
Teachers' Competency in Mizo Language: A Study with Reference to Selected Variables

Ramhlupuii*
H. Malsawmi**

Abstract

It is a prevalent assumption that as we transition to a culture where English is the primary language of instruction, we tend to distance ourselves from our mother tongue. In a country like India, where the English language is highly valued, especially in the field of education, it is crucial to gain a strong competency over our native language so as to stay grounded to our roots, and to preserve our traditions, customs, beliefs, and practises and to be able to pass them on to the next generation to ensure that we don't lose our ethnicity, our identity, or the essence of our culture. The present study is basically an attempt to find out the Mizo language competency of higher secondary teachers. For this, Mizo language competency test constructed by the investigators was used. 62 higher secondary in-service teacher trainees were taken as the sample of the study. It was found that majority of higher secondary teachers had normal mizo language competency. There were more teacher trainees who had good mizo language competency than those who had poor mizo language competency. When Mizo language competency was compared with reference to gender, locale, school management and teacher status, it was found that there was no significant difference between each of these variables.

Keywords: *Language competency, higher secondary, teacher trainees, Mizo.*

Introduction

It is common knowledge that language is fundamental to all facets of human existence. It is the means by which one develops relationships with other people and expresses their needs, wants, and opinions, all of which are necessary for people to operate properly in society and to live in harmony with one another. A person's mother tongue is an important component of their social, cultural, and personal identity. It aids in maintaining a sense of connection to our ancestry and cultural identity and has a significant impact on defining a person's personality.

*Ramhlupuii: Research Scholar, Department of Education, Mizoram University, Ph: 7085629980, Email: rampuii76@gmail.com

**Prof. H. Malsawmi: Professor, Department of Education, Mizoram University, Ph: 9436360683, Email: drmalsawmi@yahoo.co.in

Language competency is the system of unconscious knowledge that one knows when they know a language. It is the ability to make and interpret an unlimited number of sentences in one's home language, as well as to discriminate between grammatical and non-grammatical phrases. It is a quality that only perfect native speakers possess. There are several reasons why one should be highly proficient in their mother tongue. First of all, it is the first language they acquire and the one in which they feel most at ease. It is also the language that they use to communicate with other members of the community. Furthermore, studies have indicated that children who are skilled in their mother tongue perform generally better academically than those who are not. This is a result of their greater background in reading and writing in their mother tongue, which carries over to other topics as well. Last but not least, speaking one's mother tongue well can assist in fostering cultural pride and understanding.

Rationale

Language is more than the sum of its parts; it is history, discourse, customs, and heritage in addition to sentence structure and grammar. The expression of culture is inextricably linked to language. It serves a crucial social purpose in fostering a sense of collective identification and cohesion by serving as a means of expressing values, beliefs, and practises. It serves as a vehicle for transmitting and preserving culture, along with its customs and shared values. A society's very core will gradually disappear if its language is not valued. A piece of civilization is lost when a language is lost. In the same way, when a language is maintained, the norms and traditions live on in the minds and hearts of people who can understand it. Consequently, it is critical to appreciate our language and give it a significant place in our educational system.

According to studies, people who can speak their mother tongue well develop intellectually and cognitively quicker than those who cannot. Additionally, it has been found that students who receive their education in their mother tongue outperform those who receive it in a foreign language. We cannot disregard the importance of having a solid foundation in one's home language in order to pick up another language effortlessly. One can learn a new language more quickly if they have a solid command of their native tongue. This is especially important since multilingualism becomes an increasingly desired quality in today's globalised society.

Keeping in mind the importance of mother tongue for the comprehensive development of children and the crucial role it plays in creating effective teaching and learning environment, this study is taken up to measure the competency level of secondary school teachers in their own mother tongue and to shed lights upon one of the most neglected areas of study. This type of study is likely to have an impact on society as a whole because of the significant role that language plays in the transmission and maintenance of cultural practises and ideas as well as the ability it possesses to keep those practises alive.

Review of Related Literature:

Sathiaseelan (2005) conducted a research on “Mother Tongue in Higher Education Policies and Practises in Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka since 1950” and came to the conclusion that the goal of education can only be achieved when the process of education is made effective and motivating, which is only possible through mother tongue as the medium of instruction.

Judith (2020) conducted a study on “Teaching and Mother Tongue Proficiency of Pre - Service Teachers: How Competent” The participants of the study were chosen via stratified random sampling. Ninety-seven (97) people took part in the study. To examine the data, mean, standard deviation, ANOVA, and Pearson r were employed. Mother Tongue Proficiency was based on the respondents’ grades in their EDMOTO (Mother Tongue) topic, and the data on teaching ability was collected from the Teaching Evaluation and Rating Sheet. The study found that (1) teaching competence of the pre-service teachers was “very high” when taken as a whole and grouped according to major and sex, (2) the pre-service teachers’ proficiency was “good” when taken as a whole and grouped according to major and sex, and (3) there is a significant difference and significant relationship between teaching competence and proficiency.

Read (2020) studied “Mother Tongue Teachers’ Competencies’ Assessment (MTTCA)” and conclude that the most frequently cited reasons for variations in teacher competencies between languages include differences in the order in which the languages were introduced as the language of instruction, issues with teacher preparation, regional variations in the availability of qualified teachers, differences in teachers’ commitment to and views of their profession, and regional variations in the degree of political and community support for Mother Tongue teachers. The competency evaluation results for mother tongue instructors are generally poor (barely 50 percent-correct points aggregated across all languages).

Benson (2005) examined “[Girls, Educational Equity and Mother Tongue-Based Teaching](#)” and came to the conclusion that more girls will attend school if bilingual instruction is provided using their mother tongue. Bilingual education that begins with the mother tongue addresses additional challenges in addition to encouraging more girls to enrol in formal education. First, utilising their native tongue makes learning for girls less scary. Second, mother tongue training promotes parental involvement and influence. Finally, teachers who spoke the girls’ native language would win their trust and lower the possibility of abuse. Case studies from the Philippines and Papua New Guinea support the idea that girls attend formal education for longer periods of time and benefit from bilingual instruction in their mother tongue.

Objectives

1. To find out the level of Mizo language competency among higher secondary school teachers.
2. To compare Mizo language competency among higher secondary school teachers with reference to gender.

3. To compare Mizo language competency among higher secondary school teachers with reference to locale.
4. To compare Mizo language competency among higher secondary school teachers with reference to school management.
5. To compare Mizo language competency among higher secondary school teachers with reference to teacher status.

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference between male and female higher secondary school teachers in Mizo language competency.
2. There is no significant difference between rural and urban higher secondary school teachers in Mizo language competency.
3. There is no significant difference between government and private higher secondary school teachers in Mizo language competency.
4. There is no significant difference between permanent and private higher secondary school teachers in Mizo language competency.

Methodology

This study is basically a descriptive survey method as it tries to find out Mizo language competency among higher secondary school teachers and to compare their language competency based on selected independent variables

Sample

Sample for the present study consists of 62 higher secondary in-service teacher trainees from different districts in Mizoram. There were 36 males and 26 female teacher trainees

Tools used

'Mizo Language Competency Test for Higher Secondary School Teachers' developed by the investigators was used for collecting data for the present study.

Analysis and interpretation

Findings of the present study was analysed and interpreted in accordance with the objectives as follows

Objective -1: To find out the level of Mizo language competency among higher secondary school teachers.

In order to find out the level of Mizo language competency, the mean and standard deviation of the scores obtained by the teacher trainees were calculated. Then those teachers scoring less than one standard deviation below the mean were categorized as having poor

Mizo language competency, and those teachers scoring more than one standard deviation above the mean were categorized as having good Mizo language competency and those teachers scoring between minus one standard deviation and plus one standard deviation were categorized as having normal Mizo language competency. The level of Mizo language competency among higher secondary school teachers are presented in table - 1

Table – 1

Level of Mizo language competency among higher secondary school teacher

Competency level	Goodmizo language competency	Normal mizo language competency	Poormizo language competency
Number & Percentage	10 (16.13%)	44 (70.97%)	8 (12.9%)

As can be seen in Table -1, majority (70.97%) of teachers had normal mizo language competency, there were more (16.13%) teachers who had good mizo language competency than those (12.90%) who had poor mizo language competency.

Objective –2: To compare Mizo language competency among higher secondary school teachers with reference to gender.

To compare the Mizo language competency of male and female teachers, the mean and standard deviation of the scores of male and female teachers were calculated. The mean differences of these two groups were tested by applying ‘t’ test and the details are presented in the following table – 2

Table - 2

Comparison of male and female higher secondary school teachers on Mizo language competency

Groups	Number	Mean	SD	MD	SEM	‘t’- value	Sig level
Male	36	34.83	5.94	0.513	1.313	0.391	NS
Female	26	35.35	4.399				

As depicted in table - 2, the calculated ‘t’ value of .391 is lower than the criterion ‘t’ value. Therefore, it can be concluded that there was no significant difference in the Mizo language competency between male and female teachers. Hence the hypothesis (no.1) that states there is no significant difference between male and female higher secondary teachers in Mizo language competency is accepted.

Objective -3: To compare Mizo language competency among higher secondary school teachers with reference to locale

To compare the Mizo language competency of rural and urban teachers, the mean and standard deviation of the scores of male and female teacher trainees were calculated. The mean differences of these two groups were tested by applying ‘t’ test and the details are presented in table - 3

Table - 3**Comparison of rural and urban higher secondary school teachers on Mizo language competency**

Groups	Number	Mean	SD	MD	SEM	't'- value	Sig level
Rural	27	35.41	4.963	0.636	1.348	0.472	NS
Urban	35	34.77	5.626				

As evident in table -3, the calculated 't' value of .472 is lower than the criterion 't' value. Therefore, it can be concluded that there was no significant difference in the Mizo language competency between rural and urban teachers and the hypothesis (no.2) that states there is no significant difference between rural and urban higher secondary school teachers in Mizo language competency cannot be rejected.

Objective -4: To compare Mizo language competency among higher secondary school teachers with reference to school management

To compare the Mizo language competency of government and private higher teacher trainees, the mean and standard deviation of the scores of governments and private in-service teacher trainees were calculated. The mean differences of these two groups were tested by applying 't' test and the details are presented in table no-4

Table-4**Comparison of government and private higher secondary school teachers on Mizo language competency**

Groups	Number	Mean	SD	MD	SEM	't'- value	Sig level
Govt.	13	35	6.468	0.061	1.933	0.032	NS
Private	49	35.06	5.043				

As depicted in table -4, the calculated 't' value of .032 is lower than the criterion 't' value. Therefore, it can be concluded that there was no significant difference in the Mizo language competency between government and private teacher trainees. Hence the hypothesis (no.3) that states there is no significant difference between government and private higher secondary school teachers in Mizo language competency is accepted.

Objective -5: To compare Mizo language competency among higher secondary school teachers with reference to teacher status

To compare the Mizo language competency of permanent and part time teachers, the mean and standard deviation of the scores of permanent and part time in-service teacher trainees were calculated. The mean differences of these two groups were tested by applying 't' test and the details are presented in the following table no- 5

Table- 5

Comparison of permanent and part time higher secondary school teachers on Mizo language competency

Groups	Number	Mean	SD	MD	SEM	't'- value	Sig level
Permanent	47	35	4.895	0.2	1.861	0.107	NS
Part time	15	35.2	6.657				

As depicted in table - 5, the calculated 't' value of .107 is lower than the criterion 't' value. Therefore, it can be concluded that there was no significant difference in the Mizo language competency between permanent and part time teacher trainees. Hence the hypothesis (no.4) that states there is no significant difference between permanent and part time higher secondary school teachers in Mizo language competency is accepted.

Conclusion

It is commonly known that having a solid grasp of one's mother tongue gives one the tools they need to acquire additional languages, enabling them to translate their knowledge of linguistic structure to a number of different languages. When children acquire their first language, they gain an instinctive awareness of grammar that transfers easily to other languages. The development of one's own social, cultural, and personal identity is also greatly influenced by one's mother tongue. A person with good native language competency frequently exhibits a greater sense of wellbeing and self-assurance, as well as a deeper understanding of themselves and their place in a society.

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