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PROBABLE AND PREFERRED FUTURE OF ENGLISH AS SECOND LANGUAGE IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOLS OF KERALAM STATE BY 2040

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ABSTRACT:



During the last few decades, there has been a radical change in every field on account of scientific inventions, technological advances and the advent of AI. The changes are so rapid that there is no opportunity even to get ready for them, and it is these problems that have initiated an interdisciplinary body of knowledge known as futurology or future studies.

*It revolves around social realities with futuristic outlooks at the changes which are yet to occur. The present study titled "**Probable and Preferred Future of English as Second Language in The Secondary Schools of Keralam State By 2040**" is a mixed method research study adopting qualitative survey and Delphi methods. The sample for the survey consisted of 200 higher secondary school students for the survey, 10 educational experts for the first-round Delphi method and thirty experienced teachers for the second-round Delphi methods.*

This was an attempt to study how far the present is ready for the future by measuring the higher secondary school students' experience of learning English as second language in the secondary schools, with respect to gender, types of schools and the medium of instruction in acquiring English language competency. The study also attempted to find out the probable future and preferred future of English as second language in the secondary schools of Kerala in the year 2040 A.D., with respect to government policies, motivating factors, textbooks, activity-based interactive learning, proficiency in language skills, competency of teachers and evaluation procedures.

By collating all the data collected through rating scales and interviews with experts, it was possible to get a lucid picture of the present status of English language teaching and learning at the secondary school level in the state of Kerala. The result unfolds the inadequacies in the system, assesses the strengths and suggests corrective measures in the light of several governmental and institutional interventions for improvement. The study has great implications for school managements and heads of institutions for the future of ESL at secondary school level. It also has implications for improvement of teacher education programmes, pedagogic improvement, effective use of pedagogy, curriculum development, integration of basic language skills and assessment of students' proficiency and achievement in English.

KEYWORDS: *Probable and preferred future of ESL, Secondary Schools, Secondary School Learning experiences of students in English, Future of Secondary Schools.*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

"The best way to predict the future is to create it" – Abraham Lincoln

It is a well-known fact that English is the most widely used language and the chief vehicle of international communication in the world today. English has been considered to be the first global

lingua franca. In today's modern world the English language has become part and parcel of every existing field. It has been an international language of communication, business, science, information technology, entertainment and so on.

The importance of English language has been recognized by the Asian countries as well and thus it has become the language of administration as well as the medium of instruction in several Asian countries including India. English has undoubtedly attained a unique global position and it works as a link language in India. Despite being a foreign language, English is now firmly rooted in the soil of India and it has become a part of Indian life because **it bridges the communication gap in the multilingual Indian context.** Thus English has great importance for the integrity of India.

2.0 NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The importance of English language competency increases as more and more people want to learn this language. Government also has brought English as Second Language all though the Indian Territory predominantly. It is also used for inter-state and intra-state communication. But the objectives of teaching English in Primary and Secondary levels have not been achieved satisfactorily so far. A number of innovations have been introduced from the process of learning to the process of acquisition. We have to focus on the need of English in the areas of higher education, job opportunities in the global scenario, being in touch with multimedia and entertainment. Above all, high proficiency in English seems to be essential for socio-economic status in India.

Effective language acquisition is possible only when it is planned ahead keeping in mind the futurology of the language. So planning for the future is the felt need of the hour. If English has "stood the test of time" and would continue to enjoy the exhausted position in future, a futuristic outlook is indispensable if it has to serve the purpose of a second language. Keeping in mind this futurological aspect of English in the present context of Kerala, the investigator attempted the present study titled "**Probable and Preferred Future of English as Second Language in The Secondary Schools of Keralam State By 2040**." The topic may sound much worked upon, but for the investigator concern for the future of English as a Second Language in the secondary schools of Kerala really deserves attention. Not with standing the Malayalee's love for the mother tongue there still remain the love to educate their children wholly in English medium schools. English it seems is a passport to great job and entry into the world beyond, such being the case, teachers and educationalists need to analyze the present system, view it objectively check for corrective measures and attempt to look into the future.

3.0 REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The international significance of the study is evident by the research conducted by **David Graddol (1997), 'The Future of English?'** He expressed his valuable opinion about the English language in the 21st century in his book. This book explores the possible long-term impact on developments of English in growing economy, globalization, communicative technology and major demographic shifts.

National significance of the study is very clear by the research carried out by **Sarvepalli Gopal (1988), 'The English Language in India since Independence, and its Future Role'.** He had mentioned Nehru's first language policy in his study. The paper highlighted that Nehru conceded it would be foolish to drop English altogether.

Peri Bhaskararao (2002) conducted a study on 'English in Contemporary India'. He examined that the status of English in India is different from its status in a Western European country. In contrast to a country like Germany, where it is a foreign language, English is a second language in India, and, as such, it is widely used in the media, education, administration, and non-localized business.

In Kerala, the significance of the study is very evident in the research done by a team of investigators headed by **M.A. Sudheer and Radha Ramanan Pillai (2019),** which was submitted to SCERT, Kerala, titled **"Relish English"** for Evolving new Strategies and Pedagogies in English Language Learning. The sole aim of the study was to improve the competency in English language among secondary school students of Kerala. This study also has presented future aspects of learning English.

Johnson K.J. (1998) attempted a study on **'Future of English as Second Language in the Secondary Schools of Kerala State'**. He had researched into the existing status of English in secondary schools in Kerala and made a prediction of the scene in 2015. Interestingly, the investigator found that the English language teaching and learning process had overshot most expectations and some of them contradicted his predictions. It is precisely his findings that enthused the investigator to take this research forward, by studying the changes that have taken place and attempting to predict the scenario in 2040 A.D. "No man ever steps in the same river twice," says an old proverb. Indeed, predicting changes is the most unpredictable act that one can engage in. Finally, the investigator does not claim that his foresight could be flawless since we live in an age of technology where every hour of changes affects life.

4.0 OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF THE TERMS

a) Probable Future

Probable Future is the hard-data-based projection of the trend in different variables influencing teaching and learning English as second language, visualised by the experts and assumed to continue in a particular direction and at a rate, as it has been identified over the last few years (indicates what will be). The variables selected for the present study are Government Policies, Motivating factors, Textbooks, Competency of teachers, Proficiency in Language skills, and Evaluation procedures.

b) Preferred Future

Preferred future is the desirability of the future society as expressed by the experts (participating in the present study) on the status of teaching and learning English as second language in the secondary schools of Kerala State with respect to government policies, textbooks, competency of teachers, proficiency of language skills, motivation and evaluation procedure (indicates what should be).

c) Learning Experiences in English

Learning experiences of higher secondary school students' English as second language in the secondary schools with respect to teacher competency, motivation, peer group learning and language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing.

d) English as Second Language

English is a non-home but official language of the nation, which must be learned by its citizens for full social, economic and political participation in the life of the nation. In the secondary schools of Kerala State, English is taught and learned as a Second Language.

e) Secondary Schools

Secondary Schools in the present study include those schools which have classes VIII, IX and X that follow the curriculum prescribed by the Government of Kerala State and use mother tongue/regional language and English as the medium of instruction.

5.0 OBJECTIVES

1. To study the experience of higher secondary school students of Kerala State in learning English as second language in the secondary schools with respect to Medium of Instruction, Gender and Type of Schools.
2. To study the present status, probable and preferred future of English as second language in secondary schools of Kerala State in the year 2040 A.D.

6.0 HYPOTHESES

H_{01}: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of Malayalam Medium and English Medium Higher Secondary School students on Experiences of Learning English at Secondary school level.

H_{02}: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of higher secondary school Boys and Girls on Experiences of Learning English at Secondary school level.
H_{03}: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of aided and unaided higher secondary school students on Experiences of Learning English at Secondary school level.

7.0 METHODOLOGY

7.1 Research Design

The present study used a mixed research design. It includes three phases. The quantitative aspect of the study includes a survey to study the experience of the higher secondary school students in learning English as second language in the secondary schools of Kerala and second and third phases included a Delphi study on the probable and preferred future of English as second language in the secondary schools of Kerala in the year 2040 A.D. The table 1.0 gives the phases of research design used in the study.

Table 1.0: Phases of research design

Phase I	Students Level	Experiences of higher secondary school students in learning English as second language in the secondary school.
Phase II	Experts Level	Probable and preferred future of English as second language (Delphi study – First Round).
Phase III	Experienced Teachers Level	Probable and preferred future of English as second language (Delphi study – Second Round).

7.2 Sample of the study

The sample selected for the present study in three phases is shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2.0: Method adopted and the sample of the study in three phases

Phase	Method	Sample	Number
Phase I	Quantitative	200 higher secondary school students	200
Phase II	Qualitative (Delphi first round)	10 experts	10
Phase III	Quantitative (Delphi second round)	30 experienced teachers	30
Total			240

7.3 Tools used

i) A rating scale for higher secondary students on Experiences of Learning English as second language in their respective secondary schools of Kerala, developed by the investigator.
ii) An interview schedule for experts on present, probable and preferred future of English for first round Delphi study, developed by the investigator.
iii) A rating scale for experienced teachers on probable and preferred future of English for second round Delphi study. Developed by the investigator.

8.0 ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

8.1 Analysis of the Objective 1:

The data collected from higher secondary school students using the rating scale on experience of learning English as second language in the secondary schools was tabulated and descriptive statistics namely **Mean, SD** and inferential statistics namely **'t' test** were computed to test the hypotheses. Table-3 gives the results.

Table 3.0 : Results of experience of learning English as second language in the secondary schools of higher secondary students

Variable	-	Number	Mean	S.D	't' Value	Df	Remarks (0.05 level)
Medium of Instruction	Malayalam medium	28	129.39	20.16	2.15	198	Significant
	English medium	172	144	22.12			
Gender	Boys	76	131	22.21	3.29	198	Significant
	Girls	124	149	18.47			
Type of Schools	Govt/aided	150	144.01	20.69	1.154	198	Not Significant
	Unaided	50	147.98	21.17			

From the table it is observed that the obtained 't' value for medium of instruction is 2.15 and for gender is 3.29 which are greater than the theoretical value of 1.97.

The 't' value for type of school was 1.15 which was less than the theoretical value of 1.97 hence $H_0$1 and $H_0$2 were rejected and $H_0$3 was accepted and the following conclusions were made.

- There is significant difference between the mean scores of Malayalam Medium secondary school students and the mean score of English medium secondary school students, on experience of learning English. **English medium students had better learning experience of learning English as second language than Malayalam Medium students.**
- There is significant difference between, the mean score of Malayalam medium secondary school boys and girls on experience of learning English. **Girls had better learning experiences of English as second language than boys.**
- There is no significant difference between, between Mean scores of aided secondary school students, and the mean scores of unaided secondary school students, on experience of learning English as second language.

8.2 Analysis of Objective 2:

The first-round Delphi study involved the interview with 10 experts regarding the Present, Probable and Preferred future of English as second Language in the secondary schools in the year 2040 AD. For the second round of Delphi tool was prepared on the basis of findings of the first round, namely the interviews with experts. The data was collected from 30 experienced teachers. The collected data was tabulated and only those items on which **fifty percent of respondents expressed** (median value 50%) similar views were considered as Probable and Preferred future of English as second Language in the secondary schools in the year 2040 A.D the following were the results of the study.

Probable Future Pro and Preferred Future of English

a) Government Policies

- Strict Implementation of Government policies will be and should be part of education
- Curriculum will be and should be reformed based on the theory of "Multiple Intelligence" and KCF 2023 and NEP 2020.
- Govt. policies will and should promote issue-based text books with integrated activities.
- Dual level classes with additional learning materials for the gifted and the slow learners will be and should be considered.
- The new policies will and should take into account innate abilities of the children to grow and learn.

b) Motivating Factors

- The pupils will be and should be convinced of the utilitarian values of learning English.
- The introduction of ICT, KITE trained teachers in AI in schools will and should enhance pupils' motivation to learn English.

- Learning will and should seek dialogical, collaborative and co-operative atmosphere in the class rooms.
- Teacher will be and should be motivated to make use of KITE the web portal titled 'SAMAGRA', a repository of all ICT resources.
- School level English blog will be and should be part of English learning, giving access to other schools to enhance the creative work.
- Dedicated and committed teachers who know the goals and needs of their children will be and should be a motivating factor.

c) Text Books

- Text books will be and should be more and more digital and it will be called energized text books enabling easy access to digital learning.
- Decentralized text books will be and should be there considering the diverse culture of the country and the local needs, with integrated activity, enabling access to digital learning.
- Text book will be and should be with authentic pieces of children's literature which are edited, abridged, grammar in context, language activities, projects, need based vocabulary development and Cross section of world literature.
- There will be and should be lot of learner space in the text books making it more learner friendly.
- Text book will be and should be designed into comprehensive units with integrated activities, suitable to the age and nature of students.

d) Competency of Teachers

- Well conserved teacher empowerment programme both face to face and online will be and should be planned and executed covering all the teachers of the state.
- Teachers will be and should be reflective professionals creative and divergent thinkers and above all human beings acting as guides and mentors and facilitators to the students.
- Teachers will be and should be capable of setting the learning issues in the right direction ensuring the active participation of all the students.
- Teacher will and should kindle the spirit of enquiry to guide the students to the world of English.
- Teachers will be and should be equipped with technological, pedagogical and content knowledge.
- A mechanism of co-ordination among local self-government, education office, DIET's and BRC's will and should help in enhancing the teacher quality.
- Teachers will and should recognize themselves as professionals endowed with the necessary knowledge, attitude, competency, commitment, enthusiasm, spirit of seeking new knowledge and capable of reflection.

f) Proficiency in language Skills

- Teachers will and should move from more independent users of language to proficient users of language.
- Children will be and should be given a chance to introspect and reflect upon what they do in the class.
- Students will be and should be given maximum exposure to listen, speak, read and write English.
- Students will be and should be given ample opportunities to express their creative ideas.
- Context - embedded interactive language programme will be and should be there to go deep into other cognitive - academic skills. Such as library comprehension, appreciation, inferences, interpretation and narration.

g) Evaluation Procedures

- Decentralized Evaluation system will be and should be part of teaching learning process giving priority to every aspect of language teaching with appropriate remedial practices.
- A continuous comprehensive evaluation will be should be part of teaching learning process.

- More formative assessment will be and should be considered based on proficiency rubrics.
- Teachers and educationist will be and should be encouraged to develop new modes of evaluation.

Educational implications of the study

- Malayalam medium secondary school need to find ways and means to develop better language skills among students and appoint qualified and competent English teachers right from the primary classes.
- Boys of secondary schools should be encouraged and efforts should be taken by schools to enhance their language skills and provide better learning experience.
- The study has great implications for school management, head of institutions, educational experts, teachers and administrators, in planning and implementing innovative programmes and learning strategies.
- It has implication for improvement of teacher education programmes, pedagogic improvement, effective use of the pedagogy, curriculum development, integration of basic language skills and assessment of students' proficiency and achievement in English.
- To have decentralized text books considering the diverse culture of the country and the local needs with integrated activity and enabling access to digital learning.
- To plan and execute Well conserved teacher empowerment Programme both face to face and online covering all the teachers of the state.
- To have Text books with authentic pieces of children's literature which are edited, abridged, grammar in context, language activities, projects, need based vocabulary development and Cross section of world literature with child centered learning and activity-based learning.
- To plan dynamic model of English teaching" with "an indigenous approach, based on our own needs.
- To have Teachers as reflective professionals creative and divergent thinkers and above all human beings acting as guides, facilitators and mentors to the students.
- To have a Mechanism of Co-ordination among local self-government, educational officer, Diet and BRC's to help in enhancing the teacher quality.
- To have decentralized Evaluation system giving priority to every aspect of language teaching and learning with appropriate remedial practices
- Strict implementation of the following existing theory in the class room teaching learning process
    - Activity based teaching and learning
    - Process oriented teaching learning
    - Theory of constructivism and social constructivism
    - Discourse oriented Pedagogy for student’s acquisition of four language skills
    - Theory of Multiple intelligence.
    - Learner centered teaching learning
    - Collaborative learning, co-operative learning
    - Differentiated teaching

CONCLUSION

However, we cannot deny the fact that there have evolved winds of change. Though we have gone far ahead in language learning through performance-based activities, we still have to go miles ahead to mould our learners as confident users of language. In this scenario, the need of an effective innovative transaction technique to reinforce the transaction of the text as well as help the learners to overcome the hurdles in the usage of the language became a need of the hour. Keeping in mind the norm that language acquisition can only take place with the proper linguistic environment, creating such an environment becomes the need of the hour. The approach and methods to be followed should be realistic and practicable in Indian context and also should be learner friendly.

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