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Explorations: Teaching and Learning English in India

Issue 6: Using inclusive practices and multilingual approachYg(1)

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Contents

Explorations: Teaching and Learning English in India

Issue 6: Overview

Using inclusive practices and multilingual approaches (1)

The papers in this]ssue of *Explorations: Teaching and Learning English in India* investigate the two professional practices of using inclusive practices and using multilingual approaches. The first professional practice involves recognising and valuing diversity among learners and encouraging inclusive education within a supportive learning environment. Through this professional practice, teachers treat all learners equitably and with respect. The second professional practice includes recognising and valuing the multilingual nature of societies, schools and classrooms and using appropriate strategies for the multilingual classroom. Through this professional practice, teachers take learners' linguistic backgroundg into account and capitalise on HˌY]f diversity.

TR Muralikrishnan investigates the use of translation in the teaching of tertiary Malayalam-speaking students on specialised technical courses and concludes that there is indeed a place for the L1 language in the L2 classroom. In the context of young learners' classrooms in Tamil Nadu, **Bhanu Shankar** demonstrates the effectiveness of a bilingual shared reading approach and how it can support young children's comprehension, language and ability to communicate. **Digambar Ghodke** also examines a bilingual/multilingual context in the case of primary schools attended by children from the Waddar community in Maharashtra and shows the disadvantages these children experience when trying to learn English as an L3 through the medium of a language which is not their own.

About the authors

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About the English Language Teaching Partnerships (ELTReP) Award programme

India has a long tradition of educational research but the results of this have not always reached the wider world. Through a range of programmes, British Council India places considerable emphasis on encouraging and supporting inquiry. A key strand of that work between 2012 and 2016 has been the English Language Teaching Partnerships (ELTReP) Award programme. The programme aimed to facilitate high quality, innovative research to benefit the learning and teaching of English in India and to improve the access of ELT

policy makers, professionals from India and the United Kingdom and the global ELT community to that research. All writers contributing to the eleven issues of *Explorations: Teaching and Learning English in India* were selected and supported in their research by the ELTReP Award programme.

All three papers in this issue have been written by practitioners in the field, whether teachers, lecturers, educational department personnel or other roles that involve day-to-day contact with the teaching and learning of English. The researchers, many of whom will be seeing their work published for the first time, have designed and implemented their studies and present results which in each case are innovative and thought-provoking. Each paper reflects the creativity, detailed awareness of context and practical suggestions of a wide range of writers, from different backgrounds and working in different situations.

We very much hope you enjoy *Explorations: Teaching and Learning English in India* and that you feel the insights the papers provide into a variety of educational environments are applicable to your own context, wherever you may be working.

Acknowledgements

The opinions expressed in the papers in this issue are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily represent or reflect the views of the British Council.

1

The role of translation in second language learning with specific reference to specialised technical courses

T R Muralikrishnan

1. Background description

The project proposes to make a study of the role of the first language (L1) in second language (L2) learning (the translation method), with reference to specialised courses which are purely technical in nature. Translation as a method has now gone out of favour because of the influence of later approaches such as the direct method, the audio-lingual method, the communicative approach and Suggestopedia. The study does not aim to revive TM (translation method) as a replacement for all contemporary methods but rather to find a logical space for TM in the paradigm of approaches for specialised purposes. In scientific discourses (i.e. teaching of technical subjects) at the classroom level students with little knowledge and skill (in English) may find it difficult when an L2 (here it is English) is provided 'raw'. It could be more be productive if the students were given a translation of certain concepts for the purpose of enhancing their learning. Hence an attempt is made in this study to know how far the L1 can contribute in the acquisition of an L2 in the context of technical courses.

1.1. Issues of L1 and L2 learning in a bilingual context

Theorists and ELT experts have been discussing the relevance of the translation method over a long period of time. (Howatt, 1984; Richards and Rogers, 1986; Malmkjaer,1998). It was seen as a simple way to provide equivalent words and expressions and many consider that traditional methods are still in vogue in the classroom (Gabrielatos, 2002). However, the practice of making use of translation came under scrutiny and criticism in the latter half of the twentieth century. Since then, there has been an underlying practice among ELT practitioners in third world countries in which the translation method is followed covertly without compromising the formal principles of the direct method. Also, few applied linguists have shown allegiance to the use of translation since the 1980s (Malmkjaer, 1997, 1998; Chesterman, 1998, Stibbard, 1998; Gabrielatos, 2001, 2002; Butzkamm, 2003; Storch and Wigglesworth, 2003; Rinvolucri, 2003).

Stern (1992: 282) states that it is almost impossible to separate L1 from L2 and that is 'an undisputable fact of life'. Brooks and Donato (1994) state that the use of translation 'provides students with an opportunity to notice similarities and differences between L1 and L2.' Ross (2000: 61-63) states that translation develops three qualities essential to all language learning - accuracy, clarity, and flexibility - that will help students learn effectively. Harmer (2001: 135) suggests acknowledging the widespread and important use of the L1 in the classroom, using appropriate L1 and L2 activities, differentiating

between levels with the need to use the L1 lessening as learners progress, agreeing clear guidelines so that students know when the use of L1 is beneficial and using encouragement to persuade students to speak in their L2. Macaro (2005) believes that total abstinence from L1 would result in the increased usage of input modification leading to negative effects in discourse level interaction. According to Sayuki Machida (2011) 'The act of translating should stimulate advanced learners to learn more about the language, and assist with bridging the gap between their L1 and SL/FL. The experience of the act of translating should contribute to the learners not only noticing and observing the linguistic systems in L1 and SL/FL, but also how the two languages convey messages or express reality and the world.'

However, the advocates of bilingual teaching, i.e. L1 and L2 use in the classroom situation, do not call for a restoration of the grammar-translation method. They argue for a judicious use of L1. For example, Sampson (2011: 293) states that the need of the hour is to find a 'common-sense approach where exploitation of L1 is counterbalanced with efforts to teach communicative functions in L2.'

1.2. Translation in language learning

This study has researched the representative, significant literature up to contemporary times which reflects the various perspectives that have been taken on the influence of L1 on L2 learning and acquisition. A few recent studies are summarised below.

According to Paul Nation (2003), second language use in the foreign language classroom needs to be maximised wherever possible by encouraging its use and by using it for classroom management. However, he claims that research shows that the first language has a small but important role to play in communicating meaning and content.

Yi-chun Pan and Yi-ching Pan (2010) argue for the appropriate use of L1 in foreign language learning environments by drawing on theoretical perspectives and empirical work in the existing

literature. Three key issues are addressed: the rationales for the use of L1, the positive effects of L1 on foreign language learning and teaching, and the ways in which L1 can assist foreign language teachers.

Ismaeil Fazel (2011) explores the use of translation by Iranian university students, particularly with regard to their beliefs concerning translation and using it as a strategy in writing. Forty female and male students of English at Shiraz Azad University participated. In addition to an interviewing guide, two sets of questionnaires were employed: the Inventory for Beliefs about Translation (IBT), and the Inventory for Translation as a Learning Strategy (ITLS). Results indicate the respondents believed that translation facilitated the acquisition of English writing skills.

Sayuki Machida (2011) discusses the act of translating between mother tongue and second/foreign language as a potentially effective way to improve learners' second/foreign language. The author first examines the history of 'translation' as a methodology in second/foreign language teaching. The author then provides arguments in favour of including the methodology in SL/FL teaching in the current post-communicative, cognitive paradigm of learning. The paper limits its theoretical perspective of the methodology to advanced level learners, and emphasises that the act of translating can create ideal learning opportunities with positive L1 use in SL/FL learning. The act of translating is a holistic activity, which immediately compels the learners to pay more attention to the SL/FL text, which encourages their awareness of form and meaning in context and improves their reading and writing skills in SL/FL. The methodology further enhances learners' general skills of noticing and observing details of the linguistic systems, cultures, and societies of L1 and SL/FL, in order to deliver the messages between the two languages. This can expand the SL/FL learning beyond the classroom.

The study carried out by Ilknur Pekkanli (2012) primarily aimed to present a review of the role and benefits of translation in foreign language development and the second aim was to discover ELT teacher candidate's perceptions of the

translation activity as an instrument for assisting foreign language learning development. The main finding was that translation is useful for language proficiency development and the results confirm that the ELT teacher candidates find translation to be effective in foreign language development.

The study conducted by Seyed Mohammad Jafari and Nasrin Shokrpour (2013) investigated the use of students' mother tongue, the Farsi language (L1), in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) classes at an Iranian medical university, as well as the attitudes of Iranian ESP instructors and ESP students towards employing Farsi in ESP classrooms. Data was collected by means of classroom observations, semi-structured interviews and a questionnaire, with 100 ESP students and two ESP instructors participating in the study. The results revealed that ESP instructors used Farsi in specific situations such as explaining grammatical points and new words, managing the classroom, explaining instructions, and checking students' understanding. With respect to the second aim of the study, the findings of the semi-structured interviews showed that both instructors and students held positive attitudes towards employing Farsi in the ESP classroom. Similarly, the results of the questionnaire indicated that ESP students had positive attitudes towards the use of Farsi in their ESP classes.

In the study conducted by Zeinab Karimian, and Mohammad Reza Talebinejad (2013) the participants' responses indicate that most of the participants accepted the mother tongue as a helping strategy in their new language (English) learning. The learners reported that they made use of their first language by mentally translating while reading English texts. They emphasised that translation is helpful mostly in outlining their ideas and also their writing, understanding the meanings of utterances whilst listening, and learning English idioms and expressions.

Barbora Kratochvílová (2013) also deals with the issues of using translation in second language teaching. She concludes that translation is a natural way of dealing with the L2 and it cannot be avoided just as the students cannot be forced

into thinking in the L2. An unconditional rejection of L1 might also make the students feel stressed and be harmful to the communication in the classroom as students sometimes prefer not speaking at all to struggling to express their ideas in the L2. Moreover, the use of translation makes the class more effective both by not wasting time with complicated, and often unsuccessful, monolingual explanations and by encouraging the students thorough comprehension.

Nada Salih Abdul Ridha (2014) explores the use of translation by Iraqi university students, particularly with regard to their beliefs concerning translation and to using it as a strategy. Thirty female and male students of English at Basrah University participated. Two sets of questionnaires were employed: the Inventory for Beliefs about Translation (IBT), and the Inventory for Translation as a Learning Strategy (ITLS). The results indicate that the participants in the study use translation tasks to learn all language skills. The learners have a positive view towards studying translation to improve their English. The results show that students used a wide variety of learning strategies related to translation. The participants employ translation as a learning strategy to comprehend, remember, and produce English and they depend heavily upon translation in the process of learning and acquiring English as a foreign language.

Nafiye Çigdem Aktekin, and Aysegül Uysal Gliniecki (2015) explored the role of translation in ELT students' English learning, notably regarding their learning beliefs and learning strategies about using translation in learning the language. Although the significance of translation for foreign language teaching had gone unnoticed for decades, the general attitude towards translation has begun to alter, and translation has started playing a vital role in the language learning process and supports learners in comprehending and producing the English language. The following outcomes are visible in their study. Firstly, many participants noted that they believe translation plays a positive role in their English learning process. However, the results also demonstrate that they do not possess the belief that they are dependent on translation or translation is inevitable for their learning process. It can

be inferred that they regard translation as an assisting tool. Secondly, learners utilise translation frequently as a learning strategy and thirdly it can be inferred from the results that the participants' beliefs influence their learning strategies.

2. Statement of the topic

The present project is targeted at examining the extent of the validity of using translation in the L2 classroom and in a genre-specific context by studying translated versions of some simple and short business/scientific documents from Malayalam into English. The translations are first done by a few low-level vocational students as participants and then marked by comparing participants' outputs with experienced translators or with the teacher corrections. Participants in the study are also interviewed about their use of translation in learning English. From the systematic study of their translation outputs and the interview data, it is hoped that a better understanding of the role of translation and related strategies in L2 learning can be achieved. The findings have implications for classroom practice and what strategies to encourage learners to develop even beyond the classroom.

Research questions

The main research questions in this study are presented below.

1. Can TM or translation help students learn English as a second language?

2. What are vocational students' attitudes towards TM or use of translation in the English classroom?

3. What are the implications of the use of translation in language teaching for:
   - the use of the dictionary?
   - resolving difficulties or problems with vocabulary, syntax or grammar?
   - differences between individual and collaborative work?
   - what learners learn?

4. What are the merits and demerits of TM and how can they be maximised or minimised?

5. To what extent do Keralite[1] learners make use of their mother tongue as a learning strategy?

6. What strategies involving translation do Keralites use in the process of English learning?

3. Research methods

A. Participants

One hundred and fifty male and female students taking English courses in language schools aged 15-20 participated in this study. At the first part of the study, all of the survey participants took part in a quantitative survey.

Out of the 150, 65 were male and 85 were female. The majority of them have been studying English for the last four to seven years. In most cases (i.e. 120), there is at the maximum just one member in the family who knows English, hence chances of guidance from the family are low.

B. Instruments

Data collection of this study was through the following instruments:

1. Learning strategy questionnaire
To identify the learning strategies regarding translation, a learning strategy questionnaire was administered, which was first designed by Liao (2006). The questionnaire is of a Likert-scale design. There were 5 scales for each item from 'completely disagree', which represents the lowest rank of participants' using translation as a learning strategy to 'completely agree', which indicates the most use of this strategy. The questionnaire was firstly translated into the survey participants' native language (Malayalam) to assist them to better understand the intentions of items as per the instruction at the Pre-Teacher Education Conference in Hyderabad on 26 February 2015.

2. Interview guide for students
The data based on interviews have been added as extra information to complete the quantitative part. The interview was used to elicit specific data concerning English learners' use of translation strategies. Through the help of an interview

[1] i.e learners from Kerala

the researcher got first-hand information about the students' attitude and also their viewpoints regarding the learning of English. This can help the researcher to get a better understanding toward the function of the learners' native tongue in the language learning process.

The interview questions for the students focused on learners' reflections and evaluations of their use of mother tongue as a strategy in the language learning process. The interview schedule was designed based upon the method used by Liao (2006). The questions were somehow modified taking into consideration the students' use of Malayalam, the native language. Further the interview questions were designed to get a better understanding of language learners (especially beginners who are mostly of low English proficiency).

3. Teacher questionnaire

A questionnaire was circulated among teachers of NIVHSS Technical School Marampally and St. Xavier's college for women, Aluva to ascertain whether L1 helps/interrupts the learning of an L2. The questionnaire was administered to a total of 25 teachers who were requested to report the method involved in the teaching learning process. Twenty five teachers responded, five males and twenty females. Fifteen teachers were of the age group 20-30. Seventeen teachers had teaching experience of less than 10 years. All of them are postgraduates

4. Findings

Through the study conducted as part of the ELTREP's award, it has been identified that translation is a crucial factor in language learning in the context of technical vocational courses. The findings outlined are based on the conclusions reached through questionnaires, data analysis, interviews, personal narratives and discussions.

- As far as the period of study of English for the total population of students is concerned, 67 per cent have been learning English for a period of 4 to 7 years

- As many as 97 per cent of students preferred translation of technical text

- Seventy-two per cent of students prefer translating technical vocabulary into the L1

- Fifty-six per cent of students write Malayalam translation in the texts

- Ninety-five per cent of students consider that translating helped them to understand grammar rules

- Most of the students think that translation to Malayalam would help them to recall the content better later

- Many students do not prefer their teachers to use *only* English while teaching

- Many teachers responded that the use of L1 in the classroom can save time

- Many teachers responded that the use of L1 can reduce opportunities for learners to listen to and understand the L2

- Teachers responded that many of them rarely use L1 for preparing students for tasks before switching over to L2.

5. Discussion and final reflections

Based on the findings the following assumptions can be arrived at:

- translation is an important tool in learning English

- it enables the construction of meaning in both L1 and L2

- it helps in group work and taking and giving instructions

- grammar and basic skills of L2 are reinforced with the help of the L1

- vocabulary growth in L2 is made possible when L1 is used

- code-switching is possible, within a controlled environment

- literal word-by-word translation needs to be controlled

- L2-L1 dictionaries are often made use of when doubts of expressions have to be cleared

- using the L1 helps teachers to establish rapport with the underprivileged

- peer interaction in the L1 is often a help rather than a hindrance

- peer monitoring can help the learners to solve many of their problems

- lower proficiency students tend to remain silent and using the L1 can help them to break the barrier

- rural vocational school students have issues in adjusting with the L2 if ideas are provided in the L2 only

- technology can be used if that is suitable to the environment of learning.

5.1. General observations (Figures 1 to 7 in the appendix)

- It may be noted that the respondents are from rural technical schools and they lack the kind of sophistication and exposure which is generally assumed in their urban counterparts.

- Most students have a habit of translating the technical text in English into Malayalam to get an overall understanding

- There is a tendency among many students to make use of Malayalam translation, if available, to check whether the student's comprehension is correct

- The students memorise the meaning of new English technical vocabulary by correlating those words with their equivalent Malayalam translation

- Students make use of English-Malayalam dictionaries to learn English words

- Students often ask questions about how an English expression can be translated into Malayalam

- A few students work with other students to translate English articles to Malayalam when the teacher assigns such work to them

- Almost all students have a habit of writing Malayalam translations of words in English texts

- Only very few students try to understand the meaning of what they read without attempting to think in terms of Malayalam

- A few students try to translate an English passage into Malayalam in their mind and then try to think in English

- The general habit that is found is to paraphrase English technical texts rather than translating them

- Only very few students have the habit of asking the teacher to provide Malayalam translation of English passages

- Many students say that translation helps them to understand the textbook while reading it

- Most students make use of translation to write English compositions

- Many students consider that translation helps them to memorise English vocabulary

- Many students are of the opinion that translating helps them to understand English grammar rules.

5.2. Specific observations

The research carried out within the given limitations suggest that
- translation can help students to learn English as a second language

- the attitudes of the vocational students are specifically significant for the investigation because for them the presence of the L1 is necessary for learning the L2

- the learning of language items such as vocabulary, idioms and phrases requires the linguistic support of the L1. Group work/ collaborative work in the classroom reaches a significant standard when English is used.

The merits and demerits of translation can be summarised as:

Merits	Demerits
• Immediate response • Complete and exhaustive use of textbooks • Initial difficulty in comprehension is reduced • Content learning and its recall is quite effective • Group work will be effective • Comparative linguistic awareness is enhanced	• Delay in the learning process • Use of memorisation • Possible issues of identifying the equivalent terms while translating idioms, phrases, technical words • Interaction with the teacher in the L2 is almost nil • Writing is preferred over speech • Grammar rules are not analogous as far as the L1 and the L2 are concerned

Findings show that students undergoing technical courses in Kerala of the age group stated above tend to make use of English mostly for the sake of dealing with definitions and explanation of concepts in writing and of providing details of concrete examples as part of their practical work. For all other purposes at the functional level and the communicative level, the L1 is used. The common means of learning an L2 for technical students are as follows:

a) translating L2 into L1 for getting into the meaning

b) memorising key words of the L2 through translating them roughly into the L1

c) use of dictionaries

d) interactions with classmates in the L1 to complete work in the L2

- in the actual process of learning / studying the L1 helps them to recall the content

- learners show preference for a blend of L1 and L2 in the classroom rather than only L2 in the classroom.

5.3. Responses from teachers (Figures 8 to 12 in the appendix)

The teachers' responses are as follows:

- the teachers with whom the study was conducted showed a tendency to exclude L1 generally

- occasionally they made use of the L1 in those contexts in which it is necessary

- they are of the opinion that L2 use should be focused on for all academic transactions

- however, they do not feel awkward or guilty while using the L1

- when it comes to issues of cultural identity, the teachers think that the L1 can be helpful

- for lower level/age group classes the L1 is suitable

- for younger level learners the L1 is suitable.

5.4. Interviews

Qualitative interview data was also collected from 20 students chosen at random, which enabled researchers to gain students' views on translation

Arguments in favour of using L1	Arguments against the use of L1
• Learner acceptance • Saves time • Group tasks • Less anxious • L1 is seen as an effective strategy	• Reduces opportunities for listening/speaking in the L2 • Negative transfer or 'interference' • Possible resistance to thinking in English among students while speaking and writing

of technical texts and classroom strategies about translation. The interviews were conducted in English. As a shared common experience, students state that they benefit from translation. Further, they add that when they listen/read something in English, they initially think in terms of Malayalam, if the words and expressions are vital for understanding the texts and discussion in the class. Occasions for speaking in English in the classroom are very few.

Excerpt 1:
Malayalam is there with me for a long time. I get occasional opportunity to read English newspapers. Headlines are easy. I can understand the instructions in English in the classroom.

Excerpt 2:
I always try to use English, especially to write English but there is no chance for us to use English in the classroom.

Excerpt 3:
I use translation when I learn vocabulary. I try to memorise the meaning of a new English word by trying to remember the Malayalam translation. Learning in English is good but some words are difficult.

Excerpt 4:
I prefer to learn English words such as synonyms. They are interesting.

Excerpt 5:
L1 provides a sense of security, allowing me to express myself. I am willing to experiment and take risks with English.

Excerpt 6:
Speaking in L1 is OK here but we come to this level of study (secondary) for the sake of improving our L2. The technique of teaching is different compared to school classes.

The teachers made the following points:

Excerpt 1:
Low proficiency in L2 is one of the problems of learners. Many are reticent while using L2 for communication.

Excerpt 2:
In technical schools certain pre-teaching materials are necessary for making interactions useful and purposeful.

Excerpt 3:
L2 should be made an unavoidable part of learning.

Excerpt 4:
Planning is essential for weaker students, so make the learners understand the reasons for avoiding the use of L1 and enquire what will motivate them to make use of L2 in classroom interaction.

Excerpt 5:
Monitoring system is welcome, but peer mentoring system will be handy to encourage the diffident students.

Excerpt 6:
Make the students repeat tasks which will boost some amount of confidence.

6. Conclusion

The use of L1 was considered unnecessary in ESL classes but L1 plays a facilitative role in the acquisition of L2. As stated above, the use of L1 can be beneficial in L2 learning and this has been recognised by many researchers. It should be noted that L1 remains a natural resource in L2 learning. The teacher, whether a native or non-native speaker, the learner, whether beginner or advanced, the use of L1, whether allowed or banned, the use of L1 in ESL classes cannot be avoided. It is almost impossible to define and determine the appropriate quantity of L1 to be used by teachers since it depends on students' proficiency levels and teaching requirements. L1 is a useful tool that cannot be abandoned in L2 centred classrooms. Teachers are expected to get a reality check with the circumstances within which they work. Teachers have to use L1 and L2 depending on the heterogeneous group that they work with. Learners at the same time understand that there is a great need to switch over to L2 though they have a background in L1. L1 is thus a stepping stone to success. It is only a matter of orientation.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Questionnaires for teachers and students

1. Here is a list of ways in which teachers might use Malayalam language in class.

(Tick ONE box for each activity)

How frequently do you use Malayalam language to	always	often	sometimes	rarely	never
explain vocabulary?					
give instructions?					
explain grammar?					
develop rapport and a good classroom atmosphere?					
correct spoken errors?					
explain when meanings in English are unclear?					
give feedback on written work?					
test and assess learners?					
maintain discipline?					

Other (please specify):

2. Here is a list of the ways in which learners might use their Malayalam language in class.

(Tick ONE box for each activity)

In the class you teach most often, how frequently do learners	always	often	sometimes	rarely	never
use bilingual dictionaries or word lists?					
compare English grammar to the grammar of their own language?					
watch English-language TV/video with Malayalam language?					
do spoken translation activities?					
do written translation activities?					
prepare for tasks and activities in Malayalam language before switching to English?					

Other (please specify):

3. Summarise your views of Malayalam use in your classroom.

(Tick ONE box for each activity)

To summarise your views of Malayalam use in your classroom.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Students should use bilingual dictionaries or word lists					
Students should compare English grammar to the grammar of their own language					
Students should watch English-language TV/video with Malayalam language					
Students should do spoken translation activities					
Students should do written translation activities					
Students should prepare for tasks and activities in Malayalam language before switching to English					
I try to exclude Malayalam language use					
I allow Malayalam language use only at certain points of a lesson					
English should be the main language used in the classroom					
I feel guilty if languages other than English are used in the classroom					
Malayalam language use helps learners express their cultural and linguistic identity more easily					

Here is a list of possible arguments for using learners' Malayalam language in the classroom.

(Tick ONE box for each statement)

To what extent do you think each is a strong argument for Malayalam language use in class?	Weak argument for Malayalam language use Vs Strong argument for Malayalam language use				
	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Learners like to use their Malayalam language in class					
Conveying meaning through the learners' Malayalam language is useful because it saves time					
Malayalam language use helps learners work together					
Learners can relate new English-language knowledge to their knowledge of the Malayalam language					
Malayalam language use makes learners less anxious					
Translation is an effective language-learning strategy for many learners					

Other reason(s) for Malayalam language use:

4. Here is a list of possible arguments against using learners' Malayalam language in the classroom.

(Tick ONE box for each statement)

To what extent do you think each is a strong argument against Malayalam language use in class?	Weak argument against Malayalam language use vs Strong argument against Malayalam language use				
	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Malayalam language use reduces the opportunities for learners to listen to and understand English					
In multilingual classes, Malayalam language use is impractical					
Malayalam language use reduces the opportunities for learners to speak and practise English					
Malayalam language use leads to interference (negative transfer) from the learner's own language into English					
Learners prefer English-only classes					
Malayalam language use stops learners thinking in English					

Other reason(s) against Malayalam language use:

5. Here is a list of possible arguments about using learners' Malayalam language in the classroom.

(Tick ONE box for each statement)

(Tick ONE box for each statement)	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Malayalam language use is more appropriate with lower-level learners than higher-level learners					
Malayalam language use is more appropriate with younger learners than with adults and teenagers					
Malayalam language use is more appropriate with larger classes than with smaller classes					
The amount of Malayalam language use depends on the extent to which Malayalam is particularly different from English (e.g. uses a different writing system or has a very different grammar)					

Interview with teachers

1. Do you teach technical vocabulary implicitly or explicitly?

2. Do you use any kind of teaching materials? If so, name them.

3. Do you use translation for teaching vocabulary? Why or why not?

4. What kind of activities do you use to teach technical vocabulary? Describe some of them.

5. Do you think those activities are effective for students to learn technical vocabulary? Why?

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Questions for students

Sl. No.	Questions	Always	often	sometimes	rarely	never
1	When reading an English technical text, I first translate it into Malayalam in my mind to help me understand its meaning					
2	After I read English articles, I use an available Malayalam translation to check if my comprehension is correct.					
3	I memorise the meaning of new English technical vocabulary words by remembering their Malayalam translation					
4	I learn English idioms and phrases by reading their Malayalam translation					
5	I use English-Malayalam dictionaries to help myself learn English					
6	I ask questions about how an English expression can be translated into Malayalam					
7	When the teacher assigns English articles for reading, I work with others to translate them					
8	I write Malayalam translations in my English textbooks					
9	When reading English, I try to grasp the meaning of what I read without thinking of Malayalam equivalents					
10	I try to translate an English passage into Malayalam in my mind and just try to think in English.					
11	I try to paraphrase an English technical text rather than translation it into Malayalam in my mind					
12	I get into the habit of asking teacher to provide Malayalam translation of English passages					

Appendix 2: Statistical representation of responses to certain vital questions

Table 1: Details of the period of study of English for the total population of students

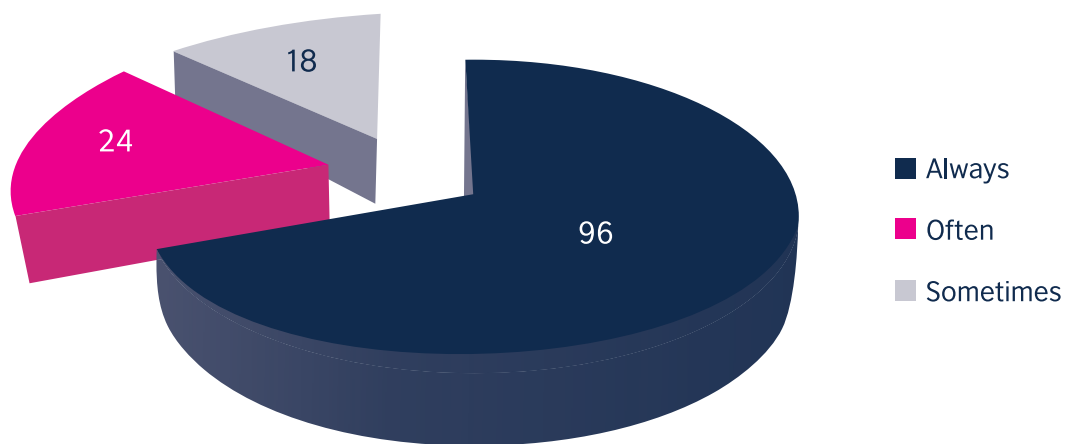| Years of study	Numbers	Percentage
0-3	0	0
4-7	96	64
8-12	29	19
	150	100

Figure 1: Distribution of students who preferred translation of technical text
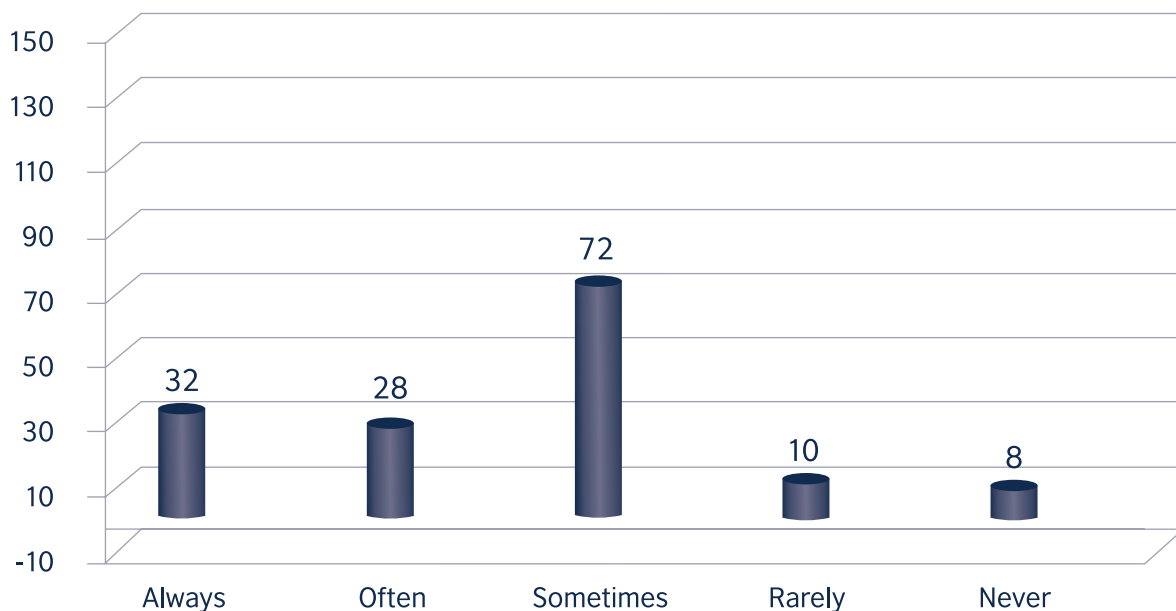

Figure 2: Details of students who prefer translating technical vocabulary to L1

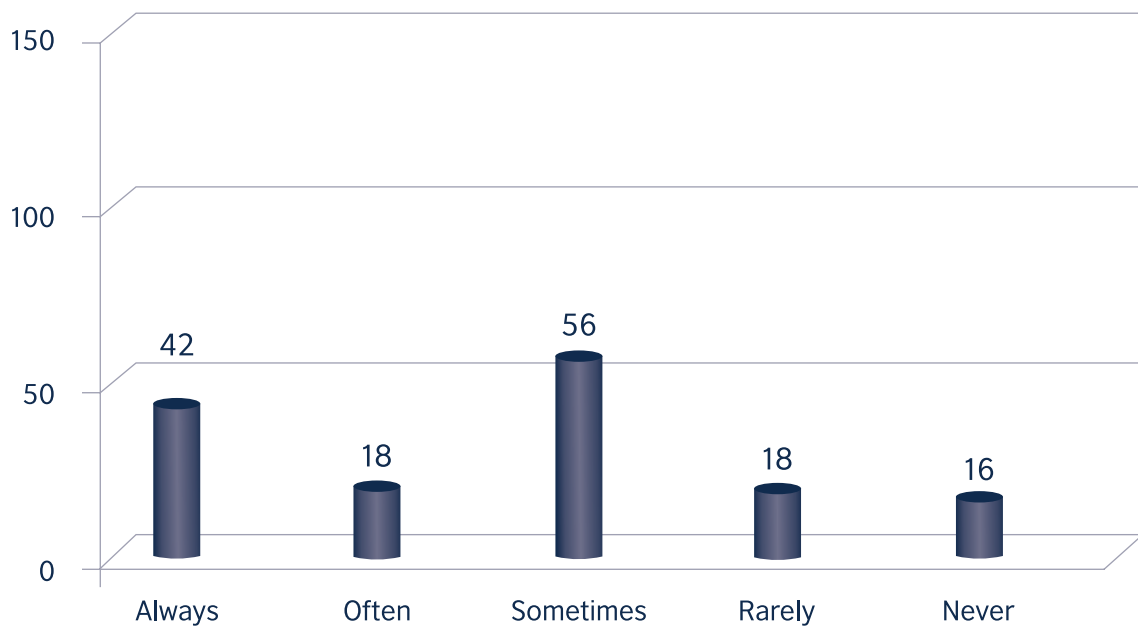**Figure 3**: Details of students who write Malayalam translation in the texts
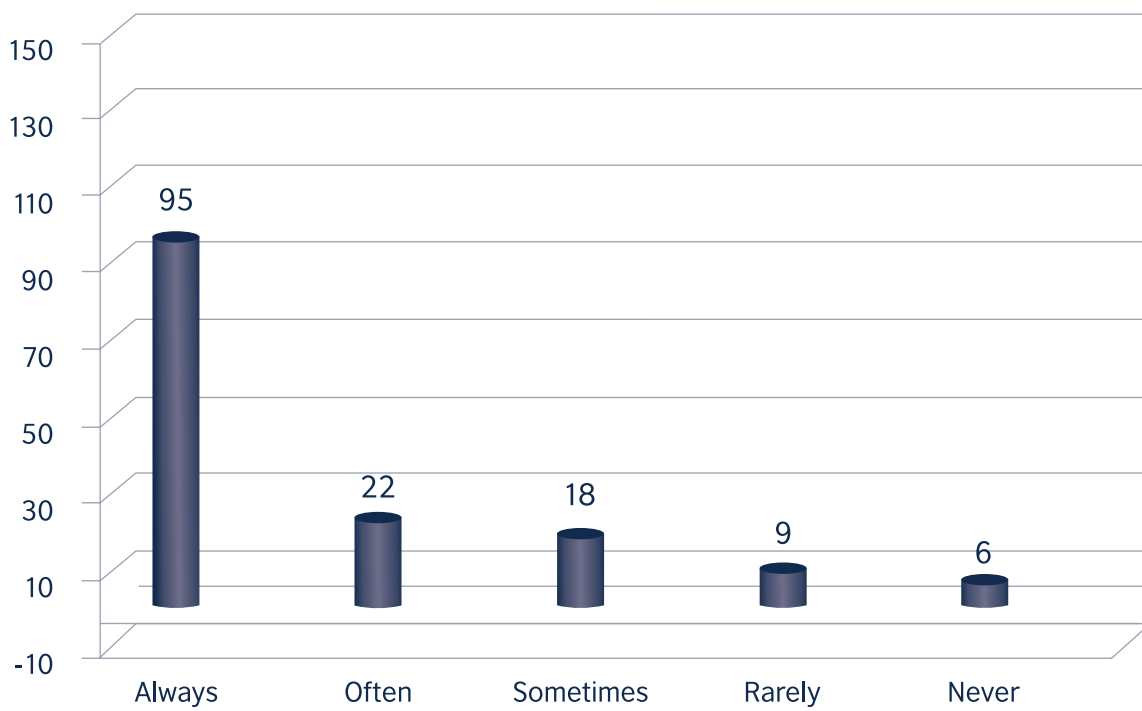
Figure 4: Details of students who consider that translating help them to understand grammar rules
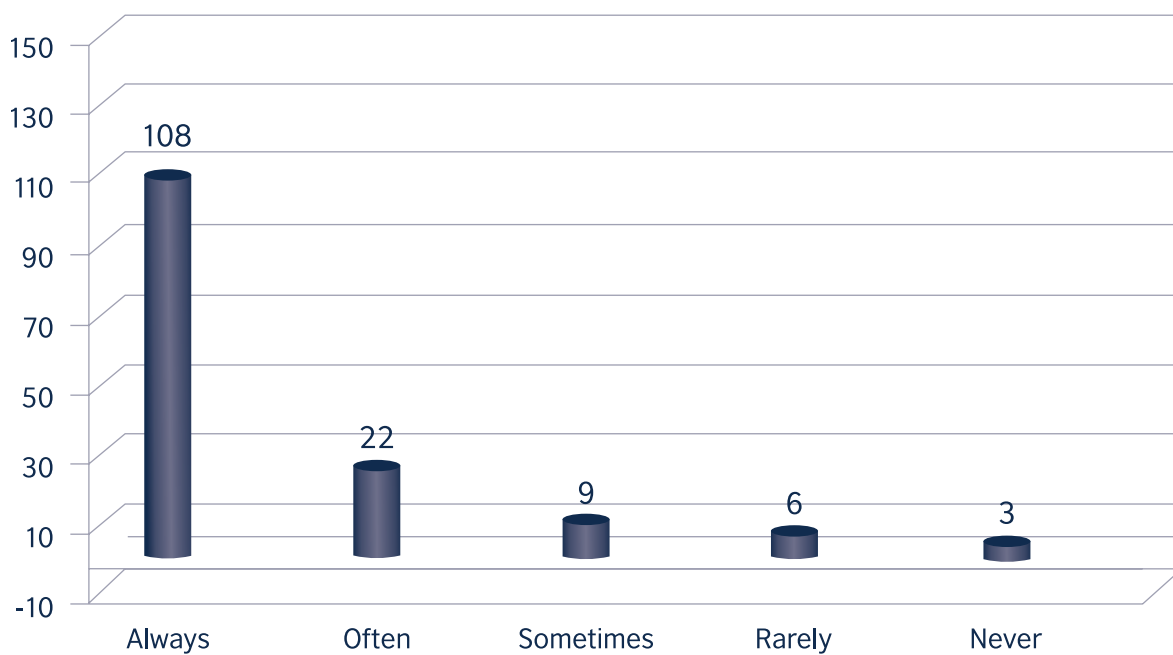
Figure 5: Details of students who think that translation to Malayalam would help them to recall the content better later
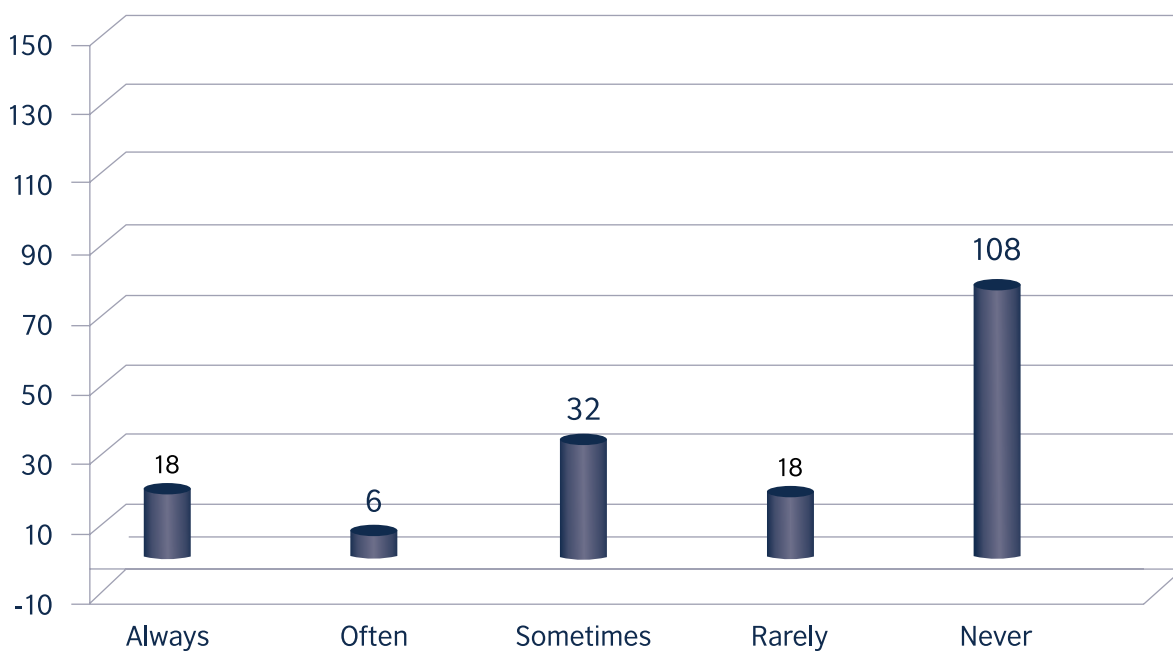
Figure 6: Representation of students who prefer their teachers to use *only* English while teaching
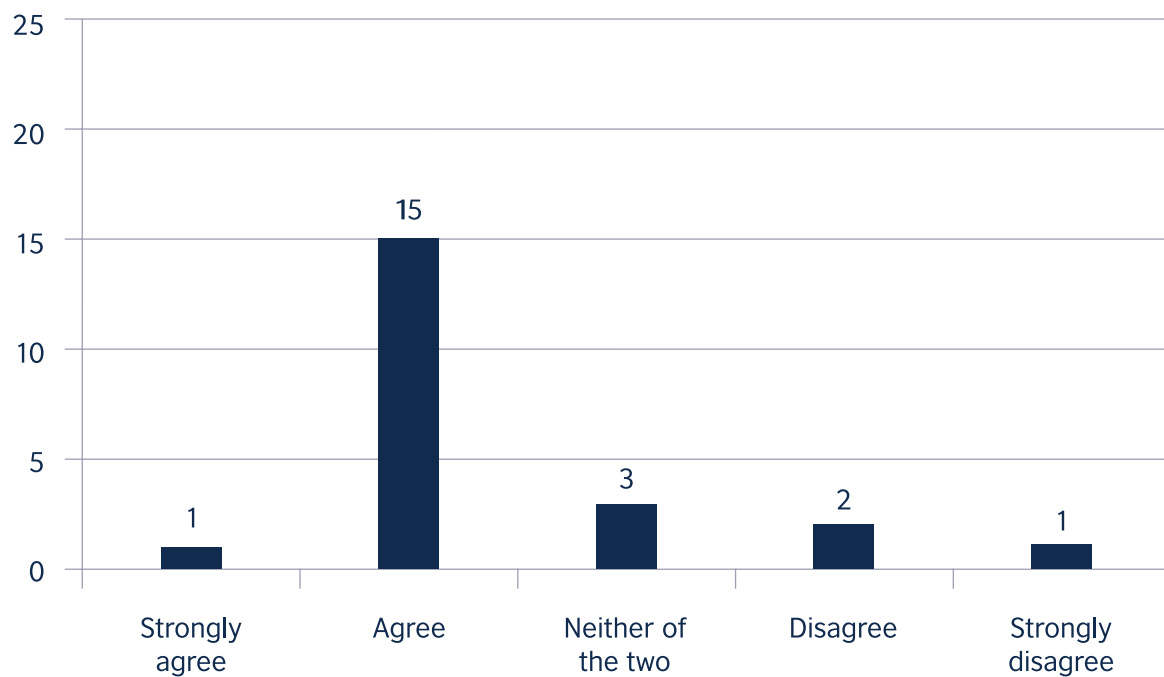
Figure 7: Teacher's response to the question whether learners like to use L2 in the classroom
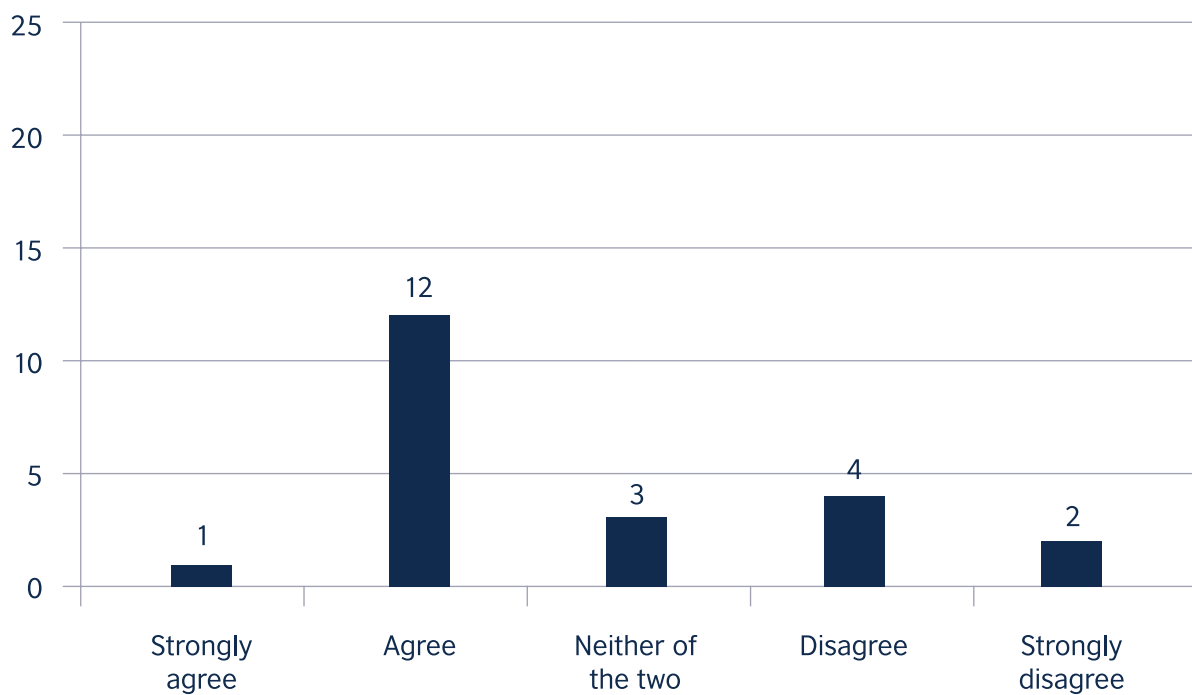
Figure 8: Teacher's response to the question whether use of L2 in the classroom can save time
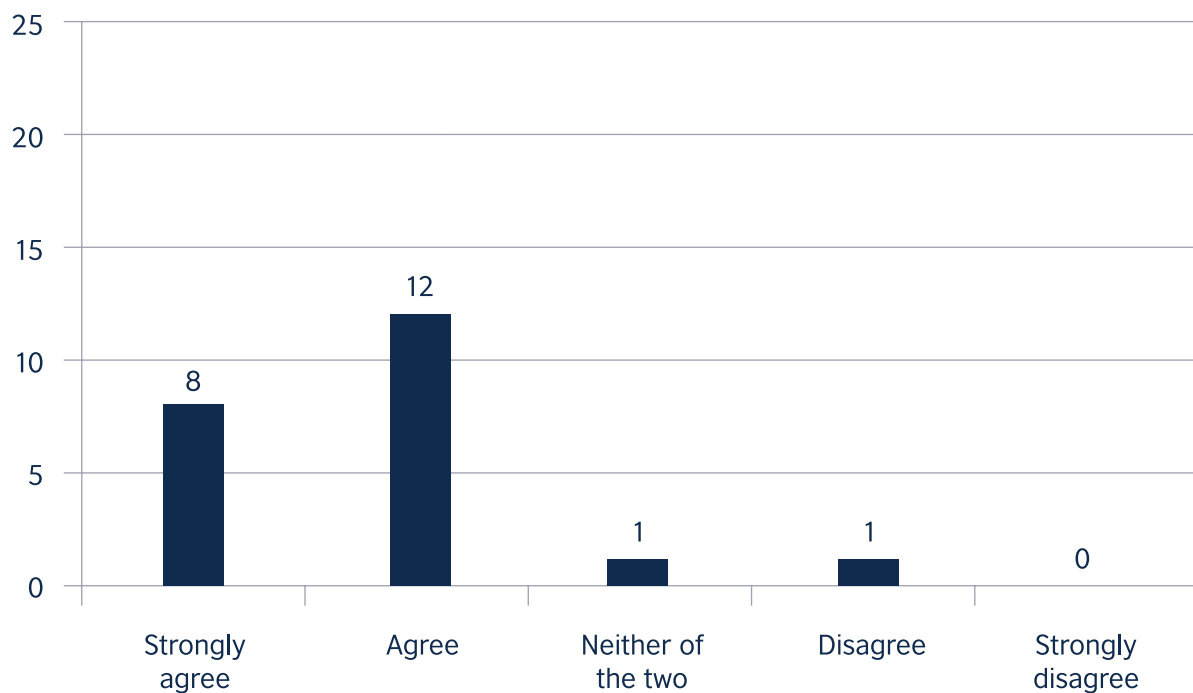
Figure 9: Teacher's response to the question whether use of L1 can reduce opportunities for learners to listen and understand L2
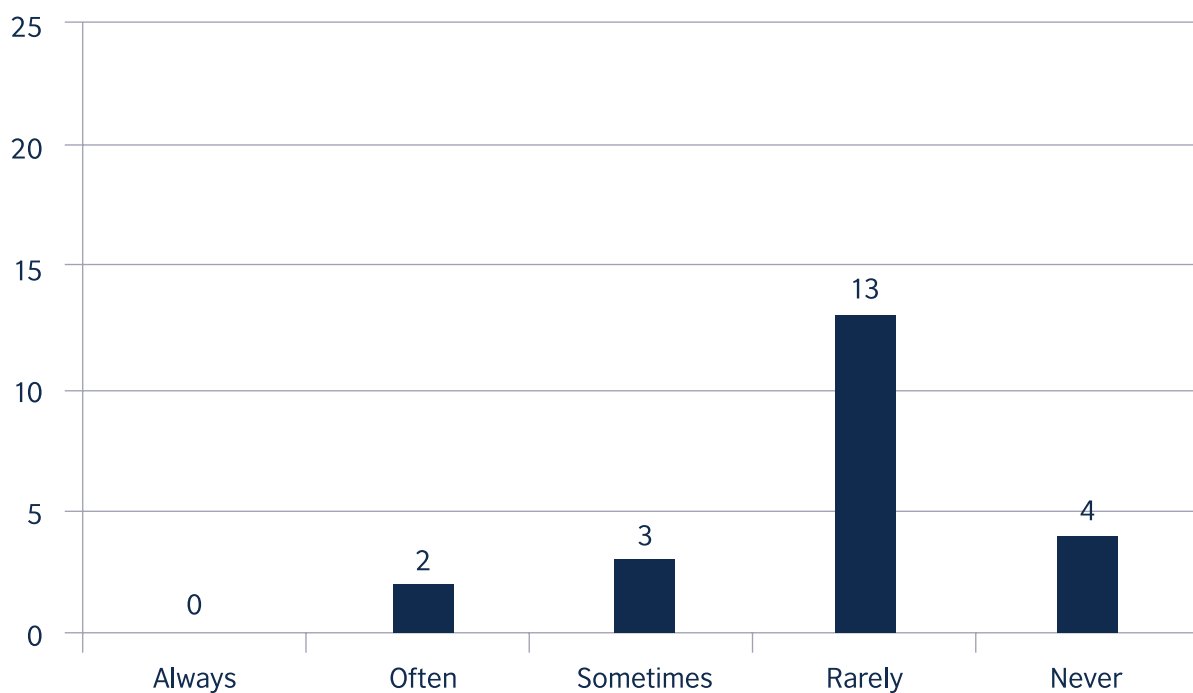
Figure 10: Teacher's response to the question whether they use L1 for preparing students for tasks before switching over to L2
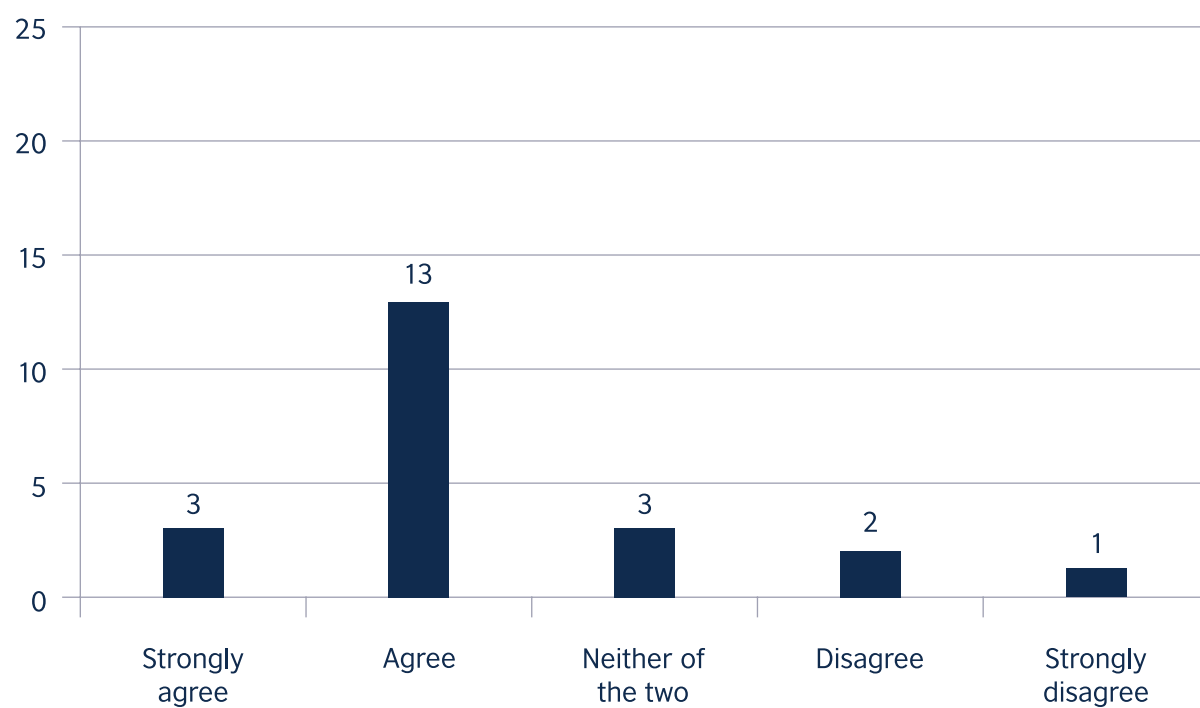
Figure 11: Teacher's response to the question whether he/she excludes the use of L1 to teach L2

2

Shared reading strategies using bilingual methods to improve listening, speaking and reading skills in young learners between the ages of four and eight

Bhanu Shankar

Introduction

English has become the second largest medium of instruction in primary schools in India after Hindi. Tamil Nadu continues to be one of the states with the highest number of students enrolled in English medium schools (Nagarajan, 2009). Most higher learning institutes also rely on English as a language of instruction. However, many children suffer from poor language skills that have an impact on their learning outcomes. Students in semi-urban areas of Tamil Nadu, who are non-native speakers of English, struggle to acquire reading and speaking skills as there is very little exposure to English in their day to day environments. Most of the methods undertaken by schools to teach the language appear insufficient. Studies by Pratham reveal that there are many English medium schools where children are neither able to read the relevant texts of their year level or communicate easily in the language of instruction. In Tamil Nadu, only 57.1 per cent of children in Grade 5 can read simple English words (Pratham, 2012). This in turn, impedes the learning outcomes in other subjects such as sciences and the arts, which are taught in English. The proposed research study aims to enhance learning outcomes in language among students through the approach of a 'Shared Reading Methodology.' The age group for this study is students aged four to eight. Shared Reading

with a bilingual approach was the methodology. Enlarged texts, in English and Tamil, were used to introduce children to the concept of print. The study tried to measure if early literacy skills could be accelerated using a Shared Reading Approach.

1. Background

1.1. Problem statement

Students in semi-urban areas of Tamil Nadu struggle to acquire English language skills, especially reading and speaking, as there is very little out-of-school exposure to English. This in turn impedes the learning outcomes in other areas as the medium of instruction is English. The proposed research study aims to enhance and improve learning outcomes in language among students through using a 'Shared Reading Methodology'. The aim is to show improvement in language acquisition skills among young learners (four to eight years) through using a shared reading methodology.

The affluence and education of children does have an impact on learning as children whose parents are educated tend to do better in school, including in language acquisition (Salve, 2015). Thus, schools in urban areas catering to different socio-economic backgrounds have very different outcomes. Research suggests that parental

engagement in teaching and learning contributes to the learning outcomes of students. The only goal in teaching English to these children then becomes engaging the students in the nuances of language. But the scenario is different in the small towns of Tamil Nadu. Studies point out that parents from semi-urban backgrounds consider English to be a huge gateway to better opportunities for children (Vishwanath, 2010). The reading skills of the children, all of whom are non-native learners of English, were a matter of concern to the researcher. These children struggle with English language skills in semi-urban areas.

A small town situated about 500 kilometres from the capital city of Chennai in Tamil Nadu, proved to be an interesting starting point. The researcher was engaged in making qualitative improvements in this school for about two years. Children were from a background where parents mostly spoke Tamil. Such children and their parents yearn for the children to learn and speak in English. When provided with a non-threatening, encouraging environment, children started speaking in English with confidence, albeit with grammatical errors. Despite this, after a couple of months reading skills remained poor.

After observing this for a few months, the researcher, with the help of Vidya, a non-governmental organisation (NGO) in Mumbai, decided to introduce the technique of Shared Reading as a possible solution to improve reading and language acquisition skills. A pilot project was conducted in February 2014 and all primary school teachers and language teachers attended a workshop organised by Ms. Jayashree Murali of Vidya. She trained the teachers to prepare the 'Big Book', which essentially is a very large book which has a story which is printed with a large font (Arial 72) and illustrated with pictures. Some books were written by the teachers in their own handwriting. Seating was in a circle on the floor. Children could touch, feel and hear the teacher next to them. This methodology trained the teachers to support the integration of various activities along with the Big Book thereby creating a non-threatening environment. This helped students to read the text.

2. Literature review

The theoretical foundations of this study are based on research which shows teachers using instruction to teach reading in the following three ways. One way is the 'bottom up' approach (Vacca, Vacca, Gove, Mckeon, Burkey and Lenhart, 2006: 38) in which teachers believe in a linear approach. Teachers believe that children must first learn to identify letters and words and then they read larger text. The teacher gives a great deal of emphasis to correct word recognition and accuracy in identification. This method is sequential, systematic and instructional (Vacca et al., 2006).

In the 'top down' approach (Vacca et al., 2006: 38) teachers consider reading for meaning as essential. They believe in involving children in meaningful activities. There is a great deal of importance given to the idea of choice and freedom. Children are encouraged to choose their own text and enjoy what they read. Errors during oral reading are not strictly corrected as the emphasis is on encouraging students to bring meaning into reading.

Teachers following the 'interactive approach' (Vacca et al., 2006: 39) combine the two other approaches. While it is important to make reading meaningful, children should recognise words too, to make sense of what they read. In order to do this, the teachers provide a learning environment supported by the scaffolding of a series of activities. They integrate reading, speaking, listening and writing. They thus support children's reading experience by mixing both explicit instruction and allowing children's immersion in reading by encouraging them.

It was this interactive approach which was used as a classroom tool in the study. Shared Reading involves reading along with children using enlarged text. This methodology introduces the children to words and pictures. Research on Shared Reading supports the fact that children enjoy the story and then begin to identify the words that appear in large print. It is a collaborative literacy learning activity and is based on the premise that just as children learn to

talk by experiencing so also do they learn to read by experiencing reading (Honchell, and Schulz, 2012). Shared Reading with the teacher models the reading that not all children are able to experience through parental support or child care givers. The whole approach moves out from an instructional to an emulative approach (Holdaway, 1979). Literacy begins through immersion in the environment in a meaningful way.

Shared Reading can be used successfully from Kindergarten to Grade Three where text large enough to be seen from a distance supports children's reading and helps with text directionality (Drucker, 2004). Children from age groups four to eight were introduced to Shared Reading in their classrooms with the help of Big Books. Various kinaesthetic movements relevant to the story were introduced as interweaving movement and drama helps various styles of learners. According to Sun (2003), kinaesthetic movements help early learners decode language and develop vocabulary (Rieg and Paquette, n.d).

For this study, the reading was done in both English and the mother tongue (Tamil). Tamil and English story reading were done during separate sessions. There was no ban against children using their mother tongue to express an idea or a word even when the reading was done in English. According to Butzkamm (2003), many monolingual methods ban the use of the mother tongue and there is a feeling of guilt associated with it. It is assumed that bilingual techniques will become a crutch for students. However, the mother tongue is an important resource for both cognition and pedagogy and can be used effectively to improve and increase literacy. The idea is to work with the natural tendency which is the mother tongue and not against it by banishing it from 'the head of a child'. When children understand English well through the mother tongue, they gain confidence and become less dependent on the mother tongue. It is with this idea that the four stories that were chosen were translated into Tamil, the mother tongue of 99 per cent of the students of the class. Measuring the impact of the mother tongue in acquiring literacy was beyond the scope of the researcher's work. However, the idea behind the introduction was for children to increase their understanding of the nuances of the story in both languages and thereby help them enjoy the story better.

Large print plays a major part in Shared Reading. Rule application and rituals tend to look at literacy as a complex process (Holdaway, 1979). Holdaway supports language experience through the use of symbols of print to encode personal meanings. A cosy environment of trust is created so that children enjoy the beauty, aesthetics and excitement and this helps in creating natural responses from students that help them acquire language skills.

3. Statement of topic

3.1. Research questions:

The research was focused on understanding the efficacy of the Shared Reading approach to help to promote listening, speaking and reading skills in the age group of four to eight. Therefore the researcher focused on three main questions:

1. How does Shared Reading help in listening and comprehension skills?

2. How does Shared Reading help in improving reading skills?

3. How does Shared Reading help in developing speaking skills?

3.2. Methodology of the research

A qualitative research methodology was used to help understand how Shared Reading can improve language acquisition within a population. The purpose of the study was to establish the relationship between shared reading and language literacy. To help to achieve this, six Early Language Literacy Tools were identified and a pre-test was conducted for the students aged four to seven. Then an intervention was carried out over six months and continued for about ten months. During this time the tools for the intervention were carefully applied. Four Big Books for each level were prepared both in English and in the local language Tamil. Stories in these books were read to the children whilst showing them the large print. Various activities were designed

for this approach. Stories were read, large print was displayed, flash cards with sight words were introduced. Children's responses were articulated through art and through kinaesthetic movement.

A circular was sent to parents before the project began briefing them about the project and asking their consent to be a part of the research project. All parents gave their consent. Permission was also taken from them to photograph their students during the project. Care was taken to ensure that children's pictures were taken in groups and in a manner that could not be misused. Names used in the research have been changed to protect the students' identity.

The data that was collected came from the grades which were involved in the shared reading strategy. The primary research instrument for gathering data was through assessment tools. Data collection was mostly through conversation, art work assessment, feedback from parents, and tests which were administered to establish the causal relationship between Shared Reading and its effect on each of the Tools of English language that was measured.

The rubrics of ASER tests (www.asercentre.org/p/141.html) were first administered to understand what students can do and the skills mastered by them. The ASER test classifies children with four parameters. They are 'nothing', 'letter', 'word' and 'paragraph' based on performance criteria. The testing tools are simple, quick and can be easily administered by the examiners. However, there have been questions raised about their content (Vagh, 2012). Therefore, the researcher decided to use the diagnostic tools created by the state government of Victoria and customised them to the local situation by using six of the nine rubrics mentioned in the document. The tools that were omitted were alphabet, phonemes and early writing. The reasons were that the focus of research was on reading complete words and it had been decided not to break words into letters or sounds.

That the data being gathered was numerical made it easy for statistical analysis. Children from each section were tested in English language skills using the rubrics given in 3.3 below. The testing happened in the classroom. It took place in small groups and in an informal environment to help students to feel comfortable. Two people acted as assessors in order to reduce subjectivity. All the results were then compiled.

The diagnostic Assessment Tools in English have been developed by the government of Victoria over a period of two years and are reflective of the international trends in the field of early years research. The tools address numerous skills in decoding and comprehension (State Government Victoria, 2013). They have been developed by contextualising print (which is the bedrock of the researcher's area of study) and they focus on reading, speaking and listening skills.

3.3. Diagnostic Assessment Tools in English – List of assessment tools

The following are the six English Tools in Early Literacy. Table 1 outlines what skills are being assessed in these tools.

Children were assessed and were given a value ranging from 1-5. The Shared Reading Intervention was the common factor for the students. The categories developed to measure literacy were the variables – i.e. reading comprehension, oral language conversation, reading fluency, recall; these are dependent on the deployment of Shared Reading methodology.

For the purpose of research the first stage was the selection of four stories. These stories were made into Big Books with enlarged print and pictures. The same stories were written in enlarged print in Tamil. The stories were read in class and then followed with activities. The table below gives a list of activities that were used along with reading. Reading took place in an inclusive manner with the teacher and the children seated on the floor and the 'Big Book' with them. Reading was done aloud. In the age group of four years, the entire story in big print was printed and pasted on the wall with a few pictures to go with the story. Children were thus constantly introduced to print.

Table 1: Early Literacy in English Diagnostic Tools

Source: Diagnostic Assessment Tools in English.
Available at www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/support/Pages/date.aspx

Diagnostic Tool	Skill *	Beginning	Progressing	Accelerating
Comprehend text	RC	Listen to story _____ and answer questions	Listen to _____ (book) and answer questions	Listen to _____ (book) and answer questions
Concepts of print	CP P	Front of book Where is title? Trace around a word	Where does the story begin? Which way to go Name and purpose of full stop	Name and purpose of quotation marks and question marks
Listening and recall	CR	Repeat sentences Follow simple directions with common positional language	Repeat sentences Follow instructions to construct a figure	Repeat sentences Follow instructions to construct a figure Ability to repeat instructions
Phonological awareness	WS	Identify syllables in words Identify words that rhyme	Identify words that rhyme	Generate words that rhyme
Oral language	OL:C OL:R	Name objects in a picture Describe actions in a picture	Use positional language to describe objects in a picture Describe clothing in a picture	Engage in conversation with the teacher with a picture prompt extent of utterance coherence vocabulary clarity
Reading	RA RF RC	Read environmental print	Listen to text and match words back to the text Identify common sight words in text	Read a story well supported by illustration with a simple repetitive structure fluency accuracy Answer questions about the story

Key

RC: reading comprehension CP: concepts of print P: punctuation	CR: comprehension of retell WS: words and sounds OL:C: oral language conversation OL:R: oral language retell	RA: reading accuracy RF: reading fluency RC: reading comprehension

There were certain times in the school calendar when Shared Reading could not be done regularly. This was during the times when the students had the Christmas and the mid-term break. During these times, parents who were educated could support the children at home by reading to them the stories that the teachers had photocopied for the students. Whilst parents were introduced to Shared Reading Methodology and were also encouraged to read to their children at home, it was difficult to collect data for the effect that this support had on children as it could not be measured with consistency and regularity.

3.4. Discussion with subject matter experts

All the teachers were involved in reading stories to the children from these classes. Their inputs are considered important. Therefore there were regular meetings with the group to find out their opinions, suggestions and improvements to the plan if any. It is teachers who designed the worksheets with tasks such as word search, construction of sentences and other activities. Discussions with teachers helped in understanding differences in learning among students and the techniques adopted to improve reading. Teachers shared their ideas, such as the use of flashcards, of movement and of art during these meetings. Table 2 below gives a list of the

classes involved, the stories read, the strategies followed for reading the stories, both in Tamil and in English.

4. Findings

A pre-test and a post-test were used to determine whether improvement in the students could be tracked. There was a gap of about five months between the pre-test (September, 2014) and the post-test (February, 2015).The six parameters for testing the students are given in Table 1, Column 1. The six parameters were as follows: Comprehend Text, Concept of Print, Listening and Recall, Phonological Awareness, Oral Language and Reading. Students were grouped into three categories, which were Beginning, Progressing and Accelerating. They were assessed using a Big Book.

After these assessments, the language teachers using the Big Book carried out Shared Reading systematically. The raw test scores and the percentages were for English language literacy. The project was implemented for PP2, Grade 1, Grade 2 and Grade 3. For the purpose of research, data was collected from Grade 1 and Grade 3. This was because both these grades had no problems of teacher attrition and there was regularity and consistency in the instruction pattern.

Table 2: Grade 1 percentage comparison

	Pre-test and post-test percentage comparison					
	Percentage of learners					
	Beginners **before SR**	Beginners **after SR**	Progressing **before SR**	Progressing **after SR**	Accelerating **before SR**	Accelerating **after SR**
Comprehend text	18	9	18	22	32	36
Concept of print	27	9	14	27	27	32
Listening and recall	22	9	18	27	27	32
Phonological awareness	22	14	14	18	32	36
Oral language	27	18	18	18	22	32
Reading	22	9	9	9	36	50

Table 3: Grade 2 percentage comparison

	Pre-test and post-test percentage comparison					
	Percentage of learners					
	Beginners **before SR**	Beginners **after SR**	Progressing **before SR**	Progressing **after SR**	Accelerating **before SR**	Accelerating **after SR**
Comprehend text	27	18	36	22	36	59
Concept of print	36	14	45	68	18	18
Listening and recall	36	22	27	41	36	36
Phonological awareness	27	18	45	36	27	45
Oral language	22	14	45	36	32	50
Reading	18	4.5	36	18	45	77

4.1. Findings in Grade 1 and Grade 3 – Analysis of Tables 2 and 3

Students have consistently moved out of one stage and gone to the next level of language development after Shared Reading. A small percentage of students were found to be at the same level. The reasons were long absenteeism of these students from school and lack of exposure to the language at home.

The time period for such a research programme is very short to show language improvement as it has been suggested that it requires four to five years to learn a language (Eaton, 2011). However, Shared Reading helps children with comprehension, language and communication using immersion techniques (Eaton, 2011).

Parents were introduced to the program through an orientation workshop. After the Shared Reading Program concluded, a letter was sent asking parents for their feedback.

The teachers were the facilitators for the project. They had been involved in the pilot program that ran in February 2014. The teachers who took part in the pilot program in turn trained new teachers. Teachers created the time schedule, ran the parent orientation and designed worksheets.

Feedback from both these stakeholders was essential in arriving at how Shared Reading impacted learning. The common themes that emerged after talking to parents and teachers are presented below:

- Learning environment: There was a general enthusiasm and interest in the project. Parents saw clear benefits in being involved in a project that was funded by the British Council. Children were delighted to be part of the reading program which happened in floor seating with the teacher as a part of the circle. The learning aid was the Big Book and a stylus to point to the words in the story as the story was read out. The non-formal seating made the session interactive and more cohesive. The learning environment became informal, inclusive and interactive. Learning is deeper when the learning environment is informal and non-threatening (The National Academic Press, 2012).

- Reading skills: The entire program was deployed to see how the experience would help language reading skills. While all teachers and most parents mentioned the improvement in English language reading, only one parent has spoken about the improvement in reading Tamil.

- Pronunciation: Most children speak with a strong vernacular accent; constant practice in reading text also saw an improvement in pronunciation according to the interviewees (Teachers and Parents).

- Speaking skills: Children tried telling the stories in their own words. They made sentences with new words. All this helped them to improve their speaking skills. This was mentioned by parents who sent their feedback.

- Creativity and imagination: The program encouraged children to be creative and imaginative. Children enacted the stories.

4.2. Checklist matrix to explore the effect of shared reading from the themes that emerged from responses:

	Teacher	Parent
Learning environment	*The reading practice was not one-sided but a truly interaction session with open ended question which changed the traditional concept of yes or no answer but which rather challenged the students to respond and elaborate their points* – **T1** *Fun way method of learning. It was an interactive reading experience which was very useful* – **T3**	*She is very happy and interested in participating in such programme because. she felt like as if she were a character of the story they read* – **P5** *Teachers helped her to read difficult words and new words through more fun and interesting ways* – **P4**
Reading skills	*The speaking and reading skills of students improved gradually* – **T1**	*It established the habit of independent reading in my child both in English and Tamil* – **P4** *His reading ability and understanding characters in the stories have increased exponentially* – **P2**
Comprehension skills	*Questions were raised from the stories to determine student's comprehension level* – **T3**	*Understanding characters in the stories have increased exponentially* – **P2**
Improvement in speaking	*The speaking and reading skills of students improved gradually* – **T1** *In turn resulted in the development of the student verbal and communicative skills along with the vocabulary* – **T2** *They retold the story in their own words* – **T3**	*pronounce English words well- it improves them to pronounce correctly* – **P6**
Creativity and imagination	*the art of enacting which enhanced their creativity and imagination* – **T1** *"in the book and beyond the book experience which help the students to imagine and work without restrictions* – **T2**	*she felt like as if she were a character of the story they read* – **P5**

4.3. Feedback from teachers

Teacher 1 – Teacher (Grade 1)

Apart from the regular academic activities, Shared reading was an added feather in the cap for the students of Luxor World School. It was an interactive activity which helped both the students and the facilitator to sharpen their skills in language. The speaking and reading skills of students improved gradually and students learnt the art of enacting which enhanced their creativity and imagination. The teachers enjoyed carrying out this activity while students had fun learning it. This reading activity has encouraged our students to develop the love for reading. Overall this activity has left an indelible mark in this academic year.

Teacher 2 – Tamil Teacher

Shared reading was an extraordinary experience which changed the entire atmosphere of the classroom. It was more than just reading aloud we concentrated on the collective development of the child like building up the oral language, vocabulary comprehension, phonological awareness and print awareness like illustration and other publishing details. We also gave importance to letter identification and concepts of words.

The reading practice was not one sided but a truly interaction session with open ended question which changed the traditional concept of yes or no answer but which rather challenged the students to respond and elaborate their points which in turn resulted in the development of the student verbal and communicative skills along with the vocabulary.

The students were asked to repeat the phrases from the text and perform various movements that were related to the actions described and with extra attention to the verb. It was a in the book and beyond the book experience which help the students to imagine and work without restrictions.

Teacher 3 – English Language Teacher (Grade 3)

Shared reading was an interactive reading experience which was very useful to our students. It provided necessary support for the students who struggled to read. It was a fun way method of learning. The students could predict what the story might be about. Questions were raised from the stories to determine student's comprehension level. They were instructed to relate the story to the student's similar experiences. They retold the story in their own words. It was an amazing activity for the students.

The researcher's thoughts: (November, 2014)
When I went into one classroom in PP2, I asked a student S1 who always speaks in Tamil to me – 'How was Tom Tiger's room?' and much to my amazement, the little one responded 'messy'. It was a delight to see her pick up the word and answer.

4.4. Feedback from parents

P1- Parents of Student A:

Dear Madam,
We the parents of your student A1 are happy to text few lines regarding feedback of my kid's Learning. We appreciate your teaching method which gives my child Learning and doing homework is a happy event for him every day. I find my child pronounce English words well and improved a lot in Grade 1. In shared reading he learnt to make sentences on his own and tried to write a story on his own which I could not do until I entered College. We congratulate your efforts and hoping that my kids both A1 & A2 will have wonderful learning process in the years to come.
Thank you,

P2- Parent of A2

> *Hello Mam,*
>
> *We the parent of A2, studying Grade I*
>
> *During this academic year he improved a lot in various activities. His handwriting and vocabulary improved remarkably. His reading ability and understanding characters in the stories have increased exponentially. Thanks to the method of share reading practised in the school which helped him a lot in learning English. We would like to thank for the efforts taken by you in improving his language skills.*
>
> *With warm regards,*
>
> *P2*

P3- Parent of A3 – Grade 1

> *We thankfully acknowledge that our son A3 in Grade I, has improved a lot his Language Skills after his inclusion in Shared Reading. We hopefully look forward for a Good Development in his skills in the coming days.*
>
> *Thanks and Regards*
>
> *P3*

P4- Parent of A4 – Grade 1 'A'

> *The shared reading programme was very useful since it established the habit of independent reading in my child both in English and Tamil. The teachers helped her to read difficult words and new words through more fun and interesting ways. Through constant practice she gained confidence to read that story alone and was able to well comprehend that story, which in turn made her to read other books with confidence.*
>
> *A4, (P4- Grade 1 'A').*

P5- Parent of A5

> *Hope u doing well...i am grade 2 A5's mother. I came to know that you are in-charge of share reading programme that was going on since last few months in luxor world school*
> *When I interacted with A5 this regarding....she told that she is very happy and interested in participating such programme because.. she felt like as if she were a character of the story they read.*
>
> *She also said there were the other kids involved in this activity.*
> *What I really felt is.... this kind of activity will definitely improves my kid's English reading skill, pronunciation, fluency, knowledge and self-confidence.*
>
> *So keep going...*
>
> *Kindly mail me how A5 does in share reading*
>
> *Thanking you*
>
> *Regards,*
> *P5*

P6- Parents of A6

> *hello mam, i am A's mom .ur reading practise thought was very good. keep it up. please do it continuously. thank u.*
>
> *reading practise is a very good attempt to children. it improves them to pronounce correctly. we suggest to teach spoken English classes in cca periods.it may help to talk in English fluently.mam u give some imaginary characters and describe it to them. please do this reading prac. continuously and ask children to read a book every night in home. thank u🤱*

4.5. Summary of responses

Similarity in responses of all participants: All participants felt that Shared Reading had been very useful in helping the students to develop language literacy skills.

Parent responses: Parents felt that their children had improved language skills in English. However, only one parent specifically mentioned Tamil. The improvement in Tamil was therefore either not significant or else was not given due importance as parents are keen to measure English.

Parents had differing opinions about how Shared Reading had benefitted children. Apart from one parent, none of the others spoke of the benefits of Shared Reading in Tamil language.

Teacher responses: All teachers felt that students had enjoyed learning through Shared Reading. The larger benefit they felt was accrued through the different methodologies that engaged the learning through a set of interesting activities. There was consensus among teachers that it had helped improve language communication skills.

5. Discussions and reflection

Any research requires a systematic approach and a consistency. This was achieved with moderate success in the two grades mentioned above. The other age groups had a constant change of teachers for various reasons. This hindered the process of the research.

Student absenteeism was another factor that needed to be considered. The two sections mentioned above again had attendance above 85 per cent, which helped to measure the results.

The effect of the mother tongue and its impact on helping students acquire the second language through the methodology of following the same stories in both languages was helpful to see their reactions but difficult to measure. However, one of the parents (P4), mentioned specifically that her child was learning to read and speak in Tamil. Whether learning the language in the mother tongue through the stories helped in cognition which accelerated the acquisition of English is again something that the research was not able to find.

Shared Reading definitely played a big part in making reading a fun activity and given that reading skills are vital in language acquisition, it contributed to the students picking up more nuances of the language.

Based on various interactions with teachers, parents and students, the researcher found that it really helped to integrate reading through storytelling activities. Research too supports the fact that stories have tremendous impact on language development and they create bonds that are important in the classroom. Storytelling is important to help children imagine and it is the cornerstone of teaching. Along with this when the scaffolding of Shared Reading is provided in the form of big print and other engaging activities, then it enhances language learning (Koki, 1998).

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Appendix 1: A child's interpretation of a story from the Big Book

My Name V·J· EBIROMRAJU
Date 28-8-14

Tha is My TomT

3

A study of the learning strategies used in ELT classrooms by monolingual and bilingual learners

Digambar Ghodke

1. Introduction

This project is an attempt to study the performance of the Class 4 students from the Waddar Community in the English classrooms of selected government primary schools in Maharashtra, India. The universality approach advocates a universal approach to teaching English to children in any part of the world and the diversity approach underscores bilingual/ multilingual education. Research in bilingual and multilingual education favours the inclusion of a child's mother tongue (MT) in the school curriculum at an early stage of educational development for building a strong foundation for effective learning. This research seeks to substantiate the diversity approach by assessing the performance of the children from de-notified tribes (DNTs) with a different L1 within the family and neighbourhood and comparing it with that of the children from the groups whose L1 is a medium of instruction (MI) at schools. The first section explains the research context while the second section comprises the methodological part. In the third section, findings are presented and the fourth section presents the discussion on the research findings. In the final section, some suggestions related to the consideration of students' cultures and language skills when developing learning objectives and instructional activities are made.

The project studies the performance of students from two different socio-economic and linguistic backgrounds in the English classroom. It investigates the learning strategies adopted by these learners with different first language (L1) conditions. Eventually, it aims at drawing the attention of the curriculum designers and policy makers to the different pedagogical needs and learning conditions for the students from the de-notified tribes (DNTs), in India who represent the deprived sections of the society.

1.1. De-notified Tribes (DNTs) and their socio-economic and educational background

DNTs (also known as Vimukta Jatis) consist of those social groups branded as 'criminal tribes' by the British government in India under the Criminal Tribes Act (CTA) in 1871 who were 'de-notified' by the Indian government in 1952 with the repeal of the CTA. There are fourteen such tribes residing in Maharashtra. DNTs in India are socio-economically underprivileged groups. After 1952, the government of India provided these groups particular areas near villages/towns/cities for their permanent settlement. The level of literacy for these groups is low. Facilities for schooling are provided in some of their settlements and attendance has been made compulsory for children of school-going age. Education expenses

are met by the government, and children are fed, yet desirable results have not been achieved in improving their standard of living. Thus, the reasons for the lack of interest in education among these communities deserve investigation.

1.2. The present research context

Many educationists and sociolinguists have emphasised the need to take the local socio-economic, cultural and linguistic background of learners into account when designing a curriculum for English. Two contrasting approaches propose ways to support bilinguals in language learning: the universality approach, which advocates a universal approach to teaching English to children in any part of the world and the diversity approach which underscores bilingual/multilingual education. The present research seeks to substantiate the latter approach by assessing the performance of children from DNTs with a different L1 within the family and neighbourhood and comparing it with that of the children from the groups whose L1 is a medium of instruction (MI) at schools. Hopefully, the project will be useful in the English language improvement programmes being designed for primary schools.

In the present context, monolinguals are those who enter schools with their L1 as the language of instruction at their schools. Bilinguals are children whose L1 is other than the language of instruction. The MI becomes a second language (L2) for them. English is introduced as a part of their curriculum to the students who are either monolinguals or bilinguals by the time they enter into grade 1. It is an additional language to be learnt by these students. The monolinguals referred to above are learners from Marathi speaking backgrounds while the bilinguals belong to the DNTs such as Waddar[1] and Banjara[2] communities who speak mostly their mother tongues (MTs) in their families and vicinity and get exposure to Marathi only after joining a nursery school.

Research in bilingual and multilingual education favours the inclusion of a child's MT in the school curriculum at an early stage of educational development for building a strong foundation for effective learning. Researchers from this field advocate a gradual transition from L1 to the majority language or L2 to ensure development of literacy, skills and knowledge for the indigenous and minority students. Multilingual education (MLE), especially, emphasises 'first language first' and advocates taking the child's socio-cultural environment into the classroom culture. In its guidelines on language and education, UNESCO (2003) recommends the use of MT for initial instruction and literacy. It also advises the countries concerned to make a provision for teacher training in its educational planning to ensure a sufficient number of competent teachers to teach in the MT.

In this context, studying the performance of these children in English (L3), which is introduced from Class 1 in Maharashtra, should be, in fact, both intriguing and rewarding. With an interest in dealing with this unaddressed issue, I am attempting to study the performance of the Class 4 students from the Waddar Community, a de-notified community, in the English classrooms of selected government primary schools in Maharashtra.

1.3. Research questions

1. What learning strategies do bilingual learners of minority languages use to cope with a language which is not their mother tongue and which is used as (the) medium of instruction?

2. What is the relationship between the learners' socio-economic, cultural and linguistic background and their L2/L3 performance?

3. What is the effect of using monolingual curricula, teaching material, methods and techniques while teaching L2 to the learners from diverse linguistic, socio-cultural and economic surroundings?

4. Are the instructors in the class sensitive to the needs of these bilingual learners of minority languages?

[1] Waddar is a nomadic community in India.
[2] Banjara (also called Lambadi/Gormati) is a Hindi word used for a kind of nomadic people in India, who roam around living here and there, with no permanent house.

5. What efforts do these instructors make to meet these learner's needs?

1.4. English in Indian schools

With the spread of English around the world, many countries have made it part of their educational policy to teach English from the early stages of schooling. In many Indian states nowadays, English is introduced from grade 1 along with a regional language. However, for some students, the related regional language is an L1 and for others it is an L2. For the students whose L1 is a regional language, English is an L2 and it is an L3 for the students whose L1 is other than the related regional language.

Contrary to the views of the educationists who favour education in a child's MT, the majority of children in India have to learn in schools where the MI is the learners' L2. Moreover, these learners are introduced to an additional language (L3) such as Hindi and English. It would be significant to know the outcomes of such steps.

1.5. Bilingualism and its effects

There is no consensus on the concept of bilingualism among linguists across the world. For some bilingualism implies a native-like command of the L2 and for others it is the speaker's working knowledge of the L2. Experts do not agree if for children starting school where they are expected to learn a new language, knowing one or more languages already is an advantage or disadvantage.

Studies conducted by Ringbom (1987) and Thomas (1988) showed that bilinguals performed well in L3 while a study undertaken by M¨agiste (1984) showed the negative impact of bilingualism in L3 learning. Lightbown and Spada (2013:30-34) by referring to Jim Cummins (2000) underline the negative effects of bilingualism on intelligence and cognition and misdiagnosis of language delays or disorders in L2 among immigrant and minority language children.

1.6. Indigenous minority children and education

In the literature on the education of minorities, the educational failure of linguistic minorities is attributed to the disparity between the home language and the language of formal instruction (see, for example, Mohanty, 2009, Skutnabb-Kangas, 1981 and 2000). Mohanty talks about the 'forced submersion of minority children in dominant or majority language classrooms'. He criticises 'privileging the practices of preference to homogenisation and standardisation' (2009: 278). In Skutnabb-Kangas's view, it prevents access to education, because of the linguistic, pedagogical and psychological barrier it creates and it often curtails the development of the children's capabilities, perpetuates poverty, and causes serious mental harm (Mohanty, 2009: 39).

For Mohanty (2009), the major factor contributing to the poor performance of tribal children at school is the language barrier. The result of this language barrier is a content barrier because it becomes difficult for children to understand textbooks in a language which is not familiar to them. The proponents of MLE favour the use of the MTs of the indigenous minority children for effective conceptual and cognitive development.

The learning difficulties of the children from the DNTs such as the Waddars become clear. These children have to learn from texts in an L2 in which even their parents are not fluent. In addition, they also have to learn an additional language, i.e. English from grade 1. As in the example of Turkish children in Swedish schools referred to by Skutnabb-Kangas (1981:17), the Waddar children and other children from DNTs are 'between two worlds, not properly part of either'. Illiteracy and lack of fluency in the L2 present challenges to parents who wish to help their children.

1.7. Heritage languages and the medium of instruction at school

The heritage languages of the DNTs are also looked down upon by the privileged groups. These languages are mostly unwritten and their speakers use them only for family and intra-group communication. Consequently, the children from DNTs have to attend schools where the MI is other than their L1, mostly the dominant regional language, for example, Marathi in Maharashtra. While considerable research has suggested the advantages of learning the basics in one's MT,

ironically, these children have no option but to learn primary concepts in L2. Interestingly, during the visits to these schools, through informal conversations with the teachers, it was noticed that they are not familiar with the languages of these learners. The teachers stated that at the initial stages, they find it difficult to communicate with these children as the MI is different from the children's L1.

1.8. Rationale behind the selection of the schools

Nimaj, a small village with a population of about 4,500 people, is located in the Sangamner Tehsil of Ahmednagar district in the state of Maharashtra, India. In this village, there are three schools with classes up to grade 4 which are governed by the Zilla Parishad (Z.P.) or district council, a local government body. One of these Z.P. schools is located in the Waddar Community settlement area (known as Vidya Nagar), the second is located in the main village Nimaj and the third is in a settlement adjoining the Nimaj village, Gunjal Vasti. The majority of the students attending the school in the Waddar settlement near Nimaj village are from the Waddar community and the language spoken at their homes is known as Wadari in Maharashtra. The parents of these children have traditionally been stone-quarry workers. Although some of them have adopted a sedentary life, Waddar people are mostly nomadic and have to migrate across districts and states, leaving older members of the family and children at home, in search of work.

 The students who attend the other Z.P. Marathi Medium schools, located in the main village and Gunjal Vasti, have different socio-economic backgrounds, i.e., they are the children of farming people who belong to different castes, in the *balutedari* (*jajmani*), an Indian socio-economic system in the past when lower castes performed various functions for upper castes and received grain in return. However, almost all the students from these two schools, except for a few students from the Muslim community, are Marathi speakers. Marathi children are monolinguals before they start attending schools as they speak only Marathi in their family and neighbourhood. The Waddar

and Muslim children are also monolinguals before they start attending their pre-school and they gradually become bilingual by the time they reach grade 1; the Waddar children grow up speaking Wadari while the Muslims speak Dakhini, a dialect of Urdu spoken in the Deccan Plateau region, in their families and in their neighbourhood and Marathi outside their community. All these students attend the schools which use Marathi as a language of instruction, and where English is introduced from grade 1.

1.9. Research in language learning strategies (LLSs) and its implication

In Oxford's view LLSs are 'tools for active, self-directed involvement' in 'developing communicative competence' (1990:1). For O'Malley and Uhl Chamot, they are special ways of processing information that enhance comprehension, learning, or retention of information (1990:01). Ellis (1985: 293) defines strategies 'as some form of mental activity which occurs at a specific stage in the language learning process and are not necessarily problem-oriented and conscious' (see Jessner, 2008:30). Second language learning strategies are classified in Table 1.

2. Methodology

The place of study was Nimaj, the village described above. The estimated population of the village is 4,500 which includes more than 500 people from the Waddar community. The participants in this study were 28 students studying in Class 4 at the three different Z.P. schools in Nimaj. Ten students were selected from each school. Later one student each from Vidya Nagar and Gunjal Vasti left the schools as their parents migrated in search of manual labour. The teachers of these schools also took part as informants in this project.

2.1. Methods for data collection

A questionnaire was used to gather data on the relation between the learners' socio- economic and L1 background and their performance in L2/ L3 i.e. in English.

Table 1: Classification of LLSs Oxford (1990)

Direct strategies	Indirect strategies
Memory	**I. Metacognitive strategies**
Creating mental linkage	Centering your learning
Applying images and sounds	Arranging and planning your learning
Reviewing well	Evaluating your learning
Employing action	**II. Affective strategies**
Cognitive	Lowering your anxiety
Practising	Encouraging yourself
Receiving and sending messages strategies	Taking your emotional temperature
Analysing and reasoning	**Social strategies**
Creating structure for input and output	Asking question
Compensation strategies	Cooperating with others
Guessing intelligently	Empathising with others
Overcoming limitations in speaking and writing	

2.1a Data collection instruments/data collection tools

The data collection instruments comprised:

    a) a questionnaire to identify the students' background
    b) a pupil observation form for class observations
    c) tasks to enable researchers to identify learning strategies used by students.

In order to identify learners' socio-economic, educational and linguistic background, the questionnaire included questions related to parents' education, occupation, annual income, social category and family language.

The pupil observation sheet to study the learning strategies adopted by the learners while learning LSRW skills in English as L2/L3 was based on Oxford (1990) and Rubin's (1987) LLSs. The observation sheet covers both direct and indirect strategies. Initially, classroom observation was made by using the observation sheet comprising different LLSs suggested by Oxford (1990). However, after realising the difficulties in doing so, different tasks were prepared to elicit the information about the direct and indirect learning strategies adopted by the learners under study. Five MA (English) students were selected and trained to observe the learners while doing their tasks, in written and spoken forms. Prior to observations, the researcher visited each school individually twice to ask for permission and collect information related to the students' backgrounds. Observers visited each school and noted the behaviour of the learners. Each school was visited three times and three classes were observed, for 35 minutes each.

2.1b Tasks and activities
Task 1: Grouping
This task included an activity on memorisation. The researcher/observers read aloud 6 to 8 words related to various things from their day-to-day life (mobile, TV, etc.) and the students were asked to memorise these words.

Task 2: Guessing
A game was used to practise the alphabet. The students were divided into groups and asked to stand in line. A piece of chalk was given to the students in the front of the line to write on the blackboard. Then a letter was written with a finger on the back of the students at the end of the line. The next student did the same with the student in

front of him/her and so on. The students with the chalk tried to guess the letter and wrote any word that began with that letter on the board.

Task 3: Matching
In this task of eight examples, the students were asked to match the words with their pictures given in a wrong order.

Task 4: Practising with sounds
A task was devised to test if the students were able to identify the differences in rhyming words (e.g. 'look' and 'book' etc.).

Task 5: Spelling contest
Each class was divided into two teams. Then words were said aloud to spell. Students were to spell these words correctly with not even one mistake. The team that had more points was the winner.

Task 6: Act out an activity
In this activity, each student was asked to perform an action (e.g. cooking, etc.) and the other students guessed what that student was doing.

Task 7: Catching up on your ABC's
The alphabet was written on the board. The observers threw a beanbag to someone, and asked (them) to say a word beginning with the letter A and so on. The tasks such as Words Beginning with a Given Letter, Bang Bang - A Vocabulary Game, Guess the Letter on Your Back,

Chain Spelling, Mimes, etc. were used to elicit the information related to learning strategies.

Task 8: A post-competency test
A post-competency test of 50 marks was conducted for the same students (who were selected for this study when they were in grade 4) while they are in grade 5. Informal talks were held with the teachers of the three schools under study.

3. Findings
The findings of the study are presented in three categories:

3.1. Findings related to the learners' background

3.1a Social category, family language and medium of instruction
In the case of schools at Gunjal Vasti and Vidya Nagar, on account of the low number (nine each), all students from grade 4 were selected while in a school in Nimaj (main) village, where grade 4 consisted of 30 students, ten students suggested by the class teacher and the Headmaster were selected. Table 3 gives an account of the social category and family language of the participant students. We can see that seven out of the ten students from Nimaj village belong to the open/ general category, i.e. the Maratha community, a socio-economically dominant community which

Table 2: Social category and family language

School	Social Category	Open/General		OBC	DNT	NT (C)	ST	Total
		Maratha	**Muslim**					
	Family Language	**Marathi**	**Local Urdu**	**M**	**Waddar Banjara**	**Marathi**	**Marathi**	
Z.P. School, Nimaj		07	--	02	--	01	--	10
Z.P. School, GunjalVasti		05	02	--	01 Banjara	--	01	09
3. Z.P. School, Vidya Nagar		--	--	--	09 Waddar	--	--	09
Total		**12**	**02**	**02**	**10**	**01**	**01**	**28**

speaks Marathi. Marathi is also the MI in all these schools. The remaining three students, although belonging to a different social category, viz. a nomadic tribe (NT-C), also share the language of their counterparts from the Maratha community. This means that the MI and the L1 of these students are identical. The data from a school at Gunjal Vasti shows that five out of the nine students are from the Maratha community while there are two students from the Muslim community, who use local Urdu for intra-group and family communication and one each from the DNTs and Scheduled Tribes (ST) - deemed under Article 342 of the Indian constitution, as those tribes with primitive traits, distinctive culture, geographical isolation, shyness of contact with the community at large, and backwardness. The student from DNT claimed Banjara as her family language while the ST student spoke Marathi

as her family language. The data underlines the linguistic diversity of the class, i.e. more than 33 per cent of learners belonged to non-Marathi speaking families. However, in all these schools, irrespective of the L1 of these students, the MI used is Marathi. The case of the school in Vidya Nagar is fascinating. All students from the class, indeed from the school itself, belonged to DNT and the family language they used is Waddar. These students have to learn in a language neither spoken in the family nor in their neighbourhood, i.e. in Marathi, the MI used in this school.

3.1b Educational background of the parents
The table given below helps understand the educational scenario of the families of the students from the three different schools selected for this study:

Table 3: Learners' social category and educational background of the parents
D= degree; NE= no education

Social Category		School	Parent	D	HSC	SSC	IX	V-VIII	I- IV	NE
Open/ General	Maratha students (07)	Nimaj	Male (M)	01	01	01	01	02	01	--
			Female (F)	--	01	01	01	04	01	--
	Maratha students (05)	Gunjal Vasti	M	--	03	02	--	--	--	--
			F	--	01	02	--	--	02	--
	Muslim students (02)	Gunjal Vasti	M	--	01	--	--	--	01	--
			F	--	--	--	01	01	--	--
OBC students (02)		Nimaj	M	--	01	--	--	01	--	--
		F	--	01	01	--	--	--	--	
DNT students (01)		Gunjal Vasti	M	--	--	--	--	--	--	01
		F	--	--	--	--	--	01	--	
DNT students(09)		Vidya Nagar	M	--	--	--	--	03	03	03
		F	--	--	--	01	05	01	02	
ST students (01)		Gunjal Vasti	M	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
		F	--	--	--	--	--	01	--	
NT (C) students (01)		Nimaj	M	--	--	01	--	--	--	--
		F	--	--	--	--	01	--	--	

The study showed that only a few of these parents (11 male and seven female) are well educated. Only one of them, who belonged to the open/general category, had obtained a degree level education. We can see that out of the 12 parents of the Maratha community children, four male and two female parents have gained a higher secondary certificate (HSC) while three male and three female parents have passed their school secondary certificate (SSC) examination. In comparison to this, none of the parents, either male or female, of the students from the DNT have attended school up to these levels. Out of the ten parents, three male and five female parents attended school up to upper primary level, three male and two female parents went to lower primary level while four male and two female parents from this category are totally illiterate. The figures clearly show a lower level of parental education in this community.

3.1c Occupations

The table shows that all the male parents of DNT students are engaged exclusively in stone quarry work where they can earn Rs.150-200 wage a day provided the work is available in the quarry. On rainy days, they have to migrate to locations where they can get wages on a daily basis. In addition, the majority of the female parents of these children also work on a daily wages basis to support their family needs. During the discussion, it was also found that they have to migrate,

leaving their children back with their grandparents or taking the children with them, on many occasions in search of work.

3.2 Findings related to LLS

The correlation between the chosen tasks and learning strategies is discussed in this section. The findings related to the LLSs are as follows:

3.2a Direct strategies
I. Memory
(A) Creating mental linkage
(i) Grouping:

Activity 1: Try to memorise a list of words:
The observation showed that the monolingual learners were good at using this strategy of grouping. Three out of the ten from the school in Nimaj village and two out the nine students from the school in Gunjal Vasti remembered five words each while three students from each school reproduced four words. In the case of the school in Vidya Nagar, only one student could recollect two words while others could remember only one word each. Interestingly, the bilinguals from the school in Gunjal Vasti too had a similar problem.

Activity 2: Find and circle the odd word out in each: Four students from the school in Nimaj village and one from the school in Gunjal Vasti could find and circle all odd words from the five examples given to them. Three from the school

Table 4: Occupations of the male parents

Social category		Occupation of male parents							
		Service	Shop-Keeper	Farming	Driver	Marketing	Mason	Farm Labour	Stone-quarry worker
Open/ General	Maratha	02	02	07	01		01		
	Muslim			01		01			
OBC (02)				02					
DNT (10)									10
ST (01)								01	
NT (C) (01)									

in Nimaj village and five from the school in Gunjal Vasti could find four odd words and the students from the school in Vidya Nagar could not solve this task at all as they failed to understand the instructions.

(ii) Associating:
Activity: Draw a line from words to their pictures:
Four out of the nine students present from the school in Nimaj village and three out of the five students from the school in Vidya Nagar scored 06 in this task.

(B) Applying images and sounds
Activity: Guess a letter on your back:
It was observed that the monolingual students from the school in Nimaj village and the school in Gunjal Vasti found it easy to identify the letters written on their back while the bilingual students from the school in Gunjal Vasti and the school in Vidya Nagar were unable to do so. They either wrote wrong letters or wrote them in reverse order or in a mirror image form ('d' in place of 'b' and likewise).

II Cognitive

(A) Practising
Activity: Formally practising with sounds: Word Pair (do they look alike? Yes/No)
The students from all schools needed to be given instructions in Marathi for the activity. It was noticed that the bilingual students failed to easily understand the given instructions. They asked each other for help using their L1.

(B) Getting the idea quickly
Activity: Spelling game
Students from the school in Vidya Nagar found it difficult to play this game as they failed to understand the instructions.

(C) Using linguistic clues:
Activity: Catching up ABC
During this activity, both English and Marathi languages were used to give instructions. It was found that the monolingual students found it easy to understand the instructions in Marathi while the bilinguals took more time

to follow the instructions. It shows that the language of instruction can result in students not understanding the task.

(D) Using other clues
Activity: Act out activity
While carrying out this activity in the school in Vidya Nagar, the problem of the language for instructions again was an obstacle, and students were unable to understand the instructions properly.

(E) Switching to the mother tongue
In the English classrooms, the teachers also used the L1 of the monolingual learners. However, in the school in Vidya Nagar, the teacher said that she uses the L2 of the learners as MI while the learners switch to their MT while talking to peers – a language she and her colleagues were unfamiliar with. As a result, the bilingual learners in schools in Gunjal Vasti and Vidya Nagar did not communicate with their teachers.

3.2b Indirect strategies
I. Metacognitive strategies
The researcher visited a high school in Nimaj village where the students from all three schools under study went for their further education. He conducted a post-competency test to understand the metacognitive strategies used by these students when they were in grade 5. The results of this test showed that the bilingual learners under this study failed to understand what they need to know for a certain task. They did not know how to use their current skills to learn what they do not know. For example, they were unable to solve the tasks such as match the rhyming words, and write 'any three of the animals you know' in the post-competency test conducted by the researcher.

II. Affective strategies
During the study it was noticed that the monolingual learners used different ways to lower their anxiety. They found it easy to ask questions related to the instructions for tasks to the instructors using their MT i.e. Marathi but the bilingual learners were not at ease in doing so as their MT/L1 differed from the MI. They were quiet, hesitant and shy.

III. Social strategies

During the informal conversations, the teachers in the schools in Gunjal Vasti and Vidya Nagar shared the view that the bilingual learners seldom asked them questions. The researcher observed this while conducting the tasks, activities and tests in this study. Most of the monolingual learners asked for clarification or verification while the bilingual learners did not. The monolingual learners cooperated with others while the bilinguals lacked this strategy.

3.3. Findings related to the performance of the learners in the post-competency test

A post competency test was conducted when these students from all three schools joined the same high school in the village after passing grade 4. Out of the 27 students selected for this study, two did not join the high school as their parents migrated to other places and two others were absent on the day of test. The 23 students who appeared for the test consisted of 14 monolinguals and nine bilinguals. The results of the test demonstrated the monolingual learners achieved higher scores than their bilingual counterparts. Eight of the monolingual learners obtained more than 45 marks while four of them got more than 40 marks in this test. On the contrary, two of the bilinguals got less than 10; one got less than 15 and the other 6 scored less than 30 (between 21 to 29). The instructions of the questions were given in both English and Marathi.

The findings reflect that the monolingual learners are advantaged in classrooms where the MI is their L1 while the bilingual learners find it difficult to cope with L3 learning through their L2, the MI.

4. Discussion and final reflections

4.1. LSs used by bilingual learners to cope with the dominant language of other learners as MI

The findings of the study showed that the bilingual learners have to learn L3, here English, through L2 (Marathi). Although most of the studies in TLA claim that multilingual learners profit from their experience of SLA, this study found that the bilingual learners under study were slower

learners in both L2 and L3. They experienced learning delay as much of their learning efforts are concentrated on SLA. However, it does not mean that their rate of learning was slower but they did not understand instructions for activities and the test. The findings discussed in 3.1.and 3.3. show that the bilingual learners are weak in using both direct (Memory and Cognitive) and indirect strategies (Metacognitive, Affective and Social).

4.2. Relationship between the learners' socio-economic, cultural and linguistic background and their L2/L3 performance

The researcher found that there is a strong connection between the learners' socio-economic, cultural and linguistic background and their L2/L3 performance. Findings related to learners' background show that the learners belonging to socio-economically underprivileged communities achieved lower scores than their privileged counterparts.

4.3. Effects of using common curriculum, etc.

The use of monolingual curricula, teaching material, methods and techniques while teaching English to learners from diverse linguistic, socio-cultural and economic surroundings often results in negative outcomes. As the monolingual material is not inclusive, we assume that it fails to sustain the interest of the learners. They feel alienated in the classroom surrounding and fail to follow the instructions and seldom get involved in classroom activities.

4.4. Instructors' insensitivity to the needs of the bilingual learners

Being sensitive to the needs of learners is one of the qualities of a good teacher. The teacher is expected to be adaptable, caring and compassionate. However, teachers of the learners, as observed in this study, seem to have lacked awareness of the needs of their learners. Moreover, it was observed that they do not differentiate between the monolingual and bilingual learners; their perception of the learning abilities of bilingual learners is very negative. Rather than reflecting over the possibilities to make them more effective, they talk about their own helplessness to deal with the bilingual learners from DNT groups and accord the lack of

learning skills and abilities among these learners to their socio-cultural and family environment.

4.5. Instructors' efforts to attend to these learners' needs
The study attempts to underscore the needs of the children from deprived sections which have often remained at the fringes of the mainstream progress on account of their illiteracy, poverty and social marginalisation. It reveals the challenges these children have to face while coping with the languages of dominant communities which are either L2 or L3 to them. The instructors and the peers often look down upon these children for their poor performance. Eventually, the study is an appeal to curriculum designers and policy makers to understand the different pedagogical needs and learning conditions of students from deprived section like DNTs.

5. Suggestions

- Teacher education programmes should consider adding more specific course work and in-service training to prepare teachers to meet the needs of bilingual or multilingual learners from underprivileged groups. They should be trained to deal with individual, socio-cultural and linguistic differences positively.

- Teachers should use a variety of instructional strategies and learning activities.

- Teachers should consider students' cultures and language skills when developing learning objectives and instructional activities.

- It would be helpful if teachers just used English during English lessons.

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