



A Study Of Mother Tongue Influence On Second Language Learning In Secondary Education: In Tripura

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ABSTRACT:

The paper is devoted to the mother tongue influences on second language learning at the secondary level of education in Tripura. Secondary sources of data are its basis, and by taking care of or taking into consideration Tripura's linguistic communities and diversity, the paper is moulded in a way that further development and research can be done. The language groups, tribal and non-tribal communities, and their languages are surveyed, and remarks or findings based upon those bases further possibilities are discussed. How a mother tongue can become a vehicle for second language learning is the focal point, and relying upon this, results, discussion, possibilities, further provisions, and conclusions are knitted in a vivid manner. Mainly the Tibeto-Burman language groups and Indo-Aryan groups or language families are greater in no in Tripura, and languages and dialects of those communities are there in the school curriculum as well as served as means of communication.

KEYWORDS: -

Mother tongue, Secondary Education, Indo-Aryan language group, and Tibeto-Burman language group.

INTRODUCTION:

Tripura, a hilly state in the northeastern region of India, possesses and showcases diversity in its culture, creed, languages, and religion, and it is itself a microcosm amid macrocosms. The linguistic variations in Tripura are unique, and various dialects are spoken by different language communities here. In the Northeast, where states like Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, and Mizoram also supports and adds to the glory of Northeast India. Tripura, being a sister of these states, contributes nonetheless. The language communities in Tripura are quite diverse in nature; a total of 19 tribes reside in Tripura, and they are mainly from the Tibeto-Burman origin group of people, language reflecting the same, along with other non-tribal language community people belonging to Indo-European language groups like Bengali, Hindi, and many more, although other groups like Austro-Asiatic, Dravidian, Semito-Hemitic, and other groups exist in Tripura in lesser numbers. This article mainly focuses on the influences of mother tongue on second language learning, either English, Bengali, Hindi, Sanskrit, or other languages, in secondary education in Tripura. Although it is obvious that mother tongue has a vast impact on each of the languages spoken, learnt, and used. In this paper, the prime focus will be on what the benefits and influential factors of mother tongue are in learning a second language at the secondary level of education, which helps in better cognition and forming abilities like problem-solving and analytical skills, or can be

said to be higher-order learning skills among the learners of the age group who are enrolled in the secondary level of education in Tripura for their career prospects and achieving further goals in life, either in academics or in other sectors, along with the challenges and setbacks of it in teaching and learning, curriculum formation, superstitions related to language learning, myths, social challenges, and so on.

The total area of Tripura is 10,491.69 sq. sq.km, and the population is 3,673,917 as per the census of 2011. The number of J.B., S.B., high, and higher secondary schools in Tripura are 2,503, 1,217, 695, & 497 consecutively, i.e., 4,912 in all, including Madrassa (as per UDISE 2022-2023), and the teachers are also divided into stages like pre-primary (126), primary (16,246), upper primary (8,387), secondary (7,556), and higher secondary (5,436), a sum of 37,761 in numbers here also, and Madrassa is included (as per UDISE 2022-2023). The number of students enrolled is 31,030 in pre-primary, 303,252 in primary, 17,2830 in upper primary, 101,746 in secondary, and 85,681 in higher secondary, i.e., a total of 694,539 (as per UDISE 2022-23), including Madrassa. So, relying upon this, the percentage of students enrolled under primary and secondary education is 18.90.

RESEARCH RELATED QUESTIONS:

The paper particularly done to find out the answers to the questions written below:

1. What are the influences and benefits of mother tongue on second language learning in secondary education in Tripura?
2. Barriers or challenges in secondary education related to second language learning based on mother tongue.
3. How can second language learning be more effectively done at the secondary level of education using the mother tongue?

OBJECTIVES:

The objectives of this research article are illustrated as follows: -

1. To identify the influences of mother tongue in second language learning.
2. To identify the challenges faced by the mother tongue users in learning second language.
3. To find out effective ways of learning a second language based on the mother tongue.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS:

Mother Tongue—Mother tongue is the language acquired rather than learned, the language that is unconsciously acquired by the children from his/her parents or other family members.

Secondary Education—Secondary education mainly includes students from primary, secondary, and higher secondary in Tripura. In Tripura, TBSE stands for Tripura Board of Secondary Education, the governing body that is vested with liabilities for the overall growth and development of the students who belong to the age group of 12 to 18. Which ensures quality education and life skills for the learners amid such a diversity and free and compulsory education for children of age group six to fourteen years old as per Article 21A of the Indian Constitution.

Indo-Aryan language: This language group is the major branch of the Indo-European language family, with population of one and half billion in numbers among the three billion speakers of the main group, i.e. Indo-European, and some of the languages belongs to this group are Bengali, Punjabi, Marathi, etc.

Tibeto-Burman language: It is a vast language group that is found in the Himalayan regions of India, along with countries like Nepal, Bhutan, Tibet, and China, and in Southeast Asian countries like Burma, Laos, Vietnam, and Thailand. Although some tribal communities in Tripura fall under this language family, several hundred languages of this group are yet to be discovered.

METHODOLOGY:

The methodology adapted in this research paper is based on the secondary sources on data collected through numerous sources and qualitative approach of research is taken and sampling is purposive in nature where ongoing research and findings plays a vital role and specially major language groups are taken as sample like- Tibeto-Burman and Indo-Aryan groups amid numerous other groups and the mother tongue of these groups are analyzed and considered for the research purpose and findings and data based upon all this further illustration along with discussion , suggestions are formulated solely to find out the influence of mother tongue in secondary education in Tripura for learning second language with helps in quality development in the sector of education and non the less contribute to the counties over all growth along with serving the basis educational needs of the present day learner under secondary education.

FINDINGS AND ILLUSTRATIONS: -

Although Tripura is state where inhibitors are mainly indigenous group of people along with their own dialects and mother tongue but also the language majority is Bengali and next to it lies Kokborok. Bengali and Kokborok is the official language in use and in schools the medium of instruction is also as follows Bengali being the major language groups schools are also not debarred from it although now a days English medium schools are also not less in numbers along with mediums like Kokborok, Manipuri and so on so forth. A study published by scholars of Tripura University namely Sudeshna and Mousami Debbarma in June 2024, where they have enclosed a table on page no. 57, namely Table 1. Language family affiliations of Tripura 2011, which shows the percentage of speakers chronologically, where the Indo-European language group of people tops the rank among other groups like Tibeto-Burman, Austro-Asiatic, Dravidian, Semito-Hemitic, and others. Tripura has also, nowadays, become the hub of mother tongues, where various people from different mother tongues intermingle, and the influence becomes loud and clear. In the changing dynamics of the world, the language also changes, and the structure, intonations, patterns, and styles, accents, and other aspects are also at risk. In schools, a boy or girl from a different mother tongue background has to communicate with others for his or her needs and curriculum demands, and the interaction is not only limited to his or her educational aspect or the transfer of information. The mother tongue, or the language used in communication, makes an impact on the subconscious mind, and the influence is silently carried out in the way or form of interaction. The pronunciation of Kokborok, Mizo, and Halam will be different from the pronunciation of languages like Bengali, Manipuri, Hindi, etc. It is the fundamental aspect of any language, where every language has its own ways of articulation and production of speech sound. Mother tongue becomes the language of the conscious and unconscious mind for a child, where he/she processes his/her thoughts on the same and conveys them. Previous studies talk about the findings of mother tongue influence that has deconstructed the language on young learners, where it is seen that for proper development and growth, any child on a specific language needs at least six to eight years of time spent.

THE INFLUENCES OF MOTHER TONGUE ON SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING:

In Tripura for example a learner in secondary education when he/she came across second language like English, Bengali, Hindi, Sanskrit, Kokborok etc.in his/her later classes of secondary education the following things are seen:

1. Difficulties in pronunciation and spelling of the targeted language in the curriculum and the pronunciation and ways of articulation of sounds of the word in the mother tongue influence the language learner i.e. phonological influence.
2. Grammar-related influences due to dissimilarities with grammars used in the mother tongue, influence based on construction and syntax.
3. Influence of spellings that might be the same but mean the opposite or different for the language learnt.
4. Cognitive associations of the mother tongue can be a big influence; for example, the word “my,” used and sounded in English, means entirely different for the of Kokborok or Bengali or other mother tongues of Tripura, which are used to indicate the same.

5. Mother tongue and skills associated with it transfer to the second language learnt in the secondary language, like understanding vocabulary, retention, use, and construction of sentences based upon it, i.e., creativity or special abilities related to language.
6. A good mother tongue user with both verbal and nonverbal abilities finds him or herself more confident in learning a second language.
7. Mother tongue can be a turning point for second language acquisition for those who are properly guided, and coming under the shade of language, their mother tongue can work like a means or vehicle to flourish or cherish the uniqueness of the second language in the curriculum of the secondary level of education.
8. Subjects like Science, math, civics, geography, etc., which are written in the mother tongue, can be a factor when translated to a second language.

SOME OF THE CHALLENGES AND BARRIERS FACED BY TEACHERS AND LEARNERS IN SECONDARY EDUCATION RELATED TO SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING BASED ON MOTHER TONGUE:

1. Conservative mentality or superstitions related to second language acquisitions: some of the language communities are finding it hard to break the shackle of the age-old beliefs that lack scientific evidence.
2. Lack of proper training facilities for the teachers and lack of infrastructure like a language lab and language acquisition tools, and lack of based materials for language learning,, which not only aid in learning but also help in building interest and motivate learners.
3. Lack of community support and policy implementation related to language learning.
4. Learners' unwillingness and comfort zone have a vast effect on learning a second language.
5. Teacher-student relationship and curriculum gap.
6. Subjects and curricula that are written in languages other than the native or mother tongue can be a matter of fear among learners and will take time and need various approaches and methods to convey.

SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING USING MOTHER TONGUE AS A MEDIUM OR VEHICLE: -

1. Learners mother tongue and its fundamentals can be used to facilitate second language learning amid students at secondary level like props, pictures and other Teaching learning materials in the mother tongue or native language can be used to promote a second language.
2. Mother tongue can become the medium of instruction for the targeted language.
3. Constantly giving tasks in a second language using the mother tongue and instructed to follow the same for a longer period, say, for example, a student of class 10 is assigned with the work of writing the names of all writers in his or her English book first in Kokborok or Bengali and later translating it to either Hindi or English for a period of 15 days.
4. Matters enclosed or adapted in the secondary school curriculum can be discussed better using the mother tongue, which helps in better understanding and later can easily be translated in the targeted language or second language in the school curriculum.

CONSEQUENCES OF MOTHER TONGUE USE IN SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING IN SECONDARY EDUCATION IN TRIPURA: -

The mother tongues of Tripura are very prone to the everyday changes in the field of linguistics findings and research. Many of the languages and dialects spoken here are very primitive in nature and form, and the language groups have their own dignity, which might face a crisis in the vast and competitive nature of language development. The mother tongue holds numerous cultural heritages in Tripura's oral stories of tribal communities, which are only circulated orally without any written scripts associated with them. Economical factors like poverty in some of the tribal areas where it is hard for the parents to send their child to schools where secondary language learning is done or facilitated might lack behind in society due to language factors. Marginalised language groups and language minorities will also face challenges.

Although using a mother tongue for a secondary language can open new realms for the learners in their later life and prove to be an asset for them on the global platform, where bilingualism or multilingualism is not a rare occurrence but a normal phenomenon, the boundaries can be put aside in communication. Cognitive facilities of the young learners, along with critical thinking, problem-solving attitudes, and interaction skills, can be generated in young learners by imparting them a new language.

CONCLUSION:

Secondary education serves not only the educational needs of a learner but also helps the learner to update and adapt to the changing needs of society. In Tripura, policies related to secondary education are implemented for the sake of learners' overall development and language diversity, and different language communities are tied together in a system where one can support the other. For this reason, a language that can be used uniformly either for educational or for social use is the basic need. At the secondary education level, the learners who are within the age group of 6 to 18 possess young and vibrant minds and cognitive provision, which aids in learning anything at this stage of life. Mother tongue, although it holds the greater dimensions for anyone, is not just a means of communication within the community; it also can be used in a way where learning a new language can be much easier. In Tripura, where there are people from different parts of the country, they must take steps for learning and acquiring languages.

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