

# Assessment Of English Language Achievement Among Secondary School Students

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## ABSTRACT

English has become one of the most influential worldwide communication media in the modern period. It is the language of textbooks and the medium of instruction at various levels of education; and plays a significant role in the teaching learning process. A student's English language proficiency may also influence his/her overall academic performance in the classroom. The current study examines the influence of gender, place of residence and the type of school management on secondary school students' English Achievement. A sample of 1000 secondary school students selected from Government and Private secondary schools from Srikakulam district of Andhra Pradesh have been considered for the present study. The investigator has developed and standardized an achievement test in English to assess secondary pupils' English Achievement. The findings of the study revealed that majority of students have exhibited an average level of performance in English. In addition, the study suggests that there is a considerable disparity in English achievement among secondary school students based on their gender, place of residence and the type of school management.

**Key Words:** English language proficiency, secondary school, school management, geographic location.

## 1. Introduction

The English Language is one of the most efficient modes of communication across the globe. India has recognized the importance of English and has created several educational opportunities to help the students improve their English language skills. India has a complex linguistic community as a bilingual country; but policymakers have promoted English as a strategy to modernize. Students should learn English in addition to their mother tongue or regional languages as English is an international language. After independence, the Indian government appointed different Commissions and Committees to speak on the position of English language in school curriculum. The commissions had studied thoroughly the problems of English language teaching at different levels; and recommended appropriate solutions. The Secondary Education Commission recommended that "Our youth should acquire knowledge from all sources and contribute their share to expansion and development. In the attainment of this objective, the study of English is bound to play an important role". The University Education Commission acknowledged the importance of the English language and stated that "English should continue to be studied in higher education." It is a literary language rich in

humanistic, scientific, and technological works. We cut ourselves off from the ever-growing living stream of knowledge if we abandon English for emotional reasons, and students who desire to pursue higher education or vocational courses must grasp English well enough to get knowledge. With this in mind, CABE (1961) established the so-called three-language formula in schools, in which students learn:

1. When the regional language or mother tongue differs from the regional language,
2. Hindi or any other Indian language in Hindi-speaking areas.
3. English or any other European language.

The importance of English has long been recognized in India. For example, the English Language is employed in all science, technological, and social science curricula. Students' education and communication abilities increase as a result of learning English. In both communication and academic practice, students who do away with English, encounter numerous challenges. When students' English proficiency improves, their academic achievement will undoubtedly improve. Earlier

researches (Sahragard et al., 2011; Aina et al., 2013; Sadeghi et al., 2014) showed that the Proficiency of students in language has a positive impact on their academics. In contrast, the researcher (Adegboy, 1993) claims that lack of English proficiency is a hallmark of poor mathematics performance. (Raka and Lasaten, 2016) discovered a strong link between students' English language skills and academic success in science, mathematics and English.

### **Assessment of Language Learning**

Estimation is frequently characterized by how stakeholders use data; nevertheless, the fundamental purpose is to obtain knowledge that will assist us in making decisions that will benefit everyone (Bachmann & Palmer, 2010; Chatterjee, 2003). All assessments should provide precise descriptions of the necessary practice and opportunities for students to demonstrate their abilities. The evaluation process should be linked to the success criteria. There are, however, a variety of approaches to conduct evaluation that highlights the distinct users of assessment data.

Because education is about learning, students must be active participants in the process and progress to the core level. Evaluation and learning become merged when students can create personal objectives using criteria and offer proof of Achievement through self and peer evaluation. In data structuring and utilization, identifying and encouraging students' voices and agency can assist in design evaluation as learning.

Teachers are just as important as students in planning and using assessment data to guide and enhance the quality of instruction. Teachers regularly provide precise feedback to students, make minute-by-minute adjustments to their instructional tactics, and guarantee that their students' learning is scaffold. When evaluation helps teachers to make suggestive decisions within and throughout the classroom, they participate in an evaluation for practice (Stiggins, 2005).

Large-scale evaluation and conditions across multiple classes involve schools, districts or states in planning, collecting, analyzing and reporting student data with the support of the district and state authorities. Standardized, normative-prescribed, or standard-prescribed tests are large-scale measurements. They go through a multi-year development process that includes subject

testing on individual students in cognitive labs, pilot testing on a small sample of students and field testing on many children before deciding on the best items or activities to include in the final exam form. When conducted annually, the learning assessment often significantly impacts the outcomes. Data from learning assessments can generally assist students and teachers in making the necessary decisions.

### **Purposes for Assessing English Language Learners (ELLs)**

The findings may be misconstrued if instructors do not understand why we evaluate English Language Learners (ELLs). The evaluation includes six critical classroom, school, district, and state objectives. Students engage in self- and peer evaluation in the classroom, while teachers constantly assess students' performance and refine their daily teaching practice. Other evaluation objectives should eventually impact teaching and encourage student learning, whether at the district or state level.

Teachers working with ELLs must be aware of the student's baseline language competence, which is a starting point for monitoring academic progress over time (in English and their mother tongue). Teachers can track student growth throughout the school year after collecting baseline data. Classroom evaluation represents the day-to-day educational procedures that take place in the classroom. The collaborative classroom evaluation gives information from unit to unit at the grade or departmental level. Student portfolios, which gather and analyze actual student work; and can be used quarterly or semester-wise as proof of student success over time.

### **Measuring Academic Language Proficiency and Academic Achievement**

It can be more challenging to assess ELLs who receive language support services than to assess proficient English-speaking pupils. This requires confirmation of language aptitude and academic development. Language aptitude refers to the processing and use of language in four ways: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The extent of a student's language growth, commonly described as a level of language competence, is revealed via language proficiency evaluation. Accountability reform attempts were extended into academic contexts

in the early 2000s to measure language proficiency (Bailey & Wolf, 2012). Furthermore, the anchor for language proficiency testing and language development standards underlines the importance of language sections of the curriculum in students' academic success (WIDA, 2004, 2007, 2012). As a result, estimations of academic language competence have broadened over the last decade to include school language—that is, the language relevant to each subject or content area.

### **The need and significance of the study:**

In linguistically and culturally relevant classrooms, teachers serve as mediators, supporting students in bridging the familiar and unknown gaps. Classroom teaching and evaluation adapt to the cultural value systems of the surrounding communities and represent their knowledge groups. According to Baronet Al., 2005; Gonzalez, Moll & Amanti (2005), "Classroom teaching and evaluation adapt to the cultural value systems of the surrounding communities and represent their knowledge groups".

Teachers should assess the many linguistic and cultural experiences students bring to the classroom and incorporate various views in developing students' socio-cultural identities, assignments and projects. When using culturally responsive teaching to evaluate teachers, students must be able to analyze and report information in a language and cultural context and evaluate themselves and their peers as relevant decision-making resources.

Schools should pay more attention to different types of children and their families. Students learn how to construct knowledge through cultural lenses at schools with a multicultural presence or that have undergone cultural shifts. Learn about students' experiences and cultures; become socio-culturally aware by learning about the school environment; have affirmative ideas about diversity; use suitable teaching tactics such as drawing on students' mother tongues and local resources; advocate for all students' rights.

Students' ability to understand their own culture and the cultures of others is critical to their academic and personal success. "When teachers induce intricate language, culture, and circumstance interactions and make judgments within a clear theoretical framework, schools

make a big and real difference for children" (Miramontes, Nado, & Cummins, 2011, p. 10).

Academic culturally responsive standards include the notion that culture pervades the classroom, with faculty members responsible for ensuring that students' languages and cultures are reflected in everyday instruction. Student materials must also be valuable, improved, and integrated into benchmark learning (Cipher, Edwards, Ellis, Co, & Stockzinsky, 2011). Let us suppose educators provide a loving and nurturing environment. In that case, students will be more confident and inspired to take risks in their new or native language by exhibiting respect, authenticity and common ground based on disagreement. Classroom communities promote language equality, intolerance and learning.

Culturally responsive teaching builds trust with children who have traditionally been excluded from schools through a learning partnership (and society). Teachers' ability to use it aids pupils in gaining understanding and trust with linguistically and culturally diverse students. As a result, pupils' increased capacity to complete more difficult assignments leads to a richer learning experience (Hammond, 2015).

According to Chomsky (1965), language competency is the knowledge of a language that both the speaker and the listener share. Language competency is the ability to communicate in a foreign language; linguistics is universal to all civilizations and is unaffected by inattention, memory problems, diversions or faults.

Chomsky's concept of universal grammar (U.G.) stresses that language is complex for individuals to develop and understand based on the naturalness of language use. Chomsky (1965) distinguished between language skills and language abilities, the latter distinct from the former, prompting Hymes (1967) to doubt Chomsky's thesis. Language performance, such as language ability, is vital to language testing, he said, because language skills and the study of language performance are intertwined.

According to Canal and Swine (1980), no feature is more significant than the other, and both have been valued since the beginning of the target language learning process. Language or grammatical ability, socio-linguistic ability, strategic ability, and speech ability were all used to characterize

communication aptitude (Canal, 1983). According to Canal and Swain (1980, 1981), linguistic or grammatical competence refers to a speaker's comprehension of syntax (grammatical rules), semantics (the study of the link between words and their related meanings), and grammar (the study of linguistics). Language component sources and speech and phonology (sound research) appendages are included in the units. When learning a second language, experts believe that grammar in suitable and meaningful communication is required.

The researcher claims that any language's lexicon can be broken down into "grammatical words" (p. 101), implying that vocabulary cannot be reduced to a list of target language words. Pinker (1995) and Schouten (1995) suggest that English language learners require cognitive ability to recognize and understand specific language proficiency and language units (2009). According to Nunan (1999), language components are part of a good word: vocabulary. Cook (2001) agreed with Noonan (1999) on the need for vocabulary acquisition for language learners to be able to express themselves in the target language. The number of words needed to function appropriately in target language is unknown (Cook, 2001).

In this regard, Indigenous speakers and language learners require time to understand the social norms that govern a culture to function well in various social circumstances (Anderson, 1990). Language learners must comprehend various social conditions, necessitating additional time to master the target language (Chaika, 1994; Vanpaten, 2004). Anderson highlighted that while the rules of interaction within a social group vary by culture, they are tied to the speaker's age, gender, social standing, and educational attainment (1990). As a result, oral partnerships are dictated by latent cognitive speakers' understanding of the target culture and social norms (Anderson, 1990; Chaika, 1994). The speaker's and listener's everyday grasp of the underlying social principles of communicative engagement (Chaika, 1994) also contributes to the speech's success in the social environment. The speaker's ability to grasp, know, and select the appropriate language to employ in a given social setting is referred to as sociolinguistic ability in Canal and Swain's (1980, 1981) definition of linguistic knowledge.

The term applies to the chosen language, the target culture's native tongue (Siegel, 2003). As a result, learners must study/acquire English to fully participate in the country's social, educational, and legal systems. The educational performance of ELLs is measured in English (Collier, 1987; Cummins, 1979; Kraschen, 1982), regardless of how long the language has been used in the country, and standardized assessments are created to be more homogeneous this premise. The population is visible. It is vital to understand the variables of language capacity (Canal & Swine, 1980, 1981) and the sociolinguistic aspect of the language incorporated in second language acquisition and teaching.

Given the efficacy indicated above, English proficiency significantly impacts students' academic Achievement and many academics firmly agree that students must be skilled in English to succeed. The investigator was keen to examine secondary school students' English Achievement in vital socio-cultural and demographic factors.

#### **The objective of the study:**

1. To find out the English language Achievement of 10<sup>th</sup> class students concerning the following variables:

- a. Gender : Male/ Female
- b. Area : Rural / Urban
- c. School management: Government/ Private

#### **Hypotheses:**

1. There is no significant difference in English language achievement of male and female 10<sup>th</sup> Class students.
2. There is no significant difference in English language achievement of 10<sup>th</sup> Class students from rural and urban areas.
3. There is no significant difference in English language achievement of 10<sup>th</sup> Class students studying in Government and Private schools.

#### **Method:**

The descriptive or survey research approach was employed for this study. The study's population consists of all students in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade from government and private secondary schools in Srikakulam District of Andhra Pradesh.

#### **Sampling method:**

A sample of 1000 students of 10<sup>th</sup> grade from government and private secondary schools in

Srikakulam district of Andhra Pradesh was chosen for the current study using Random Sampling method.

### Research tool:

The researcher prepared an Achievement test paper in English subject and measured their academic performance in the test. The question paper consists of 50 questions for 50 marks, each question carrying 1 mark. The screening test is conducted at the end of the academic year before the students appear for their annual examination.

### Reliability and Validity

The split-half reliability coefficient for the achievement test as perceived by students was 0.834, and the scale's validity is based on the content and constructs validity. As an instance of construct validity, the scale is correlated with

some other dimensions and found the obtained correlations statistically significant.

### Procedure:

The investigator obtained permission from the head teachers of secondary schools and fixed the schedule. Before conducting the test, students were given orientation on the study; and all the students voluntarily participated in this programme. The question sheets were distributed to the students; and they were asked to answer them submit the filled-in answer sheets within the stipulated time of 30 minutes.

### Data Analysis:

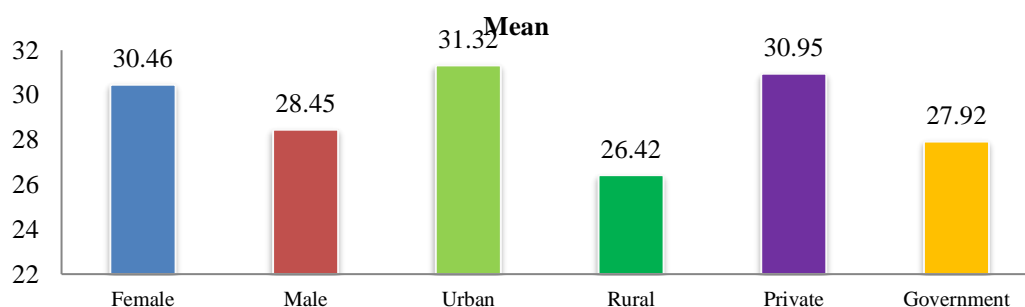
The collected data were entered into a Microsoft excel database sheet and analyzed. The mean, cross-tabulation, standard deviation and t-test were used for the data analysis.

**Table 4: Comparison of the mean value, S.D., t-value**

Variable	Group	N	Mean	SD	SE <sub>D</sub>	"t"	Hypotheses
Gender	Female	389	30.46	8.64	0.574	3.50*	Null hypothesis is rejected
	Male	611	28.45	9.32			
Residence	Urban	574	31.32	8.79	0.565	8.67*	Null hypothesis is rejected
	Rural	426	26.42	8.79			
School Management	Private	433	30.95	8.62	0.565	5.36*	Null hypothesis is rejected
	Government	567	27.92	9.26			

\* Significant at 0.05 and 0.01 levels.

### Bar diagram showing the Mean score values on Gender, Location of the school and Type of school management



### Findings:

1. Male and Female students of 10<sup>th</sup> grade in Secondary Schools differed significantly in their Achievement in the English Language.

Female students (Mean=30.46) in 10<sup>th</sup> grade performed better in the English Language

than male (Mean=28.45) students in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade in secondary schools.

These results are in tune with the studies conducted by Ghulam Sarwar (2018) and N. Sasikumar, R. Bapitha (2019).

2. The students of 10<sup>th</sup> grade studying in Urban and Rural secondary schools differed

significantly in their Achievement in the English Language.

The students of 10<sup>th</sup> grade in urban (Mean=31.32) secondary schools performed better in the English Language than their counterparts studying in rural (Mean=26.42) secondary schools. These results are in tune with the studies conducted by (N. Sasikumar and R. Bapitha 2019). However, these results contradict with the findings of the studies conducted by Ghulam Sarwar (2018), who reported that there is no significant difference in students' Achievement in the English Language in the urban and rural secondary schools.

3. The students of 10<sup>th</sup> grade studying in Government and Private secondary schools differed significantly in their Achievement in the English Language.

The students of 10<sup>th</sup> grade in the Private secondary schools (Mean=30.95) performed better in their English Language achievement than their counterparts studying in Government secondary schools (Mean=27.92). These results are in tune with the studies conducted by Ghulam Sarwar (2018) and N. Sasikumar, R. Bapitha 2019).

### Conclusion:

Teachers are just as important as students in planning and using assessment data to guide and improve instruction. For both language competence and academic success, teachers dealing with ELLs must understand the students' baseline or starting position (in both English and their native language). Each day's classroom evaluation reflects ongoing educational strategies. The study concluded that the Achievement of student in English language learning is influenced by the variables – gender, Location of the school and type of School Management.

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