



ENGLISH AT THE PRIMARY SCHOOL LEVEL-A STUDY OF TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

This is probably the study of English at the primary school level -A study of teachers' perspective. The study aims to examine the policy and practice of English teaching at the primary school level. This attempt could help in revealing practical loopholes and limitations of the policy on English at the primary school level. Such revelations could be useful in bettering the implementation of the policy and determining the right direction in which English language teaching at school could proceed. The present study finds the teachers' awareness of the said policy in English at the primary school level is quite satisfactory. The present study suggests that the special trainings for teaching methods and spoken English are necessary. This would help teaching effective.

INTRODUCTION

The government of Maharashtra introduced English at the school level in the regional language school considering the growing importance of English in today's competitive world. The policy aims to teach children at a very early age communicative skills in English by making them actively participate in the process. Teachers play a significant role in determining the psychosocial environment for individual student's learning. Teachers can also set the physical environment for teaching-learning activities. Teacher behaviour considerably affects the academic performance of individual students. The academic performance of children is influenced by the kind of learning environment at home, school and community. This was expected to improve the quality of teacher education programme and in-service training programmes.

OBJECTIVES

1. To study the theoretical implications and practical difficulties in the implementation of the government of Maharashtra policy on English at the primary school level.
2. To study the pedagogical skills of teachers while teaching English
3. To study their expertise in English language teaching
4. To study the availability of teaching and learning materials study time they got to teach English
5. To study their interest in teaching English

HYPOTHESIS

In view of difficulties that teachers face in the teaching English at primary level(in regional language schools) one could say that the Maharashtra Government policy of English at Primary School level and practical implications have some limitations which need to be right in time so that the desired output of this policy could become visible.

DATA COLLECTION

The study was conducted using secondary data. The secondary data was collected by using close ended questionnaire and to conduct interviews of teachers.

METHOD

Survey method was the method of the study.

TOOLS OF DATA COLLECTION

The secondary data was collected with the use of structured close ended questionnaire and interviews of practising teachers.

SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

The survey covered hundred teachers of Municipal schools in Pune city. For want of time and space, it becomes a representative study of one particular type of school and school teachers. Besides, since the study is restricted only to the teachers' perspective the view of students and parents, considered in passing, couldn't be studied in detail.

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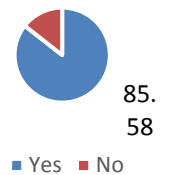
DATA ANALYSIS, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Theoretical implications and practical difficulties in the implementations of the Government of Maharashtra policy on English at Primary Level

Table : 1

Awareness of regarding the Government of Maharashtra policy on English at Primary Level

Sr.No.	Particulars	No. of Respondents	%Percentage
1	Yes	89	85.58
2	No	15	14.42



Number of teachers who have read the policy on English at Primary school Level

Sr.No.	Particulars	No. of Respondents	%Percentage
1	Yes	47	42.20
2	No	57	54.80

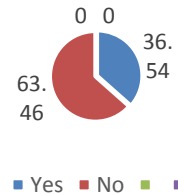
Familiarity with the objective set in the policy

Sr.No.	Particulars	No. of Respondents	%Percentage
1	Yes	55	52.89
2	No	49	47.11



Opinion about the criteria of the policy like age factor, socio-economic, cultural background of the student have been taken into consideration

Sr.No.	Particulars	No.of Respondents	%Percentage
1	Yes	38	36.54
2	No	66	63.46



The survey based on the questions asked under this category shows that the teachers' awareness of the said policy on English at primary level is quite satisfactory. Of the total number of teachers questioned, 85.58 % were aware of the policy and of them 45.20 % percent had actually read the whole policy. 52.89% teachers knew the objectives set by the policy. The ratio of the teachers who were familiar with the theoretical implications of the Government's policy on English at Primary Level to the teachers who were totally or partially unaware of the policy, its objectives etc., is quite considerable.

2. Pedagogical skills of teachers while teaching English

Table : 2

Reasons for interesting learning of English

Sr.No.	Particulars	Respondents	%Percentage
1	Use of songs	20	19.23
2	Use of pictures, charts	37	35.58
3	Use of simple expressions	2	1.92
4	All the three mentioned above	45	43.27

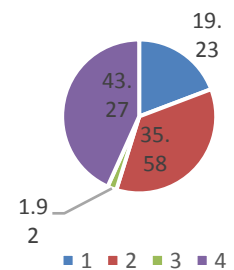


Table 2.1

Methods of preparation of lesson in English

Sr.No.	Particulars	Respondents	%Percentage
1	Read the content	72	69.23
2	Read and explain the difficult words	27	25.97
3	Explain with grammatical viewpoint	5	4.80

Table 2.2

Use of supplementary material for the topic to be taken up

Sr.No.	Particulars	Respondents	%Percentage
1	Yes	100	100
2	No	-	-

Table 2.3

Preparation of this material

Sr.No.	Particulars	Respondents	%Percentage
1	Yes	87	83.65
2	No	1	0.96
3	Both	16	15.39

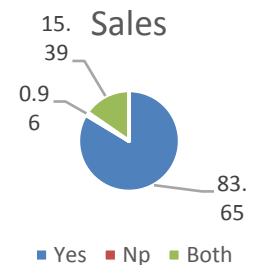


Table 2.3

Opinion on non-linguistic expressions in the teaching of English

Sr.No.	Particulars	Respondents	%Percentage
1	Yes	101	97
2	No	03	03

Table 2.4

Use of body language in the teaching of English

Sr.No.	Particulars	Respondents	%Percentage
1	Very little	11	10.58
2	Very much	93	89.42

Teachers seem to be keen on making the teaching and learning of English interesting. For this purpose, almost all of them make use of poems, songs, charts, flash cards, simple expressions. Apart from these non-projected means they also use audio-visual aids like multi-media viz tape recorders, C.D., Players etc., Those who do not use the audio-visual aids mainly have infrastructural limitations. Barring this no teacher seems to be unwilling to make use of the various audio-visual aids.

All the teachers also claimed that they make use of supplementary material for the topics they opt to teach and majority of them (83.65%) have prepared their own supplementary material.

Almost 97% teachers maintain that non-linguistic expressions have a great role to play in the comprehension of the language by students. This helps them to make students feel at ease while learning English and thus they can practice the participatory method of teaching. In order that students interact with them the teachers hold a very considerable attitude and encourage them to speak even if they commit mistakes at times. They also encourage the interaction by giving them simple clues. All the teachers do take student's feedback regarding their comprehension by means of simple test.

3.Their Expertise in English language teaching

Table:3

Familiarity with the speech sounds of English

Sr.No.	Particulars	Respondents	%Percentage
1	Yes	80	76.92
2	No	12	11.54
3	Some extent	112	11.54

Table:3.1

Self-Assessment of teachers as users of English

Sr.No.	Particulars	Respondents	%Percentage
1	Average	64	61.53
2	Very good	1	0.97
3	Good	34	32.70
4	Excellent	-	-
5	Not so good	5	4.80
6	Bad	-	-

1. Most of the teachers 76.92% have knowledge of the sounds of English. They seem to have obtained it during the In-serving training.
2. 52.79% teachers believe and honestly accept that their knowledge of English ability to speak English and their knowledge of English grammar are average. Most of them 46.15% also find it difficult to simplify topics through their ability to translate the content into Marathi and explain it in Marathi is good.
3. These teachers admit that to attain the objectives of the policy it is necessary to appoint experts in the subject to teach it. It is their sincere belief that persons with higher qualification and better communication skills in English should be specifically appointed.

4.Availability of Teaching Learning Material

Table 4

Use of teaching learning material for teaching English

Sr.No.	Particulars	Respondents	%Percentage
1	Text book	89	85.57
2	Hand book	14	13.47
3	Other	1	0.96

Table 4.1

Availability of this material

Sr.No.	Particulars	Respondents	%Percentage
1	Yes	95	91.35
2	No	09	8.65

Teachers prominently make the use of text books for teaching language. They are satisfied with the material available for teaching. They feel that the material has been produced taking into consideration the intellectual level of the students. As many as 100% teachers have produced their own teaching material without any special training in the same. They believe that the use of supplementary material is greatly beneficial to the students.

5.In-service Training

Table 5
Opinion on the training

Sr.No.	Particulars	Respondents	%Percentage
1	Good	76	73.07
2	Boring	09	8.66
3	Encouraging	19	18.27
4	Redundant	-	-

Table 5.1
Sufficiency of the duration of the training

Sr.No.	Particulars	Respondents	%Percentage
1	Sufficient	14	13.46
2	More	60	57.70
3	Less	30	28.84

Table 5.2
Was the training conducting during the vacation?

Sr.No.	Particulars	Respondents	%Percentage
1	Yes	68	65.38
2	No	36	34.62

All teachers have been given a one week in service training in English teaching. Their overall impression of this was good. However only a few 18.27% teachers found it encouraging. Majority of them believed that the duration of the training was more than sufficient. Only 28.84% teachers found it insufficient. This training was conducted during vacations. However, some teachers 34.62% were given in-service training during school hours.

6.Time they get to teaching English

Table 6
Sufficient of this time

Sr.No.	Particulars	Respondents	%Percentage
1	Yes	72	69.24
2	No	32	30.76

Table 6.1

Time allotted and completion of the syllabus

Sr.No.	Particulars	Respondents	%Percentage
1	Yes	56	63.84
2	No	48	46.16

The teachers admit that the time that if they get to teach English in school (30 or 35 min. every day) is insufficient. But only 30.76% teachers feel that more time should be allotted to English teaching. Around the same number of teachers feel that more time should be allotted to English teaching. Around the same number of teachers 46.16% believe that because of the time constraint they cannot complete the syllabus inspite of time planning their lessons well. This shows that though they decide to teach a certain topic in a given time students need more time to grasp and practice.

7.Their Interest in The Teaching of English Level of Confidence

Table 7

Fear of teaching of English

Sr.No.	Particulars	Respondents	%Percentage
1	Yes	17	16.35
2	No	87	83.65

Table 7.1

Level of Confidence

Sr.No.	Particulars	Respondents	%Percentage
1	Yes	95	91.34
2	No	09	8.65

Majority of the teachers questioned like to teach English, are not scared of English and English teaching and therefore have a very positive attitude towards the teaching of English. They feel that they can teach English confidently because of their experience as teachers. Teachers teach with confidence on account of sufficient knowledge of the subject and experience of teaching. However, 16.35% teachers are still scare of English teaching. All teachers feel that speaking of English enhance their confidence and believe that lack of expertise in the language affects their confidence.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Separate courses in English communication Skills should be organised.
2. Printed notes, enough resource material on the topics covered should be supplied in the training programme.
3. Need of the teachers should be taken into consideration.



4. Translation method should be adopted while teaching English but English should not be taught in Marathi.
5. Teacher training programmes should have an increasing involvement of experts in English and organisations/institutions of English.
6. Separate training programmes be conducted for the development and appropriate use of educational tools for the teaching of English. Such training could enable teachers to produce their own tools.
7. Significance of body language in teaching is well known. The present study asserts the need of special training programmes in the effective use of body language in the teaching of English.
8. Special training seems necessary even in the methods of teaching English. They need to improve in themselves. They should be given training in the ways in which they can improve their English. Training should focus on aspects that would lead to the increase in their interest in English.
9. Teacher should be specially trained in spoken English so that their inferiority complex is lessened and they would go beyond the text book while interacting with students.
10. Resource person in the training should be great experts in the subject so that trainee teachers get deep knowledge of the subject and their problem, difficulties etc are satisfactorily answered.
11. Teacher training programme should prepare need based, increase a positive attitude, increase level of confidence, focusing only what is necessary, having appropriate attitude towards English.
12. In-service trainings of the teachers should be followed by supervision of actual classroom teaching to see whether the knowledge, information and teaching methods learnt at the training are actually used by them in their teaching. Such supervision would give feedback on whether the skills and methods taught in the training are used by them in their teaching and whether they have been effective or otherwise.
13. In-service training should give enough scope to teachers to interact. Therefore, such trainings should prominently make use of active participation of the trainee teachers. This would increase their interest in the training.
14. Teachers should be advised to use English while teaching English. They should minimize their use of Marathi. This would give students greater exposure to spoken English.

CONTRIBUTION OF THE PRESENT RESEARCH

1. The study focused on teachers' perspective on English language teaching at primary school level (in regional language schools).
 2. The study focused on practical difficulties that teacher faced while teaching English language in regional language schools.
 3. The study focused the role of teachers.
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4. The study throws lights on implementation of the government policy on English language in regional language schools.

CONCLUSION

The present study covered around the hundred teachers of Municipal Schools in Pune city brought to the notice of the researcher that the government policy as English at Primary School level in regional schools has some practical difficulties. The aims and objectives of the policy are known to many but their implementation poses certain practical difficulties. These difficulties have been noted in data analysis. The present study also put forth valid suggestions and recommendations for the betterment of the implementation of the policy. It has been observed from the survey and the data collected that the policy on theoretical level is feasible however practical implementation is defective because of various factors discussed earlier. The suggestions and recommendations mentioned in the previous pages therefore should be taken into consideration. This could help the government to observe the desired output of the policy.

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