

**READING SKILLS AND STRATEGIES: A STUDY
OF UNDERGRADUATE SPEAKERS OF TAMIL
LEARNING ENGLISH AT SALEM**

*Dissertation submitted to the Jawaharlal Nehru University
in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the award of the degree of*

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

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Dated: 26 July 2000

CERTIFICATE

I declare that the material in this dissertation entitled "READING SKILLS AND STRATEGIES: A STUDY OF UNDERGRADUATE SPEAKERS OF TAMIL LEARNING ENGLISH AT SALEM" submitted by SURESH P. Centre of Linguistics and English, School of Languages, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi for the award of the degree of MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY is an original work and has not been submitted so far in part or in full, for any other degree or diploma of any other University.

This may be placed before the examiners for evaluation for the award of the degree of MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am ever grateful to my guide Prof. Vaishna Narang for her immense help and encouragement without which the work would have never been completed. I thank my seniors Bakil and Jagdish for their constant support. I also remember my friends Raj, Bansi, Bijay, Homen, Uma and Gopal for their help in completing my work.

I recall my parents at this juncture for giving me the great opportunity to pursue my research interest.

I also wish to thank the students of B.A. (Pass) at Salem Sowdeswari College who willingly came forward to fill up the questionnaires. I believe that this study will help in understanding the complex subject of reading-skills and strategies.

Suresh P.

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CHAPTER 1

LEARNING TO READ: AN INTRODUCTION

- 1.1) Defining the process of Reading
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INTRODUCTION:

Reading is a receptive skill. It involves three processes which are recognition, identification and understanding. Recognition is based on sensory activity. But identification and understanding are cognitive activities. In other words, reading has two aspects - sensory and cognitive.

According to H.C. Widdowson, reading is a communicative activity and not merely a linguistic skill. The ability to read enables one to create or recreate discourse from the sources available in the language system and from other conventional symbols. Thus, reading is the ability to create a discourse in the mind what we perceive from the script.

Teaching of reading has two stages, primary and advance stage. At the primary stage, students should be taught 'Recognition' and in this stage, structuring should be emphasised. But at the advance stage, students should be taught to interpret the reading materials for themselves.

1.1) DEFINING THE PROCESS OF READING:

Reading domain is considered by Patricia la Carrell as "by far the most important of four skills in a second language particularly in English as a second language or foreign language".¹ The significance of Reading

¹ Carrell (1988), Interactive approaches of second language reading, CUP, p.1

is expressed in improving reading subs-skills as well as predict other language skills; for instance, we assume, one who listens consistently, will improve his reading abilities by improving his concentration and attention.

Goodman described reading as a "psycholinguistic guessing game", in which "reader reconstructs a message which has been encoded by a writer as a graphic display".² Regarding the two prevailing views on reading, whether it can be described as a passive act or an active act? Goodman took a stand that "reading is not a passive, but rather an active, and in fact an interactive process has been recognized for sometime in first or native language reading".³

Paul G. Berg says that the part of reading is essentially a distinct quality, which differs from the ordinary or simple reading. "It is ability of the person to distill all of the essential similarities from a series of object and event".⁴

Alderson who focused on text and reader has given a new outlook to reading. For him reading in a sense is an interaction between the reader and the text. This is the first time that reader has been put into the frame

² Carrell (1988), Interactive approaches of second language reading, CUP, P.2.

³ Carrell (1988), Interactive approaches of second language reading, CUP, P.1.

⁴ Berg G. (1971), Teaching efficient Reading, P.27

of structural statements. Most of the linguists have failed to give a precise definition of reading, one of the examples is Frank Smith's statement.

“Reading is no different from all other common words in our language, it has a multiplicity of meanings”.⁵ And further he explains, “reading may sometimes entail ‘comprehension’ and sometimes not”.⁶ Berg's opinion on reading and meaning is that “It is a perceptual process perception meaning that our thought processes are able to take these symbols and to invest them with meaning”.⁷

In order to understand reading, one has to identify what the reading sub-skills are, why they are considered to be important, and how they are linked with each other?

1.2) READING SKILLS AND STRATEGIES:

1.2.1) Reading Skills and Sub-Skills

Reading skills consist of sub-skills, which are the indispensable parts of reading skills. According to Alderson, "reading is composed of different sub-skills that might relate to one another within Taxonomy or hierarchy of skills."⁸ Many sub-skills of reading have been discussed subsequently; Barner (1968) for instance reported five skills, such as,

⁵ Smith Frank (1978-85), Reading CUP, p.100.

⁶ Smith Frank (1978-85), Reading CUP, p.100.

⁷ Berg G. (1971), Teaching Efficient Reading, p.10.

⁸ Introduction, Alderson (1984-89) Reading in a foreign language, p. XVI

“literal comprehension, reorganization of the ideas in the text, inferential ability, evaluation and appreciation”.⁹

Reading skills have been developed over the years, it was started from three elements of sub-skills to thirty-six elements of reading skills, and they were developed by the New York city board of Education as reported by Burner.

Yet there are some questions to be answered in order to understand how many elements basically constitute reading skills? The questions are as follows:

- (a) What is meant by reading skills or sub-skills?
- (b) How many reading skills and sub-skills can be identified?
- (c) Do they have reciprocal relationship with one another?
- (d) Are the sub-skills really constituting reading skills?
- (e) What is meant by reading strategies?
- (f) Do Reading skills and strategies claim parallel relation?

⁹ Introduction, Alderson (1984-89) Reading in a foreign language, P.XVI.

1.2.2) Reading Skills: Comprehension

Comprehension is based on predictions.”¹⁰ Further prediction is accepted through experiences and pre-set structural principles. Comprehending is a knowledge of understanding and interpreting what one learns or reads. But recent researches are not clear about how reading is related with comprehension or with interpretation. “‘Reading’ sometimes entails ‘comprehension’ and sometimes not...”¹¹ Further how understanding and reading speed are linked is shown by Nuttal.

“There is no doubt that reading speed and comprehension are closely linked. A very slow reader is likely to read with poor understanding”.¹² One who reads quickly can have good comprehensibility rather than a slow reader. Comprehension tests are basically formulated in a way to represent the reading knowledge through written forms.

Comprehensibility of a text:

It depends on a certain extent on language structure and to certain extent on vocabulary, the forms as well as their respective semantic range.

¹⁰ Goodman (1988) Carrell, Interactive Approaches of Second Language reading CUP.

¹¹ Smith Frak (1978-85), Reading CUP, p.100.

¹² Nuttal (1982), Teaching reading skills in a foreign language, p. 15.

Comprehension ability of the learners:

It depends on the learners' general linguistic ability, his educational background and a number of socio-psychological factors like motivations and attitudes.

1.3) READING PROCESS:

In scientific procedures, reading and vision has three aspects which are explained by P. Berg as:

1. "Sensory mechanism;
2. The motor mechanism – binocular – coordinating mechanism.
3. The mental process – which produces a conscious organizational patterning of this process into what we call visual perception".¹³

Sensory mechanism of Reading is experienced through eye. Many researchers explain it as eye muscles. Paul G. Berg's argument goes on explaining the difference between an educated and an uneducated person and their reading processes.¹⁴ "For the one who reads, however, the eye muscles steer the eye through a learned pattern of responses which select light energy transformed into electro chemical impulses is finally perceived in the brain as a decoded word, the perceptual area in the brain

¹³ Berg G. (1971), Teaching efficient Reading p.14.

¹⁴ Berg G. (1971), Teaching efficient Reading, p.4.

for the one who can read is prepared by many such previous experiences. So that immediate visual memory takes over and decoding is accomplished".¹⁵

There are two studies of understanding the eye movements. One study goes from the eye movement and predicts by means of it and the other is from the mental perception to eye. In this proposed view every eye movement is based upon reflecting of mental perception. Pre-determined experiences cause the effect on eye muscles and steer the eye through a learned pattern of responses. In other view Berg says, "good readers do not read word by word".¹⁶ Frank Smith gives a clear picture of how the FL reading can be done.

One starts his reading from word to word and gradually develops his capacity to learn and understand in total. This strategy is quite familiar in reading of FL and ESL. Reading process of MT is different because in FL learning one may start with (alphabets) formal (learning) education but as far as MT is concerned this kind of approach is not an essential way.

¹⁵ Berg G. (1971), Teaching efficient Reading, p.33.

¹⁶ Smith Frank (1978), Reading CUP, p.85.

1.4) DICHOTOMY OF READING THEORIES:

One of the many controversies in reading is concerned with the order of learning.

Top to bottom theory and bottom up theory are in contrast with each other. These theories are explained and supported by various linguists and language teachers.

1.4.1) Top to Bottom Theory:

Goodman (1981), Anderson (1978) and Cziko (1978) have jointly stated, “higher level processes interact, with and direct the flow of information through, lower level – processes”.¹⁷ In this procedure one may start with large units of stories or paragraphs and develop the skill to analyse by identifying sentences or the pairs of sentences. This process is known as ‘analytical procedure’ and this term is given by Smith. This model of reading contains the predictability, selective reading and understanding immediately by comprehension. Focus on the main theme is necessary rather than the sub-ordinate themes.

¹⁷ Carrell (1988), *interactive approaches to second language learning* p.3.

Fry (1963) supports the view of reading text (text/sentence/paragraphs) as a whole. He considers that many words are meaningless in isolation of sentence or paragraphs.

"The concept - driven top-down model suggests readers' exploitation of the knowledge of the context and ability to make predictions about the text based on prior experience".¹⁸

This model of reading contradicts with the bottom-up model of reading. For ESL beginners, top to bottom is helpful in the beginning stage. But in later stage bottom up model may be useful when a person attains significant required knowledge of English language.

1.4.2) Bottom up Theory

In this proposed model, learners start with letter contours, and end up with an essay or larger units. This is a study, which drives from easy to hard task. In this process, information is getting passed in each session. "In bottom up model, information flow occurs in a series of discrete stages where each stage transforms the input into the next stage by adding information".¹⁹ Further Srivastava explains, "The Model presupposes building up the textual meaning from lower level linguistic units (i.e.

¹⁸ Srivastava (1988) Article, Reading Strategies in Applied Linguistics, p.112.

¹⁹ Srivastava (---) Article, Reading Strategies in Applied Linguistics, p.111.

letters, syllables, morphemes etc.) to higher level units of linguistic organisation (sentences, texts etc)".²⁰

Bottom up reading, as mentioned by Donald E.P. Smith,

“Letter contours and contours in letters:

Letter, and letters in words and words in sentences.

Sentences and sentences to paragraphs:

Paragraphs and paragraph in discourse.²¹

Studying from the bottom to top is named as synthetical procedure, it is very difficult to find out which one procedure can be relied on, whether the bottom up or top to bottom order of reading. Conceptualization of both theories is not the same.

1.5) PEDAGOGICAL ASPECTS OF READING:

Mother Tongue and other Tongue Reading:

According to Nuttal, “Reading lesson is used as an opportunity to teach pronunciation, encourage fluent and expressive speaking and so on”.²² It is not apparently known how Mother Tongue Reading is different from the other tongue reading. According to Nuttal “It is not clear to what

²⁰ Smith D.E.P., (1976), A technology of Reading and writing, New York, p.76.

²¹ Introduction, Alderson, (1984) Reading in a foreign language, Longman, p.XVI.

²² Nuttal, Christine (1982), Teaching Reading Skills in a foreign language, HEB, London p.2.

extent reading in a foreign language is different from reading in first language”.²³

In order to distinguish between MT and OT Reading, the process should be visualised, whether it starts from letters to sentence or sentence to words.

During the 60's when structural models of language and behaviouristic theories of learning dominated language pedagogy, the mother tongue interference hypotheses was also the focus of pedagogical theories and practice. This context interpreted that the MT reading strategies and strategies followed by a learner, are bound to influence his second language or FL reading practices.

Later part of seventy's when studies in error analysis and interest in learners' language hypothesis was at its peak, the MT interference hypothesis became of marginal interest only. In that context in the 80's, again we find a growing interest in the hypothesis with these changes in the theoretical context, it is understandable that we have different view points regarding the process through which mother tongue learner and other tongue learner to read.

²³ Nuttall (1985) Teaching Reading skills in a foreign language, Longman, p.1.

There are two contrary views on reading of FL. One view is the reading of FL through MT and the second view of supporting reading FL without the help of MT. In 1970 Jolly proclaimed that one's reading abilities are based upon two propositions. One is 'old experiences' and second is 'adequate reading of foreign language'. First proposition consists of another skill that is transfer of old skills into FL reading. Goodman's view is quite debatable because he does not identify the differences between FL and FT Reading. He says, "the reading process will be much the same for all languages".²⁴

OBJECTIVES:

The objectives of this dissertation are:

- (1) To identify the strategies adopted by Tamil students while reading and comprehending a written English text.
- (2) To study the comprehension level of Tamil undergraduate students in learning English. That is related to the level of understanding a text.
- (3) To study the speed of reading and comprehension.

²⁴ Alderson (1984) Teaching Reading skills in a foreign language, p.4.

- (4) To suggest effective proposals to broadly improve reading skills and strategies.
- (5) Examining teaching strategies used for non-literary and literary texts, which help to find out the specific strategy used for specific purposes.

1.6) MULTILINGUALISM IN INDIA:

Multilingualism is a prominent factor in India because of its multiethnicity. Multilingualism means knowing of two or more languages without any reference of equality in all the languages. But in the literary it denotes equal competence in all the languages.

In a realistic view, Tamil learners are very close to Bilingual situation rather than multilingual situation but this is an exception when we focus on Border areas of the intermediate state. Eventhough we can't conclude Tamil learners are Bilingual. Considerably it has influence of three language notably, Kannada, Telgu and Malayalam. To standardize the ELT in Tamil Nadu is necessary where regional colleges which teach English as a second language has a major flaw that without knowing the particular strategy of teaching variety of texts, teachers intend to teach. This can be identified by evaluating the students' comprehension knowledge and their reading skills.

1.6.1) Teaching Materials:

The Madras University has prescribed teaching materials for B.A., IInd year students; they are English paper II, American Literature, Drama and History of English Literature. English paper II consists of the glossary of poems, prose and drama. In American literature, two detailed and non-detailed novels has been prescribed; the detailed novels are 'Glass Menagerie" and "Old Man and the Sea." In Drama paper "Edward the second" is the detailed text and there are four non-detailed plays, other than the detailed one. "History of English Literature" consists of three studies, which are social, political and literature development in England.

1.7) LITERATURE REVIEW: LEARNING TO READ:

How does the learner proceed in his or her reading? What are the procedures? How can an effective model be devised according to his or her needs? These are the questions to be answered by literature review.

Reading comprehension: Strategies

In the book, *Reading and Learning to Read*, Jonnane L. Vacca, Richard T. Vacca and Marry K. Grove gives a detailed analysis of the same procedure of reading which lays importance on practices, the reading process and comprehending the knowledge of students.

- 1) Attending,
- 2) Discrimination – identifying, matching and so on
- 3) Recognising-knowing, identifying, and understanding.
- 4) Reproducing-speaking, spelling.

These are the steps for learning process, developing reading skills one by one or gradually.

Franchise Grellet, in the book, *Developing Reading Skills*, stated that understanding a written text means expecting the required information as efficiently as possible.

- 1) Skimming: quickly mining one's eyes, "over a text to get the gist of it".
 - 2) Scanning: quickly going through a text to find a particular piece of information
 - 3) Extensive Reading: Reading longer texts, usually for one's own pleasure. This is a fluency activity, mainly involving global understanding.
 - 4) Intensive Reading: Reading shorter texts, or texts to extract specific information. This is an activity involving reading in detail.
- Importance of Reading and selecting of materials are related to the

interest of students. Grellet's, exercise book is to be learnt while beginning and during the learning process.

In John Munby's *Communicative Syllabus Design* he mentions that of Reading skills which are involved in designing the syllabus on the basis of characteristics such as:

- Recognizing the script of a language.
- Deducing the meaning and use of unfamiliar lexical items.
- Understanding explicitly stated information.
- Understanding information when it is not explicitly stated.
- Understanding conceptual meaning.
- Understanding the communicative value (function) of sentences and utterances.
- Understanding relations within sentences.
- Understanding relations between the parts of a text through lexical cohesion devices.
- Understanding cohesion between parts of a text through grammatical cohesion devices.
- Interpreting the text by going outside of it.
- Recognizing indicators in discourse.

- Identifying their main parts or important information in a piece of discourse.
- Distinguishing the main idea from supporting details.
- Extracting salient points to summarize (the text, main idea, etc.)
- Selective extraction of relevant points from a text
- Basic reference skills.
- Skimming
- Scanning to locate specifically required information.
- Transcending information to diagrammatic display.

D. B. Fry (1963) in his book *Reading Faster* emphasises on reading speed without ignoring comprehension. His focus on vocabulary is also a notable characteristic. Fry supports the view of studying meaning as a whole pattern rather than parts. He considers that many words are meaningless in isolation of sentences or paragraphs. He says that, the testing of comprehension may be two kinds: one is to be asked directly to test the student and his ability to understand, and the other, to ask indirectly to test his conceptual abilities.

Paul G. Berg, in his book *Teaching of Efficient Reading* (1971) explains the causes of poor reading habits due to:

- (1) Lack of effective techniques,
- (2) Lack of effective practice with new techniques.
- (3) Lack of practice in direct translation in reading symbols,
- (4) Insufficient background.
- (5) Technical materials: some technical subjects demand slow, exact reading.
- (6) Visual problems.

Further, he explains the solutions to the poor reading habits, regular work is to be examined in the following measures:

- (i) Some of it contains many details, some very technical, and these must be read relatively slowly.
- (ii) Other materials will be fairly simple in purpose and detail, and these can be read very rapidly.
- (iii) Whatever the material, it usually has three parts: (a), (b) and (c).
 - (a) an introduction, usually starting a topic or idea or the purpose for writing.
 - (b) a development of the idea and
 - (c) a conclusion, summary or ending.

Paul G. Berg is describing what are the characteristics of successful reader in his book as follows:

- (1) has purpose
- (2) can concentrate
- (3) comprehends what he reads
- (4) remembers what he reads
- (5) has a good vocabulary and
- (6) can read rapidly but with rate depending on the material.

Alderson concludes, the reading problems can be solved in five ways:

- (1) If poor first - language reading is the cause, we must improve the first language reading.
- (2) If poor foreign language knowledge is cause, we need to improve FL competence.
- (3) If first language reading ability is short-circuited by low FL competence, we need to improve FL competence first, then improve the reading strategies of poor first-language readers.
- (4) If processing is different for different languages, then we need to teach reading of the foreign language, regardless of the first language ability.

- (5) If transfer of reading ability takes place across the native or non-native language divide, than we can teach reading in either first or foreign language reading. Reader who are poor in foreign language reading but not their first language are either logical impossibilities or merely in need of familiarisation with the first language code".²⁵

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²⁵ Alderson (1984), Reading in a Foreign Language, Longman, p.6.



CHAPTER 2

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

- 2.0 Research procedures in Social Science: an introduction
- 2.1 Objectives
- 2.2 Test procedures
- 2.3 Subjects
- 2.4 Elicitation Procedures
- 2.5 Questionnaire I
- 2.6 Questionnaire II
- 2.7 Pilot study
- 2.8 Assessment
- 2.9 Chapterisation

2 METHODOLOGY:

2.0 RESEARCH PROCEDURES IN SOCIAL SCIENCES: AN INTRODUCTION:

Like any other discipline in social sciences linguistic and pedagogical studies have also witnessed trends changing from subjective studies to objective studies and vice-versa, rational to empirical approaches and vice-versa i.e. empiricism to rationalism. The trend has also been changing sometimes in favour of longitudinal studies sometimes, cross sectional studies and sometimes a combination of the two.

The present study includes the combination of subjective and objective test procedures for data elicitation and analysis. This is partly empirical (mostly for needs analysis) and partly subjective. (assessment and evaluation of teaching materials). Due to paucity of time in M.Phil programme it is not possible to conduct a long drawn longitudinal study on one or more individuals who are in the process of learning to read under similar or different conditions. So the data elicitation for the study was only cross sectional.

The data comes from both primary as well as secondary sources. The studies conducted in the area of reading skills and strategies which serve as the secondary source of information is discussed in chapter I sections numbers 7. The primary data is what we collected from students

through questionnaire (Appendix I) and the teaching materials currently in use (section 1.6.1 page no.15).

This chapter on Research Methodology outlines the objectives and hypotheses (section 2.1 page no.24) followed by the research procedures in two sections. The section dealing with the test conducted on the students has detail about the subject (page no.25), factors control and variables (page no.), the questionnaire (page no.) The last section deals with analysis and the assessment procedures for teaching materials/methods currently in use. Finally, there is a note on chapter divisions (page no.38).

2.1 OBJECTIVES:

1. To identify strategies adopted by Tamil students while reading and comprehending a written English text.
2. To study the comprehension level of Tamil graduate students learning English.
3. To study the speed of reading and comprehension.
4. To suggest effective proposals broadly to improve reading skills and strategies.
5. Examining teaching strategies used for non-literary and literary texts, which help to find out the specific strategy used for specific purposes.

2.2 TEST PROCEDURES:

The following tests were conducted in order to:

- (a) analyse the attitudinal factors pertaining to the reading habits of the learners, a self-assessment.
- (b) test the reading comprehension skills and competence of the students.

2.3 SUBJECTS:

Subjects in this experiment are thirty II year students of B.A., English Literature. Out of thirty, 14 are males and 16 are females studying in the same class. Even though they have come from different linguistic backgrounds, their competence in Tamil is quite similar. Three students come from Telugu background, four students come from Kannada linguistic background and rest of them have Tamil as Mother Tongue. But all of them use Tamil as the first language.

Before analysing the details of second language competence of the students, we have to distinguish between two major factors playing important role which are:

- (a) Tamil medium learners and English Medium Learners.
- (b) Gender - male or female learners.

In Tamil Medium, teaching instruction is in Tamil upto XII standard. But in English Medium, the medium of instruction is English since the primary education. Generally, English is the subject since the III standard of their schooling. Eight students have come from English Medium background and rest of them are from Tamil medium background.

2.4 ELICITATION PROCEDURES:

Formulating the Questionnaire:

There are two different kinds of questionnaire which are formulated for two different purposes. Formulation of the 1st questionnaire is carefully followed on the basis of learners, a self assessment. The second questionnaire is through time bound testing of reading comprehension.

2.5 QUESTIONNAIRE I:

The purpose of the first questionnaire is as follows:

- (a) to analyse the attitudinal factors pertaining to the nature of reading skills and strategies of the learners,
- (b) to get self-assessment of the students pertaining to the reading skills and strategies adopted by them,
- (c) to get a self-assessment by the students pertaining to their reading speed and habits.

The purpose of self-assessments test, is to know the strategy of

second language, which are followed by Tamil learners. There are 25 questions in this questionnaire. In order to mark the correct responses, students are asked to put a circle around the answers. The responses are marked on a five point scale, (1 to 5), 1 being the most positive and 5 being the most negative and 3 is neutral. One who gets Maximum Marks will be the poor reader.

The maximum marks one can get in the marking is 125 and minimum is 25 marks. In this marking one who gets minimum marks is considered to be a good reader and is expected to know the right skills and strategies procedures and methods of reading. The questionnaire along with detailed instructions given to the students is being reproduced below.

QUESTIONNAIRE I:

QUESTIONNAIRE: MONITORING STRATEGIES OF READING COMPREHENSION

- * In order for us to teach better, and in order for us to improve the English reading program, we need your help by answering this questionnaire.
- * Please read all the statements below and kindly answer all of them.
- * Please put a circle (0) around the number you feel represents your belief i.e. 1,2,3,4 or 5.
- * Please remember that the number 1-5 represent a scale; see below
- * Remember that this questionnaire is for research purpose only, so that please be cooperative and honest in answering the statements.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5

Questionnaire I : Data Tabulation

1. When reading in English, I am able to predict what will come next in the text
2. When reading in English, I am able to recognize the difference between main points and supporting details.
3. When reading in English, I am able to relate information, which comes next in the text to previous information in the text.
4. When reading in English, I am able to question the truthfulness of what the author says.
5. When reading in English, I am able to use my prior knowledge experience to understand the content of the text I am reading.
6. When reading in English, I have a good sense when I understand something and when I do not.
7. I can write a summary of the passage only if I re-read it.
8. I usually use punctuation to understand complex and long sentences.
9. When I read the title of a passage I can predict what the passage is about, and I check this prediction while reading.
10. When skimming a text, I read the first sentence of every paragraph quickly in order to deduce the whole idea of the paragraph.
11. When scanning a text, I look for the specific information I need.
12. When I read I keep my purpose in mind.
13. I feel that I understand better, if I read slowly.
14. I feel that I understand better, if I read fast.
15. When I read a text I can understand better, if I know its type/function (e.g.) classification, an article, cause and effect, etc.)

16. If there is a picture or a diagram in the text I would like to see picture before going to paragraphs
17. When I read in English I feel that all words in the text are important and that I should know the meanings before I continue my reading

When I read a text in English, I do so because...

18. I find it interesting.
19. I want to improve my English particularly in reading and vocabulary
20. I want to know that the author has to say.
21. I want to pass time and read for pleasure.

When reading silently in English, if I don't understand something

22. I keep on reading and hope for clarification further on
23. I reread the difficult part.
24. I go back to a point before the difficult part and start reading.
25. I look up unknown words in a dictionary

2.6 THE QUESTIONNAIRE II:

The purpose of the second questionnaire is as follows:

- (a) to analyse and test the reading comprehension skills and competence of the students.

This questionnaire has three parts. The first part consisting of 5 questions and each question is based on different purposes; generally, coherence, observation, checking of vocabulary and its occurrences mainly subjected towards the contextual meanings. The correct responses marked

by one marks. The maximum mark for this part is five.

The second part consists of five separate paragraphs. In each separate paragraph, there are two questions. The language used in these paragraphs are not so simple as used in part A. The first paragraph is on political science, the second paragraph is on science. In these two paragraphs, checking of the learners expected to extract the exact meaning or vocabulary and it's contextual occurrences.

The third and fourth paragraph questions are consisting of reading contextual meaning, sequential order of the incidents. So part B, paragraphs are amalgam of science, political science and philosophy subjects. The correct responses carry one mark each, so that maximum marks in this part can be 10 marks.

The part C consists of two essays, one essay is from a science text book and the other from prose. Each essay has three questions, so the maximum marks are six. In this part, scientific terms, comprehensibility and understanding abilities of orders are checked.

The second questionnaire test is time bound and was given only forty minutes at the maximum. According to Wallace J. Michael (1998) time-based exercise might yield better understanding and comprehensibility.

Reading Skills and Strategies Comprehension Test

- i) *This text is meant for research purpose, so please take it seriously.*
- ii) *This text is divided into three parts (A), (B) and (C). Part A can be answered with 15 minutes, Part B can be answered within 20 minutes, Part C can be answered within 15 minutes. (maximum of 50 minutes).*
- iii) *To answer the question you have to put a circle any round your choice, a,b,c, or d.*
- iv) *Maximum time limit is 50 minutes. After the 50 minutes please stop writing.*

(Starting Time.....)

Part A (Max. 15 Minutes)

Circle the Answer:-

- 1) Reading is important merely because it gives access to new knowledge. Being an active process requiring effort, concentration and deliberation, it is an aid to thinking.
Why Reading is Important?
 - (a) reading is important because it is an aid to thinking.
 - (b) reading is important because it gives access to new knowledge.
 - (c) because it requires effort and concentration.
 - (d) because it requires deliberation.

- 2) The global health team assists the local health workers in stopping the spread of what are called communicable diseases, like cholera. These disease can spread from one country to another and so can be a Threat to world health.
What is the meaning of communicable diseases?
 - (a) cholera
 - (b) which can spread
 - (c) which can spread from one country to another
 - (d) it is not mentioned in the paragraph.

- 3) Newspapers are the cheapest medium of information today. Also they are easily available to everybody. Newspapers are an important means of educating people.
The main role of newspapers might be....
- (a) Cheapest medium of information.
 - (b) They are easily available to everybody.
 - (c) Well-informed abbot current affairs.
 - (d) None of these.
- 4) There was a sandstorm yesterday. In the evening, the sky suddenly become yellow with sand and wind began to blow strongly. The branches of trees started shaking violently in the wind. The wind blew pieces of paper and leaves along with Birds.
Which is the first incidence during sand-storm?
- (a) there was a sand storm yesterday.
 - (b) the sky suddenly becoming yellow with sand and wind being to blow strongly.
 - (c) the wind blew pieces of paper and leaves along with Birds.
 - (d) none of the above.
- 5) Today there is a lot of unrest in the student community. Everyday one hears of strikes and violent demonstrations in some university or other. The students have acquired unusual powers and teachers and authorities alike are conscious of this.
Unrest of the student community is exposed....
- (a) through strikes and violent demonstrations.
 - (b) because the students have acquire unusual powers.
 - (c) because students want to occupy the powers of teachers and authorities
 - (d) because they are intelligent.

Part-B (Max. 20 Minutes)

- I. We in India have our own special problems. No one can deny that some of them are of a serious nature and must be attacked with vigour and determination. Our national objectives have been defined clearly. We aim at providing every citizen with the basic necessities and complete freedom to lead a life of his or her own choice. We aim (at providing every citizen with the basic necessities and complete freedom to) to create a democratic society, strong and free, in which every citizen, irrespective of his religious belief will occupy an equal and honoured opportunities for growth and service.

1. *This passage could most probably be a part of.....*

- (a) the Indian constitution
- (b) a book on political science
- (c) a speech
- (d) a personal letter.

2. *According to the author, our National objective is to.....*

- (a) create equal opportunities for all
- (b) end economic exploitation in the country.
- (c) promote individual freedom and prosperity.
- (d) promote democracy, socialism and secularism.

II From the very beginning man has attempted what has seemed impossible. Man is different from the rest of the creation in this respect. He has an eternal thirst for adventure. This led to countless new discoveries and invention. Human curiosity is limitless. It is responsible for space exploration and moon landings.

1) "He has an *eternal* thirst for adventure Here *eternal* means.....

- (a) great
- (b) old
- (c) without beginning or end
- (d) that which cannot be satisfied.

2) "*It* is responsible for space exploration and moon landings" Here *it* stands for.....

- (a) man's attempting the impossible.
- (b) The difference between men and the rest of creation.
- (c) Man's eternal thirst for adventure.
- (d) None of the above.

III. Astronauts Armstrong, Collins and Aldrin, who were the first humans to set foot on the soil of the moon, have proved beyond doubt that man shall not rest until he has conquered the entire universe.

Now the questions arises: Is in enough to know and Master Nature? To answer it one should first answers a more basic question: which is more important knowing and understanding the world around you or knowing and understanding yourself? Every one will agree that in the absence of self knowledge even the most advanced knowledge of the universe will be not only useless out also dangerous.

- 1) *Which is more important knowing and understanding the world around you or knowing and understanding yourself?*
- (a) one particular person
 - (b) one imaginary reader
 - (c) only those who read this passage
 - (d) one, any one.

- 2) *The above sentence implies that.....*
- (a) one should have only self-knowledge
 - (b) a knowledge of the universe is in all cases useless and dangerous
 - (c) the author doesn't want any one to know and understand the universe
 - (d) first one should know and understand oneself and only afterwards try to know and understand the universe.

IV. By far the most common difficulty in study is simple failure to get down to regular concentrated work. This difficulty is much greater for those who do not work to plan and have no regular routine of study. Many students muddle along doing a bit of this subject or that, as the mood takes them, or letting their set work pile up until the last possible moment.

Few students work to set time table, they say that if they did construct a time - table for themselves they would not keep to it or would have to alter it constantly, since they can never predict from one day to the next what their activities will be.

1. *Concentration is a main factor in reading it can be developed by following.....*

- (a) study irregularly
- (b) studying regularly
- (c) by compulsion of teacher
- (d) none of these.

2) *Students could not follow the time-table because.....*

- (a) they can't predict the timing
- (b) they haven't facilitated with concentration
- (c) students are working a lot for fixing the time - table.
- (d) none of these.

- V. It is evident that there is a close connection between the capacity to use language and the capacities covered by the verb 'to think'. Indeed some writers have identified thinking with using words: Plato coined the aphorism, in thinking the sound is talking to itself'. J.B. Watson reduced thinking to inhibited speech located in the minute movements or tension of the physical mechanism involved in speaking: and although Ryle is careful to point out that there are many senses in which a person is said to think in which words are not in evidence, he has also said that saying something in a specific frame of mind is thinking a thought.
- 1) *The thinking common to Plato, Watson and Ryle is their belief in.....*
- (a) the soul's capacity to talk to itself
 - (b) some relation between most thinking and language.
 - (c) thinking being unexpressed speech.
 - (d) complete identify between thinking and speech.
- 2) *Who reduced 'the thinking' into inhibited speech.....*
- (a) Plato
 - (b) Watson
 - (c) Ryle
 - (d) none of them.

Part - C (Max. 15 Minutes)

Water is an important medium for the activity of the living. Water is essential for the growth and maintenance of plant and animal life. Plants and animals can survive for very short period without the external supply of water.

In human body, some of the important processes such as digestion, transport and excretion are to a great extent regulated with the help of water. The salts present in the food materials consumed by us are dissolved in water. There are absorbed by the body. Some of the waste materials are also dissolved in water and excreted from the body. All the metabolic relations in the body take place in an aqueous (water) medium. Water also regulates temperature by the process of sweating and evaporation.

The importance of water in plant life is an significant in the human body. Water in plants help in the germination of seeds, preparation of food by plants through the process photosynthesis and dissolution of nutrients supplied by the soil and fertilizers for absorption by the plants. It also helps in transport of minerals and food in plants and in the maintenance of the structure of the plants parts by providing the appropriate pressure to plant

tissues. Water provides a habitat in the form of ponds, lakes, rivers and sea to several organisms.

- 1) *Water is an important medium for the animity of the living because.*
 - (a) plants and animals can survive for a very short period without the external supply of water.
 - (b) Water is essential for the growth and maintenance of plant and animal life.
 - (c) a only
 - (d) a and b.

- 2) *What is the meaning of metabolism reaction?*
 - (a) digestive, transport and excretion.
 - (b) chemical processes of a living body.
 - (c) some of the waste materials are also dissolved in water and excreted from the body.
 - (d) none of the above.

- 3) *What is the suitable title for the passage?*
 - (a) importance of water.
 - (b) metabolism in human body.
 - (c) the processes of photosynthesis.
 - (d) growth and maintenance of plants.

- 2) New York is a city of many beauties, and with a reckless prodigality she has done her best to obscure them all. Driven by a vain of swift traffic, she assails your ear with an incessant din and year eye with the unrightiest rail road that human ingenuity has ever contrived. She has sacrificed the amenity of her streets and the dignity of her buildings to the false god of speed. Men of New York, as they tell you with an insistent pride, are hustlers but the hustling probably leads to little enough. Haste and industry are not synonymous. to run up and down is but a form of busy idleness. The captains of industry who do the work of the world sit will, surrounded by bells and telephones. They show themselves furtively behind vast expanses of plate glass, and move only to ear and sleep. It is the common citizen of New York who is never quiet. He finds it insecure to say long in the same place. Though his house may be comfortable, even luxurious, 'he is in fever to leave it'. And so it comes about that what he is want to call 'transportation' seems the most important thing in his life.

- 1) *According to the author, eminent industrialists*
 - (a) are idle people
 - (b) work secretly
 - (c) do no move about offer
 - (d) believe only in eating and sleeping.

- 2) *The passage gives a true picture of big industrialists.*
 - (a) domestic life
 - (b) mode of working
 - (c) secret habits.
 - (d) office life.

- 3) *The attitude of the author towards the common citizen is one of*
 - (a) disapproval
 - (b) sympathy
 - (c) pity
 - (d) anger.

2.7 PILOT STUDY:

A group of five Tamil - speaking undergraduates of J.N.U. were given this test. Based on the results the questionnaires were revised, modified and reformulated.

2.8 ASSESSMENT:

In the first questionnaire, students were asked to choose one column from the five point scale. This questionnaire is based on self-assessment. The students were asked to choose one among them. Five choices are strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree in an ascending in order. Second questionnaire consisted of four objective answers, so the students were asked to choose one of them.

2.9 CHAPTERIZATION:

Introduction

Chapter 1: Learning to read and literature review.

Chapter 2: Research Methodology and procedures.

Chapter 3: Data analysis and results

Chapter 4: Summary and Conclusion.

CHAPTER 3

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

3.1) Questionnaire No.1

3.2) Questionnaire No.2

3.2.1) Part A

3.2.2) Part B

3.2.3) Part C

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

A detailed study and analysis of the data collected by the questionnaire method is presented in this chapter. As explained in the chapter on methodology two kinds of questionnaires were used for data elicitation. The first one on skills and strategies was more of self assessment by the subjects on a five point scale, while the second questionnaire was used to test their reading comprehension and reading speed. The following two sections deal with the results of the two kinds of questionnaires separately.

3.1 QUESTIONNAIRE 1

This questionnaire has five questions (from no.1 to no.5) dealing with the general perception about reading skills. These five are discussed together. Question no.6-10 are about reading strategies while no.11-12 are concerning the objectives. These 7 questions are put together for discussion. Question nos.13 and 14 are regarding the speed of reading while 15-17 are mostly concerning the test itself. These five questions are discussed together. Question nos.18 to 21 are more focussed on the purpose of reading. The last four questions numbered 22-25 are pertaining to some more reading strategies, which are used when the text is not clearly understood in the first reading. These questions are put together for discussion in the following sections.

1. When reading in English, I am able to predict what will come next in the text

Responses:

	1	2	3	4	5
Male	4	6	3	0	1
Female	0	13	0	3	0
Total	4	19	3	3	1

2. When reading in English, I am able to recognise the difference between main points and supporting details.

Responses:

	1	2	3	4	5
Male	2	3	3	2	2
Female	10	3	5	0	0
Total	12	6	8	2	2

3. When reading in English, I am able to relate information which comes next in the text to previous information in the text.

Responses:

	1	2	3	4	5
Male	4	3	4	2	1
Female	6	5	5	0	0
Total	10	8	9	2	1

4. When reading in English, I am able to question the truthfulness of what the author says.

Responses:

	1	2	3	4	5
Male	5	1	2	4	2
Female	11	1	2	1	1
Total	16	2	4	5	3

5. When reading in English, I am able to use my prior knowledge experience to understand the content of the text I am reading.

Responses:

	1	2	3	4	5
Male	3	5	2	3	1
Female	7	8	1	0	0
Total	10	13	3	3	1

The first five questions of the questionnaire No.1 are based on reading skills which are ability to read, comprehension, ability to predict, assessment, and inference. As per their self-assessment male and female readers are similar since they respond mostly on the positive (or) neutral part of the scale, that is numbers 1, 2 and 3. By analysing the responses in detail however, we find some difference in degrees in the sense that the female readers show a better and more confident self-assessment as compared to the male readers.

The question no. 1 and 3, relating to the predicting ability show that 15 female readers marked on no. 2 as compared to 6 male readers. Question 2 and 4, which generally assess the comprehension ability shows much greater difference in their responses. 10 female as compared to only 2 male readers responding at No.1 for question no. 2, and 11 female as compared to only five male readers responding at no. 1 question no. 4, indicates that the female readers are much more confident about their comprehension. Similar difference in degrees can also be seen in Question 5 which indicates, the ability to infer, 15 female readers marking one (or) two as compared to only 8 male readers. A comparison of the male and female readers' responses to these five questions on an average is as follows (in percentage):

Responses:

	1	2	3	4	5
Male	3.6	3.6	2.8	2.2	1.4
Female	6.8	6	2.6	0.8	0.2

6.8 percent female readers as compared to 3.6 percent male readers respond at no. 1 and 61 as compared to 3.6 percent males respond at no. 2 showing much more positive and confident self-assessment among females as compared to male readers. A similar contrast is also seen in the number of male and female readers responding at 4 and 5 on the scale. Only 0.8 percent female respondent as compare to 2.2 percent males responded no. 4, whereas 0.2 percent females responded five as compared to 1.4 percent male marking five. Four and five, numbers are "disagree" and "strongly disagree", whereas one and two are "strongly agree" and "agree" respectively.

6. When reading in English, I have a good sense when I understand something and when I do not.

Responses:

	1	2	3	4	5
Male	3	4	2	2	3
Female	9	6	1	0	0
Total	12	10	3	2	3

7. I can write a summary of the passage only if I re-read it.

Responses:

	1	2	3	4	5
Male	4	1	6	1	2
Female	7	6	2	1	0
Total	11	7	8	2	2

8. I usually use punctuation to understand complex and long sentences.

Responses:

	1	2	3	4	5
Male	5	1	2	5	1
Female	6	3	3	3	0
Total	12	4	5	8	1

9. When I read the title of a passage I can predict what the passage is about, and I check this prediction while reading.

Responses:

	1	2	3	4	5
Male	0	3	6	2	3
Female	8	5	1	2	0
Total	8	8	7	4	3

10. When skimming a text, I read the first sentence of every paragraph quickly in order to deduce the whole idea of the paragraph.

Responses:

	1	2	3	4	5
Male	0	4	4	2	4
Female	7	8	0	0	1
Total	7	12	4	2	5

11. When scanning a text, I look for the specific information I need.

Responses:

	1	2	3	4	5
Male	1	10	0	1	2
Female	10	6	0	0	0
Total	11	16	0	1	2

12. When I read I keep my purpose in mind.

Responses:

	1	2	3	4	5
Male	1	3	6	3	1
Female	7	6	2	0	1
Total	8	9	8	3	2

The question numbers 6 to 12 of the questionnaire are based on some important reading strategies. Some of the notable characteristics in these questions are skimming, scanning and keeping in mind the purpose of reading, inferring from title etc. The responses of the female students once

again are very much inclined towards the number one and two in a five point scale that is "strongly agree" and "agree". In contrast the male readers show maximum responses marked in the middle of the scale at no. 3 that is "neutral". The rest of them, responded mostly in an haphazard manner. For example question no. 9 is regarding inference from the title where 6 of the male readers marked no. 3 as compared to one female; and 8 females responded as compared to 0 male regarding question No.11 which is scanning a text in order to look for specific information. We find the result, different from the rest of the questions i.e. 10 male students marking positively at No.2 and 10 female students marking one and 6 female students marking at two.

A comparison of the male and females average responses on these seven questions are as follows (all figures are in percentage):

Responses:

	1	2	3	4	5
Male	2.0	3.7	4	2.2	2.2
Female	7.8	5.7	1.3	0.86	0.3

The average of these seven questions in reading strategy indicates an almost even distribution of responses from one to five by the male readers. In contrast the female readers show a definite and clear perception of the strategy they adopt which is indicated by 7.8 percent and 5.7 percent

responding at 1 and 2 respectively only 0.8 percent and 0.2 percent responding at 4 and 5 respectively.

13. I feel that I understand better, if I read slowly.

Responses:

	1	2	3	4	5
Male	6	3	0	2	3
Female	3	5	7	1	0
Total	9	8	7	3	3

14. I feel that I understand better, if I read fast.

Responses:

	1	2	3	4	5
Male	2	4	0	6	2
Female	8	0	8	0	0
Total	10	4	8	6	2

15. When I read a text I can understand better, if I know its type and function (e.g.) classification, an article, cause and effect, etc.)

Responses:

	1	2	3	4	5
Male	2	4	1	5	2
Female	7	6	2	1	0
Total	9	10	3	6	2

16. If there is a picture or a diagram in the text I would like to see picture before going to paragraphs

Responses:

	1	2	3	4	5
Male	3	2	4	2	3
Female	11	0	0	4	1
Total	14	2	4	6	4

17. When I read in English I feel that all words in the text are important and that I should know the meanings before I continue my reading

Responses:

	1	2	3	4	5
Male	3	2	2	4	8
Female	13	2	0	0	1
Total	16	4	2	4	4

The following five questions are pertaining to the speed of reading, the types of text influencing the speed of reading and comprehension.

No.13 shows that 6 of the male readers feel that they understand better if they read slowly whereas only three female readers marked No.1. In contrast 8 female readers indicate that they understand better if they read fast as compared to only 2 male. At least 8 female readers (50% of the total female readers) are non-committal about the speed of reading and these female readers responded at No.3 for both the questions no.13 and 14. Question 15 and 16 are regarding the devices in the text which may enhance the speed of reading and the results show that 14 out of 16 female readers marked one in favour of using pictures (or) diagrams in a text.

18. I find it interesting.

Responses:

	1	2	3	4	5
Male	3	4	5	0	2
Female	9	3	3	0	1
Total	12	7	8	0	3

19. I want to improve my English particularly in reading and vocabulary

Responses:

	1	2	3	4	5
Male	5	2	3	3	1
Female	8	8	0	0	0
Total	15	10	3	3	1

20. I want to know that the author has to say.

Responses:

	1	2	3	4	5
Male	2	5	6	0	1
Female	9	5	1	0	1
Total	11	10	7	0	2

21. I want to pass time and read for pleasure.

Responses:

	1	2	3	4	5
Male	4	5	1	4	0
Female	8	4	0	0	4
Total	12	9	1	4	4

The following questions from 18 to 21 which indicates the purpose of reading are also marked differently by male and female readers, as indicated below:

The responses of the female readers are mostly in column one and two indicating that they generally agree with the purpose and objectives of reading as specified by these question 5. But the responses of Male readers are seems to be scattered over 1 to 5 on an average.

	1	2	3	4	5
Male	3.5	4	3.5	1.75	1
Female	8.5	5	1.0	0	1.5
Total					

The average of these four questions shows 8.5 and 5 female readers responding at one and two respectively, whereas 3.5 and 4 male readers responded one and two and 3.75 male marked at No.3 as neutral.

22. I keep on reading and hope for clarification further on

Responses:

	1	2	3	4	5
Male	5	5	1	2	1
Female	9	1	0	4	2
Total	14	6	1	6	3

23. I reread the difficult part.

Responses:

	1	2	3	4	5
Male	3	5	5	1	0
Female	8	4	0	2	2
Total	11	9	5	3	2

24. I go back to a point before the difficult part and start reading.

Responses:

	1	2	3	4	5
Male	3	1	4	5	1
Female	11	1	3	1	0
Total	14	2	7	6	1

25. I look up unknown words in a dictionary

Responses:

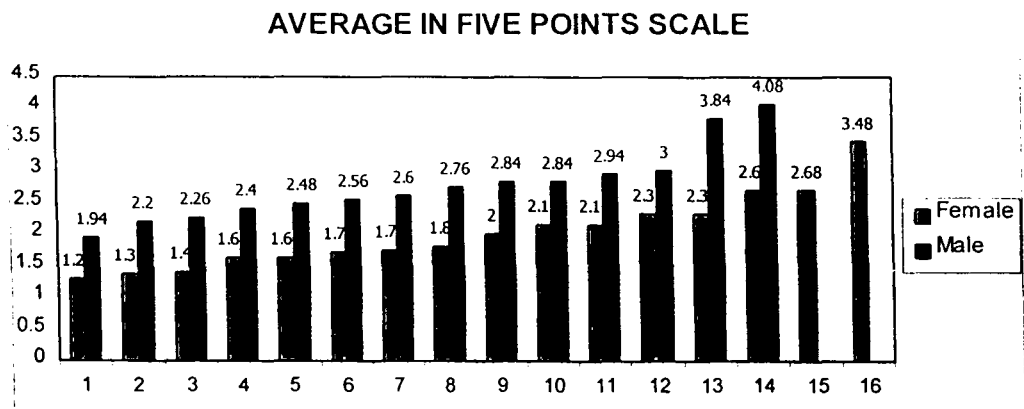
	1	2	3	4	5
Male	2	5	2	2	3
Female	9	3	1	2	1
Total	11	8	3	4	4

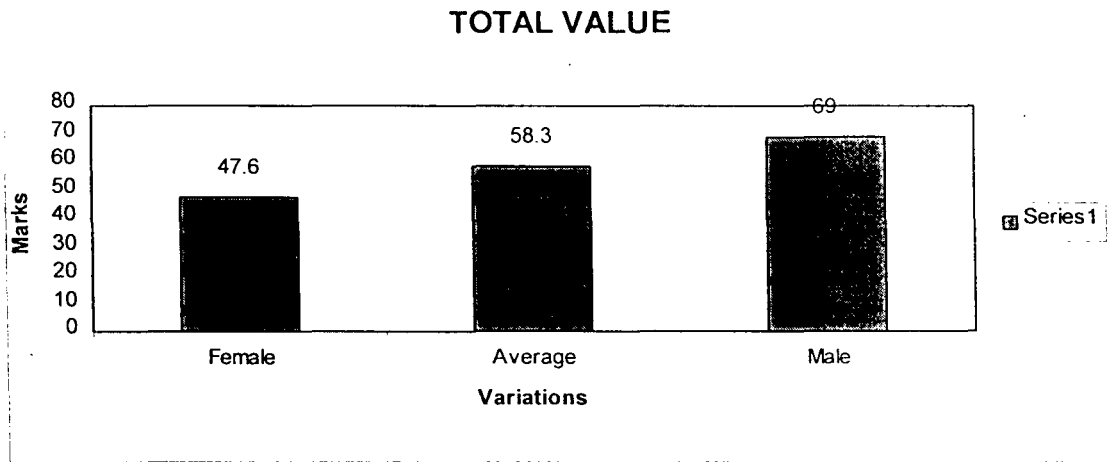
These following questions from 22 to 25 are also pertaining to the reading strategies when a text is not clearly understood in a first reading. The average of these four questions indicate the same trend as before.

	1	2	3	4	5
Male	3.2	4	3	4.5	1.2
Female	9.2	2.2	1	2.2	1.2
Total					

The total of 9.2 female readers responding at one in certain with 3.2 male readers. There is only one response at three in female readers as compared to three marking at No.3 amongst male readers. It is interesting to note that the averages of the male and female responses at 4 and 5 are almost identical. It appears that the male and female readers mostly agree on the types of reading strategy but difference in their responses lies in one and two that is strongly agree, and degree.

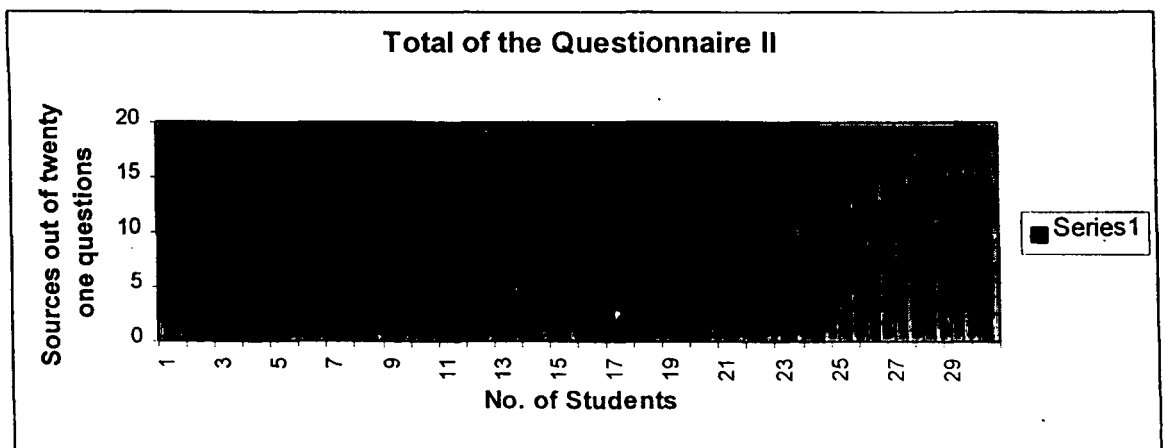
The self-assessment responses for all twenty-five questions put together show the contrast between the male and female responses as indicated in the following two charts.



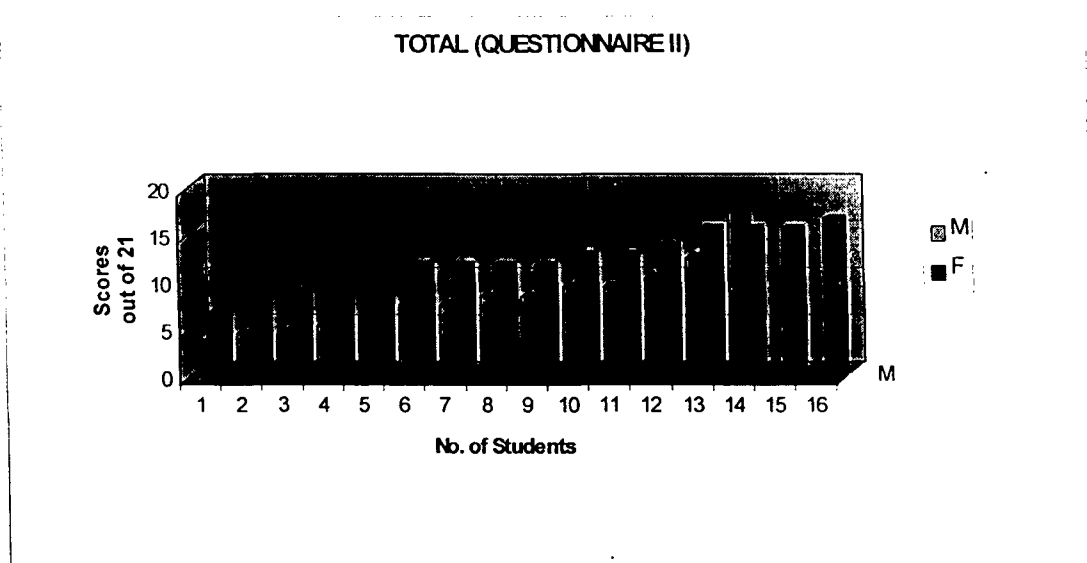


Questionnaire II

As stated in the chapter on methodology, the second questionnaire is devised with a view to assess the reading comprehension of the subjects. This questionnaire has three parts A, B and C containing reading texts of different length and complexity. The results of these tests are being discussed in the following sections. The overall results show that the lowest score is four out of 21 responses and maximum is eighteen, as indicated in the bar chart below.



The range of correct responses is from less than 20% to 86% inspite of the fact that all the readers have a similar background in terms of age, region, education as well as languages known. So, this needs an explanation on the basis of the results of the first questionnaire and that is the male-female parameter which emerged as an important factor in the first part. So using the same parameters, we look at the responses of the two groups based on gender. The results do show a striking difference in the overall scores between the two groups as indicated in the bar chart given below, in which female and male readers are indicated in two different columns).



For the male readers the score is mostly in the lower range beginning with few correct responses and going up to 11 with only two exceptions. One, scoring 14 out of 21 and the other subject scoring 18 out of 21, are two of the few people who got their education in convent school in English Medium.

The female readers in contrast show scores in much higher range, mostly from 8 to 16 (38% to 76%) with an exception of one girl student scoring only five out of 21. Given below are the results in section wise detail.

3.2 PART A

1. Why reading is important?

	A	B	C	D
Male	1	9	4	0
Female	1	15	0	0
Total	2	24	4	0

2. What is the meaning of communicable disease?

	A	B	C	D
Male	8	2	4	0
Female	3	6	7	0
Total	11	8	11	0

3. The main role of newspaper might be?

	A	B	C	D
Male	4	6	2	2
Female	3	2	11	0
Total	7	8	13	2

4. Which is the first incident during sand – storm?

	A	B	C	D
Male	5	7	2	0
Female	3	12	1	0
Total	8	19	3	0

5. Unrest of the student community is exposed.....

	A	B	C	D
Male	6	1	5	2
Female	6	4	4	2
Total	12	5	9	4

Explanation of Part A

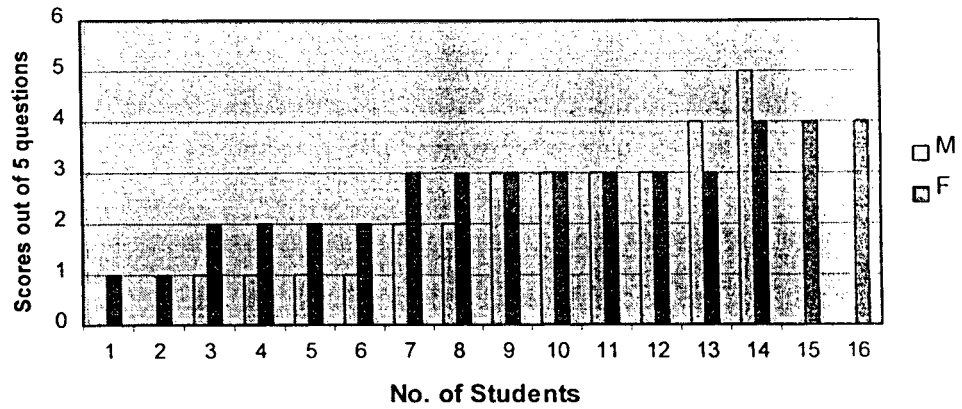
The first question of the questionnaire is to check contextual meaning of a given text. This question was responded well, 24 students answered it correctly and only one female student responded to it negatively.

The second question is to check the literal meanings of the given vocabulary items. This question is responded to negatively by the majority of the students. It shows that most of them do not understand the factual meaning of the given text and they are confused with the contextual sequence and meaning. Only two males and six female students responded it correctly. In the third question the student are expressed to infer the message and perhaps they are tempted to give their own opinion. Hence a wide range of answers appears in which only four males and three females responded it correctly.

The fourth question of part A was answered correctly by most of the students. The nature of this question was relatively simple and asked to identify the sequential understanding of the incident among the readers. Seven males out of fourteen and twelve females out of sixteen answered it properly.

The last question of this part is asked to assess comprehension of the students. But they also answered this quite well by six out of fourteen males and six out of 16 females, answered correctly while the other answers show that the students are perhaps expressing an opinion. (part A bar chart below)

PART A (QUESTIONNAIRE II)



3.2.2 PART B

I.1 This passage could probably be a part of.....

	A	B	C	D
Male	4	7	2	1
Female	13	2	1	0
Total	17	9	3	1

I.2 According to the author, our national object is to.....

	A	B	C	D
Male	4	1	4	5
Female	7	1	5	3
Total	11	2	9	8

II.1 He has an eternal thirst for adventure here eternal means.....

	A	B	C	D
Male	8	0	3	3
Female	5	0	4	7
Total	13	0	7	10

II.2 "It is responsible for space exploration and moon landings", here it stands for.....

	A	B	C	D
Male	3	4	6	7
Female	3	2	11	0
Total	6	6	17	1

III.1 Which is more important knowing and understanding the world around you or knowing and understanding yourself?

	A	B	C	D
Male	9	1	3	1
Female	6	1	6	3
Total	15	2	9	4

III.2 The above sentence implies that.....

	A	B	C	D
Male	2	4	0	8
Female	0	4	0	12
Total	2	8	0	20

IV.1 Concentration is a main factor in reading is can be developed by following.....

	A	B	C	D
Male	0	10	1	3
Female	1	14	0	1
Total	1	24	1	4

IV.2 Students could not follow the timetable because.....

	A	B	C	D
Male	4	1	7	2
Female	9	1	5	1
Total	13	2	12	3

V.1 The thinking common to Plato, Watson and Ryle is their belief in.....

	A	B	C	D
Male	8	3	1	2
Female	5	3	5	3
Total	13	6	6	5

V.2 Who reduced "The Thinking" into inhibited speech.....

	A	B	C	D
Male	2	4	1	7
Female	0	13	3	0
Total	2	17	4	7

Explanation of Part B

(I.1) The first question of the first subsection has been responded very poorly by both groups of students. Only three students responded it correctly. It explains only 10 percent of the total students knowing the answer. This misunderstanding of students can be explained in two ways. The first can be described as the lack of knowledge about the register specific choices of language and the second can be, the problem in understanding the nature of the text again due to register specific details. So placing the text in an appropriate context or register is necessary. The question no. I.2 to check students' ability in differentiating main text from the subordinate texts. To answer this question students should have the ability to differentiate between these two texts. Especially this type of question is asked to test the students'

ability in comprehending the main text. Only two males and one female readers answered it correctly.

The question no.II.1 has been responded quite well by the students. Only eleven students responded to it correctly and out of those eleven, seven students are females and four males. Question no.II.2 has been asked to analyse the comprehension ability of the students, especially when it involves a certain order. This question is answered by a fairly large group of students as seventeen students (six males and eleven female students) responded to it correctly.

The question no. III.1 is asked to identify the students' abilities to conceptualise in knowing the abstract things. The question is about the object referred to, but without understanding the given text it is not possible to answer which is the object. So most of the students answered it wrongly. (III.2) In this subsection, the second question is meant to test the textual meaning of a particular sentence. This question is answered correctly by the students. Twenty students responded to it correctly and out of this twenty, twelve were female students.

(IV.1) The first question of the fourth subsection asked in simple terms and with simple vocabulary. So twenty four students marked it correctly. It is known that ways of the simple and frequently used vocabulary have immense results as compared to the rare and hard vocabulary. In this question only two

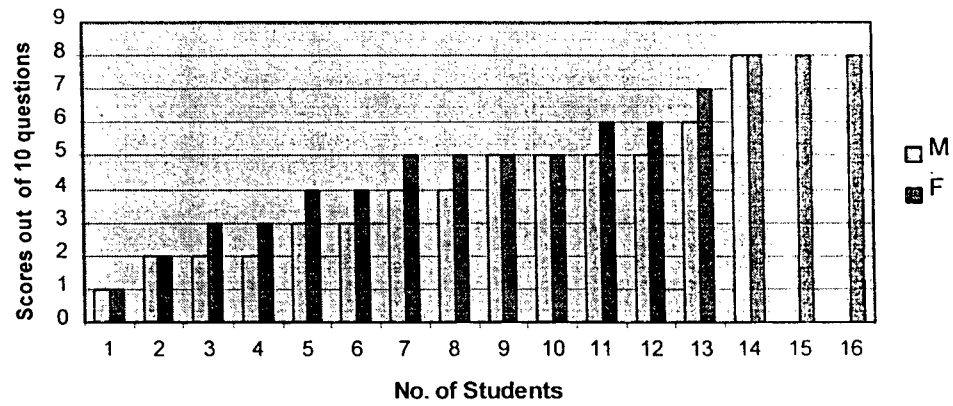
of the female readers are wrong. But four male students out of fourteen are wrong. So in this question also, female respondents are better in performance. (IV.2) The second question of the subsection has been answered correctly by fifteen students. This question is asked to test the reasoning ability of these students and the reason for the question has been given indirectly in the paragraph.

The question no. V.1 has been asked for testing the comprehension ability of the students in understanding a logical text. Another importance of asking the question is to check the students' understanding of the main plot, which is the connective part with all subordinate plots. This question is responded fairly correctly by the students and here male students seem to be doing better in comparison to the female students. The question no.V.2 is a direct, straightforward one, so the responses are also made correctly. Out of seventeen correct responses, thirteen are female readers.

Students have got the correct responses from 10% to 80%. Overall results show that the lowest score is one and maximum score is eight correct responses out of ten questions. But in this section the maximum scores four students, who include three females and one male, have scored eight.

The responses of the reader to this section consisting of ten questions can be summed up in the term of a bar chart below.

PART B (QUESTIONNAIR II)



The female readers once again perform better in reading comprehension as compared to the male readers.

3.2.3 PART C

The third part of the questionnaire has two texts, which are longest as compared to the texts given in the earlier texts. Neither of the two texts has any specialised forms (Register specific vocabulary or structures) in the sense the two texts are fairly simple. One is about water as a means to life and the other is about New York City. Both passages are descriptive. The results of this part of the text are being discussed below:

I.1 Water is an important for the animity of the living because.....

	A	B	C	D
Male	3	4	0	7
Female	1	1	3	11
Total	4	5	3	18

I.2 What is the meaning of metabolism reaction?

	A	B	C	D
Male	0	3	8	3
Female	3	4	6	3
Total	3	7	14	6

I.3 What is the suitable title for the passage?

	A	B	C	D
Male	9	1	2	2
Female	16	0	0	0
Total	25	1	2	2

Explanation of Part C

The first essay is from the register of science and the second from the register of social sciences. The first question is responded well by the students. Eighteen students answer it correctly and out of them, eleven are female. Performance of female students is notably better in this question.

1. According to the author, eminent industrialists.....

	A	B	C	D
Male	5	7	0	2
Female	8	0	6	2
Total	13	7	6	4

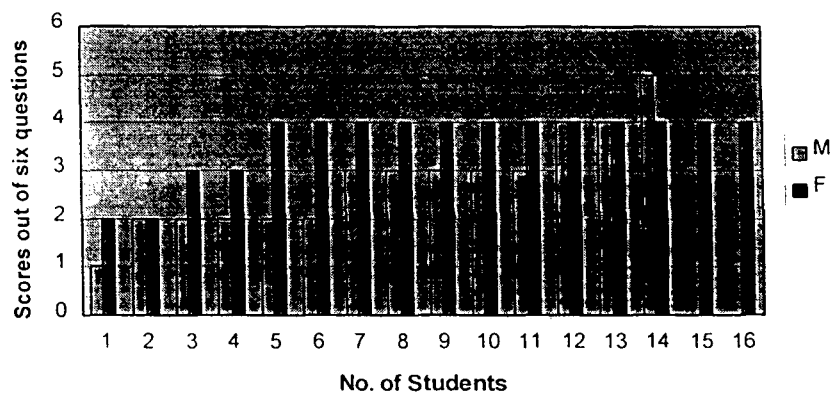
2. The passage gives a true picture of big industrialists.

	A	B	C	D
Male	3	7	1	3
Female	5	11	0	0
Total	8	18	1	3

3. The attitude of the author towards the common citizen is one of.....

	A	B	C	D
Male	4	7	1	2
Female	4	6	5	1
Total	8	13	6	3

PART C (QUESTIONNAIRE II)



The second question of the same essay has been constituted to acknowledge the factual meaning of the given vocabulary. To notice the given vocabulary items, one has to understand, at least, a paragraph of this essay. This question has been responded quite well by the students. Male students are the better performers in comparison to the female. Eight male students and six female students responded it correctly.

The third question of a same essay is about choosing a suitable title. To choose an appropriate title, one has to know the following reading skills: comprehensiveness in totality, understanding ability, identifying the main plot and sub-plots, and finding appropriate vocabulary to give a suitable title.

The second section of the part C consists of a text with vocabulary items with a lot of extended meanings, metaphor etc. The first question (straightforward) has been responded correctly by the thirteen students and out of then eight students are female and five are male. The second question has also been fairly responded by the students, out of eighteen correct responses eleven are female students and seven are male.

CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Berg explains the problems of culturally disadvantaged people in terms of their linguistic disadvantage. He says "language is one of the most important tools of learning to read. Time and again it has been shown that one's ability to read and make meaning out of the printed page depends upon one's language facility and past experiences."¹ Secondly, he explains, language being what it is, "language patterns may act as a significant restriction to reading achievement unless certain basic principles about the language relationship are considered during reading instructions."² Thirdly, a "culturally disadvantage learner learns his language by passive exposure without operant control of feed back".³ Fourthly, he assumes that "in normal teaching conditions he will not learn to read if he has not had previous exposure to the use of language in his everyday world."⁴

The present study was conducted on Tamil undergraduates learning English in Salem with following objectives:

¹ Berg G. (1971), Teaching efficient reading, p.36.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

- To identify the strategies adopted by Tamil students while reading and comprehending a written English text.
- To study the comprehension level of Tamil undergraduate students in learning English that is related to the level of understanding a text.
- To study the speed of reading and comprehension.
- To suggest effective proposals to improve reading skills and strategies
- To examine teaching strategies used for non-literary and literary texts, which help to find out the specific strategy used for specific purposes.

As explained in the chapter on methodology the questionnaire method was adopted for conducting this study. Two types of questionnaires were formulated as explained earlier. The first questionnaire consisting of 25 questions on 5 point scale is devised with certain assumptions about the nature of reading skills, strategies, reading speed and habits and is a self-assessment by the student. The purpose of this questionnaire:

- to analyse the attitudinal factors pertaining to the nature of reading skills and strategies of the learners,

- to get self-assessment by the students pertaining to the reading skills and strategies adopted by them,
- to get a self-assessment by the students pertaining to their reading speed and habits acquired over period of time.

The outcome of this is discussed in detail in the previous chapter. To sum up, the main points, which emerge, are as follows:

- (i) reading ability which is generally considered positively is the ability to predict, to assess the truthfulness, to infer, to be able to recognise the main points from other details etc. are tested in question numbers 1 to 5;
- (ii) reading skills generally recognised as correct are skimming , scanning, re-reading, using punctuation as a helpful device etc.;
- (iii) reading or is not purpose oriented;
- (iv) self-assessment of reading speed is tested;
- (v) using dictionary while reading English;

Various sections of the questionnaire focussed these and other aspects and the results showed that.

In overall performance, male and female students show differences in skills and strategies, in analysing and classifying the text. Medium of

instruction (Tamil/English) variation is also among the important distinctive feature.

In self-assessment female student's responses are very much inclined towards 1 and 2 which are 'strongly agree' and 'agree'. But the averages of male subject are leaning towards no.2 'agree' and no.3 'neutral'. This shows their confidence in answering the questionnaire, related to their reading strategies and reading skills. Overall average of the 25 questions in this questionnaire is given below:

Scale	1	2	3	4	5
Male	3.1	3.7	3.2	2.4	1.4
Female	8.8	4.7	1.4	0.99	0.92

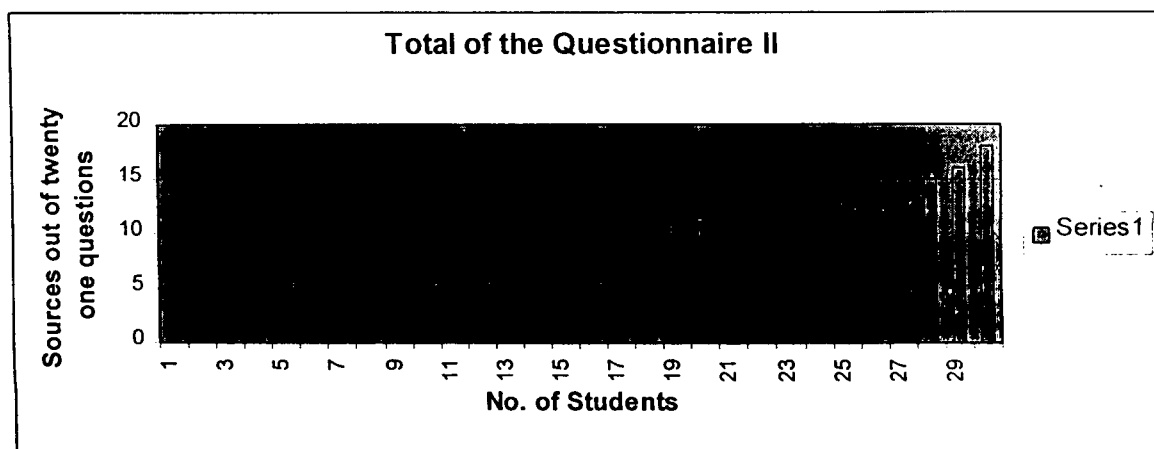
Only one female student on an average responding at no.4 or no.5 that is 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree'; the average number of female student responding at 3 i.e. neutral is only 1.4. Those responding at no.1 and no.2 and 8.8 and 4.7 respectively. This shows their confidence in the skills and strategies adopted and in answering the questions.

In contrast the male students responses seems to be much more scattered between these five points. On an average there are 1.4 and 2.4 responses on no.5 and no.4 respectively, which is on the negative end of the scale. 3.2 on an average responded at no.3 which is neutral-meaning non-committed, or non confident about their answers. Those responding at no.1

and no.2, i.e., on the positive side of the scale are also lesser in number in contrast with the female readers, i.e. only 3.1 and 3.7 respectively.

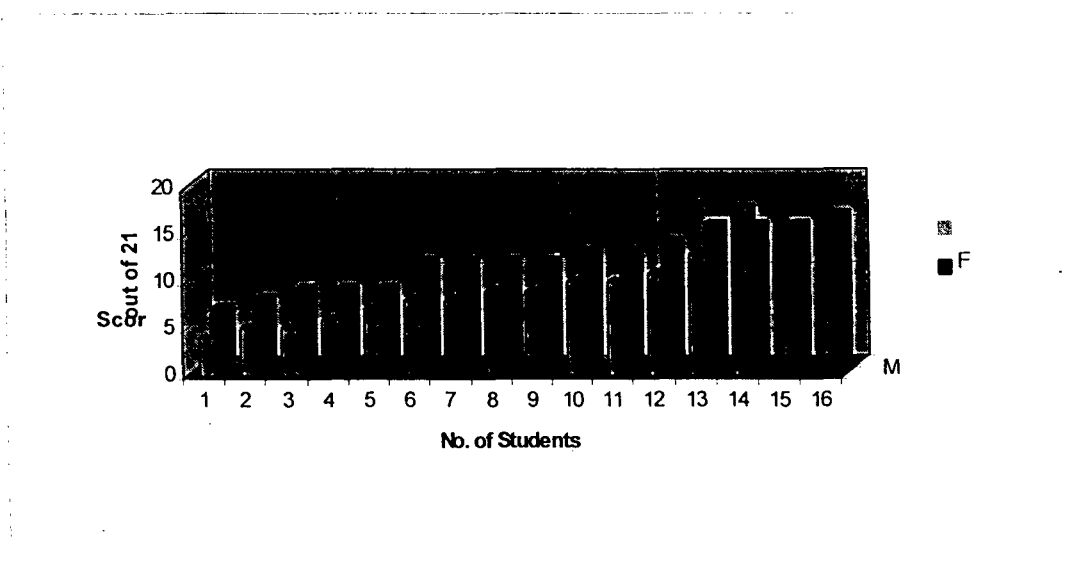
Questionnaire II:

As stated in the chapter on methodology, the second questionnaire is devised with a view to assess the reading comprehension of the subjects. This questionnaire has three parts A, B and C containing reading texts of different length and complexity. The results of these tests are discussed in detail in the pervious chapter. The overall results show that the lowest score is four out of 21 responses and maximum is eighteen.



The range of correct responses is from less than 20% to 86% inspite of the fact that all the readers have a similar background in terms of age, region, education as well as languages known. So using the same parameter i.e., male-female, we look at the responses of the two groups based on gender. The results do show striking differences in the overall scores between the two

groups as indicated in the bar chart given below bar chart, in which female and male readers are indicated in two different columns.



For the male readers the score is mostly in the lower range beginning with few correct responses and going up to 11 with only two exceptions. One, scoring 14 out of 21 and the other subject scoring 18 out of 21, are two of the few people who got their education in convent school in English Medium. The female readers in contrast show scores in much higher range, mostly from 8 to 16 (38% to 76%) with an exception of one girl student scoring only five out of 21. Given below are the results in section wise detail.

Overall average	
Male	5.6
Female	8.2

It is an identical view that females responses for the first questionnaire and the second questionnaire (comprehension) are positive and confidently answered. It also shows the good strategy is necessary to develop the Reading abilities. (Comprehension) As we followed the female responses to sections A, B and C i.e., 'simple to complex', the result is also visible in a way that corresponds with the total responses. In the part A, total average is 6.75, but in the part B, total average is 5.6, but in part C it is slightly higher.

Total Average	Part A	Part B	Part C
	6.75	5.6	6.2

In general, the results of this dissertation are an indication of the following:

- (i) Reading strategies and reading skills are in parallel relations, by improving one's ability, we may be able to develop the other.
- (ii) Reading sub-skills are the components of reading skills. Some of the important sub-skills are skimming, scanning, rereading etc. which lead to comprehension at various levels. Such as vocabulary, patterns of vocabulary, contexts – both syntactic and semantic.

- (iii) Reading strategies are the methods followed to achieve certain goals which may be reading to extract certain information, reading for pleasure, or reading for language etc.
- (iv) Questionnaires one and two, show that the female students are good readers, they have good comprehension ability and generally performed better than the male readers.
- (v) A few convent school students also showed a better performance as compared to the rest.
- (vi) No definite results were obtained on reading speed but generally the better language ability was also reflected in better speed of reading. Slow reading does not necessarily correspond with better comprehension.

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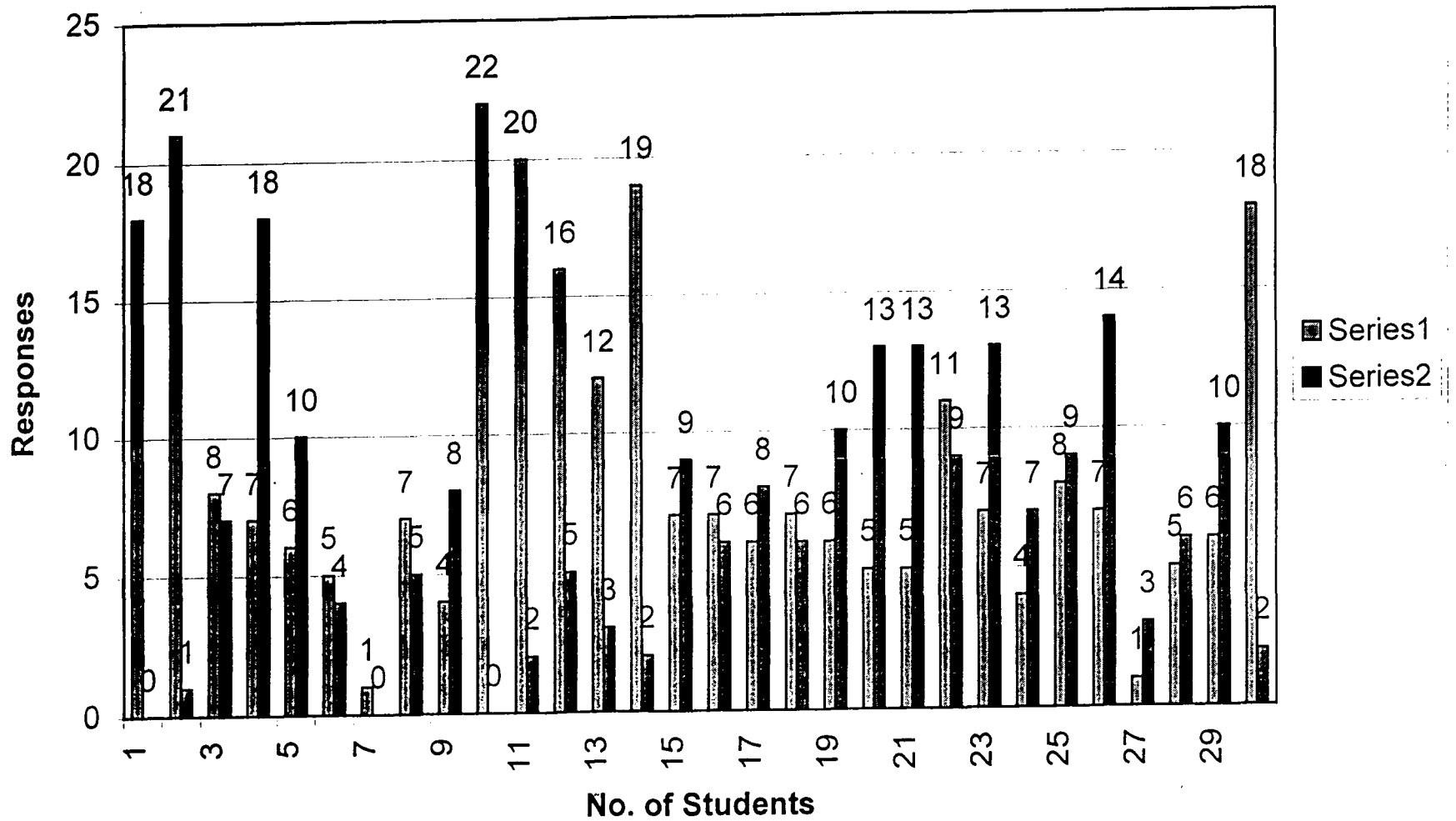
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APPENDICES

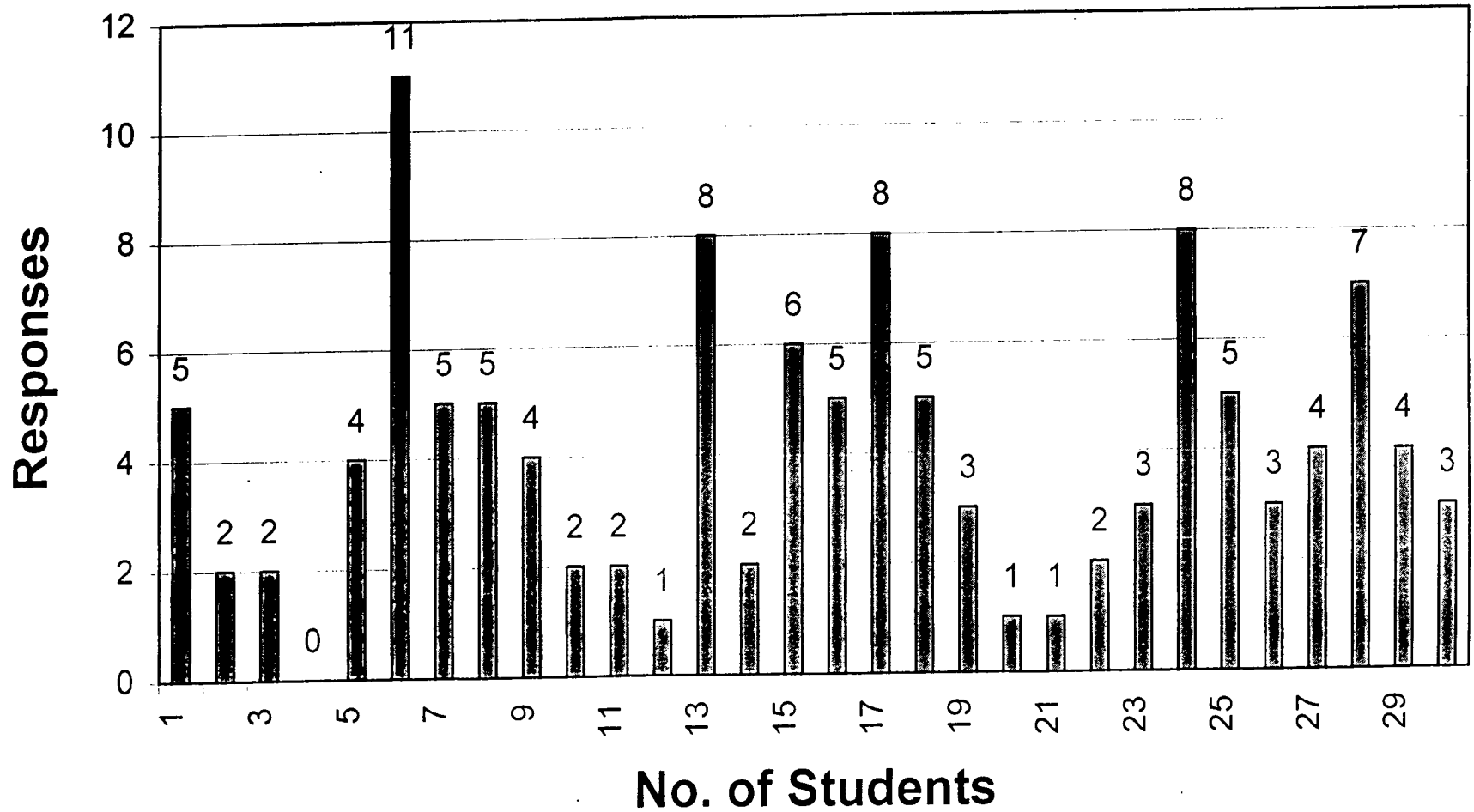
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F2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	5	1	1	1	21	1	2	0	2
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F4	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	2	2	2	7	18	0	0	0
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M6	1	3	1	4	2	1	6	3	4	3	2	3	1	4	2	3	3	1	3	3	4	2	3	5	3	5	4	11	4	1
M7	3	4	4	4	4	5	3	1	3	4	5	4	5	5	5	5	4	3	4	3	3	5	5	4	5	1	0	5	9	10
M8	3	2	1	5	4	1	5	4	5	2	2	3	5	1	4	1	1	2	3	5	1	2	3	1	4	7	5	5	4	4
M9	1	2	4	4	1	5	3	1	5	5	2	3	5	2	4	3	5	2	2	3	2	2	2	3	5	4	8	4	3	6
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F12	2	1	2	3	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	4	2	1	5	1	1	2	1	5	1	1	1	1	16	5	1	1	2
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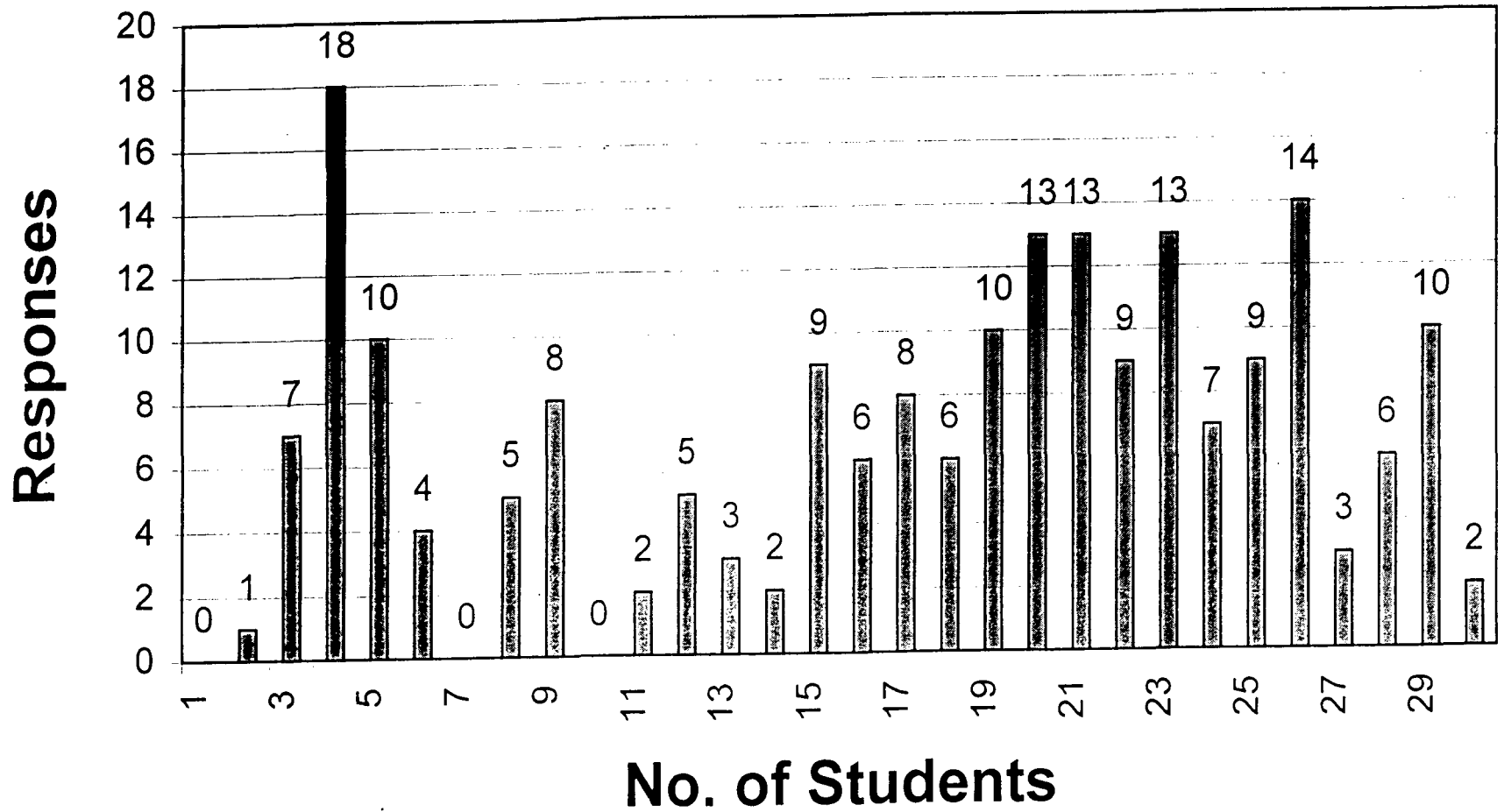
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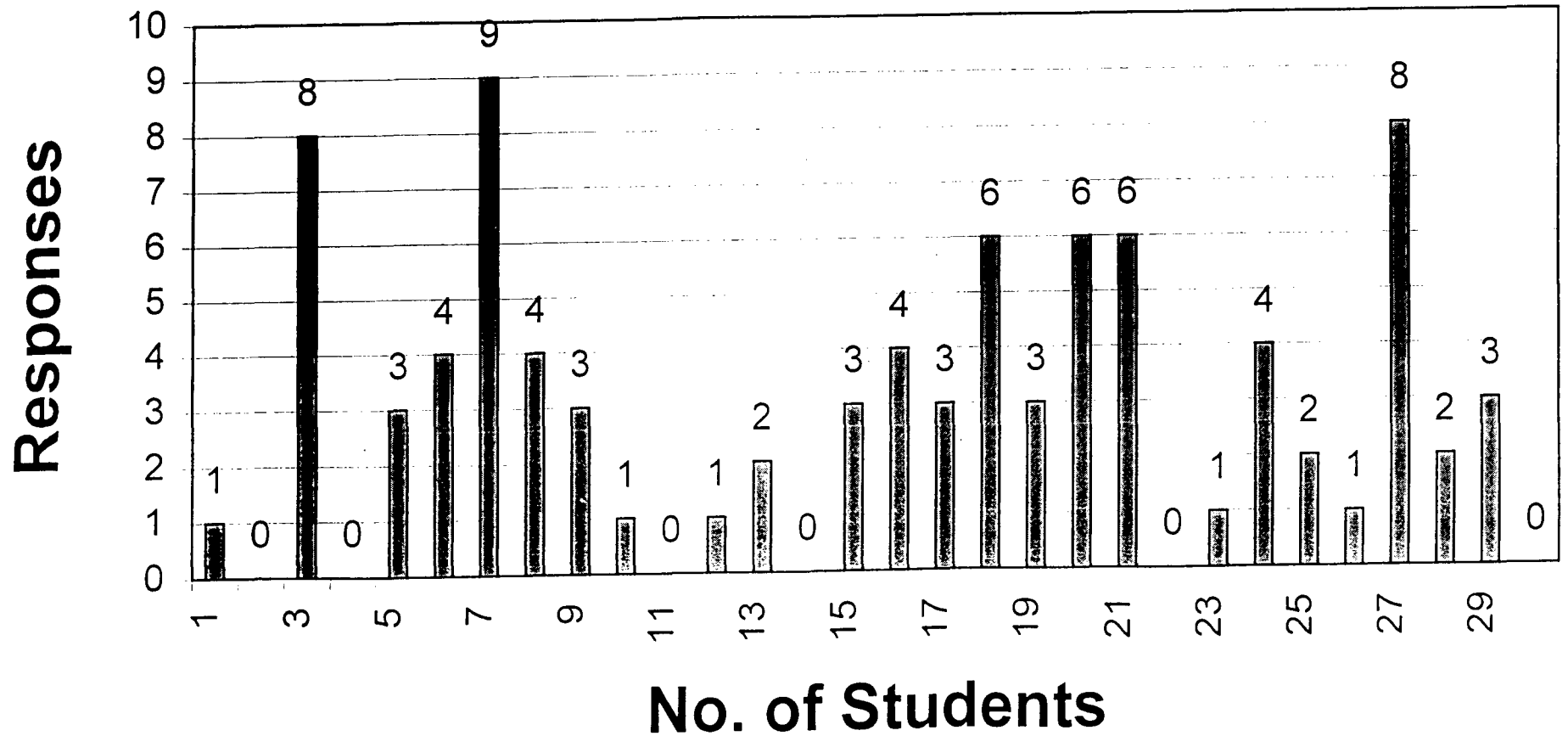
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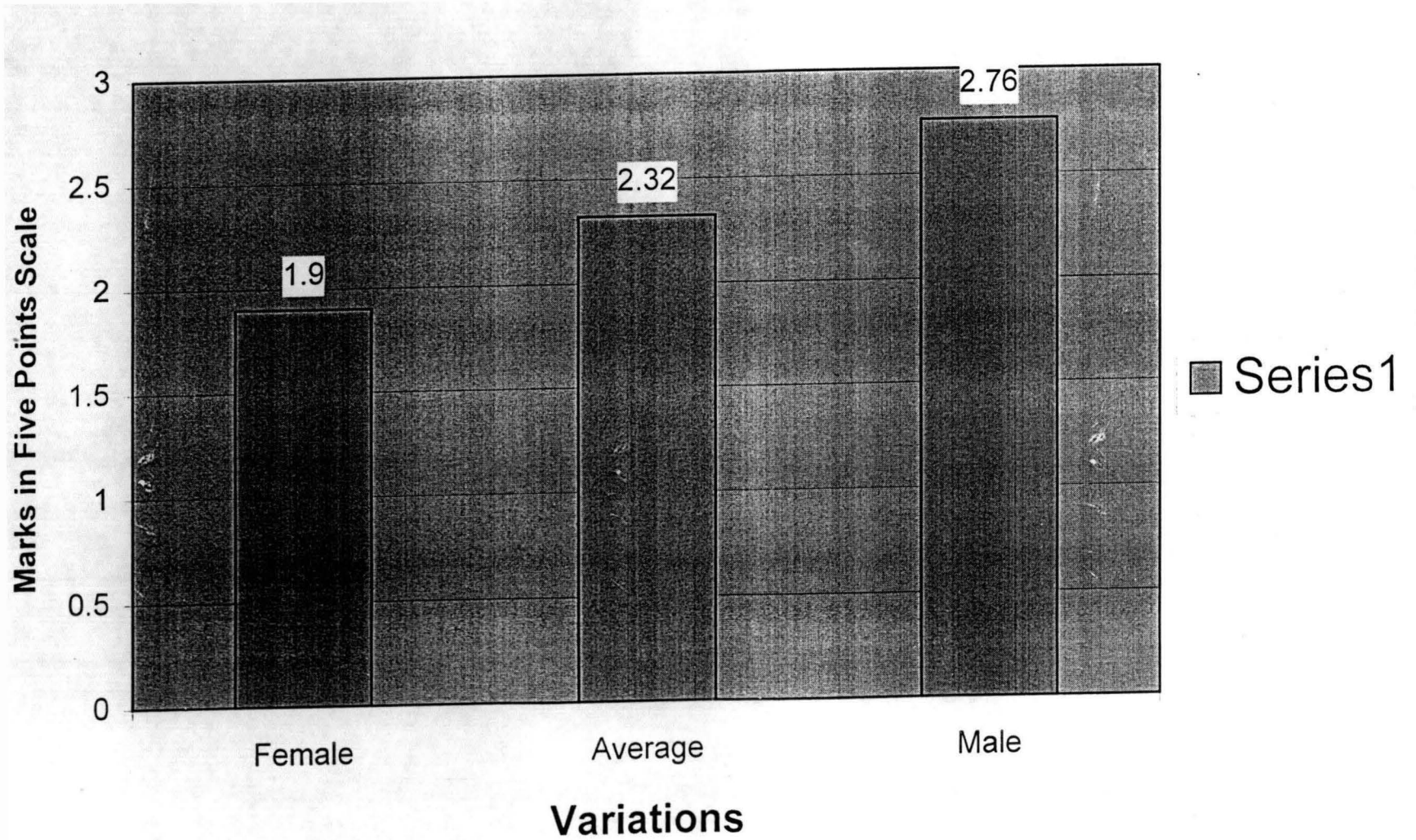
Questionnaire No.1, Responses at ~~two~~ ^{Three}



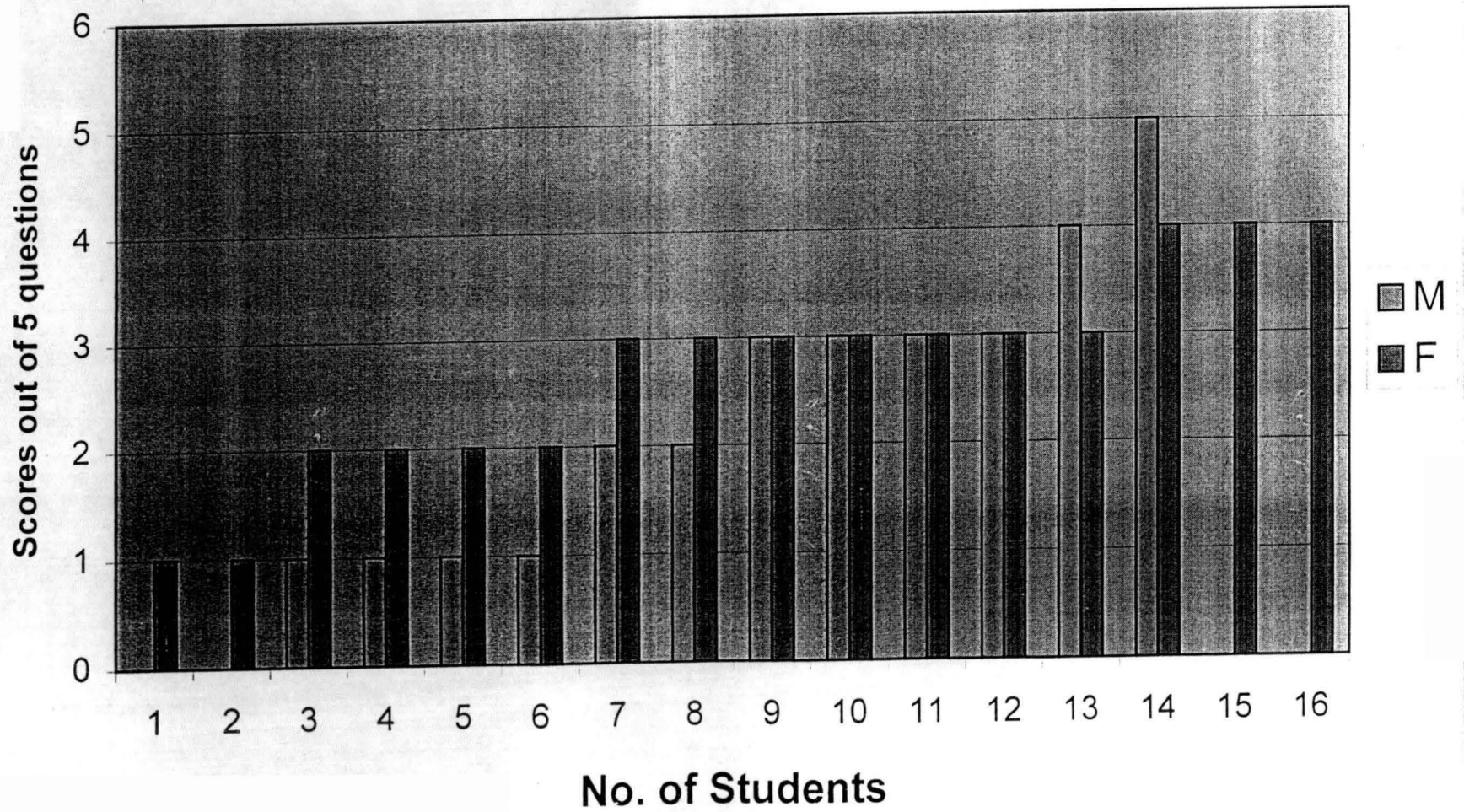
Questionnaire No.1, Responses at four



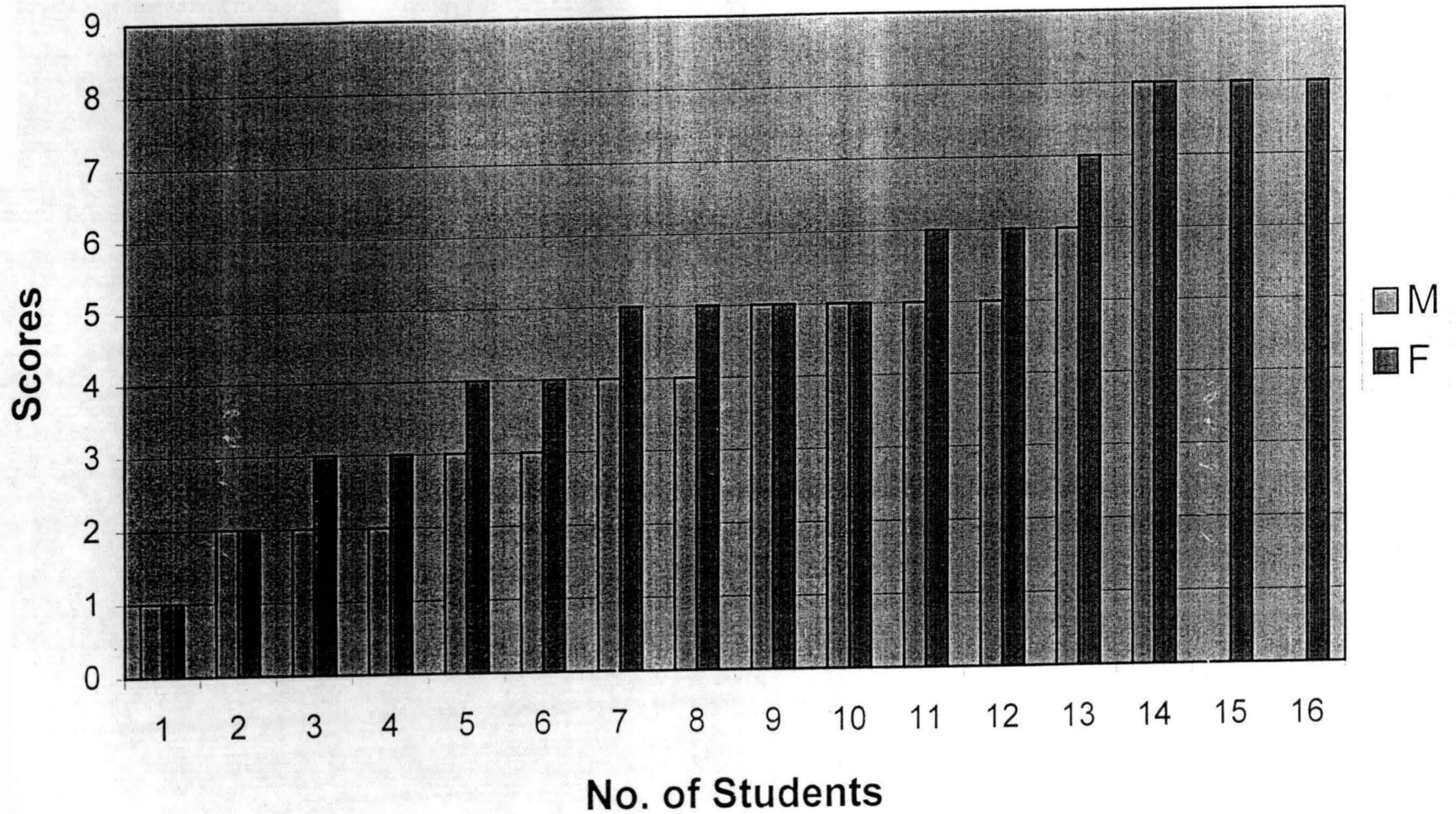
Average



PART A (QUESTIONNAIRE II)



PART B (QUESTIONNAIR II)



PART C (QUESTIONNAIRE II)

