

## A Comparative Study of Attitude of Teachers in English and Non-English Medium School/Colleges from Grade 8 to Grade 12 in India

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**Abstract:** Numerous studies have been conducted in India and abroad on the impact of medium of instruction (MI) on academic achievement as well as learning English as a second language. But the researches reveal divided opinions on the issue. Apart from medium, there can be other factors that play significant role in the teaching-learning process of English language. It aims to study and compare attitude of English Medium (EM) and Non-English Medium (NEM) school teachers towards English as a language and English language teaching (ELT) and to study differences if any, in their attitude. To realize these objectives, a normative survey was conducted with randomly selected fifty-six teachers, comprising 24 EM and 32 NEM school teachers. The findings of the study suggest that EMS teachers have highly positive attitude towards the profession and teaching English as a subject; whereas NEMS teachers are moderately positive in this regard. The EMS teachers are favorably disposed with highly positive attitude towards the learners, their abilities for learning English as well as their performance in English language. But the NEMS teachers are moderately positive in this regard. Both the EM and NEM teachers have favorable attitude towards importance of English language in general.

**Keywords:** Attitude of teachers, English Language Teaching, English Medium Schools, Non-English Medium Schools.

### Introduction

Acquisition of proficiency in English language has always been a herculean task for the learners who come from non-English medium institutions, pursuing their degree programs in rural India. The students who enroll for first year of graduation in any discipline consist of two types of learners – one who come from Mother tongue (MT) medium schools and colleges and the other who come from English medium background. The former are very poor and incompetent in English language. The latter that undergo their schooling in English medium based institutions are comparatively far better than the learners of MT medium students. Former's performance in all four pedagogical skills of language seems better than the latter's. Both set of learners study English as compulsory subject for near about twelve years right from primary level up to grade twelve. The teachers of MT medium institutions are equally eligible and perhaps better trained rather than those of English medium (EM) ones.

Despite this fact, competence of EM learners in English language is better. This difference of standard of performance carry forward during their graduation and at the end of graduation, EM learners come out as better speakers and communicators. The performance of EM students in different skills such as listening, speaking, reading, writing, pronunciation, comprehension, analysis and interpretation is more satisfactory than their counterparts.

In this scenario, it has become obligatory to understand why and how this difference in standard of EM and MT medium learners of English occurs. Apart from the difference in their MI, there can be other variables like teaching process, attitude of teachers, use of English in school/college, motivation strategy, teaching of language skills etc. The present study attempts to study and compare the EM and NEM school teacher's attitude towards learners, importance of English language in general and towards English language teaching.

## Review of literature

### I. Medium of instruction.

Medium of instruction (MI) plays a significant role in the acquisition of any language. A bulk of studies on impact of MI on academic achievement has been undertaken in India. Most of these studies can be broadly divided in following two categories.

i. Studies on impact of mother tongue (MT) as MI on selected variables

i. Studies on impact of English as a MI on selected variables

D.P.Pattanayak observes in his Trend Report on Research in Language Education that most of the studies were conducted in the 1970s (Kamakshi, 1965; Dave and Anand, 1971; Dave and Dave, 1971; Jayaram and Misra, 1980; Srivastava and Khatoon, 1980). The results of these studies are of three types, namely,

a) Students in English-medium achieve significantly more than students in MT (Mother Tongue) medium (Kamakshi, 1965; Srivastava and Khatoon, 1980).

(b) Students in MT-medium schools score significantly more than students in English-medium schools (Dave and Anand, 1971).

(c) There is no significant difference in achievement between MT and other tongue medium students (Dave and Dave, 1971; Jayaram and Misra, 1980)

But there is no uniformity in the results of these studies. Rather these studies reveal contradictory results as follows. A. K. Srivastava et al. (1986) have worked on the comparative aspect of mother-tongue and English as medium on subjects of study and attainment of students' longitudinally. Their conclusions state that different factors responsible for better achievement, one of them being the English medium. In various studies they have found mother- tongue

students reaching the level of English-medium students. But the methods, materials and media used for the English-medium students give them an edge over mother-tongue students.

## II. Attitude towards English and Language Teaching

Attitude directly or indirectly affects the performance in any activity, endeavor or process in general. As far as the teaching-learning process of any language is concerned, it plays a significant role. Fishbein (1967, p.12) defines attitude as a mental disposition of the human individual for or against a definite object. Attitude towards any referent may be either favorable or unfavorable. These attitudes also influence language behavior towards language which include attitude towards a language or towards a feature of language, or towards language use, or towards language as a group marker (Cooper and Fishman, 1974 in Boruah, 2014). Since attitudes to language form a belief (in individuals) in relation to the referent object, their effect on language policy change cannot be taken for granted since they play an important role leading to either acceptance or rejection of language policy change.(Webster et.al.,2012)

Tessers (1995; 222 in Webster et.al.2012) reports that there is a large amount of studies that have shown that, “people’s attitudes can be influenced by pairing some target object with some stimulus” about which the person already feels positively or negatively, or placing the target object in some context that induces positive or negative feelings.

Teachers who are generally unenthusiastic about the teaching profession (i.e. having a negative job orientation) reported in one study that they were more distressed about their teaching situation than were teachers who were enthusiastic (Litt & Turk 1985, p.180). K. Sumita Rao (2012) conducted a study of attitudes of secondary school teachers towards teaching profession with the variables like- gender, religion, marital status and background of teachers and found that ‘there is a significant difference in the Mean Teacher Attitude scores towards teaching profession in the area of academic aspect of attitudes of teachers towards teaching profession. The mean teacher attitudes scores of female teachers in total area were found to be greater than the male.’ Dr. H. V. Belagali (2011) conducted a study of secondary school teachers’ attitude towards teaching profession in relation to gender and locality.

But no specific and authentic comparative study of English and Non-English medium school teacher’s attitude towards teaching profession, English and language teaching are available.

### Method of Study

In order to carry out the research and realize the objectives, Normative Survey was employed in the present study. Normative survey also termed as descriptive survey studies, describes what exists at present. They are concerned with existing condition or relations, prevailing practices, beliefs and attitudes etc. (Pushapanathan, 2010).

### Profile of the Sample

Since the objective of the study was to compare and analyze ELT in English Medium (EM) and Non-English Medium (NEM) schools and colleges at high school and junior college level, the subjects of the study were English teachers teaching to classes from grade 8 to grade 12. There are 70 teachers working in 32 EM and NEM schools and colleges in the target area out of which randomly selected 56 teachers -24 from EM and 32 from NEM schools formed the sample for the present study.

### Area and Location of the Study

The study was conducted in the school/ colleges located in Rajura tehsil -a part of Chandrapur, District in Maharashtra, India. Rajura town is located at  $19^{\circ}47'N$   $79^{\circ}22'E$   $19.78^{\circ}N$   $79.37^{\circ}E$ <sup>[1]</sup> in Maharashtra, the second most populous and the third largest in area of India's 28 states. Rajura lies on the banks of the Wardha River and falls within the coal belt of Central India.

### Limitations to the Study

This study has some limitations. Firstly, the present study limits itself to small geographical area (i.e. Rajura tehsil in Chandrapur district). Hence, the sample of the study was small comprising only 56 teachers. Secondly, the study included teachers teaching English in schools from grade 8 to grade 12 in the target area only. Thirdly, only instrument used for data collection was a self designed questionnaire. But still, every care has been taken to make the entire study genuine and the data has been analyzed and interpreted carefully.

### Instrument for Data Collection

The instrument used for data collection was a self designed questionnaire consisting close ended questions. The instrument was face validated by two experts having considerable experience in empirical research in English language. The instrument was validated in terms of relevance to the topic, clarity of language, adequacy of items and ambiguity of statements. The experts after examining the instrument suggested some requisite changes and corrections which were effected in the final draft of the instrument.

### Method of Data Collection

The principal investigator physically visited the all the secondary schools/colleges from grade eight to grade twelve in the target area and with prior permission of the concerned headmaster/principal administered the questionnaire to the respondents. Along with the questionnaire, a general appeal letter was also given to provide information about the study and general instructions regarding filling of the questionnaire. It was clearly informed to them that the questionnaires are not meant for sending to any government or semi-government

organization and only statistical information will be used in the final report. They were appealed to give honest and candid information and it was stated to them that only their factual and candid responses can bring valid conclusions. The respondents were not allowed to write their names anywhere in the questionnaire so as to receive honest, frank and fearless responses. The questionnaires were retrieved on the spot after completion. This study was purposed to collect descriptive information on various variables, non-parametric statistical techniques such as percentage, frequencies of numbers converted into percentage have been used to analyze the data. The data has been presented in tabular and graphic forms.

## Results and Discussion

**Table 1: Teacher's attitude towards English language in general**

Sr No	Item	Strongly agree %		Agree %		Neutral %		Disagree %		Strongly disagree%	
		EMS	NEMS	EMS	NEMS	EMS	NEMS	EMS	NEMS	EMS	NEMS
1.	English has got much importance today	70.83	62.5	29.16	25	00	6.25	00	00	00	00
2.	Since English is a killer subject it should be made optional	00	00	00	00	8.33	6.25	25	68.75	66.66	25

EMS-English Medium School; NEMS-Non-English Medium School

The above table shows English and Non-English medium school teachers attitude towards English language in general. The majority of both groups of teachers strongly agree that *English has got much importance today*. The EMS and NEMS teachers strongly agreeing to the said item show a difference of 8% i.e.EMS-70% and NEMS-62.5% which is not so significant. To the second item-*since English is a killer subject, it should be made optional*, majority of both teachers deny meaning that English should not be made optional though it is killer subject. They understand the need of studying English in the era of globalization and cut throat competition. But NEMS teachers do not show strong disapproval as majority of them only 'disagree' not 'strongly disagree'. Only 25% strongly disagree and the majority i.e.68% disagrees. It can be interpreted that EMS teachers are highly positive to the first item; whereas NEMS teachers are moderately positive owing to their response to the second item. Overall both the groups of teachers show favorable attitude towards English language in general.

**Table 2: Teacher's attitude towards profession of teaching English**

Sr. No	Item	Strongly agree %		Agree %		Neutral %		Disagree %		Strongly disagree%	
		EMS	NEMS	EMS	NEMS	EMS	NEMS	EMS	NEMS	EMS	NEMS
1.	I like the job of teaching	50	31.25	45.83	50	4.16	9.37	00	9.37	00	00
2.	I like my subject i.e. English	70.83	28.12	29.16	43.75	00	12.5	00	15.62	00	00
3.	I feel comfortable and confident during teaching English	54.16	12.5	33.33	21.87	12.5	21.87	00	12.5	00	6.25

This table shows the teachers attitude towards profession of teaching as well as towards teaching English as a subject. 45.83% EMS agree and 50% strongly disagree to the statement that '*I like the job of teaching*'. On the whole, majority of EMS teachers have strong liking for the profession of teaching. It also means that EMS teachers have chosen this profession willingly or after entering the job they have developed and maintained interest in the job of teaching. The response of NEMS teachers is slightly different from EMS. They also like the profession of teaching. But NEMS teachers do not show strong penchant for the profession because the number of teachers strongly agreeing is less i.e. 31.25% than those who agree i.e. 50%.

The majority of EMS teachers like English as a subject. The most significant thing to note here is that maximum EMS teachers i.e.70.83% strongly agree against 29.16% who only agree to the statement. The case of NEMS teachers is exactly opposite to their counterpart. The number of teachers strongly agreeing is far less i.e. only 28.12% than those who agree i.e. 43.75%. There is little scope to say that some NEMS teachers do not like English as a subject for teaching. 15.62% teachers who disagree and 12.5% neutral responses can validate this assumption.

The responses of both teachers to the third item are like their previous reactions. There is a sharp contrast between EMS teachers i.e.54.17% and NEMS teachers i.e.12.5% who strongly agree to the statement –*I feel comfortable and confident during teaching*. Nearly 18% NEMS (i.e. sum of 12.5who disagree and 6.25 who strongly disagree) teachers do not feel comfortable and confident during teaching English. It clearly indicates that NEMS teachers are poorly skilled for teaching English than the EMS.

In nutshell, EMS teachers have highly positive attitude towards the profession as well as teaching English as a subject; whereas NEMS teachers are moderately positive in this regard.

**Table 3: Teacher's attitude towards learners**

Sr. No	Item	Strongly agree %		Agree %		Neutral %		Disagree %		Strongly disagree%	
		EMS	NEMS	EMS	NEMS	EMS	NEMS	EMS	NEMS	EMS	NEMS
1.	I do not like my students	00	00	00	00	12.5	21.8	41.6	40.6	45.8	37.7
2.	My students are not capable of learning English	00	00	00	28.1	00	18.7	37.5	40.6	62.5	12.5
3.	My students are not satisfied with my teaching	00	00	00	00	8.33	12.5	37.5	59.3	54.1	28.1
4.	My students performance in English is not satisfactory	00	00	00	21.8	00	00	41.6	34.3	58.3	21.8

From the above table, we can realize that both- English and Non-English medium school teachers either 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree' to the statement that '*I do not like my students*' which clearly means that they like their students. Neither of the group of teachers 'agree' to the statement. Every teacher likes and loves his/her students. Aversion or hatred to the students hampers the results of entire teaching-learning process.

62.5% EMS teachers strongly disagree to the statement that '*my students are not capable of learning English*' implying that they agree that their students are intelligent enough to learn English. Comparatively only 12.5% NEMS teachers affirm this. The majority of both groups of teachers disagree but NEMS teachers do not disagree strongly like EMS. Moreover 28.12% NEMS students agree to the statement. It is concluded that EMS teachers show strongly positive attitude whereas NEMS teachers are moderately positive.

The responses of NEMS teachers to the third and fourth statements are more or less like the second statement. The majority of EMS and NEMS teachers refuse both the statement. But while responding to both the statements, majority of NEMS teachers only disagree, not strongly

disagree. Thus in both the items, the EMS teachers exhibit strong positive attitude whereas the NEMS teachers show moderately positive.

It is obvious that the EMS teachers are favorably disposed with highly positive attitude towards the learners, towards their abilities for learning English as well as their performance in English language. But the NEMS teachers are moderately positive in this regard.

### Conclusions

Both the EM and NEM teachers have favorable attitude towards importance of English language in general. EMS teachers have highly positive attitude towards the profession as well as teaching English as a subject; whereas NEMS teachers are moderately positive in this regard. The EMS teachers are favorably disposed with highly positive attitude towards the learners, their abilities for learning English as well as their performance in English language. But the NEMS teachers are moderately positive in this regard. In nutshell, the overall attitude of English medium school teachers is comparatively more positive attitude towards English language, language teaching and learners in the school.

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