

Multilingualism, Multiculturalism and Education: Case Study of Mumbai City

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1. Introduction

India is said to be a socio-linguistic giant and the nerve system of this giant is multilingualism. "Indian multilingualism is huge in size, having 1620 mother tongues reduced to 200 languages.... With the population of many of minorities larger than European countries"(Annamalai E. 2001)¹. This multilingual character of India is represented by Mumbai² City, the industrial capital of India, where people from all over come and settle down. In Mumbai every child is exposed to at least four languages right from its infancy.

India is not only multilingual but multicultural too, having multiple religions, castes, sects, professions and lifestyles.

1.1. Culture

Culture can be described as totality of thought processes, belief systems and behavioural patterns of a community, handed over to them by previous generations. Culture is community specific; it is the peculiarities of the people, who have developed a worldview according to their needs, their modes of living shaped by their geographical and social environments.

1.2. Language

Language is the expression of all these things evolved through communication among members of the community and the culture it represents. Language, like culture, is community specific and is intricately interwoven with the culture it represents. Language helps members of the community to establish, assert and maintain their identity as individuals and as a group, bringing among them a sense of solidarity.

1.3. Education

Education grooms children in such a way that they become capable of shouldering responsibilities of their adult life with confidence. Educational system relies on language to achieve this. Language acts as medium of instruction on the one hand and as a means of establishing rapport with their wards on the other. It helps to develop thoughts that need to be presented with integrity and compactness. The relation between thoughts and language is not erratic, but rule governed. "Communication is not passing of information, but involves conceptualization of concepts and experiences, of identification and classification, of argumentation and assertion through correct language" (Pattanayak D.P.1987.)³. The task of an Educationist is to develop aesthetic sensibility and proper attitude towards the fellow beings and the world, so that they can live a healthy social life and contribute meaningfully to the society they live in.

2. Mumbai: A case study

The task of educating children becomes much more difficult when teachers have to face a heterogeneous group with multilingual and multicultural background. Mumbai acquires a very complex form because people from all parts of Maharashtra⁴ and India have come and settled in Mumbai. They have brought with them their languages and cultures, representing different religions, castes, sects and professions and specific registers pertaining to them. People in Mumbai use three official languages, sixteen major languages, and many others with more than a thousand speakers.

It is a mosaic design, where different speech communities adjust and accommodate, cultural diversity and linguistic plurality, sharing common community goods and services, but jealously guard their individuality amidst all external pressures.

2.1. *People of Mumbai*

Population of Mumbai has crossed ten billion. People here can be divided into three categories

Affluent who send their children to English medium schools and the language spoken at home is also very often English

Middle class that send their children either to Marathi medium schools or English ones, as per their aspirations. All non- Marathi children of middle class families study in English medium schools, though all members of the household speak their respective languages at home and most of the parents are college educated.

A Third group of children live in slums and go to Municipal public schools where education is free and all the facilities are provided for.

2.2. *Government policy*

It is the policy of government of Maharashtra to try and provide education to all in their mother tongue⁶, as per UNESCO guidelines. Instructions are imparted in as many as eight different languages⁷ in the schools run by Mumbai Municipal Corporations. There is also a large number of Marathi and English medium schools, run by private organisations partially or fully funded by the Government. Most of the middle class children mentioned above study in these schools.

Maharashtra also follows the three language formula of Government of India, which means children learn two or more languages, besides the language of instruction.

A Government body called Maharashtra Board of Education prescribes the curriculum and the syllabi. The board conducts examination only at secondary and higher secondary level (except in Municipal schools). Exams are conducted at the end of the academic year, with each subject having hundred marks, twenty out of which are allotted to class tests or assignments during the year. Teachers have freedom to implement the syllabi in accordance with the ability of their students. Until 9th grade, school authorities conduct examinations. Only in municipal schools do all children have uniform question papers in all the schools, every academic year.

2.3. *The School structure*

Children enter school at the age of four. They do

2 years – nursery or kindergarten

4 years – primary (1st to 4th)

3 years – upper primary (5th to 7th)

3 years – secondary (8th to 10th)

2 years – higher secondary (11th to 12th)

After that the students either take up general graduation (i.e. B.A., B.Sc. or B.Com) or enroll in professional courses (i.e. engineering, medicine, etc). Twelfth grade is normally a requirement for

vocational courses, (that often offer stipend to student who work as apprentice) and take up blue collared jobs.

3. Multilingualism

Every child is born with a language acquisition device having innate properties that plays a role in acquiring knowledge of language. This innateness is a biological endowment that Chomsky refers to as “Principles and Parameters”. According to this theory, there is a universal grammar – where “Principles” are general features, while “parameters” are variables left open in the statement of principles that account for the diversity found in languages. Grammar is a collection of choices (e.g. a choice between SOV and SVO patterns of sentences). They define the limited numbers of grammatically permitted choices from the universal grammar menu of options. There are also lexical facts. Once the vocabulary is learnt and grammatical patterns are fixed, the whole system falls in its place and general principles programmed into general organ, just churns away to yield all the particulars of the language concerned (Chomsky as quoted in Jenkins, 2000)

In other words, there are different grammatical systems based on the choice of different parameters, when the child is exposed to them, its innate capacity gets activated and it acquires knowledge of the rules of the language while using it for communication. When the child is exposed to more than one such linguistic system, it acquires more than one language and is known as multilingual.

3.1. *Multilingualism is of two kinds*

Elite – Language learned in a formal setting through planned and regular instruction as in a school system.

Neighborhood – Here the language is acquired in a natural setting, acquired through the interaction with people speaking different languages.

In Mumbai children are exposed to at least four languages in their neighborhood and they learn to use them. “These multilinguals select their code from their linguistic repertoire based on the person one is talking to, the place (the social context of the talk) and the nature of the topic under discussion” (Sridhar Kamal.K, 2000). Though people are facilitated in their daily affairs this way, language thus acquired sometimes becomes a hindrance in school. The instruction in schools is imparted in the standard variety while language learnt in neighborhood may be a dialect or it may not provide adequate exposure, resulting in speech habits not suitable for school purposes. If these speech habits are fossilized, it becomes a great challenge to teachers to instill a new set of habits in their students. The problem becomes still more acute, if the languages concerned are genetically related, as in case of Hindi and Marathi. It would not be out of place to quote here Salman Rushdie, an English novelist of Indian origin, “Bombay’s garbage argot, Mumbai’s kachraa-patti, baat-cheet, in which sentences begin in one language, swoop through a second or even a third and swing back to the first one. Our acronym for it was HUGME – Hindi, Urdu, Gujarati, Marathi, and English. Bombayites like me, who spoke this, were the people, who spoke five languages badly and no language well (Times Of India, 2002)”. Rushdie was lucky not to come across other common Dravidian languages like Tamil, Telugu, Tulu or Kannada, which are also very common in Mumbai, among whom children grow eating, playing and learning the facts of life together.

To elicit the multilingual nature, some examples are cited below:

3.2. *Phonology*

Phonology is the study of sound system of a language. Following are a few examples of differences in the sound systems of languages in Mumbai. Length is Phonemic in Hindi, English, and the Dravidian languages, but it is not so in Marathi. Examples: In Hindi, /piTaa/ ‘got beaten’ –/piiTaa/ ‘beat’ if the length in the vowel is not carefully pronounced the person would become different, or the

contrast in the pairs like /live/ and /leave/ or /shit/ and /sheet/, if not carefully maintained one can land in difficulty.

The contrast between /e/ and /ei/ is not found in Marathi thus loosing difference between the pairs of sentences 'I gave my urine sample for testing' and 'I gave my urine for tasting.'

Gujarati does not have distinction between /E/ and /ei/ as also /O/ and /au/, so the 'snakes' get served in the 'hole' instead of 'snacks' in the 'hall'.

Aspiration is a common feature of all Indo-Aryan languages and is absent in Dravidian. Hence if the contrast between /baaii/ 'woman' and /bhaaii/ 'brother' is not maintained, it may lead to change in the sex of the person under consideration.

3.3. Morphology

Morphology deals with grammatical sub-systems of words and the variation they undergo while entering into sentences. The differences in all sub-system are naturally present. Examples of gender sub system cited here as a sample.

- In all the Dravidian languages gender distinction is human and nonhuman, (except in Telugu where it is male/ non-male), which means all males are masculine, all females are feminine and every thing else is neuter.
- In Indo-Aryan languages gender is grammatical, and is seen in noun-verb concord. Again, Marathi has three genders, Hindi has two, and Bengali or English none. Examples: In Marathi /chahaa/ 'tea' is masculine, 'coffee' a borrowed word is feminine, and /duudh/ 'milk' is neuter. All the three words are liquids and are breakfast items, thus belonging to the same semantic field. In Hindi same 'tea' and 'coffee' are feminine but 'milk' is masculine.

3.4. Syntax

Syntax deals with the structure of the sentences. It is also concerned with the role a word plays in assigning meaning to sentences, for example

The order of the words in sentences is very important in English. The meaning in a sentence like 'John chases Jane.' would change, if the order of the two nouns in it is interchanged. In Indian languages, inflectional markers define the role of words in a sentence. If we take the same sentence 'John-ne Jane-ca paaThlaag kelaa' it wouldn't matter if the place of 'John' and 'Jane' is changed because /-ne/ and /-ca/ tell us that John is chasing and it is Jane, who is being chased. This difference in sentence patterns results in errors in writings of English learners, as in 'T.V. watches housewives in the afternoon.'

3.5. Lexicon

Lexicon deals with vocabulary items. India is known as a linguistic area and this is evident from the lexical items. There are either cognates or borrowed words from Sanskrit, abundantly found in almost all the languages of India. But sometimes the same word may carry different connotation or even entirely different meaning. For example, /sansaar / means 'world' in Hindi and Gujarati, but 'family life' in Marathi and Bengali, /sanshodhan/ in Hindi is 'editing' while in Marathi it is 'research'. /khaalii/ in Hindi is 'empty', in Marathi it is 'under, below'. Most interesting is the word /baaii/. In Marathi it means 'a woman of any status', whether she is a head of the institution or sweeper woman, she would be referred to and addressed with the same term. In Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, /baaii/ means either 'mother' or 'elder sister', and in most of the other parts of India it means 'a prostitute'. Many have gotten into an awkward situation because of they did not know the different connotations of the word. If one vocable can cause so much of confusion, one can imagine how difficult it would be to master the entire vocabulary of all the languages the children are expected to learn!

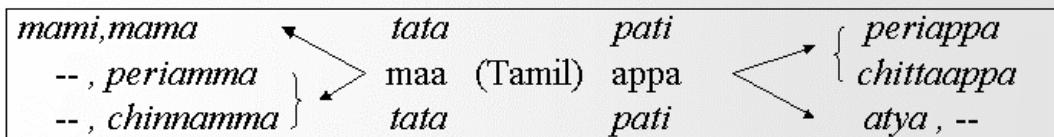
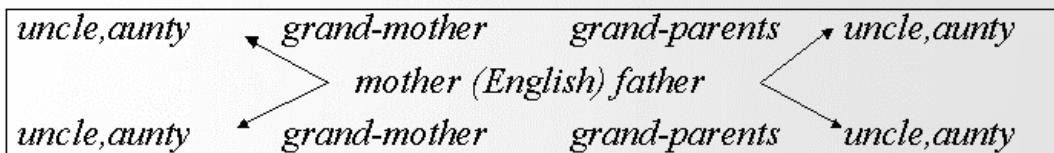
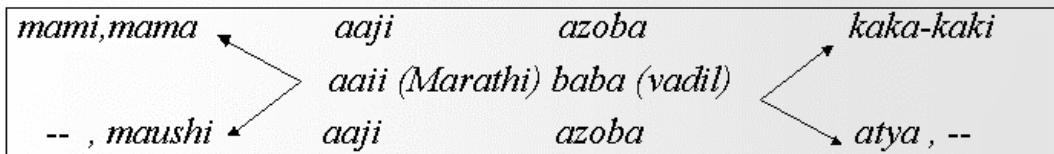
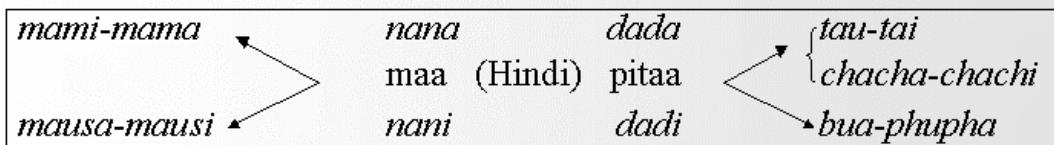
4. Multiculturalism

The culture and environment in which the language is spoken, determine structure of language and its semantic networking. Again, as Whorfian hypothesis goes, its the conceptual categorization of the world is determined by the structure of the language. Since the structures of languages differ considerably, the conceptual categorization also differs from one language to another Therefore the contrast between semantic set cannot be studied without discovering contrast that exists in the referential world, that is the world in which the members of a community live and do things together.’(Manjali F.C.1998) ‘Meaning components are combined in lexical items but are ‘encapsulated’ in different languages in different ways based on their cultural and geographical background. It requires a special skill to remember the differences’ According to C.Andrade, the Cultural Anthropologist, ‘the cultures have consensual domains having cognitive schemas that are inter-subjectively shared by social groups.’(As quoted in Manjali, 1998). These are throughout and forever reconstituted by cultural blending and children learning a second or a foreign language have to deal with the absence of similar cognitive domains. This becomes a learning issue.

The example of kinship terms is cited here to show the same referential world, that has different semantic network.

Example - Gap in Cognitive Domain

KINSHIP TERMS



Every language has its system of linguistic etiquettes and formalities. These rules help in maintaining congenial inter-personal relations. In Indian languages, the inter-personal relations are marked mainly by pronominal forms.

Example - Gap in Cognitive Domain

PRONOMINAL STRUCTURE : INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS

<u>English</u>	<u>Marathi</u>	<u>Hindi</u>	<u>Tamil</u>
I We	mi { amhi	mai` ham	naan nangaL
You You	{ aapaN		nii ningaL
He } They	tu { tumhi	tu }	avan }
She } They	{ aapaN	tum }	avaL }
It }		aap }	avar
This These	ha/to he/te	ye ye	ada adakkaL
That Those	hi/ti hya/tya	vo ve	
	he/te hi/ti		

In Indian languages plural pronouns == Singular respectful form

Plural forms are used to express respect to a person for one single person, if s/he happens to be elder, or senior in status or a stranger. This is a pan Indian feature. In English Formal relations are expressed in a very different way, not by using plural form. Students of English find it difficult to adjust psychologically to this fact, especially when they have to refer to or address their male professor as 'he' instead of 'they'.

Again in Hindi there are three different forms of second person pronouns. /tu/is used to refer or address a person of lower status or caste and has derogatory connotation, /tum/ denotes familiarity and is used for friends or equals. /aap/ as a singular form conveys semi-formal relation while plural /aap/ denotes formal relations One needs to learn these rules of formality to attain communicative competence and smooth social relations

5. Issues involved in language education

There are several other issues involved in language education other than the difference in language and culture. Standard language is taught as one of subject. Teachers teach skills to appreciate literature and aesthetic sensibility, and to build a positive attitude towards the world. But it is also necessary to develop it as a tool for acquiring knowledge, that is, for studying all the knowledge-based subjects. Here comes the issue of imparting instruction in Mother Tongue or first language.

5.1. Issue of multiple dialects and first language instruction

Dialect versus Standard Variety: Education is imparted in standard variety of the language concerned. This is true of both the first language used as medium of instruction, or a second language taught for enrichment. This attains greater importance in first language instruction, because the child has to learn all the subjects in this language. Very few really speak standard variety. Most of the children speak some or other dialect, and some of the dialects are so far removed, that they can be

distinct languages. Many children speak one of the dialects at home, Mumbai Hindi which is a pidginised variety as contact language outside their homes and at school they learn highly stylized variety of the textbooks. This is true of all languages but worst is the case of Hindi that has eleven dialects almost like distinct independent languages. This, very often, proves very traumatic to children just entering school. Not only that these languages have different linguistic systems but the rules of social verbal etiquettes are also different in different sociolects. Mumbai Municipal corporation schools use first six weeks of the school to introduce these etiquettes by exposing the children to the standard variety through nursery rhymes, stories from Mythology or folk literature and group activity in which they are also taught the sense of hygiene and matters of every day affairs. This has proved very useful in overcoming the initial shock of communicative gap among the children.

Again, several believe that students belonging to low-income group or low social status lack language and they are treated with negative attitude both by teachers and by fellow students. But as professor Labov says, these children don't lack language but the sophistication of the standard variety. A survey was conducted (by Language Development Project, a body set up by municipal corporation to study problems in language education of slum dwelling children with the help of Ford Foundation), to find out the vocabulary control of Gujarati speaking preschool children, because their textbooks were being rewritten. It was found that the vocabulary of slum dwelling children was greater than that of the children coming from middle class. But it contained a large number of taboo words not appropriate for textbooks or school.

A study was also done of the schools around which the fishermen community of Mumbai lived. It was found, that there was a heavy drop out rate among the children by the time they reached secondary stage. The observation of these children revealed, that the children use their own language in the first and second standards in all their school activities, in the third and the fourth they mix the code of their dialect with and the standard. They appeared quite comfortable with this mixture but by the time they reach the fifth standard they start realizing that their language is not the right one. By this time they also reach their adolescence, adding a psychological dimension to their problems, and then dropping out from school begins.

It is essential to impart education in standard language. Is it possible to write textbooks in so many dialects? Who will write them? Mumbai Municipal Corporation that imparts educations in eight languages finds it difficult to get teachers and writers to write good and appropriate textbooks. In spite of spending a lot of money on this enterprise, the results are never satisfactory.

The solution perhaps lies in letting the children use their language in the classrooms to initiate them in literacy, as was found among fishermen children, but there should be gradual and conscious efforts to transfer to the standard variety. The question is not whether to allow the children to use their home language in school, but for how long? Children should understand that every one speaks the home language, but they must also learn the standard language to be successful in school. Teachers should explain to them the role of each of the varieties; the standard variety is for life outside their homes, to be used in public affairs, and their dialect for private life at home. This would give them the psychological stability and group solidarity. Language Development Project conducted an experiment to try this out with positive results. It was more difficult to convince the teachers to accept this method, than transferring speech habits of children from dialect to standard. (In this experiment students were allowed to use words, sometimes even structures, from the dialect they spoke at home. The experiment was tried in the first grade in ten schools of Mumbai Municipal Corporation. This was done to initiate them in literacy. Once they mastered initial reading skills, they were introduced to regular prescribed textbook in standard language. It needed only a few weeks for the children from experimental group to comfortably take exams with children from control group. They had begun looking into differences in the two varieties themselves. It turned out to be a special activity for them to locate differences in the dialects of other students who spoke different varieties.)

5.2. English medium schools

“English in India, because of colonial history and its association with currently valued domain of

higher education and administration, science and technology, international commerce, western culture and pop entertainment, is perceived as all powerful and ticket to upward mobility.”(Sridhar. Kamal. K. 2002) Hence a large number of parents prefer to send their children to English medium schools. The English medium schools are equal in number with Marathi medium schools (and Marathi speaking population in Mumbai is 41% according to 1991 census). English in these schools is treated as a first language because it is the medium of instruction, but it is definitely a second language for the students. The children with good aptitude for language and a good intelligence can cope with the education, but the children with average intelligence, who are in large numbers in a class, find language as the barrier to understand different subjects they need to study. There are normally sixty or more children in a class making the problem more difficult. These children most often learn their lessons by rote for examinations. Thus failing to learn language skills and consequently they end up learning nothing. Some schools use a bilingual method to teach subjects, for which textbooks are in English. The teacher explains concepts in the native language and the students write their exams in English. These students seem to learn there subjects better than those who haven't studied through bilingual method, but this method also fails in training them to acquire language skills.

Govt. of Maharashtra has very recently introduced English as one of the languages to be taught from the very first grade. The Govt. has tried to involve linguists in planning the courses to introduce a communicative approach that advocates development of language skills. The Govt. has done this to assure those parents who thought that their children are being left behind in life, because they could not study in English medium schools.

5.3. Teaching of second language

This is what is called elite bilingualism. Govt. of India has introduced the Three Language Formula in its educational system, which means every child has to study two more languages other than their first language. The two languages are introduced simultaneously at upper primary level. If the children are studying in English medium schools, Hindi is treated as second language, and Marathi the third (interestingly many of these students have Marathi as their home language), English is the third language to all the other students, and Hindi is second for Marathi medium students, and Marathi for Hindi medium students. Students studying in other mediums study Hindi and Marathi as a composite subject from examination point of view. These children thus learn four languages at the upper primary level. At the secondary level students can opt for Sanskrit, which is a classical language or a foreign language like French, German, Arabic, etc. If they do so, they are allowed to drop Marathi or Hindi as the case maybe. The whole system is very complicated. Nevertheless, the Govt. makes a sincere attempt to provide instruction for all these languages. Here Hindi is taught to develop language to interact with people beyond their own state and Marathi (the language of the state), to facilitate the day today affairs and to allow the non Marathi speakers to participate in the cultural and literary programs of the people with whom they share their social life.

Unfortunately the three- language formula has not been successful, mainly because these languages do not follow second language teaching methodology. Students are directly introduced to writing system without giving any exposure to spoken variety, and as has been earlier mentioned, very often students are exposed to pidginised variety outside their homes and to lots of code mixing seen in hoardings, and jingles used in advertisements popular on T.V. Unlearning the speech habits picked up in this manner is very difficult. Secondly students never understand the purpose of learning these languages because they are not taught to use the language meaningfully. Very often the learning of these languages is considered a waste of time and energy, thus the entire purpose of teaching second language is defeated, (this is true of only Indian languages. People are ready to put in any amount of money, time and energy to learn English).

Hindi and Marathi are both Indo-Aryan languages with similar scripts. The students are taught the script and then immediately introduced to highly stylized version of the language, as extracts from the writings of famous writers. The students are taught literature rather than language, where grammar is taught as a separate entity and not integrated in language lessons. Evaluation is not

done of language skills, but of grammar rules and the information in the text concerned.

Infact, the teachers themselves do not differentiate between teaching a language, teaching through a language, and teaching about a language, or teaching of language and literature. All this leads to rote learning for examinations and students are found waiting to get rid of the language courses as soon as possible.

Introducing second languages at school is a necessity in a city as multilingual as Mumbai. Psychologists say that language acquisition device is at its sharpest between the age of three and twelve. It thus becomes necessary to acquaint teachers about the linguistic system of different languages and the modern methods of language teaching. This will help to build an empathetic attitude towards the students and to create interest among them to learn the languages.

6. Steps by the govt. to improve language education

The Govt. has tried to bring about improvement in language education in Maharashtra in general and Mumbai in particular. These are listed below:

Mumbai Municipal Corporation established 'Language Development Project' in the late seventies, with funds from Ford Foundation. This Project looked into problems of language education of children living in slums. Some of its projects have been already reported above. It also runs in-service-teacher training programs.

The Govt. of Maharashtra has also introduced a competency- based syllabus for teaching languages. The basic competencies have been identified and listed out. Teachers are expected to develop these competencies among students through student- centered and activity -based teaching of languages. They are given training in using pair work and group work among students to enhance interactive and co-operative discourse. They are also encouraged to involve students in different projects that give an opportunity for peer learning. All the methods mentioned here are used only in first language education and need to be extended to second language.

A few years ago the Govt. introduced the second language methodology, the communicative-interactive approach, in teaching of English with astounding results. But, unfortunately teachers believe that this method works only for English as a second language and not for the Indian languages

7. A few more suggestions to improve the present situation

Languages are taught/learned to communicate either orally or in writing. Communication is a complex multi-channel-process, with non-verbal information and verbalized messages inter-woven together. To develop effective communication, one not only needs to acquire the knowledge of language rules but also to learn to integrate it with the knowledge of the world. One also learns to use it in proper context, (that is, who one is talking to, when and what one needs to say,) and consequently develops meta-linguistic knowledge, which helps them to understand what language is, what it can do for them, and its potential as a skill. Bilingual children deal with the two different sets of codes in order to communicate in two languages, and with inter-language interferences as also with code mixing and code switching. The metalinguistic knowledge of bilinguals helps them to separate sound and meaning or name and object. They also develop better insight in objective and arbitrary property of language. Through communicative approach teachers try to develop basic language skills, where all

the four skills are taken care of. Students learn to handle complex communicative situations through pair and group work. They also learn basic reading and writing skills. These basic skills help the children in their day-to-day affairs. But that is not enough. They also need to develop higher-level language skills useful for academic purpose. Critical reading, discussing the material read, and judging its merit should be a part of the language syllabus. Reading thought provoking academic matters should also be encouraged in language classrooms for higher-level reading skill. Writing is another skill, which needs special grooming for academic purposes. Putting down thoughts on paper helps to focus on the topic, it also helps to check its validity, effectiveness and relevance. Besides, it provides a scope to correct and improve the written material, leading to more organized writing. To be a good writer one needs to learn writing in different genres, styles useful for different purposes.

In addition to these measures, teachers should also be trained in following areas:

Language is the most powerful tool in education, hence needs to handle it carefully. Student – teachers in Mumbai study about language development as a part of general learning theory under psychology of education. They learn the ‘Theories’ propagated by Asubel, Brown, Piaget and Vygotsky, but it is not emphasized that language is an arbitrary but a well-organized system, and that the each system has its own peculiarities because of the choice of different parameters, how they are acquired by children and what is their role in acquiring knowledge. Hence Applied Linguistics should be made a compulsory subject at B Ed along with other subjects like psychology, sociology and philosophy of education. This would help remove the myths regarding language teaching. At the same time it is necessary to make teachers realize that language is an important tool in educational career.

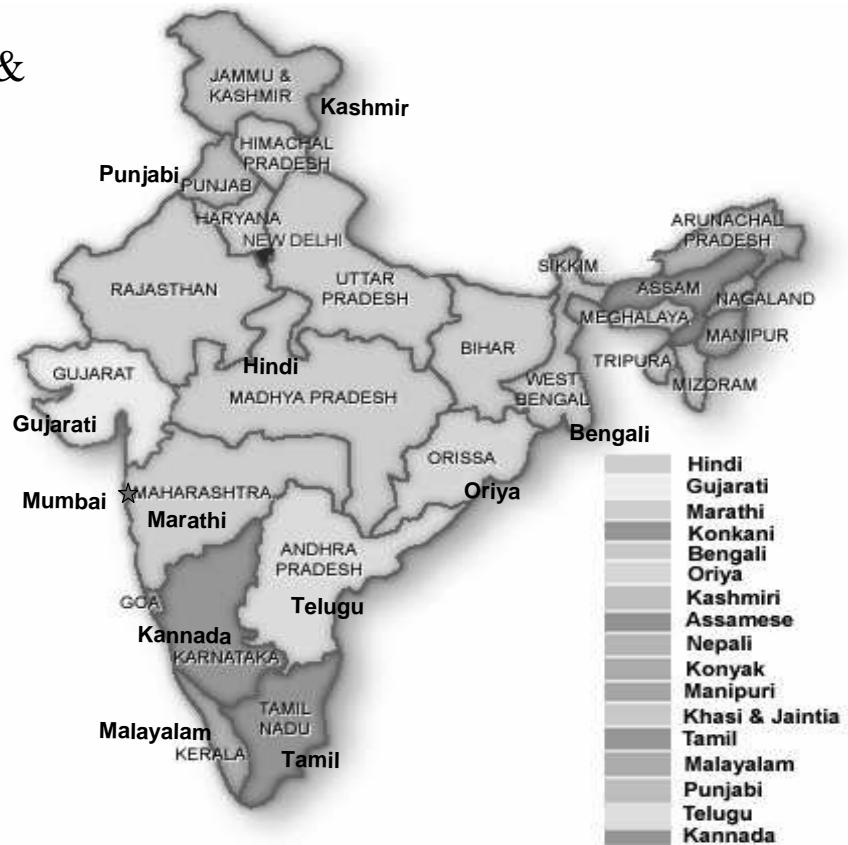
And lastly, Multilingualism should be looked at as an advantage offered to us by history rather than a problem. As has been mentioned above, Multilingualism helps to develop meta-cognitive and metalinguistic skills. At a very early age children learn to express the same thought with different codes in different languages. At societal level they understand the cultural differences leading to different norms to be observed in interpersonal relations in different discourse situations Thus it teaches them to live harmoniously with others in the society.

As Pandit puts it, “Language is not interpreted as an autonomous system outside culture but as a manifestation of culture. As a system it is designed to accommodate any kind of cultural diversity and plurality. Multiculturalism in linguistic societies and heterogeneity in languages are the consequences of people living together, working together, and sharing the services and goods of the same community This linguistic community does not require an imposition of homogeneity as it is a design of diversity.”

Notes

1. Map of India.

Map of India & Indian Languages



2. Mumbai (formerly Bombay), is located on India's west coast, and is a major political, cultural, and economic hub. It is the capital of Maharashtra state. Mumbai lies on an 18-km long peninsula whose width varies from 4.75 km in the north to 1.3 km at the southern tip. It is one of the world's largest and most crowded cities with a population of 14 million and an area of 1,467 sq. km. Its population is estimated to grow at 3.1% per year to 22 million by 2011.

3. Maharashtra is situated on the west coast of India and is surrounded by Arabian Sea on one side and the states of Gujarat, Madhya-Pradesh, Orissa, Karnataka, and Goa around its three sides. It is divided in twenty-two districts having Marathi as its state Language and nearly ten major geographical dialects, some of which are so different that they can be independent languages

4. Sixteen major languages spoken in Mumbai are: Marathi, Gujarati, Hindi, Urdu, Tamil, Telugu, Tulu, Kannada, Malayalam, Bengali, Oriya, Sindhi, Assamese, Punjabi, Kashmiri, and Konkani.

Three Official languages are as follows: Marathi used in the state administration, and Hindi / English in National and International administration.

5. The classification presented here is not so neat. People from slums with higher aspirations also send their children to English medium schools these children do not get any home support as the parents are either not educated through any formal system or do not know English.

6. 'Mother Tongue is the technical status of "Mother Tongue" because the language name, that a speaker offers to a census enumerator, is a name that often marks their identity rather than realities of their linguistic usages.' (Annamalai. E. 2001)

7. Eight Languages as first language:

	Municipal	Private (Aided)	Private (Unaided)	Total
Marathi	459	169	73	701
Hindi	233	44	29	396
Urdu	203	31	1	237
Gujarati	116	59	21	196
Tamil	50	1	0	51
Kannada	45	0	0	45
Telugu	44	0	0	44
English	41	85	418	544

There were schools in Sindhi and Malayalam some twelve years ago but they closed down because parents preferred to send their children to English medium school. There are no schools for these children after upper primary. There are only two schools in Tamil and two in Telugu run by private organization and funded by Municipal Corporation up to tenth standard. Education is not available in these languages after that. There also some schools run by private organizations for Bengali, Sindhi and many other languages which go unreported.

8. The eleven dialects of Hindi are as follows: Awadhi, Bangru, Bhojpuri, Braj, Bundeli, Chattisgarhi, Magahi, Maithili, Pahadi, Rajasthani, and Khadi-Boli, the last one is the accepted as the standard variety. Out of these eleven Maithili and Rajasthani have already been accepted as independent languages by Sahitya Academy for awards given every year for excellence in literature in the languages recognized by Govt.

9. Census Of India 1991, Maharashtra State / District Profile numerically strong languages in descending order, Table 30. Greater Bombay District (i. e. Municipal Corporation).

10. Language Development Project was established in late seventies with funds from Ford Foundation, that looks into the problems of teaching languages in municipal schools. It mainly caters to the needs of hutment children or the children from streets. Some of the work by this project has already been reported above in the main body of the paper. There are graver problems that faces the Municipal Corporation related to children, who live among diverse language speakers and are exposed to a kind of language that can be expressed in Nina Martysis words, 'Multilingual Mumbai, microcosm of India, has twisted many tongues well and truly out of shape, to forge its own robust speak' (Times Of India 8/5/02). To train the children, who have learnt this language in an effort to survive in difficult circumstances, in the school language and provide them meaningful education is the real challenge faced by the teachers here, especially when there are a lot of distractions out side the classroom.

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