

ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY LEVEL OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS OF ANDHRA PRADESH

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ABSTRACT

As per the mandate of the National Policy on Education (1968), English is compulsory in all the schools of India. Yet, it is widely seen that the standard of English among the students passing out from schools remains much below than the accepted level. There have been widespread reports on the decline in the standard of English among the school students of Andhra Pradesh and also on the difference in the proficiency level of government and private school students. Keeping in view such reports regarding lack of adequate English knowledge among students, this study was undertaken to generate evidence on the disparities present in the proficiency level of government and private school students. Using a customized English language test, the study investigates the expertise of students in three schools of Andhra Pradesh. The results show that there exists a huge gap between the English proficiency level of private English medium schools and government aided regional medium schools. The study also recommends some probable solutions to enhance the knowledge of English language of the government school students.

KEYWORDS: Adequate, Disparities, Proficiency, Probable Solutions, Enhance.

INTRODUCTION

Today in India, a lot of people, spanning every section of socioeconomic level, perceive English to be a language of opportunity and chance, for young people, along with being a medium of communication, it is even perceived to be a kind of style statement. It is also a critical component of education system where it holds a considerable position as a second language in the entire school education. It is also the language of instruction in higher education in addition to it being acknowledged by the Constitution of India as an official language of the country; yet it is widely seen that the standard of English language

of the students passing out of schools remains much below the expected level.

The Knowledge Commission Report (2006) says that the quality of English language teaching is simply not good enough, and the support systems, such as the number of teachers or the materials for teaching, are neither adequate nor sufficient. Sharan (2012) is of the opinion that English is introduced rather late in rural schools. Moreover, teaching is being done by ill-equipped teachers and syllabi are usually designed based on outdated knowledge of pedagogy and perception.

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For anyone wishing to learn a language, mastering all the four basic skills (i.e Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing) is infinitely important.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

There have been many statements by educationists and parents regarding the decline in the standard of English among secondary school students of Andhra Pradesh and also about the difference in the achievement and proficiency level of government and private school students. The present study was undertaken to investigate the disparity in the performance between government and private schools students and to uplift the level of English among the regional medium school students. This article focuses on three important aspects of language learning. There are grammar, comprehension, and vocabulary.

AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The present study was conducted with the main objective of finding out the proficiency level in grammar, vocabulary and reading comprehension of students of 10th standard in two schools belonging to three different categories (High Standard, Mid-Standard and Low Standard).

The present study investigated the expertise of students in two selected schools of Guntur: Social Welfare Residential Schools (government funded Telugu medium school), and Bhashyam School (private English medium school). These schools are all co-educational and were selected using purposive sampling method. The schools were selected on their basis of their year of establishment, their proximity to each other and the number of students in the 10th standard.

METHODOLOGY AND MATERIALS

The data were collected from 10th standard students of each school using an online proficiency test of the students in grammar,

vocabulary and comprehensive skills. The test was modified to suit the local context of the students, so that better clarity could be achieved in the questions.

A total of 120 students participated in the survey voluntarily. Out of those 120 students, 72 were boys and 48 were girls, with the average age being 15 years. The participants in the survey had studied English for an average of seven years.

ANALYSIS

SWRS's performance was the worst between the two schools. Bhashyam's performance was the best in grammar, reading comprehension and vocabulary.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The result of the proficiency test clearly showed that the private school students are have a better command on English than the government school students. The teachers of English medium private schools are more accountable to their authorities than their counter parts in government schools. Hence these teachers take the extra effort to see to it that their students perform better in their studies.

Government school teachers are more secure in their jobs and hence do not take any extra care to improve their teaching strategies. In order to improve the knowledge of English among students, teachers of the government funded schools should realize their responsibility and be actively involved in the teaching process.

On the basis of the key findings of the study, the authors make the following recommendations for researchers, teachers, curriculum designers, school administrators and policy makers:

- Attention should be drawn towards the appointment of well-trained English teachers in government schools to support better language learning.

- Language labs with wide varieties of exercises should be introduced in government schools to provide better learning opportunities to the students.
- Different types of learner centered methods and approaches should be adopted in the process of teaching and learning.
- Students should be motivated to learn English by inspiring them and giving them prizes to encourage them to participate attentively in the classroom activities and perform well.

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