

English Language Proficiency among Secondary School Students in Relation to their Gender and Locality

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Abstract

English has become the language of international business so most multinational companies require some level of English comprehension. The world is an increasingly globalized place where individuals are communicating among and between multiple cultures each day. Every high level profession needs a good communication skill in English. So the students are not an exception. English language has become an integral part of curriculum almost at all levels of education. In order to excel in educational career a student must be proficient in English language. In this regard, a study has been conducted to know the proficiency level of the secondary school students in relation to their gender and locality. The objectives of the study were to find out the difference in English language proficiency level among secondary school students on the basis of their gender and locality. The population consisted of all the secondary school students of district Meerut, Uttar Pradesh, India. For this purpose, a sample of 100 secondary school students (50 Boys and 50 Girls) from rural and urban schools were selected randomly. English Language Proficiency Test developed by Dr. K.S.Misra and Dr. Ruchi Dubey was used for the collection of data. Mean, Standard Deviation and t-test were used for the analysis of the data. The findings revealed that there is no significant difference in English Language Proficiency level with respect to gender and locality of the students but there is significant difference between urban boys and urban girls secondary school students.

KEYWORDS: English proficiency, gender, locality, secondary school students

INTRODUCTION

The world is an increasingly globalized place where individuals are communicating among multiple cultures each day. English is the link language of the masses. It not only serve the human kind to transmit emotions, thoughts but also it is the language of trade, science, technology and research. The communication skill in English language is very much essential in order to keep pace with advancement in professional field. English has become the language of international business so most multinational companies require some level of English comprehension. The truth of the matter is that those who have a fluent grip over the English language tend to receive a higher salary.

English is taught as a second language at every stage of education in all states of India and has been accepted as the medium of instruction in higher education. In India, English has become an integral part of curriculum almost at all levels of education. The present century witnessed great advancement in science and technology and this enabled many new ways of sharing information and doing business. India's international commercial activities led to need for acquiring proficiency in English as

an international language. Nowadays, proficiency is very essential to become successful in career building in English language because English is considered to be the spectacle to see the world. English is used in both public and personal domain and its functions extend far beyond those normally associated with an outside language, including the instructional, the regulative, the interpersonal and the innovative, self-expressive functions. The role of English is not replaced, it overlaps with local language in certain domain. Habok, Anita; Andrea Magyar & Gyongyer Molnar (2022) investigated the relationship among English Language learning strategies, language achievement and attitude. The main objective of the study was to ascertain whether English as a Foreign Language learners with various levels of English language achievement differ significantly in applying foreign language learning strategies. The findings point to statistically significant differences in the frequency of English language strategy use among more and less proficient learners. Quantitative analyses also reported that, in spite of the students' stated low or moderate levels of strategy use, it turned out as a statistically significant predictor of foreign language attitude and language achievement. Wang, Changmi (2021) studied the relationship between teachers' classroom English Proficiency and their teaching Self-efficacy in an English medium instruction context. The Pearson correlational analysis indicated that there was a strong positive relationship between the EMI teachers' classroom English proficiency and their teaching self-efficacy. Among the four constructs of the Classroom English Proficiency Scale, both language of instruction have a higher correlation with teaching self-efficacy than grammar or pronunciation. The linear regression analysis suggests that language of instruction has a significant contribution to the variance of teaching self-efficacy. The findings reveal the need to prioritize the strategic training of language of instruction skills to EMI teachers who are not so proficient in English. Shah, Bibi Sadia et.al. (2021) investigated the relationship between English Language Proficiency and academic performance of engineering students in Mehran University Jamshoro, Pakistan. The study confirms that the language has played a pivotal role to improve academic performance of the students studying in Mehran University of science and technology. Hossain, Tamil (2018) studied English language proficiency level among the secondary school students in relation to gender and socio-economic status. The objectives of the study were to find out the relationship between proficiency level and the socio-economic status of the students at different levels and also to find out the difference in proficiency level between male and female students. The study revealed that there is no relationship of English language proficiency level either with socio-economic status or gender of the students.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Linguistic proficiency is an important skill that a student must acquire during his schooling. It is imperative that a secondary school student identifies his potential in acquiring proficiency in English so that he is able to set his own goal and plan for the realization of his goal. In the linguistically plural setting of India, English often acts as the link language among people of different dialect. For many educated Indian, English is virtually the first language. Thus, in the present context, English is playing a vital role in bringing together people from different regional languages for a close exchange of social educational and administrative network of India. It provides a linguistic tool for the administrative cohesiveness of a country when students' proficiency in English language is high it will definitely affect and improve the

academic performance of such students. Nevertheless, when the proficiency in English is lacking in any academic setting it will definitely lower the academic performance of such students. If a student wishes to increase further his qualification in any field the Science, Commerce or Humanities he needs to learn the English language to face the challenges that awaits him. Many secondary school students experience difficulty in expression both verbal and written which hampers their development. Therefore, it is very necessary to study and analyse the level of English language proficiency in secondary school students.

STATEMENT OF THE STUDY

English Language Proficiency among Secondary School Students in Relation to their
Gender and Locality

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study English language proficiency of boys and girls secondary school students.
2. To study English language proficiency of rural and urban secondary school students.
3. To study English language proficiency of rural boys and girls secondary school students.
4. To study English language proficiency of urban boys and girls secondary school students.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

1. There is no significant difference between boys and girls secondary school students in their English language proficiency.
2. There is no significant difference between rural and urban secondary school students in their English language proficiency.
3. There is no significant difference between rural boys and girls secondary school students in their English language proficiency.
4. There is no significant difference between urban boys and girls secondary school students in their English language proficiency.

METHODOLOGY USED

Descriptive Survey Method was used for the study.

POPULATION AND SAMPLE SELECTED

The population for the study consisted of all the secondary school students of Meerut district, Uttar Pradesh, India. The sample consisted of 100 (50 boys and 50 girls) secondary school students belonging to rural and urban areas of Meerut district. Random Sampling Technique was employed for the selection of the students.

TOOL USED

English Language Proficiency Test (ELPT) by Dr. K.S.Misra and Dr.Ruchi Dubey

was used.

STATISTICS USED

Mean, Standard Deviation and t-test were used for the analysis of data.

TESTING OF HYPOTHESES

Data were collected on a sample of 50 boys and 50 girls secondary school students belonging to rural and urban areas of district Meerut. Two groups were compared for measuring their language proficiency. Mean and standard Deviation of these groups were calculated. The significance of difference between the mean scores was found out by calculating the critical ratio. The data and result of the test of significance are given in the following table No.1.

Table 1

Significance of Difference between Mean Scores of Secondary School Students on their English Language Proficiency

Variables	Sample	N	Mean	SD	t-value	Level of Significance
Gender	Boys	50	267	17.63	1.66	Not Significant
	Girls	50	261	18.32		
Locality	Rural	45	263.58	19.37	0.41	Not Significant
	Urban	55	265.19	18.28		
Rural Locality	Rural Boys	24	266.72	21.83	1.16	Not Significant
	Rural Girls	21	259.64	18.65		
Urban Locality	Urban Boys	26	248.37	13.65	4.23	Significant at Both Levels
	Urban Girls	29	266.46	17.52		

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

1. Boys and girls secondary school students do not differ significantly in their English language proficiency.
2. Rural and urban secondary school students do not differ significantly in their English language proficiency.
3. Rural Boys and rural girls secondary school students do not differ significantly in their English language proficiency.
4. Urban Boys and urban girls secondary school students differ

significantly in their English language proficiency at 0.01 level of significance.

CONCLUSION

It was found that there is no significant difference between boys and girls secondary school students in their English language proficiency. Boys secondary school students have more English language proficiency as compared to girls secondary school students. It was also found that there is no significant difference between rural and urban secondary school students. Urban secondary school students have more English language proficiency as compared to rural secondary school students. No significant difference exist between rural boys and girls but rural boys have more English language proficiency as compared to rural girls secondary school students. The findings also revealed that there is significant difference between urban boys and girls secondary school students at both levels of significance. Urban girls have more English language proficiency as compared to their counterparts.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

English language proficiency among secondary school students gets affected by a number of factors. Their performance in various competition in future is affected by their lack of proficiency in English language. The schools should promote learning of English language and support educational and professional development of the students. Proficiency in English language creates more positive attitude among the students. English language proficiency enhances one's opportunities in government jobs, business, law, technology, military, marketing etc. It provides a competitive edge in career choice.

DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1. The study has been delimited to secondary schools students of Meerut district in Uttar Pradesh.
2. The study has been delimited to 100 secondary school students.
3. The study has been delimited to English language proficiency of secondary school students.
4. The study has been delimited to gender and locality of secondary school students.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

- 1 .Similar study can be conducted on a large sample to get a generalized conclusion.
2. A comparative study can be conducted between primaryschool and secondary school students.
3. A similar study can be conducted on adults who have studied in an English medium school.

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