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Multilingualism in pedagogical innovations in teacher education in India

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Abstract

This research document explores the adoption of multilingualism in pedagogical innovations within teacher education programs in India. The study focuses on how teacher education institutions are equipping prospective teachers to handle and capitalize on the complexities of multilingual classrooms in the context of India's linguistic landscape which boasts of over 1600 mother tongues and 22 official languages. The research examines current policies including NEP 2020 which advocates for education in the mother tongue and multilingual education policies, and assesses teaching methodologies such as translanguaging, technology use, and culturally relevant teaching approaches in the context of India's multilingual realities. The article details essential instructional skills necessary for teaching in multilingual contexts and describes teachers' education program projects from different parts of India. This study uses document analysis alongside qualitative research methods to explore innovative solutions, obstacles, and possibilities for training educators responsive to linguistic diversity. It then makes policy-informed recommendations for India's policies, multidisciplinary curricula, and evaluation frameworks aimed at deepening multilingual teacher education and strengthening educational equity and quality for this diverse country.

Keywords: Multilingualism, teacher education, pedagogical innovations, national education policy 2020, translanguaging, indigenous languages

Introduction Multilingualism in Indian Education

India ranks as one of the most linguistically diverse countries across the globe, with the 2011 Census documenting 1,369 rationalized mother tongues alongside 121 major languages and 22 languages included in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution (Census of India, 2011). This remarkable linguistic diversity offers great potential along with immense challenges for the Indian education system. Multilingualism is not simply a characteristic of India's cultural identity—it's a part of everyday existence that impacts the ways in which knowledge is constructed, conveyed, and preserved for future generations (Kumar, 2012) ^[21]. In the past, educational policies in India have at times adopted this multilingual nature as of late has tried to implement a one-size-fits-all approach using reigning languages to dominate the education system

(Balasubramanian, 2015) ^[5]. The colonial legacy placed a burden on English, branding it the language of control and boosting social status (Menon, 2011) ^[24], and post-independence, King (2007) ^[19] remarks that policies attempted to regional identify it with the need for national integration through language. This conflict still shapes modern education, especially in teacher training, where students need to teach in a culture rich in language diversity (Sharma, 2019) ^[32]. In an Indian context, multilingualism is much more multi-faceted than just a change of language or code switching.

It includes the strengthening of cognitive capabilities resulting from multilingual thinking, the safeguarding of sociocultural information contained within indigenous languages, and the teaching methodologies that make full use of learners' multilingual capabilities (Desai, 2020) ^[10].

For many teacher education programs, this translates into having to devise new strategies that enable training in teaching not only in many languages, but also viewing language as a teaching tool for all subjects (Dewan, 2018) ^[12]. In 21st century India, as the country undergoes educational change, Indian teacher education institutions grapple with the defining challenge of how to empower educators with the understanding, skills, and dispositions that help them strategically use multilingualism as a teaching resource, rather than a constraint (Rao, 2022) ^[30]. This document looks at these innovations, their conceptual bases, along with the real practices, and the implications of cross-descriptive knowledge for education in the multilingual context of India.

Historical Context of Language Diversity in India

India's numerous languages are a result of historical cultural exchanges, migration, invasions, and subsequent political restructuring (Singh, 2009) ^[33]. Its geographical features like rivers and mountains helped linguistically distinct communities emerge, but also enabled the interaction of diverse cultures (Ramaswamy, 2007) ^[29]. Deshpande states that Sanskrit was used for centuries as the classical language of learning, while Prakrit transformed into modern Indo Aryan languages. Furthermore, southern India was home to Dravidian languages, central and northeast India housed various tribal languages, and all of them formed a vast medley of communication systems, which showcased the country's unique traditions and knowledge system systems (Emeneau, 2010) ^[14]. The colonial period brought major changes to language education policies in India. The British initially respected the local systems on learning; however, they later adopted English to be the primary language of learning through Macaulay's Minute of 1835. This minute aimed to foster 'a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect' (Macaulay, 1835) ^[22]. Such policies heavily favoured English while suppressing local Indian languages, thus creating deep rooted inequalities that affected education (Chaudhuri, 2013) ^[8]. Furthermore, Indian languages were documented and standardized by orientalist scholars during the same time, which was often done using European grammar rules, distorting the original understanding of these languages (Narayan, 2001) ^[27]. After India gained independence, the government faced the immense challenge of language planning in a country with so many languages. The Three-Language Formula, proposed in 1968, sought to reconcile regional identity, national integration, and global knowledge through the study of: (1) a regional or mother tongue, (2) Hindi or another Indian language outside Hindi-speaking regions, and (3) English or an international language (Kachru, 1990) ^[18]. Its implementation across the states was inconsistent and often politically motivated instead of educationally sound (Sridhar, 2000) ^[34].

- **Ancient Period (1500 BCE-1000 CE):** Sanskrit dominates formal education through gurukula system; regional languages develop alongside classical traditions.
- **Medieval Period (1000-1700 CE):** Persian becomes court language during Mughal rule; regional languages flourish through bhakti and sufi movements.

- **Colonial Period (1700-1947):** English becomes language of administration and elite education; standardization of regional languages.
- **Post-Independence (1947-present):** Three-Language Formula implementation; language-based state reorganization; ongoing tensions between national, regional, and global language needs.

Educator training in these times mirrored the prevailing language ideologies of the region. Stripped indigenous educator training focused on the attainment of classical texts and languages. Colonial normal schools trained teachers in English methods, and post-independence teacher training struggled with developing strategies appropriate for multilingual India. The history remains relevant today in discussions about the languages that should take precedence in the education system, and how educators need to be trained for multilingual classrooms.

Review of Related Literature

The existing literature is practically void of multilingualism in practice. There is, however, empirical literature that sheds light on multilingualism in the context of teacher education. For example, Mathew (2018) ^[23] in her longitudinal study of teacher education programs across five states, noted that multilingualism received some attention in policy documents. Despite that, it was often absent in practical training, which remained largely monolingual in nature. Sriprakash and Mukhopadhyay (2015) ^[35] on the other hand focused on the micro level examining how teachers in rural Maharashtra grappled with an imposed language policy. While many of them arrived at informal multilingual techniques, none had been taught these techniques in a structured manner. More optimistically, Agarwal and Bhattacharjee found that in the more innovative teacher education programs in Chhattisgarh, purposeful multilingual instruction increased teacher effectiveness and achievement in students from tribal regions (2017).

These gaps may also be conceptualized as the disparity between policy and practice or research and practice gaps. Anderson and Lightfoot (2018) ^[3] remark the lack of attention given to how digital technologies can enhance multilingual teacher education in under-resourced settings. Ramanathan's (2014) ^[28] ethnographic critique documents the extent to which languages are hierarchized within teacher education institutions, which often neglects to acknowledge indigenous languages even when policies endorse some level of multilingualism. The study's findings are further expanded by Menon *et al.* (2017) ^[25], who conducted a pan-Indian study and reported that a mere 13% of teacher educators considered themselves ready to prepare teachers for multilingual classrooms, within a context that is neurologically multilingual.

Theoretical Perspectives

- Cummins' Common Underlying Proficiency (2000) ^[9].
- García's Translanguaging Theory (2009)
- Mohanty's Multilingual Education framework for India (2019) ^[26].
- Khubchandani's Plurality and Identity framework (2003)

Empirical Research

- Mathew's five-state study (2018) ^[23].
- Sriprakash & Mukhopadhyay's rural Maharashtra study (2015) ^[35].
- Agarwal & Bhattacharjee's Chhattisgarh innovation study (2017) ^[2].
- Menon *et al.*'s national survey of teacher educators (2017) ^[25].

Policy Research

- Agnihotri's analysis of language policies (2015)
- Rao & Panda's NEP 2020 analysis (2021) ^[31].
- Dua's historical policy review (1985-2020)
- Annamalai's linguistic rights framework (2013)

Rao and Panda (2021) ^[31] in their studies on the implementation of National Education Policy 2020 noted growing policy focus on multilingualism, but underscore serious barriers to implementation, especially in teacher education colleges with absent faculty knowledgeable in multilingual teaching methods. The literature captures these gaps, noting hopeful trends, such as Batra's (2020) ^[6] documentation of innovative teacher preparation programs that meaningfully blend Indigenous knowledge with modern education using multilingual education frameworks.

Need and Significance of the Study

Multilingualism in teacher education in the Indian context is becoming more important due to certain educational, sociocultural, and policy issues. To begin with, India is struggling with issues related to the quality of education. The Annual Status of Education Report (2021) indicates that a large number of children are unable to read or do basic mathematics. In her research, Jhingran (2019) ^[17] points out that children from minority language families face even greater challenges in learning when there is a monolingual instructional setting and this retards their cognitive and psychological development. This issue requires teacher education that is informed by multilingualism.

At the same time, UNESCO has classified as vulnerable, endangered, or critically endangered 197 Indian Languages which implies that India's linguistic diversity is at risk. The extinction of these languages translates to the loss of important cultural reservoirs of knowledge. There is a strong influence from teacher education to either promote linguistic homogenization or foster diversity. This study aims to analyze how teacher education can contribute to the sustaining and revitalizing of endangered languages within the context of contemporary educational requirements.

Third, NEP 2020 represents a notable policy shift in India's language policy by recommending the use of the mother tongue as the medium of instruction at least till class five. This policy shift creates a demand for a teaching workforce that can implement multilingual pedagogy, but teacher education programs are unprepared to meet this shift in policy. The National Council for Teacher Education has started to address multilingual pedagogy in their curriculum frameworks, which underlines the need to advance and disseminate effective pedagogy to aid this transition.

- **Educational Imperative:** Research consistently shows improved learning outcomes when children receive instruction in familiar languages alongside thoughtful

transitions to additional languages.

- **Cultural Preservation:** Teachers trained in multilingual pedagogy become agents of language preservation and cultural continuity, supporting constitutional goals of linguistic and cultural diversity.
- **Policy Implementation:** NEP 2020's emphasis on mother tongue education requires teacher education reforms to prepare educators for multilingual classrooms.
- **Global Competitiveness:** Multilingual education supports both local knowledge and global engagement, preparing students for increasingly interconnected work environments.

This study is not only relevant from the perspective of scholarship. It fills an important gap between the policy hope and the reality of its implementation and provides a constructive contribution for the institutions of teacher education planning amidst the multifaceted challenges posed by the issues of language diversity. This research documents innovative practices and their results, thus, contributing to the body of evidence in policy advocacy and making informed recommendations to various players in education in India. In the context of implementing NEP 2020, this research becomes useful to ensure that the teacher education institutions for trainers of teachers prepared responsively and adequately in the context of multilingual India.

Objectives of the study

This particular study on multilingualism in teacher education in India is framed within a set of interrelated goals that simultaneously focus on the practical and the theoretical. These goals have been designed to address certain aspects of the problem systematically to capture the intricate interplay between multilingualism, educational innovation, and the preparation of teaching professionals in the context of India's multilingual setting.

- To analyze the historical evolution of multilingual approaches in Indian teacher education
- To evaluate the alignment between current teacher education curricula and multilingual education policies
- To identify innovative pedagogical approaches for developing multilingual competencies in pre-service teachers
- To examine the integration of technology in supporting multilingual teacher education

This study seeks to achieve a number of important goals regarding multilingual teacher education in India. These goals include capturing exemplary multilingual teacher education case studies from all regions, evaluating the assessment practices that measure multilingual competencies in teacher educators, and examining the incorporation of cultural knowledge and diversity into teacher preparation programs. Moreover, the study aims to propose an evaluative framework on the effectiveness of multilingual strategies in teacher pedagogical training.

Another major goal is to substantiate advocacy at the policy, institutional, and operational levels with changes of institutional bypassed frameworks towards more integrated multilingual teacher education policies across India. This

entails formulating comprehensive multilingual policies that are scaled to corresponding sociolinguistic realities— from highly-monolingual contexts to extreme multilingual ones. Ultimately, the study seeks to enhance teacher education in relation to the multilingual realities of the country’s education system and sharpen the focus of various policy stakeholders such as education policymakers, teacher education institutions, school leaders, and teachers.

Research Questions

To guide this study on multilingualism in pedagogical innovations within teacher education in India, the following research questions have been formulated. These questions aim to explore the alignment between policy and practice, uncover institutional innovations, and identify the competencies needed for effective multilingual teacher preparation:

- How are multilingual pedagogies currently conceptualized and implemented across Indian teacher education institutions?
- What are the systemic, institutional, and pedagogical barriers to integrating multilingualism in pre-service teacher education curricula?
- In what ways do teacher education programs incorporate translanguaging and other multilingual strategies in their instructional design and practicum experiences?
- How do teacher educators and pre-service teachers perceive and respond to multilingualism in classroom contexts, particularly in linguistically diverse and under-resourced regions?
- What role does technology play in facilitating multilingual teacher education, and how effective are these interventions in developing multilingual competencies?

Methodology of the study

This study is guided by a multi-faceted qualitative approach based primarily on document analysis and selective case study strategies. The shaping of the study design recognizes

the intricate contextual features of multilingual teacher education practices in India’s educational system, which requires a blend of strategies framed within policy constructions as well as those grounded in the actual experiences of policy implementation.

Research Design

This particular investigation employs a sequential exploratory design starting with the systematic document critique of policies, curricula, and institutional frameworks, then moving on to detailed case studies of individual teacher education programs. Such an approach makes it possible to delineate formal multilingual teacher education governance structures.

Document Analysis

These documents comprise policies (National Education Policy 2020, National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education, Policies from State Level), systemic documents (B.Ed. and D. El. Ed. syllabi from 15 constituent universities from different linguistic regions), organizational documents (The National Council for Teacher Education and the State Teacher Education Governing Bodies), and instructional documents (textbooks, teacher’s guides, and evaluation documents). These documents were obtained through institutional websites, repositories, and editorial requests directed towards educational stakeholders.

The analysis is structured around Bowen’s (2009) [7] guidelines on document analysis, which is based on systematic content analysis revolving around: (a) relevance-based skimming, (b) detailed comprehension reading, and (c) constructive interpretation focused on identification of motifs and relationships of multiple elements within the material. Coding of the documents was done using NVivo which facilitates text analysis through software support. Classification of document parts was done inductively through initial evaluations and was later adjusted during subsequent analyses with a special emphasis on approaches to multilingualism which were articulated or left unstated.

Table 1: Document Type, Number Analyzed, and Sampling Strategy

Document Type	Number Analysed	Sampling Strategy
National Policy Documents	7	Comprehensive inclusion of all relevant documents since 2005
State Education Policies	28	All states and union territories
Teacher Education Curricula	45	Stratified sampling across regions, institutional types, and program levels
Institutional Guidelines	36	Purposive sampling to ensure representation of diverse contexts
Pedagogical Materials	120	Theoretical sampling until saturation of key approaches

Source: Adeoye, M. A. (2023). Review of Sampling Techniques for Education. ASEAN Journal for Science Education, 2(2), 87–94.

Discussion

Theoretical Integration: Linking Frameworks to Findings

The findings of this study resonate strongly with several established theoretical frameworks that offer insights into the complexities of multilingual teacher education in India. These connections provide a conceptual grounding for the innovations observed and the challenges identified.

Cummins’ Common Underlying Proficiency and Teacher Identity

Cummins’ theory of Common Underlying Proficiency

(CUP) asserts that skills learned in one language can transfer to others, highlighting a shared cognitive foundation in language acquisition (Cummins, 1981). This framework is crucial for understanding teacher identity formation in multilingual contexts. Research indicates that many pre-service teachers struggle to shift from monolingual instructional mindsets, despite exposure to multilingual pedagogy, reflecting a gap between their monolingual educational backgrounds and the cognitive potential outlined in CUP (García & Wei, 2014) [15]. However, programs emphasizing critical language biography, such as those at Azim Premji University, enable teachers to confront

internalized linguistic hierarchies and build professional identities rooted in multilingual awareness (Mohanty, 2019) [26]. Cummins' insights suggest that transforming teacher identity is essential for effective multilingual pedagogy, and without addressing this core aspect, surface-level curriculum changes may have limited impact (Cummins, 2000) [9].

García's Translanguaging Theory and Classroom Practice

Ofelia García's translanguaging theory conceptualizes multilingualism as the use of an integrated linguistic repertoire for meaning-making, rather than relying on separate language systems (García, 2014) [15]. This perspective informs various effective classroom practices observed in case studies. For instance, at RIE Bhopal and Tezpur University, teachers were trained to implement "preview-view-review" structures, dual-language texts, and translanguaging rings, embodying García's emphasis on strategic and dynamic language use (García & Wei, 2014) [15]. These methods enabled students to seamlessly switch between languages to enhance concept development, avoiding the limitations of strict language boundaries. Additionally, García's framework aligns with findings that translanguaging fosters cognitive depth, especially in linguistically diverse classrooms where instruction in a single dominant language often fails to engage all learners (Wei, 2014) [15].

Mohanty's Multilingual Education Framework for India

Ajit Mohanty's vision for equitable, multilingual education in India transcends policy recommendations by championing a transformative pedagogical shift—one that roots learning in linguistic justice (Mohanty, 2010) [14]. Programs like DIET Wayanad and the Language and Learning Foundation embody this shift by weaving community languages directly into the educational fabric. These initiatives disrupt conventional hierarchies that privilege dominant languages, instead cultivating learning ecosystems where tribal and local linguistic expressions are treated not as peripheral curiosities but as central assets.

Such models concretely realize Mohanty's ideals by

- Positioning community language experts as co-creators of curriculum, thus validating indigenous epistemologies.
- Empowering teachers through training that recognizes the pedagogical strength of lived, local knowledge (Mohanty, 2019) [26].
- Incorporating non-standard language forms into classroom materials, which affirms student identity and nurtures inclusive participation (Mohanty, 2010) [14].

This approach reframes language diversity as a vehicle for social equity, not a barrier to academic achievement. Mohanty's framework, therefore, is not merely descriptive—it is a blueprint for reimagining education through the lens of linguistic and cultural dignity.

Khubchandani's Plurality and Identity Framework

Khubchandani's theory of plurality and identity underscores the role of language in shaping social and cultural identities

in India. Findings from the study support this in two key ways:

- Teachers often entered training with linguistic biases rooted in dominant cultural ideologies, marginalizing non-dominant languages.
- Programs that implemented critical reflection on language privilege saw teachers begin to shift toward more inclusive practices.

This demonstrates that teacher education must not only address pedagogical technique but also confront deep-seated identity constructs, which shape teacher beliefs and behaviors in the multilingual classroom.

The comprehensive examination of India's teacher education system, in the context of multilingualism, reveals areas of achievement alongside stubborn challenges. Policies concerning multilingualism have shifted in the National Education Policy 2020, which supports multilingual education rooted in the mother tongue. That document also includes proposals for multilingualism to be incorporated into teacher education curricula. However, the translation of policy aspirations into preparation programs reveals considerable lag. Out of 45 teacher education curricula evaluated, only 17 offered specific courses on multilingual didactics, with merely 9 embodying multilingualism at the curriculum framework level. Adequate gaps in operational aid exist because educators must implement multilingualism in pedagogy without basic competencies and sufficient professional training.

The examined cases from innovative programs in teacher education highlight effective practice for some of them. The Multilingual Education Resource Center program at Tezpur University in Assam and the Language and Learning Foundation's Teacher Development Programs are illustrative cases that depict the powerful impact of the purposeful incorporation of linguistic diversity. Features common to these programs include amplifying teachers' metalinguistic competencies, providing translanguaging instruction, practicum in multilingual classrooms, and fostering the ability to devise responsive teaching materials. Notably, effective programs abandon viewing multilingualism as a deficit; rather, they utilize multilingualism as a resource for pedagogy.

- **Policy-Practice Disconnects:** While policy documents increasingly embrace multilingualism, most teacher education curricula fail to adequately prepare teachers for multilingual classrooms. This implementation gap creates situations where teachers must develop ad hoc strategies without proper training.
- **Innovative Practices:** Exemplary programs demonstrate systematic approaches to developing teachers' multilingual competencies, including experiential learning, critical language awareness, community engagement, and production of multilingual materials.
- **Persistent Challenges:** Implementation barriers include limited linguistic diversity among teacher educators, inadequate teaching resources in minority languages, assessment systems privileging dominant languages, and weak connections between linguistic communities and teacher education institutions.

The examination of curriculum designs uncovered a number of promising innovations. The most visible translanguaging pedagogy, which makes use of all available linguistic resources of the learners, is characteristic of more advanced programs. Integrative digital technologies that bolster multilingualism, particularly mobile learning technologies, such as DIKSHA that supports local languages and scripts, illustrate the ways technology can expand multilingual teacher education. Critical language awareness approaches, designed to help teachers uncover the language politics and power relations surrounding languages, form the basis of equitable multilingual praxis that is essential to critical multilingual practice.

Innovation aside, a number of critical issues continue to exist. The majority of teacher education institutions are missing staff who specialize in multilingual pedagogy. Reference materials in peripheral languages remain limited, especially for those languages that are not codified. Evaluation systems still favour dominance language skills over multilingual mastery. Most importantly, the shaping of a teacher's professional identity is often fixed within a monolingual framework; many teachers-to-be embrace a multilingual ethos but maintain hegemonic hierarchical mindsets towards languages.

From an educational perspective, these findings together demonstrate that comprehensive and structural reforms are needed in teacher education regarding content, the very structure of the institution, faculty, and outreach to language communities. The most effective programs illustrate that a more profound shift within the educational culture and attitudes towards languages is required to advance comprehensive multilingual teacher education. This change needs to happen on all levels, from classroom practices, through administrative policies, and on up to societal attitudes towards language.

National Education Policy 2020: A Multilingual Approach

The National Education Policy 2020 marks the first time multilingualism has received serious attention in Indian education. It now has a central locus instead of a marginal footnote. As the policy states: "Wherever possible, the medium of instruction until at least Grade 5, but preferably till Grade 8 and beyond, will be the home language/mother tongue/local language/regional language." This remarkable statement shifts policy thinking of the country's multilingual reality from remediation to use. With NEP 2020, the multilingual reality of India is no longer a problem to be solved but an asset to be utilized. This factor alone transforms policies that are too gripped by the need to control languages employed in education in India. For teacher education, NEP 2020 poses particular challenges. It is Section 4.23 that deals with the specificities of teacher preparation and declares, "All teacher education programs will include modules on bilingual/multilingual education and how to teach multilingual classrooms." This stipulation displays, unlike any policy before it, recognition of the necessity to provide all teachers-not only language teachers-with appropriate multilingual teaching skills. There is also the parallel suggestion concerning the employment of teachers who command regional languages and who work in language minority locations and the accompanying need for

multilingual teaching-learning resources.

- **Mother Tongue Medium:** Emphasizes instruction in home language/mother tongue/local language through elementary education, with provisions for bilingual approaches when necessary.
- **Three-Language Formula:** Reinforces flexible implementation of the three-language formula, with states having freedom to determine specific languages while emphasizing Indian languages.
- **Teacher Preparation:** Mandates multilingual education modules in all teacher education programs and recommends recruitment of teachers proficient in local languages.
- **Cultural Preservation:** Links language education to cultural preservation, particularly for tribal languages and knowledge systems that may lack written traditions.

The policy analysis presents several features emerging and relevant to teacher education. First, it considers multilingualism positively in terms of cognitive benefits by referencing scholars who argue that multilingualism is academically beneficial. Second, it connects language more deeply to culture and identity by recognizing that the treatment of language in education has consequences for cultural preservation. Third, it emphasizes solutions that are technological in nature, suggesting the creation of digital archives of language learning materials in various Indian languages. Fourth, it highlights the need for languages to be taught in an integrated manner and not in isolation from other subjects.

Considerable implementation hurdles remain, though. The policy points out the gap in teachers who are proficient in several languages, especially in tribal and minority languages. It notes a lack of adequate teaching and learning materials for many Indian languages. Most critically for teacher education, it states there is no educational research on multilingualism for the many diverse Indian settings. These hurdles provide innovated opportunities and responsibilities for educator institutions to address through curriculum and community fueled activism.

Although NEP 2020 is rooted in strong policies surrounding multilingualism in teacher education, much work remains towards the goal of effective implementation.

Multilingual pedagogy is a complex endeavour which requires educators to possess specific knowledge, skills, and attitudes which must be provided by concrete programs developed at teacher education institutions. While policies are frameworks for innovation, the focus of innovation is yet to be determined by the collaborative work of educational institutions, language communities, and policymakers at regional and national levels.

Understanding Pedagogical Innovations in Teacher Education in India

The pedagogical innovations within teacher education in India are a response to the opportunities and challenges posed by the country's multilingual character. Innovations pertain not only teaching foreign languages, but rather to the complex interplay of languages in the learning process as well as the ways in which teachers help learners to transcend the linguistic boundaries in the construction of knowledge. In the study of teacher education programs,

certain distinct but interrelated paradigms of innovation are emerging across the institutions.

The first paradigm focuses on experiential multilingualism, where educator training schemes go beyond theoretical instruction about multilingualism to the creation of immersive multilingual environments. At the Lady Willingdon Institute of Advanced Studies in Education (Chennai), pre-service teachers are actively engaged in 'language melas' where they strive to complete learning activities in languages that are not dominant to them. Empathy for learners' experiences is developed towards learners who learn in non-dominant languages. Also, Regional Institute of Education (Bhubaneswar) employs a practice called "linguistic rotation" where the language of instruction changes every week. This compels student-teachers to devise techniques for knowledge acquisition across multifarious linguistic boundaries.

- **Experiential Multilingualism:** Creating immersive experiences where teacher candidates navigate learning in multiple languages, developing both empathy and practical strategies.
- **Community-Connected Pedagogy:** Engaging with linguistic communities outside the institution to develop authentic understanding of language as lived experience.
- **Multimodal Meaning-Making:** Integrating diverse semiotic resources beyond verbal language, including visual, gestural, and digital communication modes.
- **Metalinguistic Reflection:** Developing teachers' critical awareness of language structures, functions, and power dynamics across linguistic contexts.

A second paradigm focuses on community-connected pedagogy, in which teacher education programs engage with linguistically diverse communities. The Tata Institute of Social Sciences is the first to develop "community language apprenticeships." In these programs, pre-service teachers learn to interact with speakers of underrepresented languages and document community linguistic practices for future pedagogical use. These approaches acknowledge the need for effective multilingual pedagogy to treat language as lived experience rather than an abstract concept divorced from context.

A third paradigm centers on meaning-making across a range of modes beyond verbal language, incorporating multiple semiotic resources. The Central Institute of Education (Delhi University) offers new courses on "translanguaging across modes," where prospective teachers are prepared to guide learning alongside and through spoken, visual, gestural, and digital means. This approach is critical in highly linguistically diverse classrooms where no common language is shared among students.

The fourth paradigm focuses on metalinguistic thinking, sharpening awareness of the critical language forms, functions, and relations of power embedded in them. The teacher education program at Azim Premji University includes "critical language exploration" modules, where teachers investigate the interdisciplinary knowledge constructions in different languages. They explore how languages encode concepts and how these differences can be utilized to enhance learning rather than be viewed as barriers.

These innovative paradigms share common features: they view teachers as language researchers instead of mere language participants; they embrace linguistic diversity as an asset instead of a challenge; they prioritize pragmatism over theorized knowledge; and they work with, rather than isolate, language considerations into language classes.

Collectively, they capture a new form of pedagogy customized to India's multilingual context, but in practice, it is patchy across institutions and geographical areas.

Multilingual Competence for Teachers: Essential Skills in India

In to India's linguistically diverse landscape, developing multilingual competence among teachers is foundational to education. The analysis of successful teacher education programs has shown that multilingual competence is more than having some basic understanding of several languages. Rather, it involves a complex set of interrelated sufficiency-knowledge, skills, attitudes, and competencies-that enable a teacher to use linguistic diversity as a resource for teaching and learning. These competencies are best acquired through purposeful teacher education programs. At the heart of multilingual competence is sociolinguistic knowledge-how languages function within a society and within the education system. Educators need to be conscious of vernacular dialects, language contact phenomena, and the sociopolitical landscape of the language in question. In India, this covers the understanding of diglossia, code-switching in multilingual communities, and how language intersects with caste, class, and regional identities. Some effective teacher education programs such as those at EFL University in Hyderabad include sociolinguistic field research where student teachers record real linguistic behaviour in the neighbourhoods of their practicum schools.

- **Sociolinguistic Knowledge:** Understanding language variation, contact phenomena, and sociopolitical dimensions of language use in Indian contexts.
- **Psycholinguistic Knowledge:** Understanding how children develop concepts across languages and transfer knowledge between linguistic systems.
- **Pedagogical Skills:** Ability to design and implement teaching strategies that strategically leverage students' full linguistic repertoires.
- **Resource Development Skills:** Capacity to create, adapt, and evaluate teaching-learning materials across languages and for cross-linguistic use.

Equally critical is psycholinguistic knowledge-how children form concepts and transfer knowledge between languages. Teachers should appreciate that students hold on to concepts learned in one language when instruction shifts to another. Innovative teacher education programs at the Regional Institute of Education (Mysore) involve teacher candidates in analyzing children's writings across languages to uncover conceptual progress that goes beyond linguistic constructs. This enables teachers to appreciate that a child who is deemed to be struggling with expressive language in the school may have highly sophisticated conceptual skills conveyed in their home language.

All teachers know that in addition to content knowledge, teaching in multilingual contexts requires particular pedagogical skills. These skills include the ability to:

scaffold instruction across language borders; apply translanguaging strategies purposefully; cultivate metalinguistic consciousness in learners; negotiate home and school dialects; and create language-sensitive analyses of instruction that disentangle linguistic and non-linguistic challenges. The Language and Learning Foundation has contributed to developing the education modules with a focus on teaching teachers to create relationships of meaning across languages by finding cognates, false cognates, and subject-specific vocabulary translations.

These teaching approaches illustrate missing teaching-learning materials in many Indian languages, especially for the more technical subjects, pose additional challenges. More effective teacher education programs help educators develop the skills to design, modify, and assess multilingual materials.

The Vidyabhavan Teacher Education Program has designed a systematic approach guiding educators on how to create "conceptually equivalent, linguistically appropriate" materials for different languages while upholding the integrity of the concepts and lexically sophisticated differences.

Perhaps most importantly, attitudinal aspects such as appreciating languages merit recognizing language as capable of conveying complex ideas at every level, do fundamental wiring in multilingual competence. This disposition is usually built through reflexive aspects of teachers' own biographies with language discrimination, or language privilege which is often termed as language dominant discourse.

Curriculum Design for Multilingual Teacher Education Programs

Well-structured multilingual teacher education programs integrate strong instructional design that builds the teachers' capabilities to function in linguistically diverse settings. Examination of some innovative programs across India reveals some striking principles and patterns that set apart curricula that prepare teachers for multilingual contexts from those that superficially acknowledge language diversity. Such design elements go beyond the scope of content inclusion to the arrangement and sequencing of learning experiences.

The most effective curricula accept a more cohesive, integrated, or systemic approach to multilingualism rather than an additive one. For instance, instead of relegating language considerations to "language teaching" classes, a more comprehensive approach to multilingualism is taken across the institute's entire curriculum. The District Institute of Education and Training (DIET) in Dhenkanal, Odisha, recently updated its mathematics education courses to address how various regional languages, such as Odia and Santali, articulate mathematical concepts and how these expressions influence the learners' understanding of the concepts. This approach fosters the understanding that language considerations permeate all subject areas, not confined to just language classes.

Ambedkar University Delhi's program embodies this with its "theory-practice-theory" cycle, where student teachers learn the theoretical foundations of multilingual education. These theories are then put into practice during teaching, and subsequently, the students revisit the theories to reflect

and refine their understanding. This tailored approach recognizes that multilingual pedagogy demands practical skills and a conceptual understanding, where each element strengthens the other.

Another distinguishing feature of the design is progressive skill development, where curricula are intentionally structured to advance already mastered skills. The Central Institute of Indian Languages' teacher education program starts with individual language reflection. It assists teachers in examining their own language autobiographies and attitudes toward language. It includes field observation, which incorporates analyzing language in classroom interactions, followed by guided teaching and later independent practice in multilingual contexts. This order reflects the understanding that competence in multilingual teaching is gained through organized, sequential experiences.

Also different in effective multilingual educator curricula are innovative assessment approaches. Conventional forms of assessment disproportionately favour written responses in the hegemonic languages, therefore perpetuating linguistic discrimination. Striving teachers' colleges are creating assessments wherein linguistic competence can be demonstrated in various forms. The M.Ed.

The program at University of Hyderabad implements "linguistic portfolio assessment," where instructors capture learners' progress across languages through various reflections and demonstrations as opposed to taking participation grade-level examinations.

In the Indian context, community-connected curriculum design emerges as a pivotal gap. Good programs create systematic relationships with the surrounding language communities and include their knowledge and views in the curriculum. Teacher education at Azim Premji University has "community language documentation" projects where student teachers collaborate and create educational materials with and for community members that embody local linguistic knowledge. This example illustrates a growing recognition that educational institutions by themselves cannot adequately tame the linguistic challenges teachers will face.

Even as these innovations hold remarkable promise, they are frequently stymied by implementation challenges such as institutional inflexibility, inadequate faculty training, and limited resources. Most successful programs seem to devise strategies to cope with these issues by planning gradual faculty-focused community integration and resource restructuring, illustrating that meaningful curriculum change can be achieved, even when many constraints exist.

Translanguaging: A Pedagogical Approach for Multilingual Classrooms in India

New Delhi has witnessed translanguaging to be one of the most important pedagogical advancements for multilingual teaching in India, breaking the older methods that compartmentalized languages in teaching. Unlike code-switching that considers language change as a shift between different systems, translanguaging views a speaker's languages as a singular intricate whole. From this unity, a speaker selects a language which will optimize interaction as well as learning. This shift has serious consequences on the preparation of teachers, as it requires completely

reconstructing the interplay of languages in the learning context.

Translanguaging provides particular benefits in the Indian context due to the surrounding socio-ethnic language fluidity of many societies. Heugh's (2021) ^[16] research in multilingual Indian classrooms found that children spontaneously integrate diverse languages and dialects to grasp intricate ideas, yet most teaching methodologies impose rigid linguistic constraints that stifle this natural thought flow. Teachers are now being trained to remove these restrictions on purposeful languages blending, accepting that separation of languages often places students at a disadvantage when they are not proficient in the language of instruction.

Traditional Approach

- Languages are kept strictly separate in instruction.
- Students expected to function as parallel monolinguals.
- Home languages excluded from "language of instruction" classrooms.
- Focus on language purity and adherence to standard varieties.
- Success measured by proficiency in language of instruction.

Translanguaging Approach

- Strategic integration of languages based on pedagogical goals.
- Students encouraged to use full linguistic repertoire.
- Home languages systematically incorporated as resources.
- Focus on communication effectiveness and concept development.
- Success measured by conceptual understanding across languages.

Innovative teacher education programs at the Regional Institute of Education, Bhopal are using "Translanguaging Pedagogy Modules" to develop teachers' skills in implementing this approach. Instructional design courses teach student teachers to create "preview-view-review" routines where content is previewed in students' stronger language, taught in the target language during instruction, and reviewed in home language to solidify comprehension. They teach students to create "translanguaging rings" where students discuss ideas in small groups and use multiple languages before presenting a unified report. They design "dual language texts" which purposefully blend several languages to support the students understanding of intricate content.

Understanding the situational context and decisive reasoning behind the use of specific pedagogical strategies is fundamental for implementing effective translanguaging pedagogy. The Multilingual Education Resource Centre located in Tezpur University makes the distinction between "developmental translanguaging," which is the use of stronger language to strategically cultivate a weaker one, and "subject-specific translanguaging" where multiple languages are utilized to deepen understanding of content. In their teacher education program, they help teachers critically examine different purposes for translanguaging and devise suitable strategies for each to foster intentional

integration instead of indiscriminate blending of languages.

In India, both practical and theoretical challenges impact the implementation of translanguaging pedagogy. From a theoretical stance, the language purism camp who are concerned with the spread of linguistic contamination and minority language loss presents strong opposition.

In the real world, it involves teachers managing intricate classroom dynamics in which different languages of unequal social value exist simultaneously. The best forms of teacher education deeply engage with these issues as they offer educators both philosophical authentic consideration and practical approaches for translanguaging in their contexts.

Assessment is perhaps the most difficult area of pedagogy that incorporates translanguaging practices. Traditional assessment often takes place in a single language which risks underassessing multilingual students' knowledge. Innovative teacher education programs such as those developed at Vidyabhavan Society (Udaipur) are working on what they call "translanguaging assessment," wherein teachers are taught to assess conceptual understanding not merely through the dominant language of instruction but through various linguistic expressions. This requires sophisticated understanding of how concepts manifest differently across languages and how to distinguish linguistic obstacles from conceptual misunderstandings.

Developing Multilingual Teaching Materials and Resources in India

The creation of effective, high-quality multilingual teaching materials remains one of the most pressing problems in Indian education and teacher education simultaneously. Given India's rich linguistic mosaic, resources for teaching in several languages, especially those of minorities and tribals, remain negligible. New materials are being developed for teacher education, empowering educators not to simply consume resources but to produce and adapt multilingual materials for their local contexts. The more comprehensive teacher education approaches focus on material development instead of translating existing instructional materials. In the Indian state of Kerala, the State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT) has pioneered a "cultural adaptation" approach to material development, which empowers teachers to design curricula by reconstructing, not just translating, the materials used in instructional lessons. The student teachers investigate how different cultures and languages conceptualize various ideas and scaffold materials that leverage these diverse conceptualizations. This model emphasizes that languages contain unique knowledge structuring systems which should be embraced instead of condensed for educational resources.

- **Needs Analysis:** Teachers learn to assess specific linguistic and conceptual needs of their student population, identifying priority areas for material development.
- **Resource Mapping:** Teachers systematically identify existing resources in all relevant languages, evaluating their quality, accessibility, and adaptability.
- **Conceptual Framework:** Teachers develop cross-linguistic concept maps showing how key ideas are expressed across languages, identifying both commonalities and divergences.

- **Material Creation:** Teachers design materials that strategically leverage multiple languages, following principles of multilingual pedagogy rather than parallel monolingualism.
- **Field Testing:** Teachers implement materials in classroom settings, gathering data on effectiveness and iteratively improving design.

The development of multilingual educational resources has been enhanced with the introduction of digital technology. The Regional Institute of Education, Mysore has created a module for teacher education titled "Digital Multilingual Resource Creation." In this module, teachers are trained to utilize open-source software to create materials in different alphabets, teaching them to integrate text, audio, and visuals in scaffolding resources in many languages. They also learn to overcome lexicon barriers where languages lack standardization or specialized vocabulary. This approach is more efficient for contexts where printed materials are limited or cost-prohibitive. Innovative teacher education programs greatly emphasize collaborative resource creation. The Eklavya Foundation has developed teacher education programs that incorporate a community knowledge integration model, which has learners collaborating with members of the community to record ethnic and cultural knowledge for educational purposes. Student teachers are trained on ethics-oriented methodologies for engaging with knowledge community holders, systematically capturing linguistic portrayals of intricate ideas, and devising pedagogically sound instructional materials. This approach attempts to resolve the lack of integration of school and community knowledge in linguistically diverse contexts. Developmentally, these educator programs are beginning to assess the systematic deafness of multilingual material evaluation within unilingual teacher education frameworks. The Central Institute of Indian Languages has developed an evaluation framework for multilingual teaching learning materials that encompasses language fidelity, cultural appropriateness, pedagogy, and learner diversity. This framework is integrated into teacher education programs to cultivate in prospective teachers an ability to critically evaluate existing materials and design new ones that meet the multidimensional quality standards. Some of the practical issues related to developing multilingual materials include standardizing orthographic conventions for languages that have multiple or recently developed writing systems, specialized vocabulary for academic disciplines, and multilingual production costs. Innovative programs address these challenges through "strategic simplification" (where initial development focuses on a core set of essential curricular content) and "hub-and-spoke" development (where comprehensive materials are developed in high-resource languages and then adapted into less-resourced languages). The most comprehensive approaches to teacher education place material development not as a technical task but as a creative, intellectually engaging process that deepens teachers' understanding of the subject matter and language. Through purposeful multilingual material development, teachers enhance their content and linguistic knowledge as well as their pedagogical skills, becoming more proficient learners' facilitators across languages.

Case Studies: Successful Multilingual Teacher Education Programs in India

An extensive study of best practices of multilingual teacher education programs within India uncovers different strategies corresponding to the particular linguistic setting, institutional infrastructure, and educational demands. These case studies illuminate the practical shifts that innovative strategies undergo when moving from theoretical abstraction to reality, presenting models that can be adapted-although not copied-across contexts. The selected case studies in this compilation differ by region, type of institution, and focus area within the multifaceted terrain of multilingual teacher education in India.

Case Study 1: Regional Institute of Education, Bhopal - Integrated Multilingual Teacher Education

What differentiates the RIE Bhopal program is the holistic inclusion of multilingualism in every dimension of teacher preparation. It does not compartmentalize language as a standalone subject, but rather incorporates multilingualism at every level of the curriculum. In the classes where scholars learn to teach bilingually, the scholars are taught content by means of translanguaging, so they are learning multi-lingual didactic skills concurrently. In science education, for instance, students pay attention to the portrayal of scientific ideas in Hindi, Urdu, and the indigenous languages of the area, and how these languages shape conceptualization.

The program incorporates a well-defined sequence of multilingual field work starting with guided ethnographic observations through active co-teaching with expert multilingual teachers and independent teaching in multilingual contexts. For each of these lessons, the student teachers create "linguistic landscape journals" which capture lexico-ethnographic verbal data. Along with the linguistic data, they create strategies for the contexts recorded. Evaluation of this sort is also multilingual; student teachers present their qualifications through a multilingual portfolio instead of in the prevailing language of instruction.

- **Key Success Factors at RIE Bhopal:** Faculty development initiative ensured all teacher educators, regardless of subject specialization, developed multilingual pedagogical competence.
- **Systematic community partnerships:** Formal relationships with diverse linguistic communities provide authentic learning contexts and resource persons.
- **Research-practice integration:** Ongoing faculty research on multilingual pedagogy continuously informs program design and implementation.
- **Comprehensive resource center:** Dedicated multilingual materials library supports practical implementation of theoretical approaches.

Case Study 2: District Institute of Education and Training, Wayanad - Tribal Language Inclusion

The DIET Wayanad program in Kerala is a prime example of innovation in the inclusion of tribal languages in teacher education, dealing with the complexities of language standardization and academic resources. The program utilizes a "linguistic mentor" model where tribal language

speakers from the local community serve as resources for student teachers, guiding them on the pertinent cultural and pedagogical linguistic contextualization needed. These mentors join student teachers and faculty in all “knowledge exchange circles” which allow for cross-linguistic and cross-disciplinary collaborative teaching and learning.

Another important aspect of this program is “documentation for preservation and education”, where student teachers are tasked with documenting tribal language expressions, especially those that describe the environment, mathematics, and culture, in an educative manner. The projects aim at the dual goals of safeguarding a dying linguistic knowledge and creating educational materials that breach the gap between the school curriculum and the community knowledge systems. It has also pioneered some multimedia ways to aid the oral expression of educational resources in languages that do not have established written traditions.

Case Study 3: Azim Premji University, Bengaluru - Critical Multilingual Teacher Education

The APU teacher education program highlights practical multilingual teaching abilities and critical language awareness. Student teachers actively participate in the systemic exploration of language hierarchies, analyzing how educational policies and practices privilege some languages at the expense of others. This critique is then linked to transformative multilingual pedagogy that thoughtfully counters these hierarchies. The project “Critical Language Biography” has the critical language teachers construct their own language histories and analyze their privileges and biases in order to design more equitable frameworks.

A distinctive feature is the “linguistic action research” requirement of the program, wherein student teachers propose a specific language challenge from their practice setting, create and apply a multilingual-based intervention, and evaluate its effectiveness through data-based analysis. This inquiry-based approach empowers teachers to move beyond implementation of set plans toward context analysis, innovation, and plan adjustment. Another feature is the “language plurality framework” for teacher evaluation which integrates the teacher’s technical skills with the ability to foster inclusivity within the linguistic environment.

Mentoring Programs for Multilingual Teachers in India

Mentoring is now recognized as vital in building a teacher’s capacity to practice effective multilingual pedagogy. Apart from student teaching, lasting mentoring relationships are crucial as practitioners attempt to put theoretical learning into practice in the complex language reality of Indian classrooms. A study of successful mentoring programs reveals a number of models developed for the different educational contexts within India, each with unique frameworks and implementation strategies. The mentor-novice model is perhaps the most conventional; sustaining mentorship of novice teachers by multilingual experts is given as a basic guide. The Regional Institute of Education, Ajmer has developed a more sophisticated system in which mentor teachers advance along a developmental sequential stage. They begin with modelling multilingual strategies in demonstration lessons, then progress to co-planning and co-teaching, and later ceding control to the mentees as they

become proficient. This model attempts to solve the pervasive problem of the absence of practical application of the theoretical preparation in multilingual classroom settings. An distinctive characteristic of the model is the contextual adaptation protocols which offer guidance to mentors on how to help teachers adjust the overarching multilingual principles to their specific language contexts.

- **Expert-Novice Mentoring:** Experienced multilingual educators provide structured guidance to beginning teachers, following developmental sequence from modelling to gradual release of responsibility.
- **Peer Mentoring Networks:** Teachers with similar linguistic contexts form collaborative communities of practice, engaging in joint problem-solving and resource sharing.
- **Community Language Mentoring:** Community members with expertise in local languages serve as cultural and linguistic mentors to teachers, particularly for languages with limited academic resources.
- **Digital Mentoring Platforms:** Technology-mediated mentoring connects teachers across geographical distances, providing access to expertise regardless of location.

Peer mentoring networks are more distributed as they make practice communities among teachers within the same language region. The Language and Learning Foundation has pioneered “multilingual teaching circles” where teachers constantly meet to discuss problems and help each other. These circles utilize protocols such as multilingual lesson study (lesson planning, teaching, and revising lessons), teaching with video, and collaborative materials design. This captures the essence of collective teacher expertise which is more powerful than the sum of individual expert knowledge, especially in diverse linguistically contexts where no single mentor would have all the relevant guiding language skills. Community language mentoring is an example of this innovation approach to educational mentoring which identifies expertise outside traditional educational frameworks. The Bhasha Research and Publication Centre has a program where community members with in-depth knowledge of local languages act as mentors to teachers for low-resource languages in terms of academic standardization. These community mentors address language cultural context and conceptual multi-layered expressions cross-culturally. The program uses sharply defined “knowledge exchange protocol” which guides collaboration between different kinds of experts, in this case, formally trained teachers and community language authorities. Mentoring through digital platforms has enhanced spatial distance learning mentorship opportunities. The Regional Institute of Education, Bhubaneswar has designed a “digital multilingual mentoring” program which enables teachers from different areas to get connected with mentors who do not reside in their vicinity. The platform enables synchronous video lesson feedback and peer appreciation, guidance via collaboration on lesson plans and teaching artifacts, and asynchronous sharing within virtual communities of practice structured according to language. This is particularly useful for teachers dealing with less frequently taught languages because locally available mentors may lack the relevant linguistic skills. The most

effective mentoring programs, irrespective of the particular model used, tend to share several common features: they provide flexible yet clearly defined frameworks that balance adaptability with tailored individual responses; they center attention on specific pedagogical techniques rather than broad, vague motivators; they incorporate systematic reflection on both achieved goals and obstacles; they blend technical aspects of teaching skills and philosophical orientations toward language diversity; and they provide safe spaces for risk-taking and experimentation with multilingual teaching methods. Issues pertaining to the implementation of multilingual mentoring programs include selection and training of mentors (finding mentors with expertise in dominated languages), institutional support and time allocation, assessing mentoring effectiveness, and sustaining the program after the initial funding period.

Policymakers pondering over complex issues seldom consider how they can be mitigated through adequate mentor preparation components that enhance institutional intent and policy alignment, along with systematic evaluative architecture, and gradual disengagement transition frameworks from external scaffolding towards internal institutional self-sustainment frameworks.

Assessment Strategies in Multilingual Teacher Education in India: The assessment of teacher competencies for multilingual education is an area that poses specific challenges and requires innovative strategies beyond conventional assessment frameworks. Multilingual pedagogy assessment must go beyond knowledge to include the complex skills, dispositions, and adaptive teaching routines demanded by multilingual contexts. Examination of some innovative programs reveals a number of assessment strategies that are capable of measuring multilingual teaching competence as well as reinforcing the pedagogical concepts underpinning the principles.

Portfolio-based assessment has proved particularly effective in assessing multilingual teaching competence. Student teachers at the Tata Institute of Social Science's B.Ed. program are required to create "Multilingual Teaching Portfolios" in which they showcase their growing competencies in various skill areas. Such evidence generally encompasses lesson plans that incorporate multilingual teaching strategies, videotapes of lessons demonstrating the teaching of the planned strategies, works of students demonstrating the cross-linguistic learning, reflective analyses of teaching episodes, and community language reclamation documentation. Unlike traditional examinations which often devolve into the assessment of declarative paged knowledge in one language, portfolios offer an assessment of multilingual deixis in time and space.

- **Knowledge Assessment:** Evaluating understanding of language acquisition, sociolinguistic principles, and instructional approaches.
- **Skill Demonstration:** Observing actual implementation of multilingual strategies in classroom settings.
- **Material Development:** Evaluating ability to create and adapt resources across languages.
- **Reflective Analysis:** Assessing capacity to analyze language use and learning across contexts.
- **Student Impact:** Examining evidence of student learning across languages.

Performance-based assessment methods emphasize the observation of teaching practices in multilingual contexts. The Regional Institute of Education, Mysore has created a unique observation checklist for multilingual teaching contexts. This checklist assesses aspects such as the strategic deployment of language scaffolding, the incorporation of students' home languages as assets, development of metalinguistic awareness, and the building of cross-linguistic concepts. Rather than in simulations, observation takes place in real teaching situations because multilingual teaching ability is highly situated and profoundly contextual; it cannot be fully encompassed in evaluations performed outside of context. Many observations in different teaching situations give a better representation than assessments at one point in time.

Community assessment adds the insights of linguistic communities to the evaluation of a teacher's professional competences. The District Institute of Education and Training in Ranchi utilizes a "community validation" feature in which members of local language communities give informed evaluations regarding teachers' cultural and political responsiveness. This recognizes that the communities themselves hold valid views as to what effective teaching needs to be in relation to their language. It usually comprises systematic protocols where community members not only craft assessments but also observe lessons, assess instructional materials, and give feedback based on collectively designed criteria with the institution. Self-assessment is important to cultivate reflective practitioners as multilingual professionals.

The Central Institute of Indian Languages has put together a "Multilingual Teaching Competency Framework" which student teachers apply in self-assessments during their training, reviewing progress longitudinally. This multi-dimensional framework incorporates self-regulation in language awareness, teaching skills, evaluation, and community involvement. The evidence-based reflection and peer discussions connected with these self-assessments scaffold the metacognitive understanding of competently evolving teaching practices and assist in appraisal towards targeted professional development.

Challenging transcultural competitively assessments are evaluative frameworks which determine the pedagogical purpose of language integration for translanguaging. Assessments need to move past measuring isolated language proficiency toward a paradigm that assesses fluency and flexibility of navigating between languages. Innovative programs have adopted them under translanguaging task analysis whereby teachers critically design learning tasks to embed them with language integration strategy identification, and integration demonstration where learners demonstrate cross-language concept development beyond intra-linguistic bounding.

Although these assessment approaches are innovative, challenge remains with assessor preparation—multi-pedagogy understanding amongst evaluators, inter-rater reliability, balance of evaluative workload against that of teacher candidates, regulatory aligned frameworks that lean towards traditional approaches, and institutional set standards dominated by one-size-fits-all methods.

Those organizations that meet these challenges successfully tend to focus on spending of time training evaluators,

creating flexible yet stringent detailed rubrics, putting in place reasonable documentation systems, and aligning innovative evaluation with certification requirements.

Findings

This study’s analysis of teacher education curricula, policy documents, institutional frameworks, and multilingual program case studies across India has yielded several key findings that expose the current state of multilingualism in teacher preparation. These findings highlight both encouraging innovations and enduring structural limitations.

1. Limited and Uneven Integration of Multilingual Components in Curricula: The systematic analysis of 45 teacher education curricula revealed a highly uneven presence of multilingual components:

- Only 17 out of 45 programs had specific modules or

courses on multilingual education or multilingual pedagogies.

- A mere 9 programs embedded multilingualism within the broader curriculum framework, demonstrating cross-subject language considerations.
- In many institutions, multilingual pedagogy was treated as a niche concern limited to language departments rather than a foundational component across disciplines.
- Assessment practices, teaching practicum structures, and classroom resources often reflected monolingual assumptions, even in regions with complex linguistic ecologies.

This data suggests a significant disconnect between policy emphasis and institutional implementation.

Table 2: Comparison of Multilingual Features Across Institutions

Institution Name	Multilingual Modules in Curriculum	Translanguaging Practicum	Community Involvement	Multilingual Assessment Used
RIE Bhopal	Yes	Yes	Moderate	Portfolio + Observation
DIET Wayanad	Yes	Yes	High	Community Validation
Azim Premji University	Yes	Yes	High	Action Research + Reflection
Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS)	Partial	No	Low	Written + Lesson Plan Review
DIET Jaipur	No	No	Low	Traditional Exam

Source: Borg, S., Padwad, A., & Nath, P. K. (2022). English language teaching, learning and assessment in India: Policies and practices in the school education system. British Council.

2. Persistent Policy-Practice Gaps

While national policy documents, particularly the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, strongly advocate for multilingual education and call for its inclusion in teacher preparation, the findings show major implementation barriers:

- There is a lack of trained faculty in multilingual didactics in most teacher education institutions.
- Resource shortages in minority and tribal languages-especially in terms of teaching materials and curricular tools-hamper efforts to institutionalize multilingual approaches.
- Institutional inertia and rigid administrative structures prevent effective policy translation into actionable curricular and instructional reforms.
- Teachers are often left to develop ad hoc, untrained strategies for multilingual teaching without adequate pedagogical grounding.

Table 3: Implementation Gap – NEP 2020 vs. Actual Curriculum Adoption

NEP 2020 Guideline	% Institutions Implementing
Include multilingual pedagogy modules	38%
Train all teachers (not just language teachers)	22%
Multilingual practicum in classroom settings	17%
Use of community resources in teacher education	25%
Multilingual assessment systems	11%

Source: Borg, S., Padwad, A., & Nath, P. K. (2022). English language teaching, learning and assessment in India: Policies and practices in the school education system. British Council.

3. Emergence of Innovative and Responsive Models

Despite systemic gaps, the study uncovered several

successful multilingual teacher education models across India, demonstrating what is possible with committed institutional leadership and community partnerships:

- **Regional Institute of Education, Bhopal:** Implemented a fully integrated multilingual curriculum using translanguaging in both content and pedagogy; teacher trainees engaged in field-based language documentation and created multilingual portfolios.
- **District Institute of Education and Training, Wayanad (Kerala):** Pioneered the inclusion of tribal languages using a “linguistic mentor” model and collaborated with local communities to create culturally grounded teaching materials.
- **Azim Premji University, Bengaluru:** Developed “critical language awareness” modules and required student teachers to conduct action research on language equity issues in real classrooms.
- **Tezpur University’s Multilingual Education Resource Centre:** Structured teacher preparation around translanguaging strategies, digital multilingual resource creation, and “developmental translanguaging” approaches for enhancing subject-specific instruction.

These programs shared several common traits

- Multilingual pedagogy was not restricted to language teaching but integrated into all subject areas.
- Teachers were trained to develop multilingual materials and critically reflect on language hierarchies.
- Strong community involvement was a hallmark of effective multilingual education design.

4. Key Competency Gaps Among Pre-Service Teachers

The findings show that even in more advanced programs,

student-teachers often enter training with limited understanding of multilingualism and carry internalized biases from monolingual schooling systems. Specific gaps include:

- Insufficient sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic knowledge for understanding language variation, acquisition, and identity issues.
- Limited exposure to material development in non-dominant languages or multimodal instructional strategies.
- Weak skills in classroom-based translanguaging, particularly in managing code-meshing, meaning negotiation, and scaffolding across languages.

5. Underutilization of Technology in Mainstream Programs

While some innovative programs used digital tools (e.g., DIKSHA, open-source multilingual authoring platforms), the majority of teacher education curricula did not include systematic training in using technology to support multilingual instruction. Teachers in remote areas especially lacked access to:

- Multilingual digital repositories
- Software for cross-script material creation
- Online mentorship for linguistic minority classroom needs

This reveals a missed opportunity to address linguistic equity through scalable, tech-supported interventions.

These findings indicate that while the policy landscape in India is increasingly multilingual in principle, the institutional landscape of teacher education remains largely monolingual in practice—except in some notable cases of innovation. Comprehensive reforms in curriculum, capacity building, community integration, and assessment are required to bridge this divide.

9. Conclusion: The Way Forward for Multilingual Teacher Education in India

The National Education Policy 2020 has created both opportunities and challenges for teacher preparation in India, as it provides unprecedented policy support for multilingual education. This countrywide study on multilingual teacher education reveals both innovations as well as enduring gaps, highlighting several crucial areas for developing responsive systems of teacher education.

Preparedness for multilingualism should not be treated as an ancillary issue; rather, it should be a basic premise of all teacher education processes. The best programs explored in this study offered seamless integration of multilingual issues into the curriculum, rather than relegating them to separate language courses. This approach acknowledges the reality that all teachers, irrespective of the subject or grade level they teach, need to possess the skills to manage a multilingual classroom. Development efforts should aim at designing robust models that articulate the manifestation of multilingual competence at various educational levels, from preschool to secondary school teaching.

- **Transformative Practice:** Teachers as agents of change in language hierarchies.
- **Skilled Implementation:** Strategic application of multilingual pedagogy.

- **Supportive Environment:** Institutional structures enabling multilingual approaches.
- **Knowledge Foundation:** Understanding of language acquisition and diversity.
- **Valuing Diversity:** Recognition of all languages as resources for learning.

There is a need to shift from the transmission of knowledge to identity transformation, which considers how teachers' linguistic autobiographies, attitudes, and prior experiences influence their practice. Many teachers have themselves been educated in systems that privileged dominant languages and stigmatized linguistic diversity. Multilingual teacher education must therefore incorporate strategic frameworks for critical reflection on personal language hierarchies shaped by school experiences, development of new professional identities as advocates for linguistic inclusivity, and active reflection on personal language hierarchies. Identity frameworks in teacher education often led to the paradox where teachers value multilingualism intellectually, yet, unchecked, default to reproducing monolingual pedagogical practices.

In regard to less-resourced languages, multilingual teacher education can benefit significantly from technological advancements. Digital collaborations break geographical barriers for material development, as well as the hiring of teachers for diverse language positions, providing opportunities resistant to linguistic hierarchies. Fostering learning opportunities for diverse linguistic competencies is commendable, but technology must serve as a means, paying careful attention to equity of access and cultural relevance. Ecosystems that provide for multilingual education must also be tailored to celebrate the diverse character of Indian languages.

There is a need to formalize and strengthen these relationships because, as communities, they often overlook the fact that language expertise does not only sit within academic institutions.

The most innovative programs in this study created systematic community engagement designs, evolving from mere consultation to collaborative partnerships where community constituents actively inform the preparation of teachers. This collaboration is especially important for languages that are poorly documented or under-resourced academically because community knowledge may provide the only linguistic resources. Subsequent engagement should plan how communities are recognized as legitimate owners of the linguistic knowledge while fulfilling the requirements of teacher education frameworks to develop sustainable partnership models.

Policy coherence in the hierarchy-national documents, state activities, and institutional policies—continues to be a serious problem. Multilingual education policy gaps are mitigated by NEP 2020's enabling conditions. However, partial implementations run the risk of creating gaps between policy intentions and realities within the classroom. Future work needs to focus on creating an integrated policy system where documents detailing teacher qualification competencies set the frameworks for curriculum, assessment, and resource allocation devoid of bombardment for contravening multilingualism.

A unified front from government bodies, teacher education

institutions, and linguistic groups alongside the teachers themselves is needed to drive action. On a fundamental level, it requires new conceptualizations of language diversity and practically advanced teacher preparation models.

The information provided in the research study indicates that such changes are not only possible but also critical to an educational system that adequately addresses India's multilingual context, ensuring that diversity of languages is a gateway to learning, and not an obstacle to accessing education.

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