

Using Learners' Home Language in Teaching English at the Secondary Level in West Odisha

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Abstract

Direct method, where the learners' L1 was treated as a hindrance in L2 learning, was the best method in 1970s. However, theories of bilingual education advocate the use of L1 in teaching English. But these theories seem to have neglected the existence of multiple non-standard languages under a language. This study intends to examine the effects of adopting local dialects and culture in teaching English to indigenous speakers.

The study assumed that *Sambalpuri* dialect speaking learners face comprehension problems as their home language is neglected in classroom and it focuses on learning difficulties arising out of it. This study hypothesized that the use of learners' home language and forms of culture may help them develop reading skills in English.

The study attempts to find out how far multilingual education would be effective for the target group. Thirty three regional medium learners are taken as the sample of the study. Questionnaires, interviews, reading comprehension tests are used as tools. The tests are intended to see the difference between the impacts of using local and standard dialect in reading comprehension in English.

Analysis shows that learners benefit if their home language is used as a resource in teaching English.

Introduction

There have been a number of studies on role and use of L1 in L2 learning but very few studies have addressed a grave issue like dialect and sub-standard language speakers' problems in learning for their first language not being used in pedagogy. Studies in 1970s and 80s on role of L1 in teaching and learning L2 brought in a method like 'bilingual method' and having felt the

importance of using L1 in L2 instruction, use of Regional language was advocated by National Educational Policy. Regional language means the standard language of the state according to the 'three languages formula' proposed by Official Languages Act (1961) and modified by Kothari Commission (1964). These policies, although productive for standard language speakers, have neglected or have not focused on the fact that every Indian language has many dialects and sub-standard languages. This is a problem associated with all the Indian states and almost all the Indian languages.

Context in general

English is generally taught through the L1 of the state in mainstream education or the Government schools. But the use of standard language of the state may not be convenient and useful for the learners who speak a language or dialect other than the standard language. The 2001 Census has identified 1652 mother tongues or home languages and those were grouped under 122 languages. Of the 122 languages recorded in the Census, only 26 are used as medium of instructions in schools (Jhingran). Learners belonging to the rest non – scheduled languages or dialects face difficulties in the schools as they do not get education through their own language. A rough assessment shows that almost 25% of primary and secondary school children face moderate or severe problems on account of their home language being different from the school language.

However, the discussed study is concerned with teaching-learning situations and pedagogic problems in Odisha, western part of Odisha, to be specific.

Specific Context

Western part of Odisha includes as many as ten districts of Odisha like Kalahandi, Bolangir, Nuapada, Sundergarh, Boudh, Deogarh, Bargarh, Sonapur, Jharsuguda, and Sambalpur where Sambalpuri is the dominant language. Almost all the population of these districts speaks Sambalpuri at home and community. So, it is very much evident that Sambalpuri is their first language. According to 2011 census, Odisha has a population of 4,19,47,358 out of which about 1,72,92,730, roughly around 1.7 crore people, and constituting 41.23% of total population of Odisha and 1% of Indian population belong the Western Odisha. The home language or first

language of this population is Sambalpuri which is described as a dialect or a sub-standard language and not used in academic contexts which invites many pedagogic problems.

The Research Problem

The Sambalpuri Government regional medium learners face problems on account of their home/first language not being used in pedagogy. The present study concentrates on their problems. The problem pertaining to second language learning in the context is that home language or mother tongue or first language of the learners is not equal to the first language used in the school. Odia, the first language of the state is used in teaching all over the state. But linguistically and structurally Odia is different from Sambalpuri, the home language of learners. So, the use of L1 in teaching of English does not support the discussed learners in any respect. Moreover, the forms of culture which are very much different from the culture of mainstream Odisha also do not find a place in pedagogy. In this context, the study attempts to explore the extent of problems faced by learners because of these linguistic and cultural alienations.

Problems specific to Reading Comprehension

The only exposure to English Language the rural Sambalpuri learners get is through the prescribed text books. In this context, if the inputs in English i.e. the readings texts are not comprehensible for them, they cannot do well in reading comprehension.

They do not get exposure to English reading texts outside the school. Even in the school, they do not get enough scope for the silent reading and development of other sub skills of reading. The prescribed reading texts do not seem appealing to them as those are dealt with through the use of standard Odia which is another incomprehensible language for them.

Reading is related to cognition involving four types of Comprehensions like;

- Literal Comprehension (a low level understanding only from the textual information)
- Making inferences, finding central idea, drawing conclusions, and reasoning.
- Critical reading (going beyond the text and making judgments)
- Creative thinking (ability to come up with innovative and new ideas)

When reading involves all these cognitive procedures, it demands a high level of understanding of the text. But in the present context, the learners are not even able to decode the English reading text properly to get at least a surface level meaning.

D. Kamhi-Stein in his article “ Reading in Two Languages” states that readers mentally translate the given target language text into their home language to get the meaning and he adds that it is a successful reading strategy. But in the present context, the use of home language of the learners is not encouraged and they do not even get support through their home language. Moreover, the reading instructions, word meanings, motivation, and explanations are also given in standard Odia.

In this way neither the Language resource nor the schema of the learners is used in the second language reading in spite of the existence of the fact that mother tongue and schema of learners help them in learning second language.

Assumptions of the Study

All the above mentioned observations and arguments lead to assumption that learners face problems in understanding terms and concepts used in standard Odia and because of that, they face difficulties in learning English as Odia is used as medium of instruction. Also the study assumed that learners do not get scope to read, think, and comprehend English texts using their own home language as resource language.

Some items of the questionnaire, and interviews were set with an objective to establish these assumptions right or wrong.

Hypotheses of the Study

The study hypothesized that use of learners’ home language in teaching English may help the learners learn English better. Another hypothesis of the study was that use of the learners’ home language and the forms of Culture and tradition may help them develop reading skills as it may work well to activate and make use of their schema while reading English texts.

Although there was no academic study on Sambalpuri context to provide a theoretical support to the study, it has drawn its theoretical underpinnings from several similar studies in native and

non-native contexts, and also from established theories by linguists and language practitioners. Some closely related theories and studies are as follows.

Research Questions

The mentioned study attempted to obtain answers to the following questions:

Is multilingual education practised in the learning and teaching of English when the society in question is largely multilingual?

How far multilingual education be effective among the target group of learners?

Review of Literature

Dhir Jhingran in his article “ Diversity in Primary Education in India”, identifies four groups of children who face a moderate to severe learning disadvantage on account of their home language being very different from the language of instruction at school. The four groups are as follows:

- Tribal learners who speak their indigenous language at home. Their language is very different from the regional standard language used in the school.
- **Dialect Speakers** - Children who speak a language that is considered a ‘dialect’ of the regional language and have low comprehension of the standard language used at school. For all purposes, the school language becomes a second language for the children.
- Children of migrants who move from one state to another also face problems in education. They speak a language that is not even used anywhere in the host state.
- Children whose first language, though written and well developed, is not used as a medium of instruction at school. Urdu and Kashmiri speakers are example of such category.

Children belonging to all the above mentioned categories face difficulties in learning but the present study is concerned with dialect speakers. The world of Sambalpuri learners is largely multilingual as they speak a language at home and are expected to use another language at school. The extent and nature of learning difficulties faced by the children who do not speak or

understand the language used as MOI (Medium of Instruction) depend on several factors such as *level of intelligibility* of the language used as MOI, the *socio-economic background* of the children, *exposure to standard language* outside the school and *motivation to learn the school language*.

Apart from the issue of an unfamiliar language being used at school, the alienation is compounded by the attitudes of the teachers towards the language and cultures of the learners belonging to particular ethno-linguistic groups. This is especially true in the case of teachers who are non-tribal and those who do not belong to dialect speaking communities.

UNESCO says that children learn faster through their mother tongue. And here language practitioners like Jhingran, A. K. Mohanty, G. Rajagopal and Tove Skutnabb kangas suggest multilingual education for the mentioned categories of learners.

Dialect speakers as Bi/multilinguals?

The discussed contexts seems to be multilingual in nature but before being judgmental enough to describe the contexts as multilingual, it is necessary to see whether and how they are monolingual, bilingual or multilingual. For that, it is required to look into some definitions by established language experts in the field.

Definitions of bilingualism based on competence are as follows:

“Native-like control of two or more languages” (Bloomfield, 1933 quoted in Skutnabb-Kangas 1981)

“Active, completely equal mastery of two or more languages” (Braun, 1937, quoted in Skutnabb-Kangas, 1981)

“An ideal bilingual is, of course, two native speakers rolled into one” (Haugen, 1972)

Going by these strict definitions, nobody in the described context would be a bilingual. Sambalpuri speaking population would meet the criteria to be only a monolingual.

Some other definitions are more accommodative and focus on the functional aspects of language to describe somebody as bilingual.

“At least some knowledge and control of the grammatical structure of the second language” (Hall, 1952, in Kangas, 1981)

or a much more accommodative definition like

“Understands the foreign language without being able to speak it” (Pohl, 1965, in Kangas, 1981).

“The alternate use of two or more languages by the same individual” (Mackey, 1970, in Kangas, 1981)

As per Wikipedia, a multilingual person is one who can communicate in more than one language, be it actively through speaking and writing or passively and interactively through reading, listening or perceiving. A multilingual person is generally referred to as a polyglot where *Poly* means ‘many’, and *glot* means ‘language’.

These considerations bring the idea of describing the target population as polyglots as they are exposed to many languages and at least they can function in as many as four languages those are Sambalpuri, Odia, Hindi and English.

Now, having termed the target population as multilinguals and polyglots, it is required to see kinds of programmes available and pedagogy suggested for them.

Different Programmes of Bilingualism

Depending on the combination of programme goals, status of the student group, proportion of instructional time through each language, the sociolinguistic and philosophical situation in the immediate community, bilingual education has been stratified into 5 different types (Cummins, 2007). Those are *Programme for National Minority Groups*, *International Minority Groups (migrants)*, *Deaf and Hard-hearing Communities*, *Dominant or Majority Language Group Students*, *Indigenous Language Groups*. The discussed study is concerned with bilingual programmes meant for Indigenous groups.

These programmes involve the use of indigenous or native languages as medium of instructions. For example, the Maori Immersion programme in New Zealand as well as various bilingual programmes U.S and Canada involving native languages. These bilingual programmes are aimed at the revival or revitalization of languages those have become endangered (Cummins).

In Indian context, the indigenous people are known as ‘tribals’ and dialect users. Though guided by the statutory recognition in favour of mother tongue education to linguistic minorities (Article 350-A), languages associated with tribal are charged with minimum functional use. Educational needs of tribal are catered for through the languages of dominant cultures. There doesn’t seem much realization of the difficulties the rural dialect speaking population faces which arise out of unintelligibility of the instant high standard projected in the mother tongue textbooks. Such school standard may be quite unrelated to their real life communication. As a result, many of them find it difficult to relate the structure and the content of education to their way of life. Many dialect user children fail to continue school after primary classes as the difference between the “school language” and the “home language” shows an increased curve.

In such a scenario, efforts were made through various policies and orientations to increase the literacy rate among tribals and dialect speakers. In this endeavour, diverse approaches of transmitting literacy skills have emerged on the scene; conventional educators profess strict use of standard language of the state, whereas liberal educators recommend a bi-dialectical approach of a gradual phasing over a period of time from mother tongue to standard language. Some educators adopt a peculiar approach by accommodating a variety of dialects/speech in spoken language in the classroom, but at the same time focus shifts to standard language at the written level. This is a pluralistic model of literacy in which a variation in speech is regarded as a tool of communication.

This approach promotes the cultivation of positive values for the diversity of speech varieties prevailing in a group in response to the demands of situation, identity, and communicative task (Khub Chandani, 1996).

The present study is related to the programmes for indigenous group as it targets to explore the learning problems of a community which speaks a dialect other than the Standard language spoken and used as medium of instruction throughout the state.

Teaching English in Dialect Speakers’ Contexts

As per Jhingran, Dialect speakers are one of the four groups who face difficulties on account of their home language being different from the standard language used as MOI.

There are several Dialects of all the languages in the country those are not used in formal context with a consideration of it being a sub- standard language. English language and culture are very unfamiliar to the learners and when an unfamiliar language is taught through the use of another unfamiliar language and culture, it becomes difficult for the learners to decode the input and thus, they face learning difficulties.

National Knowledge Commission (2008) considers this grave problem and suggests the promotion of multilingualism. It says that language issues must be explicitly taken on board in designing school curricula and methods of teaching English. It is evident from the report of the NKC that it suggests bilingual/ multilingual education for the children belonging to dialect and tribal language speaking communities.

The Role of L1 in L2 Learning

The role played by L1 (first language) in L2 (second language) learning has been an area of interest for many language experts since 1950s. In the behaviourist ideology L1 was seen primarily as a source of error that crept into second language learning. It was believed that the difference in the two languages (L1 and L2) can lead to a phenomenon where the features of L1 will be transferred into L2 which will result in the formation of ungrammatical and unacceptable sentences. Theorists of behaviourist ideology like Robert. C. Lado (1957) and C.C. Fries (1945) opined that this transference of the features will ultimately lead to a kind of imposition of L1 structures over L2. So language teaching mainly concentrated on drilling out errors from the repertoire of the language learner and treating L2 learning as a fresh learning where L1 didn't have any role to play.

Later on, the studies in the areas of cognitive and psycholinguistic processing recognised the value of L1 in the learning of L2. Larry Selinker (1977) proposed the theory of inter language which described that a language learner at any point of time shows a 'transitional competence' where features of the already acquired L1 interact with the L2 features to be acquired. In the inter language studies, L1 is seen as a 'system' on to which the learner fall back whenever s/he feels the absence of the required L2 knowledge during communication. It is more of a communication strategy than an inability to learn. The studies those followed (Flynn 1985, Gass 1987, White 1985) viewed L1 as a starting point which provides the basis on which L2 develops.

Recent studies in the area places more emphasis on the significance of L1 in the learning of L2. L1 can be judiciously used by the teachers in the language classes to aid the teaching of L2. But here we need to understand that use of L1 does not mean use of standard language of the state always. First language, in many contexts, means the home language or the indigenous language used by the dialect speakers and tribal learners. Use of another alien language in the name of using L1 in teaching L2 makes the situation even more problematic. Thus, it is necessary to see what model of bilingual education the context needs.

Drawing from the discussed theories, definitions, concepts and studies, the present study attempted to explore the problems pertaining to the specific population. For that, specially designed study was conducted and possible solutions were suggested as per the findings of the study. The details of the study conducted are as follows.

Method

Participants

Since the study is dialectical one, it needed the involvement of high school students who are **Sambalpuri dialect** speakers. Thirty three learners from a state government regional medium school called **Sinapali High School** in the district of **Nuapada** from **Western Part of Odisha** were taken for the study. The home language of thirty two learners out of thirty three is **Sambalpuri dialect**. These learners were from Sambalpuri-speaking middle class families who hardly use any language other than Sambalpuri outside the classroom. All of them were from 8th standard and belonged to the age group of twelve-thirteen with exposure to English teaching for five years. Learners were chosen randomly from a section of seventy two students. Their proficiency in Sambalpuri, Odia, or English was not considered while choosing the sample.

Five teachers were involved in the study. Three teachers were from the school where study was carried out and another two were from nearby schools. All the teachers belonged to the Sambalpuri speaking Community but interestingly all the teachers have mentioned Odia as their mother tongue. Four of them are trained teachers.

Tools used for Data Collection

Classroom observation checklist, Reading comprehension tests in Sambalpuri, Odia and English, Questionnaire for learners and teachers, and semi-formal personal interview format for participants and teachers were used as the tools for gathering data for the study.

Materials

The reading comprehension tests in three languages intended to test the proficiency, level of comfort and performance of the learners in different languages. This was done in two phases. First phase intended to know the interest and the performance of the learners in the reading text in their home language, academic L1 i.e. Odia, English passage based on their own culture and Standard English text. The second phase of tests intended to see the impact of the scaffolding given in their home language Sambalpuri and standard Odia in English reading activities. Standard English passages were chosen to carry out these tests. Readers were asked to comprehend the given passages. In this phase, different passages were supported or simplified by different gloss like Sambalpuri, Odia, and English. Phase two of the study intended to see the impact of scaffolding given in their home language in contrast to their academic L1 Odia.

Questionnaires were designed for both learners and teachers to gather information about the profile of the learners and teachers, the language used in formal instructions in the classroom, the language that is in frequent use by the learners and teachers in and outside the classroom and to know whether there is difficulty for the learners in understanding the academic L1 of the state.

Personal informal interviews of the learners were taken to know the language in use in the classroom and the language in which they are most comfortable with.

Procedures

Phase I

The phase I included four reading comprehension tests of four different types involving Sambalpuri, Odia, and English Language. None of these passages was provided with glossary for the help of the learners. These passages in the first phase of the study intended to assess the performance of the learners in Sambalpuri, Odia, and two English passages out of which one was based on their culture and another was Standard English passage.

Type 1- Sambalpuri Reading Passage

On the second day of the study, the subjects were given a Sambalpuri passage to comprehend. A rural folk tale was the content of the passage. The story was in Sambalpuri language and was related to their cultural background. The script used in the passage was Odia, but the style of presentation matched to the spoken Sambalpuri language.

Type 2- Odia Reading Passage

Reading Comprehension passage Type 2 was an Odia passage. It was not related to their background. It was an extract from a story of a story book “*Kahani*”(Story) prescribed in secondary level.

Type 3- English Reading Passage based on Sambalpuri Culture

Type 3 passage was an English passage based on Sambalpuri culture. It was about their biggest local festival “*Nuakhai*”. A small Sambalpuri story from a book of folk-tale was translated into English to get this text. The given text for comprehension was in English, but it was based on the culture of the subjects.

Type 4- Standard English Reading Passage

This was a non-Sambalpuri English passage with a standard to match secondary level. The content of the passage was a story of a forest. It was in Standard English and not related to the back ground of the subjects.

Phase II

Five types of English reading passages were tried out in phase II of the study. All the passages were in Standard English but those were glossed with different languages.

Type 5 - Type 5 reading comprehension passage was an English passage with **Sambalpuri gloss**. The passage was not at all familiar to them. It was not related to their cultural background. But the advantage of this passage was the Sambalpuri gloss given for all the difficult words. Sambalpuri language was used while dealing with the reading lesson.

Type 6 - This was a reading comprehension passage in Standard English. It was supported with **Standard Odia gloss** which is the academic L1 of the learners but not their home language. Only Standard Odia language was used in the classroom while dealing with this reading activity.

Type 7 - Reading comprehension passage type 7 was an English passage with English gloss. Classroom instruction during the reading lesson involved only English language.

Type 8(3+4) - English reading comprehension passage type 8 was a fusion of type 3 and type 4. This passage had more of type 3 and less of type 4. The given English passage was familiar to the background of the learners. It was taken from their local stories. This passage was supported with a glossary where most of the difficult words were explained using Sambalpuri language and some of the words were explained in English language. Mark of the culture of the learners and their home language was dominant in this passage although it was an English passage.

Type 9(4+3) - This passage again was also a mixture of two types but it was just the reverse of the type 8. It was fusion of more of type 4 and less of type 3. The English reading passage given to the subjects was not familiar to them. It was a Standard English passage. Most of the explanations given in the glossary of this passage were in Standard English and only few words were explained in Sambalpuri language. Standard English was dominant in this passage.

Subjects were given 30 minutes for each reading comprehension passage in both the phases of the study. The phase I was only test of their competence in different languages but phase II included reading comprehension lessons. Every passage was followed by questions of 20 marks. All these questions targeted at certain sub-skills of reading skills.

Analysis

Observation during phase I – The subjects did not ask for any kind of help to comprehend the Type 1 passage. They were happy to see and read a text in their home language. It was their first experience to see their home language in the formal setting of the classroom. While comprehending Type 3 passages also, they did not want any help although it was in English as the passage was based on their festival and thus they were familiar to it. Their back ground knowledge about the culture helped them to get the meaning of the English text. On the other hand, many of them wanted help and asked many questions while comprehending the passage

Type 2 (Standard Odia) and Type 4 (Standard English). The subjects were not given any kind of help in comprehending the passages in phase I.

Observation during phase II- The subjects were comfortable to see a Sambalpuri gloss with an English passage while dealing with passage type 5. Still, some of them wanted me to explain some sentences in Sambalpuri. On the other hand, when they were given passage type 6, which was an English passage with Standard Odia gloss, they wanted those Odia explanations to be explained further. Dealing with the comprehension of passage type 7, which was an English passage with English gloss, was difficult for them. The subjects had many questions to ask about the word meanings and explanation of the sentences.

When they were asked to comprehend the passage type 8, which was a mixture of type 3 and type 4 with more type 3, they were comfortable. They solved it without any question. But they faced some problems while comprehending the passage type 9 which was mixture of type 4 and type 3 and Standard English was dominant there. The researcher was present during all the experimentations.

Findings

As the study intended to see the role of home language on the reading skills of the learners, the scoring criteria concentrated on the sub-skills of the reading skills. Questions were set to make them *skim* the text for particular information and *scan* it for general information. Some other questions were there to make them *read for detailed information*. And the answer scripts of the subjects were scored looking at whether they have skimmed, scanned, and done the detailed comprehension successfully or not. Grammaticality was not a criterion to evaluate the scripts. Speaking as a whole, successful comprehension of the given text was the main focus in the scoring of the scripts.

The analysis of the scores of all the tests shows that learners have performed very well in Sambalpuri reading comprehension in phase I and English text with Sambalpuri glossary in phase II. They have performed very well in all the passages which were influenced by Sambalpuri dialect. It signifies that home language of the learners play a significant role in the understanding and comprehension of target language.

An analysis of the Findings from Teachers' and Learners' Questionnaire and Interviews

Data collected with the help of learners' questionnaire reveals some interesting information. 100 percent learners say that they are comfortable with Sambalpuri dialect of Odia as it is home language of all of them. 84.84 percent of the sample express that they are not comfortable with the Standard Odia and finally 100 percent learners agree to the statement that use of Sambalpuri language and culture help them understand and learn English better. But some interesting conceptions emerged from the interview of the learners. All most all the learners feel that it is awkward to use Sambalpuri language in formal situations. Again they have thinking in their mind that it would be difficult for them to compete with the learners of mainstream Odisha if they are not good at Standard Odia.

On the other hand teachers also argue that giving importance to local dialect in the classroom may lead to the ignorance of the learners in the L1 of the state leading to their academic failure in higher studies. So, even if all the teachers realize that learners are very comfortable with the use of Sambalpuri in the classroom and they benefit from its use, they do not use it frequently and do not encourage its frequent use by the learners. All most all the teachers have stated that they resort to the use of Sambalpuri when learners fail to understand the English and Odia explanation. Still, they like to stick to the official medium of instructions i.e. Odia.

Of course all the learners do not need the use of Sambalpuri to understand English, but for most of the learners it has been found helpful. Responses of both teachers and learners to the questionnaires and interview indicate that use of Sambalpuri in the teaching of English has significant positive effect on learning.

These questionnaires were administered after the first phase of reading comprehension tests where proficiency of the learners in Sambalpuri, Odia, and English was measured. In later phase, the reading comprehension tests in English were supplied with different scaffoldings like glossary in Sambalpuri, Odia, and English as per the need of the learners to see the impact of the use Sambalpuri language in their teaching. Some texts related to their culture were also used to see the impact.

Overall Interpretation of Results

Analysis of the learners' questionnaire shows that they are really interested about the use of their own home language i.e. Sambalpuri. Most of them express their positive feelings towards the use of Sambalpuri in the classroom while teaching and they firmly believe that the use of Sambalpuri can affect their learning English very positively.

Interviews explored some thoughts of teachers that encouragement of frequent use of Sambalpuri in the classroom may stop their learners from learning Standard Odia which would be problematic for them in future. Some teachers even think that they should use only English in the English classroom to give maximum exposure to the learners in target language and that is why Sambalpuri should not be used. But as all of them now acknowledge that they are very comfortable with Sambalpuri language, it can be effectively used in the classroom.

Analysis of the reading comprehension tests in the first phase of the study shows that learners are comfortable with Sambalpuri reading texts and English texts based on Sambalpuri culture. They performed better in Sambalpuri passage than Odia passage which means they are more comfortable in Sambalpuri as it is their home language. In second phase of the study, all the passages given to them for comprehension were English passages and they performed very well in the comprehension of the passage which was supported with Sambalpuri glossary and motivation compared to the passage which was supplied with Standard Odia glossary and motivation. So, finally the study comes to the conclusion that use of Sambalpuri in the teaching of English will be very fruitful for the learners.

Implications

Krashen's affective filter hypothesis says that the use of learners' mother tongue works well to lower the affective filter by lowering their anxiety of going wrong in using target language. The use of learners' home language and culture create familiar atmosphere and learners get their self-identity and existence in the classroom. But in case of the present context, where the learners speak a non-standard dialect of the first language of the state, the use of Standard language in the teaching of English does not help in lowering the affective filter. Rather, it creates another problem for them as they have to comprehend two unfamiliar languages simultaneously.

Reading is an activity connected with cognition and it is believed that learners mentally translate the texts in target language to their own mother tongue while reading. Learners who use their

mother tongue as a resource are more successful in reading comprehension. It is also observed in the present study that support like motivation and a glossary in their home language helped the learners to perform very well in reading comprehension tests whereas the glossary in the Standard language did not help them comprehend better. So, the findings of the study derive a conclusion that if the home language is used as a support, learners, especially those who are poor at Standard language and L2, can improve their reading comprehension.

Finally, a conclusion can be drawn that as the use of learners' home language and culture result in better learning of L2, the teachers in the dialect speakers' contexts should go for a learner-centered approach with primary importance to the language and culture of the learners. The teachers should make use of the experiences of the learners to help them explore the world of knowledge rather than diminishing their language, culture, feelings and experiences and obviously this attitude will result in better learning.

Possible solutions and Suggestions

As the study finds out the positive impact of the use of local dialect on the learners' reading comprehension, it suggests that teachers should use the home language of the learners as medium of instructions while teaching the learners who speak a dialect other than the Standard language that is the L1 of the state. At least it should be used till the learners become proficient enough in using the dialect in comprehension of L2 reading texts. Then there should be a gradual move from the local dialect to the standard dialect of L1 used in the school. The local dialect or the home language of the learners should not be underestimated in formal contexts. The process of using the local dialect in teaching should start in the primary level to facilitate the learners develop a positive attitude towards the use of their own dialect in learning.

The use of home language of learners or the local dialect is beneficial not only for the learners who are in government schools where Standard language of the state is used as medium of instructions; it is also useful for the learners who study in private English medium schools. So, the school administration should be aware of the fact and they should take steps towards adopting the multilingual education in primary and secondary level. Schools should take steps to arrange some remedial or tutorial classes at least for those learners who are very poor in Standard

language and English as well. These kinds of classes should make use of local dialect of the learners to help them improve their reading comprehension ability.

The board of secondary education should also carryout and facilitate surveys and work towards the implementation of the findings of studies. Taking note of the benefits of the use of local dialect in the teaching of English, the board as well as the government should arrange teacher education programmes to make the teachers aware of the multilingual approach and its implementation. And finally everybody including the learners, teachers, parents, and administration should be made aware of the fact that home language does not stand as barrier to learn another language and multiple language experience helps the learners to have enriched social and linguistic experiences.

Further researches

As the study finds out the need of a support through the local dialect for the learners, it creates a scope for the development of the materials with justified use of the home language, as per the need of the learners. **Materials can be developed** with the use of home language and culture of the learners and those can be tried out over a period of time to see the impact on learning English. Further, a research can be carried out to develop a **teacher training module** for the justified use of learners' home language in the second language classroom in the contexts of dialect speakers. Another research may try to find out **what duration of local dialect use** will enable the dialect speakers to enhance their language learning abilities. Studies similar to the present one can be conducted in the contexts of other languages and dialects speakers throughout. If those studies come up with the similar findings, that can be used in education policy formations and thus the findings would be very useful for speakers of minority language speakers in their English language learning.

Conclusions

No man fully capable of his own language ever masters another.

George Bernard Shaw (1903)

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