



A Study on the Academic Achievement of Xth Standard Students in English of Cooch Behar District in West Bengal

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Abstract:

Communication is successfully effected only when speaker's auditory perceptions are translated into the listener's auditory perceptions. Considering the principal function of language, Block and Trager call it a "System of arbitrary vocal symbols by means of which a social group co-operates". English is a progressive language. Considering the global impact and indispensability of English as a language the present study exhibits the level of achievement in English by the Xth Standard students of Cooch Behar District in West Bengal. The method of the study designed for the present investigation is a descriptive study of normative survey type. The objectives of the study are to find out the academic achievement of pupils in English in the Govt. and Govt. Aided secondary schools in Cooch Behar city.

Keywords: *Academic Achievement, English, Xth Standard Students, Cooch Behar District, West Bengal.*

Introduction:

We know that understanding language depends on the agreement between Speaker or Writer and Listener or Reader that a set of signs, more or less systematized shall have references of some events which are referred. Hence it is observed that language is clearly a kind of code. Language is a code to the extent that it is a symbolization of the Phenomena of existence and imagination. The Indian Education Commission (1964-66) recommends the use of English as a second language, where the primary goal is the achievement of a fair degree of communicative competence of any language up to a standard level. A healthy exercise of all the four linguistic skills of that particular language is quite essential. The schools have a great role to play in this regard. To develop a good communicative competence in the language, English must be taught as a skill based subject in the school curriculum.

Rationale of the study:

English plays a pivotal role and enjoys a privileged position in our country since before independence. Thus we find that English was of great importance before the freedom of our country. But with the passage of time there was a change in the place of English in our country. Today English has become a world language to such an extent that if it is not studied in its schools a nation will be cut off from the rest of the world. The schools have a great role to play in this regard. To develop a good communicative competence in the

language, English must be taught as a skill based subject in the school curriculum. Considering the limitations and drawbacks of the Translation-cum-Grammar Method, it is popularly established that for successful learning and acquisition of a foreign language like English, Direct Method is the best and natural method to follow. But unfortunately in most of the schools of West Bengal instead of Direct Method typically and traditionally the said Translation-cum-Grammar Method is still followed. In such a contextual backdrop the proposed study becomes a necessity for the researcher to estimate the level of academic achievement of Xth standard students in English. Therefore, the investigator intends to evaluate the academic achievement of Xth standard students in English keeping in view the objectives of teaching English language for developing proper mastery over the four basic linguistic skills.

Research Questions:

1. What are the academic achievements of Xth standard students of Govt. and Govt. Aided schools in English?
2. What are the academic achievements of Xth standard boys and girls in English?

Statement of the study:

A Study on the Academic Achievement of Xth Standard Students in English of Cooch Behar District in West Bengal.

Objectives of the study:

1. To find out the academic achievement of pupils in English in the Govt. and Govt. Aided secondary schools in Cooch Behar city.
2. To find out the difference between the academic achievement of boys and girls in English.
3. To investigate the difference between the academic achievement of Xth standard pupils in English in Govt. and Govt. Aided schools.

In order to achieve the above mentioned objectives the researcher has formulated two hypotheses namely H₀₁ for Objective No. 2 and H₀₂ for Objective No. 3.

Hypotheses:

H₀₁: There exists no significant difference between the academic achievement of boys and girls in English.

H₀₂: There exists no significant difference between the academic achievement of Xth standard pupils in English in Govt. schools and Govt. Aided schools.

Operational definition of the terms used:

Academic Achievement: Marks in English secured by the Xth standard pupils in the test examination administered by the researcher.

Govt. Schools: Schools which are controlled, run, managed and administered by the Dept. of Education, Govt. of West Bengal.

Govt. Aided Schools: Schools which are financially aided by the Govt. of West Bengal but run and managed by the Managing Committee of the respective schools.

Delimitation of the Study:

The present study is delimited to the Xth standard students of Govt. and Govt. Aided secondary schools in the town area of Cooch Behar City within the district of Cooch Behar of West Bengal.

The study is further delimited to the academic achievement of Xth standard students in English only.

Method of the study:

The method of the study designed for the present investigation is a descriptive study of normative survey type. It is an ex-post-facto type as the current status of phenomena what exists at present has been considered.

Population of the study:

The population of the present study comprises of all Xth standard students of Govt. and Govt. Aided secondary schools in the town area of Cooch Behar City within the district of Cooch Behar of West Bengal.

Sample of the study:

The sample for the present study has been collected from amongst the secondary school students of Xth standard studying in Govt. and Govt. Aided secondary schools in the town area of Cooch Behar City within the district of Cooch Behar of West Bengal. Out of the total 24 secondary schools comprising of 4 Govt. schools and 20 Govt. Aided schools total 8 schools have been selected as the sample for the proposed study considering all 4 Govt. schools (2 schools for boys and 2 schools for girls) and another 4 Govt. Aided schools (2 schools for boys and 2 for girls) at **purposive sampling technique** from the entire population of schools within the City.

Studies of researchers like Mohanty (2007), Codjoe (2007), Hong E (2001), Scott. Et. Al. (1991) have confirmed sex differences in home environment in favour of performance of boys. Daulta (2008) however has found girls scoring higher than the boys. Sunitha and Khadi (2006) also found out gender differences in the home environment with respect to the academic performance in favour of girls. In consideration of such results the investigator wanted to find out gender differences in the academic performance of students of Cooch Behar district considering the patriarchal society prevalent in Bengali culture. Therefore the sex wise categorization of the sample has been made.

As regards the school management type variation it is observed that school learning environment is an effective factor of academic achievement as well as developing the overall academic performance in any subject like English. Researchers like Gayani (1998), Panda et al (1995), Wangoo and Khan (1992) reported that type of school is a positive factor influencing academic achievement. Because of lottery system in admission procedure in West Bengal students of different merit and different strata of the society reads in Government schools, whereas in most of the Government Aided schools there is a huge pressure to admit the students whoever comes for admission irrespective of merit, social strata or any other criteria. Therefore the school management type categorization has been made to find out whether the school management is viable factor for bringing about better academic achievement as well as developing the overall academic performance in English.

Tool of the study:

In the present study the following tool has been developed, standardized and finally used for administering the test as well as the collection of data:

A Questionnaire titled “**ENGLISH TEST for Xth standard students**” has been developed, standardized and used by the researcher. The reliability of the test was found to be 0.80.

Results and Discussion:

Analysis of data with regard to the academic achievement of pupils in English in the Govt. and Govt. Aided secondary schools in the town area of Cooch Behar City:

The distribution of scores obtained by administering the ‘English Test’ on the academic achievement in English has been subjected to descriptive analysis for the interpretation of the same in respect to the contrast of management for satisfying the predefined objective. In order to ascertain and establish the difference is significant in case of academic achievement in English of the sub-samples on the basis of gender and type of management differential statistical analysis has to be adopted.

Analysis of data with regard to the difference between the academic achievement of boys and girls in English:

The test of significance of difference between the means of contrast i.e. gender wise sub-samples on the academic achievement in English was found out through ‘t’ test and the result has been tested for significance either at 0.05 or at 0.01 levels of significance. The result is presented in the following Table 1.

Table 1: Test of significance of difference between gender wise sub-samples on academic achievement in English through ‘t’ test

| Variation | Sub-samples | N | M | SD | SED | t | Level of significance |
|-----------|-------------|----|-------|------|------|-------|---------------------------|
| Gender | Boys | 77 | 54.86 | 2.42 | 0.35 | 15.74 | Significant at 0.01 level |
| | Girls | 91 | 60.37 | 1.85 | | | |

$$df = (N_1 + N_2) - 2 = (77 + 91) - 2 = 168 - 2 = 166.$$

Note → df_{166} at 0.05 level = 1.97 (Tabular value).

df_{166} at 0.01 level = 2.60 (Tabular value).

From the above Table 1 it is observed that the obtained ‘t’ value of gender wise sub-samples on academic achievement in English is 15.74 which is significant at 0.01 level of significance. The obtained ‘t’ value is 15.74 which is much greater than the tabular ‘t’ value of df for 166 samples in both the levels. Thus it is concluded that there exists significant difference in the scores on the academic achievement in English of boys and girls at 0.01 level of significance. Hence the null hypothesis H_{01} which states that there exists no significant difference between the academic achievement of boys and girls in English is rejected. Hence the final conclusion can be drawn as there exists significance of difference on academic achievement in English when ‘gender’ is taken as an intervening variable, which can be presented in the following Fig. (i). Therefore, the null hypothesis H_{01} is rejected.

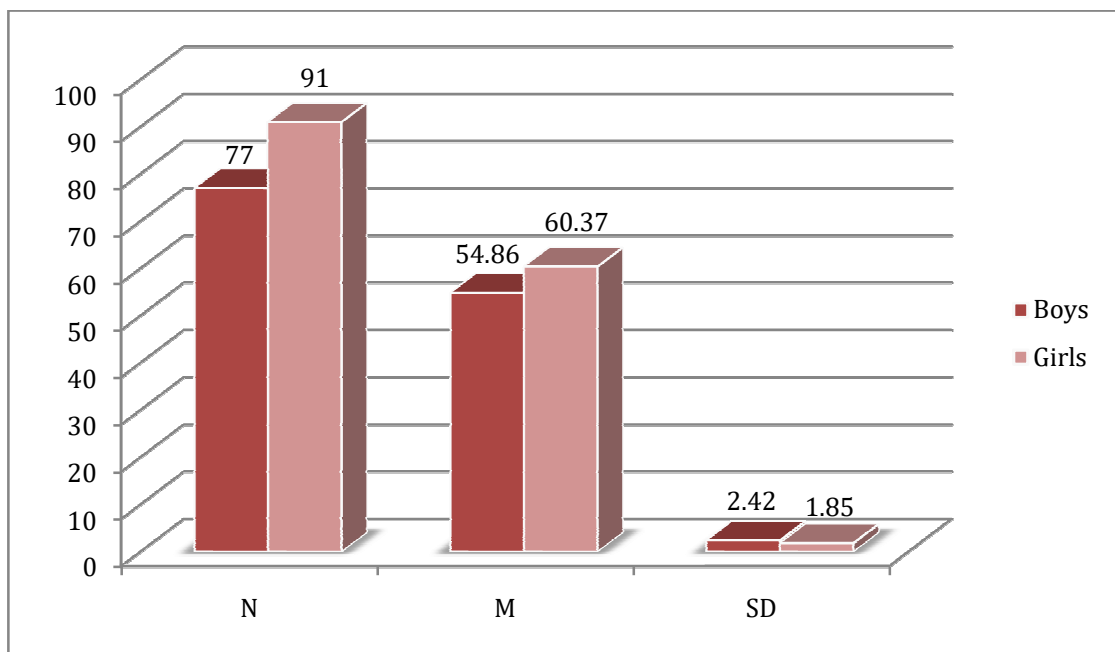


Fig. (i): Difference between gender wise sub-samples on academic achievement in English

Analysis of data with regard to the difference between the academic achievement of Xth standard pupils in English in Govt. and Govt. Aided schools:

The test of significance of difference between management wise sub-samples on the academic achievement in English was also calculated through ‘t’ test and again the result has also been tested for significance either at 0.05 or at 0.01 levels of significance. The result is presented in the table that follows.

Table 2: Test of significance of difference between management wise sub-samples on academic achievement in English through ‘t’ test

| Variation | Sub-samples | N | M | SD | SED | t | Level of significance |
|------------|---------------------|----|-------|------|------|-------|---------------------------|
| Management | Govt. schools | 76 | 65.76 | 2.14 | 0.32 | 45.19 | Significant at 0.01 level |
| | Govt. Aided schools | 92 | 51.30 | 1.86 | | | |

$$df = (N_1 + N_2) - 2 = (76 + 92) - 2 = 168 - 2 = 166.$$

Note → df_{166} at 0.05 level = 1.97 (Tabular value).

df_{166} at 0.01 level = 2.60 (Tabular value).

From the above Table 2 it reveals that the obtained ‘t’ value of management wise sub-samples on academic achievement in English is 45.19 which is significant at 0.01 level of significance. The obtained ‘t’ value is 45.19 which is too much greater than the tabular ‘t’ value of df for 166 samples in both the levels. Thus it is evident that there exists significant difference in the scores on the academic achievement in English between the students of Govt. schools and Govt. Aided schools at 0.01 level of significance. Hence the null hypothesis H_0 which states that there exists no significant difference between the academic achievement of Xth standard pupils in English in Govt. schools and Govt. Aided schools is rejected. Thus finally it can be said that there exists significance of difference on academic achievement in English when ‘management’ is

considered as an intervening variable, which can be presented in the following Fig. (ii). Therefore, the null hypothesis H_{02} is rejected.

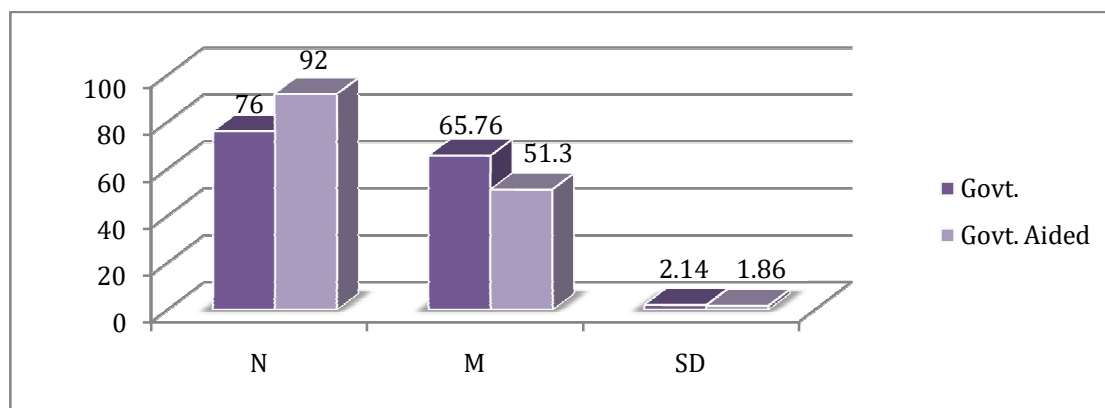


Fig. (ii): Difference between management wise sub-samples on academic achievement in English

Major findings of the study:

The major findings are –

1. Govt. schools students showed higher academic achievement in English as compared to its counterpart i.e. Govt. Aided schools students.
2. The academic achievement in English of the Govt. schools students are more deviated than the academic achievement in English of the Govt. Aided schools students, because after calculating the standard deviations it is found that the SD of the achievement of Govt. and Govt. Aided schools students are 2.14 and 1.86 respectively. Therefore, the achievement of the Govt. schools students shows a higher degree of heterogeneity compared to its counterpart.
3. Girls have better attainment so far the academic achievement in English is concerned compared to boys.
4. Further, when the standard deviations are compared between both the groups of boys and girls, it is found that the SD for boys and girls are 2.42 and 1.85 respectively. This reflects that the achievement done by boys is more deviating than that of girls. Therefore, boys' academic achievement in English showed heterogeneity in nature, while in nature girls' academic achievement is homogenous.
5. Though from mean (M) and standard deviation (SD) it is clear that there exists a difference between the academic performance in English of boys and girls; to establish the significance of difference, the 't' ratio has been calculated and the obtained 't' value is 15.74 which is much higher than the tabular 't' value at both the levels. Thus it is established that the difference is significant and girls' performance is significantly better than boys'.
6. There exists a difference between the achievements of Govt. schools students and Govt. Aided schools students where the Govt. schools students perform better in English compared to their counterparts.
7. After calculation of 't' ratio, the obtained 't' value is 45.19 which is quite greater than the tabular 't' value at both the levels. Therefore, it is derived that the difference is significant where the achievement of Govt. schools students is significantly different and commendably better than the performance of Govt. Aided schools students.

Conclusion:

The major findings which have been derived so far from the present study lead to the conclusion that academic achievement in English language learning has so many shortcomings. Whereas the Govt. schools students specifically in the district of Cooch Behar showed a better performance, Govt. Aided schools students performed comparatively a bit poor as far as the academic achievement in English is concerned. There are certain causes which are duly responsible to play the determining factors in this difference. There is a difference in the recruitment procedure of teachers in both types of schools. Whereas the teachers for Govt. schools are selected through Public Service Commission after screening through rigorous competition throughout the state, the teachers in Govt. Aided schools are appointed by the recommendation of the School Service Commission. Besides, the Govt. schools are enriched with much better infrastructural facilities, better library facilities and student-teacher ratio is also strictly maintained, whereas in most of the Govt. Aided schools classes are overcrowded and over flooded with students. In such a scenario where student-teacher ratio is badly effected, maintaining students' quality and taking individual care is equally hampered.

Further girls' academic achievement in the subject is much better than that of the boys'. This reflects the fact that girls are not only attentive and sincere in learning the subject inside the class, rather, they do take good care of the subject to nourish and practise in a better way back in their home too. Therefore, boys are needed to be guided in an intensive manner and they should also be more caring and sincere regarding learning the subject.

Suggestions for further study:

This research may be a stepping stone for any kind of further researches of this type. A few topics which may be dealt in the future in this regard are listed below:

- Academic performance in English of Xth standard students of Jalpaiguri district.
- Listening, speaking, reading and writing skills in English of secondary school students of Jalpaiguri district.
- Communication competency in English among the secondary school students of Jalpaiguri district.
- A comparative study between Govt. and private schools students on academic performance in English.
- A study on the curriculum of English in the schools of West Bengal.
- A study on the use of audio-visual aids in teaching and learning English in the schools of West Bengal.
- An investigation into the methodology of teaching English in the schools of West Bengal.
- A study on the English Grammar competency of the secondary schools students of Jalpaiguri district.
- A study on the examination/ evaluation system in English being followed in the secondary schools of West Bengal.
- Use of computers in teaching English in the secondary schools of West Bengal.
- Application of innovative techniques while teaching English in the classroom in the schools of West Bengal.
- A study on the initiative of the English teacher to promote English language competency outside the school environment.

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