

Multilingual Education: Possibility or Ideal Dream

Shashank S. Parimi and Hridbijoy Chakraborty

Abstract—Diversity can truly be seen inherently across India, on the basis of language. The National Curriculum Framework-2005 has also given importance to address multilingualism to aid cognitive development. This paper explores the field level experiences of implementing multilingual pedagogy through various case studies. This paper also explores language education vis-a-vis multilingual education. The paper tries to address the challenge faced by children in classrooms due to the difference in mainstream language and their regional variances of the language.

Index Terms—Children, multilingualism, language, dialects, regional variances.

I. INTRODUCTION

Language has always been associated with identity. The language of the people on the upper side of social hierarchy have maintained their hegemony over others. Taking an example of ancient Egypt, the language which was uttered by the Pharaohs (Egyptian) was considered to be God's' language. The use of this language was prohibited to slaves (who used to speak Hebrew), they were not allowed even a single utterance of the so called 'gods language'. [1]

The Egyptian civilisation existed a long time ago and perished overtime; But the exclusion is still not completely eradicated. Discrimination based on language continued through the course of history and has worsened in contemporary times.

Similar event also happened in India; Brahmins with their sacred knowledge and language. Ushering to discrimination of other castes in context of knowledge sharing and transfer [2].

When it comes to India, discrimination runs through Class, Caste, Creed and Language on a large scale. Apart from the social injustice happening to the hegemonic weaker classes, the most impacted (in a purely negative way) are the children.

A child comes from its primary discourse of learning of the home language and the community's language, but as a child enters its secondary discourse and is immediately disdained by the mainstream language.

Taking an example from random sample of schools, I had observed that many children who had migrated after spending a good amount of time in their native place. This time has also been labelled as critical period by researchers. Now when these children come into an urban setting, they are intimidated by the language of the popular medium and the alien language English. When these children fail to perform

according to the evaluation standards, they are shunned by the teacher. Apart from this they are also discriminated upon the language they use in the classroom. The language they had learnt in their primary discourse is deemed invalid as they do not have any valid script. This is also a propaganda of a certain agency which believes language in contemporary framework is linked economically, politically, and communally.

In the last three decades or so, the demand for English language education has been slowly and steadily increasing all over the world and all the more in developing countries like India. In India, the demand for not just English language education but for English medium education has grown by leaps and bounds. People from regional and other languages backgrounds also feel that if their children study in English medium schools their careers will get a boost. There may be some truth in this, but they often do not realise the difference between learning a language and using it as a medium and the associated risks of sacrificing the development of their own language and the enhanced understanding of concepts that goes with it.

However, in today's world it has been realised that it is equally important to nurture the child's home language along with strengthening the mainstream languages. Recent work on language and language teaching and learning has brought out that it is possible to provide the potential of mobility through new languages at the same time nurturing the home languages.

Only thing that separates humans from animals is the way we perceive our surroundings. Animals react to their current physical scenarios, whereas we humans gaze the world through representations. Concept of time—imagining a distant place — many more.

Humans as foetus start representing the outside world in a certain manner; as we grow up in our house, society, culture and others in our immediate microsystem, there begins a way in which we start to construct our belief system through which we represent the world. As a child when we enter this whole new concept of schooling we are introduced to whole new world which excites us. But, the only problem which lies here is the belief system or the world which we create till the moment we enter school, is ignored for some faulty reason. This leads to a struggle between our own belief system and the one which is being shoved onto us.

In order to curb and eradicated such exclusions it is crucial to understand and implement multilingualism in a decentralised manner.

Nature of language is an important aspect when it comes to education, this is so because we as humans represent the world around us in sense of representation. The main thing that separates human beings from animals is the way we see the world react to it and look at the world through

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Shashank S. Parimi and Hridbijoy Chakraborty are with the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, 400088 India (e-mail: shashank.parimi@tiss.edu, hridbijoy@gmail.com).

representation. Animals on the other hand react to the present surroundings which can be seen instinctively. This holds true as humans are capable of planning ahead of time even fifty years from now. Language and social dimensions play an important role in development of this sense of representation. The most important fact is the way we are able to weave stories or narratives of the future and the past. Every set of community holds the distinction of being proud of their culture and lineage. The way it is preserved is through construction of perfect sequence of events which are gathered together and woven into a story. Human instinct is largely based on assumptions, which can be a good and a bad thing all together. We observe and experience the patterns of fellow humans and start assuming things. Our experiences and interaction with others build us our own set of belief system by which we live our lives. The belief system that is created by one is very tough to change even if the person is open to other opinions and liberal. The person will fight for their own belief systems.

The world seen by different people is represented to them in a whole different way due the belief system each individual hold. Looking at the education system every individual has their own set of perspectives towards it. A child entering this system is perceived to be an empty vessel waiting to be overflowed with knowledge. As they progress through their primary years they have to present everything symbolically. The symbols are the use of language through the written medium rather than the conversational channel. The use of such system hinders the pre-education of the child baseless.

The child has been learning from the mother's womb about various things. Even before a child begins to talk they observe the world around them building a narrative and starts gaining control. The child has been creating a representation of the world in his-her own mind and then to be told it is wrong can damage the child's development. Every human be a child or an adult gains sense of the world through representation by these stories. Sometimes thoughts are difficult to be penned down in words.

Stories have a role in education that goes far beyond their contribution to the acquisition of literacy. Storying is a great way of interpreting the world around us and even better for children.

But again, the flip side of stories is the danger of the single story and stereotyping. When we hear a story about a particular place which is not visited by us then we shape the land and the people accordingly. Stereotyping is the oversimplification of a particular set of people and places. We fail to acknowledge the diversity of a place and tend to think all things are similar.

The thing that we need to remember is that we as humans will keep on representing the world in our stories which are being woven in our minds added to our belief system. We should reject the idea of a single story and be open to variety of perspectives and combining them onto one and then a new representation will be born. To absolutely gain control of the world around us we need to keep on practising the art of storying as a ritual.

In order for all this to happen the nature of language and the social dimensions bounding it will play the most

important role, as no knowledge can be transferred without even having language. Even in its simplest of form as symbols language is the ergonomic buttress of the whole society.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A vast majority of countries in the world are officially or unofficially bilingual. However, many countries have sought to adopt a one nation, one language policy. Even in places where official requirements of adopting the majority language don't exist, for socio-economic reasons individuals who are minority-language speakers adopt either the language of economy or a language of national and international communication like English. Sutton [3] writes: "It is also apparent, from the frequency of the use of a language other than a learner's mother tongue, as the medium of instruction in education, that some form of bilingualism is common. As migration increases and mono-cultural nation states become obsolete, cultural identities become more complex, less tied to a geographical region, more individualised and less static". [3]

A. Bilingualism

Skutnabb-Kangas's defines bilingualism as "A bilingual speaker is someone who is able to function in two (or more) languages, either in monolingual or bilingual communities, in accordance with socio-cultural demands made of an individual's communicative and cognitive competence by these communities or the individual herself, at the same level as native speaker, who is able positively to identify with both (or all) language groups (and cultures) or parts of them". [4] Here, I have looked into the socio-political obstacles and motivations for acquiring an additional language and how different circumstances demand different solutions. Further, I look into an optimal program for teaching in a bilingual or multilingual set up.

Skutnabb-Kangas categorises bilinguals into four main categories [4]:

- Elite bilinguals: This refers to people who have decided voluntarily to become bilingual. They travel and live abroad and they face no internal or external pressures to become bilingual. This group seeks out their own ways to learn an additional language and might do so through travel or enrolling in classes to learn a foreign language.
- Children from linguistic majorities: These children learn a foreign/other language at school. The risk of failure is small, since these children still have the majority language to fall back on. There isn't any internal pressure, for instance an economic motivation, for them to learn the additional language, but the administration may create a language policy which requires them to learn a new language. However, the level of success a student achieves in this language does not affect his or her future opportunities the same way it would be for a child from a linguistic minority. Teaching of the second language in this case is done by having additional language classes in school but these may not necessarily be the medium of instruction and the language is just taught as another subject.

- Children from bilingual families: These children grow up with multiple languages, especially when the parents don't know each other's languages too well. In that situation, the home works as the bilingual class. The child is exposed to both the languages at home and depending on the level of exposure the child may grow up as having native-fluency in both the languages.
- Children from linguistic minorities: Strong external pressure from society to become bilingual in the majority language. There is also pressure from their families to become fluent in the majority language because that is seen as the only path for an improved social standing. For instance, if a student has a mother tongue that is neither the language of the majority at the national or regional level then the student under the current system, the child's education will be conducted in a language effectively "Alien" to her. It is this case where some research shows that including the L1 of the student within in the school can help the student do better in the long run.

In some of these cases, particularly the last one, there are certain socio-political factors that provide motivation or act as obstacles for people who seek to learn a new language. One major issue that emerges from this situation is how to create language programs that preserve the native minority languages but also allow these groups to make use of benefits that might come as a result of learning a different language.

Economic motivations for learning a new language:

One of the major motivations for being multilingual is that learning a new language might increase one's access to certain opportunities that would not be available otherwise. An example, in current times, of this is English. English is a global language of communication and within India it plays an important role in communication across the different linguistic regions of the country. As a result, a person's ability to benefit from and to become a participant in the economy depends in large part on his or her ability to communicate in English. English is considered the quasi-official language and in these circumstances, it would be beneficial for people to learn the language purely for their personal gain. [5]

Socio-economic obstacles : At the same time, especially in the case of India, learning English poses an obstacle for groups that come from less-privileged backgrounds. The ability to learn English depends on the availability of teachers and classes which might be curtailed for some students. In addition, there is also the issue of sociolects. Within the same language different versions might be spoken which reflect the socio-economic background of the speaker. This is referred to as a "sociolecto" by Sutton. [3] He describes what are considered "high" and "low" forms of languages. Language diversity comes not just from geography, but also through social status. A person's linguistic repertoire includes both the number of languages one knows but also the situation-specific variant. An individual might use different dialects/languages depending on the context. Knowing the "low variant" of a language can pose just as great a barrier as not knowing the majority mother tongue for a person.

Preserving minority languages for linguistic diversity:

Languages are seen as carriers of heritage and this is an

important issue when it comes to language policy in India. Sridhar Kachru, and Agnihotri discuss this in their articles. India has dealt with a long history of unrest over linguistic issues. English had to become the language of communication due to the linguistic diversity of the country. In the US there is a contradiction between the melting pot idea of the US and the assimilation-oriented education policies. Languages are also a store for the history and traditions of those communities and a part of a group's cultural identity. [3]

Problems with using mono-lingual solutions in Multilingual contexts:

Due to political developments, English became the default language of communication between the diverse parts of India. As a result, English began to tower over other native languages of India. The article discusses how, "the efforts to achieve linguistic homogeneity contributed to an asymmetrical power relationship between the majority and minority languages, resulting in the supremacy of English over other languages in India." [6]. In the article Agnihotri also touches on how Urdu and Hindi were bifurcated as two separate languages from Hindustani by eliminating all Persian origin words from *Khadi Boli* and removing all Sanskrit root words from standard Urdu. This dichotomy also transferred from the Hindus to the Muslims. English in India is associated with the elite and occupies a position of power with respect to the other languages in the country. Agnihotri concludes that the constituent assembly had not envisaged how India's multilingualism was not suited to having one official language: "What they could not anticipate however was that monolingual solutions to multilingual societies would not work. A multilingual society would need a multilingual perspective, and monolingual solutions that would eventually be formulated in terms, for example, of a three-language formula would not work. Any classroom in India is in general multilingual, and unless we conceptualise the school curriculum, syllabus, textbooks and classroom transaction in terms of multilingualism as a resource, strategy and a goal, where languages are not seen as discrete objects and language boundaries are porous, we may not be able to arrive at a pedagogical breakthrough where an individual child's language and systems of knowledge are respected." [6]

The kind of research and knowledge that exists today was not available in the past about the effects of multilingualism on cognitive development and classroom achievement. Agnihotri concludes that "home languages" should be brought into the school and should be taught as compulsory subjects. In a country like India where every region has its own linguistic minorities having schooling in the regional language alone cannot be a solution.

B. Bilingual Educatio

"Bilingual Education" is defined as a schooling system where at least two languages are used as a medium of instruction. Thus, intensive foreign language training alone does not count as "bilingual education". When more than one language is engaged as a medium of instruction in a classroom then the system would be considered bilingual education. There are two primary models of education in more than one language. One is the immersion model and the

other is the submersion model. In the immersion model the child's mother tongue is included in the classroom. The student has the support of their L1 as they learn more of the L2 and at a later point L2 is used as a medium of instruction for the student. In Submersion on the other hand students engage just with the L2 and are thrown into the new language with the expectation that they will adopt the L2 since they have no other option. [4]

Children and even adults in second language classrooms use defensive strategies when they feel uncomfortable with the L2. Leaving the class can be one of these strategies. Submersion in the L2 can lead minority language children suffering since they have to do extra work compared to the majority. They are expected to do just as well as the majority without the extra help they need.

Rothstein describes bilingual education and its effect as follows: "Bilingual education, a preferred strategy for the last 20 years, aims to teach academic subjects to immigrant children in their native languages (most often Spanish), while slowly and simultaneously adding English instruction. (1) In theory, the children don't fall behind in other subjects while they are learning English. When they are fluent in English, they can then "transition" to English instruction in academic subjects at the grade level of their peers". [7] Rothstein writes about how there is a myth that immigrant children in the US became English speakers through a sink or swim policy where they were placed in English-only schools. Rothstein states that most first and second-generation immigrants the dropout rates were exceptionally high. In contrast Hispanic immigrants today have a far higher success rate in American high-schools. This in part can be attributed to the use of a bilingual education set-up.

Skutnabb-Kangas uses a swimming metaphor to explain L2 immersion/submersion. [4] She describes immersion as a "language bath" which children take part in as long as they enjoy it. They have an instructor to tell them what to do (i.e. a teacher who knows their L1) and water wings (their mother tongue, which they can fall back on if the class gets too difficult).

Submersion is described as "language drowning". Here, the children are thrown into the cold water at the deep end, without the knowledge of swimming or an instructor (a teacher who understands their mother tongue). The expectation is that they will learn when they have no other choice. The unintended consequence of this approach is that minority children cannot keep up with the majority, and as a result become disheartened with their education.

C. Connection between Bilingualism and Cognitive Benefits in Learning

Using a critical narrative analysis Suoto-Manning [8] in this paper attempts to explain the current state and debate on bilingual education in the US. The author is a mother of a bilingual and bi-cultural child herself. She wanted her son to grow up learning both Portuguese and English but she found that many of her fellow teachers did not approve or tried to dissuade her from this attempt. Suoto-Manning points out that raising a bilingual child in a predominantly monolingual set-up is difficult. A lot of people feel that the brain has a limited capacity for language and teaching more than one

could "overload" the brain. On the other hand, empirical evidence shows that there is a strong connection between bilingualism and intellectual capabilities and cognitive development. However, many such children are placed in special education in the US because they do not develop the requisite skills in English easily. Bilingualism is treated as a disability.

Skutnabb-Kangas analyses studies that compare IQ levels in monolingual education to bilingualism have some problems. There were three types of tests in this study:

- Verbal tests are done in the bilingual children's L2. The language used in the test was not considered, neither what kind of test it was.
- There were verbal and non-verbal tests in the children's L2 whereas their IQ was compared to monolingual children in both kinds of tests.
- Using verbal or non-verbal tests or both, in both languages. The results are compared as between the two languages and for each of the two languages individually with results of the monolingual children.

In the first set of tests, the children's bilingualism was not controlled for. In some cases, children were classified as bilingual if their parents were immigrants. The tests found that bilingual children on average score less than monolinguals.

In the second type which includes verbal and non-verbal IQ tests, there was a better control for bilingualism. It showed that monolinguals do similarly in both tests, whereas bilinguals did a little worse at the verbal tests.

In the third test it was found that Bilingual children registered better scores in their L1 than they did in their L2.

Bilingual children perform better than monolinguals on tests that test the children on varied areas. They also tend to have a better grasp of sentence structure. They can look at sentences analytically. This is because they are used to keeping two sets of grammar or language rules separate in their heads [4].

III. STUDIES ON BI-LINGUAL & MULTILINGUAL EDUCATION

A. Navajo Teaching in Immersion Schools

In this article they discuss the continuing decline of the Navajo language and possibilities of reviving and saving it from extinction in the future. The article says that a shift towards English-learning is occurring due to "the agency of public education and mass media". [9] In the last half of the twentieth century, American influence has increased among the Navajo population, and Navajos themselves ventured out of their reservations and increasingly participated in mainstream American culture. The youngest generation of Navajos are growing up as mono-lingual English speakers. The authors distinguish between natural changes that occur in living languages and changes occurring due to specific social and economic pressures. Most Navajos are choosing to learn and teach English to their children due to its economic benefits. English is also the language of popular youth entertainment. Most mono-lingual Navajo speakers are a part of the older generation and as they die so does the language. There is also no institutionalised teaching of the Navajo language even on the reservation schools. Finally, another

reason cited by the paper is that “[t] here is collective ignorance and apathy among the Navajo speakers themselves about the decline of Navajo-language use”. [9]

To address this issue in 1986 the Fort Defiance School started a Navajo-language immersion program for Navajo children who had a passive knowledge of the language (they could understand certain words and phrases but were unable to converse in the language). Despite the initial trepidation, the results of the exercise were positive. Students from the immersion school outperformed students who were monolingual in English. The students in the immersion program also significantly improved their Navajo speaking skills. This was followed by further experimental immersion and bilingual teaching programs which proved to be successes as well. One of the reasons these programs were successful is due to the participation of the community and dedicated teachers, which the authors describe as essential to running such a program. These programs have not produced results when the community or administrators were lackadaisical in their approach.

B. English-Spanish Programs in the US

Tashakkori and Lopez [10] report on a two-way bilingual program and study the differences between an experimental group that received instruction in both English and Spanish and a control group that only received instruction in English. Both groups consisted of students who were ELLs (English language learners) and non-ELLs. In the experimental group 70 percent of the time the instruction was in English whereas in the control group 90 percent of the time the instruction was in English. Tests taken in the beginning of the program showed that the ELL students in the experimental group showed greater improvement on standardised tests when compared to their counterparts in the control group.

Despite starting off with lower scores in pre-tests towards the end of the program they were able to match their scores in tests conducted in various subjects. The study was conducted in an elementary school in a primarily Spanish speaking district. Two-way bilingual teaching refers to a system where English and Spanish both were used as a medium of instruction. The students consisted of English language learners as well as students who had gone through an ESOL (English as second language program) and were no longer considered ELLs. In the control group Spanish was used only in the “Spanish language and arts classes” whereas English was used in the rest of the classes. The experimental group had a larger proportion of students who were classified as English language learners (i.e. they weren’t considered as proficient in English as the students in the control group). This was not a random experiment since parents chose the program they wanted their children to be a part of. The results of the study showed that at the end of the research period there was no statistically significant difference between students in the experimental group and those in the control group in their performance in the post-tests. These tests tested their comprehension and reading abilities.

C. Study in AP and Orissa Reported by Mohanty, Mishra, Reddy and Gumidyala

“Kept out of major domains of power and resources such

as official, legal and formal use, education, trade and commerce, languages become vulnerable to shift pressure from the dominant languages and their survival is threatened. This process is associated with loss of linguistic diversity and death or 'murder' of languages. Sometimes, however, minority languages under such pressure seem to survive in multilingual societies like India by a passive withdrawal into domains of lesser power and visibility following what has been called 'anti-predatory strategies'. Although rapid language shift does not occur the languages are marginalised with considerable domain shrinkage; languages are barely maintained in the domains of home and close in-group communication with clear signs of declining inter-generational transmission.” [11]

The problem in teaching languages in India is that in many cases the mother tongues of minority language children are ignored in the class room. Tribal children face a language barrier to their entry into a classroom which consequently leads to economic deprivation. In addition, they also suffer in school since "life experiences and culture" or tribal children isn't reflected in their text books and curriculum. In a study that the authors did in Orissa, they found that Kui-Oriya bilingual Konds performed better than Konds who became mono-lingual in Oriya. Kui is a tribal language spoken among the Konds. "The exclusion of tribal mother tongues from education limits tribal children's chances of adequate classroom learning and success in academics and, consequently limits their freedom and ability to influence the direction of their lives." [11]

The writers suggest that a multilingual framework that makes mother tongue maintenance its goal is needed to teach languages in a setting like India. Current systems fail to recognise the importance of the mother tongue in education. The article talks about MLE programs organised for tribal children in AP and Orissa since 2003 under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan. [11] In certain selected schools in AP and Orissa from 2004 tribal students were placed in MLE classrooms. The students started from Grade 1 and were in Grade 5 when they were assessed in 2008. Now the program exists in all classes from 1-5 in the selected schools. "The MLE programs in the two states are planned to strengthen children's mother tongue through its use as the language of teaching for a few years in the school and gradually develop competence in the dominant state languages.

In these MLE programs initially the mother tongue (MT) is used as the MOI (medium of instruction). The L2 (Telugu/Oriya) is introduced as a subject to first develop oral skills in the language and then gradually develop reading and comprehension skills by Grade 5. After this the students from MLE schools are introduced into schools which use their L2 as the MOI. Apart from the L2, and L3 (usually in the form of English) is also introduced as a subject in the MLE schools in grade 3 in Orissa and Grade 4 in Andhra Pradesh. The MT is the MOI in both sets of schools for the first 3 years following which the L2 is introduced as an MOI from Grade 4 and the languages are used on a 50 percent time sharing basis in Orissa. In Andhra Pradesh there was a gradual introduction of the L2 (Telugu) as MOI. In Grade 4 there is equal time sharing and in the next grade this switches to 25 percent for the MT and 75 percent for the MOI not counting language

classes (pp. 287). In both states Hindi is introduced as an L4 in Grade 6. Currently there are no plans to extend the use of the MT in classes for these students in the future. But the program has generated interest among parents and also has produced curriculum and text books in the MT of these students. This could help create demand and possibilities for extension of teaching of the MT in the future in the older age groups.

The MLE programs try to incorporate the "indigenous knowledge systems, games, songs and stories from the tribal communities" [11] into the curriculum and teaching material. Cultural themes are associated with competencies in different subjects like mathematics. For instance, number skills are developed through traditional songs and stories. Activities are also conducted with other members of the community engaging them in the learning process of their children. The Andhra Pradesh program has been evaluated in two major studies. "Both studies show that classroom achievement in the school subjects was significantly better in MLE programs for all eight tribal languages compared to the Telegu medium schools. The MT based MLE improved basic competencies of literacy and numeracy among all children, increased their school attendance and participation and resulted in greater parental satisfaction and community involvement" [11] In the Orissa MLE program results were similar and students in the MLE program in all 10 tribal languages showed better results in tests and teacher feedback than their counterparts in the Oriya medium schools.

D. Multilingualism, MLE and Its Benefits and Problems (India Focus)

According to Agnihotri, [12] language should not be seen as a separate entity but issues of language have to be transformed into issues of multilingualism. In the current context hardly, any region of the world exists as a monolingual entity. For most multilingual's there are no concrete boundaries that exist between different languages.

Agnihotri [12] suggests that language classes should be structured as linguistic classes where students learn not simply the grammar or vocabulary of a certain languages, but rather the underlying commonalities and structures and connections between all languages. Students should be able to look at languages at a metalinguistic level. In such a manner Agnihotri [12] believes the focus will shift from the idea of limited languages to the idea of multilingualism which he thinks reflects current linguistic realities.

"Multilingual education (MLE) is much more than just bringing in languages into the process of education; it is, in fact, deeply rooted in a philosophy of critical pedagogy that seeks to actively empower the learners and their communities. If MLE is to be seen as providing a powerful model for the education of the indigenous/tribal and linguistic minority communities, it needs to replace the authoritarian, rigid, pre-ordained knowledge approach of dominant-culture-centric education by a system of critical educational experiences empowering them to become valued, equal, and responsible members of their own and the larger society outside their community and not feel estranged from it". [13] An MLE program according to the authors shouldn't just be one that seeks to teach multiple languages, but rather

engages the cultural practices associated with the languages and those that the students recognise. It also incorporates into the curriculum culturally situated and embedded understanding of science, mathematics, language and history.

One of the motivations, aside from providing an optimum learning atmosphere for students, for encouraging MLE is the protection of linguistic human rights. MLE programs are seen as a source of empowerment for indigenous and minority language speakers who otherwise stand to lose out in the face of the dominant language. [14] As Agnihotri writes, India is a country where multilingualism is an inherent part of linguistic culture and he writes, "the site for subversive discourses is NOT English but multilingualism". [14] However, "given the inequalities across languages, tribal languages suffer gross neglect and exclusion from significant social, political, economic and educational domains leading to serious language disadvantage of tribal children and large-scale failure and push-out in dominant language classrooms, where mother tongues have little space". [13]

The explicit inclusion of culturally specific materials into an MLE curriculum is also known as "MLE plus" and this program is based on the Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) approach put forward by Vygotsky [13], "Vygotsky (1987) described conceptual development as an interaction between spontaneous everyday concepts and the organised system of concepts referred to as 'scientific concepts'" [13], The authors argue that the pedagogical approach to MLE should focus and involve cultural and everyday aspects of the students' lives in the classroom. Involvement of parents and community members also helps develop a positive outlook towards the educational process and reduces the motivation for parents and children to drop out of school.

One problem that these MLE programs still face is the transition from MT as MOI to a complete transfer to the L2 and absorption into the L2 as MOI schools. The MLE plus model is dropped at this stage and along with the language there is also a loss of the same culturally specific curriculum that so far formed the foundation of their education. However, recently the positive outlook towards MLE programs and the development of curriculum in tribal languages and teacher training in the program has increased the possibility of extending MLE at the higher level. [14]

Another problem in implementing such a program is that of scale. In these classes where MLE was first attempted in Orissa and Andhra Pradesh a limited number of tribal languages were included in the program compared to the vast number of languages that are used in the country. In addition, each classroom itself was homogenous in the sense that all the children had the same MT. This might not be feasible in all cases [13].

IV. CHALLENGES

Defining the trajectory of each child's progress specifically related to literary linguistics and multilingual threads.

Weaving in multilingual aspects in non-text-based activities.

Lack of coherence between activities and the outcomes.

Projecting image of Multilingual education in the

community.

Struggle for maintaining the balance between multilingual education needs and the demands of mainstream education.

V. CONCLUSION

The approach to bilingual education should be based on the understanding of how languages develop, what are the languages and script structures, what are the relative positions and relationships between the languages and how these are related to language learning, what opportunities and discourse develop various attributes of language in young learners.

It will also draw upon research in bilingualism and multilingualism to develop materials and processes that enhance multilingual development.

There has to be an attempt to have a two-way relationship in using already published children's literature with translations into another language and the home language as well as collection and development of literature from children's own experiences and community repertoire.

When the texts will include a collection of the local histories of the settlements and descriptions of the lives of the people and the children to use these as learning materials in the classrooms, they will help in the development of the local knowledge hand in hand with the global knowledge. This will also help in sensitising a whole generation with respect to different languages. The older children of classes 4 to 8th can be involved in the writing up of these materials, while the younger children and other children in other schools of the same age group can use them as reading materials.

दुई नहीं दो! came out a story we were discussing just before writing this paper. Last year around the same time, we had gone for a school visit in Mansarovar Garden in Delhi during the "Every Child Can Read" campaign. We were sitting at the back while some children were engaged in a role-playing activity. After that the teacher asked some children who were not participating to read a few lines. A boy who was sitting at the back was called to the front of the class. He started reading and mispronounced 2 (दो). The teacher quipped at him and said "दुई नहीं दो!" (It's do not dui). Then she explained to him that "dui" is not correct Hindi but again the child said "dui". This time the teacher was visibly angry and asked him to go back to his seat. She also said something after the boy left, which we couldn't hear.

Later when we met the teacher after the class to discuss about the material and challenges, she made some comments on the socio-economic background of the children and particularly on their language. That boy and some other kids in that class were first generation school goers whose parents speak a 'dialect' of Hindi spoken in Bihar. The teacher wanted the children to use standard Hindi and this became a challenge for both the children and the teacher.

While coming back from the school, we started discussing papers that we had read on sociolinguistics. We had few questions in our mind, some of which have been answered multiple times but they still remain unresolved, like what is a language? We would say language is form of representation of the world around us or in layman terms, language is for

communication. But then, what is a dialect and correct language like the teacher was telling the boy. This is where it gets complicated. Unlike computer languages, human languages are very complex and their usage further complicates the situation as languages are inherent part of human society. While linguists reject dialect as non-entity, however it is not the truth. Dialects are a reality in everyday situation and with the commercial use of any language along with politics standardisation is another such reality.

Language cannot be looked at just as a tool for communication, as it also is a marker of identity for both individual and groups. But, mostly while talking about identity associated with language, the identity of languages, more particularly that of dialects gets ignored. In the classroom, that was mentioned about earlier, both the phenomenon happened together as the identity of the dialect spoken by that boy got rejected and also his own identity changed from speaker of a particular dialect to someone who cannot speak standard Hindi.

What's the difference between a language and a dialect? Max Weinreich said that "a language is a dialect with an army and a navy." This makes classroom a battleground of languages and dialects which is different from multilingualism.

Most of the studies on languages in classroom space have been done in rural areas, while the classrooms in multicultural-multi ethnic metro cities face a different sort of challenge. This challenge is faced at two levels, one because of the having speakers of mutually exclusive languages in the same space and second because of having speakers of different variants of same language. Also, in this case the problem doesn't really lie in the classroom but is a result of top down approach followed since independence.

Prof. Maxine Berntsen [15] in *Standard and Non-Standard Language: Teacher's stance* cites a very popular saying in India according to which a language changes every twenty-four miles. She further says the even linguists cannot give definitive response to the phenomenon of standardisation of languages. This is quite possible because standardisation itself is a political process.

From a child's perspective, classroom becomes the site of struggle for language which has a direct impact on learning, growth and development of the child. The primary discourse for children gets created through their mother tongue or first language, but the formal schooling system demands them to shift to secondary discourse as soon as they enter into school. This creates dichotomy in terms of pedagogy and children end up struggling through this dilemma, which later adversely affects their chances of success in life.

Without getting into the politics of standardisation of language we would focus on the core issue of pedagogy. Prof. Bernsten in *Standard and Non-Standard Language: the teacher's stance* argues for taking the middle path without taking any extreme position. She says teaching the child in their language is one extreme, while teaching them in the standard variety is another extreme. Arjuna Parakrama in *The Politics of Standardisation and the 'Special' Problematic of (Post) Coloniality, De-Hegemonising Language Standards* [16] says that subjects are never given the option of

proposing other 'choices' in the best of all possible worlds or at any rate a better one than exists for them at present and thus the existing body of knowledge doesn't really represent the best options before us. Thus, sociolinguistics too becomes an apology for the 'way things are' and the 'way things will gradually become'.

Education planners in India have, by and large, committed themselves to education for all without seriously questioning the elitist framework of education inherited from the colonial set up. They failed to consider the complexity of speech variation across dialects. Even as corrective measures 3 language formula and similar policies failed to bring justice to the minoritized languages and language communities.

A. Case from the National Capital

Delhi being India's capital has huge migrant population as there are very few who had lived here before the city became the capital of India. The wave of migration started in 1913 when the employees of the British Indian government shifted to Delhi. The second wave of migration happened during the partition of India in 1947 and subsequently during the Asian games of 1982 and post liberalisation of economy in 1991. Currently Delhi has a huge population and the enrolment rate in Delhi's school is almost 100%. After the implementation of RTE act, many first-generation school goers have started attending school. Most of them come from poor families, where their parents have migrated from Eastern part of the country to work as daily wage laborer's in factories, construction sites and as domestic helps in rich people's homes.

The school that we had gone to also had large number of such first-generation school goers who speak a different variety of Hindi or maybe a different language. The classroom of Mansarover Garden school like many other classrooms of the city represent the cosmopolitan nature of Delhi and this complicated the problem of pedagogy.

While in rural areas language might change in every 20 miles, but in a metropolitan city like Delhi too many languages coexist in the same space but in the classroom, everyone is expected to speak in the standard variety. From a teacher's perspective this is really challenging as the textbook which are followed from class one is written in standard Hindi or khadi boli, while children might not speak that language. Also, the National Curriculum Framework 2005, advocates for bringing the primary discourse of the child to the classroom. But, unfortunately it doesn't get translated well into our classrooms.

Prof. Ramakant Agnihotri [12] says multilingualism is now widely recognised as a natural phenomenon and he has demonstrated this in South African classrooms. In case of India, as said earlier the challenge doesn't really lie within the classroom but in the flawed policies.

In this case for cosmopolitan cities like Delhi we have to recognise languages as languages, not just as dialect, or non-standard variety. At least for primary classes we have to avoid getting into this debate of using standard or non-standard variety of language.

Using what Prof. Bernsten [15] had suggested i.e. taking the middle path. She says that there is nothing like pure and

impure language and all varieties of languages are equally powerful and logical. But to avoid taking extreme steps in the interest of children she suggests focusing on oral language in the primary classes as she says oral language can never be standardised as it is a social process not governed by governments but she also says that there is a need for standard language for ease of communication which children should learn only when they reach class five, after their thinking skills have developed and they have basic mastery of reading and writing skills. In this way the problem of pedagogy can be solved and also the political interest of the state can be ensured.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Shashank S. Parimi wrote the paper and conducted the literature review; Hridbijoy Chakraborty conducted the research and analyzed the data. Both the authors had approved the final version.

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Shashank S. Parimi studied master of arts in education (elementary) from the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, India.

He was trained as an aircraft maintenance engineer, but, he was always passionate about contributing to the world around and that led him to work for education and later a career in the development sector, where he had the privilege of working on large scale reforms at the grassroots level.

His research interests lies in role of language in the construction of social difference and social inequality, sociolinguistics, multilingualism, language and identity.



Hridbijoy Chakraborty studied master of arts in education (elementary) from the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, India & bachelor of arts in Chinese from Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi, India.

He was working with the Delhi Government on various education & social reforms across the state both at bureaucratic and grassroot level.

His research interests lies in sociology of education, social inequality, sociolinguistics, multilingualism, language and identity.