ATTITUDE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS TOWARDS TEACHING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE IN VERNACULAR MEDIUM SCHOOLS OF NORTH 24 PARGANAS

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Abstract:

Teaching and learning of English language are great challenge in non-native speakers of English countries. The proposed study aims at exploring attitude of teaching English as a second language especially for effective learning of the vernacular medium. The present study was based on descriptive qualitative survey method and consisted of 100 school teachers of rural as well as urban areas of North 24 Pargansa District in West Bengal. The work shows that most learners do not realize the central significance of English in adult life as they do not find any immediate use of the same outside the classroom in school life. However, the functional role of English as a link language and in the job-market cannot be denied and hence learning English emerges as crucial. The study demands that English teachers should adopt various methods to teach English as a second language to the students in vernacular medium schools, most of whom are deprived of a systematic exposure to the target language. Despite extensive research in the area, there seems to be a knowledge gap about how the teachers, supposed to be aiding learners by the teaching English as a second language, feel about this subject as a compulsory paper to be taught in the curriculum.

Key Words: Attitude, Secondary school teachers, teaching learning process, English language,

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Introduction:

Teaching and learning of English language is a great challenge in non-native speakers of English in countries like Peru, China, Japan, India etc. because exposure to use of English is minimal outside the classroom. Studies show that most learners do not realize the central significance of English in adult life as they do not find any immediate use of the same outside the classroom in school life. However, the functional role of English as a link language and in the job market cannot be denied and hence learning English emerges as crucial. English teachers have to adopt various methods to teach English as a second language to the students in vernacular medium schools, most of whom are deprived of a systematic exposure to the target language. English language teaching is now a matter of an enfranchised academic response to people's aspirations. English language education in India is an extensive and highly complex phenomenon in the curriculum governance and autonomy of the Indian education system. The three-language formula, formulated in 1968 by the ministry of Education of the Government of India in consultation with the states, mandated teaching of English as a compulsory subject in schools for functional communicative purposes. However, in any language learning, listening to and speaking in the target language is of primary significance and lack of such exposure in countries like India pose a challenge to effective transaction of the English curriculum in the vernacular medium schools where English is compulsory as per the three-language formula mentioned above. English, in such a case, becomes a burden to the learners who experience fear guage with little or no exposure to the target language, even in the educational institutions. The teachers too, under such circumstances, apparently experience anxiety and feel burdened to teach English to learners apprehensive of the accuracy and fluency of the foreign language. Despite extensive research in the area, there seems to be a knowledge gap about how the teachers, supposed to be aiding learners by the teaching English as a second language, feel about this subject as a compulsory paper to be taught in the curriculum. The proposed study aims at exploring attitude of teaching English as a second language especially for effective learning of the vernacular medium.

Statement of the Problem

This is a study on the attitude of secondary school teachers towards teaching English as a second language in vernacular medium schools of North 24 Parganas.

Research Questions

1. What is the attitude of teachers towards teaching English as a second language in vernacular medium schools?
2. What are the problems that faced by vernacular medium high school teachers teaching English as second language?
3. What is the attitude of English teachers towards teaching English as a second language in Bengali medium schools?
4. Is there any difference in teaching En-

glish as second language in urban and rural areas?

Hypotheses: The study has the following hypotheses:

H_{01}: There is no significant difference between rural and urban teachers in their attitude towards teaching English as a second language.

H_{02}: There is no significant difference between female and male teachers in their attitude towards teaching English as second language.

H_{03}: There is no significant difference between male and female teachers in the problems encountered in teaching English as a Second language.

H_{04}: There is no significant difference between rural and urban teachers in the problems encountered in teaching English a second language.

H_{05}: There is no significant difference between support received by rural and urban teachers for teaching English as a second language.

H_{06}: There is no significant difference between support received by male and female teachers for teaching English as a second language.

Methodology

The present study based on descriptive qualitative survey method and confined to the vernacular medium secondary schools at Barasat and Chowgacha of North 24 Pargansa District in West Bengal, India. A standardized questionnaire based on dependent as well as independent variables with 19 items for quantitative analysis and 6 items in the form of interview schedule for qualitative analysis were used for the present study. The total respondents were 100 teachers consisted of each 50 from urban and rural areas selected through random sampling technique. A Five-point rating scale was used with each question to quantify the qualitative responses.

Analysis and interpretation of data

After the collection of data through survey the investigator organized analyzed and interpreted the data and there after established the conclusions and generalizations to get a meaningful picture of the problem at hand and its implications for practical action and further research.

Hypothesis 1

H_{01}: There is no significance difference between rural and urban students in their attitude towards learning English.

t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Equal Variances		
Q. B.		
	URBAN	*RURAL*
Mean	28	22.14
Variance	20.08163265	39.18408163

Observations	50	50
Pooled Variance	29.63285714	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
Df	98	
t Stat	5.382460566	
P(T<=t) one-tail	2.51188E-07	
t Critical one-tail	1.660551217	
P(T<=t) two-tail	5.02375E-07	
t Critical two-tail	1.984467455	

Analysis: The t Stat (5.3825) is significantly larger than both the one-tail critical value (1.66055) and the two-tail critical value (1.98446). The p-values (both one-tail and two-tail) are extremely small and much less than the conventional significance level (e.g., 0.05 or 0.01). This implies that there is a statistically significant difference between the Urban and Rural groups.

Conclusion: There is enough evidence to reject the null hypothesis that the means of the Urban and Rural groups are equal. The Urban group has a significantly higher mean compared to the Rural group. The difference in means is statistically significant at a high confidence level.

Hypothesis 2

H_{02}: There is no significance difference between female and male students in their attitude towards learning English as second language

t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Equal Variances		
	FEMALE	*MALE*
Mean	25.74358974	24.63934426
Variance	25.03778677	46.36775956
Observations	39	61
Pooled Variance	38.09695379	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
Df	98	

t Stat	0.872605058	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.192505691	
t Critical one-tail	1.660551217	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.385011381	
t Critical two-tail	1.984467455	

Interpretation:

1. Statistical Significance: The two-tailed p-value is 0.385, which is greater than the common significance level of 0.05. This indicates no statistically significant difference between the means of the Female and Male groups

2. Comparison with Critical t-values: The calculated t-statistic (0.873) is less than the critical values for both one-tailed (1.6606) and two-tailed tests (1.9845). Thus, we fail to reject the null hypothesis.

3. Practical insight: Although the Female group's mean is slightly higher (25.74 vs. 24.64), this difference is not statistically significant based on the data provided. The variability in the Male group (higher variance) might dilute any difference between the means.

Conclusion: There is no significant difference between the female and Male groups based on the data presented. The observed differences in the means could be due to random variation rather than any real effect.

Hypothesis 3

H_{03}: There is no significance difference between male and female students in their problems encountered in learning English as second language.

t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Equal Variances		
	FEMALE	*MALE*
Mean	17.8974359	17.42622951
Variance	26.62078273	29.11530055
Observations	39	61
Pooled Variance	28.14803853	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
Df	98	
t Stat	0.433195886	

P(T<=t) one-tail	0.332912222	
t Critical one-tail	1.660551217	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.665824444	
t Critical two-tail	1.984467455	

Interpretation and Analysis: The provided table shows the results of a t-test for two samples assuming equal variances. Here is the detailed analysis:

1. Mean Values: Female: 17.8974359. Male: 17.42622951. The mean difference between females and males is very small, indicating a similar average score.

2. Variance: Female: 26.62078273. Male: 29.11530055. The variances are comparable, supporting the assumption of equal variances.

3. Degrees of Freedom (df): 98. The degrees of freedom for this test is 98, which is derived from the sample sizes (39 females and 61 males).

4. t-Statistic (t Stat): 0.433195886. This value is much smaller than the critical values, indicating weak evidence against the null hypothesis.

5. P-values: One-tail: 0.332195886. Two-tail: 0.665824444

Both P-values are significantly greater than the common significance levels (0.05 or 0.01), implying no statistically significant difference.

6. Critical t-Values: One-tail: 1.660551217. Two-tail: 1.984467455. The calculated t-statistic (0.433) is less than the critical values for both one-tailed and two-tailed tests.

Conclusion: The null hypothesis (H_o) states that there is no significant difference between the mean scores of males and females. Based on the analysis, P-values are greater than 0.05, indicating that the results are not statistically significant. t-statistic is smaller than the critical t-values, further supporting the lack of evidence to reject H_o.

Hypothesis 4

H_{04}: There is no significance difference between urban and rural students in their problems encountered in learning English as second language.

t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Equal Variances		
	URBAN	*RURAL*
Mean	16.62	18.6
Variance	36.68938776	17.71428571
Observations	50	50
Pooled Variance	27.20183673	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
Df	98	
t Stat	1.898174259	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.03030785	
t Critical one-tail	1.660551217	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.060615699	
t Critical two-tail	1.984467455	

Analysis:

That Stat (-1.89) is slightly less than the negative of the two-tail critical value (-1.98446). The one-tail p-value (0.0303) is less than 0.05, indicating significance for a one-tailed test at the 5% level. However, the two-tail p-value (0.0606) is greater than 0.05, indicating no statistical significance for a two-tailed test.

Conclusion: *1. One-Tailed Test: If the hypothesis is directional (e.g., "Rural mean is greater than Urban mean"),* there is sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis at the 5% level.

 2. Two-Tailed Test: If the hypothesis is non-directional (e.g., "There is a difference between Rural and Urban means"), there

is not enough evidence to reject the null hypothesis at the 5% level. Thus, whether the results are statistically significant depends on the nature of the hypothesis being tested.

Hypothesis 5

H_{05}**:** There is no significance difference between urban and rural teacher in their attitude towards teaching English as second language.

t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Equal Variances		
	URBAN	*RURAL*
Mean	18.42	15.54
Variance	19.96285714	14.62081633
Observations	50	50
Pooled Variance	17.29183673	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
Df	98	
t Stat	3.462915776	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.000396846	
t Critical one-tail	1.660551217	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.000793691	
t Critical two-tail	1.984467455	

Analysis:

1. One-Tailed Test: p-value (one-tail): 0.000397. t-Critical (one-tail): 1.66 Since the p-value is much smaller than 0.05, the result is statistically significant in a one-tailed test, meaning the Urban group's mean is significantly higher than the Rural group's mean.

2. Two-Tailed Test: p-value (two-tail): 0.000798. t-Critical (two-tail): 1.98 Again, the p-value is much smaller than 0.05, confirming the result is statistically significant in a two-tailed test, indicating a significant difference between the two means.

Conclusion: The results show a statistically significant difference between the Urban and Rural group means, with the Urban group having a higher mean (18.42) compared to the Rural group (15.54). The low p-values (<0.001) indicate that this difference is unlikely due to chance. This suggests that the factor being measured (e.g., income, educational attainment, health outcomes, etc.) is significantly different between urban and rural populations.

Hypothesis 6

H_{06}: There is no significance difference between female and male teachers in their attitude towards teaching English as second language.

t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Equal Variances		
	FEMALE	*MALE*
Mean	16.87179487	24.63934426
Variance	16.79892038	46.36775956
Observations	39	61
Pooled Variance	34.90229131	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
Df	98	
t Stat	6.412897153	
P(T<=t) one-tail	2.52475E-09	
t Critical one-tail	1.660551217	
P(T<=t) two-tail	5.04949E-09	
t Critical two-tail	1.984467455	

Interpretation: The p-value for both one-tailed and two-tailed tests is extremely small (<0.001), indicating that the difference in means between the two groups is highly statistically significant. Since the t Stat (5.41) exceeds both the critical values for one-tailed (1.66) and two-tailed (1.98) tests, we reject the null hypothesis (which states there is no difference in means between females and males).

Conclusion: There is a statistically significant difference between the average values for the Female group (mean = 16.87) and the Male group (mean = 24.64). The large t-statistic and low p-value suggest the difference is unlikely to be due to chance.

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Q.1) a) How do your teachers teach English in class? Do they use any other teaching aids or ICT for teaching English along with textbook and blackboard?

Teaching items	Percentage
ICT	50
BLACK BOARD	55

127

TEXT BOOK	100
OTHERS	10

b) Does your school have provisions of ICT, plug points in classroom and portable projectors?

DEVICES	PERCENTAGE
ICT	100
PLAG POINT	100
PORTABLE PROJECTOR	100

Q.2) Is grammar taught in the class by teaching rules from the textbook or by any other interesting method?

METHOD OF TEACHING	Responds
GRAMMAR BOOK	80
OTHER INTERESTING METHOD	50

Innovative Method used in rural and urban area.

AREA	PERCENTAGE
URBAN	80
RURAL	25

Q.3. a) How many male and female teachers of English do you have? What are their activities apart from teaching ?

URBAN MALE TEACHER	URBAN FEMALE TEACHER	RURAL MALE TEACHERS	RURAL FEMALE TEACHERS
3	3	1	2

b) Who are more burdened with the non-academic responsibilities?

ACTIVITIES BY TEACHERS	PERCENTAGE
MID-DAY MEAL COUNTING	80
KANYASREE	60
BOOK DISTRIBUTION	50

DRESS DISTRIBUTION	30
MALE TEACHER	**FEMALE TEACHER**
60	90

Q.4) What are the opportunities that you feel would have enriched your English communicative competency if organized by your school?

COMMUNICATING SKILL	PERCENTAGE
SPOKEN ENGLISH	60
DEBATE CLUB	50
DRAMA CLUB	50
MAGAZINE	80
CREATIVE WRITING	70

Discussion

It was found that most of the teachers use the textbooks and blackboards for teaching English. From the interview responses it was found that most of the schools both urban and rural had computers at least one portable projector and basic resources which can be used for teaching learning however the interview responses clearly point out that such resources are seldom or never used in classroom teaching. It is found that a subject as crucial as grammar in any language teaching learning is taught mostly in lecture method by citing grammatical rules and giving examples from books instead of active student engagement in well planned activities and tasks that help in teaching situational grammar and textual grammar in effective meaningful way. The male teachers are more in number and help the students for learning English. This finding is explained by data collected through unstructured interview where it is seen that the number of female teachers the most of the school surveyed is significantly less and most of the female teachers are overburdened with barriers like mid-day meal, Kanya Sree which leave them with very little time and energy to patiently support the non-native speakers of English in vernacular school. It is found that majority of the students feel that apart from the schedule English classes in the time table where only the prescribed test books are taught the school showed organized free spoken English courses or classes public, speaking classes, creative writing activities, debate and drama clubs and publication of English magazines. It was found that majority of teachers con-

sidered these as vital for learning English.

Recommendations

1.The Government should conduct regular training programmes for rural school teachers to introduce modern teaching techniques, including ICT tools and interactive methods.Promote peer learning by organizing teacher exchange programs between urban and rural schools.

2.Strengthen the utilization of ICT infrastructure in rural schools to bridge the gap in innovative teaching practices. Provide technical support and regular monitoring to ensure consistent use of ICT in rural schools.

3.Recruit more teachers to address the shortage in rural areas and distribute workloads evenly. Allow teachers to focus more on student learning by reducing the burden of non-academic government projects.

4.Introduce English-speaking clubs and activities in rural schools to promote verbal communication skills. Conduct workshops and competitions specifically designed to build confidence in speaking English.

5.Provide rural students with access to creative activities such as debates, extempore, and creative writing through inter-school collaborations or online platforms. Offer scholarships or grants for rural schools to organize co-curricular activities.

6.Include verbal communication as a core part of the English curriculum across rural schools. Utilize audiovisual aids, role-playing exercises, and interactive sessions to enhance communication skills.

Conclusion: The findings highlight a significant disparity between rural and urban schools in teaching techniques, resource utilization, and student opportunities. While urban schools have embraced modern methods and foster holistic development through extracurricular activities, rural schools struggle with traditional approaches, teacher shortages, and limited emphasis on verbal communication. Addressing these issues requires targeted interventions in teacher training, infrastructure utilization, and curriculum design. Bridging this gap will ensure equitable access to quality education and promote proficiency in English among all students, irrespective of their geographic location. Future research should delve deeper into the systemic barriers and innovative solutions to create a more inclusive and effective learning environment.

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