

Teacher Attitudes Toward Bilingual Instruction in Government Schools of Andhra Pradesh

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ABSTRACT

This study delves deeply into the perceptions and dispositions of government school teachers in Andhra Pradesh regarding the implementation of bilingual instruction within their classrooms. Rooted in India's rich linguistic plurality and guided by the transformative vision of the National Education Policy (2020), bilingual education has been posited as a vehicle to bridge comprehension gaps, strengthen cognitive development, and foster inclusive learning environments. The research employs a convergent mixed-methods design, integrating quantitative survey data from 150 teachers across five representative districts with qualitative insights drawn from in-depth interviews of 20 participants. The survey instrument, rigorously piloted and validated (Cronbach's $\alpha = .89$), measured teacher attitudes across four key domains: perceived instructional effectiveness, self-efficacy in bilingual lesson planning, adequacy of bilingual resources, and clarity of policy support. Quantitative analysis revealed a generally favorable outlook, with a mean attitude score of 3.72 out of 5.0, yet highlighted critical areas requiring intervention—most notably, only 54% of teachers reported confidence in designing and delivering bilingual lessons, and less than half (48%) had reliable access to dual-language instructional materials. Thematic analysis of interview transcripts surfaced five core themes: an unwavering commitment to student learning, acute needs for sustained professional development, chronic resource constraints, misalignment between curriculum design and bilingual pedagogy, and a strong desire for collaborative planning networks. Correlational and ANOVA tests further indicated that teaching experience significantly influenced self-efficacy, with veteran educators exhibiting greater confidence than their less-experienced counterparts. These convergent findings underscore the necessity of multi-pronged policy measures: ongoing, practical teacher training workshops; timely provision of bilingual textbooks and teaching aids; curricular revisions to embed bilingual strategies; and the creation of professional learning communities. By foregrounding teacher voices, this study offers actionable recommendations to strengthen bilingual instruction in Andhra Pradesh's government schools, thereby contributing to more equitable and effective multilingual education.

KEY WORDS

Bilingual Instruction, Teacher Attitudes, Andhra Pradesh, Government Schools, Multilingual Education

INTRODUCTION

Andhra Pradesh, a state characterized by its linguistic vibrancy and cultural heterogeneity, stands at the forefront of India's multilingual education landscape. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 reinvigorated the longstanding three-language formula, advocating for mother tongue or regional language instruction in early grades alongside English or Hindi (Ministry of

Education, 2020). This policy pivot underscores an educational paradigm shift: moving from an English-dominant framework toward one that values linguistic diversity as an asset rather than a barrier. In government schools—where the majority of students hail from rural, socioeconomically marginalized backgrounds—the effective integration of bilingual pedagogy promises to bolster conceptual understanding, enhance cognitive flexibility, and promote equitable access to learning resources (Rao, 2018).

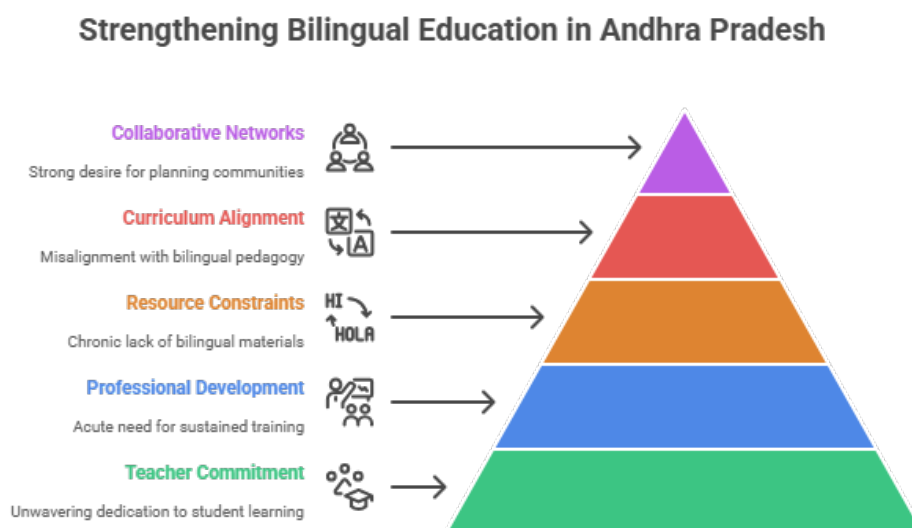


Figure-1.Strengthening Bilingual Education in Andhra Pradesh

Teachers, as the principal architects of classroom experience, wield considerable influence over how policies translate into practice. Their beliefs, attitudes, and self-perceived competencies shape pedagogical choices, resource utilization, and ultimately, student outcomes (García & Wei, 2014; Baker, 2011). While prior research in other Indian states has offered glimpses into educator dispositions toward bilingual methodologies, there exists a conspicuous gap in empirical evidence regarding government school contexts in Andhra Pradesh. Ramanathan and Mohan (2010) noted hesitant teacher engagement due to limited pedagogical support, whereas Reddy (2019) highlighted concerns around English proficiency inhibiting bilingual lesson execution. Yet these studies were largely exploratory, lacking the breadth and methodological rigor needed to inform large-scale policy and program design.

This study addresses these lacunae through a convergent mixed-methods approach, capturing both the breadth of survey-based attitude measures and the depth of qualitative interview narratives. Specifically, it investigates: (1) the overall attitude profile of government school teachers toward bilingual instruction; (2) the influence of demographic variables—such as years of experience, urban versus rural posting, and teaching load—on these attitudes; and (3) the lived challenges and enabling factors shaping bilingual pedagogical practices. By situating teacher attitudes within the broader policy ecosystem and classroom realities of Andhra Pradesh, the research aims to generate nuanced insights for stakeholders—ranging from policymakers and teacher educators to school administrators and curriculum developers. Ultimately, the study aspires to chart a pragmatic roadmap for optimizing bilingual education, thereby enhancing learning equity and academic achievement across the state's diverse student population.

Bilingual Education in Andhra Pradesh

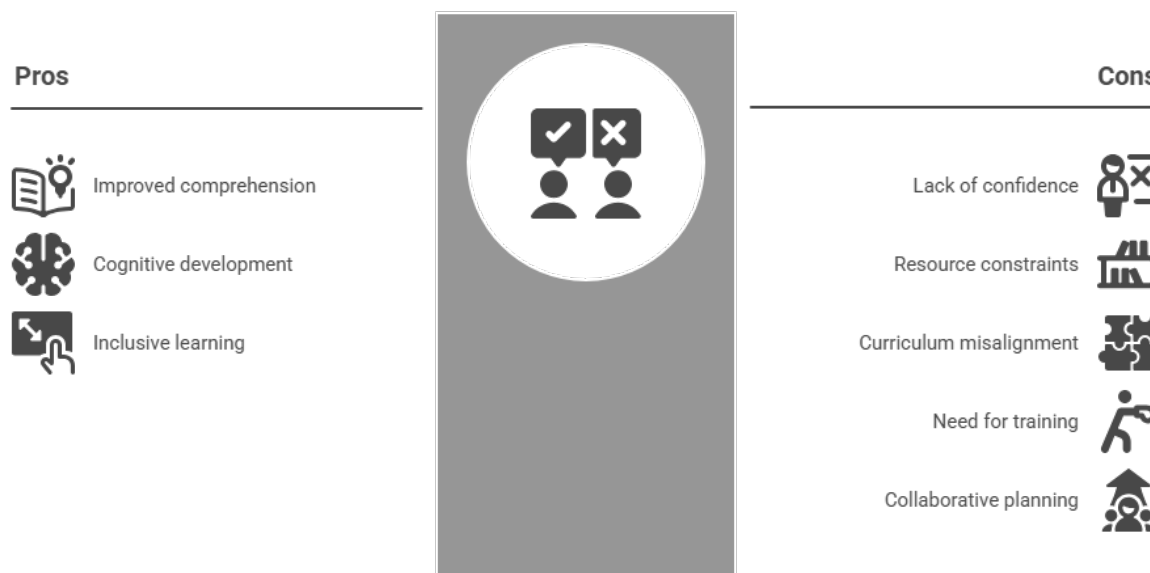


Figure-2. Bilingual Education in Andhra Pradesh

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Underpinnings

Bilingual education draws its conceptual foundations from sociocultural and cognitive theories that emphasize the interdependence of language, thought, and social context. Vygotsky's (1978) notion of mediated social activity positions language learning as a dialogic process, wherein scaffolding in the mother tongue facilitates higher cognitive functions. Cummins's Common Underlying Proficiency model (2000) further articulates that cognitive and academic skills developed in one language can transfer to another, supporting the rationale for mother tongue support in second language acquisition. Complementing this, Krashen's Input Hypothesis (1982) asserts that language learners thrive when exposed to comprehensible input slightly above their current proficiency level, implying that learners' home language can serve as a scaffold for English or Hindi acquisition.

International Empirical Evidence

Global studies underscore the pivotal role of teacher attitudes in bilingual program efficacy. Research in Canadian immersion contexts revealed that teachers who endorse bilingualism tend to employ more interactive, student-centered methodologies and demonstrate greater flexibility in pedagogical strategies (Lapkin, Hart, & Swain, 1991). In contrast, educators lacking conviction often adhere to monolingual lesson structures, diluting the potential benefits of bilingual instruction (William & Burden, 1997). Beyond North America, studies in European and Asian contexts similarly highlight that sustained professional development and administrative backing are key to fostering positive teacher attitudes and preventing program attrition (Garcia, 2009; Cenoz & Genesee, 1998).

Bilingual Education in India

India's three-language policy has undergone multiple iterations since its inception, reflecting tensions between regional linguistic pride and the aspirational value of English proficiency (Annamalai, 2005). Empirical investigations in Karnataka and Kerala revealed that while teachers generally recognized the cognitive and cultural merits of bilingual instruction, they grappled with logistical challenges: large class sizes, scarce instructional materials, and insufficient training on bilingual methodologies (Thomas & Collier, 2002; Menon, 2015). In Odisha, Behera (2016) found that teacher engagement in continuous professional learning communities correlated strongly with program sustainability and improved self-efficacy.

Contextualizing Andhra Pradesh

Andhra Pradesh's Directorate of School Education formally endorsed mother tongue instruction up to grade five in 2017, yet ground-level adoption has been uneven (Government of Andhra Pradesh, 2017). Ramanathan and Mohan (2010) observed that while teachers intellectually supported bilingual principles, they reported low confidence in adapting existing curricular materials. Reddy's (2019) survey of rural Telugu-medium educators revealed anxiety around English language skills, which translated into tentative bilingual practices. Moreover, administrative directives often lacked specificity, leaving teachers uncertain about lesson design, assessment criteria, and student grouping strategies.

Identified Research Gaps

Despite these contributions, a comprehensive, large-scale examination of teacher attitudes in Andhra Pradesh's government schools remains absent. Questions linger regarding how attitudes vary by demographic factors, how qualitative experiences nuance quantitative trends, and what systemic interventions might optimally bolster teacher capacity. By integrating robust survey metrics with rich interview narratives, the present study seeks to fill these gaps, providing an empirically grounded foundation for policy and practice enhancements in bilingual education across Andhra Pradesh.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design and Rationale

This investigation adopted a convergent mixed-methods framework (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011), enabling simultaneous collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data, followed by integrative interpretation. Such a design ensures methodological triangulation, enhancing validity by cross-verifying findings across data types.

Sampling Strategy

Using a stratified random sampling technique, five districts—Visakhapatnam, Vijayawada, Guntur, Kadapa, and Anantapur—were selected to reflect Andhra Pradesh's geographic diversity and socio-educational contexts. From each district, six government primary schools were randomly chosen (totaling 30 schools). Within each school, five teachers meeting the inclusion criteria (minimum two years of grade 1–5 teaching experience; current engagement in bilingual instruction initiatives) were randomly invited to participate, yielding a total survey sample of 150 teachers.

Data Collection Instruments

Quantitative Survey

The survey comprised 25 Likert-scale items, evenly distributed across four domains: perceived instructional effectiveness of bilingual methods, self-efficacy in bilingual lesson design, perceived adequacy of bilingual teaching resources, and clarity/supportiveness of policy directives. Items were adapted from validated scales (Baker, 2011; Pilgreen & Kuehn, 2017) and translated into Telugu to enhance comprehension. A pilot test with 30 teachers outside the main sample produced strong internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha = .89$) and satisfactory item-total correlations (ranging .42–.68).

Qualitative Interviews

To capture experiential depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 20 teachers (four per district), selected purposively based on variation in survey attitude scores (high, moderate, low). The interview guide probed lived experiences of implementing bilingual approaches, challenges faced, perceptions of training adequacy, resource management strategies, and aspirational supports. Interviews lasted 45–60 minutes, were audio-recorded with consent, then transcribed verbatim and translated into English for analysis.

Data Collection Procedure

Following approvals from the Andhra Pradesh Department of School Education and school authorities, data were gathered between January and March 2022. Surveys were administered in person by trained research assistants who provided clarifications in Telugu as needed. Interviews were scheduled at teachers' convenience, typically in school meeting rooms or quiet staff lounges, ensuring confidentiality and comfort.

Data Analysis

Quantitative Analysis

Survey data were entered into SPSS v26. Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, frequency distributions) summarized overall attitude profiles. Inferential analyses included one-way ANOVAs and independent-samples t-tests to examine differences in attitude dimensions by demographic variables (teaching experience: <5 years, 5–10 years, >10 years; posting: rural vs. urban; gender). Effect sizes (η^2 , Cohen's d) were calculated to gauge practical significance.

Qualitative Analysis

Interview transcripts underwent thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase process: (1) familiarization with data through repeated reading; (2) systematic coding using NVivo; (3) collating codes into candidate themes; (4) reviewing and refining themes against coded extracts and entire data set; (5) defining and naming final themes with clear descriptions; and (6) producing a thematic report illustrating each theme with rich participant quotes.

Integration and Rigor

Quantitative and qualitative strands were integrated during interpretation, using a matrix approach to align statistical trends with thematic narratives. Rigor was ensured through member checking (participants reviewed interview summaries), peer debriefing among research team members, and maintenance of an audit trail documenting analytical decisions. Ethical considerations included informed consent, voluntary participation, anonymization of data, and secure storage of digital records.

RESULTS

Quantitative Findings

Overall Attitude Profile

Teachers exhibited a moderately positive disposition toward bilingual instruction, with an aggregate mean attitude score of 3.72 (SD = 0.65) on a 5-point scale. Domain-specific results showed:

- **Perceived Effectiveness** (8 items): $M = 4.01$, $SD = 0.58$; 68% agreed that bilingual methods enhance student comprehension and retention.
- **Self-Efficacy** (6 items): $M = 3.45$, $SD = 0.71$; only 54% felt confident designing and implementing bilingual lessons without significant effort.
- **Resource Adequacy** (6 items): $M = 3.22$, $SD = 0.80$; 48% reported consistent availability of dual-language textbooks, worksheets, and audiovisual aids.
- **Policy Support** (5 items): $M = 3.81$, $SD = 0.66$; 61% perceived policy directives as favorable yet lacking operational clarity.

Demographic Variations

One-way ANOVA revealed a significant effect of teaching experience on self-efficacy scores, $F(2,147) = 5.12$, $p = .007$, $\eta^2 = .065$: educators with over 10 years of experience ($M = 3.68$, $SD = 0.66$) reported higher confidence than those with less than five years ($M = 3.32$, $SD = 0.74$; $p = .004$). No statistically significant differences emerged between urban and rural postings in overall attitude scores ($t(148) = 1.21$, $p = .23$) or among gender groups.

Qualitative Themes

Five interrelated themes crystallized from interview analysis:

1. Unwavering Commitment to Student Learning

Teachers uniformly articulated that mother tongue support lays a critical cognitive foundation. One participant shared, "When I introduce concepts in Telugu first, students engage more readily and can later link those concepts to English terminology." This sentiment reflects a deep pedagogical belief in cross-linguistic scaffolding.

2. Urgent Need for Sustained, Practical Training

While occasional workshops had been offered, teachers yearned for regular, hands-on training featuring model bilingual

lesson demonstrations and collaborative microteaching sessions. A seasoned educator lamented, “We attend one-day seminars, but I need ongoing mentoring to refine my bilingual lesson plans effectively.”

3. **Chronic Resource Constraints**

Inconsistent supply chains for bilingual materials emerged as a persistent barrier. Participants recounted receiving delayed textbook shipments or insufficient copies, compelling them to photocopy or improvise worksheets from scratch, significantly increasing their workload.

4. **Curricular Misalignment and Autonomy Dilemmas**

Educators expressed frustration that standardized syllabi did not accommodate bilingual strategies, forcing them into ad-hoc content adaptation. A teacher noted, “The state curriculum lists objectives in English only; aligning Telugu explanations requires extra time and creativity, which often conflicts with exam preparation schedules.”

5. **Desire for Professional Learning Communities**

A recurrent aspiration was the formation of district-level forums—either virtual or in-person—where teachers could exchange bilingual resources, lesson templates, and experiential insights. “If we had an online group moderated by experts, I could learn from colleagues’ successes and pitfalls,” one participant suggested.

Integrated Insights

The convergence of quantitative trends (moderate overall attitudes, experience-linked self-efficacy) with qualitative narratives (training deficits, resource shortages, curricular misalignments, and collaborative aspirations) underscores a multi-dimensional challenge. While teachers value bilingual instruction conceptually, systemic supports are insufficient to translate positive attitudes into sustained classroom practice.

CONCLUSION

This comprehensive investigation into teacher attitudes toward bilingual instruction in Andhra Pradesh’s government schools illuminates both the promise and the constraints of multilingual pedagogies. Quantitative findings reveal a generally favorable attitude profile ($M = 3.72$), tempered by moderate self-efficacy and resource adequacy scores. Crucially, experienced educators demonstrate higher confidence, suggesting that peer mentorship could amplify capacity building. Qualitative themes further elucidate the lived realities: teachers’ steadfast commitment to student learning, episodic professional development opportunities, logistical impediments in resource provision, curricular misalignment with bilingual methodologies, and an urgent desire for collaborative professional learning communities.

To actualize the pedagogical benefits of bilingual education, policy and implementation strategies must adopt a systems perspective. First, teacher education programs should offer ongoing, practice-oriented workshops, microteaching labs, and in-class coaching, thereby reinforcing theoretical constructs with tangible pedagogical skills. Second, the Directorate of School Education should streamline the production and distribution of bilingual instructional materials—textbooks, worksheets, multimedia aids—ensuring timely and equitable access across districts. Third, curricular frameworks must be revised to embed bilingual objectives explicitly, providing lesson plan templates and assessment rubrics in both languages. Fourth, establishing district- and state-level professional learning communities—leveraging digital platforms and periodic face-to-face convenings—will foster resource sharing and

collective problem solving. Fifth, mentorship pairings between veteran and novice teachers can accelerate the diffusion of effective bilingual teaching practices.

By adopting these multi-pronged interventions, Andhra Pradesh can catalyze a shift from policy aspiration to classroom reality, nurturing an educational ecosystem where bilingual instruction thrives, cognitive benefits are maximized, and all learners—regardless of linguistic background—experience a more accessible and empowering educational journey.

SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

Scope:

This study's breadth encompasses five strategically selected districts—Visakhapatnam, Vijayawada, Guntur, Kadapa, and Anantapur—representing diverse socio-geographic and linguistic contexts within Andhra Pradesh. The convergent mixed-methods design affords both quantitative generalizability across 150 teachers and qualitative depth from 20 in-depth interviews, facilitating a holistic understanding of teacher attitudes and classroom realities. Findings are directly relevant to policymakers in the Andhra Pradesh Department of School Education, teacher educators designing professional development curricula, and school administrators tasked with resource allocation and instructional oversight.

Limitations:

1. **Sectoral Focus:** The research exclusively targeted government primary schools; attitudes in private, aided, and secondary schools remain unexplored. Consequently, findings may not generalize beyond the government sector or higher grade levels.
2. **Self-Report Measures:** Both survey responses and interview narratives are subject to social desirability bias and retrospective recall limitations, potentially inflating positive attitudinal responses or underreporting challenges.
3. **Temporal Snapshot:** Data collection occurred over a discrete three-month window (January–March 2022). As policy directives and resource ecosystems evolve, teacher attitudes and experiences may shift, necessitating longitudinal follow-up studies.
4. **Absence of Classroom Observations:** The study did not systematically observe classroom practices or measure student learning outcomes, limiting the ability to directly correlate teacher attitudes with instructional fidelity or academic performance.
5. **Translation Nuances:** Although the survey was translated into Telugu and interviews conducted bilingually, subtle semantic variations may have influenced item interpretation and response nuance, introducing potential measurement error.
6. **Digital Divide Considerations:** Recommendations for online professional learning communities may be constrained by variable internet connectivity and digital literacy among rural teachers, requiring complementary offline mechanisms.

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