

International Multidisciplinary
Research Journal

*Indian Streams
Research Journal*

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RNI MAHMUL/2011/38595

ISSN No.2230-7850

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WAYS OF LEARNING ENGLISH LANGUAGE: A SURVEY



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LEARN ENGLISH

ABSTRACT:

The present paper is an attempt to find out different English language learning habits of first year students of commerce. The researcher conducted a survey in his college, consisting of ten questions, to find out the different ways of learning English language skills. The researcher has divided this paper into three parts. First part of the paper deals with the importance of English language in today's scenario. The second part focuses on the objectives and the methodology used to conduct this survey. It also provides the detailed analysis of the questionnaire. In the last part, the researcher concludes that students of the college are aware of different tools to develop their English language competency.

KEYWORDS

English language, language learning habits, competency.

INTRODUCTION:

Can you think of this world without English? The answer to this question is 'No'. One cannot even imagine this world without English, as it plays a vital role in day to day life. It is impossible in today's competitive world to survive without English language. If one is not acquainted with English language then one can face a range of problems like one cannot participate in group discussions, face an interview, write an application and score marks in the examination. It is very much essential to achieve mastery over English language and use it effectively in personal as well as professional life. It would help to climb the ladder of success not only in educational field but also in professional career.

The learner of English language should not forget that English is the language of the 21st Century. In true sense it is a global language. It is the second most widely spoken language in the world. English is overwhelmingly the second language of choice for non – English - speaking people. One must remember that English is the lingua franca of the next century. If we look at the various uses of English in different fields we realize that English is used as a language of international trade and transport. It is a language of international cooperation in science and technology. It is a universal language on the Internet. It is used as a medium for communicating information and news. English is a major language of international business and diplomacy. There are many more areas where English is regularly used for communication.

The above discussion shows that English is a widespread and important language in the world today. It is used for everything from international academic conferences to news reports to popular music lyrics. It is used not only for communicating between native speakers and non-native speakers of English but between non-native speakers as well. Even though it does not have the greatest number of speakers in the world, it is the most widely used language in the world and it will be used by more people in future.

Taking this background into consideration, the present survey was conducted to know how students try to develop their English language skills.

II.OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

While conducting this survey, the researcher had following objectives in his mind:

- 1.To know the different strategies used by learners to develop listening & speaking skills
- 2.To understand students' attitude towards learning grammar & vocabulary
- 3.To explore students' referencing skills and reading habits

III.METHODOLOGY

The prime objective of the study was to find out English language learning habits of first year commerce students of the college. So for conducting this research, a questionnaire was prepared consisting of 10 questions. Data was collected from first year commerce students to understand their English language learning habits. This questionnaire was filled up by 324 students. The questionnaire contained the following ten questions:

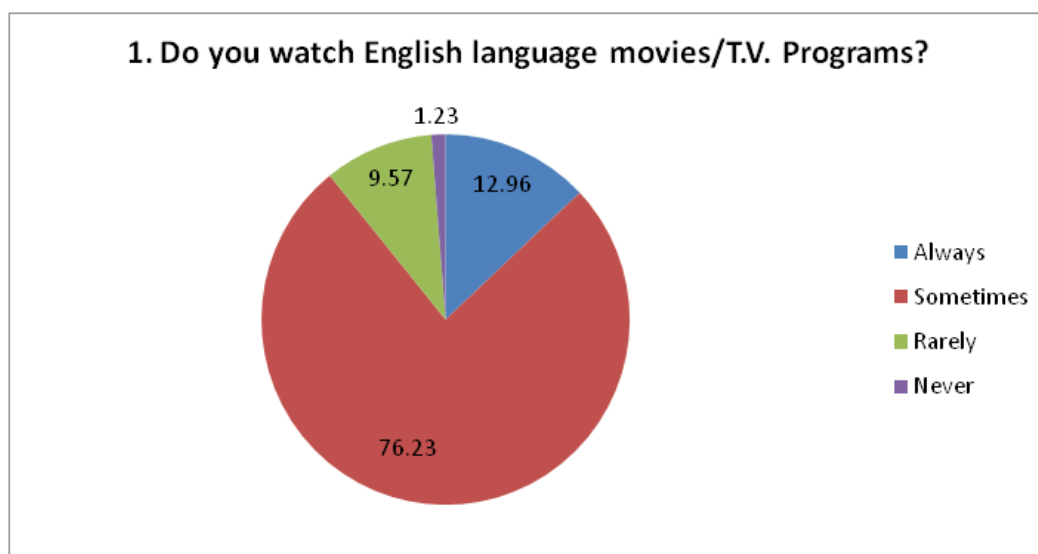
1. Do you watch English language movies/T.V. Programs?
2. Do you feel shy while speaking English?
3. Do you speak English with your own family?

4. Do you practise pronunciation and intonation?
5. Do you read English magazines/ newspaper?
6. Do you believe grammar is the most important part of learning English?
7. When you learn grammar in class, do you practise it in conversations with your friends or family?
8. Do you practise new vocabulary by using the words/idioms in sentences?
9. In class, if you make a mistake, do you later practise the correct way?
10. Do you use English to English dictionary?

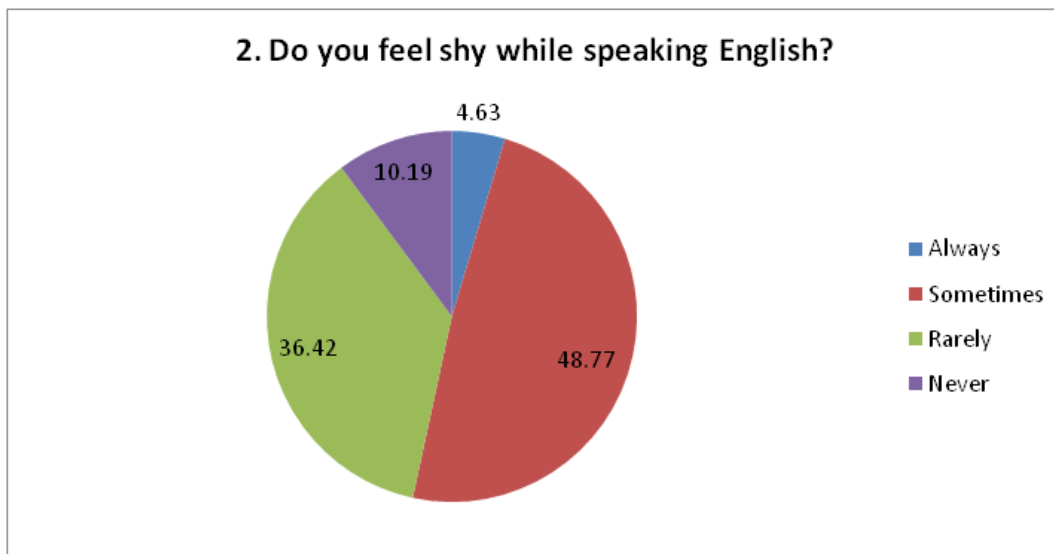
IV. DATA ANALYSIS

After collection of data, it was analyzed statistically to find out the trends among learners about their language learning habits. The analysis of data provides very interesting statistics. The detailed analysis of each question has been presented below by using different charts:

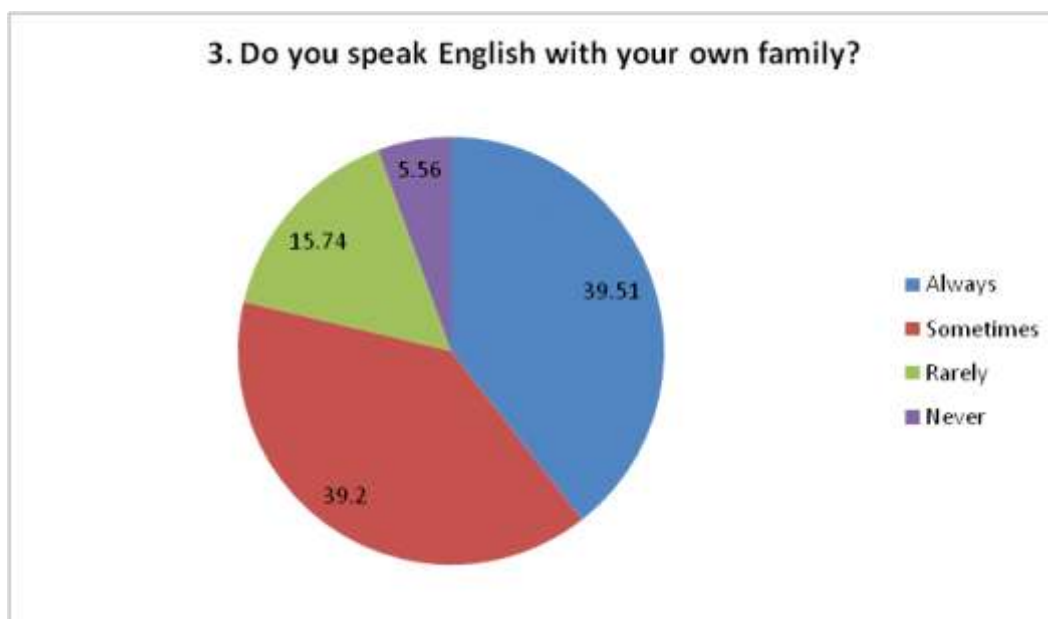
The analysis of the first question shows that 247 students sometimes watch English movies or television programs to improve their English language skills. That means 76.23% students try to improve their language skills by watching English movies or TV programs. But these students utilize these tools only sometimes and not always. The result also shows that only 42 students i.e. 12.96% students utilize these tools regularly. 31 students i.e. 9.57% students rarely use these tools and 4 students i.e. 1.23% students never use these tools to improve their English language skills.



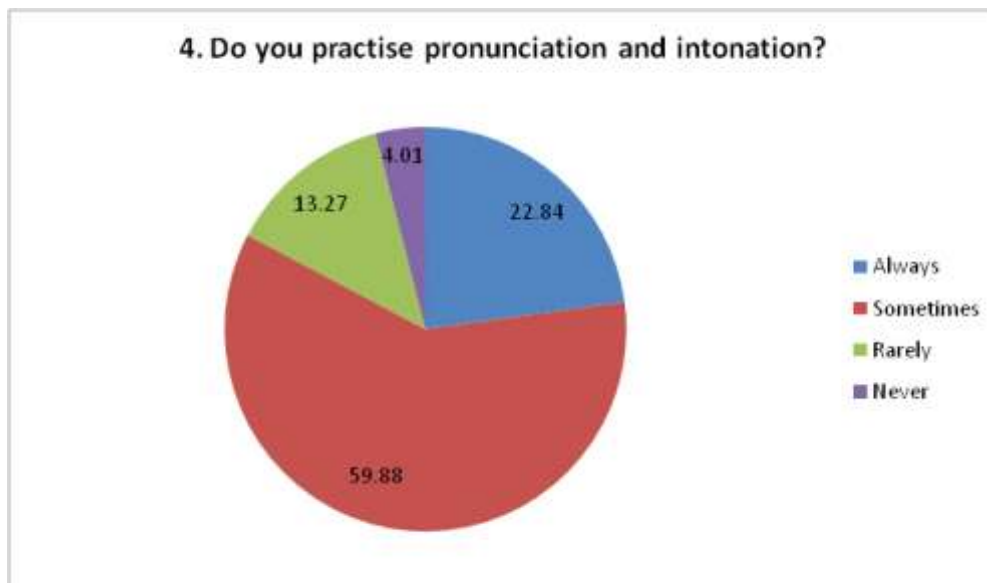
The results of the second question show that 158 students i.e. 48.77% students sometimes feel shy while speaking English. 118 students i.e. 36.42% students rarely feel shy when interacting in English. This shows that majority of students are confident to communicate in English language but there are few students who feel shy while interacting in English language. 15 students or 4.63% students always feel shy and 33 students or 10.19% students never feel shy while communicating in English.



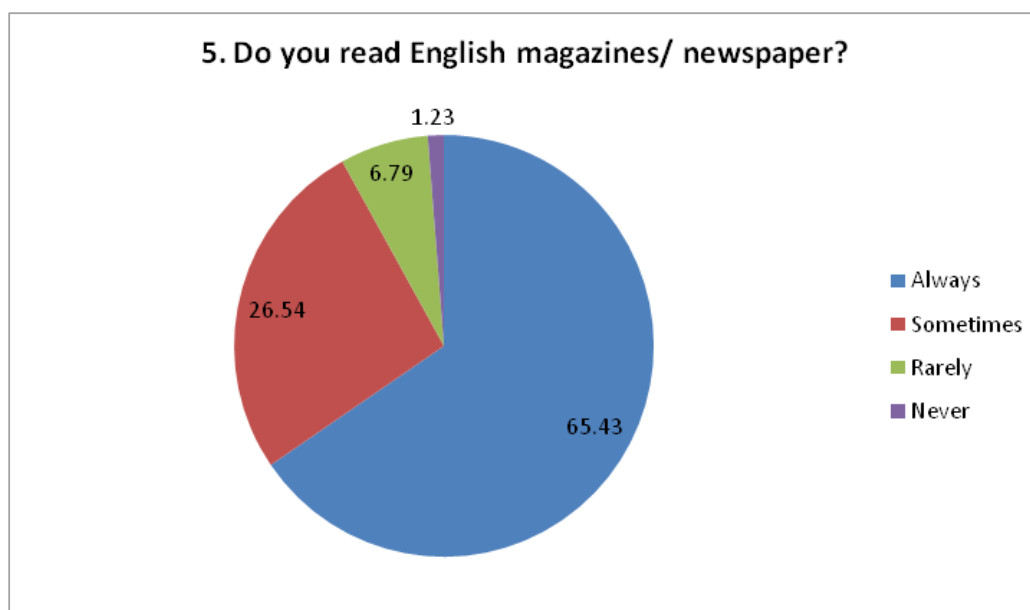
The analysis of the third question shows that 128 students i.e. 39.51% students always speak English with their family members. 127 students or 39.20% students sometimes interact with their family members in English. 51 students or 15.74% students seldom speak English in family. 18 students or 5.56% students never use English with their family.



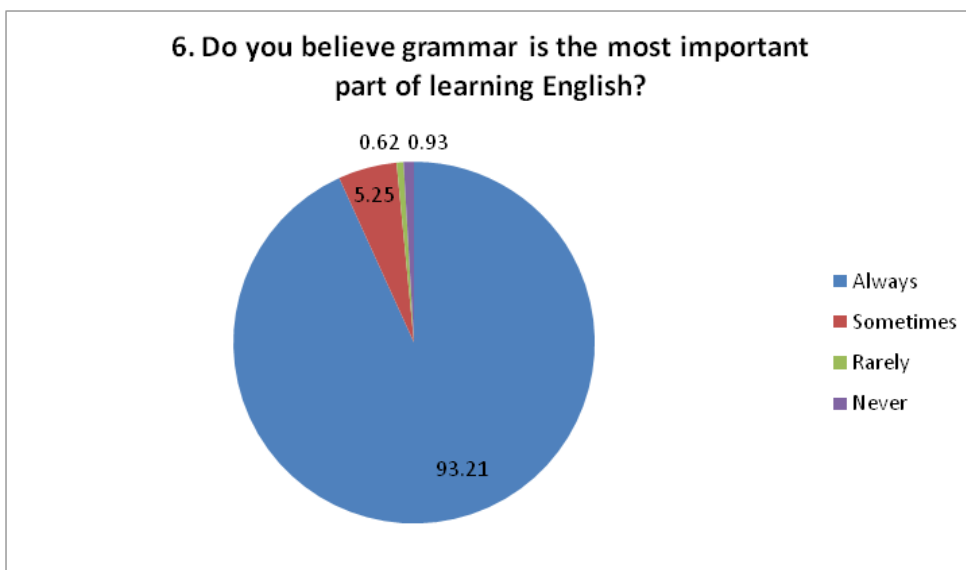
The results of the fourth question show that 194 students i.e. 59.88% students sometimes practice pronunciation and intonation to develop their English language competency. 74 students i.e. 22.84% students always practice these two sub-skills of speaking. This shows that majority of students are aware of the importance of intonation and pronunciation in learning English language, as they practice these sub-skills either sometimes or regularly. 43 students or 13.27% students rarely practice these two sub-skills and 13 students or 4.01% students never practice them.



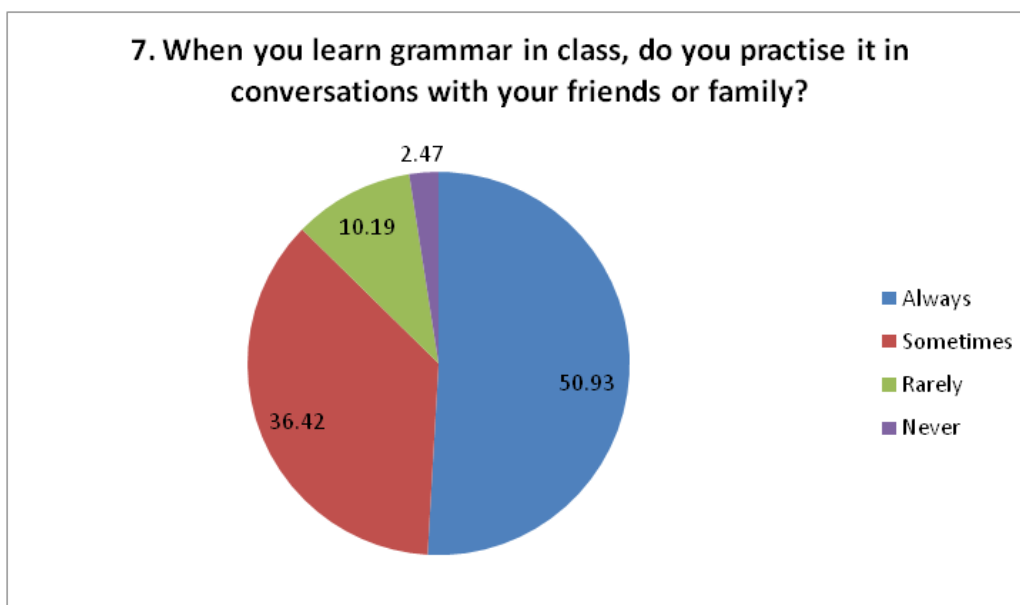
The analysis of the fifth question provides interesting details about the English language learning habits of the students. 212 students or 65.43% students are regular readers of English magazines or newspapers. They believe that these tools help to develop their English language proficiency. 86 students or 26.54% students also know the importance but they sometimes read English magazines and newspapers. 26 students are yet to realize the importance of these tools in developing their language skills. The result shows that 22 i.e. 6.79% students and 4 i.e. 1.23% students either rarely or never read English magazines or newspapers.



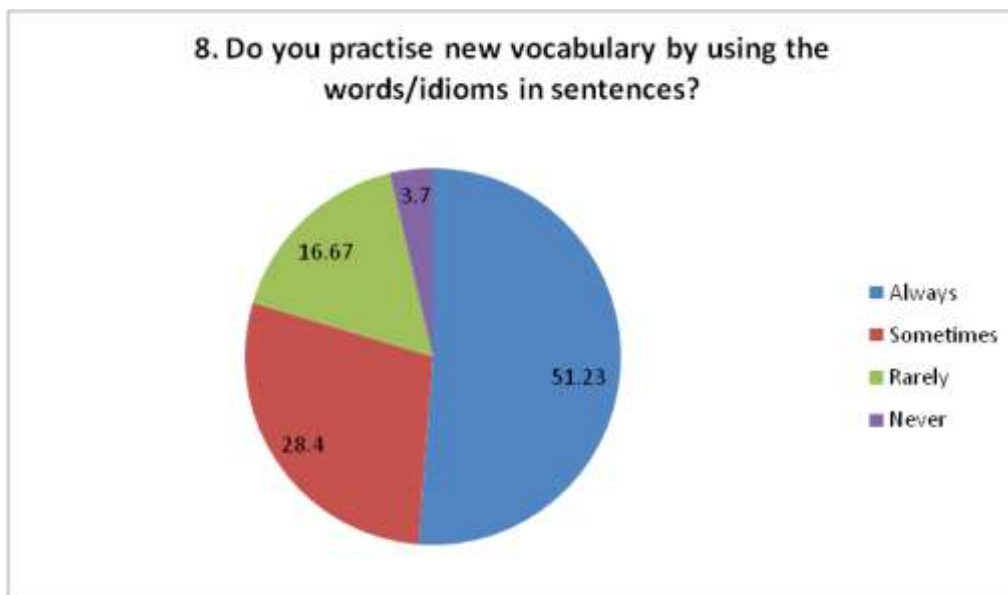
When these students were asked about the importance of grammar in learning English language, 302 i.e. 93.21% students responded in affirmation. They mentioned that grammar plays a vital role in learning a language. It is the most important part of learning English. 17 i.e. 5.25% students stated that grammar is sometimes important but 5 or 1.54% students believed that grammar is rarely or never important in learning English language.



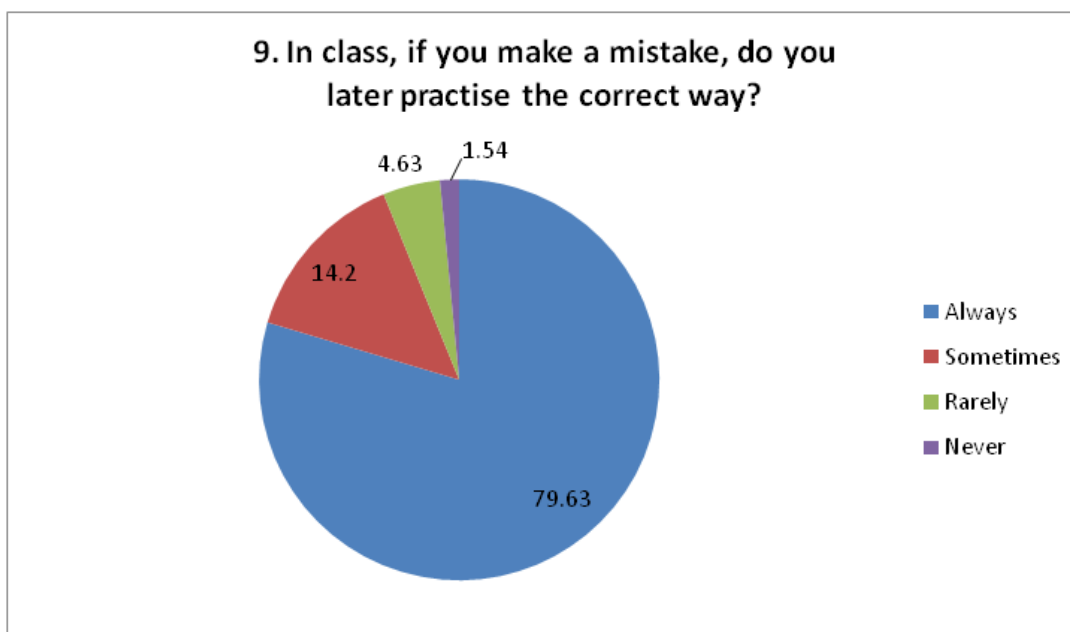
When learners were asked about practicing grammar in conversations with their friends or family members, 165 or 50.93% students mentioned that they practice it regularly. 118 or 36.42% students stated that they use it sometimes. 33 or 10.19% students rarely practice conversation with their friends or family members. 8 or 2.47% students never converse in English for learning grammar with others.



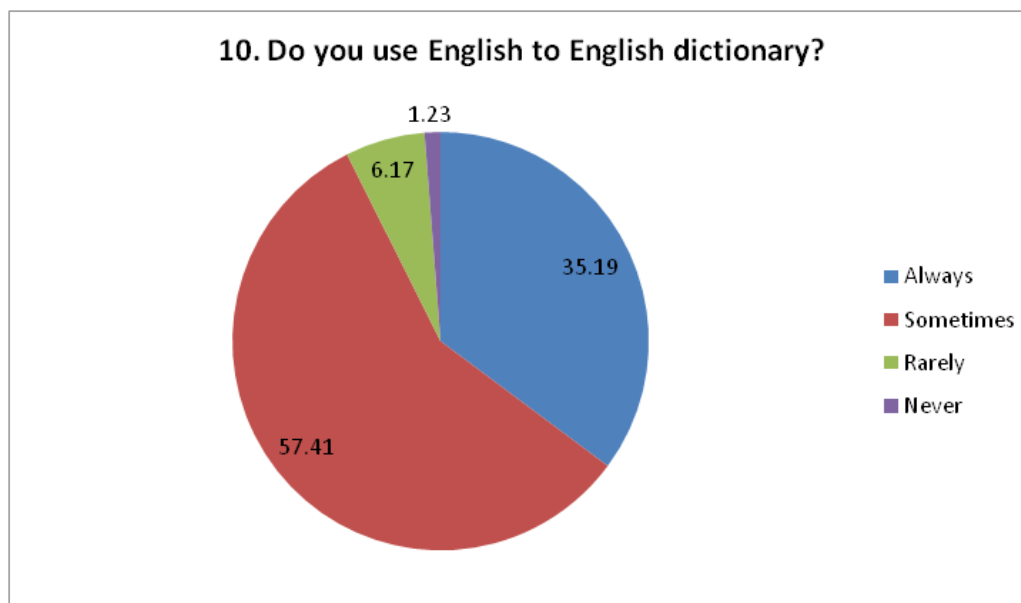
The results of eighth question show that 166 or 51.23% students practice new vocabulary regularly by using the words or idioms in sentences. 92 or 28.40% do the same thing sometimes. 54 or 16.67% rarely make use of new vocabulary in practice and 12 or 3.70% students never use new vocabulary in their conversation.



When they were asked about rectification of an error, 258 or 79.63% students informed that they do it regularly. 46 or 14.20% students do it sometimes. 15 or 4.63% students rarely try to rectify their errors by practicing the use in the correct manner. 5 or 1.54% students never take any efforts to rectify their errors.



When the researcher tried to find out learners' use of English to English dictionary, he got very interesting details. 114 or 35.19% students make use of English to English dictionary regularly. 186 or 57.41% students use them sometimes. 20 or 6.17% students rarely try to find out meaning in a dictionary. Only 4 or 1.23% students never use English to English dictionary.



V.CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it can be stated that students use various strategies to improve their English language competency. They are aware of tools of mass media like movies, television, magazines and newspapers and they judiciously make use of these tools to achieve proficiency in English language. At the same time, majority of the students are confident to use English with others and very few students feel shy while interacting in English. Majority of students interact in English with their family members or friends to develop their English language skills. They also practice pronunciation and intonation to develop their competency in English language. The results also show that students believe that grammar is the most important component of learning a language. Many of them practice conversations with others to use English grammar accurately. At the same time, many of them try to rectify their mistakes by practicing it in a correct way. They also build up their vocabulary by using new words in sentences and they refer to English to English dictionary to find out the meanings or usage of words.

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