	8	2	10	3	1	4	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	3	3	1	2	3	6	2	8	-	1	1
17	M	24	14	40	2	13	15	1	18	19	1	2	3	-	3	3	1	1	2	-	2	2	1	1	2	1	3	4	6	2	8	1	5	6
18	M	17	22	39	1	12	13	8	10	18	2	3	5	-	3	3	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	2	2	1	2	3	4	5	9	-	1	1
19	M	24	15	39	2	13	15	18	1	19	3	5	8	-	1	1	1	-	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	-	3	3	5	3	8	1	1	2
20	M	11	22	33	-	16	16	11	7	18	2	5	7	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	2	2	-	3	3	3	4	7	-	1	1
21	M	19	15	34	5	14	19	13	7	20	6	2	8	21	5	7	-	1	1	-	1	1	3	1	4	2	1	3	5	3	8	-	1	1
22	M	25	15	40	4	13	17	11	12	23	2	2	4	2	3	5	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	2	2	1	1	2	7	1	8	-	1	1
23	M	24	9	33	6	14	20	12	7	19	4	5	9	2	5	7	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	2	2	2	1	3	6	2	8	-	3	3
24	M	21	20	41	3	11	14	6	14	20	1	5	6	2	5	7	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	2	2	2	1	3	7	2	9	-	1	1

25	M	12	22	34	3	10	13	2	15	17	4	4	8	1	4	5	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	2	2	2	1	3	7	1	8	-	1	1
26	M	16	21	37	4	10	14	6	15	21	3	3	6	2	3	5	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	2	2	1	2	3	5	1	6	-	1	1
27	M	21	16	37	4	11	15	10	11	21	2	4	6	3	4	7	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	2	2	1	2	3	6	3	9	-	2	2
28	M	18	11	29	4	9	13	15	6	21	4	6	10	1	8	9	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	3	3	1	2	3	5	3	8	-	1	1
29	M	6	27	33	3	12	15	1	20	21	2	6	8	1	4	5	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	2	2	1	2	3	8	-	8	-	1	1
30	M	20	16	36	3	12	15	8	10	18	5	4	9	1	4	5	-	1	1	-	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	3	3	3	6	-	1	1
31	M	18	15	33	3	14	17	9	12	21	1	4	5	-	5	5	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	2	2	-	4	4	3	3	6	-	1	1
32	M	20	12	32	4	9	13	19	1	20	5	5	10	1	4	5	-	1	1	-	1	1	2	2	4	2	1	3	5	1	6	-	1	1
33	M	26	15	41	2	10	12	11	10	21	4	-	4	-	4	4	-	1	1	-	1	1	1	2	3	2	1	3	4	2	6	-	1	1
34	M	12	24	36	-	15	15	5	16	21	2	3	5	-	4	4	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	2	2	1	2	3	4	-	4	-	1	1
35	M	3	17	20	1	15	16	8	12	20	2	10	12	-	3	3	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	2	2	-	3	3	5	1	6	-	1	1
36	M	23	11	34	3	14	17	15	6	21	2	-	2	-	3	3	1	-	1	-	1	1	-	4	4	1	2	3	4	32	7	-	1	1
37	M	18	18	36	2	11	13	10	12	22	-	5	5	-	4	4	-	-	-	-	1	1	2	-	2	-	4	4	6	2	8	-	2	2
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41	F	16	17	33	-	13	13	5	15	20	1	5	6	-	5	5	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	2	2	-	3	3	2	4	6	-	1	1
42	F	17	16	33	1	14	15	4	18	22	-	6	6	-	4	4	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	1	-	-	3	3	4	1	5	-	1	1
43	F	9	14	23	-	13	13	3	14	17	1	6	7	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	2	2	-	3	3	4	1	5	-	1	1
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47	F	22	12	34	2	13	15	4	14	18	2	5	7	-	4	4	-	1	1	-	1	1	1	1	2	-	3	3	3	3	6	-	1	1
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49	F	5	20	25	1	16	17	3	14	17	2	8	10	-	5	5	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	2	2	-	3	3	3	2	5	-	1	1
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58	F	5	15	20	4	19	23	14	4	18	3	4	7	1	6	7	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	4	5	1	1	2	3	3	6	-	1	1
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63	F	15	16	31	-	15	15	1	18	19	-	7	7	-	4	4	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	2	2	-	3	3	7	1	8	-	-	-
64	F	12	30	32	3	12	14	6	12	18	1	4	5	-	4	4	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	2	2	-	3	3	5	1	6	-	1	1
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68	F	12	18	30	-	13	13	9	11	20	1	5	6	-	4	4	-	1	1	-	1	1	2	-	2	-	2	2	5	3	8	-	1	1
69	F	22	18	40	-	13	13	6	11	17	1	3	4	-	4	4	-	1	1	-	1	1	2	-	2	-	3	3	4	4	8	-	-	-
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76	F	7	22	29	2	18	20	1	12	13	3	3	6	-	5	5	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	2	2	-	4	4	6	1	7	-	1	1
77	F	16	18	34	3	15	18	3	12	18	1	3	4	2	3	5	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	2	2	-	3	3	6	1	7	-	1	1
78	F	21	9	30	8	11	19	20	1	21	5	2	7	3	3	6	1	-	1	-	1	1	2	1	3	2	1	3	5	2	7	-	1	1
79	F	5	24	29	2	13	15	-	17	17	3	6	9	2	3	5	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	2	2	-	3	3	4	3	7	-	1	1
80	F	12	24	36	2	10	12	1	15	16	2	5	7	2	3	5	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	2	2	1	2	3	5	2	7	-	1	1

## Appendix III

### Marking Scheme

The researcher checked the answer sheets only focusing on the use of punctuation marks. He did not care about other mechanics of writing. He provided marks for each question on the basis of respondent's responses. The researcher used red pen to make the correction on the answer sheets. He put the circle where punctuation marks are used correctly or erroneously and to indicate correct and erroneous use of particular punctuation mark, he used following marking codes or symbols in the right or left margin of the page.

For correct use:

Corr. ' —	For correct use of apostrophe
Corr. $\checkmark$ —	For correct use of comma
Corr. $\sphericalangle$ $\sphericalangle$ —	For correct use of quotation mark
Corr. $\odot$ —	For correct use of full stop
Corr. /?/ —	For correct use of question mark
Corr. :/ —	For correct use of colon
Corr. !/ —	For correct use of exclamation mark
Corr. /=/ —	For correct use of hyphen
Corr. Cap —	For correct use of capitalization
Corr. (/) —	For correct use of slash
Corr. [ ] ( ) —	For correct use of brackets

For erroneous use

err. ,	—	For erroneous use of comma
err. †	—	For erroneous use of apostrophe
err. ′ ″	—	For erroneous use of quotation mark
err. ●	—	For erroneous use of full stop
err. / ? /	—	For erroneous use of question mark
err. : /	—	For erroneous use of colon
err. ! /	—	For erroneous use of exclamation mark
err. / = /	—	For erroneous use of hyphen
err. /Cap/	—	For erroneous use of capitalization
err. ( / )	—	For erroneous use of slash
err. [ ] ( )	—	For erroneous use of brackets