

Teachers Attitude towards Medium of Instruction at Primary Level

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Abstract

Medium of instruction has been a major concern of almost all the countries with multilingual population. Whether mother tongue is to be given priority or the other dominant language of the county or any other dominant foreign language that is in parlance, is the disturbing issue of most of the Post-colonial countries to which India is no exception. It is universally accepted that the medium of instruction in the primary levels of education should be in mother tongue. However, there are demands from family, society, market etc. for use of non-mother tongue medium of instruction in the education system. With this aspiration across Andhra Pradesh and Telangana states about 5000 primary schools which were run by the government with regional medium are closed during last 5 years due lack of admissions and sufficient strength. Parents are sending their wards to the private English medium schools. Both the state governments are planning to establish English medium primary schools. The aim of the study is to study and analyze the attitude of teachers – who are the prime concerned of the education system – with regard to the mother tongue as a medium of instruction. The present study aims to contribute to the discussion on the medium of instruction and its aspects on the teaching-learning process at Primary education system. This study, elicits the views of the teachers regarding providing primary education through the mother tongue and analyses the views of elicited by using different statistical methods to gain proper findings.

KEYWORDS: Medium of Instruction, Mother Tongue, Primary Level, Attitude of Teacher.

Introduction:

Medium of instruction has been a major concern of almost all the countries with multilingual population. Whether mother tongue is to be given priority or the other dominant language of the county or any other dominant foreign language that is in parlance, is the disturbing issue of most of the Post-colonial countries to which India is no exception. The countries such as India which have come out of the colonial cultures some 72 years ago are still struggling with an ambivalent situation - whether to follow the native language or the colonial language at various levels of the education system. The magnitude of this ambivalence accentuates when there are multitude of languages specific to each of the region of the country as it is in India. Adding to the ambivalent situation is the unavoidable impact of globalization which is demanding the intrusion of foreign cultures and languages and forcing each of the world cultures to make their place in the global scenario. In this process local cultures and languages are getting affected and marginalized, as only the people educated in globally recognized languages will have place in the global market. This in a way affects the medium of instruction at the local and regional levels negatively.

Beginning with early times, philosophers of India such as Buddha have showed utmost concern for the common man's language. For instance, Buddha

allowed his disciples to use the language of the people for propagating his teachings. Further, modern Indian philosopher of education, who witnessed the post-colonial situation of India, also argued for the mother tongue medium of education.

This is the general scenario of the medium of instruction in the multilingual Post colonial countries which are being usurped by the waves of globalization.

Review of Literature

Research studies have been conducted all over the world to focus the problems of Medium of Instruction in multilingual context. Medium of Instruction in other than Mother Tongue at Primary Level is an impediment to the learning process among children. In this connection studies carried out by the researchers are reviewed.

Pwnalosa Fernando (1980), Halbar (1981) and Sujit Kuamr Choudary (2005) have discussed the role of Mother Tongue and Social-economic positions of learners. Toukonna Pertti (1980) and Lee Gunderson (2007) studied the Problems of immigrant people and language attitudes. Role and problems of multilingualism along with bilingual and multilingual education and their advantages were studied by Halbar (1981), Ajit Mohanty (1982), Cardenas Jose (1984), Lee (1993) and Susan Malon (2007). Values embedding cultural and social benefits and advantages of using Mother Tongue as a medium of instruction were elaborated by the research of De Partha (1981).

The above analysis of the review of literature leads the investigator to make an attempt to study the attitude levels of teachers towards Mother Tongue as a medium of instruction at primary level.

Significance of the Study

In general, it is universally accepted that the medium of instruction in the primary levels of education should be in mother tongue. However, in a multilingual country like India in the present global scenario, there are demands from family, society, market etc. for use of non-mother tongue medium of instruction in the education system. With this aspiration across Andhra Pradesh and Telangana states about 5000 primary schools which were run by the government with regional medium are closed during last 5 years due lack of admissions and sufficient strength. Parents are sending their wards to the private English medium schools. Both the state governments are planning to establish English medium primary schools. At this juncture it is need of the hour to study the attitude of teachers (who are directly involved in the process of instruction) towards instructional language/media at Primary level.

The specific aim of the study is to study and analyze the attitude of teachers – who are the prime concerned of the education system – with regard to the mother tongue as a medium of instruction. Teachers are the providers or transistors of education to the children. They facilitate the learning process. The success of the teaching-learning process depends equally on the teachers along with the students. Unlike the students, teachers can express their views, problems and suggestions in a more authoritative and concrete way about the process of learning. This study, therefore, elicits the views of the teachers regarding providing primary education through the mother tongue and analyses the views of elicited by using the different statistical methods to gain proper findings.

Objective of the Study

To find the attitude levels of teachers towards Mother Tongue as a Medium of Instruction at Primary Level.

Hypothesis of the Study

There is no significant difference in the attitude levels of teachers towards Mother Tongue as a Medium of Instruction at Primary Level.

Research Tool

In order to achieve the objectives an attitude scale was constructed to study the attitude of teachers towards Mother Tongue medium of instruction with 76 relevant and appropriate statements. These are grouped and categorized into 5 groups. They are as Language Skills (LSRW), Teaching and Learning, Psychological Factors, Socio – Economic and Cultural Factors and Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization (LPG). Of the 76 items selected for the present study 38 were positive (favourable to Mother Tongue as a Medium of Instruction) and the remaining 38 were negative. The statements were arranged on 5-point scale - Strongly Agree, Agree, Doubtful, Disagree and Strongly Disagree.

Split-half method is used to estimate the reliability of scales used in the study. The attitude scale is administered on 120 teachers and the obtained data is subjected to estimate reliability through Split-half method (Mahammad Ali, 2009). The obtained r-value of scale is very high (0.89) indicating the reliability of the scale used in this study.

Sample of the Study

For the convenience, two districts from Andhra Pradesh namely, Srikakulam and Chittoor and one district from Telangana state i.e. Mahabubnagar selected based on the availability of schools which are located in multilingual areas. From each district 100 teachers from Primary Schools and 100 teachers from Secondary Schools are randomly selected. The Study limited itself to Primary Schools (Single Mode of Medium of Instruction) namely Mandal Parishad Elementary, Government Primary, Municipal Primary and Mandal Parishad Upper Primary Schools and Secondary Schools (Dual Mode of Medium of Instruction - SUCCESS Schools) namely Zilla Parishad/Municipal/Government Schools.

In the present study, the Normative Survey method is adopted to study the attitude levels of Teachers working in Mandal Parishad Elementary Schools, Mandal Parishad Upper Primary Schools and Zilla Parishad/Municipal/Government High Schools (Dual mode of Medium of Instruction). An attempt was also made to provide understanding about the significance of Mother Tongue as a Medium of Instruction in the multilingual context at Primary Level of School Education.

Collection and Analysis of Data

After selection of sample, the attitude scale was administered on selected teachers. Sufficient time was given to the teachers and no time limit was specified for rating the scale. Collected data are scored and quantified based on weights given to statements. By adding the numerical values, the attitude scale yields a score of attitude towards Mother Tongue as a Medium of Instruction in-total and aspect wise of the teachers. The collected data is analyzed by using Mean, Standard Deviation and Percentages.

Attitude Levels of Teachers on various aspects of Mother Tongue as a Medium of Instruction at Primary level

To know the attitude of the teachers on each aspect of Medium of Instruction, and total attitude, the mean and SD are calculated and presented in table-1. The attitude levels of teachers have been divided into three groups viz., Low, Moderate and High based on the Mean \pm SD scores. The results obtained are shown in table-1.

Table-1: Mean, SD and Attitude levels of total sample on various aspects of Mother Tongue as a Medium of Instruction

Sl. No.	Aspects of Medium of Instruction	No. of Statements	Mean (Neutral score)	SD	Attitude Levels		
					Low (Mean-1SD)	Moderate (Between Mean-SD & Mean+SD)	High (Mean+SD & above)
1	Language Skills	10	30	3.45	Below than 26.5	Between 26.5 and 33.45	33.45 and above
2	Teaching and Learning	20	60	5.18	Below than 54.82	Between 54.82 and 65.18	65.18 and above
3	Psychological Factors	18	54	4.77	Below than 49.23	Between 49.23 and 58.77	58.77 and above
4	Socio – Economic and Cultural Factors	16	48	4.51	Below than 43.49	Between 43.49 and 52.51	52.51 and above
5	Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization (LPG)	12	36	3.89	Below than 32.11	Between 32.11 and 39.89	39.89 and above
Total		76	228	9.50	Below than 218.5	Between 218.5 and 237.5	237.5 and above

The above divisions of levels of teachers' attitude on Mother Tongue as a Medium of Instruction are used for the analysis. The computed data of the teachers' levels of attitude based on their corresponding Mean Scores on various aspects of Medium of Instruction is shown in table-2.

It is clear from table-2, that for the Language Skills aspect of Mother Tongue as a Medium of Instruction at Primary level, teachers dealing with two mediums show a higher level of positive attitude (60.33%) than the teachers dealing with one medium (56.33%) and the total sample group (58.33%). Teachers dealing with one or two mediums and total sample groups showed the variation to the three levels of attitude.

Coming to the aspect of Teaching and Learning, significant percentage of teachers who are dealing with two mediums showed a high level of positive attitude (67.67%), whereas total sample group shows 63.67% only. Teachers who are dealing

with one medium (59.67%) showed less than the high level attitude of teachers dealing with two mediums and total sample group with respect to the Teaching and Learning aspect. It is also obvious that, more percentage of teachers dealing with two mediums shows better positive high level attitude towards the Psychological Factors aspect (62.33%) than the total sample group and teachers' dealing with one medium (61% and 59.67%).

With respect to the aspect of Socio-Economic and Cultural Factors, teachers dealing with one, two mediums and total sample showed narrow variance to the high attitude level (44%, 43.33% and 43.67% respectively). Teachers dealing with one or two mediums and total sample groups showed insignificant percentage to high level positive attitude, which are close to moderate attitude level.

Meager percentage of teachers dealing with one, two mediums and total sample groups showed high level attitude to the aspect Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization (27%, 24.67% and 25.83%) and they are less than the low (27%, 24.67% and 25.83%) and moderate (45%, 47.67% and 46.33%) attitude levels. It can be inferred from the above that a majority of teachers from the sample group show more moderate level attitude than the high and low attitude level for the Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization aspect of Mother Tongue as a Medium of Instruction at Primary level.

The teachers dealing with two mediums showed more percentage of high attitude level (51.67%) than teachers dealing with one medium and the total sample group (49.33% and 50.5%) to the total attitude scale of Mother Tongue as a Medium of Instruction. It is clear that 50% of the teachers of the total sample group have high level of attitude towards the total attitude scale of Mother Tongue as a Medium of Instruction at Primary level. In case of Teaching and Learning and Psychological Factors aspects the percentages of responses are 63.67% and 61% respectively with high level of attitude. It shows that the teachers teaching competencies and psychological factors also influence their attitude level towards the Mother Tongue as a Medium of Instruction at Primary level. This finding supports the Tsirai Ndamba (2008) and Mahammad Ali (2009) findings that children preferred to learn English and not favourable towards L1. Likewise these results are in tune with Robinson's (1996) finding that English is viewed as performing high functions than the mother tongue which does not render a person employable, hence parents tend to negatively evaluate indigenous languages because they do not perform such high functions.

Table-2: Levels of Attitude of Teachers Based on their corresponding Mean Scores on various aspects of Medium of Instruction with respect to dealing with Number of Mediums

S. No.	Aspects of Medium of Instruction	Teachers dealing one medium N=300			Teachers dealing two mediums N=300			Total N=600		
		Attitude Levels (numbers within the parentheses are frequencies i.e., number of teachers and outside the parentheses are corresponding percentages)								
		Low	Moderate	High	Low	Moderate	High	Low	Moderate	High
1	Language Skills	8.33(25)	35.33(106)	56.33(169)	7.33(22)	32.33(97)	60.33(181)	7.83(47)	33.83(203)	58.33(350)
2	Teaching and Learning	9.67(29)	30.67(92)	59.67(179)	7.33(22)	25(75)	67.67(203)	8.5(51)	27.83(167)	63.67(382)
3	Psychological Factors	7.33(22)	33(99)	59.67(179)	6(18)	31.67(95)	62.33(187)	6.67(40)	32.33(194)	61(366)
4	Socio-Economic and Cultural Factors	16.67(50)	39.33(118)	44(132)	21.67(65)	35(105)	43.33(130)	19.17(115)	37.17(223)	43.67(262)
5	Liberalization Privatization and Globalization	28(84)	45(135)	27(81)	27.67(83)	47.67(143)	24.67(74)	27.83(167)	46.33(278)	25.83(155)
Total		14(42)	36.67(110)	49.33(148)	14(42)	34.33(103)	51.67(155)	14(84)	35.5(213)	50.5(303)

Note: Frequencies and percentages mentioned in table-2 are based on the number of teachers who fall under the attitude levels viz., Low, Moderate and High shown in table-1.

Findings

- Teachers dealing with one medium, two mediums and total sample showed Moderate level of attitude (Neutral attitude) with respect to Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization aspect. With respect to other aspects of attitude scale namely Language Skills, Teaching and Learning, Psychological Factors and Socio-Economic and Cultural Factors the respondents showed Positive attitude (High level attitude).
- Teachers dealing with two mediums showed significant percentage of high attitude level than the teachers dealing with one medium for Language Skills, Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization (LPG) aspects and aspects in-total of the attitude scale of Mother Tongue as a Medium of Instruction at Primary Level.
- More than the half of Teachers dealing with one and two mediums and the total sample group showed high level positive attitude towards Language Skills, Teaching and Learning and Psychological Factors aspects of Mother Tongue as a Medium of Instruction at Primary Level.
- More percentage of Teachers dealing with one and two mediums and the total sample group expressed high level of attitude towards the Socio-Economic and Cultural Factors aspects of Mother Tongue as a Medium of Instruction at Primary Level than the Moderate level of attitude.
- With regard to Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization (LPG) aspect more number of teachers dealing with one and two mediums and the total sample group expressed moderate level of attitude towards Mother Tongue as a Medium of Instruction at Primary Level than the High and Low level of attitude.
- Half of sample dealing with one medium and two mediums and total sample group showed high level of positive attitude towards Mother Tongue as a Medium of Instruction at Primary Level in total.

Conclusion

It is a well-known fact that the problem of Medium of Instruction to be adopted at all levels of education has become a thorn in the flesh of the academicians, administrators and politicians. Before introducing any reform, it would be in the fitness of things to feel the pulse of the consumer (receiver/target group) so that the reform can be implemented without much hubbub. It also helps to evaluate the reform that has already been introduced, so that loop holes if any, can be plugged. This is true of any reform, more so with reforms in Medium of Instruction which affects millions of young students. Teachers are well aware that the regional languages are characterized by individual/community usage, emotional attachment, village solidarity and personal loyalties. Whereas, the official language is characterized by institutional usage, written usage, functional use, economic advantage and national and international communication. From the findings of the study it is concluded that the Teachers may felt that Mother Tongue has less important in Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization (LPG) context. Due to the LPG, the mode of teaching strategies and styles are changed. Hence there were some differences in the behaviour of the teachers, like psychological, social and cultural aspects etc., to cope with the LPG.

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