

The Challenges of English Language Teaching in Multilingual Classroom

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Received: November, 14, 2023

Revised: Desember, 14, 2023

Accepted: Desember, 30, 2023

Abstract

The concept of multilingual describes someone who is able to speak, write, or comprehend multiple languages. It includes the use of two or more languages in a variety of contexts and for various kinds of purposes. The paper aims to explore the challenges of English language teaching in multilingual classrooms. The paper examines the different views of researchers on this topic, using a review of literature method. The research paper looks at the implementation of multilingual education in a few different nations. The challenges faced by those who wish to introduce multilingual education are also discussed. Teaching English in a multilingual context presents a significant challenge for English teacher due to the linguistic diversity in classrooms. Multilingual students often lack confidence in using English due to a reluctance to make mistakes. The curriculum may not be suitable for enhancing students' English proficiency. The study indicates that a student-centered approach, which takes into account the individual needs and backgrounds of learners, is essential for effective language teaching in multilingual classrooms.

Keywords: Multilingual Classroom, English Language Teaching, Challenges

Introduction

The condition in which more than two languages are employed in the same context for the same purpose is termed called multilingualism (Poudel, 2010). Similarly, according to (Li, 2008) multilingual refers to anyone who can communicate in more than one language, be it active (through speaking and writing) or passive (through listening and reading). The use of many languages, either by an individual speaker or by a community of speakers, is known as multilingualism. Multilingual education commonly referred to as bilingual education, utilizes two or more languages as a medium of instruction in educational settings.

The main aspect in learning English is teaching. Teaching English in a classroom with a varied students presents significant challenges for both the teacher and the students. According to (Patil, 2008) teaching English is about giving the students the skills they need to read, speak, and write fluently rather than simply sharing information. Additionally, teachers must concentrate on the students' learning context and how it will benefit them (Derakhsan, 2015). Thus, teaching language necessitates that students develop their professional and personal skills. The main aspect in the acquisition of English is teaching. Furthermore, learning English is becoming more and more important, and it is developing into the main part of the teaching and learning process as well as a crucial component of the lives of students. Although English is seen as a vital tool for functioning in the global economy (Paik, 2008), the rate of people learning the language as a second language is growing quickly every day.

Furthermore, the teacher inevitably finds themselves instructing a class of students with varying linguistic and cultural backgrounds (Adamo, 2015). It means that it can be difficult for students and teachers to communicate in the classroom. In the classroom, it might be difficult for all those involved

in teaching and learning activities to speak to students in their mother tongue. Students in a multilingual classroom come from a variety of linguistic and cultural backgrounds, and their psychological, sociological, and physical components all have a significant impact on how successfully they can acquire languages. When students speak many first languages, the class is said to be multilingual. A multilingual classroom is comparable to a monolingual classroom in which every student speaks the same language. In a monolingual classroom as opposed to a multilingual one, teaching English is easier. While the target language will serve as both the teacher's and the students' common language in a multilingual classroom, it can be used far more frequently. Different learner behaviors and cultures might cause problems in a multilingual classroom when teaching and learning the target language.

Multilingual classrooms are thought to present the largest challenges for both English language teachers and learners. All of the students in the classroom speak different local languages presents a variety of challenges for both the teachers and the students. Multilingual classrooms are challenging, and it can occasionally be quite tough for English teachers to solve their challenges. A research article on "Obstacle in learning English as a second language among intermediate students of districts Mianwali and Bhakkar, Pakistan" (Khan, 2016). In order to explore the challenges faced by the English language teachers and students in the multilingual setting of district Mianwali and district Bhakkar, Punjab Pakistan. Teachers and college students made the participants. The study's findings demonstrated that the experienced teachers, educational policies, examination processes, and lengthy curricula or syllabus make it challenging for college students to acquire the English language. Similarly, Rasheed, Zeeshan & Zaidi (2017) conducted a research article on "Challenges of Teaching English Language in a Multilingual Setting: An Investigation at Government Girls Secondary Schools of Quetta, Baluchistan, Pakistan". This study to investigate the challenges female secondary school teachers encounter when instructing English in their multilingual classrooms. The study's findings highlighted several challenges. The linguistic diversity found in schools is an enormous difficulty for English teachers when teaching the language in a multilingual setting. Although they are afraid of making mistakes, the students in the multilingual classrooms lack confidence while using the English language. It's possible that the curriculum isn't designed to assist students get better at English. Teachers frequently employ code-switching to instruct students in multilingual classrooms. Furthermore, Shoaib & Ayaz (2021) conducted a research article on "A study on the challenges face by teachers in teaching English in multilingual classroom at secondary level in public schools of Liaquatabad town Karachi". This study looks at the challenges teachers of English in bilingual classes at the public school in Liaquatabad, Karachi. The results of the study showed that teachers in bilingual classrooms encountered numerous challenges. Since they are unsure of their own mistakes, students in multilingual classrooms must use the English language. For supplementary students who attempt to improve their English proficiency in a multilingual classroom, the curriculum strength is appropriate. The teacher uses code-exchanging to teach students. Nalunga (2013) carried out a research study on "Teaching and learning English in a multilingual classroom: A study of code switching in an English Foreign Language/English Second Language teaching/learning situation" with the aim of code-switching is an asset or a problem in a multilingual classroom. The findings of the study show that code-switching is a natural phenomenon in second language development and that code-switching has a positive impact on second language development as it fulfils a significant number of functions in the classroom, including vocabulary and concept development, need for clarification and emphasis, provides a learning strategy for second language acquisition, and generally helps students maintain and develop their second language.

Poudel (2010) conducted a research on "Teaching English in Multilingual Classroom of Higher Education". The main objectives of the study were to identify the problems and challenges of multilingual classroom, to find out how the teachers behave linguistically in the classroom while teaching English, to find out the reactions/attitudes of the students towards their teachers' use of language in the classroom and out of the classroom and to suggest some pedagogical implications. On the basis of the questionnaire and the responses of the teachers and students, the list of problems faced by the non-Nepali mother tongue speaking students were communication related problems, interaction related problems, comprehension related problems, structural organization related problems, content delivery related problems. And to deal with the problems, the ways they used for this were Inviting students for group discussion, formation of language groups (if possible) in the large classes, inviting them to translation activities, asking simple questions about their casual activities and suggesting them with instrumental motivation. Dhillon and Wangiru (2013) published an article entitled "Challenges and

Strategies for Teachers and Learners of English as a Second Language: The Case of Urban Primary School in Kenya” the study focused on the challenges and strategies for the teaching and learning English as a second language in primary level. The article described the various difficulties faced by English second language teachers and students in Kenya’s multilingual environment, including the fact that most students spoke their mother tongue at school, which limited their ability to learn English, the reality that teachers mixed languages during English lessons, and the real life that students struggled with English sounds that were not present in their native tongue.

The previous review literature suggests that multilingual classroom teaching face challenges worldwide. Additionally, the literature review shows that language teachers need to be aware of difficulties that are sensitive to the language used by their students. As a result, the majority of the literature suggested that the order to address the challenges that come up during the English language teaching in multilingual classrooms, there is a need for qualified and component teachers.

Multilingual classes consist of students speaking different languages and are most often found in English speaking countries where students have come with an aim to learn English. Multilingual students are becoming more prevalent in many educational setting right now (Singleton & Aronin, 2018). This rise has prompted research into multilingual education models in an effort to give multilingual students equitable access to school, increase their chances of success, and enhance their academic performance (Hobbs, 2012). Thus, in English as a second language classroom, the learning activities and use in practice present a challenge to teachers and students too. The language diversity in the classroom makes it difficult for teachers to teach English in a multilingual classroom. There are many various ethnic communities and languages used in different nations, which makes it challenging for teachers to teach English to students from linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Methods

The literature review process was applied in this study, which methodically examines and assesses relevant previous studies on the topic or topic of study (Snyder, 2019). The methodology for conducting a literature review involves a systematic approach to ensure a comprehensive and coherent synthesis of existing knowledge on a given topic. Furthermore, in secondary data analysis, the body of current literature containing theories and empirical research findings in a specific topic and scope is gathered, evaluated, and integrated with the aim of identifying significant discoveries, gaps, tensions, inconsistencies, or suggesting future study direction (Hulland, 2020). This study reviewed several articles related to the challenges of English language teaching in multilingual classrooms.

Result and Discussion

The study aimed to determine the challenges of English Language Teaching in multilingual classrooms. Some of the major challenges are discussed as follows:

Weak Linguistic Background

A lot of students consider it difficult to understand even basic English sentences, and even after being taught the language several times, students still hesitate to used it in conversation. The students challenge with their fluency in English. The influence of different regional language could be visible in the interactions between teachers and students in multilingual classrooms. When teachings are given only in English, the learners cannot understand it. In multilingual class showed that these was constant code-switching taking place in the classrooms between the teachers and the students.

Anxiety Among Learners

The level of anxiety that students experience in multilingual classrooms was another challenge. Students without an English language background are more likely to listen passively in class and not actively participate in discussions or activities. Language anxiety is another problem that affects student in the classroom. It is characterized as a feeling of anxiety and nervousness that is mainly related to situations involving the used of a second language, such as speaking, listening, and learning. The students worry that if they say something improper, the teacher or other students would make fun of them. These hysterical symptoms show that students are uncomfortable in a multilingual classroom because they are unable to express their feelings.

Lengthy Syllabus

A lengthy syllabus may also be a challenge for teaching in a classroom with many languages used. Students are given a time limit to cover up the curriculum, which becomes more difficult when the category involves many languages. The students ignore what the teacher says. Due to that, teachers have a deadline to finish the syllabus and are unable to retake a lesson. The needs and perspectives of the students are usually ignored when teachers are pushed for time. Students in these classes are rarely engaged with the teachers and are typically mute or uninterested.

Lack of Teacher Trainings

There don't seem to be enough opportunities for government teacher in schools to engage in inclusive, multilingual education. Teachers who teach in multilingual classrooms encounter particular challenges, thus they should be properly educated to handle these challenges. Professionally trained and groomed teachers are much better able to manage multilingual classes than less prepared teachers who have to work extra hard because of the variety of languages. In a multilingual circumstance, students also need to be more attentive and involved in order to receive information more efficiently.

Mismatch Between Language of Instruction and Dominant Learner's Familiar Language

In multilingual classrooms, the language of instruction could serve as a barrier to the literacy development of the students. The learners' prevalent familiar language and the language of teaching are not matched.

Conclusion

Teaching English in a classroom with many languages presents many complicated challenges. The language barrier is one of the most evident problems because students may speak different languages and develop from different countries. Students might discover it more challenging to learn English as well as to interact with the teacher and each other as a result of this. The cultural diversity of students is another difficulty since it might result in varying norms, values, beliefs, and expectation regarding learning and education. Teacher must be aware of these differences and adapt their teaching methods accordingly. Teaching English in a multilingual classroom is complex and challenging task that requires teachers to be aware of the language, cultural, and learning differences of their students. However, with the right approach, it can also be a rewarding experience that helps students develop important skills and attitudes. The study indicates that a student-centered approach, which takes into account the individual needs and backgrounds of learners, is essential for effective language teaching in multilingual classrooms.

Acknowledgments

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to all those who have contributed to this research project.

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