

CHAPTER – ONE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with the general background, classification; review of the related literature the objectives and the significance of the study.

1.1 General Background

The first writing systems were mostly logographic and / or syllabic, for example Chinese and Maya script, and they do not necessarily require punctuation, specially spacing. This is because the entire morpheme or word is typically clustered within a single glyph, so spacing does not help as much to distinguish where one word ends and the other starts. Disambiguation and emphasis can easily be communicated without punctuation by employing a separate written form distinct from the spoken form of the language that uses slightly different phraseology. Even today, formal written modern English differs subtly from spoken English because not in print, even with punctuation.

Punctuation marks are symbols that indicate the structure and organization of written language, as well as intonation and pauses to be observed when reading aloud.

In written English, punctuation is vital to disambiguate the meaning of sentences. For example, “woman, without her man, is nothing” and “woman: without her, man is nothing” have greatly different meanings, as do “eats shoots and leaves” and “eats shoots and leaves”. “King Charles walked and talked half an hour after his head was cut off” is

alarming; “King Charles walked and talked; half an hour after, his head was cut off,” less so. (For English usage, see the articles on specific punctuation marks.)

The rules of punctuation vary with language, location, register and time and are constantly evolving. Certain aspects of punctuation are stylistic and are thus the author’s (or editor’s) choice. Tachygraphic language forms, such as those used in online chat language and text messages, may have wildly different rules ([http://www.google.punctuation history/.com](http://www.google.punctuation.history/.com)).

The earliest alphabetic writing had no capitalization no spaces and few punctuation marks. This worked as long as the subject matter was restricted to a limited range of topics (e.g., writing used for recording business transactions). Punctuation is historically an aid to reading loud.

According to the William Caxton ([http://www.google.punctuation history/.com](http://www.google.punctuation.history/.com)). The oldest known document using punctuation is the Mesha Stele (9th century BC). This employs points between the words and horizontal strokes between the sense sections as punctuation.

According to the Wikipedia ([http://www.google.punctuation history/.com](http://www.google.punctuation.history/.com)). The Greeks were using punctuation marks consisting of vertically arranged dots – usually two (cf. the modern colon) or three – in around the 5th century BC. Greek playwrights such as Euripides and Aristophanes used Symbols to distinguish the ends of phrases in written drama: this essentially helped the play’s cast to know when to pause. In particular, they used three different symbols to divide speeches, known as commas (indicated by a

centered dots), colons (indicated by a dot on the base line), and periods or full stops (indicated by a raised dot). The Romans (circa 1st century BC) also adopted symbols to indicate pauses.

Punctuation developed dramatically when large numbers of copies of the Christian Bible started to be produced. These were designed to be read aloud and the copyists began to introduce a range of marks to aid the reader, including indentation, various punctuation marks and an early version of initial capitals. St. Jerome and his Colleagues, who produced the vulgate translation of the Bible into Latin, developed an early system (circa 400 AD); this was considerably improved on by Alcuin. The marks included the virgule (forward slash) and dots in different locations; the dots were centered in the line, raised on in groups. The introduction of a standard system of punctuation has also been attributed to Aldus Manutius and his grandson. They have been credited with the colon or full stop, inventing the semicolon, making occasional use of parentheses and creating the modern comma by lowering the virgule.

The use of punctuation was not standardized until after the invention of printing.

According to the 1885 edition of *The American Printer*, the importance of punctuation was noted in various sayings by children such as:

Charles the First walked and talked half an hour after his head was cut off, with a semi-colon and a comma added it reads; Charles the First walked and talked; half an hour after his head was cut off.

Shortly, after the invention of printing the necessity of stops or pauses in sentences for the guidance of the reader produced the colon and full point. In process of time, the comma was added, which was then merely a perpendicular line, proportioned to the body of the letter. These three points only one used until the close of the fifteenth century, when Aldo Manuccio gave a better shape to the comma and added the semicolon; the comma denoting the shortest pause, the semicolon next, then the colon, and the full points terminating the sentence. The marks of interrogation and admiration were introduced many years after.

The standards and limitations of evolving technologies have exercised further pragmatic influences. For example, minimization of punctuation in typewritten matter become economically describable in the 1960s and 1970s for the many users of carbon–film ribbons, since a period or comma consumed the same length of expensive non-reusable ribbon as did a capital letter. Originally, Sanskrit had no punctuation. In 17th century Sanskrit and Marathi both written in Devanagari script, started using vertical bar (I) to end a line of prose and double vertical bars (II) in verses.

There are two major styles of punctuation in English American or Traditional punctuation and British or Logical punctuation. These two styles differ mainly in the way which they handle quotation marks. Punctuation marks the clear presentation of the written language possible. It makes easier to get the theme developed in the text. If we do not use any word of sentence boundaries or any other punctuation marks the written piece of text becomes a solid block of symbolic (i.e. letter) which becomes, for the readers, not only difficult but almost impossible to perceive or comprehend the intended meaning of the text. It is

widely used in a written text in different ratios. Only the systematic use of punctuation makes the text reliable and understandable.

1.1.1 Defining Punctuation

American Education Encyclopedia (1961) states, that punctuation is ‘The uses of certain symbols in written and printed composition for the purpose of making the thought clearer.’

In the same way, the Encyclopedia of Education (1965) states, that punctuation is ‘..... system of marks representing an effort to compensate for the loss of spoken intonation in the written language.’

Encyclopedia Britannica (1968) defines punctuation as ‘..... the art of ‘pointing a literary composition so as to divide it into sentences and portions of sentences, which the ‘points’ at their close, this indicating what would in speech be pauses of changes of expression’

OALD (4th edition) defines punctuation as ‘Any of the marks (e.g. full stop, comma, question mark etc.) used in a written or printed text to separate sentences, etc. and to make the meaning clear.’ The quote Gordon (1978) punctuation is ‘..... in many ways an art.’

Punctuation is an important aspect of written language. According to Harris (1993:30) says, “Punctuation is fundamentally a means of marking boundaries and relationships between the grammatical units of written texts.” Punctuation marks are fairly well

established and highly standardized. The most clear cut use of punctuation marks are those that marks the boundaries of the most obvious grammatical units 'sentence' being the fundamental grammatical unit begins with a capital letter and ends with a full stop or an equivalent mark according to the nature of meaning.

Similarly, Gautam (1996:206) defines the term 'punctuation is the rule for using stops in writing.' It means for the readable utterance of sentences which adapt by the marks of punctuation.

In some cases, according to Sthapit (1998), use of full stop or question mark is a matter of clash. In the expression link 'would you mind passing me a pen' a full stop or a question mark is a suitable mark to close this sentence.

According to king (2000:1) , the word 'Punctuation' was derived from a Latin word 'punctum' which means the use of symbols, not belonging to the alphabet to indicate intonation and meaning otherwise conveyed in the written language.

According to Sultan (2009:289) punctuation is defined as 'While talking we use pauses, some slight and some longer, to group words into ideas.' If a speaker is so fast that is sentences run into one another, it would be difficult to follow his uses. Punctuation marks like the full stop, the mark of interrogation, the comma, etc, are the equivalents of these pauses used to mark the writers meaning clear. Absence or wrong use of punctuation marks could totally distort the meaning.

1.1.2 Function and Use of Punctuation

After the beginning of systematic study of Punctuation, several grammarians have presented the function and use of punctuation directly. To quote Gibaldi (2004:50), ‘The primary purpose of punctuation is to ensure the clarity and reliability of writing.

Punctuation clarifies sentences structure, separating some words and grouping other. It adds meaning to written words and guides the understanding of readers as they move through sentences. ’ Punctuation plays vital role to clarify the meaning of a text. Different punctuation marks function differently to make the text intelligible. The American Education Encyclopedia (1961) says, ‘Punctuation marks are placed between whole sentences and within sentences to separate the different parts: Similarly, focusing on the function of punctuation marks, Gordon (1978) says, ‘Good punctuation is essential for writing to be easily and rapidly understood.’ Those statements present an overall picture, regarding the function of punctuation.

Punctuation marks are not as old as writing system itself. In the words of Sutcliffe (1999:237), “It was not until the early days of printed books; however, in the late 1400s and early 1500s, that punctuation – and even the placement of spaces between words – began to be used as a way to clarify text, for the reader.” Gradually, Punctuation now regarded an important feature of writing system. The punctuation marks are used to mark boundaries and relationships between words and sentences. They are used mainly to help convey meaning and to make the expressions explicit or unambiguous.

Generally, the professional writers and editors make use of all of these punctuation marks. The students and the learners of English language as a second or foreign language

do not need to use all of these punctuation marks. They use the most common ones. The researcher has selected only the eight punctuation marks, which are the most commonly used. They are: capital letters, full stop, comma, question mark, quotation marks (inverted comma), exclamation mark, apostrophe and parentheses. Therefore, this study is limited to these eight marks of punctuations.

1.1.3 Classification of Punctuation

Punctuation is classified variously from books to books or writers to writers. But they can be systematized in the following way. There are altogether sixteen kinds of punctuation found in different sources. They are :

- | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------|
| i. Full stop [.] | ii. Comma [,] |
| iii. Apostrophe ['] | iv. Question mark [?] |
| v. Quotation mark [“-”] | vi. Semicolon [;] |
| vii. Exclamation mark [!] | viii. Hyphen [-] |
| ix. Colon [:] | x. Dash [-] |
| xi. Slash or oblique [/] | xii. Italics [<i>Italics</i>] |
| xiii. Parentheses [()] | xiv. Capitalization [ABC] |
| xv. Square brackets [{ }] | xvi. Dots [.....] |

Apart from these, OALD presents another punctuations, i.e. Footnotes, But they are not analysis in detail.

1.1.3.1 The Capital Letter (ABC ...)

Capitalization comes under the board heading punctuation. It refers to the use of capital letter at beginning or in the middle of sentences.

To put in king's (2000:16-17) words, 'Capital letters are an important form of punctuation is that they help to guide the eye & mind through a text. Using capital to flag the start of sentence is clear enough but confusion surrounds the capitalizing of certain nouns and names. Some capitalizations are logical but many of them are not. Some are constant throughout the language while others are arbitrary, differing from country to country and even from one publisher or newspaper to another. Example: (the army, spring and Autumn, Union Jack, Vincent Van Gogh, Jacuzzi, New Testament, Down Under)

1.1.3.1.1 Use of Capital Letters

Capital letters are used under the following conditions

- a) An initial capital letters is used with proper nouns. Which are names of persons, days, months, festivals, religion, countries, nationalities, race, language, adjective specific geographical places, school, collage, business, house, political party, building, flight , title of book, story , poem, etc. For example – Malla, Monday, Nepal, English, Patan, North Pole.

- b) The first word of sentence begins with capital letter. For example- All children possess special qualities.
- c) The first word of direct speech begins with a capital letter.
- d) Every new line of verse stanza usually begins with capital letter.

For off when on my coach I lie

In vacant or in pensive mood

- e) Comma or abstract noun, when they are personified, begins with capital letter.
- f) All noun and pronoun referring to God (but not to gods) begins with capital letter.

I pray to the Almighty to forgive me for my sins.

- g) The pronouns "I" and interjection "oh" are always written as capital.
- h) All the words in a heading except articles preposition and conjunctions begin with a capital letter.

The Vanity Fair, Anthony and Cleopatra

- i) Abbreviations of degrees, personal little, etc., begin with a capital letter.

Ph.D. M.D. C.M.A. M.Ed.

- j) Words used as forms of address may also begin with a capital letter.

Dear Sir, Dear Father

1.1.3.2 The Full Stop [.]

According to Sutcliffe (1999: 273), "The full stop is the most common punctuation mark to mark word or sentence boundaries. It is mainly used to close all declarative sentences and imperative sentences. That is to say, it is used at the end of a statement, a command or an indirect question."

To put in King's (2000: 26) words, "The full stop is the most emphatic, abrupt and unambiguous marks. The full stop is probably the most used mark, partly because we need it so much and partly because virtually everyone knows how to use it."

'The full stop is used like a knife to cut off a sentence at the required length. The rule is the simple: where you place your stop is up to you, but as we saw in that chapter on the sentence it is generally at the point where a thought is complete.'

1.1.3.2.1 Use of Full Stop

According to Sultan (2009:289-290), 'The Full Stop indicates the longest pause'. It is used:

- a) to close a statement or a command:

Public speaking is an art. (Statement)

Give me some tips on public speaking. (Command)

- b) After abbreviation with first and last letter, abbreviations of weight & measures, etc. Dr. (Doctor), St (Saint), Kg (Kilogram), hr (Hour) etc.

- c) to indicate a decimal fraction 48.5, 37.6

1.1.3.3 The Comma [,]

According to Sultan (2009:291-295), ‘The comma is the shortest pause. The use of comma is absolutely necessary to bring clarity to our writing’.

The comma is a relatively more difficult mark of punctuation. It usually separates parts of sentence and helps us to understand the meaning of the sentence.

As a general rule, (Gordon, 1978: 21) it is placed to separate each item in a list but not the last which is preceded by ‘and’. For example:

- He bought a book, a pencil, a ruler and an eraser from the stationery shop.
- We went a house near the shops, close to a bus rout and not too expensive.

Regarding the function and use of comma, King (2000:33) says ‘the comma is the most flexible, most versatile of all the punctuation marks. Because it is the least emphatic marks it is also the most subtle and complex. On the contrary, not surprisingly, any writers feel a nagging certainty about using commas.’

According to Gordon (1978: 17), “A comma is commonly used to clarify the meaning of a text or to separate parts of sentence, but using the comma in a text is not to say easy because several other punctuation marks can be used instead of comma, such as colon, dash and sometime full stop too. Two or more than two ‘experts’ may use different punctuation marks to the same utterance or text”. Therefore, whether to use a comma or not may depend on:

- The length of the whole sentence or part of it,

- The emphasis we want to give certain words,
- What punctuation marks we are using in the sentence.

In the same way, *ibid* (1999:18-29), “Commas are used with non-defending clauses, to separate question tag from the statement, to mark off the names of persons spoken to or addressed directly and in compound sentences a comma is used between the independent clauses that are joined by coordinating conjunctions”. For example:

My mother, who is 65 is having a party on the occasion of her birthday.

You’re with me, aren’t you?

Good morning, sir.

Ram comes here.

1.1.3.4 The Question Mark [?]

Basically, a question begins with wh–word or an auxiliary verb. Sometimes an assertive sentence may function as a question form. So, a question mark is put at the end of a direct question where the sentence may be in statement form.

- a) The mark of interrogation or question mark is used at the end of direct question as in the following example.

Do you realize the value of time?

Where did you waste so much time?

- b) Sometimes question mark is used in assertive sentence to edit surprise:

You are still at home?

You saw him?

c) Question marks use in tag – question:

I'm your friend, aren't I?

According to Gordon (1978: 14), "Two boundary marks usually do not come together to close a sentence. That is to say, a question mark replaces a full stop or an exclamation mark, and there is no need of writing two of them together to close a sentence, But if a direct question ends in an abbreviated word, a full stop and a question mark come together, the full stop is for the abbreviated form of the word and the question mark is to close the direct question". For example:

Has your brother got M.A?

1.1.4.5 Inverted Comma or Quotation Mark [“.....”]

Nepal (2005: 164) says, "Single inverted commas are used to focus on the important word term whereas double ones are to indicate direct speech." Some people even use the single inverted comma to mention the direct speech:

-Madhuri said, “Mitra Sen sang well.”

-The word ‘chhee’ refers to a short of disliking. ‘What Men Live By’ is a short story?

Quotation marks are used to give special emphasis to letters, words, phrases, names or titles. For example, titles of radio programmes and television shows, titles of movies and plays, titles of books and newspapers or news paper articles when quoted are enclosed with quotation marks:

“Meribassai” is a very popular television serial.

The old man reads “Muna Madan” every day.

1.1.3.6 The Exclamation Mark [!]

The mark of exclamation is placed at the end of an exclamatory sentence, that is, a sentence which expresses some sudden or strong emotion as:

-What an outstanding performance!

-How kind of you!

-How hilarious the movie was!

Likewise, Sultan (2009: 291) says, "when a command is given in an angry or harsh tone, the full stop at the end may be replaced by a mark of exclamation." For example:

-Just get out of the room!

Sutcliffe (1999: 242) says, "The Exclamation mark is usually used after interjection." For example:

-Oh!

-Hurry!

Gordon (1978: 15) adds, "Exclamation mark is another device of punctuation that closes a sentence. It is used for the sentence which shows strong emotions such as surprise, fear, angry, joy indignation, urgency, enthusiasm, disbelief". For example:

What a surprising arrival!

1.1.3.7 The Apostrophe [']

According to Sutcliffe (1999:27), "Use of an apostrophe to the singular noun which ends in's', is a case of personal preference, i.e. only an apostrophe can be added to the noun."

For example:

Dicken's novels are interesting to read.

Dicken's novels are interesting to read.

An apostrophe is used to show omission of a letter or letters in the contracted form of a word or phrase. The apostrophe replaces the omitted letter or letters. 'It's' is the contracted form of it is; and 'isn't' is the contracted form of is not. Similarly, the other use of apostrophe is to signify possession or ownership of a person, an animal or an abstract noun. Most possessives are formed by adding's to the end of a singular noun that does not end in 's':

It was Grandfather's sixtieth birthday.

On the country, Gordon (1978: 35-35) says, "Possessives of plural nouns that end in s are formed by adding an apostrophe to the nouns, but if the plural noun does not end in 's', the possessive is formed by adding 's' ". For example:

-The ladies' toilet is on the right just opposite to the men's.

1.1.3.8 The Parentheses [()]

According to Sultan (2009: 298), "The parentheses serve the purpose of double dashes. If a phrase or a clauses occurring within a sentence is not linked to its main idea, it should be enclosed within parentheses:

The court (I have a great faith in our judicial system) took an impartial view of the case."

The main purpose of using the parentheses is to clarify the meaning of the given text.

Sometimes, commas and other punctuation marks replace the parentheses; however, they have their own use too. One of the characteristics of using it is: if we remove the brackets. The remaining parts work as a complete sentence. And mainly it is used to explain and comment within sentences, for cross reference and for number or letters etc.

1.2 Review of Related Literature

Up to now, few researches have been carried out to study the proficiency in using punctuation. Some of them are cited below:

Rongong (1973) is the first in studying vocabulary proficiency in Nepal. He has carried out a research entitled 'A study of the spoken vocabulary of the primary school children

of Nepal.’ He has attempted to investigate the words that are used productively by the students of the primary level. The findings of the study showed that the words used by the primary level students from three regions (i.e. the Himalayan, the Mountainous and the Terai), were similar to a great extent.

Bhattarai (2001) carried out a research entitled, “A study on use of punctuation in free writing.” The study population was 120, study at class twelve of four higher secondary schools and two campuses of Morang district. He has attempted to investigate the mark that is used productively by the students of grade 12. He also aimed to establish the hierarchies of the total use, correct use and erroneous use of punctuation marks on the basis of their frequency in the written texts. The finding of the study showed no fundamental change was found in the hierarchy of the total and correct use of punctuation and the total number was 8812, which was 77.79 % of the total use.

Similarly, Khatri (2001) carried out a research entitled ‘A study of errors in punctuation committed 180, from 6 government public high school of Bhimeshor Municipality of Dolakha district, 30 students from each of the school, studying in grade 10. The study attempted to identify and determine of the frequency of errors in the use of punctuation mark. The findings of the study showed the students tended to commit more errors in the use of punctuation mark in free writing than in guided or controlled writing.

Neupane (2004) carried out study on ‘proficiency of the B.B.S and B.Ed. first year students in the use of adjective and adverb’. The study population consisted of 60 student of B.B.S and B.Ed. The findings of the study showed that the overall proficiency of B.B.S and B.Ed students was satisfactory (61.55%). The students of Saptagandaki

Multiple Campus Chitwan had better proficiency than that of Galyang multiple campus Syangja.

Regmi (2005) carried out a research entitled 'The proficiency of B.Ed students in phrasal verbs. The researcher aimed at investigating the proficiency of Bachelor level students of the faculty of education in the use of the phrasal verbs and to compare the proficiency among the students majoring in English and the students not majoring in English. She found out that the proficiency level of the students majoring in English was better (40.31%) than that of the students not majoring in English (26.9%).

Likewise, Khatiwada (2007) carried out a research entitled "proficiency of Grade Ten Students in causative verbs. The study population consisted of 50 students of Kathmandu district from one private school and one government school. The Findings of the study showed that they proficiency of grade ten students in causative verbs was found quite satisfactory (67.12%).The proficiency of the private school was found better (81.76 %) than the proficiency of the government school (51.52%).

On the contrary, Pandey (2007) carried out a research entitled 'Proficiency of Bachelor's Level Students in Using Idioms and Phrasal Verb.' The study population consisted 80 from only one government campus, Waling Multiple Campus of Syangja district. The population had taken only from two faculties i.e. Humanities and Education Studying in diploma 1st year. The study attempted to notify and determine the proficiency of Bachelor Level Students using idioms and phrasal verbs. The finding of the study showed 36.75 average percentage of the total proficiency. The proficiency of both B.Ed and B.A. found better in using phrasal verb (i.e. 37.4%) than the proficiency in using idioms (i.e. 36.1%).

Various research works have been carried out in the field of error analysis. Most of them are carried out at the level of syntax or especially grammar. Second or foreign language learners also tend to commit errors at graphological level. Graphological errors in the use of punctuation marks and spelling are also common. But the area of punctuation regarding proficiency analysis is relatively unexplored. Hence, the researcher undertook to carry out a field study on proficiency in the use of punctuation marks scored by the students studying in bachelor level first year.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are as follows:

- a) To find out the proficiency of B.Ed., B.A., B.B.S and B.Sc first year students in the use of punctuations.
- b) To compare the proficiency level of the students studying in B.Ed., B.A. B.B.S. and B.Sc in using punctuations.
- c) To suggest some pedagogical implications.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study is useful for all involved in language teaching in general and English Language Teaching (ELT) in particular. It would also be useful for teachers, students and researchers. This study would specially contribute to teaching and learning correctness in grammatical utterances.

This study is expected to be the significant mainly in the following ways:

- a) It gives a short introduction in the correct use of punctuation, that may be a reference material for the students, teachers and others,
- b) It points out the proficiency and distribution of different items of punctuation which can be a milestone for the further study in this field to the students, teachers, text book writers, syllabus designers, methodologists, and other people who are directly or indirectly involved in English Language Teaching / Learning, and
- c) It will also provide the consulted ones with the useful techniques of teaching punctuation because the researcher has rigorously analyzed and interpretation the data for this purpose.

1.5 Definition of Terminology Related to the Study

Here, the researcher presented the clarification of terminology and test items.

1.5.1 Proficiency

The term ‘proficiency’ refers to the ability of students in using the punctuation appropriately in their written text of free writing.

1.5.2 Guided Writing

The word ‘guided writing’ is inclusively the text or teacher oriented piece of test item. It also refers the informants tend their productivity in the given skeleton or frame work on the basis of instruction and question.

1.5.3 Free Writing

It refers to the selection or choice of different kinds of lexicon and grammatical items in order to compose / narrate sentence (s) or paragraph (s).

CHAPTER – TWO

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of the present study was to find out the proficiency of Bachelor level students in using punctuation, this chapter deals with the methodology adopted to carry out the field study. In this chapter, sources of data, tools for collection of data, process of data collection and limitations of the study have been dealt with.

2.1 Sources of Data

In order to carry out this research, the researcher used both primary and secondary sources of data.

2.1.1 Primary Sources of Data

This research work was primarily based on field study. The primary sources of data for this research were the Bachelor's level students of Mahendra Morang Adarsha Multiple Campus and Gograha College Biratnagar, Morang district.

2.1.2 Secondary Sources of Data

As secondary sources of data, I collected the materials available in the market which were related to the grammatical study. I went through different articles, books, journals, theses, reports published by different scholars. Some of them are King (2000), Gordon (1978), OALD (Forth edition), Sultan (2009), Nepal (2005), Kumar (1999), Nissani

(1996) and Bhattarai (2006), Crystal (1996) and Celce – Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1999), etc.

2.2 Population of the Study

The study population for the purpose of this study included the students of B.Ed., B.A., B.B.S. and B.Sc. first year of Mahendra Morang Adarsha Multiple Campus and Gograha college, Biratnagar , Morang.

2.3 Sample Population

The sample population for the purpose of this study consisted 80 students 20/20 of each faculty (i.e. B.Ed, B.A., B.B.S., & B,Sc) of Bachelor level first year of selected campus & college, Biratnagar.

2.4 Sampling Procedure

To carry out this research, I selected Mahendra Morang Adarsha Multiple Campus and Gograha College of Morang district altogether 80 students 20/20 from each B.Ed., B.A., B.Bs., and B.Sc., first year using simple random sampling procedure.

2.5 Tools for Data Collection

The major tool for collection of primary data was the subjective test. The final test designed to administer among the informants carried 100 full marks and one and half an hour's time was allocated for the test (see Appendix I). The following types of testing tools were prepared to elicit data for proficiency analysis in the use of punctuation marks:

guided writing exercise and free writing exercise that required the correct application of punctuation marks.

- a) Guided writing exercise: This was the main tool to find out the proficiency in the use of punctuation marks. There were two sub types under this heading, i.e. sentence writing and marking the correct punctuation mark. These both items included the correct application of all specified punctuation marks, i.e. capital letters, full stop, comma, question mark, quotation mark, exclamation mark, apostrophe and parentheses. There were 60/60 erroneous points carrying (30/30 percentage each) 60% of full marks.
- b) Free writing: It was subjective type of test carrying 40 % of the full marks. It was designed / administered to elicit proficiency in the use of specified punctuation marks in free writing.

2.6 Process of Data Collection

The researcher used the following procedure to collect the data from the primary sources:

At first the researcher visited the selected campus and college and requested to the concerned authority for permission to carry out the research. He explained for permission to carry out the study. He consulted the subject teacher for co-operation. Then, eighty students were selected using simple random sampling procedure.

The researcher designed sheet test items for assessing the proficiency level items (Guided and free writing) were administrated to the selected population. The students were

provided with the necessary information and direction for each sub types of subjective test items they were going to take.

2.7 Limitations of the Study

This study had the following limitations:

- a) The subject area was limited to eight punctuation marks: capital letter, full stop, comma, question mark, quotation mark, exclamation mark, apostrophe and parentheses.
- b) The study was limited to one government public campus affiliated by T.U. and a college affiliated by P.U. of Biratnagar, Morang district.
- c) The study was limited to written data only.
- d) The number of sample population was eighty students (20/20 of each faculty) only.
- e) The study was limited to only four faculties i.e. Education, Humanities, Management and Science of Bachelor level first year.
- f) The study was limited in only two types of subjective test items i.e. guided writing and free writing.
- g) The study was limited in assessing only the proficiency on the use of punctuation marks.

CHAPTER – THREE

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This chapter deals with the analysis and interpretation of the proficiency performed in the test items administered to the specified population.

3.1 Analysis and Interpretation of Proficiency

In order to carry out the analysis and interpretation of data, the researcher collected the answer sheets to measure the targeted objectives from the respondents and he checked the responses to the test items and assigned marks to them. Then the researcher grouped the scores obtained by the respondents in accordance with the set objectives. The researcher used the proficiency of the respondents by applying the observation method. On the basis of their scores in three different items i.e. Sentence writing (SW), marking the correct punctuation marks (MCPM) and free writing (FW) in which they obtained their proficiency in using punctuation marks was analyzed and interpreted. This analysis and interpretation was displayed done by using tables and the simple bar–diagram for the proficiency in the use of punctuation marks.

Tabulation, analysis and interpretation of the data have been cited out under the following headings:

- 1) Faculty wise presentation of the proficiency in total
- 2) Total proficiency in the use of punctuation marks.
- 3) Item wise presentation and analysis of proficiency in total.

- 4) Comparison of the total proficiency of punctuation marks by the students of FOE, FOH, FOM and FOS.

The proficiency level of each, student in using punctuation marks was categorized in accordance with the five – point scale of ‘rank’ as follows:

Table No. 1: Rank scale to measure proficiency

Percentage of (The number of students with correct response)	Rank	Proficiency level on Punctuation Marks
81% to 100%	I	Excellent
61% to 80 %	II	Very Good
41% to 60%	III	Good
21% to 40 %	IV	Satisfactory
1% to 20 %	V	Poor

The above table shows the presentation of the measurement scheme to assess the proficiency. The second column denotes rank scale and the third column refers level of proficiency on the basis of percentage and rank in the use of punctuation marks.

In the use of punctuation marks which were responded correctly by 81% to 100% of the students were placed in the first rank and it denotes the excellent level of proficiency. The punctuation marks that were responded correctly by 61% to 80% of the students were placed in the second rank and it refers the very good level of proficiency in their use.

Similarly, the punctuation marks which were responded correctly by 41% to 60% of the

students were placed in the third rank and it denotes the good level of punctuation proficiency. In the same way, in the use of punctuation marks which were responded correctly by 21% to 40% of the students were placed in the fourth rank and it denotes the satisfactory level of proficiency. At last, the punctuation marks which were responded correctly by 1% to 20% of the students were placed in the fifth rank which indicates the poor level of proficiency in using punctuation marks.

3.1.1 Faculty Wise Presentation of the Proficiency of Punctuation Marks

Table 2-5 show the analysis and proficiency in the use of punctuation by the students of FOE and FOH of Gograha college Biratnagar and FOM and FOS of Mahendra Morang Adarsha Multiple campus Biratnagar Morang. In each table total correct responses were tabulated and ranked on the basis of correct responses. To wipe out contradiction towards the intentions of the reader the selected faculties were supposed as FOE – college A, FOH- college B, FOM- college C and FOS – college D. faculty wise analysis is described below:

3.1.2 Analysis of the Proficiency in Punctuation of College A

The students of B.Ed first year of Gograha College, Biratnagar, which was supposed college A responded purposively in the sue of punctuation marks. The total proficiency of College A is presented in the following table.

Table No. – 2: The Total Score of College A

Types of Punctuation	Test Items			Average% out of 100	Rank
	Guided Writing		Free writing		
	S.W 30 %	MCPM 30 %			
Capitalization	14.5	8.5	3.9	26.9	IV
Full stop	9.2	6.9	10.3	26.4	IV
Comma	9.33	5.86	9	24.16	IV
Question Mark	5.33	3	5.87	14.2	V
Inverted Comma	2.66	2.5	2.37	7.53	V
Exclamation Mark	1	1.66	8.25	10.91	V
Apostrophe	8.83	2.66	13	24.49	IV
Parentheses	16.65	0	2.66	3.31	V

Table No. 2 shows the total proficiency by the students of college A (i.e. B.Ed first year) in the use of punctuation marks. The researcher administered the two items of tests i.e. Guided writing and free writing test item two sub-items were administered i.e. sentence writing test item containing 30 marks and marking the correct use of Punctuation Marks containing 30 marks. Similarly, the free writing test item contained of 40 marks in which the respondent's comprehended mainly eight types of limited punctuation marks in their use.

Similarly, the table no.2 also shows that no students of very colleges found in the excellent, very good and good level. College A scored 26.9% and fourth rank in capitalization 26.4% and fourth rank in full stop, 24.49% and fourth rank in apostrophe, 24.16% and fourth rank in comma 14.2% and fifth rank is question marks, 10.91% and fifth rank in exclamation mark, 7.53% and fifth rank in inverted comma and 3.31% and fifth rank in parenthesis. Out of eight types of punctuation marks, the students of college A secured only satisfactory and poor level of proficiency and fourth and fifth rank only.

Likewise, the students of college A scored the highest (i.e. 26.9) in capitalization and the lowest (i.e 3.91%) in parentheses. Similarly, in the order of the proficiency level it was found first capitalization (i.e. 26.9), second full stop (i.e. 26.4%), third apostrophe (i.e. 24.49%), fourth comma (i.e. 26.41%) and last parentheses (i.e. 3.91%) in the use of punctuation marks.

In conclusion, the above analysis showed satisfactory result, the students of college A was found better in capitalization (i.e. 26.9%) in the use of punctuation marks correctly and poor in the use of parenthesis.

3.1.3 Analysis of the Proficiency in Punctuation of College B

The total proficiency of college B (i.e. B.A first year, studying at Gograha college, Biratnagar) is presented in the succeeding page:

Table No. 3: The Total Score of College B

Types of Punctuation	Test Items		Average out of 100%	Rank	
	Guided Writing				Free writing
	S.W 30 %	MCPM 30 %			
Capitalization	10	10.83	10.87	31.7	IV
Full stop	6.83	6.33	9.75	22.91	IV
Comma	5.33	5	8.5	18.83	V
Question Mark	1	0.9	4.75	6.65	V
Inverted Comma	2	2.16	3.87	8.03	V
Exclamation Mark	2.66	2.33	4.87	9.86	V
Apostrophe	2.33	2.5	7.75	12.58	V
Parentheses	0.02	-	0.63	0.65	V

The above table shows the total proficiency by the students of college B in the use of punctuation marks which administered. Out of two test items (i.e. guided writing and free writing) in eight types of punctuation marks separately, the study showed the proficiency of College B placed only fourth rank

In these two of punctuations, types i.e. capitalization, the college B students secured satisfactory level. The rest of the other types were found in fifth rank which was the poor level of proficiency in the use of punctuation marks.

Table No.3 shows the proficiency of college B scored 31.7% and fourth rank in capitalization, 22.9% and fourth rank in full stop, 18.33% and fifth rank in comma, 12.58% and fifth rank in apostrophe, 9.86% and fifth rank in exclamation mark. Similarly, 8.03% and fifth rank in inverted comma, 6.65% and fifth rank in question mark and 0.65% which was below the targeted position in parentheses in the use of punctuation marks correctly.

The above table also shows the college B scored the highest proficiency in capitalization (i.e. 31.7%) and the lowest in parentheses (i.e. 0.65%). Parentheses was their last score i.e. very poor level.

3.1.4 Analysis of the Proficiency in Punctuation of College C

The students of college C which was supposed to be the students of B.B.S first year studying at Mahendra Morang Adarsha Multiple campus, Biratnagar scored dramatically in the use of punctuation marks. The total score of college C is displayed in the succeeding page:

Table No.– 4: The Total Score of College C

Types of Punctuation	Test Items			Average out of 100%	Rank
	Guided Writing		Free writing		
	S.W	MCPM			
30 %	30 %	40 %			
Capitalization	3.33	6.33	8	17.66	V
Full stop	3.83	6.83	8.5	19.16	V
Comma	3.83	3.83	8.25	15.91	V
Question Mark	1.66	2	3	6.66	V
Inverted Comma	1.16	1.66	2.5	5.32	V
Exclamation Mark	1.66	2	3.12	6.78	V
Apostrophe	1	1.5	2.25	4.75	V
Parentheses	0.3	0.5	0.75	1.55	V

The above table shows the total proficiency of college C in the use of selected (i.e. only eight) types of punctuation marks. On the basis of the scores no students of this college found in the excellent, very good, good and satisfactory proficiency level, they secured only fifth rank and poor level of performance.

Table No. 4 shows college C scored 19.16% in full stop, 17.66% in capitalization, 15.91% in comma, 6.78% in Exclamation mark, 6.66% in question mark, 5.32% in inverted comma, 4.75% in apostrophe and 1.55% in parentheses. All the types could place only in fifth position.

The above analysis shows the students of college C scored the heighest in full stop (i.e. 19.16%) and the lowest in parentheses (i.e. 1.55%). Similarly, in the order of their proficiency, it was found that the first full stop (i.e. 19.16%), second capitalization (i.e. 17.66%), third comma (I.e. 15.91%), fourth exclamation mark (i.e. 6.78%) and last parentheses (i.e. 1.55%) in the use of guided punctuation marks.

3.1.5 Analysis of the Proficiency in Punctuation of College D

The students of college D which was supposed to the students of B.Sc first year studying at Mahendra Morang Adarsha multiple campus, Biratnagar performed satisfactorily in the use of punctuation marks that administered in the test items. The total proficiency of college D is presented in the succeeding page:

Table No. – 5: The Total Score of College D

Types of Punctuation	Test Items			Average out of 100%	Rank
	Guided Writing		Free writing		
	S.W 30 %	MCPM 30 %			
Capitalization	5	4.83	7.75	17.58	V
Full stop	4.66	7	7	18.66	V
Comma	8.5	10.33	9.75	28.58	IV
Question Mark	2	2.83	5.25	10.08	V
Inverted Comma	0.5	1.5	3.5	5.5	V
Exclamation Mark	0.3	0.9	3.12	4.32	V
Apostrophe	0.5	0.7	4.5	5.7	V
Parentheses	0	-	0.62	0.62	--

The above table shows the total score (i.e. proficiency) of the students of college D in the use of punctuation marks correctly. The table No. 5 showed only one type of punctuation mark i.e. comma was found in fourth rank and satisfactory level. Except parentheses, the others i.e. capitalization, full stop, question mark , inverted comma, exclamation mark and apostrophe altogether 6 types secured fifth position. The only one type i.e. parentheses was found in very poor level of performance. None students of this college secured better proficiency level and rank in the correct use of punctuation marks.

The table No 5. Shows the total score that the students of college D scored 28.58% in comma, 18.66% in full stop, 17.58% in capitalization, 10.08% in question marks, 5.7% in apostrophe 5.5% in inverted comma, 4.32% in exclamation mark and 0.62% in parentheses.

On the basis of the above analysis the students of college D scored the highest in comma (i.e. 28.58%) and the lowest in parentheses (i.e. 0.62%). Similarly in the order of their score was first comma (i.e. 28.58%) second full stop (i.e. 18.66%) third capitalization (i.e. 17.58%) fourth question mark (i.e. 10.08%) and last parentheses (i.e. 0.62%) in the correct use of punctuation marks.

3.2 Total Proficiency of Punctuation Marks

At the second step of the analysis of this study, the total proficiency of the total sample population in full marks 2000/2000 separately in the three different types of test items was analyzed separately. The total proficiency of college A,B,C and D is presented in the succeeding page.

Table No.6: The Total Score of the Students of Four Faculties

Sample population	Sample size	Full marks	Test Items			Grand Total	%	Rank
			Guided Writing		Free Writing			
			S.W	MCPM				
A	20	2000	309	176	411	896	32	IV
B	20	2000	183	180	408	771	27	IV
C	20	2000	101	148	291	540	19	V
D	20	2000	129	168	332	629	22	IV
Total	80	8000	722	672	1442	2836	100	

The above table shows the total proficiency of the four colleges i.e. college A,B,C and D in three different test items in the use of punctuation marks correctly in the total average percentage. Out of 80, selected sample population 20/20 of each college (i.e. faculty) in 80,000 full marks 2000/2000 of each college separately was displayed in the table. On the basis of the table, college A,B and D secured the same rank fourth i.e. satisfactory level of proficiency whereas college C secured the fifth rank i.e. poor level of proficiency in the correct use of punctuation marks.

Table No.6 shows the total proficiency of the total sample population that college A scored the highest (i.e. 32%) and college C scored the lowest (i.e. 19%). Similarly, in the presentation of their total proficiency orderly first college A (i.e. 32%) second college B (i.e. 27%), third college D (i.e. 22%) and fourth and last college C (i.e. 19%) separately.

The total proficiency of college A,B,C and D in the total average percentage data is presented in the following simple bar- diagram.

Figure No. 1: Total Percentage Score of the Respondents

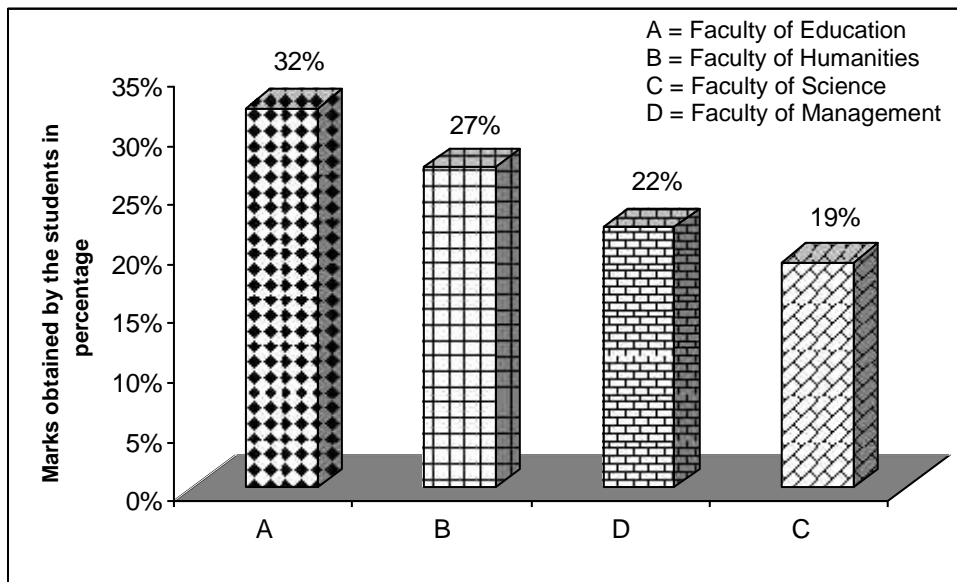


Figure No 1. Shows the total percentage score of the respondents, firstly, the college A was found better than others in the whole data, i.e. 32% preserving satisfactory level of proficiency. Then the college B scored 27%, college D scored 22% and college C scored 19% in the whole data. It can be said that no college students were found securing good level of proficiency in the punctuations.

3.3 Items Wise Analysis of Total Proficiency in Punctuation Marks

The analysis of this study for the next step is to display the total score of the total sample size i.e. 80. The test items were prepared of 100 full marks. Out of 100 marks, mainly there were two types of test items i.e. guided writing test item and free writing test item.

Guided writing test item was also divided into two sub-types i.e. sentence writing and marking the correct use of punctuation marks. So, their score was displayed in three different items. Sentence writing test item contained 30 marks, marking the correct use of punctuation marks, too contained 30 marks and free writing test item contained 40 marks altogether 100 marks. Similarly, the total score item was wisely presented of 80 students in average percentage separately of the different faculties with their rank order. Item wise total proficiency in the use of punctuation marks correctly is presented in the following table.

Table No. 7: The Total Score of Test Items.

Test Items		Faculties				Item wise total	Rank
		A	B	C	D	Average	
Guided Writing	Sentence writing	61.5	30.17	16.77	21.46	32.47	IV
	Making correct use of punctuation marks	31.05	30.05	24.65	28.09	28.46	IV
Free Writing		55.35	50.99	37.37	41.49	46.3	III
Faculty wise total average %		49.3	28.07	16.26	30.34	35.74	

The above table shows the item wise total proficiency of college A, B, C and D respectively with their average score, average total percentage and secured rank on the basis of their proficiency.

On the basis of the above table, the students of four faculties out of three different administered test items, in sentence writing test item and marking the correct use of punctuation mark the respondents secured fourth rank i.e. the satisfactory level of proficiency in the use of punctuation marks correctly. Similarly, in free writing test item, they secured third rank i.e. good level of proficiency.

The item wise score of separate college in sentence writing test item, college A scored 61.5%, college B 30.17, college C 16.77 and college D scored 21.46 in the average score separately. Similarly, in marking the correct use of Punctuation Marks, College A scored 31.05 college B scored 30.05, college C scored 24.65 and college D scored 28.09. the last test item i.e. in free writing test item college A scored 55.35, college B scored 50.99, college C scored 37.37 and college D scored 41.49 separately. Like wise item wise total average percentage in sentence writing of four faculties was 32.47%, in marking the correct use of punctuation mark was 28.46% and in free writing was 46.3% respectively. On the contrary, faculties total percentage score in three different test items altogether, the college A scored 49.35 college B scored 28.07%, college C scored 16.26% and college D scored 30.34% separately.

Table No 7. shows the item wise total proficiency of four faculties. The total sample size scored the highest in free writing (i.e. 46.3%) and the lowest in marking the correct use of punctuation mark (i.e. 28.46%). Similarly, in the ranking order, free writing was found

first, sentence writing was found second and marking the correct use of punctuation mark was found in the third and last rank. Similarly college A scored the highest (i.e. 49.3%). Likewise, in the presentation of their score in systematic order, first college A (i.e. 46.3%), second college B (i.e. 28.07), third college D (i.e. 30.34%) and fourth and last college C (i.e. 16.26%) separately.

3.4 Comparative Analysis of the Proficiency in the Use of Punctuation Marks

This is the last analysis of this study. Here, the total score of the total sample population size is shown in the table. The students of four different faculties scored in the administered test items correctly in the use of eight different punctuation marks which was displayed separately in the table and analyzed comparatively. The total score of the students of college A,B,C and D in eight types of punctuation marks in their use correctly is presented in the succeeding page:

Table No. 8: A Summative Comparison of the Respondents of the Four Faculties

Types of Punctuation	A		B		C		D	
	Average Score	Per	Average Score	Per	Average Score	Per	Average Score	Per
Capitalization	169	18.65	212	27.49	122	22.59	121	19.23
Full stops	178	19.64	157	20.36	132	24.44	127	20.19
Comma	163	17.99	130	16.86	112	20.74	191	30.36
Question Mark	97	10.70	49	6.35	46	8.51	71	11.29
Inverted Comma	50	5.51	56	7.26	37	6.85	40	6.35
Exclamation Mark	82	9.05	69	8.94	47	8.70	32	5.08
Apostrophes	147	16.22	91	11.80	33	6.11	43	6.83
Parentheses	20	2.20	7	0.074	11	2.03	5	0.56
Total Average	906	99.96	771	100.00	540	100.00	629	99.96

The above table shows the comparison of the student's proficiency in eight different types of punctuation marks in three different test items by the 80 students of four faculties.

Table No. 8 shows the total proficiency out of 80 students college A scored the highest in full stops (i.e. 19.64%) and the lowest in parentheses (i.e. 2.20%) , college B scored the highest in capitalization (i.e. 27.49%) and the lowest in parentheses (i.e. 0.07%), college C scored the highest in full stop (i.e. 24.44%) and the lowest in parentheses (i.e. 2.03%) and college D scored the highest in comma (i.e. 30.36%) and the lowest in

parentheses (i.e. 0.56%) . Similarly, the comparative study of score of the different types of punctuation marks was too observed separately. In capitalization college B scored the highest (i.e. 27.49%) and the lowest college A (i.e. 18.65%) in full stops college C scored the highest (24.44%) and college A scored the lowest (i.e 19.64%) in comma college D scored the highest (i.e. 30.36%) and college B scored the lowest (i.e. 16.86%) in question mark college D scored the heights (i.e. 11.29%) and college B scored the lowest (i.e. 6.35%) in inverted comma college B scored the highest (i.e. 7.26%) and college A scored the lowest (i.e. 5.51%), in exclamation mark college A scored the highest (i.e. 9.05%) and college D scored the lowest (i.e. 5.08%), in apostrophe college A scored the highest (i.e. 16.22%) and the college C scored the lowest (i.e. 6.11%) and in parentheses college A scored the highest (i.e. 2.20%) and college B scored thy lowest (i.e. 0.07%) separately.

Comparatively, table No- 8 shows college A was found better and college C was found weaker in the correct use of the using punctuation marks.

3.5 Conclusion

The students' proficiency level in using punctuation marks was found satisfactory, because the average percentage was 26.80. The proficiency of the students of FOE found better (i.e. 32%) than that of proficiency of the students of FOH (i.e. 27%), FOS (i.e. 22%) and FOM (i.e. 19%). The students of FOE secured the highest in sentence writing and free writing (i.e. 61.5% and 55.35%) respectively and FOH secured the highest in marking the correct punctuation marks.

The present research shows a satisfactory proficiency of the students that the overall proficiency of the students of Bachelor's level first year (i.e. FOE, FOH, FOM and FOS) in the use of punctuation marks. They performed better in free writing and sentences writing. Comparatively, they were found weaker in marking the punctuation marks in the tested test item.

CHAPTER – FOUR

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The present study was conducted to find out the proficiency of Bachelor level students in using punctuations to enhance the skills of students in speaking and writing (i.e. productive skill) and reading comprehension. The proficiency of the students were administered through the both guided and free writing items of tests in the classroom while they involve in writing activities. Findings and Recommendations are included in this section.

4.1 Findings

From the analysis and interpretation of all the data, the following findings are drawn:

- a. The proficiency of the students of Bachelor level first year in using punctuation marks was found satisfactory.
- b. The proficiency of FOE was found better (i.e. 32%) than that of the proficiency levels of students in the other faculties.
- c. The proficiency of respondents in the correct use of punctuation marks, free writing test item was found better (i.e. 46.3%) than the others item tests.
- d. The respondents were found better in the use of capital letters (i.e. 22%) compared to other types of punctuation marks.
- e. The proficiency of students in using punctuation was found weaker in parentheses (i.e. 5.53%) then that of the other types of punctuation marks.

- f. The proficiency level of the students was found better at private college than that of the students study in public campus.

So, proficiency seems to be effective in promoting productive skills in the proper spirit of grammatical correctness and inevitable to promote the correct use of punctuation marks of the students through writing skills.

4.2 Recommendations

On the basis of the findings from analysis the researcher has made following recommendations for pedagogical implications and for further research.

- a. Observing the positive performance of students, the techniques to be used as proficiency can be recommended to apply while teaching punctuations (i.e. grammar) to the students at bachelor level.
- b. By using proficiency in the use of punctuation marks methodologies, it can be assured that students will not only come to a depth understanding of the issues involved, but also their motivation and enthusiasm will be heightened. So, they should be encouraged.
- c. The research was limited to a public campus and a private college in Biratnagar. However, it can not be claimed that the findings of this study are applicable for all levels in all situations in the Nepalese context so to test the validity of research findings further researchers on this topic is highly recommended.

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