

The Multilingual Approaches to Teaching and the Role of Teachers

Kavita Srivastava

Research Scholar, St. Xaviers' College of Education , Patna

Email id : ks1132467@gmail.com

Introduction:

The philosophy of multilingualism and bilingualism focuses on the theories of cognitive development. It is often seen that students who know more than one language are cognitively stronger. Studying more than one language and having a multilingual personality enhance their personalities. Their grasping power and knowledge level increase. Many of the studies show that those who are multilingual can analyze the event or any concept in a better way. So if society wants more research, more scientific inquiry, more invention, and the use of mother tongue as a mode of learning, it should also promote bilingualism and multilingualism. Now, from the part of the teacher's role in multilingualism, it is very difficult for the teachers to teach in a multilingual classroom since a single teacher alone in class becomes overwhelmed with so many languages. It becomes difficult for the teacher to switch from one code to another or translation. In this condition, most of the time, the teacher's concentration will be on translation and not on the concept formation of the student. At the same time, the student is also distracted by new words.

A teacher who is multilingual is more beneficial because it makes content more accessible to learners and provides job-oriented skills such as writing, reading, and communication.

Objectives:

1. To find out the benefits and challenges related to multilingual teaching approaches.
2. To find out the role of teachers in multilingual education and the challenges faced by them.

Methodology:

A review-based review of related literature: Shihako, M. (2020) conducted research on "Training Teachers for a Multilingual Education. "The research explores the challenges of training teachers for a multilingual education and proposes possible solutions.

Raosahab.B.A. (2016) conducted research on "The Impact of Bilingualism on Teaching and Learning English at the Undergraduate Level at Swami Ramanand Teerth Marathwada University Nanded. "The present work undertakes to investigate different aspects of bilingualism and its impact on the process of teaching and learning English at the undergraduate level in the field selected.

Okal,B.O. (2014) conducted research on "Benefits of Multilingualism in Education. "The paper briefly examines multilingual practices and achievements of multilingualism, along with some social drawbacks that lead to the death of languages.

Kumar,P.N. (2013) conducted research on "A multilingual education program for the Singpho language in North East India." The result of the study sets up insights for the practical application of a mother tongue-based multilingual education program.

Bedamatta, U. (2012) conducted research on "Language and knowledge creation: the politics of multilingualism and classroom transaction." The focus of this study is multilingualism in the classroom, where one meets features of societal and individual multilingualism.

Description:

The first section presents an introduction to the topic and a description of the current linguistic situation in the world. Palash Kumar Nath, in his research work, talks about the current linguistic situation in the world, where the use of the mother tongue is ignored. Students are not motivated to learn the subject in their mother language; based on the philosophy of globalization and connecting the world together, other languages that are known by most people in the world are more promoted, which leads to the avoidance of those languages that are spoken by minority groups. Here it needs to be mentioned that language is not just the mode of communication; it also carries out culture. This kind of avoidance of minority languages leads to the death of the language and ultimately the death of the culture.

Keeping in mind the mentality to use global languages as a mode of teaching, there is a growing universal effort to promote mother tongues. Mother tongue literacy is based on the concept that when learning is done in mother tongue, it influences the child in a more effective manner, and the child is able to understand the topic in a broader way. Learning done in another language remains until memory level; if we want students learning to reach analysis, synthesis, and evaluation level, the education system needs to promote the mother tongue as a mode of instruction. So much research is conducted to promote multilingualism because in a single class, students come from different local languages or any other state language.

The philosophy of multilingualism and bilingualism focuses on the theories of cognitive development. It is often seen that students who know more than one language are cognitively stronger. Studying more than one language and having a multilingual personality enhance their personalities. Their grasping power and knowledge level increase. Many of the studies show that those who are multilingual can analyze the event or any concept in a better way. So if society wants more research, more scientific inquiry, and more invention, together with the use of mother tongue as a mode

of learning, it should also promote bilingualism and multilingualism.

Further research shows that the concept of multilingualism seems very effective, but there are a lot of challenges teachers face in producing material for teaching. We can't ignore any single student's language, and a multilingual classroom encourages the student to use those words that are more familiar to them, usually their own language. A teacher is also expected to know more than one language, or even more than two, to promote a multilingual classroom, which is very difficult. Similarly, producing material for multilingual classes is also very difficult.

There is a lot of politics on the part of the government. Many people's multilingualism becomes a vote bank for them.

Urmishree (2012) found in her research work that there are a lot of difficulties related to the narrow mentality of society. Multilingualism is practiced just for the sake of the socioeconomic and political rights of the minority group, and it is not for the urgent use of school. The concept of multilingualism is based on the philosophy of cognitive development. It is also based on the concept that children understand more broadly in their mother tongue. But the researcher found that all these concepts were kept aside and the more focused point was minority rights, social, political, and economic rights of the individuals. There is no feeling of growing together, cooperation, or respect for each other's language, but the only feeling that remains is their own minority rights. The basic concept of multilingualism remains untouched. So there is a need to develop a feeling of mutual cooperation and respect for each other's language.

Now, from the part of the teacher's role in multilingualism, it is very difficult for the teachers to teach in a multilingual classroom since a single teacher alone in class becomes overwhelmed with so many languages. It becomes difficult for the teacher to switch from one code to another or translation. In this condition, most of the time, the teacher's concentration will be on translation and

not on the concept formation of the student. At the same time, the student is also distracted by new words. As it was discussed earlier, multilingualism in class is more a matter of minority rights than a school question, and together with it, teachers face a lot of difficulties. As a result, multilingual classes become a burden most of the time.

The research was conducted on teachers who belonged to Orissa. Researchers found that most of the teachers were oriented toward monolingual habits. Most of the time, they preferred their own language. Juang teachers follow Juang-only rules, and Oriya teachers follow Oriya-only rules. Therefore, the tendency of the teachers to stick to monolingualism badly affects the classroom and hurts the democratic rights of the students. At least teachers should come out of their mentality of being monolingual and try to broaden their area. They should try to follow the concept that knowledge is not at all a servant of any language; we can gain and impart knowledge in any language. Teachers should try to come out of such a narrow mentality.

Bhanji Ajit Raosaheb found in his research work that bilingualism has a positive effect on the cognitive functioning of the student. Cognitive abilities or brain-based skills are needed for the acquisition of knowledge, reasoning, or manipulative activities. Since in bilingualism, the first language, or mother tongue, is helpful in the acquisition of the second language, While reading in another language, the student's mind translates everything into his own language. This is one of the reasons students become experts in reasoning, thinking, remembering, problem solving, and decision-making activities.

Bilingualism helps in metalinguistic awareness, that is, he understands the basic nature of languages, which is helpful to them in translation. Bilinguals gradually develop divergent thinking. They know many ways to solve the problem. Bilinguals develop the capability to learn more than two languages, that is, multiple languages. Persons who know more than one or two languages have prestigious status

in society, as they can come closer to people who have different languages. Not only do they get prestigious status in society, but they also have more job opportunities as they are able to face more global interaction. No doubt, people who know more than one language have more intellectual power, more grasping power, and an outstanding personality.

Researchers also found that there are a lot of problems related to assessment in bilingual education. Since first language is helpful in understanding subjects in second language, when assessment is done, target language (second language) is used to assess students competence in that language. This kind of assessment is not right and may create errors in assessment. Therefore, assessment in bilingual education is a big problem. One can imagine that if assessment in bilingual education is full of errors, what will be the condition of multilingual education? If the theory of multilingualism is to be used practically, its teaching and assessment difficulties are to be managed more properly.

Benard Odoyo Okal found in his research that language should not be imposed on students, as whenever something is imposed or pressurized on any person, it becomes a burden to them. It leads to tension and mental stress, and ultimately, the person finds a way to get rid of it. Many times, this is the reason for the death of language. Revival of the dying languages can be done by incorporating multilingualism practices in education. Students are able to understand subjects in their own language; they are able to learn other languages with the help of their first language. In this way, they are able to know more than one language. In a multilingual classroom, since teachers encourage students to speak in their own language, students of other languages also listen to new words in a cooperative manner. This type of classroom is the best example of a democratic and humanistic setting.

Language policies are different for languages that need to be learned by students. As a result,

some languages are given importance and others lead to dying situations. To make the theory of multilingualism more practical, all the languages need to be given equal importance. Multilingualism practice in education should embrace the indigenous, national, official, and foreign languages as equal partners in language policy development and education.

The researcher focused on the benefits of multilingual education. Students and teachers live in a more democratic and smooth teaching and learning atmosphere. Students are given the freedom to speak in their own language in the classroom, wherever there is need. The teacher respects the home language of the student. Though it is very difficult for the teacher to know so many home languages, multilingual education gives freedom to learn different languages and subjects without burden. The basic concept of multilingual education is that the most important thing is to gain knowledge, and language should not become a barrier to the acquisition of knowledge. Knowledge can be gained through any means or through any mode of instruction. Multilingualism has a broader outlook, where there is no place for narrow thinking, though many times it is influenced by politics, socioeconomics, and minority rights. Narrow thinking hampers the smooth and broader outlook of multilingualism. The most important role is played by teachers who, by heart, follow the concept of multilingualism and respect and encourage so many home languages in a single class. Although teachers face a lot of teaching and assessment difficulties, which have been discussed earlier.

Mathilde Shihako research closely examines that it is not easy to conduct multilingual education with training. Teachers and educators who are involved in multilingual education should receive appropriate training to conduct the classes in the mother language and second language of the learner, and it should not be the language of the teacher. Teachers should also be provided and trained according to the methodology and pedagogy related to multilingual education. For teaching in the mother

tongue, teachers should become masters of the concerned language and deeply understand the sociocultural background of the students. Understanding the sociocultural background is very helpful in learning a new language, since one becomes interested in a new culture, and knowing the culture and language is the carrier.

Research suggests that teacher education programs must offer a Namibian language (home language) as one of the major language areas of learning. Such programs should also make provision for learning through the home language so that student teachers can acquire the appropriate competency to teach in the home language. Since society is linguistically diverse, teacher education programs need to recognize and respond effectively to linguistically diverse contexts to prepare students accordingly to the demands of society. The most difficult task for the teacher is to handle the multilingual classroom since the teacher has to shift from one code to another from time to time. Every teacher ought to be a language teacher (Van der Wall and Ruiters, 2011). A teacher who is multilingual is more beneficial because it makes content more accessible to learners and provides job-oriented skills such as writing, reading, and communication.

Since the research was done in the Namibian region, it was suggested to train the teachers in their home language, which is the Namibian language, but if we look in our Indian context, we find that there are so many government programs to train the teachers in the local regional language. In the teacher's competitive examination, one paper that is related to a state's local or regional language is also included. This is a good initiative towards democratic rights and the promotion of multilingualism in education.

Williams (2017) asserted that teacher education needs to be aware of the dynamics of multilingual communication practices, code-mixing, switching, shifting, and stylizing language use that create new ways to incorporate what they have heard on radio or saw on social media into everyday multilingual practices.

Educators and teachers must be trained to teach in a multilingual or multicultural environment. Educators and teachers should receive relevant training so that they become able to teach in the learner's mother tongue. Teachers need to be aware of the dynamics of multilingual communication practices—code-mixing, switching, shifting, and stylizing language use—that create new ways to incorporate what they have heard on radio or saw on social media into everyday multilingual practices.

Conclusion:

Multilingual teaching approaches are in demand in today's education system worldwide. It saves the democratic and humanistic rights of the student and makes them cognitively stronger. If the world wants more scientific inquiry, the entire world needs to shift their mindset towards a multilingual classroom setup. Teachers play an important role in this regard, although they face a lot of challenges related to it.

References:

1. Nath, P.K. (2013). A multilingual education program for the Singpho language in North-East India. Department of Linguistics. Gauhati University, <http://hdl.handle.net/10603/116425>
2. Bedamatta, U. (2012). Language and knowledge creation: the politics of multilingualism and classroom transaction. Department of English. Utkal University. <http://hdl.handle.net/10603/119077>
3. Raosaheb, B.A. (2016). The Impact of Bilingualism on Teaching and Learning English at the Undergraduate Level at Swami Ramanand Teerth Marathwada University Nanded. School of Languages and Literature. Swami Ramanand Teerth Marathwada University: <http://hdl.handle.net/10603/166446>
4. Claudine Kirsch, J.D. (2020) Multilingual Approaches for Teaching and Learning. From Acknowledging to Capitalizing on Multilingualism in European Mainstream Education. Publisher: Routledge ISBN: 978-0-367-18135-2
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/40161734_Multilingual_Approaches_for_Teaching_and_Learning_From_Acknowledging_to_Capitalizing_on_Multilingualism_in_European_Mainstream_Education
5. Okal, B.O. (2014). Benefits of Multilingualism in Education. Universal Journal of Educational Research 2(3): 223-229, 2014; DOI 10.13189/ujer.2014.020304, <http://www.hrpub.org>
6. Shihako, M. (2020). Training Teachers for a Multilingual Education, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/346097298_Training_Teachers_for_a_Multilingual_Education

