

## **A Classroom Perspective on the Language of Instruction and Its Impact on English Proficiency**

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### **Abstract**

*Students' English proficiency and overall communicative competency are greatly influenced by the language used in the classroom. The choice of English or a regional language as the main language in multilingual society has long-term effects on social, professional, and academic spheres. Proficiency in English is frequently linked to social mobility, worldwide opportunities, and access to higher education, especially in nations like India. However, when education suddenly switches from mother tongue-based to English-medium, many students find it difficult to adjust, which leaves them with gaps in confidence and comprehension. This paper examines how, from a classroom standpoint, the language of instruction affects students' learning of English language abilities. The analysis, which draws from empirical research and classroom observations, emphasise how pedagogical techniques, teacher competency, and early exposure all work together to influence English learning results. Additionally, it takes into account the ways in which regional languages can both facilitate and impede the development of English proficiency. The results imply that although direct exposure is provided by English-medium instruction, it is not always successful in the absence of sufficient teacher preparation and student readiness. Better outcomes seem to come from a balanced bilingual strategy that intentionally uses the mother tongue to support English learning. In order to ensure that English competency develops without alienating children from their linguistic and cultural backgrounds, the research finds that careful language rules and classroom practices are crucial. The abstract also emphasises the study's wider significance in adding to the current discussions on pedagogy, language policy, and cultural identity. By taking a classroom-based approach, it connects theoretical debates with real-world learning experiences and highlights practical implications for educators, students, and legislators. This method emphasises how urgently context-sensitive tactics that support linguistic variety and global preparedness are needed.*

**Keywords:** *Language of instruction, English proficiency, classroom learning, bilingual education, etc.,*

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### **I. Introduction**

Language of teaching has long been a source of contention in multilingual communities, particularly in those where English is widely spoken. In many nations, English is not just a subject but also the medium for delivering scientific, technological, and commercial knowledge. From a classroom standpoint, the decision between mother tongue instruction and English-medium education has a direct impact on students' learning experiences and outcomes. The discussion frequently focuses around reconciling cultural identification with the practical advantages of English. Students who attend courses where English is the predominant language frequently have difficulties with understanding, vocabulary development, and fluency. These problems are not just linguistic, but also psychological, since students may feel alienated when instructed in a language other than their native tongue.

This generates a disparity in classroom engagement and confidence, particularly among youngsters from rural or impoverished families. At the same time, many parents and officials see English-medium teaching as a path to upward mobility and global prospects. Thus, schools become places where linguistic identity and practical necessity collide. Understanding how this intersection affects English proficiency is critical for educators since it influences both language acquisition and overall academic accomplishment. Furthermore, English proficiency influences national competitiveness in a worldwide economy. Countries with higher English proficiency frequently have greater access to international cooperation, digital resources, and global job markets. As a result, the topic of instructional language has expanded beyond individual learners to become a social matter, involving education, economy, and cultural integration.

### **II. Literature Review**

Scholars have long studied the effects of instructional language on second language learning. Cummins (1979) presented the Common Underlying Proficiency idea, which proposes that abilities learned in one language may be transferred to another. This suggests that good foundational literacy in the mother tongue might enhance English ability. Other studies, however, contend that direct immersion in English increases

language learning, especially in metropolitan settings where children are surrounded by English-rich environments. In the Indian setting, academics such as Annamalai (2004) and Mohanty (2019) emphasize the difficulties of teaching English in multilingual classrooms. They argue that the prevalence of English frequently causes disparities, favoring pupils from English-speaking homes while disadvantageously affecting others. According to bilingual education research, using the mother language strategically as a scaffold can improve comprehension and involvement in the classroom. Recent global study emphasizes the relevance of English-language ability among teachers. García and Wei (2014) found that translanguaging, when teachers and students employ many languages, improve understanding and promotes English acquisition. These findings demonstrate that the role of instructional language is moderated by context, teacher readiness, and pedagogical tactics. Furthermore, UNESCO (2016) highlights that mother language instruction in the early grades is critical for inclusive education and lifelong learning. According to the survey, children learn best when taught in a language they understand, particularly during their foundational years. However, it emphasizes that a gradual and well-supported introduction to English is required to prepare students for higher education and global engagement. These findings show the need of striking a compromise between local language reality and international expectations.

### **Classroom Dynamics and English Exposure.**

Within classrooms, the amount and quality of English exposure have a substantial impact on student proficiency. Students who get education solely in English may learn quicker, although this is frequently dependent on how effectively professors demonstrate proper language. In circumstances where teachers lack confidence in English, education may be fragmented, resulting in an insufficient comprehension of both material and language. Another dynamic is peer interaction. In schools dominated by regional languages, English is frequently limited to textbooks and exams. Students may be hesitant to utilize English in discussions or group activities, restricting actual language development. In contrast, English-medium schools where students are encouraged to use English in both academic and non-academic situations, competency develops more organically.

Importantly, classroom activities like debates, role plays, and group presentations give opportunities for active English use. Teachers who use bilingual tactics, such as teaching complicated topics in their home tongue then reinforcing them in English, frequently report improved understanding. Thus, classrooms act as labs in which the instructional language used directly influences learners' English development. It's also vital to note that classroom culture has a significant impact on linguistic attitudes. When English is positioned as a superior language, students may undervalue their mother tongue, leading to identity conflicts. However, schools that recognize multilingual behaviors tend to develop confidence and inclusion, allowing kids to embrace English without abandoning their cultural origins. Hence, exposure to English must be framed positively, as an addition rather than a replacement of the learner's existing linguistic repertoire.

### **Pedagogical Challenges**

Despite the legislative emphasis on English, instructors confront various problems while implementing English-medium education. One prevalent issue is code-switching, in which teachers bounce between English and their home tongue to preserve clarity. While this improves comprehension, it can occasionally impede constant exposure to English. Another difficulty is a lack of proper teacher training, especially in rural regions where English is not often used outside of the classroom. The design of the textbook is equally important. Many English medium textbooks presuppose prior knowledge of the language, which alienates first-generation learners. Students struggle to comprehend and lose confidence when they lack supplemental resources or instructor help. This is reinforced by evaluation systems that promote rote learning over communicative skill, causing children to remember answers rather than acquiring true expertise.

Socioeconomic variables intensify the educational problems. Children from wealthy homes have access to English media and parental assistance, whilst others only receive school education. Teachers must thus traverse not just linguistic difficulties, but also socioeconomic inequities that influence access to English learning materials. Furthermore, instructional difficulties are exacerbated by institutional restrictions such as excessive class numbers and inadequate infrastructure. Overcrowded classes can leave teachers with little time to give individual attention, which is critical for language development. In such situations, instructional language choices become even more important since they influence whether students can effectively participate with lessons or remain passive consumers of information.

### **Implications for Policy**

Classroom reality is directly impacted by language policy decisions. Although the National Education Policy (2020) in India places a strong emphasis on mother tongue instruction in the early years, social ambitions are reflected in the growing demand for English-medium education. Careful planning that takes equity and

quality into account is necessary to balance these conflicting demands. The necessity of progressive transition models is one consequence. Reducing cognitive load can be achieved by introducing English as a medium of instruction starting in the middle grades while maintaining high literacy in the mother tongue during the primary years. Additionally, bilingual programs that permit the simultaneous use of regional and English languages foster inclusive settings where no student is at a disadvantage.

Additionally, teacher development programs are crucial for giving teachers the tools they need to run multilingual classes. Policies run the risk of being idealistic without having any real-world effects if they don't have enough backing. Therefore, an effective language policy must be grounded in the reality of the classroom and created to empower both educators and learners. Global examples also offer valuable lessons. Flexible multilingual policies that support English while maintaining regional languages have been put in place in nations like South Africa and Singapore. These models demonstrate that rather than imposing strict answers, policy frameworks must be flexible and reflect linguistic variation. Such comparative insights might help India and comparable multilingual countries develop policies that strike a balance between cultural inclusion and global competitiveness.

### **The Mediating Role of Teachers in English Proficiency**

The most important intermediaries between the language of teaching and the learning outcomes of students are teachers. The development of English competence in classrooms is strongly impacted by their capacity to traverse several languages, modify teaching, and instill confidence in students. Teachers frequently serve as communication role models, and their fluency in the language influences how pupils view and use it in both official and informal contexts. Teacher readiness has a major impact on how well English-medium instruction works. Students become confused and uninterested when professors' explanations are inconsistent due to their own difficulties with English. On the other hand, skilled educators effortlessly incorporate language proficiency into their topic instruction, guaranteeing that students gain both communication competence and content understanding.

This dual role emphasizes the necessity of teacher development programs that emphasize language pedagogy in addition to academic competence. Additionally, teachers that use cutting-edge techniques like scaffolding peer learning, and formative assessments foster an environment that is conducive to learning English. They make learning English less daunting and more interesting by utilizing real-world situations, storytelling, and interactive debates. In order to lessen the psychological obstacles that students encounter, teachers are also essential in creating inclusive participation are frequently used by educators who see their students' mother languages as advantages rather than barriers. In order to guarantee that students attain sustained competency without feeling alienated, teachers must deliberately mediate across languages in addition to imparting knowledge in English.

### **III. Conclusion**

English competency is shaped by instructional language in a sophisticated and multifaceted way. Classrooms serve as the main setting where students either establish obstacles that last throughout their academic careers or gain confidence in their English. In addition to exposure, pedagogical strategies, teacher competency, and striking a balance between mother tongue and English use all affect how well English-medium education works. The results indicate that a balanced strategy that values both English and the mother tongue produces better results. Bilingual techniques offer the cognitive scaffolding required for greater comprehension, and students learn best when they can make connections between new linguistic information and existing knowledge. The varied demands of learners in multilingual situations are frequently not met by rigid monolingual paradigms.

In summary, English competency is the outcome of intentional design in instructional language, pedagogy, and policy rather than just being a byproduct of exposure. The most sustainable method to prepare children for global prospects without severing them from their cultural identities is via classrooms that intentionally promote English while embracing linguistic variety. Lastly, this article highlights the significance of context-sensitive methods that acknowledge the challenges of teaching several languages. The long-term effects of various instructional language models and their influence on social mobility, equality, and identity development should be further investigated in future studies. Education systems may guarantee that English competence grows inclusively and meaningfully by anchoring policies and pedagogies in classroom realities.

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