

A Scientific Study on the Attitude towards English Communication Skills of Secondary Level Student Teachers of Tamil Nadu

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Abstract

Language is an extraordinary gift of God. It is part of what makes manfully human. Language is basically a system of communication where sound or signs convey objects, actions and ideas. Language, primarily spoken not written requires a good communication skill in order to be effective. Now-a-days English Communication Skills is a widely required skill that stands as a pre-requisite parameter to any employer at the time of recruitment of teachers. It is almost impossible for a teacher to survive without this English Communication skill. It is imperative for teachers to have good communication skills to succeed in his / her profession. Skill of good listening, immediate grasping and apt responding are required from the teachers' side to accomplish their responsibilities effectively. Thus an attempt is made in this paper to scientifically study the Attitude towards English Communication Skills of student teachers of Tamil Nadu. The study revealed that the secondary student teachers positive and negative attitude towards English Communication Skills is average and there is a significant difference between secondary student teachers who took up their schooling in Private schools and CBSE Schools than that of Government schools in their positive attitude towards English Communication Skills. There is also a significant difference between UG and PG qualified student teachers with mean scores favouring UG in their negative attitude towards English Communication Skills.

KEYWORDS: Attitude, Communication Skills, Secondary level Student Teachers and Interpersonal Communication.

INTRODUCTION

Teachers need excellent communication skills to succeed in their profession. Listening, interpersonal, written and oral communication skills are required by teachers to facilitate understanding of teaching findings and the ability to accomplish their responsibilities effectively. Teachers are constantly gathering, sorting, analyzing and explaining information to learners. Not only do teachers need to accomplish technical tasks, they must also communicate efficiently and effectively with internal and external members.

Development of effective communication skills is an important part of teachers' advancement potential. Teachers must possess highly developed communication skill levels to become a successful professional. The development of these skills not only enhances the teachers' potential, but will also improve the quality of teachers produced. Advanced communication skills are required in every aspect of the teaching process.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Being able to communicate effectively is the most important of all life skills. The ability to communicate information accurately, clearly and as intended, is a vital life

skill and something that should not be overlooked. Professionally, if one is applying for jobs or looking for a promotion with the employer, one will certainly need to demonstrate good communication skills. Communication skills are important for many professions but are crucial for teachers. Teachers communicate with students, parents, colleagues and administrators every day. Whether communicated face-to-face, on the phone, in print, electronically or through the public address system, the message must be constructed carefully and delivered clearly to be properly received. Good handwriting, spelling and grammar are very important in all forms of written communication.

Teachers who are skillful communicators have a better chance of being heard by administrators when making a request, such as for a transfer, special leave or permission for a student event or field trip. Good communicators clearly state the reasons for their request, anticipate possible counter-arguments and are prepared to refute them. They control their emotions, don't lose their tempers and always behave in a professional manner, even in disappointing or frustrating situations. Administrators who recognize such efforts are more receptive to granting a positive response to teacher requests.

THE PROBLEM

Teachers have the great responsibility in shaping students as good citizens of a country. Therefore, teachers could be assessed on one hand and on the other hand student teachers who pursue teacher education courses could be assessed, since they are going to be the future teachers in the society. The investigator felt that assessing secondary student teachers undergoing B.Ed. teacher education course for the present study.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following are the objectives of the present study:

- To find out the Attitude towards English Communication Skills of secondary student teachers of Tamil Nadu
- To find out the differences in the positive and negative level of Attitude towards English Communication Skills of secondary student teachers of Tamil Nadu with respect to Gender, Type of School Studied, Discipline of Study and Level of Qualification

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

Realizing the above objectives the following Hypotheses were framed:

1. The level of positive attitude towards English Communication Skills of Secondary student teachers of Tamil Nadu is high.
2. There is a significant difference between the positive attitude of secondary student teachers' communication skills with respect to:
 - a. Gender (Male and Female student teachers)
 - b. Type of School studied (Government, Private and CBSE)
 - c. Discipline of Study (Arts, Science and Commerce)
 - d. Level of Qualification (UG and PG)
3. There is a significant difference between the negative attitude of secondary student teachers' communication skills with respect to:
 - a. Gender (Male and Female student teachers)
 - b. Type of School studied (Government, Private and CBSE)
 - c. Discipline of Study (Arts, Science and Commerce)
 - d. Level of Qualification (UG and PG)

TOOL USED

The main instrument used in this study is based on the work of Rees, Sheard, & Davies (2002). The communication skills attitude scale (CSAS) used to collect information regarding student attitudes about communication skills training. The (CSAS) consists of 26 items as shown in Table, 13 of which are written in the form of positive statements and 13 negative statements about communication skills learning. Each item is accompanied by a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Participants also completed a demographic questionnaire, which included items on their GPA, and year level.

The positive attitude scale (PAS) score was obtained by adding the scores of items 4, 5, 7, 9, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, 21, 23, 25 and the reversed score of item 22. The negative attitude scale (NAS) score was obtained by adding the scores of items 2, 3, 6, 8, 11, 13, 15, 17, 19, 20, 24, 26 and the reversed score of item 1. Both scales range from 13 to 65 with higher scores indicating stronger positive or negative attitudes.

SAMPLE FOR THE STUDY

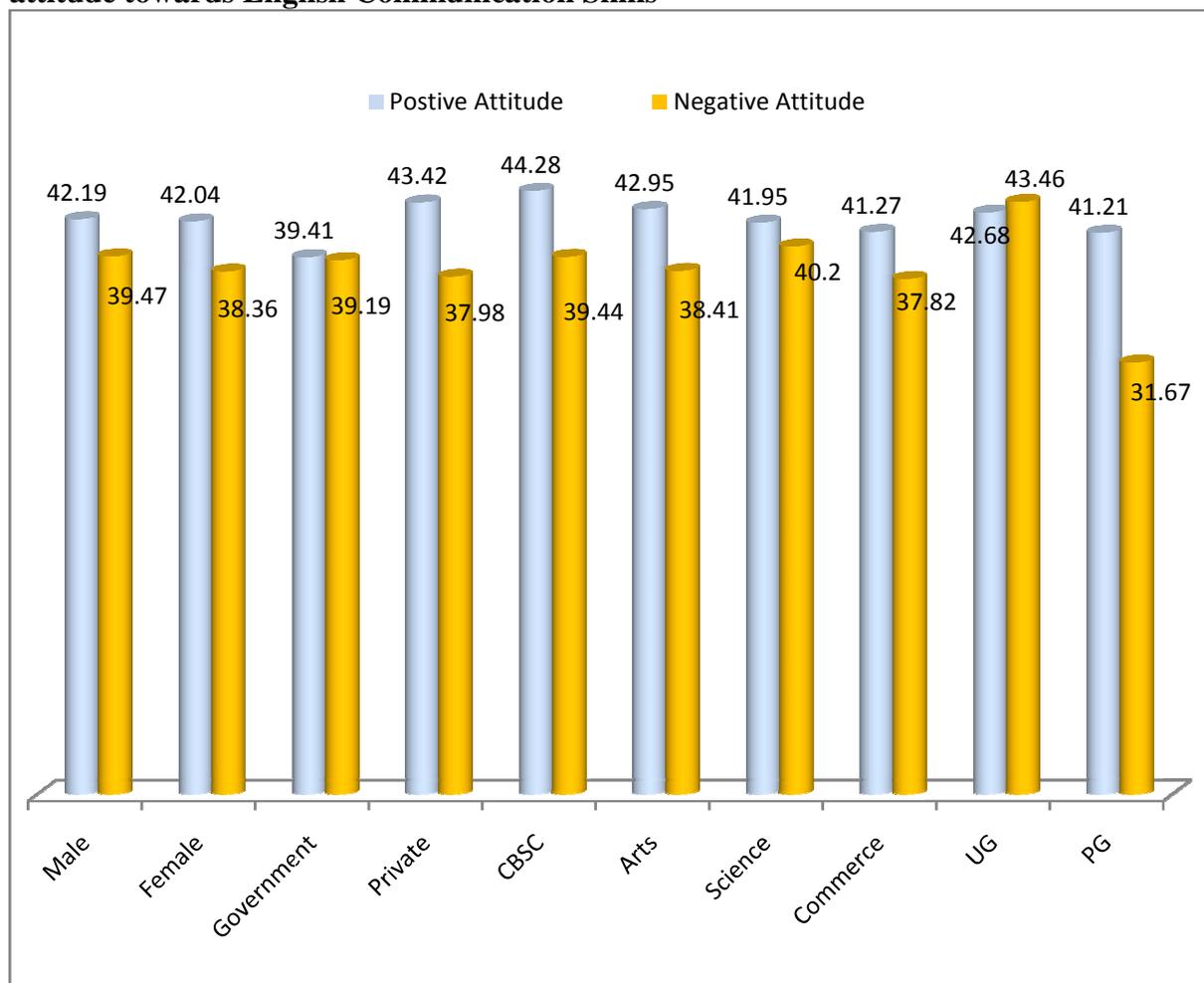
The present study includes 360 secondary student teachers undergoing B.Ed. courses in various Teacher education Institutions in the Salem District of Tamil Nadu State. The sample consists of 158 male and 202 female student teachers.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table-1: Mean and Standard deviation scores of secondary student teachers with positive and negative attitude towards English Communication Skills Max Score: 65

SN	Variable	Sub Variable	N	Positive Attitude		Negative Attitude	
				Mean	SD	Mean	SD
1	Secondary Student Teachers	--	360	42.11	8.55	38.84	8.37
2	Gender	Male	158	42.19	8.88	39.47	8.20
		Female	202	42.04	8.31	38.36	8.49
3	Type of school studied	Government	139	39.41	10.07	39.19	8.68
		Private	123	43.42	7.74	37.98	8.21
		CBSC	98	44.28	5.80	39.44	8.12
4	Discipline of Study	Arts	130	42.95	8.44	38.41	8.36
		Science	123	41.95	8.53	40.20	8.24
		Commerce	107	41.27	8.71	37.82	8.40
5	Level of Qualification	UG	219	42.68	8.54	43.46	6.96
		PG	141	41.21	8.51	31.67	4.34

Fig-1: Mean scores of secondary student teachers with positive and negative attitude towards English Communication Skills



The mean positive attitude scores of secondary student teachers towards English Communication Skills is 42.11 which is almost 65 % when compared with the maximum score of the positive attitude scale. The negative attitude scores of secondary student teachers towards English Communication Skills is 38.84 which is almost 59 % when compared with maximum score of the negative attitude scale. Hence it is concluded that the attitude towards English Communication Skills of secondary student teachers of Tamil Nadu is neither high nor low but stands at an average level in both the extremes viz., positive and negative.

Table-3: Difference of significance in the mean scores of secondary student teachers with positive attitude towards English Communication Skills with respect to Gender, Type of School studied, Discipline of study and Level of Qualification Max Score: 65

SN	Variable	Sub Variable	N	Mean	SD	t / F	P
1	Gender	Male	158	42.19	8.88	0.17	NS
		Female	202	42.04	8.31		
2	Type of school studied	Government	139	39.41	10.07	12.26 *	<0.001
		Private	123	43.42	7.74		
		CBSC	98	44.28	5.80		

3	Discipline of Study	Arts	130	42.95	8.44	1.16	NS
		Science	123	41.95	8.53		
		Commerce	107	41.27	8.71		
4	Level of Qualification	UG	219	42.68	8.54	1.60	NS
		PG	141	41.21	8.51		

From the above table it is evident that the difference between the mean scores of secondary student teachers with positive attitude towards English Communication Skills is not significant with respect to Gender, Discipline of Study and Level of Qualification. Whereas, with respect to the Type of School studied at Higher Secondary level the obtained Critical Ratio is greater than the table value at 0.001 level of significance and so there is a significant difference. In order to find out the existing difference between each of the two groups, post hoc Scheffe's test is used for the variable Type of School studied.

Table-4: Post-hoc Scheffe's test for difference in significance between each of the two groups with respect to Type of School studied.

Variable	Sub Variable	Mean Difference	Standard Error	P
Type of School studied	Govt. vs. Pvt.	- 4.01	1.03	< 0.001
	Govt. vs. CBSE	- 4.88	1.09	< 0.001
	Pvt. Vs. CBSE	- 0.86	1.12	NS

From the table, it is clear that there is a significant difference between student teachers who studied in Government and Private schools and Government and CBSE schools and the difference favouring Private School and CBSC school respectively. There is no significant difference between student teachers who studied in Private schools and CBSC schools.

Table-5: Difference of significance in the mean scores of secondary student teachers with negative attitude towards English Communication Skills with respect to Gender, Type of School studied, Discipline of study and Level of Qualification Max Score: 65

SN	Variable	Sub Variable	N	Mean	SD	t / F	P
1	Gender	Male	158	39.47	8.20	1.26	NS
		Female	202	38.36	8.49		
2	Type of school studied	Government	139	39.19	8.68	1.02	NS
		Private	123	37.98	8.21		
		CBSC	98	39.44	8.12		
3	Discipline of Study	Arts	130	38.41	8.36	2.60	NS
		Science	123	40.20	8.24		
		Commerce	107	37.82	8.40		
4	Level of Qualification	UG	219	43.46	6.96	17.98*	< 0.001
		PG	141	31.67	4.34		

From the above table it is evident that the difference between the mean scores of secondary student teachers with negative attitude towards English Communication Skills is not significant with respect to Gender, Type of School studied and Discipline of Study. Whereas, with respect to the Level of Qualification of the student teachers

the obtained 't' value is greater than the table value at 0.001 level of significance and so there is a significant difference between students with UG and PG qualification and the mean scores favouring student teachers with UG Qualification which means student teachers with PG qualification possess less negative attitude towards English Communication Skills.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

- The secondary student teachers positive and negative attitude towards English Communication Skills is average.
- There is a significant difference between secondary student teachers who took up their schooling in Private schools and CBSE Schools than that of Government schools in their positive attitude towards English Communication Skills. This may be because of the reason that student teachers who took their schooling in Private and CBSE Schools are more aware and consider the essentiality of English Communication Skills in this era.
- There is a significant difference between secondary student teachers with UG qualification than that of PG qualification in their negative attitude towards English Communication Skills. This could be because of the fact that most of the student teachers with UG qualification were not clearly aware of the pressures and requirements of the employers in English Communication Skills. The necessities of the English Communication Skills would be clear to them when they are put to the job market after completion of their B.Ed. Degree.

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