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## Multilingual Approach In Teaching English

Mrs. Rehana Iffath

Research scholar, Department of Humanities and social sciences,

National Institute of Technology ,

Warangal, Telangana , India.

**ABSTRACT:** - As India is a land of varied cultures and many languages is not suitable for monolingual method. Some languages have their alphabets but some more don't have alphabets also. In these difficult situations, Indian students have to get proper education through their mother tongue and have to get English speaking skills also. The Education system of India is undergoing many changes. Multilingualism in English classrooms has become the need of the hour. The students coming from different cultural backgrounds and different mother tongues should be taught English with the help of their mother tongues to make the students comfortable with English. It's high time the teachers get creative and look out for more possible ways to make teaching and learning in a bilingual/multilingual English classroom interesting and effective. This paper covers the problems of teaching English in a multilingual classroom, the advantages of multilingualism and the creative ways to incorporate in a multilingual English classroom to make teaching more effective.

**KEY WORDS:** - Multilingualism, Mother tongue, curriculum, cultural diversity, pedagogy.

### INTRODUCTION:-

India is a nation with diverse cultures and a multitude of languages. As per 1961 census, India has more than 1652 mother tongues, genetically belonging to five different languages families. With so many languages, multilingualism became its backbone. According to Liwei, "Language is a human faculty, it coevolves with us." Monolingualism is a phenomenon which cannot be implemented in India. English from a long time before independence has been coexisting with all the indigenous languages of India. And in present scenario where the entire world has entered into a mode of globalization, bilingualism/ multilingualism has become a new normal a way of learning and India cannot be left untouched by this new normal.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS:-

The purpose of the research was to find the answers to the following questions:

- Why should Multilingualism be encouraged in English classroom?
- What are the problems faced by a teacher in teaching English in a multilingual classroom?
- What are the creative ways that can be incorporated in curriculum to adapt to multilingualism?
- Can Multilingualism be considered as an alternative method in ELT?

Multilingualism is a normal human condition. 'Speaking two or more languages is the natural way of life for three quarters of the human race. [This] principle ... has been obscured in parts of Europe as consequence of colonial history. We urgently need to reassert it, and to implement it in practical ways, for, in the modern world, monolingualism is not strength but a handicap.' (David Crystal 2006:409)

Multilingual class basically consists of students hailing from different social and cultural background with different mother tongues and regional languages. For example, a class in a tribal institution consists of students from different social and cultural backgrounds, some of them speak tribal language even they don't have script also and some others speak Telugu and a few speak Urdu. This type of a heterogeneous class usually will have language barrier between the students they can't talk to each other or clear off their doubts among themselves in their mother tongue. It is also a problem to understand other subjects for their common understanding because of different mother tongues of pupils. Each subject may have their own terminology to use in their subjects. The only way of their communication among these students can happen only in common language that is English. This situation actually make advantage for the students to come out of their comfort zone and try the common language whether they are fluent in it or not.

The difference in culture can be a good conversation starter. This cultural difference can be used as a launch pad to start new topics like different festivals of India or different cuisines or can provide new perspective in many areas for students. The monolingual classroom tends to be monotonous, as all the students understand each other very well, not because they speak correctly, but because they make common mistakes. For example, a classroom of all tribal students may face similar problem with some pronunciation or may have trouble articulating some sounds in English, but the students still understand what the other classmate is reading even if he or she mispronounces. However, if that seems student is in a multilingual class he or she has to articulate all the sounds correctly in order to be understood by his or her classmates. This will help the students in the class to become better speakers and listeners. The learning capacity also varies from culture to culture and student to student. The multilingual class provides an opportunity for such heterogeneous groups to come together and learn new approaches. To study English language by breaking out of their comfort in speaking mother tongue. As we know about the influence of the mother tongue in speaking English language. So many words are mispronounced due to their mother tongue.

## TEACHERS INHIBITION TO CHANGE THE PEDAGOGY:

According to Pattanayak, “The notion of one dominant language as the medium of instruction leaves thousands of children illiterate in their mother tongue and fosters low achievement levels in the dominant language itself. There is no doubt that Language is a major factor in the case of school dropouts and stagnation in Education. To a great extent the high rate of illiteracy especially in tribal areas, can be attributed to the acceptance of the notion of one dominant language in a state and the lack of proper language planning.” D.P Pattanayak “Multi Lingualism and Mother tongue education”, British Journal of Educational studies, Vol: 3, Issue: 2, PP.173-174 (1983)

The Educators or teachers, mainly at under graduate level till date they are following Monolingual method for teaching. Students at their lower standard level they give priority to marks only for that it may be one reason for not concentrating in learning language. According to most of the teachers, Multilingualism may be a great asset in life but it is a major obstruction in pedagogy.” But in the present scenario Multilingualism should be welcomed into our pedagogy with open arms.

In an English classroom, the teacher can incorporate techniques like tales, riddles, proverbs, songs, and so on to make the class easy to understand and interesting. The students can learn English language better in this way because these techniques will allow the students to make connections between the new English terminology and the equivalent words in their mother tongue or local language. This technique will help them in easy English language attainment. And this is even recommended by National curriculum framework 2005. “By doing this, we will not only help our local languages but also culture can grow side by side, it can the learner will also continue to make our multilingual approach. Such an approach will facilitate effective language learning.” Anand Mahanand. “Contextualizing English language education for the language minority learners “Multilingual Education in Indian: The case for English, Viva books, 2017, PP. 43.

The English language teacher in a multilingual class should be creative and try to incorporate the cultural differences in the class and use it as a tool to improve the language skills of the students.

As Ruthz. Hauzel says, “It is crucial to understand both the medium and the context of what we are teaching, and what the student brings to the classroom, so that our teaching becomes an aid not a hindrance to the student’s potential”. “Cultural Diversity and the classroom”, “Multilingual Education in India: The case for English, Viva Books, 2017, PP.166. There are many merits of using L1 in an English classroom. Actually L1 can be incorporated in improving the L2 learning of the students. “Learning / Teaching L2 is not just about teaching the student how to add a few rooms in a house by building an extension at the back; it is like the rebuilding of internal walls. It implies that in some ways the construction of the house will change. Trying to put languages in separate compartments in the mind is doomed to failure since the compartments are connected in many ways.” (Cook.V.J.C1992) “Evidence for multi competence Language learning”, Vol. 42, PP. 557-591.

From Cook’s analysis L1 doesn’t have separate storage space in the brain; all are connected. In various forms and they have influence over each other and on the entire system on the whole. The world around us is evolving rapidly; the education system should also evolve along with it. The world is becoming multilingual, education and especially English language teaching should also adapt according to this welcoming change for the future generations. There is a need for education “to reorient itself according to the demand of the job market .... Education combined with skills

promises to rescue the society from its present state of ability, helplessness and frustration.” Shymal Das, “Changing perspectives of Education in North – east, India with special reference to Tripura.” Multilingual Education in India: The case for English, Viva Book, 2017, PP. 204 – 205.

### **POSSIBILITIES:**

Innovative methods should be integrated into English language teaching to bring synchronization between English and local languages. The classroom activities for effective English teaching should be made to order as per the capabilities of students. Teachers have to create an atmosphere that all the students should learn language skills equally but as per their mother tongue influence they understand differently. As students have different mother tongues at their community. All the students shouldn't be given same type of activities. The teacher should make sure that “we have equipped the learners with the necessary skills for English, that we have provided a cap that fits the head of the learner.” Jayshree Mohanraj.” ELT in India: Need for a cap that fits the head, “Multilingual education in India: The case for English, Viva Books, 2017, PP. 223.

Another feasible way to improve the learning output is to print the textbooks which are bilingual/ multilingual, which will facilitate positive outcomes and it will also be helpful for the teachers to interact with students otherwise teachers have to refer number of research books. However as per the international law (UNCRC, 1989) the children's language and cultural rights should be preserved, it is the fundamental rights of children to access their language repertoire, not just as a one-off scaffolding technique or a tolerated approach, but as an acknowledgment of their plural lingual identity, as a contribution to their socio- economical well- being and as recognition of children's agency in choosing how they prefer to learn a new language.” Nayr Ibrahim “Teaching children how to learn”, 2019, PP. 27.

Many educators have suggested many more activities that can be included in a multilingual English classroom. The students can use their L1 proficiency to improve their L2 skills. “what the learner brings to the class in the form of L1 can be used to trigger use of L2(English) and the L2 text need not be expected to be entirely monolingual but can also be a code switched text.” Lina Mukhopadhyay “Two Solitude: Instructional mode in ESL writing.” Multilingual Education in India, Viva Books, 2017, pp.233 – 257.

### **CONCLUSION -:**

India is a diverse nation, which takes pride in its “Unity in diversity.” The link languages play a very vital role in unifying the diverse cultures language is considered as a flag bears of any civilization. And English which came to India as a language of colonizers has now secured a prominent place in the lives of Indians. English is unquestionably the world language of academia and Multilingualism will help even the non native speakers of English to learn English efficiently.

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