A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF WRITING SKILLS IN MEITEILON (L1) AND ENGLISH (L2) AMONG HIGHER SECONDARY STUDENTS IN MANIPUR
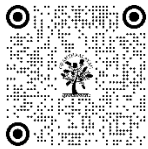
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ABSTRACT

There has always been discussion among academics, policymakers, and educators over the impact of mother tongue, or first language (L1), on second language (L2) acquisition or learning. Reaching a level of competence similar to that of a native speaker is the aim of teaching second language. Almost all Indian languages are structured in a subject-object-verb (SOV) pattern, while English uses a subject-verb-object (SVO) patter. Further, many English words of the same spelling perform different parts of speech with different meanings. As a result of this confusion, it remains a big challenge for learners of English as a second language in written skills. Writing skills improve our ability to communicate and think. It also improves our capacity to clarify and improve our concepts for both ourselves and other people. Writing abilities are crucial for effective communication. Whether a mother tongue can help, fails to help, or actually impedes written communication skills in English has been the subject of extensive research. The present paper is making an attempt to analyse the writing skills of Meiteilon (L1) and English language (L2).

Keywords: Mother Tongue (Meiteilon), Second Language (L2), Competence, Writing Skills

1. INTRODUCTION

Numerous studies in the field of English language teaching have been conducted in the past to examine the various factors that affect students' academic performance, including their English language proficiency, sociolinguistic competence, learning strategies, learning processes, preferred learning styles, and motivation levels. The acquisition of individual language skills and the ways in which individual differences impact language acquisition have received a great deal of attention in the field of English language study. However, not much research has been done on the relationship between the achievement of mother language (first language) and English language (second language). Therefore, the present study has been taken up to provide a thorough understanding for improving the language skills.

Aim of the Study: The present study attempts to find out if there is any correlation between Meiteilon (L1) and English (L2) in terms of writing skills among the higher secondary students of Manipur.

1.1. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1) To find out the writing skills of higher secondary students in Meiteilon (L1).
2) To find out the writing skills of higher secondary students in English (L2).
3) To find out the correlation in the writing skills of Meiteilon (L1) and English (L2).

Hypotheses:

There is no correlation in the writing skills of Meiteilon (L1) and English (L2) among the higher secondary students of Manipur.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Karthiyayani (1995) conducted research on the reading comprehension skills of upper secondary school pupils. It has been observed by her that students' reading comprehension of English (L2) is enhanced when the solutions are provided clearly in the text. "A critical Scrutiny of the position, Problems and Prospects of English in Manipur" by Singh, M. R. (2002) examined language and social mobility. The study shows that English is widely used in Manipuri society and all walks of life. In addition, it is utilized as a second language for academic purposes. In her paper "A contrastive study of Manipuri and English sentences," Devi, Kh. A. (2006) examined sentence structure in both languages. The results of this study show that there are substantial differences in all linguistic levels and structures between Manipuri and English. The communication and linguistic challenges that Meiteiron speakers encounter when learning a language were examined by Sujeta, B. (2010). The study found that there is a substantial gap between the English speaking and writing proficiency of students in government schools and private schools, and that the learners' English writing skills are directly impacted by the medium of instruction. Singh, M. G. (2015) in his work, "A Study of the Low Achievement of English Language Learners at the Elementary Stage in Manipur" examines the speaking skill of English of Manipuri students of the ten selected schools at the Elementary level besides listening, reading and writing skills. However, there has been no studies on the relationship between mother tongue (Meiteilon) and English language learning in terms of writing skills. Therefore, the present study has been conducted to explore more areas in the field of English language teaching. The methods adopted or the research instrument employed in the present study is discussed in the next section.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study adopts the sample survey method by using quantitative data. The process of selecting the sample is carried out by means of simple random sampling technique. The sample is taken from one higher secondary school comprising 25 male students and 18 female students with a total of 43 students studying in Class XI standard. The research instrument for investigating their writing skills in Meiteilon (L1) and English (L2) consists one set each of Meiteilon (L1) and English (L2) Question Paper prepared by the Council of Higher Secondary School (COHSEM), Government of Manipur. The full mark awarded for each set of

questions is 100. The question design of COHSEM has carried out the evaluation of students in the following pattern:

Sl.	Content	Marks
1	Prose	20
2	Poetry	10
3	Supplementary Reader	15
4	Reading Comprehension	20
5	Advanced Writing Skills	20
6	Grammar	15
Total Marks		100

The following tables 1 and 2 highlight the scores obtained in Meiteilon (L1) and English (L2) test by the higher secondary male and female students respectively. The number of students opting for Meiteilon (L1) is 39 students since there are four students whose mother tongue is not Meiteilon and they have opted for Additional English. However, in the context of English (L2), all the 43 students are taken into consideration for the present study.

Table 1

Table 1 Score of Male Students in Meiteilon (L1) and English (L2) Test		
	Meiteilon (L1)	English (L2)
MS01	NA	12
MS02	NA	33
MS03	79	80
MS04	45	64
MS05	92	81
MS06	18	31
MS07	79	55
MS08	98	92
MS09	NA	38
MS10	81	68
MS11	53	51
MS12	30	36
MS13	99	96
MS14	21	21
MS15	50	38
MS16	10	30
MS17	17	12
MS18	29	52
MS19	NA	24
MS20	16	28
MS21	21	19
MS22	3	25
MS23	25	10
MS24	27	34
MS25	6	13

Table 2

Table 2 Score of Female Students in Meiteilon (L1) and English Test (L2)		
	Meiteilon (L1)	**English (L2)**
FS01	47	63
FS02	20	27
FS03	92	61
FS04	6	27
FS05	80	78
FS06	93	62
FS07	NA	36
FS08	33	34
FS09	26	14
FS10	27	50
FS11	92	69
FS12	51	61
FS13	43	41
FS14	57	36
FS15	83	86
FS16	84	82
FS17	64	47
FS18	31	42

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Analysis of data is to be made with reference to the purpose of the study and its possible bearing on the scientific discovery. An analysis is made with reference to the research problem on hand or the hypothesis. There is something more crucial than the facts and tables in research. The purpose of research is to find out something. The purpose of analysis is to build up a sort of intellectual mode where the relationship involved are carefully brought out so that some meaningful inferences can be drawn. Facts are never innocuous. They involve both subjective and objective elements. Facts and tables are to be seen in the perspective of objectivity. The mean value and standard deviation of the scores obtained by the higher secondary students in Meiteilon (L1) and English (L2) Test is shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Table 3 The Performance of Higher Secondary Students in Meiteilon (L1) and English Test (L2)		
	Mean	**Standard Deviation**
Meiteilon (L1)	48	30.80
English (L2)	46	23.83

In the sample of 43 students, the mean performance of higher secondary students in Meiteilon (L1) is 46 while that of English is 46 thereby showing moderate performance in both the language papers, L1 and L2. Further, the mean performance of writing skills in Meiteilon (L1) and English has a slight difference of only 2 marks. However, there is a standard deviation of 30.80 in Meiteilon (L1) indicating that few students have obtained the highest score and some students the

least score. In the context of English (L2), the standard deviation with 23.83 is less than that of Meiteilon (L1).

Table 4

Table 4 The Performance of Higher Secondary Students in Meiteilon (L1) Test With Regard to Gender			
	Total No.	Mean	Standard Deviation
Male Students	25	43	32.21
Female Students	18	55	28.56

In the sample of 43 students, there are 25 male students and 18 female students. The mean performance of higher secondary male students in Meiteilon (L1) is 43 while that of female students is 55 thereby showing that female students have better performance in Meiteilon (L1) examination.

Table 5

Table 5 The Performance of Higher Secondary Students in English (L2) Test with Regard to Gender			
	Total No.	Mean	S.D.
Male Students	25	41.72	25.66
Female Students	18	51	20.52

In the sample of 43 students comprising 25 male students and 18 female students, the mean performance of writing skills among higher secondary male students in English is 41.72 while that of female students is 51 thereby indicating that female students have an edge over the performance of male students in English (L2).

Table 6

Table 6 Inter-Correlational Matrix Between the Scores of Meiteilon (L1) and English (L2)		
Variables	Meiteilon (L1)	English
Meiteilon (L1)	1.00	0.87
English	0.87	1.00

High positive correlations are ascertained in the writing skills of Meiteilon (L1) and English (0.87). Therefore, the research hypothesis is rejected. Hence, the writing skills in Meiteilon (L1) and English (L2) have direct influence upon one another with high intensity.

5. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

The major findings are reported according to the research objectives. The present study has been conducted to achieve the following objectives.

Research objective 1: To find out the writing skills of higher secondary students in Meiteilon (L1).

In order to achieve the research objective 1, the writing skills of higher secondary students are evaluated on the basis of their performance in the MIL examination paper conducted by the Council of Higher Secondary School, Government of Manipur. The mean performance of writing skills among higher secondary students in Meiteilon (L1) is found at 48 showing a moderate performance though there are six students who are able to score above 90.

Research Objective 2: To find out the writing skills of higher secondary students in English (L2).

In order to achieve the research objective 2, the writing skills of higher secondary students are evaluated on the basis of their performance in the English examination paper conducted by the Council of Higher Secondary School, Government of Manipur. The mean performance of writing skills among higher secondary students in English (L2) is found at 46 (moderate performance) with only two students who are able to score above 90.

Research Objective 3: To find out the correlation in the writing skills of Meiteilon (L1) and English (L2).

In order to achieve the research objective 3, the performance of writing skills evaluated on the basis of English and MIL paper prepared by the COHSEM is taken into consideration. The correlational analysis is carried out by using MS-Excel spreadsheet. High positive correlation in the writing skills of Meiteilon (L1) and English (L2) can be ascertained with high intensity. However, there are six students scoring above 90 in Meiteilon (L1) and only two students in English (L2).

From the above findings, it is concluded that the writing skills of higher secondary students in Meiteilon (L1) and English (L2) are moderate. Further, there is a high positive correlation between the writing skills of Meiteilon (L1) and English (L2). Therefore, students having good writing skills in Meiteilon (L1) can be improved in the writing skills of English (L1). In the present study, only a small number of students is taken into account. There is ample scope for further research in this area with larger number of students and different tests of evaluating language skill.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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