

A Comparative Study of English Language Teaching in English and Non-English Medium Secondary Schools/Colleges from Grade 8 to Grade 12 in India

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Abstract

A lot of research has 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 roles in the teaching-learning process of English language. This research attempts to compare the teaching process in English and Non-English medium secondary schools and junior colleges in India from grade 8 to grade 12. It aims to find out differences in these two sets of schools regarding teaching process with variables like language of instruction, comprehension of learners, use of audio visual aids, teaching skills, proficiency of teachers, etc. To realize the objectives, a survey study was conducted with randomly selected fifty-six teachers of both medium schools. The instrument used for the study was a self-designed questionnaire face-validated by two experts having considerable experience in empirical research. The findings of the study suggest that English Medium School Teachers' (EMST) use of English as a MI as well as for giving general instruction is more than the use of English by the Non-English Medium School Teachers (NEMST). Learners' level of comprehension after using English is higher in English medium schools. Secondly, teaching skills as well as proficiency of EMST in English are found better than the skills of the NEMST. But there are no statistical differences between both the types of schools regarding availability and use of audio-visual aids and their idea of final objectives of teaching.

Keywords: English Language Teaching, English and Non-English Medium Schools, Teaching Process, Medium of instruction, Audio-visual aids.

Introduction

Medium of instruction for education seems to show direct or indirect nexus with the acquisition of a language and also with the overall academic achievement of learners. A host of studies conducted in India validate this issue although some of the studies show divergent results.

Srivastava & Khatoon (1980) conducted a study on two groups of standard eight students; one studying through mother tongue (MT) and other through English medium were compared. It was found that English medium students achieved significantly higher than the MT medium students who also scored significantly lower in non-verbal intelligence. Again when the two groups were selected from the same school, the significant difference between them disappeared. The results clearly show that the difference between the school achievement of English and MT medium students is not due to the difference in MI but due to school related variables like difference in teaching methods materials and teaching aids used, the general school climate and the difference in selection and admission criteria.

Anand (1971) compared Kannada and English medium students with Kannada as their mother tongue and found the former to be significantly superior in verbal intelligence and the latter to be significantly superior in non-verbal intelligence.

Srivastava and Ramaswamy (1986) conducted a large scale study to examine the influence of bilingual education in which a language other than one's mother tongue is the medium of instruction (MI). They studied the effect of MI under three conditions: same MT and MI (Tamil-Tamil), different but cognate MT and MI (Tamil-Malayalam) and different but non cognate MT and MI (Tamil/Malayalam-English). Their study concluded that different factors are responsible for better achievement, one of them being English as the MI. The results of the study show that higher achievement scores of non cognate (English medium) students go contrary to the general expectations that MT is the best MI. This implies that English medium students have abundant opportunity to develop as a result of their exposure to second language English as a subject as well as a medium for other subjects

The researches on effect of medium of instruction(MI) on general academic achievement show that the a particular MI impacts on achievement of different factors of intelligence like verbal intelligence, non verbal intelligence, verbal creativity whereas some studies like one conducted by Srivastava, et al. (1986) concludes that MI shows favorable impact on acquisition of English as a second language.

Origin of the Problem

Acquisition of proficiency in English language has always been a herculean task for the learners pursuing their degree programs in rural area in India who come from non-English medium institutions. 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. The present study attempts to know the differences between English and Non-English medium school teachers with six variables--teaching process, teacher's attitude towards learners and teaching English language, use of language in school, teaching of

language skills and motivation strategy. The present paper discusses the findings of the study in case of their teaching process.

Review of Literature

1. English as a Medium of Instruction

Medium of Instruction has a direct correlation with academic achievement and its role becomes more crucial in case of acquisition of English.

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
- ii. Studies on impact of English as a MI on selected variables

As D. P. Pattanayak observes in his Trend Report on Research in Language Education, 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. Mwinsheikhe (2001), Baptist (2004) and found low academic performance of students with English as language of instruction in comparison to MT as MI. Thus researches on effect of English as MI on overall academic achievement provide mixed and divided results proving English and MT as MI beneficial in achieving certain abilities.

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The researches on effect of English and MT on learning English as a foreign language also have divided opinions and results.

Arguments against teachers using student's MT are mainly pedagogically based (Timor, 2012). While using MT in foreign language classes like English, 'translation provides an easy avenue to enhance linguistic awareness' (Cook, 2001). Turnbull (2001) in his response to (Cook, 2001) mentions that students do not benefit when teachers over-rely on using their students' MT, particularly when the EFL teacher is the sole linguistic model and main source of foreign language (FL) input. So Turnbull (2001, page 536) advises the "judicious and principled use" of MT. Because, 'teachers who overuse their students' MT deprive these learners of an important language process in which students try to make sense of what is being said in class' (Ellis, 1994). Apart from these arguments against the use of MT as MI, researchers have opinions supporting the issue too.

Studies of transfer between the MT and the FL indicate a linguistic interdependence (Jessner & Cenoz, 2000) with regard to multiple subsystems (phonological, syntactic, semantic, and textual) within the MT and FL systems (Herdina & Jessner, 2002). Hauptman, Mansur, and TAL (2008) used a trilingual model for literacy skills among Bedouins in Israel whose MT is Arabic and found that "created a support systems for Arabic the mother tongue, though English [FL] and Hebrew [MT2]." Cook (2002) supports the use of MT with psycho-linguistic argument by saying that teacher use of the MT cannot present a threat to FL acquisition because learners already have a language basis from their MT. Because of this basis, learners are more socially developed and have more short-term memory capacity and more maturity when they become acquainted with the FL. Elsa Auerbach (1993) gives a sociopolitical rationale for the use of the L1 in ESL classrooms and concludes that starting with L1 provides a sense of security and validates the learners' lived experiences, allowing them to express themselves. Schweers (1999) suggests through his study that bringing MT [Spanish] into the English classes makes learning English appears to be less of a threat to the vernacular.

2. Use of Audio Visual Aids (AVA) in ESL Classroom

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The results of numerous studies prove that use of audio visual (AV) aids help the teachers and learners to better the ELT in ESL classroom. Technology is a tool that when used with tested instructions and curriculum can be an effective catalyst for education reform (Cradler, 1992). Eze, E.U. (2013) states that human being learns more easily and faster by audio-visual process than by verbal explanation alone. Swank (2011) stressing the effectiveness of visual materials in learning, estimated that about 40% of our concepts are based upon visual experience, 25% upon auditory, 17% on tactile, 15% upon miscellaneous organic sensation and 3% upon taste smell.

Specific researches on AV aids and learning English language also stress positive side of the matter. Mayer (2003) investigated the role of visual aids in second language learning among English as a Foreign Language students using pictorial stimuli paired with text and found that the use of illustrations does aid in second language acquisition. The studies conducted by Hazan et.al.(2005), Lin & Chen (2007), Seferoglu (2008), Ling (2009), Yi-Chun Pan & Yi-Ching Pan (2009) Moenikia Mohammadi & Zahed-Babelan (2010) and Baharani & Tam (2011) reveal that AV aids and multimedia makes the learning process easier and more effective. Prof.M.M.Jadal (2011) studied effectiveness of audio-visual aids at primary level students in India and found that ‘media results in better achievement’.

By and large, the researches show that AV aids makes the learning process meaningful. But at the same time, some studies caution against the wrong use of AV aids. Flores et al. (2012) mentions that AV aids are helpful tools in the English language classroom as long as the educator is knowledgeable about how to properly incorporate them into the lesson.

Research Questions

1. Are there any differences between English Medium School Teachers (EMST) and Non-English Medium School Teachers (NEMST) in using English as MI?
2. Are there any differences in learner’s comprehension when English as a MI is used?
3. Are there any differences between teachers in use of audio visual aids?
4. Are there any differences between teachers in their teaching skills and proficiency in English?

5. Are there any differences in their final objectives of teaching English?

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 35 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°47'N 79°22'E](#)[19.78°N 79.37°E^{\[1\]}](#) 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.

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

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general instruction 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.

Data Analysis

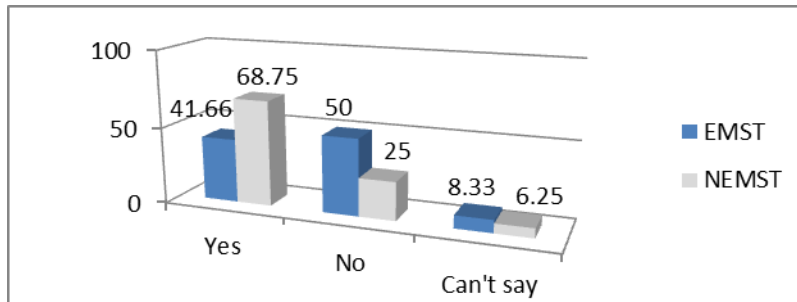
Table 1- Language used as a MI for teaching English

Respondents	Complete English	Mostly English with little mother tongue whenever required	Mostly mother tongue with little English	Both-English and mother tongue in equal proportion
EMST-17	09 (37.50%)	12 (50%)	00 (0%)	04(16.67%)
NEMST-24	2 (6.25%)	19 (59.38%)	06 (18.75%)	06 (18.75%)

The table shows the language of instruction used by respondent teachers in the classroom during teaching English. 37.5% EMS teachers use only English as a medium of instruction (MI) in the classroom which is quite more in number in comparison to 6.25% of NEMS teachers. Both the 50% EMS and 58.38% NEMS teachers use mostly English with little mother tongue as a MOI for teaching English. This is a good indication that both the teachers use more English during teaching English. No EMS teachers (0%) uses mother tongue mostly as a MOI for teaching English in contrast with 18.75% of the NEMS teachers who use MT as MI. A small number of teachers i.e.12.50% EMS and 15.63% NEMS teachers use both English and MT as a

MI while teaching English. The most significant thing in the above table is that the higher percentage of EMS teachers using completely English as a MI in comparison to the NEMS teachers validates that learners are given more exposure to English in EMS.

Graph 1- Learners’ difficulty in comprehension when English as a MI is used

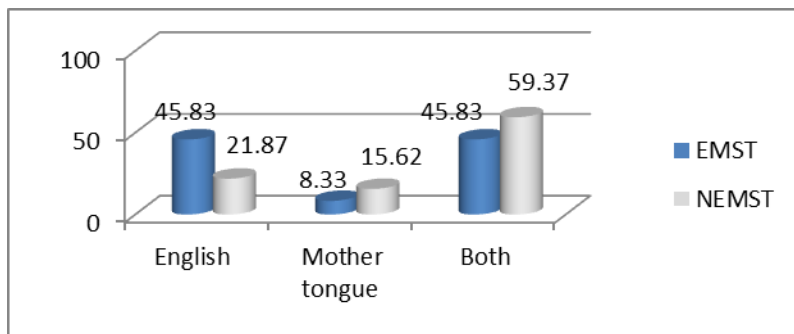


The graph shows the respondent teachers’ opinion about whether the learners feel difficulty in understanding the course content when only English is used as MI. After teaching any content a teacher can guess whether the students are able to follow it or not and up to what degree they are following. The graph shows that 41.66% EMST and 68.75% NEMST agree that the learners do feel difficulty. 50% EMST and 25% NEMST deny it and 8.35% EMST and 6.25% NEMST are neutral in this regard.

The EMS teachers who agree (41.66%) and disagree (50%) to the idea that ‘learners feel difficulty in comprehension when English as a MI is used’ are approximately equal to each other and hence the figures are not decisive to either side. But noteworthy thing to observe is the difference between the NEMS teachers who accept i.e. 68.75% and negate i.e. 25% is perceptibly more.

It is concluded from the above graph that both EMS and NEMS learners feel difficulty in comprehension when English as a MI is used in classroom during teaching English but the latter feel more difficulty and it may be because of the learner’s poor intelligence level to grasp the taught content.

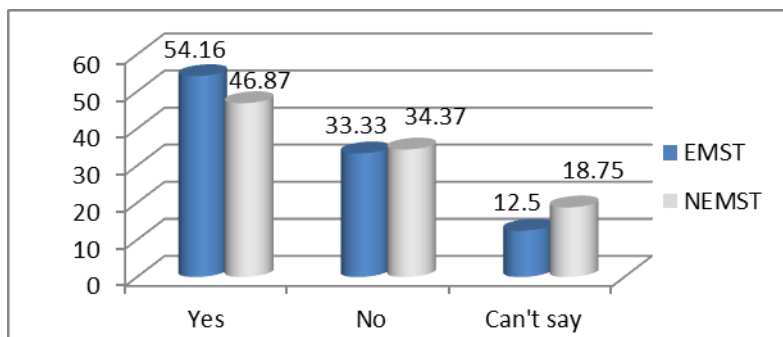
Graph 2 : Language used for giving general instructions in classroom



The graph shows that 45.83 % EMS teachers use English for general instruction in classroom in comparison to 21.87% NEMS teachers. The number of EMST is more than double to the NEMST. The figures of EMST and NEMST using Mother tongue (MT) are 8.33% and 15.62% respectively. 45.83% EMS and 59.37% NEMS use both English and mother tongue as medium for giving general instructions in classroom.

From the graph it is concluded that teachers in EMS use comparatively more English than the teachers in NEMS. Secondly it was observed that EMST use less mother tongue than their counterpart. It is obvious that students in EM schools and colleges get more exposure to English rather than the students in NEM schools and colleges and this exposure leads the students to acquire and learn English faster and in a better way than the students in NEM schools. Exposure to language is very important for its acquisition. Since English is used as a MI as well as for giving general instructions in the classroom in English Medium schools, the students get more exposure to English than the students in Non English medium schools and colleges. But exposure cannot be the only factor that assures better and quick acquisition of any foreign language. It is one of the many factors that create congenial atmosphere.

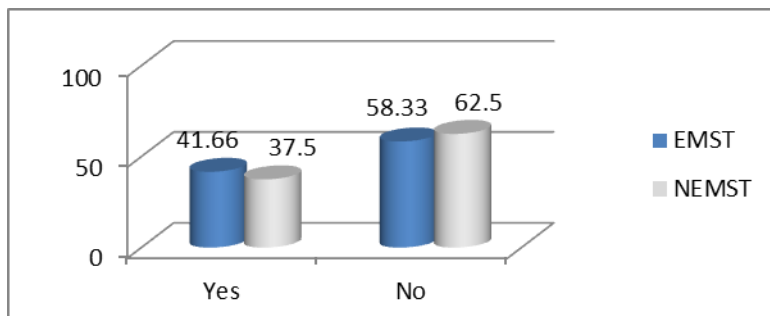
Graph 3- Availability of audio-visual aids in schools/colleges



The graph records the responses to question-Do you think that there are sufficient audio visual aids in your school/college? 62.5 %EMS and 46.87% NEMS teachers opine that their school/college have sufficient AV aids against 33.33%EMS and 34.37%NEMS teachers who refuse. 12.5%EMST and 18.75%NEMST cannot decide whether the available AV aids are enough or not.

The findings reveal that nearly half of the teachers say that there are sufficient AV aids. Comparatively, the condition of English medium schools/colleges (54.16%) is slightly better than the non English medium schools (46.87%). Both the type of schools/colleges need to increase AV aids because availability of these aids is a prerequisite for their application and use.

Graph 4- Use of audio visual aids for teaching English



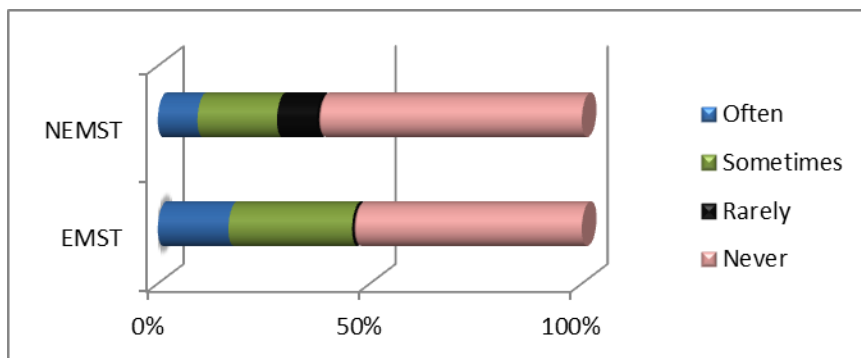
The graph shows the percentage of teachers using audio visual (AV) aids during teaching English. 41.66% EMST and 37.5%NEMST use AV aids whereas 58.33% EMST and 62.5% NEMST do not use them at all. Despite the fact that AV aids impact and better the language learning, they do not seem to be used by both the group of teachers. It seems that the number of teachers using AV aids is rather very less than the expectation. Since the EMST and NEMST who use the AV aids are nearly equal, there is no significant statistical difference between these two groups. This may be because the entire location of the study (i.e. Rajura taluka) is remote, rural and backward area and hence perhaps the schools might not have sufficient AV aids. There is another possibility that despite having the AV aids, the teachers may be reluctant for the use. The particulars of the audio visual aids used by EMS and NEM teachers are recorded in table 2 below.

Graph 5- Frequency of use of audio visual aids for teaching English

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The graph shows the general frequency of teacher's use of AV aids. 16.66% EMST and 9.37% NEMST 'often' use AV aids. The maximum number of teachers 'sometimes' use them with 29.16% and 18.75% EMST and NEMST respectively. None of EMS teacher use them 'rarely' whereas 9.37% NEMST do so. 54.16%EMST and 62.5%NEMST say that they never use AV aids. The figure of NEMST who never use AV aids match with the figures in graph 4 i.e.62.5% and thus confirms and validates the response but there is a slight variation in the figure of EMST who do not use AV aids as 54.16% in graph 5 and 58.33% in graph 4.It is concluded from the graph that EMST use AV aids oftener than the NEMST. The figures of EMST using AV aids either 'often' or 'sometimes' and not 'rarely' unlike NEMST who use them rarely also, are comparatively more. It is observed that frequency of use of English medium school teachers is comparatively better than the non-English medium school teachers although overall use of AV aids in EMS and NEMS for teaching English is low.

Table 2 - Teacher's analysis of their teaching Skills

Respondents	Excellent	Fair	Good	Poor
EMST(N=24)	06(25%)	11(45.83%)	07(29.16%)	00(00%)
NEMST(N=32)	04(12.5%)	13(40.62%)	15(46.87%)	00(00%)

The table shows the respondent teacher's analysis of their own teaching skills. 25% EMST think that their teaching skills are excellent against the 12.5% NEMST which is one half of the former. Both the group of teachers opting 'fair' is approximately equal with no considerable difference. But majority of NEMST consider their teaching skills as 'good' instead

of opting ‘excellent’ and ‘fair’. The good thing is that no teachers of either group think their teaching skills as ‘poor’. It is concluded from the graph that overall teaching skills of EMST are better than the counterpart i.e. NEMST.

Table 3 –Teacher’s proficiency in English

Respondents	Excellent	Fair	Good	Poor
EMST(N=24)	04(16.66%)	08(33.33%)	12(50%)	00
NEMST(N=32)	03(9.37%)	07(21.87%)	22(68.75%)	00

The overall proficiency of EMST teachers is rated as ‘good’ (50%) and fair (33.33%) because of the highest figures of percentage. The same is about NEMST. The percentage of teachers saying their proficiency as ‘excellent’ and ‘fair’ in both groups is low and there are only minor differences in the figures of EMST and NEMST. One third of EMST have fair proficiency (33.33%) which is not the case with the NEMST.

Statistically, proficiency of EMST is slightly better than the NEMST. From the table 4 and 5, it is observed that EMST have better teaching skills and proficiency than the NEMST.

Table 4- Final objective of teaching English

Respondents	To complete the given syllabus	To facilitate the learners to learn English language	To prepare the students for examination and score good marks	Any other
EMST (N=24)	03(12.5%)	13 (54.16%)	06 (25%)	02 (8.33%)
NEMST (N=32)	02 (6.25%)	14 (43.75%)	11 (34.37%)	05 (15.62%)

The table shows teachers responses about their final objective of teaching English. The majority of EMST (54.16%) and NEMST (43.75%) say that their objective is to facilitate the learners to learn English language. But still 25% EMST and 34.37% NEMST who opine that their objective is to prepare the students for examination and score good marks do not seem to

have clear vision of objectives of teaching English. Preparation of students for examination can be secondary objective of teaching but not the final one. It is concluded that nearly 50% teachers of both group do not have clear understanding of their goals behind teaching English. Comparatively there are no statistical differences between EMST and NEMST regarding their understanding of final objectives of teaching English.

Discussion

Teaching process in English and Non-English medium schools from grade 8 to 12 was compared on the basis of two major variables i.e. medium of instruction and use of audio-visual aids inter alia. The findings reveal that teaching process in English medium schools is comparatively better than the counterpart.

As a medium of instruction, use of English is more in EM schools i.e.37.50% against 6.25% NEM schools as shown in Table 1. When ‘only English’ is used as a MI in the classroom during teaching English, 41.66% EMST and 68.75% NEMST think that the students feel difficulty in understanding the content. It means students of both type of schools feel difficulty in comprehension. But this difficulty is faced more in NEM schools than EM schools because 50% EMST and 25% NEMST reject the statement as shown in graph 1.

Regarding audio-visual aids, the availability, general use and frequency of use of audio-visual aids, EMS and NEMS show equal status but statistically EMS are slightly better than the NEMS as shown in graph 3, graph 4 and graph 5.

The teaching skills and teachers proficiency in English in EMS is comparatively better than the NEMS.

On the whole, the teachers in EMS use comparatively more English than the NEMS for giving general instructions in classroom as shown in graph 2. By and large, as a language of instruction, use of English is comparatively more in English medium schools than Non- English medium schools. Longer exposure to English leads to congenial atmosphere and better and faster acquisition of the language. The present research supports the findings of Srivastava et.al. (1986) who concluded that MI shows favorable impact on acquisition of English as a second language.

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It also supports the research of Kamakshi, 1965; Srivastava and Khatoon, 1980 in general sense who concluded that students in English –medium achieve significantly more than the students in MT (Mother tongue) medium.

Conclusions

The use of English language as a medium of instruction is more in EMS than in the NEMS. But in both type of schools, the majority of teachers prefer to use bilingual medium of instruction comprising mostly English along with little mother tongue whenever required. Although, both the type of schools do not show significant differences on the issue of availability , general use and frequency of use of audio visual aids but EMS have slightly better position. The teaching skills and teachers proficiency in English in EMS is comparatively better than the NEMS.

By and large, the teaching process in English medium schools (EMS) is comparatively better than the Non-English Medium Schools (NEMS). This better teaching process in EMS contributes for the creation of congenial atmosphere which makes acquisition of English language faster and easier.

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