

## **An Analysis of Writing Ability in English among Tamil Linguistic Minority Students in Palakkad District**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Language is an instrument of culture and identity. It is a powerful master trait for group identity, therefore language is essential in the very survival of cultural communities. A student must develop skills in manipulating the linguistic system in order to use the language spontaneously and develop skills for using the language to communicate meanings. Learning to use the language should be the goal of language teaching, and development of writing skill occupies an important place in learning any language. We have a large number of languages which are spoken only by groups of the total population which are called the linguistic minorities. This study analyzed differences in writing skill in English among secondary school students of Tamil Linguistic Minority of Palakkad District on the basis of locale. Writing Skill Test was used to analyze the writing skill of Tamil Linguistic Minority Students. Percentage wise analysis and t – test were used to analyze data. The results of the study indicated that there exists no significant difference in the mean scores of writing skill of secondary school students of Tamil linguistic minority in Palakkad district based on locale.

### **INTRODUCTION**

English is a symbol of people's aspirations for quality in education today. The impact of technological advancements, globalizations and economic liberalizations have changed the role of English in India from the level of library language, link language and window to the world. It is the world's common language, and is spoken by a quarter of the world's population. English is widely spoken and taught in over 118 countries and is commonly used around the world as a trade language or diplomatic language. It is the language of science, aviation, computers, diplomacy and tourism. Last but not least, it is the language of international communication, the media and the internet.

Writing is the art of expressing our views, ideas, and thoughts. Though writing seems easy while thinking about it, many times, it results in unorganized and scattered pieces of information on paper. This often creates confusion or sends a wrong message. Good writing skills allow us to communicate our message with clarity and ease to a far larger audience. Most of the activities we do every day from work meetings and presentations, to writing emails and normal conversations bring out the need to communicate. Having these skills gives a person the confidence to speak, the opportunity to deduce meaning from a series of messages, and the ability to exchange information with others. Most people learn a language with the main goal of speaking it, but rarely consider writing because it doesn't help hold conversations.

According to Hedge (1998: 19), "writing is a process. In fact, it is a complex process with a number of operations going on simultaneously. Moreover, some writers seem to have a much better understanding of how to make the process work effectively for them and consequently produce more successful pieces of writing." From those definitions above, we can conclude that writing is a process which involved complex activities and fundamental towards education system going on simultaneously to produce successful piece of writing. Another definition comes from Byrne (1997: 1) who states that writing is the act of forming letters or combination of letters: making marks on flat surface of some kind.

Language serves as a tool for identification and culture. It is a potent master characteristic for collective identity. Thus, language is necessary for cultural communities to even survive. To speak naturally and be able to convey meaning through language, a pupil needs to become proficient at managing the linguistic system. The aim of teaching a language should be language usage. There are many languages in our language family that are only spoken by small percentages of the general population, known as linguistic minorities.

## **NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

Linguistic minorities are a class of people whose mother tongue is different from that of the majority in the state or part of a state. They are the ones who are in trouble most of the time while acquiring a new language. Writing in English is a critical skill for all students, but it can be particularly challenging for Tamil linguistic minority students. This is because they may be learning in a language that is different from their home language, and they may also be facing other challenges such as discrimination, and lack of access to high-quality educational resources.

Torto (2014) examined in the article “An Examination of the Approaches Adopted by English Language Teachers in Teaching Composition Writing in Cape Coast Basic School, Ghana”, the approaches that English teachers in Cape Coast . The population for this research is 75 teachers, selected out of the 213 upper primary teachers in Metropolis. The instruments used for the data collection were questionnaire, interviews and observation guide. The study revealed that the sample used goes not know about the current approaches to the teaching of composition writing. Teachers are only familiar with product and process approaches in teaching of various components of writing skills among the students. The research also revealed the fact that during the classroom teaching, the students were playing passive role in learning process.

Kemboi et al. (2014) studied the challenges in teaching composition writing in secondary schools in Pokot County, Kenya .The study revealed that both the teachers and students face challenges in teaching and learning of composition writing respectively.

Writing is a very complex skill and many researches have been done researches in the development of writing skill in English, and good writing skills are needed for students in order to accomplish their educational and professional requirements. This study is conducted among the Tamil linguistic minority students, because of several reasons, they fail to comprehend the spoken words and it reflects in writing also. The needs, expectations, goals and learning styles, skills and knowledge of these students should be taken into consideration. This study aimed to understand the factors that influence the writing skill and to develop effective strategies to support them. This research also focused to raise awareness of the importance of writing skill for all students, and to advocate policies and programs that support Tamil linguistic minority students. By understanding the factors that influence their writing skill and developing effective strategies to support them, we can help them to reach their full potential.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

1. To find out the level of writing skill in English among secondary school students of Tamil linguistic minority in Palakkad district.
- 2.To study the significant difference in the mean scores of writing skill in English among secondary school students of Tamil linguistic minority in Palakkad district based on,
  - Gender
  - Locale
  - Type of management

## **HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY**

1. There exists different levels of writing skill in English among secondary school students of Tamil linguistic minority in Palakkad district.

2. There exists no significant difference in the mean scores of writing skill in English among secondary school students of Tamil linguistic minority in Palakkad district based on

- Gender
- Locale
- Type of management

## METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

### Method

Normative survey method was adopted for the study.

### Sample

The total sample for the present study consisted of 400 Secondary School Students of Tamil linguistic minority of Palakkad district. To obtain sample representatives of the population the investigator followed stratified sampling .

### Tools Used

The tool used for data collection was Writing Skill Test constructed and validated by the investigator.

### Statistical Techniques Used

The statistical techniques used for this study included percentage wise analysis and t test.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Analysis of the level of Writing Skill in English language among Secondary School Students of Tamil Linguistic Minority of Palakkad.

For finding the level of Writing Skill in English language among Secondary School Students of Tamil Linguistic Minority of Palakkad, they were classified into three groups such as students having High level of Writing Skill, Average level of Writing Skill, and Low level of Writing Skill. The scores which are more than Mean + SD is categorized as students under high level of Writing Skill; and for students under low group as those who scored below Mean – SD and those who scored in between these two as students with average level of Writing Skill as given in Table 1.

Table 1  
*Data and results of analysis of level of Writing Skill in English language among Secondary School Students of Tamil Linguistic Minority of Palakkad.*

Writing Skill

Group	Norms	N	%
High	M + SD and above	64	16
Average	M + SD to M - SD	266	66.5
Low	M - SD and below	70	17.5
Total		400	100

From the table it is clear that 16% Secondary School Students of Tamil Linguistic Minority of Palakkad fall into high level of Writing Skill in English language. 66.5% Secondary School Students of Tamil Linguistic Minority of Palakkad have shown average Writing Skill in English language. 17.5% is falling into low Writing Skill in English language. It was found that, for the whole sample the majority come under average group. 66.5% of students from whole sample were showing average level of Writing Skill in English language. Thus the result pointed that there exist different levels of Writing Skill in English language among Secondary School Students of Tamil Linguistic Minority of Palakkad.

The percentage analysis reveals that there exist high, average, and low levels of Writing Skill in English language among Secondary School Students of Tamil Linguistic Minority of Palakkad. Therefore the hypothesis that states there exists different levels of Writing Skill in English Language is accepted.

**Comparison of the Mean Scores of Writing Skill among Secondary School Students of Tamil Linguistic Minority in Palakkad District based on Gender.**

To find out whether there exists any significant difference in the mean scores of Writing Skill among Secondary School Students of Tamil Linguistic Minority in Palakkad District on the basis of their gender, test of significance of difference (*t* – test) was employed. Details of the results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

*Data and results of the test of significance of mean difference in scores of the Writing Skill among Secondary School Students of Tamil Linguistic Minority in Palakkad District on the basis of Gender*

Variable	Group	N	Mean	SD	t	p
Writing Skill	Male	187	35.9	11.6	8.45	<.001
	Female	237	43.8	6.86		

From the Table 2 it is clear that the mean and standard deviation of Writing Skill among Secondary School Students of Tamil Linguistic Minority in Palakkad District in male students is 35.9 and 11.6. The mean and standard deviation of Writing Skill among Secondary School Students of Tamil Linguistic Minority in Palakkad District in female students is 43.8 and 6.86. The *t* value obtained for Writing Skill is 8.45 and *p* value is <.001. Hence the hypothesis stating that there exists no significant difference in the

Writing Skill among Secondary School Students of Tamil Linguistic Minority in Palakkad District based on their gender is rejected. That means there exists significant difference in the Writing Skill among Secondary School Students of Tamil Linguistic Minority in Palakkad District based on their gender.

**Comparison of the Mean Scores of Writing Skill among Secondary School Students of Tamil Linguistic Minority in Palakkad District based on Locale.**

To ascertain whether there exist any significant difference in the mean scores of Writing Skill among Secondary School Students of Tamil Linguistic Minority in Palakkad District on the basis of their locale, test of significance of difference between means (*t* test) was employed.

Data and result of mean scores of extent of Writing Skill on the sub sample based on locale are given below.

Table 3

*Data and results of the test of significance of mean difference in the scores of the Writing Skill among Secondary School Students of Tamil Linguistic Minority in Palakkad District on the basis of Locale*

Variable	Group	N	Mean	SD	t	p
Writing Skill	Rural	239	40.2	9.4	0.0975	0.922
	Urban	161	40.1	11.2		

From the Table 3 it is clear that the mean and standard deviation of Writing Skill among Secondary School Students of Tamil Linguistic Minority in Palakkad District in rural students is 40.2 and 9.4. The mean and standard deviation of Writing Skill among Secondary School Students of Tamil Linguistic Minority in Palakkad District in urban students is 40.1 and 11.2. The *t* value obtained for Writing Skill is 0.0975 and *p* value is 0.922 which is greater than 0.05.

Hence the hypothesis stating that there exists no significant difference in the Writing Skill among Secondary School Students of Tamil Linguistic Minority in Palakkad District based on their locale is not rejected. That means there exists no significant difference in the Writing Skill among Secondary School Students of Tamil Linguistic Minority in Palakkad District based on their locale.

**Comparison of the Mean Scores of Writing Skill among Secondary School Students of Tamil Linguistic Minority in Palakkad District based on Type of Management.**

To ascertain whether there exist any significant difference in the mean scores of Writing Skill among Secondary School Students of Tamil Linguistic Minority in Palakkad District on the basis of their type of management, test of significance of difference between means (*t* test) was employed.

Data and results of mean scores of Writing Skill among Secondary School Students of Tamil Linguistic Minority in Palakkad District on the sub samples based on type of management are given in the Table 4.

Table 4

*Data and results of the test of significance of mean scores of Writing Skill among Secondary School Students of Tamil Linguistic Minority in Palakkad District on the sub samples based on Type of Management*

Variable	Group	N	Mean	SD	t	p
Writing Skill	Aided	179	41.9	9.17	3.19	0.002
	Government	221	38.7	10.7		

From the Table 4, it is clear that the mean and standard deviation of Writing Skill among Secondary School Students of Tamil Linguistic Minority in Palakkad District in Aided School students is 41.9 and 9.17. The mean and standard deviation of Writing Skill among Secondary School Students of Tamil Linguistic Minority in Palakkad District in Government School students is 38.7 and 10.7. The  $t$  value obtained for Writing Skill among Secondary School Students of Tamil Linguistic Minority in Palakkad District is 3.19 and  $p$  value is 0.002 which is less than 0.05.

Hence the hypothesis stating that there exists no significant difference in the Writing Skill among Secondary School Students of Tamil Linguistic Minority in Palakkad District based on their type of management is rejected. That means there exists a significant difference in the Writing Skill among Secondary School Students of Tamil Linguistic Minority in Palakkad District based on their type of management.

## CONCLUSION

More research is needed to identify the specific factors that contribute to the difference in English writing skills between urban and rural Tamil linguistic minorities, and research should also be conducted to determine the effectiveness of interventions designed to improve the English writing skills of Tamil linguistic minorities in rural areas. Research on the writing skill of the Tamil linguistic minority has important implications for education and language policy. This research also suggests more exposure to English language and familiarizing with diversified strategies will accomplish productive ability in English language writing.

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