



Competencies of Primary School Teachers to deal Children with Telugu Language Learning Difficulties due to variation of their Gender and Experience

R. Jayabharathi Reddy, Research Scholar, Department of Education, Dravidian University, Kuppam, Andhra Pradesh.

Dr. G. Lokanadha Reddy, Professor (Retd.), Department of Education, Dravidian University, Kuppam, Andhra Pradesh.

Abstract

A language consists of symbols that convey meaning, plus rules for combining those symbols, that can be used to generate an infinite variety of messages. Learning disabilities make a reference to a variety of disorders that affect the acquisition, understanding, retention, organizing or use of verbal or non-verbal information. These disorders are the result of impairments in connection with one or more psychological process relating to learning in combination with other average abilities which are essential for listening and thinking. Learning abilities are specific and are not global impairments and as a result, they are distinct from the intellectual disabilities. A teacher should be endowed with certain professional competencies for performing the task that is assigned to him successfully. He should have a consummate knowledge regarding the curriculum that is specified for teaching. Objectives of the study were to find out the significant differences in the competencies required on various aspects of Telugu language learning difficulties in children by the primary school teachers due to variation in their gender and years of experience. As a result, it can be understood that there is vast scope for providing orientation, pre-service and in-service training programmes to the teachers of the primary schools for them to acquire competence to greater extent and similarly, the government must make efforts to incorporate content pertaining to Telugu learning difficulties in teacher training programmes.

Keywords: Learning disabilities, Telugu language learning difficulties, competencies of teachers, etc.

Introduction:

Language is a system that represents an organized way of behaviour, which can be described in an orderly manner, just as various systems of the human body (e.g. lungs, heart, eyes, hands etc.). Though the parts of human body are different, yet they act in unison and coordination for the proper functioning of an individual. Similarly, the system of language also functions through different sounds, words and structures. These, when integrated, result in the creation of a language. Each language is a very special and unique system with the help of which thoughts and ideas are constructed into meaningful entities for being conveyed to others. The language consists of sounds, structures and entities pertaining to vocabulary. As a result, when a person intends to learn a new language, he has to learn new letters, structures and items pertaining to vocabulary.

There are five main functions of language generally and they are informational function, directive function, expression function, phatic function and aesthetics function. Any language is influenced by a plethora of factors and some of them are: origin of people, social background and social attitudes. The language is always related to the situation with respect to which it is used. Every person has a certain social background and the usage of the language reflects that social background. We are going to take into cognizance different functions of language and its relationship with the social circumstances because language is related to the type of social organization that we live in.

The primary reason for learning disabilities is that the students who have minimum learning disabilities do not speak of the obvious signs of the disabilities, for example the students who are physically challenged. As a result, they are expected to attain model performance along with behaviour standards. Thus, when the students who have minimum learning disabilities behave in an atypical manner or fall below the level of academic performance which is expected of average students in the class, they are put on as indifferent students.

Telugu is the language which is most widely spoken among those people who are using the Brahmi script. These comprise the languages of South India (Telugu, Tamil, Kannada, Malayalam, Tulu and others such as Sinhala (which is spoken in Sri Lanka) and languages that are spoken in Southeast Asia such as Thai, Burmese, and Cambodian. When it comes to the number of people speaking Telugu language in the country, Telugu ranks second among the languages spoken in the country. The main languages that are spoken in the State of Andhra Pradesh are Telugu, Hindi, Urdu, Banjara and English and these are followed by Tamil, Marathi, Kannada, and Oriya. Telugu is the official and principal language of the state of Andhra Pradesh. It was also referred to as 'Tenugu' in the past. Since the middle times, 'Andhra' was the name that was given to Telugu. 'Telugu' is a corrupted form of 'Trilinga' (Sanskrit meaning three lingas). The vocabulary of the Telugu language is very much influenced by Sanskrit. Over a period of time, some Sanskrit expressions got so used to in Telugu language that people regarded them as pure Telugu words.

Review of related Literature:

Reddy (2000) undertook a research study with regard to special and normal school teachers competencies in dealing with the children who are suffering from learning disabilities. The results of this research study has revealed the fact that in more than 50% of the aspects, the teachers who were working in special schools had competency which was low and moderate, whereas in the case of normal school teachers the competency was low and moderate with regard to all aspects of competency.

Reddy, Ramar and Kusuma (2000) have come out with the publication of the book entitled, “Learning Disabilities”, which is essential for a practitioner for overcoming the learning disabilities that are existing among children.

Harinath (2017) conducted a study on problems in learning Telugu grammar among the students of 5th class in Ananthapuram. The results of the research study revealed that the students who belonged to 5th class were able to achieve the tasks which are usually assigned to the students of 2nd class level, whereas they felt a lot of difficulty with regard to the syllabus which was at the standards of the 5th class level. If this phobia is removed from the hearts and minds of the 5th class learners then they will not feel learning grammar a hassle and a heavy task and it will also not create any learning problems for them. The Telugu grammar must be taught to the students in a play way method.

The present study is a humble attempt to fill the research gap. Keeping these lacunae in view, the present research study has been undertaken to explore the terrain to understand what competencies that is required for primary school teachers to deal children with Telugu language learning difficulties.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are the attainable goals for the attainment of the research work towards which it is directed. The following are the objectives of the present study.

1. To find out the significant differences, if any, in the competencies required on various aspects of Telugu language learning difficulties in children by the primary school teachers due to variation in their gender.
2. To find out the significant differences, if any, in the competencies required on various aspects of Telugu language learning difficulties in children by the primary school teachers due to variation in their years of experience.

Method used in the Study

The method that has been adopted by the investigator in the present research study is the survey method.

Tool used in the Study

The investigator developed her own tool to assess the possessed and competencies required for teachers to deal children with Telugu language learning difficulties. For measuring Competencies required for Primary School Teachers to deal Children with Telugu Language Learning Difficulties, the researcher developed, validated and employed the following tool in the present study:

“Questionnaire to assess the Competencies Required for Primary School Teachers to deal Children with Telugu Language Learning Difficulties”

Locale and Sample of the Study

The researcher selected 36 primary schools in Ongole division, 35 primary schools in Markapuram division, 35 primary schools in Kandukur division and 32 primary schools in Parchoor division were by using simple random technique considering government, aided and private schools. Thus, the total number of the primary schools selected is 138. Total sample of the study is 400 teachers working in government, aided and private primary schools, at the time of collection of data for the study.

Data Collection

The investigator got permission from the Headmasters of the respective primary schools to collect data from the teachers. Good rapport was established with the primary school teachers before administering the tools. They were explained in detail about the purpose of the study. It was emphasized that the data will be kept confidential and they were requested not to leave any item without rating. The developed questionnaire was administered to the primary school teachers to know their competency to deal with children with Telugu language learning difficulties. No time limit was set to respond to the questionnaire. The investigator collected the filled-in questionnaires personally from the respondents of the study.

Statistical Techniques Used in the Study

The collected data were analyzed by using appropriate statistical techniques such as mean, S.D, t-test and F-test with the help of SPSS package.

Data Analysis and Interpretation:

Objective-1: Effect of 'Gender' on the Competencies required for Primary School Teachers to deal Children with Telugu Language Learning Difficulties

Table-1 represents the mean and standard deviation scores of competencies of men and women teachers working in primary schools to deal children with Telugu language learning difficulties- dimension wise and as a whole along with the calculated t-values.

Table-1: Mean and S.D. of Men and Women Teachers on different Competency Areas of Telugu Language Learning Difficulties and the calculated t-values

Competencies to deal Children with Telugu Language Learning Difficulties	Gender				Calculated t-value
	Men (N= 229)		Women (N= 171)		
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	
Nature of Telugu Language Learning Difficulties	12.09	2.122	11.82	2.065	1.24 @
Causes and Characteristics of Telugu Language Learning Difficulties	19.87	4.078	19.27	3.882	1.47 @
Assessment of Children with Telugu Language Learning Difficulties	15.44	2.984	15.09	2.757	1.19 @
Development and use of Instructional Methods, Materials and Devices for Children with Telugu Language Learning Difficulties	34.45	7.156	33.36	6.561	1.57 @
Providing Guidance and Counseling for Children with Telugu Language Learning Difficulties	15.49	3.118	15.23	2.923	0.85 @
Competencies as a Whole	97.34	18.546	94.78	17.173	1.41 @

Note: @ Not significant at 0.05 level

From table-1, it is clear that the obtained t-values with respect to the competency areas- nature of Telugu language learning difficulties (1.24), causes and characteristics of Telugu language learning difficulties (1.47), assessment of children with Telugu language learning difficulties (1.19), development and use of instructional methods, materials and devices for children with Telugu language learning difficulties (1.57), providing guidance and counseling for children with Telugu language learning difficulties (0.85), and competencies as a whole (1.41) were not significant at 0.05 level. It means, the men and women teachers working in primary schools to deal children with Telugu language learning difficulties did not experience either the competencies as a whole nor its dimensions. Hence, the formulated hypothesis '*there exists a significant difference in the competencies required on various aspects of Telugu language learning difficulties in children by the primary school teachers due to variation in their gender*' is rejected with respect to the above said dimensions. No significant difference was witnessed between the men and women primary school teachers with regard to the identification handling of the Telugu language learning difficulties that are being faced by the students because teachers of both the genders experienced the same kind of training and similarly, the qualifications are also seen. In addition to that, the workload environment, the abilities of

the teachers of both the genders and the workload that is given to both the female and male teachers is the same. As a result, no significant difference was witnessed with regard to the female and male teachers with regard to addressing the Telugu language learning difficulties being faced by the students.

Objective-2: Effect of ‘Years of experience’ on the Competencies required for Primary School Teachers to deal Children with Telugu Language Learning Difficulties

The mean and standard deviation scores of competencies required for teachers working in primary schools to deal children with Telugu language learning difficulties- dimension wise and as a whole based on length of experience i.e. teachers with below 5 years, 6 to 10 years and 11 years and above experience along with the calculated F-values are presented in table-2.

The stated hypothesis ‘*there exists a significant difference in the competencies required on various aspects of Telugu language learning difficulties in children by the primary school teachers due to variation in their years of experience*’ is accepted, as the F-values in the table-2 for nature of Telugu language learning difficulties (58.27), causes and characteristics of Telugu language learning difficulties (59.74), assessment of children with Telugu language learning difficulties (62.31), development and use of instructional methods, materials and devices for children with Telugu language learning difficulties (65.63), providing guidance and counseling for children with Telugu language learning difficulties (67.48), and competencies as a whole (72.58) were significant at 0.01 level. It means, teachers having different years of experience i.e. teachers with below 5 years, 6 to 10 years, and 11 years and above experience were significantly differing in their competencies to deal children with Telugu language learning difficulties.

Table-2: Mean and S.D. of Teachers with different length of experience on different Competency Areas of Telugu Language Learning Difficulties and the Calculated F-values

Competencies to deal Children with Telugu Language Learning Difficulties	Years of Experience						Calculated F-value
	5 years and below (N=100)		6 to 10 years (N=109)		11 years and above (N=191)		
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	
Nature of Telugu Language Learning Difficulties	10.76	2.08	11.29	1.91	13.00	1.68	58.27**
Causes and Characteristics of Telugu Language Learning Difficulties	17.42	3.89	18.14	3.41	21.61	3.37	59.74**
Assessment of Children with Telugu Language Learning Difficulties	13.79	2.53	14.09	2.50	16.76	2.55	62.31**
Development and use of Instructional Methods, Materials and Devices for Children with Telugu Language Learning Difficulties	29.97	6.15	31.42	5.44	37.54	6.25	65.63**
Providing Guidance and Counseling for Children with Telugu Language Learning Difficulties	13.58	2.46	14.28	2.48	16.96	2.79	67.48**
Competencies as a Whole	85.52	16.10	89.22	14.7	105.87	15.50	72.58**

Note: ** Significant at 0.01 level

Further, the mean scores for teachers with 5 years and below, 6 to 10 years, and 11 years and above experience in primary schools indicates that teachers with 11 years and above experience showed higher in the major areas of competencies- competencies as a whole (105.87), nature of Telugu language learning difficulties (13.00), causes and characteristics of Telugu language learning difficulties (21.61), assessment of children with Telugu language learning difficulties (16.76), development and use of instructional methods, materials and devices for children with Telugu language learning difficulties (37.54), and providing guidance and counseling for children with Telugu language learning difficulties (16.96) followed by the teachers with 6 to 10 years of experience (89.22, 11.29, 18.14, 14.09, 31.42 and 14.28 respectively) and teachers with 5 years and below experience (85.52, 10.76, 17.42, 13.79, 29.97 and 13.58 respectively). The mean values clearly indicated that the competencies of teachers with 11 years and above experience to deal children with Telugu language learning difficulties was more in the above said dimensions.

There is significant difference among the primary school teachers with regard to years of experience pertaining to helping of the students to overcome their Telugu language learning difficulties. This is because of the fact that the teachers with more number of years of experience have more competencies and their experience makes it easy for them to understand the difficulties that are being faced by the students with regard to the learning of Telugu language. Similarly, they tend to adapt themselves to the students who are facing the Telugu language learning difficulties and appropriately provide them with the instruction. Using a proper syllable, vocabulary and

phonetics with the children when they teach them lessons, they help the children overcome the difficulties faced by them with regard to the learning of Telugu language.

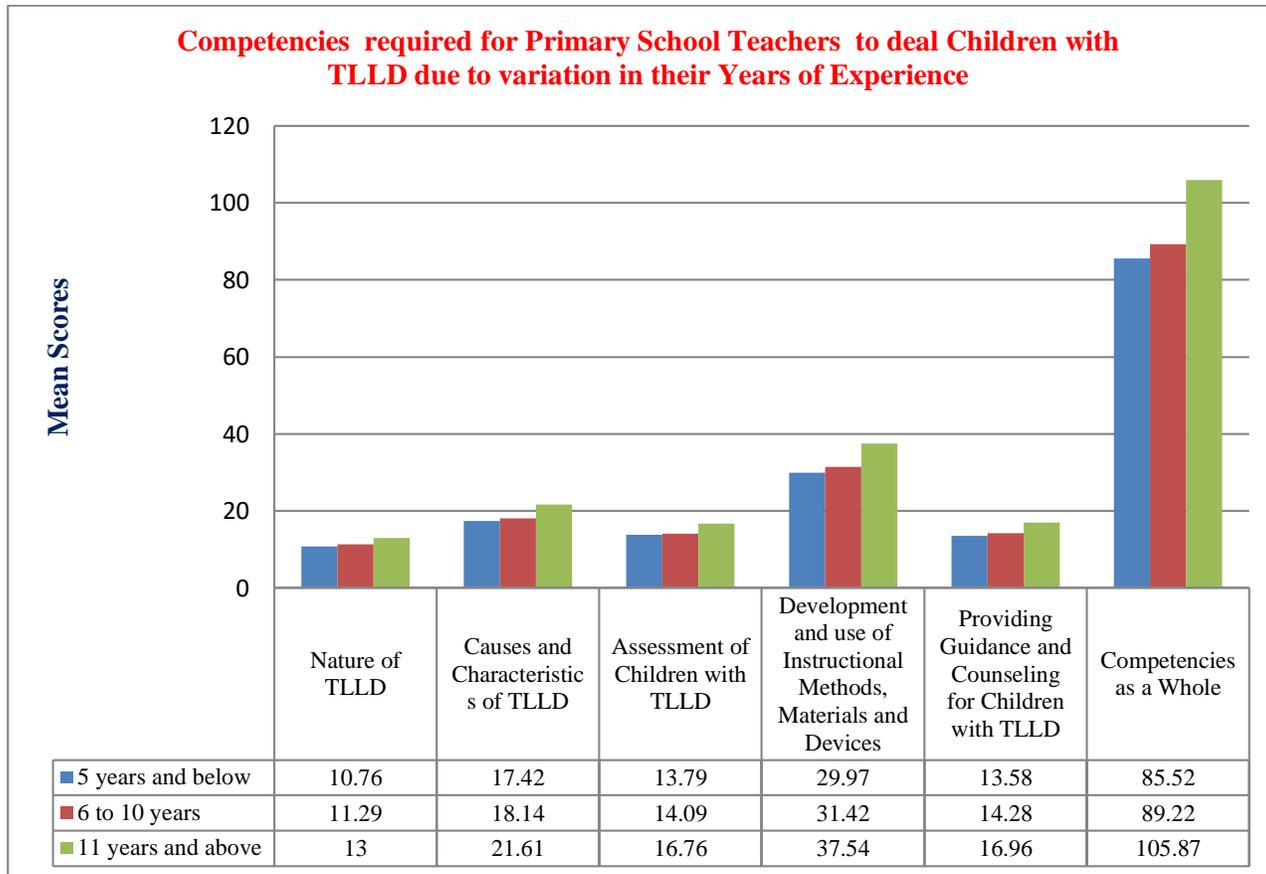


Figure: Mean scores of the areas of competencies required for primary school teachers to deal children with Telugu language learning difficulties due to variation in their Years of Experience.

Primary school teachers experience has also helped them to imbue a lot of examples by the narration of which they can help the students to understand the concept easily without much difficulty and make the students overcome the language difficulties pertaining to Telugu language and they can also involve the students in group activities and co-operative learning. The teachers, because of years of experience, also tend to develop a lot of professional commitment and passion towards the teaching profession and also with regard to providing proper planning and giving different and varied tasks to the students.

The bar diagram representing the significant mean scores in the areas of competencies required for primary school teachers to deal children with Telugu language learning difficulties due to variation in their years of experience is shown in Figure.

Implications of the Study

The research investigator is of the firm belief that the observations and the findings of this research study would certainly culminate in presenting implications which will be of great significance, utility and relevance for the stakeholders of the school education, the government authorities and the educational planners.

- The findings of the study must be given due considerations by the curriculum planners while developing educational programmes and curriculum for the students of primary level. It is but obvious that each and every class will have special children and as result, the curriculum along with the mode of instruction should be devised and suitably developed so as to address the individual differences.
- Appropriate remedial strategies and innovative instructions need to be developed for overcoming Telugu language learning difficulties among the students.
- The main focus of this research study is to help the teachers to develop appropriate and meaningful insights into each area of the Telugu language learning difficulties and as a consequence it will be of great help in developing the required competency among the teachers and as a result, it also leads to diminishing wastage and stagnation considerably in school system.

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