

Association between Attitude towards Mizo Subject and Mizo language Competency among Higher Secondary School Students in Mizoram.

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Abstract

The present study examined the relationship between attitude towards the Mizo subject and Mizo language competency among higher secondary school students in Mizoram. A descriptive survey design was employed, and data were collected from 1,403 students using the Attitude towards Mizo Subject Scale and Mizo Language Competency Test developed and standardized by the investigator. Pearson's product moment correlation, simple linear regression, and hierarchical multiple regression were used for data analysis. The findings revealed a significant positive relationship between attitude towards the Mizo subject and Mizo language competency. Attitude was also found to significantly predict Mizo language competency even after accounting for selected demographic and educational variables. The study highlights the importance of fostering positive attitudes towards the Mizo subject for promoting Mizo language learning and preservation.

Keywords: Attitude towards Mizo subject, Mizo language competency, mother tongue, Higher Secondary students, Mizoram.

Introduction:

Language is a fundamental tool for communication, learning, and social interaction. It enables individuals to express ideas, exchange knowledge, and preserve cultural values across generations, making it essential for both individual development and societal progress. Tomasello (2008) describes language as a uniquely human capacity that evolved to facilitate cooperation and shared understanding, while Vygotsky (1986) emphasizes its central role in cognitive development and learning. Besides serving as a means of communication, language shapes personal identity, promotes social cohesion, preserves cultural heritage, and facilitates the transmission of knowledge from one generation to the next. Therefore, the development of language competency is essential not only for academic success but also for the preservation and advancement of society.

The mother tongue is the first language acquired by an individual and serves as the primary medium through which children begin to understand and interact with the world around them (UNESCO, 2003). Beyond being a means of communication, the mother tongue plays an important role in children's

cognitive, social, and emotional development. It enables them to express their thoughts and emotions, develop reasoning and problem-solving abilities, and build meaningful relationships within their family and community. As Vygotsky (1986) explained, the first language also forms the basis of inner speech, which plays an important role in thinking and learning. A strong foundation in the mother tongue supports literacy development and facilitates the learning of additional languages. Recognising its educational importance, the National Education Policy (2020) recommends the use of the mother tongue or regional language as the medium of instruction during the early years of schooling.

Mizo is the mother tongue of the Mizo people and the official language of Mizoram under the Mizoram Official Language Act (1975). Although it serves as the official language of the state, it is not included in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India. Nevertheless, the Mizo language remains central to the cultural identity and linguistic heritage of the Mizo people and continues to play an important role in education, communication, and the preservation of Mizo culture. Therefore, developing competency in the Mizo language is important not only for academic achievement but also for preserving the linguistic and cultural heritage of Mizoram.

Attitude is a psychological tendency that influences how individuals respond to a particular object, idea, or situation. In education, students' attitudes towards a subject play an important role in shaping their motivation, interest, engagement, and learning outcomes. Students with positive attitudes are more likely to participate actively in classroom activities, persist in learning tasks, and achieve better academic performance, whereas negative attitudes may lead to disinterest, avoidance, and lower achievement (Ormrod, 2017). In language education, the role of attitude becomes even more important because language learning requires continuous practice, communication, and willingness to engage with the language. Gardner (1985) emphasised that positive attitudes towards language learning promote motivation and contribute to greater language achievement.

In the context of Mizo language education, attitude assumes even greater importance because Mizo is not only a school subject but also the mother tongue and a vital part of the cultural identity of the Mizo people. The Mizo language carries the history, traditions, values, and cultural heritage of the community. Therefore, students' attitudes towards the Mizo subject may influence not only their language learning but also the preservation and continued use of the language. As Fishman (1991) noted, maintaining a mother tongue is closely associated with cultural continuity and community identity. In the present context, fostering positive attitudes towards the Mizo subject is important for promoting both Mizo language competency and the preservation of the linguistic and cultural heritage of Mizoram.

Literature Review:

Masgoret and Gardner (2003) conducted a meta-analysis to examine the relationship between attitudes, motivation, and second language achievement based on Gardner's socio-educational model. The study analysed 75 independent samples involving 10,489 participants. The findings revealed a significant positive relationship between attitudes, motivation, and second language achievement, indicating that affective factors play an important role in language learning and achievement.

In a study conducted in Hungary, Habók and Magyar (2018) examined the relationship between language learning strategies, foreign language attitudes, language proficiency, and school achievement among lower secondary school students. The study was conducted on 868 students from Years 5 and 8 using an adapted version of the Strategies Inventory for Language Learning questionnaire. The findings revealed that students who demonstrated more positive attitudes towards foreign language learning also achieved higher

levels of language proficiency and better school achievement. The study further indicated that language learning strategies were positively associated with students' attitudes towards language learning, and these positive attitudes were related to higher language proficiency and better school achievement. The authors concluded that fostering positive attitudes and effective language learning strategies can contribute to improved language proficiency and academic achievement.

Liu and Dong (2023) investigated the relative contributions of language learning motivation and test perceptions to English language learning and achievement among Chinese high school students. The study was conducted on 3,105 students and employed Pearson correlation and multiple regression analyses to examine the influence of different motivational factors and test perceptions on students' language learning and achievement. The findings revealed that integrative and development motivation positively predicted students' English language achievement, while the influence of perceived test validity became more prominent among students in higher grades. The study concluded that positive motivational factors play an important role in promoting language learning and achievement, although their influence may vary according to learners' educational level and learning context.

In Northeast India, Varah and Pawar (2023) examined the attitudes of students, teachers, parents, and community members towards mother tongue education in Manipur. The study examined stakeholders' perceptions of the importance of mother tongue education and its role in promoting language learning and preserving linguistic and cultural identity. The findings revealed that the participants generally held positive attitudes towards mother tongue education and recognised its importance in improving students' learning experiences while strengthening their linguistic and cultural heritage. The study concluded that positive attitudes towards mother tongue education play an important role in supporting the learning and preservation of indigenous languages.

Kumar and Prem Kumar (2023) examined the attitudes of college students towards their mother tongue, Dogri, in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir. The study employed a survey research design and collected data from 50 college students using a five-point Likert scale questionnaire. The findings revealed that the respondents generally exhibited positive attitudes towards the Dogri language, although some students expressed neutral views on certain aspects. The study concluded that students recognised the importance of their mother tongue and maintained favourable attitudes towards its use and preservation, highlighting the need to promote indigenous languages through education.

Alsoudi et al. (2024) examined the attitudes of non-native secondary school students towards learning English as a foreign language in the Sultanate of Oman. The study was conducted on 576 high school students using the Attitudes Towards English Scale and employed correlation and simple linear regression analyses to examine the relationship between students' attitudes and their academic achievement in English. The findings revealed that students generally exhibited mildly positive attitudes towards learning English. More importantly, students' attitudes showed a strong positive correlation with academic achievement and significantly predicted English achievement, accounting for 53% of the variance. The study concluded that fostering positive attitudes towards language learning can contribute to improved language proficiency and academic achievement.

Nyamekye (2024) investigated the factors influencing students' intentions to learn indigenous languages in higher education in Ghana. The study was conducted on 180 first year undergraduate students using an extended Theory of Planned Behavior and analysed the data through Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM). The findings revealed that students' attitudes, perceived behavioural control, subjective norms, and linguistic insecurity significantly influenced their behavioural intentions

towards indigenous language learning. The study concluded that fostering positive attitudes towards indigenous languages is essential for promoting students' willingness to learn and sustain indigenous language education.

Rationale of the study:

Although previous studies have reported a positive relationship between attitude and language learning, most of them have focused on second or foreign language learning. Very few studies have examined the relationship between attitude towards a mother tongue subject and language competency. In the context of Mizoram, studies examining the relationship between attitude towards the Mizo subject and Mizo language competency among higher secondary school students are scarce. Moreover, little is known about whether this relationship remains significant after accounting for selected demographic and educational variables. Therefore, the present study was undertaken to examine the association between attitude towards the Mizo subject and Mizo language competency and to determine the extent to which attitude predicts Mizo language competency after accounting for selected demographic and educational variables.

Statement of the problems:

The present study investigates “*Association between Attitude towards Mizo Subject and Mizo language Competency among Higher Secondary School Students in Mizoram.*”

Objectives of the study:

1. To determine whether there is a significant association between Attitude towards Mizo Subject and Mizo language competency among higher secondary school students in Mizoram.
2. To determine the extent to which attitude towards the Mizo Subject predicts Mizo language competency.
3. To determine whether the association between attitude towards Mizo Subject and Mizo language competency remains significant after accounting for selected demographic and educational variables.

Research Questions:

1. Is there a significant association between attitude towards Mizo Subject and Mizo language competency among higher secondary school students in Mizoram?
2. To what extent is attitude towards Mizo Subject associated with Mizo language competency among higher secondary school students in Mizoram?
3. Does the association between attitude towards Mizo Subject and Mizo language competency remain significant after accounting for selected demographic and educational variables?

Null Hypothesis:

H₀₁: There is no significant association between Attitude towards Mizo Subject and Mizo language competency among Higher Secondary School students in Mizoram.

H₀₂: Attitude towards Mizo Subject does not significantly predict Mizo language competency among higher secondary school students in Mizoram.

H₀₃: Attitude towards Mizo Subject does not significantly predict Mizo language competency after accounting for selected demographic and educational variables among higher secondary school students in Mizoram.

Population and Sample:

The population of the study comprised of all higher secondary school students in Mizoram during the academic year 2022–2023. According to records from the School Education Department, the total student population was 25,364, comprising 11,874 male and 13,490 female students.

A stratified multistage random sampling technique was employed to ensure the representativeness of the sample. Students were selected from the five zones of Mizoram, namely North, South, East, West, and Central, to ensure adequate geographical representation. The final sample consisted of 1,403 students, including 674 male and 729 female students drawn from five districts of Mizoram.

Tools Employed:

Data were collected using the Students' Attitude towards Mizo Subject Scale and Students' Mizo Language Competency Test, both developed and standardized by the investigator. The attitude scale consisted of 24 Likert-type items, while the competency test consisted of 42 items covering different components of Mizo language competency. The instruments demonstrated satisfactory reliability and validity for use among higher secondary school students in Mizoram.

The data were analysed using appropriate statistical techniques, including descriptive statistics, the Pearson product moment correlation coefficient, simple linear regression, and hierarchical multiple regression analysis.

Findings of the study:

The quantitative findings of the present study were analysed and interpreted in accordance with the objectives as follows:

Objective 1: To determine whether there is a significant association between Attitude towards Mizo Subject and Mizo language competency among higher secondary school students in Mizoram.

To determine whether there is a significant association between attitude towards the Mizo subject and Mizo language competency among higher secondary school students in Mizoram, the Students' Attitude towards Mizo Subject Scale, consisting of 24 items, and the Students' Mizo Language Competency Test, consisting of 42 items, were administered to 1,403 selected students from the five zones of Mizoram. The mean, Standard deviation, and the minimum and maximum scores on both variables are presented in Table-1

Table-1
Distribution of scores for the study variables

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Maximum	Minimum
Attitude towards Mizo Subject	1403	87.48	10.47	116	31
Mizo Language Competency	1403	23.41	4.38	38	9

After the data were collected and compiled, the Pearson product moment correlation coefficient was computed to examine the association between students' attitude towards the Mizo subject and their Mizo language competency. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table-2

Pearson Product Moment Correlation between Attitude towards Mizo Subject and Mizo Language Competency

Variables	N	Pearson's r	P
Attitude towards Mizo Subject and Mizo Language Competency	1403	.196	<.001

As shown in Table 2, the Pearson correlation coefficient ($r = .196$) indicates a positive association between Attitude towards Mizo subject and Mizo language competency among higher secondary school students in Mizoram. The association was statistically significant ($p < .001$), indicating that students with more positive attitudes towards the Mizo subject tended to demonstrate higher levels of Mizo language competency.

Based on the findings of Objective 1, the null hypothesis (H_{01}), which stated, "There is no significant association between attitude towards the Mizo subject and Mizo language competency among higher secondary school students in Mizoram," was rejected. Therefore, it was concluded that a statistically significant positive association exists between attitude towards the Mizo subject and Mizo language competency among higher secondary school students in Mizoram.

Objective 2: To determine the extent to which attitude towards the Mizo Subject predicts Mizo language competency.

To determine the extent to which attitude towards the Mizo subject predicts Mizo language competency among higher secondary school students in Mizoram, a simple linear regression analysis was conducted. The multiple correlation coefficient (R) was computed to determine the relationship between the observed and predicted values of Mizo language competency, while the coefficient of determination (R^2) was used to determine the extent to which attitude towards the Mizo subject explained the variance in Mizo language competency. The F statistic was used to determine whether the regression model was statistically significant. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table-3

Model Summary of the Simple Linear Regression Predicting Mizo Language Competency from Attitude towards the Mizo Subject

R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	F	P
.196	.038	.038	56.08	<.001

As evident in Table 3, the multiple correlation coefficient ($R = .196$) indicates a positive relationship between attitude towards the Mizo subject and Mizo language competency. The calculated R^2 value of .038 indicates that attitude towards the Mizo subject accounted for 3.8% of the variance in Mizo language competency among higher secondary school students in Mizoram. The F value of 56.08 was found to be statistically significant ($p < .001$), indicating that the regression model significantly predicts Mizo language competency from attitude towards the Mizo subject. The regression coefficients for the model are presented in Table 4.

Table-4

Regression Coefficients for the Simple Linear Regression Predicting Mizo Language Competency from Attitude towards the Mizo Subject

Predictor	B	SE	t	P
Constant	16.228	0.966	16.797	< .001
Attitude	0.082	0.011	7.489	< .001

As shown in Table 4, the regression coefficient for attitude towards the Mizo subject was found to be positive and statistically significant ($B = 0.082$, $t = 7.489$, $p < .001$). This indicates that attitude towards the Mizo subject is a significant predictor of Mizo language competency among higher secondary school students in Mizoram. The regression coefficient further indicates that for every one unit increase in the attitude score, the Mizo language competency score is expected to increase by 0.082 units. The regression equation for predicting Mizo language competency is:

$$\text{Mizo Language Competency} = 16.228 + 0.082 (\text{Attitude towards Mizo Subject})$$

Based on the findings of Objective 2, the null hypothesis (H^0), which stated, “Attitude towards Mizo Subject does not significantly predict Mizo language competency among higher secondary school students in Mizoram.” was rejected. Therefore, it was concluded that Attitude towards Mizo subject significantly predicts Mizo language competency, accounting for 3.8% of the variance in Mizo language competency among higher secondary school students in Mizoram.

Objective-3: To determine whether the association between attitude towards Mizo Subject and Mizo language competency remains significant after accounting for selected demographic and educational variables.

To determine whether the association between Attitude towards Mizo subject and Mizo language competency remains significant after accounting for selected demographic and educational variables, a hierarchical multiple regression analysis was conducted. In Model 1, the selected demographic and educational variables, namely gender, locale, school management, stream of study, and medium of instruction at the elementary level, were entered into the regression model. In Model 2, attitude towards the Mizo subject was added to determine whether it remained a significant predictor of Mizo language competency after controlling for these variables. The model statistics are presented in Table 5.

Table- 5

Hierarchical Multiple Regression Predicting Mizo Language Competency from Demographic Variables and Attitude towards Mizo Subject

Predictor	Model 1 B	t	P	Model 2 B	t	P
Gender (Female vs Male)	-0.034	-0.15	.883	-0.094	-0.41	.680
Locale (Urban vs Rural)	0.013	0.05	.961	0.134	0.52	.600
School Management (Private vs Government)	-0.376	-1.43	.152	-0.468	-1.81	.070
Stream (Science vs Commerce)	-0.954	-2.54	.011*	-0.896	-2.43	.015*
Stream (Arts vs Commerce)	0.447	1.42	.156	0.374	1.21	.227

Medium of Instruction at Elementary level (English vs Mizo)	-0.964	-3.82	<.001**	-0.933	-3.77	<.001**
Attitude Score				0.079	7.27	<.001**

Note. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .001$.

As shown in Table 5, after controlling for the selected demographic and educational variables, attitude towards the Mizo subject remained a positive and statistically significant predictor of Mizo language competency ($B = 0.079$, $t = 7.27$, $p < .001$). Among the demographic and educational variables, stream of study (Science versus Commerce) ($B = -0.896$, $t = -2.43$, $p = .015$) and medium of instruction at the elementary level (English versus Mizo) ($B = -0.933$, $t = -3.77$, $p < .001$) were also found to be statistically significant predictors of Mizo language competency. However, gender, locale, school management, and stream of study (Arts versus Commerce) did not significantly predict Mizo language competency after controlling for the other variables. The regression coefficients for both models are presented in Table 6.

Table- 6
Regression Coefficients of the Hierarchical Multiple Regression Predicting Mizo Language Competency

Model	R ²	Adjusted R ²	ΔR ²	F	P
Model 1	.026	.022	—	6.26	<.001
Model 2	.062	.057	.036	13.12	<.001

As evident in Table 6, Model 1 accounted for 2.6% of the variance in Mizo language competency ($R^2 = .026$), and the regression model was statistically significant ($F = 6.26$, $p < .001$). After attitude towards the Mizo subject was entered into Model 2, the explained variance increased to 6.2% ($R^2 = .062$). The change in R^2 of .036 indicates that attitude towards the Mizo subject accounted for an additional 3.6% of the variance in Mizo language competency after controlling for the selected demographic and educational variables. The overall regression model remained statistically significant ($F = 13.12$, $p < .001$).

Based on the findings of Objective 3, the null hypothesis (H_0^3), which stated, “Attitude towards Mizo Subject does not significantly predict Mizo language competency after accounting for selected demographic and educational variables among higher secondary school students in Mizoram.” was rejected. Hence, it can be concluded that Attitude towards Mizo subject does significantly predict Mizo language competency after accounting for selected demographic and educational variables such as, gender, locale, school management, and stream of study (Arts vs Commerce, Science vs commerce), and medium of instruction at elementary level. Attitude towards the Mizo subject accounted for an additional 3.6% of the variance in Mizo language competency after controlling for the selected demographic and educational variables.

Discussion and Conclusion:

The present study found a significant positive association between attitude towards the Mizo subject and Mizo language competency among higher secondary school students in Mizoram. This finding is in agreement with Masgoret and Gardner (2003), who reported a significant positive relationship between attitudes, motivation, and second language achievement. Similarly, Gardner (1985) emphasised that

positive attitudes towards language learning contribute to greater motivation and better language achievement. The findings are also consistent with those of Habók and Magyar (2018), who found that students with more positive attitudes towards foreign language learning demonstrated higher levels of language proficiency and better school achievement. Likewise, Alsoudi et al. (2024) reported that students' attitudes towards learning English were positively associated with their academic achievement. The findings of the present study indicate that students with more positive attitudes towards the Mizo subject are more likely to demonstrate better Mizo language competency. Therefore, fostering positive attitudes towards the Mizo subject may help improve students' Mizo language competency.

The study also revealed that attitude towards the Mizo subject significantly predicted Mizo language competency among higher secondary school students in Mizoram. This finding is consistent with the studies conducted by Alsoudi et al. (2024) and Liu and Dong (2023), who also reported that positive attitudes and motivational factors significantly predicted students' language achievement. However, in the present study, attitude accounted for only 3.8% of the variance in Mizo language competency. This suggests that although attitude is a significant predictor, it is only one of the many factors influencing students' Mizo language competency. Other factors, such as students' learning motivation, language aptitude, home language environment, classroom instruction, and opportunities to use the language, may also contribute to their competency. Therefore, improving students' attitudes towards the Mizo subject alone may not be sufficient to substantially improve their language competency unless these other factors are also addressed.

The findings of the present study further revealed that attitude towards the Mizo subject remained a significant predictor of Mizo language competency even after accounting for selected demographic and educational variables. This indicates that the relationship between attitude and Mizo language competency remains significant regardless of students' gender, locale, school management, stream of study, and medium of instruction at the elementary level. This finding supports Gardner's (1985) view that positive attitudes play an important role in language learning and achievement. It is also in agreement with Varah and Pawar (2023), who highlighted the importance of positive attitudes towards mother tongue education in promoting indigenous language learning and preservation. Similarly, Nyamekye (2024) found that positive attitudes significantly influenced students' intentions to learn indigenous languages. The findings of the present study therefore suggest that developing positive attitudes towards the Mizo subject may contribute to improving students' Mizo language competency irrespective of their demographic and educational background.

Overall, the findings of the present study highlight the importance of students' attitudes towards the Mizo subject in relation to their Mizo language competency. Attitude was found to be significantly associated with and predictive of Mizo language competency, and it remained a significant predictor even after accounting for selected demographic and educational variables. Although attitude explained only a small proportion of the variance in language competency, it remains an important factor that should not be overlooked. Therefore, fostering positive attitudes towards the Mizo subject, together with appropriate instructional practices and supportive learning environments, may contribute to improving Mizo language competency among higher secondary school students in Mizoram. The findings of the present study may also be useful to teachers, curriculum planners, and educational policymakers in promoting effective Mizo language education in the state.

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