Needs Analysis for Incorporating Translanguaging in EMI/ELT Classrooms
Exploring Multiculturalism in NEP 2020

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Abstract

This paper investigates 'Translanguaging' in English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) and English Language Teaching (ELT) classrooms. With the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, this study reflects on translanguaging and investigates its implications for multilingual education. A needs analysis involving 177 participants from central universities in North India assesses student attitudes, preferences, and challenges related to translanguaging. The findings reveal positive student reception, emphasising benefits in comprehension, inclusivity and cultural exchange. Despite challenges, respondents express a favourable stance, advocating for selective translanguaging. The study contributes to ongoing discussions on inclusive language pedagogies, cultural awareness and transformative approaches aligned with NEP-2020 goals. It highlights the potential of translanguaging to reshape language education paradigms, fostering a more inclusive, multilingual learning environment.

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INTRODUCTION

English in India is a second language and is the first language for many in the present generation. The educational environments in India regarding english learning are established based on policies that aim to reduce the influence of Indian languages within the classroom. This approach ensures that learners are as fully exposed to English as possible. This Target Language (TL)-only methodology involved more interaction and negotiation of meaning in TL (Long, 2000; Pica, 2002). The rationale for the promotion of such language policies was rooted in specific second language acquisition theories of Krashen's Input Hypothesis (Krashen, 1985), Long's Interaction Hypothesis (Long, 1983, 1996) and Swain's Comprehensible Output Hypothesis (Swain, 1985, 1995). These theories suggest that input and context can facilitate language acquisition when simplified. Therefore, exposure to the same is essential for acquiring the Target Language (in this case, English), excluding the use of the mother tongue or the students' first language in classrooms.

Language separation purposely limits how languages can be used in fluid and natural ways and perpetuates the belief among many in and out of education that multilingual students' observable range of diverse language behaviours are problems rather than resources (Macías, 2016). However, the current emphasis has transitioned from quantifying the number of languages an individual possesses to evaluating how they effectively employ their linguistic resources to accomplish their objectives. Implementing NEP-2020 in India recognises using multiple languages in the classroom. This reflects the global multilingual realities and promotes intercultural competencies. Translanguaging in second language acquisition pedagogy changes the ideology in multilingual education systems. Multilingualism is now considered an advantage in learning english. The integration of translanguaging in education signifies progress towards a more diverse system of english that values multiple english varieties.

Review of Literature

In the field of English Language Teaching, 'Translanguaging', as a term for communication, teaching or instruction challenges the idea of language as established in the traditional sense in ELT. Several researchers working in multilingual classrooms such as, Garcia (2009) and Blackledge and Creese (2010), use the term 'translanguaging' to describe multilingual oral interaction. The use of different languages in written texts is explored by Canagarajah (2011), Garcia and Kano (2014), Conteh (2018) and Mertin (2018), to mention a few. According to Becker (1988), language is an ongoing 'process' rather than a 'thing'; it is a 'verb' rather than a 'noun' as in the notion

of 'languaging'. The paradigm shift is from the number of languages that may be provided to the learners for their use towards the idea of how the learners use all the language resources available to attain their goal of language acquisition.

Translanguaging allows learners to utilise not only a system of grammar but their whole language repository or repertoires, where repertoires represent the multitude of ways people use the linguistic resources they have at their disposal in diverse social contexts (MacSwan, 2017). It can also be described as multilingual students using linguistic resources to acquire knowledge and communicate within the globalised world.

Several arguments and disagreements surround translanguaging in education research, language policy and language pedagogy. One such contention is regarding the necessity of conceiving the very concept of translanguaging when the concepts of code-switching and code-mixing already exist to describe various phenomena related to the use of multiple languages. The argument of Blackledge et al. (2014), in this debate, supports and points out the limitations of taking such a stand towards the futility of the conception of the idea of translanguaging. They argue that code-switching and code-mixing support distinguishing monolingual, bilingual and multilingual people. Translanguaging, on the contrary, implies that all individuals are 'multilingual' in some ways, i.e., individuals in general have a range of ways of using languages with varying abilities to use them for speech or writing purposes. Depending on proficiency, we may prefer to speak or write in any of them. As a result of globalisation, social mobility and migration, there is no place for monolingualism. Their arguments suggest that the earlier established concepts related to multilingualism are inadequate in education. Furthermore, concepts like translanguaging also challenge the age-old use of terms such as, 'standard' and 'target' language, as these terms carry the weight of implied categorisation and hierarchies of languages, thereby reflecting power imbalances in their use. Translanguaging, on the contrary, does away with such hierarchies and imbalances and provides a new narrative where the issues related to social justice in language education are at the centre of debates and deliberations. The narrative movement in language education is aimed at unearthing the ways in which language resources are used in our societies, i.e., in and around us, in personal as well as in educational spaces and how this use of resources, according to Blackledge et al., 'reproduces, negotiates and contests social difference and social inequality' (2014, p. 193).

The major opposition to translanguaging in language and education policy, as also pointed

out earlier in this paper, is due to the strict enforcement of only one language, i.e., the target language, in classroom transactions, which Hall and Cook (2012: 297) define as 'entrenched monolingualism' and Cummins (2008) describe as 'two solitudes' referring to keeping the first language and target language separate in personal and educational setting.

OBJECTIVE

In India, with the introduction of NEP-2020, there comes an acknowledgement of the use of multiple languages in the classroom, which not only reflects the multilingual realities in the world (due to global migration and socialisation) but also contributes to the growth of both intercultural competencies and sensibilities and attentive consciousness of the presence of others. Translanguaging is associated with a paradigm shift towards multilingual education systems in the case of second language acquisition practices. Translanguaging is advantageous and beneficial instead of detrimental and disadvantageous to second language learning such as, english. Translanguaging practices in learning the english language in educational settings lead to accepting a more heterogeneous setup where several english varieties are equally valued and language hegemony of usually standard American and British english is underrated. However, a negative perception of translanguaging by its

stakeholders, including students, teachers in training, parents, school administrators and curriculum developers can potentially mitigate most of the advantages associated with translanguaging pedagogy. Consequently, it becomes crucial to perform a needs analysis to examine the attitudes and perceptions of these stakeholders towards translanguaging. To effectively implement translanguaging in EMI/ELT classrooms, conducting a needs analysis that considers the stakeholders' attitudes, the assessment of linguistic diversity and the educational context is imperative.

THE STUDY

This study focuses on the opinions of one of the most significant stakeholders in the educational ecosystem, namely students, by performing a need analysis to examine the attitudes and perceptions of students toward translanguaging. It investigates their stance on translanguaging, their willingness to embrace it in their educational environment and their concerns regarding its integration. It is an empirical study which serves as a base for evaluation research.

Data Collection

Research participants were invited to participate in this research, primarily from two central Universities in North India. One hundred seventy seven participants responded to our invitation to participate. These

research participants were enrolled in undergraduate, postgraduate and PhD courses in english language and literature with additional subjects like B.Ed., social sciences, law, etc, of their respective universities. The official medium of instruction for the courses undertaken by these research participants was english. Respondents were assured of confidentiality and anonymity.

Tools of Data Collection

Data collection took place over two months. Data were collected via a planned questionnaire as the test instrument for this study, which was based on their perception of attitude towards translanguaging. The term translanguaging was simplified and explained in detail in the questionnaire to ensure that each participant understood the concept and the questions well before noting their responses. The response to some questions was noted on a five-point Likert scale, with a range of strongly agreeing, agreeing, neutral, disagreeing and strongly disagreeing with the statements or examples from classroom engagement. The perception questionnaire was divided into four sections. Section A comprised of questions aimed at understanding the profile of the participants and their exposure to the english language and multilingual instruction. Section B had questions to collect participants' views on the benefits of using multiple languages (Translanguaging) in the classroom, section C observed the

participant's views on the challenges of using translanguaging and section D collected the choice of preferences and suggestions by the participants on using translanguaging, followed by additional comments on translanguaging. The responses to the questions of the whole questionnaire have been discussed and interpreted question-wise.

Questionnaires like these can be valuable in evaluating aspects of teachers' linguistic diversity competencies in the educational context. Further, the resource materials used in the classroom, especially that of the curriculum can help evaluate outcomes and the influence of translanguaging on students' academic performance and language development. Following this, policies can be formulated and support can be provided in terms of budget and resource allocation, culminating in the creation of an action plan based on the needs analysis.

To reiterate, this study aimed to investigate a need analysis to examine the attitudes and perceptions of students toward translanguaging. Analyses of responses took place over two months. The analysis has been further discussed in detail based on the sections specified in the questionnaire.

Discussion on Needs Analysis

Section A: Demographics

The demographics of the study indicate that the 177 research respondents were pursuing their

educational degrees in BA, MA, and M.Phil. or PhD from two central universities in North India. The respondents comprised 56.5 per cent undergraduates, almost 34 per cent postgraduates and 10 per cent M.Phil. or PhD students.

In most educational institutions in India, where a widespread and frequently uncontrolled private education is in practice, students with financial means have acquired english language skills early on. Conversely, those lacking the necessary financial resources have yet to encounter significant exposure to english language learning. Consequently, this dichotomy leads to classrooms comprising students with varying degrees of english proficiency.

In the 1980s and 1990s, Agnihotri, Khanna and Mukherjee (1984, 1988a, 1988b, 1993, 1996), along with Sahgal and Agnihotri (1985), conducted numerous studies on the acquisition of english as a Second Language (SL) within the Indian context. One important insight provided by Agnihotri (1991) demonstrated that individuals exposed to english as a second language for five to six years showed a significant outcome. The learners acquire 'striking parallels across linguistic and cultural boundaries' (p.78). This was true for using articles, the order of acquiring tenses and different stages of tense and aspect acquisition in english as L1 and english as L2. Similar studies were conducted by Mukherjee, Agnihotri and Khanna (1993) for tense and aspect, Sahgal and Agnihotri (1985), and Aitchinson and Agnihotri (1985) for the syntax of Indian english.

In the current instance of our study, approximately 53 per cent of the respondents have been exposed to the english language for more than five years. This observation implies that acquiring english as a second language resembles the experience of individuals for whom english is their primary language. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that 20 per cent of the respondents have dedicated three years to studying english, while a substantial 27 per cent have engaged in studying English for less than three years.
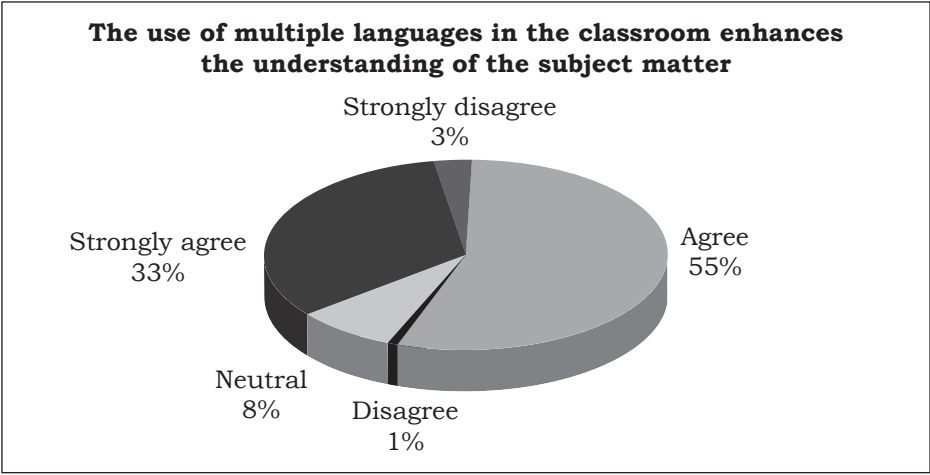
Approximately 79 per cent of the research respondents have participated in an english language classroom where they have been exposed to multilingual instruction. This statistical information holds strong significance, as it provides us with an accurate depiction of the occurrences of multilingualism within English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) and English Language Teaching (ELT) classrooms. Even though teachers undergo training to exclusively teach in the target language within ELT classrooms and utilise english as the medium of instruction in other subjects, the actual classroom instruction reveals the existence of a diverse linguistic setting.

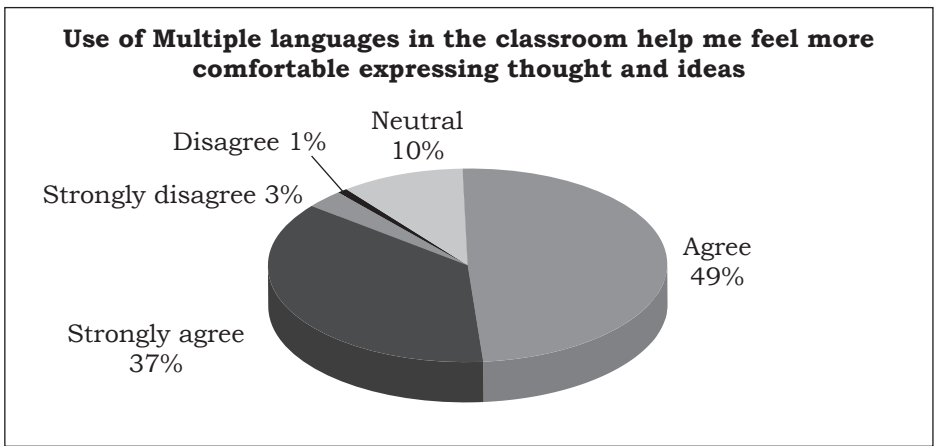## Section B: Benefits of Multiple Languages (translanguaging) in Classroom

Using multiple languages in the educational environment, known as translanguaging, presents many noteworthy benefits. Translanguaging can provide a more inclusive environment to a diverse set of learners, especially for learners from different linguistic backgrounds. This can serve as a bridge where the learners can utilise their mother tongue to express themselves, a language that they are familiar, and comfortable with in which they can elaborate and express their ideas with confidence and clarity. This inclusive nature of translanguaging can help make the students feel confident and motivate them to participate in classroom activities equally. Translanguaging also catalyses profound comprehension and cognitive growth. It recognises that language should not be seen as a barrier but as a medium to facilitate communication. When all learners use their linguistic repertoire to express their ideas better, they feel empowered linguistically. Moreover, this also gives them a platform, especially for first-generation learners, to understand and grasp complex concepts effortlessly. This also stimulates their critical thinking and creative abilities as learners. Therefore, translanguaging in the classroom respects diversity in languages and serves as a bridge to stimulate learning in the classroom.

When enquired about the benefits of using multiple languages in classrooms, the responses indicate that almost 88 per cent agree or strongly agree that it enhances their comprehension of the subject content (Graph 1).

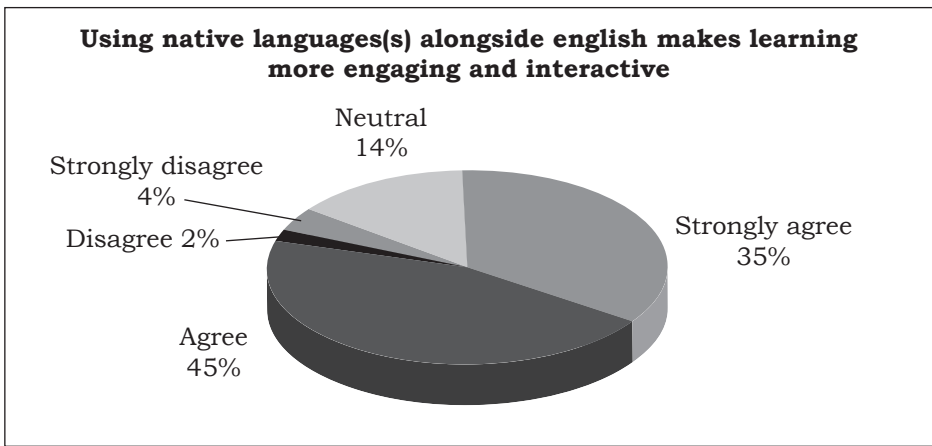*Graph 1: Use of multiple languages to enhance understanding*

Use of Multiple languages in the classroom help me feel more comfortable expressing thought and ideas

Disagree 1%
Neutral 10%
Strongly disagree 3%
Agree 49%
Strongly agree 37%

Graph 2: Use of multiple languages, making it comfortable to express thoughts and ideas

The respondents' responses to their views on translanguaging helping them feel more comfortable expressing thoughts and ideas, revealed that almost 50 per cent of respondents strongly agreed with the idea, and 37 per cent agreed with this statement. Only 4 per cent of respondents disagreed that translanguaging would make them express their thoughts more straightforwardly and effectively as can be seen in Graph 2.

The utilisation of native languages alongside english in Indian higher education is relevant. It can enhance engagement and interactivity in the learning process. Analysing the statistics of Graph 3, 80 per cent of respondents believe in the positive impact of using native languages alongside english and only 9 per cent express dissent, which highlights a significant trend in favour of multilingualism in the classroom.

Using native languages brings cultural relevance and understanding to the learning environment. It helps students grasp complex concepts and enhances comprehension. Native languages overcome language barriers in a diverse country like India. This fosters inclusivity and a positive learning environment. Using native languages improves communication between students and instructors. It allows for clarifying doubts, engaging in discussions and expressing ideas confidently. Using native languages may reduce cognitive load and improve comprehension. It can contribute to a more engaging educational experience. There are challenges in standardising assessment and learning materials when multiple languages are involved. Proficiency in English should be maintained. The question of language use in higher education has policy implications. It requires a balance between linguistic
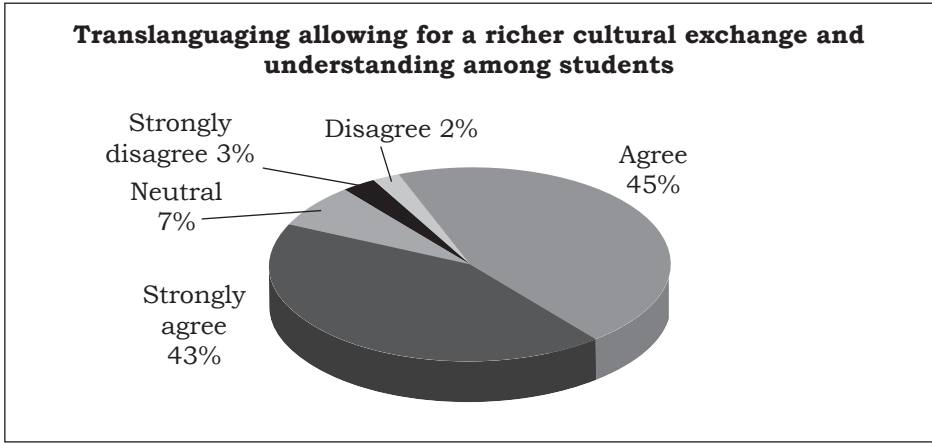
Using native languages(s) alongside english makes learning more engaging and interactive

Neutral
14%

Strongly disagree
4%

Disagree 2%

Strongly agree
35%

Agree
45%

Graph 3: Using native language(s) alongside English making learning process engaging and interactive

diversity and the demands of a global job market. The positive response from students suggests a need for a more inclusive and adaptable approach. Balancing linguistic diversity and addressing challenges is crucial for effective learning outcomes.

Translanguaging in the classroom, where students are encouraged to draw on their multilingual resources to enhance their learning experience, contributes to a richer cultural exchange and understanding among students. The statistics in Graph 4 depict that 88 per cent of respondents support this idea, and only 5 per cent express disagreement, underscoring the positive impact of

Translanguaging allowing for a richer cultural exchange and understanding among students

Strongly
disagree 3%

Disagree 2%

Neutral
7%

Agree
45%

Strongly
agree
43%

Graph 4: Translanguaging allowing for a richer cultural exchange and understanding among students
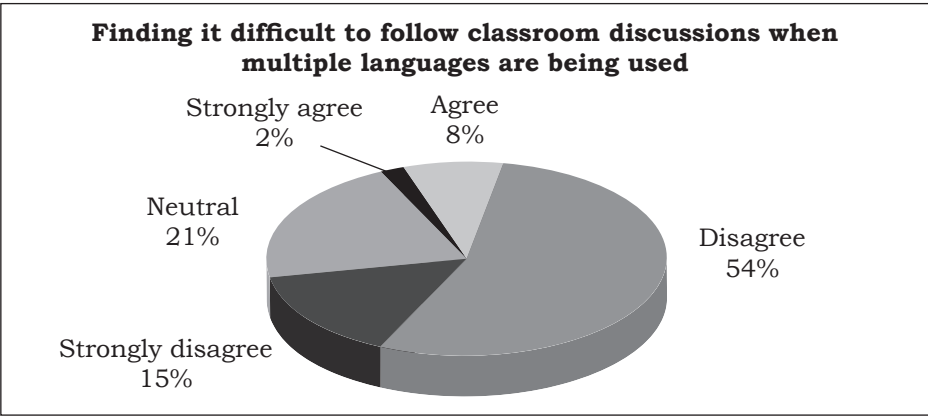
translanguaging in the context of Indian higher education classrooms. Translanguaging can enhance cultural exchange, communication, and learning experiences in Indian higher education. Integrating translanguaging effectively into teaching methodologies can create a more inclusive, engaging and culturally vibrant environment.

Section C: Challenges of Using Multiple Languages

Using multiple languages in an Indian classroom can pose various challenges. India has a vast linguistic diversity, encompassing hundreds of spoken languages. This linguistic diversity presents a challenge in meeting the linguistic needs of all students. Some languages have enjoyed more privilege than others, which has given rise to issues of language hierarchy. Using multiple languages can help overcome this barrier as well. Some learners only have exposure to their mother tongue to read materials in their language to understand concepts better. However, not all resources and classroom materials are available in all languages, which results in educational disparities. Therefore, using multiple languages in the classroom provides these students with equal learning opportunities. It is also noteworthy that sometimes multiple language usage can be limited since not all materials, especially those using technical language and jargon, do not have alternate terminology. Therefore, although using multiple languages in Indian classrooms can have several advantages for celebrating linguistic diversity, it requires careful planning. Such challenges must be addressed to ensure an inclusive environment for all learners.

The respondents were asked if they find it challenging to follow classroom discussions when multiple languages are used; as depicted in Graph 5, it was found that most (69 per cent) of respondents do not
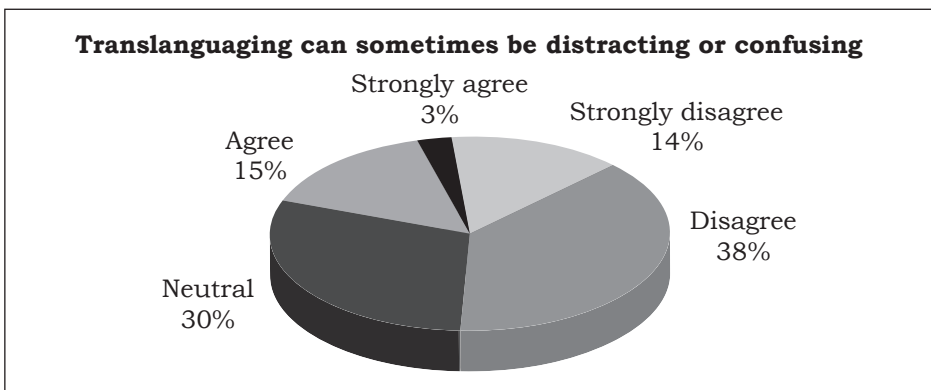

Graph 5: Finding it difficult to follow classroom discussions when
multiple languages are being used

have difficulty following discussions when multiple languages are used; however, a notable 10 per cent find it challenging. Additionally, 21 per cent remain neutral, suggesting a mixed or indifferent response to this teaching approach.
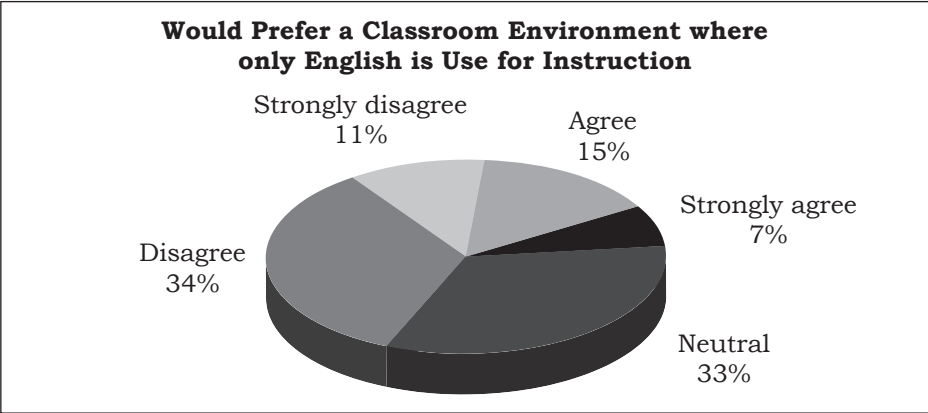
This suggests the respondents have a positive attitude towards translanguaging in EMI/ELT classrooms. However, this is where teachers work towards different ways to be comprehensible. The data demonstrates that a small proportion (10 per cent) of respondents encounter difficulty comprehending classroom discussions when multiple languages are employed, indicating the necessity for attentiveness towards inclusivity and comprehension. Conversely, the majority (69 per cent) exhibit adeptness in adapting to this approach, underscoring the essentiality for educators to ensure that all respondents derive benefit from it. Educators are pivotal in cultivating comprehension through effective instructional strategies and catering to varied linguistic backgrounds. This emphasises the significance of pedagogical methodologies that facilitate clarity and comprehension in translanguaging environments.

Using multiple languages in the classroom can sometimes distract or confuse students. The survey findings indicate that most students, precisely 52 per cent, disagree that having multiple languages in the classroom is a source of distraction or confusion (see Graph 6 below). This suggests a general acceptance among the student body. However, it is worth noting that 30 per cent of the respondents provided a neutral response, which implies a certain level of uncertainty. This uncertainty can be attributed to the teaching strategies employed. Consequently, it becomes evident that educators need to adopt practical approaches that minimise any potential distractions and promote a sense of ease and familiarity among students in multilingual environments.

Graph 6: Translanguaging is sometimes distracting or confusing.

Would Prefer a Classroom Environment where only English is Use for Instruction

Strongly disagree 11%

Agree 15%

Strongly agree 7%

Disagree 34%

Neutral 33%

Graph 7: Preference for a classroom environment where only English is used for instruction
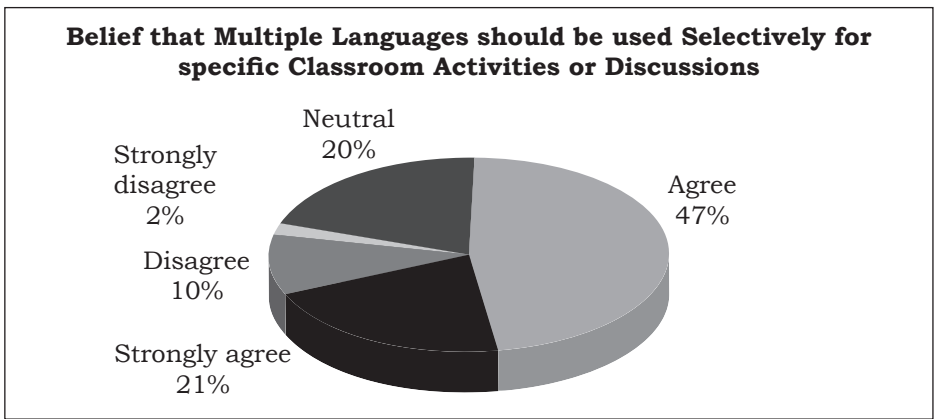
Section D: Preferences and Suggestions

Section D was designed to look at the preferences and suggestions of the respondents. The ninth question in the questionnaire examines the respondent's preference for a classroom where only english is used for instruction.

As indicated in Graph 7, 45 per cent of respondents negate the idea of an english-only environment, whereas 22 per cent prefer a classroom environment where only english is used for instruction. Some uncertainty pervades among the respondents regarding this idea, as the most significant percentage of neutral responses come for this question, almost 33 per cent.

Regarding using multiple languages in the classroom, 68 per cent of respondents agree that translanguaging is positive for inclusion, while 12 per cent disagree.

The disagreement stems from concerns about potential chaos and the need for a careful, student-centric approach. Additionally, 22 per cent are neutral, 2 per cent strongly disagree, and 21.5 per cent strongly agree. Despite prior exposure to multiple languages, there is scepticism about implementing translanguaging selectively in specific activities or discussions, resulting in more neutral responses, as observed in Graph 8. Respondents express a positive attitude towards translanguaging but highlight the importance of a thoughtful and student-focused approach.

In classroom teaching, multiple languages can effectively support students' comprehension, promote linguistic diversity and enhance cultural awareness. Educators can prioritise these aspects by clarifying learning objectives and encouraging respondents to reflect on their
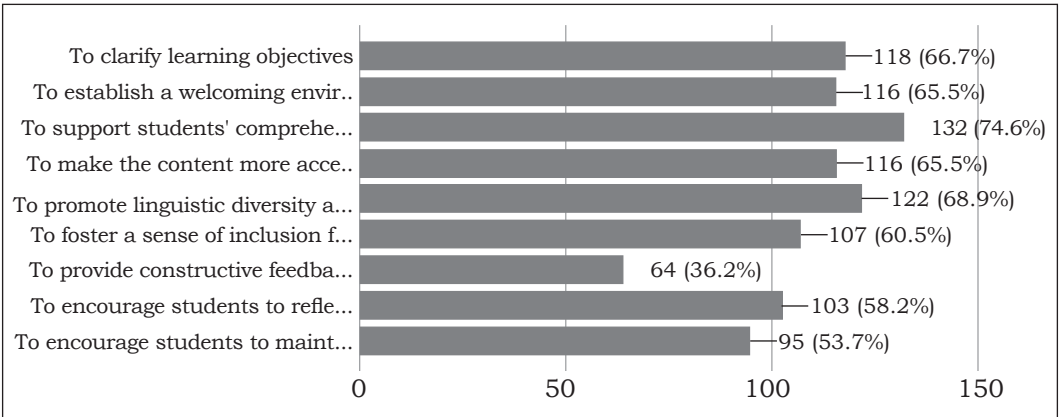
Graph 8: Belief that multiple languages should be used selectively for specific classroom activities or discussions

language use, as is indicated in Graph 9. Creating a welcoming environment involves fostering metacognition, preserving linguistic heritage and providing constructive feedback on language use. The benefits include aiding understanding of complex concepts, fostering diversity, ensuring comprehension of learning objectives, promoting self-awareness about language, creating an inclusive environment, preserving cultural connections and enhancing language skills. The approach should align with educational goals, consider linguistic diversity and address specific student needs.

Moreover, this study finds that translanguaging is an inclusive practice that ensures the participation of all

Graph 9: Ways in which multiple languages can be used in classroom teaching

respondents with multiple languages in the classroom. Teachers' occasional use of other languages is acceptable in specific settings. To enhance student understanding, teachers should employ multiple languages to facilitate clear communication, address doubts and encourage group discussions. Multiple languages are encouraged in lower grade levels (1 to 10). However, the respondents are somewhat inclined towards using only one language, i.e., english, at higher grade levels when teaching english. While teaching language components, minimal multilingualism is recommended, and a unilingual approach is preferred. However, a multilingual approach can be employed when teaching comprehension, with other languages supporting it.

Assigning translation tasks from native languages to english can be beneficial. Concerns may arise when students' native language differs from that of the teachers. However, it is crucial to separate culture from studies, as cultural aspects should be addressed outside the classroom. Teaching a South Indian student in their native language in Bihar, for example, would pose challenges in a diverse classroom setting, making multilingual classes difficult to implement. Every student can learn new languages easily, and using multiple languages in the classroom expands cultural horizons and fosters connections and interactions among learners.

IMPLICATIONS

The implications of this research on translanguaging have far-reaching impacts on teaching, policymaking, educators and learners. Integrating multiple languages in the classroom has benefits and challenges as the paper has discussed in length. One of the significant implications of this research calls for a shift in the paradigm of language education by welcoming a more inclusive setting for learners from different linguistic backgrounds. Such an inclusive nature will bring about a positive learning experience for learners, enabling them to express themselves more confidently and participate equally in all classroom activities. Our research paper suggests that we must embrace translanguaging for linguistic and cognitive growth to stimulate the learners' critical thinking and creative abilities.

This research encourages educational institutions and educators to endorse this pedagogical approach to maximise the benefits of translanguaging. Furthermore, using native languages and learning enhances comprehension and brings cultural diversity to the classroom, facilitating a deeper understanding of complex concepts, especially for learners from diverse backgrounds. It also helps students overcome any language barriers. This research suggests that teacher educators can familiarise themselves with the cultural backgrounds of the learners

and integrate native languages into their teaching-learning process. However, we also acknowledge that translanguaging poses challenges while utilising multiple languages, especially in the Indian educational system, where we have extensive linguistic diversity.

Therefore, policymakers and academic institutions must address these challenges by ensuring equal learning opportunities for all students. Also, efforts need to be made to provide resources in classroom materials in multiple languages to foster a more inclusive linguistic learning environment. Thus, the careful crafting of language policies in higher education is vital. Moreover, teacher training programmes should also concentrate on developing linguistic competencies and encourage teachers to embrace translanguaging as an essential tool. These implications further necessitate more studies on translanguaging in the context of National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 in India.

CONCLUSION

Translanguaging in educational settings is proposed to enhance comprehension of class materials, strengthen the connection between home and school and facilitate better participation among respondents with varying proficiency levels in mixed-ability classes. Translanguaging should be 'deliberately and systematically used' rather than seen as a guilt-making necessity (V. Cook, 2001, p. 418). Language teachers often experience a sense of guilt when resorting to their first language (L1). Still, implementing the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 alleviates this guilt, enabling teachers to work towards transformative practices by establishing inclusive spaces that embrace translanguaging.

Further investigation into classroom observation is necessary. The research framework can draw upon concepts from Systemic Functional Linguistics by Halliday, Pedagogic Discourse Theory by Bernstein and the Initiation Response Feedback Sequences by Sinclair and Coulthard in discourse analysis and other theories. Incorporating translanguaging could enhance current teaching methodologies and address the power imbalances prevalent in language learning and other academic domains.

Translanguaging is valuable for bilingual or multilingual teachers with extensive and culturally diverse linguistic repertoires. It provides a platform for learners to take charge of their learning process and for the teachers to build such an environment by facilitating change and dispelling negative language stereotypes. While most studies on translanguaging preferences and practices have been researched in western contexts, often in subjects other than the english language, the introduction of NEP-2020 in India and its implementation in various

institutions present an opportunity for research on translanguaging and its effectiveness.

Although language policies, curriculum design and evaluation often prioritise national or standardised languages, there are promising change cues. Educators who value translanguaging to build rapport with respondents foster mutual linguistic empowerment and researchers working in this field can potentially shape the future translanguaging pedagogies in classrooms.

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