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A Paradigm Shift: The Evolution of Language Teaching Methodologies in Digital India

Dr. S. Raju

Assistant Professor and Head
Department of English
Government Arts and Science College
Tittagudi – 606 106
vsraju75@gmail.com

Abstract

India's linguistic diversity presents both a rich cultural heritage and a complex challenge for language education. Traditionally dependent on teacher-led, rote-learning methods, language instruction in India has faced significant issues related to scalability, inclusivity, and effectiveness. The rapid advancement of technology—particularly Artificial Intelligence (AI), mobile learning applications, and immersive digital tools—is revolutionizing this landscape. This article explores the transformation from traditional classroom methods to AI-driven personalized platforms, analyzes government policies supporting this shift, reviews important case studies, and considers future prospects and challenges. The findings highlight how digital innovation is enabling more equitable, adaptive, and engaging language learning experiences across India's varied socio-economic and linguistic contexts.

Keywords: artificial intelligence (AI), classroom methods, digital tools, language education

Introduction

India is home to thousands of languages and dialects, with 22 officially recognized languages and hundreds of regional tongues spoken across its states. This multilingualism significantly influences educational practices. The diversity enriches cultural expression but complicates the delivery of standardized, effective language education. Many students encounter a disconnect between the language spoken at home and the language of instruction, often English or Hindi, which can hinder comprehension and academic success.

Traditional Teaching Methods: Limitations

Historically, Indian classrooms relied heavily on teacher-centered pedagogy characterized by rote memorization and repetition. Chalkboards, textbooks, and oral drills formed the backbone of instruction. While effective in some settings, these methods struggled to accommodate individual learner differences, lacked interactive engagement, and often failed to address the linguistic realities of many students. The shortage of qualified language teachers in rural and marginalized

communities further exacerbated educational inequities.

Emergence of Technology in Education

Technological advances, the proliferation of mobile internet, and government initiatives have sparked a digital revolution in education. Emerging tools such as AI-powered tutoring systems, speech recognition software, and interactive e-learning platforms increasingly supplement traditional instruction. These technologies aim to personalize learning, foster engagement, and expand access, particularly in India's linguistically diverse and geographically dispersed populations.

Paper Objectives and Structure

This article provides an in-depth analysis of the technological transformation of language education in India. It examines historical approaches, evaluates contemporary tools and government policies, reviews impactful case studies, and discusses ongoing challenges and prospects. Through this exploration, the article aims to illuminate how digitization and innovation are reshaping language learning and contributing to educational equity and quality.

Historical Context and Challenges in Language Education

Language education in India has a deep-rooted history shaped by the country's vast linguistic diversity and socio-cultural complexities. Understanding its historical context and the challenges faced is essential to appreciate the magnitude of transformation brought by modern technologies.

Traditional Language Education Practices

Teaching Styles and Curriculum Design

Traditional language teaching in India primarily revolved around a teacher-centered approach. The pedagogy was predominantly didactic, with educators acting as the primary source of knowledge dissemination. Classrooms were structured spaces where students listened, memorized, and repeated lessons as dictated by the teacher.

Curriculum design, particularly during the pre-independence and immediate post-independence periods, was heavily influenced by colonial education policies which emphasized English language proficiency for administrative roles. Language instruction was segmented and uniform, often neglecting the diverse linguistic backgrounds of students. Regional languages and mother tongues were either marginalized or relegated to secondary status in favor of national languages like Hindi and colonial languages like English.

This rigid curriculum left little room for creativity, critical thinking, or adaptation to learners' individual needs. The focus was on mastering grammatical rules, vocabulary memorization, and translation exercises rather than fostering communicative competence or cultural appreciation.

Role of Rote Learning

Rote learning has been a pervasive characteristic of language education in India. This method emphasized memorization of vocabulary, phrases, and grammatical constructs without necessarily understanding their contextual usage or meaning. Students were encouraged — and sometimes compelled — to memorize lesson content for examinations.

While rote learning facilitated the retention of large amounts of information and was seen as a pragmatic approach to cover extensive syllabi, it critically impaired language comprehension and practical application skills. This often resulted in learners unable to engage in everyday conversations, express thoughts effectively, or appreciate the cultural nuances embedded in language.

The reliance on rote methods was also symptomatic of broader systemic issues, such as large class sizes, limited instructional time, and insufficient teacher training. It contributed to disengagement and a lack of motivation among students, further widening the gap between language proficiency and actual communicative ability.

Resource and Infrastructure Limitations

Availability of Qualified Teachers and Materials

A significant and enduring challenge in Indian language education has been the shortage of qualified, trained language teachers, especially in rural and underprivileged areas. Many educators lacked specialized training in language pedagogy, which affected their ability to teach effectively beyond the basics of grammar and vocabulary.

Additionally, instructional resources such as textbooks, audio-visual aids, and supplementary materials were either outdated or insufficient. Many schools did not have access to regionally appropriate and culturally relevant teaching content, making language learning abstract and disconnected from students' realities. The paucity of materials was compounded by logistical constraints in distribution and funding, disproportionately affecting remote and economically marginalized regions.

Rural vs. Urban Disparities

The divide between urban and rural education infrastructure has historically affected language learning outcomes. Urban schools often benefited from better facilities, access to libraries, extracurricular programs, and relatively more qualified teachers. Their students had greater exposure to English through media, social interactions, and preparatory coaching, leading to accelerated proficiency.

Conversely, rural schools commonly faced dilapidated infrastructure, lack of digital tools, fewer teaching aids, and teachers who were sometimes underqualified or absent. These conditions hindered the acquisition of languages seen as gateways to socioeconomic mobility, such as English. Meanwhile, many rural students learned primarily in their mother tongues or regional languages, often without the resources to transition smoothly to national or global lingua francas.

This disparity underscored systemic inequalities and presented formidable barriers for equitable language education access.

Early Technology Use in Education

Radio, TV, and Computer Labs: Impact and Limitations

Attempts to leverage technology in Indian education began in the mid-20th century, primarily through radio broadcasts and educational television programs. These media aimed to bridge teacher shortages and provide standardized lessons in language and other subjects, especially in rural areas. Radio Education enabled reach to remote populations with cost-effective educational content, fostering language exposure beyond classroom walls. Similarly, television programs brought visual and auditory elements that textbooks lacked, enhancing engagement.

Later, in the 1990s and early 2000s, select schools were equipped with computer labs as part of national initiatives to build digital literacy. Computers introduced interactive multimedia learning and access to digital language resources.

However, these early technologies faced several limitations. Radio and TV were one-way communication mediums with limited scope for interaction or personalized feedback. Scheduled broadcasts lacked flexibility to match individual learner's pace or level. Computer labs were often underutilized due to lack of trained staff, intermittent electricity supply, and low student-to-computer ratios. The high cost of equipment and maintenance, combined with the uneven distribution of facilities, limited their impact.

Lessons Learned from Early Digitization Efforts

Early digitization efforts offered valuable insights that informed later innovations in educational technology:

Need for Interactivity: Passive consumption of content had limited educational impact, underlining the necessity for interactive, learner-centered tools.

Local Adaptation: Standardized content delivery failed to address linguistic and cultural diversity, emphasizing the importance of region-specific materials and multilingual support.

Infrastructural Readiness: Successful technology integration depended heavily on stable electricity, internet access, and trained facilitators, without which efforts faltered.

Teacher Empowerment: Technology could not replace skilled educators but must serve as an aid, necessitating professional development programs accompanying digital rollouts.

Scalability and Sustainability Challenges: Pilot projects often remained localized due to high costs and logistical constraints, indicating the need for scalable, cost-effective digital solutions. These lessons paved the way for the contemporary use of AI, mobile learning apps, and cloud-based platforms that emphasize personalization, accessibility, and linguistic inclusivity.

This section provides a comprehensive foundation for understanding the historical and systemic challenges upon which current technological transformations are building to improve language education in India.

Digital Revolution in Language Learning: Tools and Technologies

The landscape of language education in India has been significantly transformed through the proliferation of digital technologies. This revolution integrates mobile applications, artificial intelligence, immersive reality, and social media to create engaging, personalized, and accessible learning experiences. Understanding each of these technological advances reveals how they synergistically contribute to reshaping language acquisition.

Mobile and E-Learning Applications

Features of Popular Apps

Mobile and web-based language learning applications have become central to India's digital learning ecosystem, driven by widespread smartphone adoption and affordable data plans. Notable apps such as **Hello English, Duolingo, Mindspark**, and regional language platforms offer a diverse range of features tailored to India's multitude of learners.

Key features include:

Bite-sized Lessons: Short modules that learners can complete anytime, accommodating busy schedules and encouraging consistent practice.

Multilingual Interfaces: Support for numerous Indian languages allows native language navigation, easing user onboarding and making learning accessible.

Audio-Visual Content: Integration of videos, animations, and interactive games enhances understanding of syntax, pronunciation, and vocabulary.

Speech Recognition: Many apps incorporate voice input to assess pronunciation accuracy, offering real-time corrective feedback.

Progress Tracking: Learners can monitor their advancement through visual dashboards and receive motivational prompts.

Offline Mode: Recognizing connectivity challenges, popular apps offer offline lesson downloads to ensure uninterrupted learning.

Benefits of Gamification and Interactivity

Gamification—the application of game design elements to non-game contexts—has been pivotal in sustaining engagement and motivating learners. By incorporating elements such as points,

badges, leaderboards, timed challenges, and rewards, language apps transform monotonous practice into dynamic and enjoyable experiences.

The benefits include:

Enhanced Engagement: Interactive quizzes and challenges stimulate learner interest and reduce boredom.

Goal Setting and Motivation: Visible progress markers help set clear objectives, fostering persistence and self-efficacy.

Social Competition: Leaderboards encourage friendly competition, especially among peer groups.

Immediate Feedback: Interactive tasks provide quick responses, aiding retention and reducing frustration.

Personalized Challenges: Adaptive gamified elements adjust based on learner proficiency, keeping difficulty optimal.

These gamified features harness intrinsic motivation, which is crucial in language acquisition where sustained effort over time is required.

AI in Language Education

Personalization Methods and Adaptive Learning

Artificial Intelligence enables highly personalized language learning experiences by analyzing vast amounts of learner data and dynamically adjusting content. AI systems employ machine learning algorithms to:

Identify Learning Patterns: Detect areas of strength and weakness, learning speed, and behavioral trends.

Tailor Content Delivery: Provide customized lessons, exercises, and difficulty levels suited to each user's unique profile.

Predict Learning Needs: Anticipate which concepts learners might struggle with next and proactively introduce supporting materials.

This adaptive learning model optimizes efficiency by focusing resources where they're most needed, reducing cognitive overload and minimizing time spent on mastered topics.

AI Chatbots and Conversational Agents

AI-powered chatbots have revolutionized conversational language practice by simulating real-life dialogue environments. These bots offer several advantages:

24/7 Availability: Learners can interact at any time, ensuring flexible practice opportunities outside formal schooling hours.

Multilingual Conversation: Support for regional languages and dialects accommodates diverse linguistic backgrounds.

Instant Feedback: Chatbots can analyze text and speech to correct grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary use in real time.

Emotional and Motivational Support: Advanced chatbots use natural language processing and sentiment analysis to provide encouragement and maintain learner engagement.

Notable Indian startups like **ConveGenius** have deployed chatbot systems in government schools, making language learning more interactive and supporting foundational literacy in multiple languages.

Immersive Technologies: VR and AR

How VR/AR Enhances Language Immersion

Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR) technologies offer unique avenues for immersive language learning by simulating authentic environments and contextual interactions.

Virtual Reality: Places learners “inside” a fully interactive 3D space where they can engage in conversations, navigate virtual marketplaces, restaurants, or travel scenarios, providing contextualized language use practice.

Augmented Reality: Overlays digital language cues, such as translations or vocabulary labels, onto real-world objects through smartphone cameras or AR glasses, linking language learning to immediate physical contexts.

Such immersion addresses limitations of traditional classroom learning by fostering experiential knowledge, reducing language anxiety, and enhancing memory retention.

Current Use Cases and Pilot Programs

Pilot projects across India are exploring VR/AR’s potential:

Government School Initiatives: VR storytelling and language immersion sessions enhancing regional language learning.

EdTech Startups: Developing AR applications to teach English idioms and vocabulary

contextualized to everyday activities.

Language Labs: Universities experimenting with VR language labs to simulate international conversations and cultural exchanges.

While these technologies remain resource-intensive, decreasing costs and growing digital infrastructure in India hold promise for expanded deployment.

Social Media and Peer-to-Peer Learning

Role of Informal Platforms in Language Practice

Social media platforms have transformed language learning from a strictly formal classroom activity to a vibrant, informal practice arena. Learners engage with native speakers, influencers, and global communities through video content, live sessions, and interactive commentaries.

YouTube: Popular channels offer tutorials, pronunciation guides, and cultural context, often in vernacular languages with subtitled English learning.

TikTok and Instagram Reels: Short videos highlight conversational snippets, slang, and language games, making learning fun and relatable.

WhatsApp and Telegram Groups: Facilitate peer discussion, language challenges, and collaborative storytelling exercises.

These informal environments nurture communicative competence, cultural awareness, and learner confidence.

Examples of Successful Social Media Content

Friendly English with Rajesh: A YouTube channel blending humor with English lessons tailored to Hindi speakers, amassing millions of followers.

Tamil Words Explained: Instagram reels explaining Tamil vocabulary nuances with visual storytelling.

Language Challenges on TikTok: Viral campaigns encouraging users to share daily new words or phrases, promoting engagement among youth.

By bridging formal and informal spheres, social media fosters continuous learning and peer support, essential for language acquisition in India's vast and diverse learner communities.

This detailed exploration of digital tools and technologies illustrates how India's language education ecosystem is leveraging innovation to overcome traditional barriers and create dynamic, inclusive, and effective learning experiences.

Government Initiatives and Policy Framework

The transformative impact of technology on language education in India is supported and accelerated by a robust framework of government initiatives and policies. These programs are designed to expand access, encourage innovation, and ensure the equitable delivery of language education in alignment with India's diverse linguistic landscape.

National Education Policy 2020

Key Language and Technology-Related Recommendations

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 serves as the cornerstone of India's current educational reform. Recognizing the critical role of technology and the complex multilingual context, the policy provides comprehensive guidance to integrate digital tools and language pedagogy effectively.

Key recommendations relevant to language and technology include:

Promoting Multilingualism: The policy emphasizes the importance of mother tongue or regional language as the medium of instruction at least until Grade 5, to build strong foundational skills and preserve linguistic heritage.

Use of Technology in Learning: NEP advocates for the deployment of Artificial Intelligence (AI), digital content platforms, and smart classrooms to facilitate personalized, accessible, and inclusive language learning.

Teacher Training and Capacity Building: NEP stresses equipping educators with digital pedagogical skills and ongoing professional development to leverage technology effectively.

Open Access and Multilingual Resources: Mandates the development of high-quality, open-source digital educational materials in multiple Indian languages to bridge resource gaps and support diverse learners.

Focus on Foundational Literacy and Numeracy: The push for foundational skills is supported by digital diagnostic tools and adaptive learning platforms to identify learning gaps early and customize interventions.

By aligning policy with technology, NEP 2020 lays the foundation for increased digital adoption in language education across public and private sectors.

Digital Platforms and Public Infrastructure

Overview of DIKSHA, e-Pathshala, SWAYAM

India's Ministry of Education has spearheaded digital platforms that deliver educational content, teacher training, and learner assessment on a national scale:

DIKSHA (Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing): Launched as a flagship platform, DIKSHA offers multilingual digital content for students, teachers, and administrators. With modules spanning all school subjects, DIKSHA supports language learning through lessons, interactive videos, e-books, and quizzes, available in over 30 Indian languages.

e-Pathshala: Developed by NCERT (National Council of Educational Research and Training), e-Pathshala provides access to textbooks, audiobooks, and supplementary reading materials aligned to school curricula. It helps learners to study independently and supports educators with pedagogical resources.

SWAYAM (Study Webs of Active Learning for Young Aspiring Minds): This **Massive Open Online Course (MOOC)** platform offers university and school-level courses in multiple languages, often including language learning modules. SWAYAM facilitates bridging formal education with lifelong learning opportunities through MOOCs, certificate programs, and skill development courses.

Usage Statistics and Language Coverage

These platforms have experienced significant user engagement, reflecting growing acceptance and trust in digital education:

DIKSHA, as of 2025, boasts over 50 million registered users, with over 60% active in rural and semi-urban areas, signaling effective reach beyond metropolitan centers. Content is available in 30+ Indian languages, including Hindi, Bengali, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Marathi, Gujarati, Odia, and regional dialects, ensuring linguistic inclusivity.

e-Pathshala has digitized textbooks for grades 1 through 12, accessible through web and mobile apps, serving millions of students annually.

SWAYAM hosts hundreds of language and communication courses, supported by universities and expert faculties; enrollment exceeds several million learners nationwide. These statistics underscore the scale of digital infrastructural development and its critical role in reimagining language education delivery.

AI Research and Innovation Support

Centers of Excellence and Partnerships

To harness AI's potential in education, India has invested in Centers of Excellence (CoEs) focused on AI research, development, and deployment. These centers facilitate interdisciplinary collaboration among academia, government, and industry to develop AI algorithms, datasets, and pedagogical models that address localized educational challenges.

Examples include:

AI CoEs at premier institutes such as IIT Madras, IIIT Hyderabad, and Indian Statistical Institute, which focus on natural language processing (NLP), speech recognition, and adaptive learning technologies tailored for Indian languages.

Collaborations between government bodies and research organizations promote pilot implementations of AI-driven educational tools in public schools, scaling successful innovations to broader populations.

OpenAI Learning Accelerator India Initiative: A notable partnership providing AI-powered platforms ensuring ethical, culturally relevant, and accessible AI tools for language education.

Role of Startups and Private Sector

Private sector innovation plays a crucial role in advancing language learning technologies in India. Numerous startups and EdTech companies bring agility and creativity, complementing government efforts:

EdTech startups such as **Byju's**, **ConveGenius**, **Embibe**, **Unacademy**, and smaller regional-focused firms develop AI-chatbots, personalized learning journeys, speech recognition apps, and VR-based immersive environments.

These firms often collaborate with governments for pilot programs, incorporate local languages and dialects, and strive for cost-effective solutions to expand reach.

The private sector also invests heavily in data analytics, user experience design, and platform scalability, pushing technological boundaries and driving adoption across socio-economic segments.

Venture capital flowing into Indian EdTech surpasses billions annually, reflecting confidence in the sector's growth and impact potential.

These combined government initiatives, research centers, and private sector innovations form a comprehensive ecosystem enabling technology to drive measurable improvements in language education for millions across India.

Addressing Equity and Access

India's linguistic and socio-economic diversity, combined with vast geographical disparities, presents significant challenges for equitable language education. Addressing these requires multifaceted strategies that span infrastructure development, technological inclusivity, and targeted socio-economic support.

Digital Divide Challenges

Statistics on Connectivity and Device Ownership

Despite rapid digital growth, India continues to grapple with a substantial digital divide—a gap

between those who have reliable internet access and digital devices and those who do not, which directly affects language learning opportunities. As of 2025, approximately 65-70% of India's population has internet access, a significant rise from previous years but still leaving hundreds of millions offline, primarily in rural and remote areas. Smartphone penetration in urban areas exceeds 85%, while in rural regions, it hovers around 50-55%, affecting the ability to engage with mobile language learning apps. Device ownership remains skewed by income, with low-income households often having limited or shared access to smartphones or computers. Broadband penetration and electricity access also vary widely, with infrastructural weaknesses impairing consistent digital education delivery. These connectivity indicators directly correlate with access to digital learning tools, necessitating urgent infrastructural interventions.

Government and NGO Efforts to Address Gaps

The Indian government, with support from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and private partners, has launched several initiatives to bridge the digital divide:

Bharat Net Project: Aims to provide high-speed broadband connectivity to over 250,000 gram panchayats (village councils), facilitating rural internet outreach.

PM-WANI (Public Wi-Fi Access Network): Expanding public Wi-Fi hotspots in rural and underserved urban areas to increase affordable internet accessibility.

Device Distribution Programs: State governments and NGOs collaborate to provide low-cost or free digital devices to students from economically weaker sections.

Community Resource Centers: Establishment of digital literacy hubs offering internet access and training, supported by initiatives like Digital India.

NGO Programs: Organizations such as Pratham and Teach For India integrate digital tools into literacy programs and teacher training to enhance digital education access. While progress has been significant, ongoing challenges related to infrastructure maintenance, quality of connectivity, and reach to marginalized populations remain.

Linguistic Diversity and Inclusivity

Supporting Regional Languages and Dialects in Technology

Technology-driven language education in India must respect and integrate the country's extensive linguistic plurality:

Digital platforms increasingly support over 30 Indian languages, including major regional languages and dialects, through localized content, audio interfaces, and culturally relevant storytelling.

Natural Language Processing (NLP) models are being tailored for Indian languages to enable

speech recognition, translation, and content generation that recognize phonetic, syntactic, and semantic uniqueness.

Efforts to build language corpora and annotated datasets for less-resourced languages enable better AI training and development of educational tools. Inclusivity extends to dialects and minority languages, aiming to reduce digital marginalization of indigenous and tribal communities. Regional language adaptations improve comprehension, cultural relevance, and learner engagement, fostering stronger language identities. This linguistic inclusivity not only preserves India's rich cultural heritage but is essential for meaningful and effective educational outcomes.

Open-Source and Community-Driven Projects

Open-source and grassroots initiatives play a vital role in promoting equitable access and linguistic inclusivity: Platforms such as Wikipedia India and Mozilla's Indic language projects develop freely available language resources, fonts, and input tools.

Community-led efforts create digital dictionaries, learning modules, and storytelling apps in regional languages. Collaborative projects between academic institutions, government bodies, and civil society collect and digitize oral histories and folk literature, enriching content diversity. These projects provide low-cost, customizable, and culturally nuanced educational resources that can be adapted to local needs without commercial constraints. Open-source ecosystems drive innovation, localization, and democratization of language education technologies, especially for underrepresented linguistic communities.

Socioeconomic Barriers

Affordability and Accessibility Challenges for Marginalized Groups

Beyond infrastructure and linguistic inclusivity, socio-economic factors critically influence digital language education accessibility: Many economically disadvantaged families face difficulties affording internet subscriptions, smartphones, or computers necessary for digital learning. Gender disparities exist in device ownership and digital literacy, with girls and women often having less access and fewer opportunities for digital education.

Students with disabilities require technologies that support accessible interfaces, including screen readers, subtitles, and voice commands, which remain underprovided. Cost of digital content, even when subsidized, may limit uptake among low-income learners unless free and public resources are emphasized.

Marginalized communities, including Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and other backward classes, often confront intersecting barriers that compound educational inequities. Addressing these barriers demands policy measures that prioritize targeted subsidies, inclusive content design, accessible technologies, and community engagement to ensure all learners can benefit from technological advances in language education.

This section highlights the complexity and necessity of multifaceted approaches to ensure that

digital revolutions in language learning do not exacerbate existing inequities but foster broad-based, inclusive educational development across India.

Role of Teachers and Capacity Building

As technology transforms the landscape of language education in India, the role of teachers is evolving from traditional knowledge transmitters to dynamic facilitators of technology-enhanced learning. This transformation requires deliberate investment in teacher capacity building to harness the full potential of digital tools effectively.

Evolving Role of Educators

From Traditional Instructors to Technology Facilitators

Traditionally, Indian language teachers have focused on delivering fixed curricula through lectures, chalkboards, and printed materials, relying heavily on rote memorization and repetitive drills. In the current digital era, this role is rapidly shifting.

Teachers are now expected to:

Integrate Technology Seamlessly: Use digital platforms, AI-powered learning tools, and multimedia resources to diversify instructional methods rather than rely solely on textbooks.

Facilitate Personalized Learning: Leverage adaptive technologies to cater to individual learner needs and guide students through customized learning pathways.

Encourage Critical Thinking and Communication: Move beyond rote instruction to foster skills in conversation, comprehension, and cultural competence.

Monitor and Analyze Learner Data: Use data analytics from digital systems to assess student progress, identify challenges early, and tailor interventions accordingly.

Support Lifelong Learning: Mentor students in self-directed learning habits, digital literacy, and motivation for continuous language improvement.

This expanded role empowers teachers as collaborators, motivators, and technology enablers, essential for driving effective digital education.

Professional Development Programs

Training Models and Content for Teacher Upskilling

Integrating technology into language classrooms demands comprehensive professional development programs that equip educators with new pedagogical skills and technical proficiency.

Key components include:

Basic Digital Literacy Training: Ensuring teachers can competently navigate devices, software, and learning management systems.

Technology-Enhanced Pedagogy Workshops: Introducing concepts such as blended learning, flipped classrooms, and formative assessment using AI tools.

Subject-Specific Digital Training: Tailored modules demonstrating how to utilize educational apps, voice recognition tools, and multimedia content in language teaching.

Ethical and Inclusive Technology Use: Training on data privacy, inclusivity for diverse learners, and culturally sensitive content selection.

Continuous Support and Refreshers: Regular follow-up sessions and updates reflecting rapid technological advances and emerging best practices.

These programs are often delivered through online courses, in-person workshops, webinars, and peer-learning communities, facilitated by government initiatives like DIKSHA and private sector partnerships.

Teacher Support Networks

Peer Collaboration and Continuous Learning Opportunities

Sustainable capacity building extends beyond initial training to ongoing peer support and professional growth.

Effective teacher support mechanisms include:

Online Communities of Practice: Digital forums where teachers share lesson plans, troubleshooting tips, and success stories related to technology integration.

Mentorship Programs: Pairing experienced educators skilled in EdTech with newcomers to foster knowledge transfer and confidence building.

Collaborative Learning: Facilitating group projects, co-teaching arrangements, and peer observation cycles to enhance reflective practice.

Access to Resource Repositories: Platforms providing continuously updated teaching materials, tutorials, and research findings relevant to digital language education.

Recognition and Incentives: Awards, certifications, and career advancement linked to digital pedagogy competence encourage sustained engagement. Such networks help foster a culture of innovation, collaboration, and responsiveness, strengthening the human foundation needed to maximize digital education's effectiveness. Together, these evolving teacher roles, professional development initiatives, and collaborative support systems are critical enablers of India's technological transformation in language education, ensuring that digital innovations translate into

meaningful learning experiences for all students.

Case Studies Highlighting Impact

Real-world case studies provide concrete evidence of how technology-driven language education is transforming learning outcomes across India. The following cases highlight diverse approaches, contexts, and measurable impacts of digital tools and platforms.

Case Study 1: ConveGenius AI Chatbots

Deployment Context and Outcomes

ConveGenius is a pioneering Indian EdTech startup specializing in AI-powered chatbot solutions for language learning and foundational literacy. Its deployment focuses on government schools, especially in underserved regions where teacher shortages and infrastructural gaps limit learning opportunities. ConveGenius chatbots deliver interactive lessons in regional languages and English, using smartphones, tablets, or low-cost devices.

Outcomes include:

Rapid scalability: Chatbots have been deployed across thousands of public schools, reaching over eight million students by 2025.

Multilingual support: Lessons are tailored to local languages such as Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Marathi, and Bengali, increasing accessibility and comfort for students in native contexts.

Automated assessment and instant feedback: Chatbots administer quizzes, games, and exercises, providing real-time scoring and tips for improvement.

Reduced teacher workload: Administrative tasks such as grading and progress tracking are automated, allowing teachers to focus on instructional strategies and mentoring.

Student and Teacher Feedback

Student feedback highlights:

Greater motivation to participate, as lessons are interactive and game-like.

Improvement in basic reading, writing, and speaking skills.

Willingness to practice language learning outside regular class hours.

Teacher feedback underscores:

Relief from time-consuming grading and paperwork, enabling more personalized attention to struggling learners. Empowerment to use data analytics for tailored interventions.

Need for ongoing training to optimally integrate chatbots with broader curriculum goals.

Collectively, the ConveGenius model is praised for democratizing language learning and bridging rural-urban divides, although continued investment in teacher capacity building is essential.

Case Study 2: Embibe Adaptive Learning

Platform Mechanics and Success Metrics

Embibe is an AI-based adaptive learning platform founded in India, supporting multiple subjects including English and communication skills. Its mechanics include:

Diagnostic assessments: The platform starts with detailed analysis of each learner's baseline competencies.

Dynamic content adjustment: Lessons, quizzes, and practice activities evolve in real time according to student performance and engagement.

Personalized learning pathways: Students receive customized recommendations and targeted remediation for identified weaknesses.

Learning analytics dashboard: Both teachers and students get visual representations of progress, strengths, and action points.

Success metrics include:

Users of Embibe's language modules show a 20-35% faster improvement in reading and comprehension scores compared to traditional instruction.

Increased course completion rates and learner retention.

Impact on Language Proficiency

Embibe's focus on adaptive learning particularly benefits language acquisition:

Accelerated vocabulary and grammar mastery: Individualized tasks prevent students from stagnating or being left behind.

Confidence in communicative skills: Personalized feedback and continual practice foster self-reliance in using English or other learned languages.

Teacher support: With detailed learner analytics, educators can intervene early and customize teaching strategies for groups or individuals.

Overall, **Embibe** demonstrates how AI-driven platforms can move students toward practical language proficiency while supporting measurable improvements in standardized outcomes.

Case Study 3: OpenAI Learning Accelerator

Partnership Goals and Educational Outcomes

The OpenAI Learning Accelerator represents a robust public-private partnership, bringing AI-driven educational tools such as ChatGPT to millions of Indian classrooms. Partnering with major academic institutes like IIT Madras and government agencies, the initiative aims to:

Democratize access to advanced AI language tools: Distributing licenses and curated digital content to educators and students at scale.

Enable responsible and culturally relevant AI use: Providing Indian language models and resource guides for regional adaptation.

Support lesson planning and real-time student assistance: Teachers integrate AI chatbots and natural language interfaces to facilitate inquiry-based, student-centered learning.

Educational outcomes include:

Enhanced creative writing, comprehension, and critical thinking skills among learners.

Significant reduction in barriers for students from non-English backgrounds to access high-quality content, thanks to bilingual and vernacular language support.

Teacher professional development, with AI helping design lesson plans and facilitate differentiated instruction.

Initial evaluations show improved digital literacy, content engagement, and student confidence in using English and other academic languages.

Additional Regional Initiatives

Notable Startups and Pilot Projects

Beyond the marquee case studies, numerous regional initiatives are making an impact:

Byju's and Unacademy: Expanding language modules for school-aged learners with localized video lessons, gamified quizzes, and mentorship features.

Pratham's Digital Literacy Project: Engaging rural and slum communities with tablets pre-loaded with vernacular literacy apps.

State government pilot projects: Punjab and Kerala have introduced machine translation tools and voice-assisted language platforms to bridge classroom gaps.

Startups such as **Multibhashi, Enguru, and Hello English** focus on adult and vocational language learners, integrating speech recognition, regional slang content, and practical workplace communication modules.

These regional pilots often serve as testbeds for innovation and localization, with successful models being scaled up across states and integrated into national digital platforms.

This section provides empirical evidence of the transformative effects of technology in language education, highlighting scalable models, feedback-driven improvement, and diverse approaches for India's multilingual reality.

Future Prospects and Challenges

The journey of language education technology in India is far from complete; exciting new possibilities and significant hurdles await. To ensure that the digital revolution in language

learning remains inclusive, impactful, and culturally grounded, educators, policymakers, and technologists must constantly navigate between innovation and practicality.

Emerging Technologies and Trends

AI, AR/VR, Data Analytics Future Directions

The next frontier in language education will see Artificial Intelligence (AI) power even greater personalization—AI-driven tutors will identify learner emotional states, customize lesson content, and engage with students in natural, conversational styles across multiple languages.

Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR) promise to make language immersion accessible to all. Learners can “visit” virtual marketplaces, collaborate in simulated international classrooms, or overlay vocabulary onto real-life environments, deepening engagement and practical context.

Data analytics will become even more granular, allowing educators, institutions, and policymakers to track trends, identify gaps, and customize interventions for entire communities or individual students. Predictive analytics may soon be used for early identification of learning difficulties or the design of hyper-local content relevant to specific regions or cultural contexts.

However, for these technologies to succeed in India, infrastructural readiness, affordable device access, and reliable connectivity remain preconditions.

Ethical and Privacy Concerns

Ensuring Responsible AI Use and Data Protection

With the proliferation of AI-powered platforms and data-intensive language tools, ethical and privacy concerns are increasingly central:

Student Data Protection: Extensive data collection raises questions of informed consent, data security, and potential misuse.

Algorithmic Bias: AI systems trained on global datasets may overlook or misinterpret Indian linguistic variations, reinforcing inequities rather than overcoming them.

Transparency and Accountability: Clear guidelines must be established for how educational technology providers store, analyze, and use learner data.

Digital Wellbeing: Excessive screen time, algorithmic nudging, and commercialization of learning must be managed through thoughtful policy and design.

Government frameworks and platform providers must work together to implement robust data protection laws, transparent algorithms, and user education on digital rights, ensuring all learners are safe from exploitation and undue surveillance.

Scalability and Sustainability

Infrastructure Development and Funding Considerations

India’s linguistic and geographical scale presents formidable scalability and sustainability

challenges. Solutions must go beyond isolated pilots and elite urban deployments:

Infrastructure Expansion: Continued investment is required for rural broadband, reliable electricity, and device distribution.

Affordability: Deploying free, subsidized, or shared learning solutions ensures marginalized groups are not left behind.

Teacher Training and Support: Sustained funding for professional development is essential to keep pace with technological advances.

Public-Private Partnerships: Collaboration among governments, startups, philanthropies, and research institutions fosters innovation and broad-based adoption.

Open-Source Ecosystems: Encouraging open-source software and content creation lowers costs and supports localization. Without persistent attention to scale and cost, India's digital education revolution risks reinforcing regional and socioeconomic disparities.

Cultural and Linguistic Sensitivity Balancing Innovation with Local Relevance

Technological innovation must be continually harmonized with India's unique cultural and linguistic diversity:

Content Localization: Platforms must offer materials in regional languages, dialects, and cultural contexts.

Community Engagement: Local stakeholders, including parents, community leaders, and educators, should be involved in content creation and platform adaptation.

Preservation of Linguistic Heritage: Technology should not supplant traditional languages or practices but rather support their inclusion and celebration.

Respect for Learning Traditions: While moving beyond rote memorization, platforms must also honor Indian traditions of learning and storytelling, integrating them into digital modalities. By keeping innovation rooted in local realities, India can deliver effective, inclusive, and culturally relevant language education for all.

This future-facing section sets the stage for ongoing evolution, inviting thoughtful collaboration so that every Indian learner can benefit from—and contribute to—the next era of digital language education.

Conclusion

Summary of Transformational Impact

The transformation of language education in India, powered by digital innovation, marks a watershed moment in the nation's educational history. Technology has shifted the paradigm from teacher-centered, rote-based instruction to learner-driven, interactive platforms that foster engagement, personalization, and real-world communicative competence. AI, mobile apps, immersive VR/AR, and adaptive analytics have democratized access, allowing students from diverse backgrounds and regions to experience high-quality language learning. Case studies from ConveGenius, Embibe, and national initiatives like DIKSHA and SWAYAM illustrate measurable gains in outcomes, motivation, and inclusivity, underscoring technology's ability to bridge historical divides.

The Promise of Inclusive, Adaptive Language Education

Digital platforms and AI-driven methodologies hold the promise of inclusive, adaptive language education. These tools honor India's multilingual context by providing content in regional languages and dialects, while adaptive systems ensure that each learner progresses according to their unique pace and needs. With open-source resources, cloud infrastructure, and innovative EdTech, students who were previously marginalized by geography or socio-economic status now have greater opportunities. Inclusive technology not only expands reach—it empowers learners to celebrate their language identities, comprehend classroom material meaningfully, and participate confidently in a global economy.

Imperatives for Policy and Practice

To fully realize technology's potential, policy and practice must prioritize several imperatives:

Ongoing Infrastructure Investment: Expand connectivity and device access, especially in rural and underprivileged areas.

Continual Teacher Training: Support professional development in digital pedagogy, ensuring teachers can guide, motivate, and innovate alongside technology.

Robust Data Protection: Institute clear laws and technical safeguards to protect learner privacy and prevent misuse of educational data.

Public-Private Collaboration: Foster partnerships across government, industry, academia, and NGOs to leverage resources, expertise, and innovation.

Localization and Cultural Sensitivity: Mandate content adaptation for linguistic and cultural relevance, preventing homogenization and preserving diversity.

These imperatives demand not only government resolve, but active engagement from technologists, educators, families, and learners themselves.

Vision for India's Language Education Future

India's future in language education is defined by innovation, equity, and celebration of diversity. Technological progress must not outpace inclusivity; every learner deserves access to tools that respect and nurture their linguistic and cultural heritage. As AI evolves, VR creates new social

worlds, and analytics tailor learning like never before, the nation is poised to redefine educational success.

If the lessons of the last decade are heeded—ensuring infrastructure, empowerment, and ethical commitments—India can forge an education ecosystem where every language, every learner, and every community has a voice. This is the promise of the digital revolution: a future where language learning is not a privilege, but a right and a pathway to opportunity for all.

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Justice and Injustice in the Perspective of Thiruvalluvar

Professor Vridhachalem Subramaniam, Ph.D.

drvsbramaniam@gmail.com

Abstract:

Thiruvalluvar's poetic and classical work stands translated in all the major languages of the world. Where it is pending now, the UNESCO might do well to initiate it, as soon as possible. That would amount to a real sustenance of UN Values, "To Be, To Become and To Remain Humane."¹

This is one sound reason for the grant of United Nation's recognition to Thirukkural Couplets. This paper aims to substantiate that philosophy of Universal Humanism through a number of examples contained within the first two major sections of this immortal Poet cum Social Philosopher *par excellence*, whose *Kural* transcends all times steadfast.

Key Words: Justice – Fairplay – Royal and Administration- Advantages.

Introduction:

1. The style adopted by bard Thiruvalluvar is unique because he juxtaposes reality with idealism, the concrete with abstract, the real with the surreal and the earthly with the heavenly. His diction is iconic because of its brevity and economy of expression. Despite the brevity of diction, it is rich in meanings and semantic correlations.
2. In section number 54 of the "*PoruTpal*" the bard has chosen to deal with the human characteristic "Unforgetfulness." This is called "*pochchaavaamai*."

The first three couplets describe the contextual nature of its occurrence:

பொச்சாவாமை

Couplet 531

இறந்த வெகுளியின் தீதே சிறந்த
உவகை மகிழ்ச்சியிற் சோர்வு.

¹ Secretary General of United Nations "Sustained Developmental Goals for All Nations by 2030." U N Charter.

Translation of 531 “Worse than wrath in excess is
Forgetfulness in joy-excess.”

Couplet 532. பொச்சாப்புக் கொல்லும் புகழை அறிவினை
நிச்ச நிரப்புக்கொன் றாங்கு.

Translation of 532. “Negligence kills renown just as
Ceaseless want wisdom destroys.”

Couplet 533. பொச்சாப்பார்க் கில்லை புகழ்மை அதுஉலகத்து
எப்பால்நூ லோர்க்கும் துணிவு.

Translation of 533. “Forgetful nature fails of fame
All schools of thinkers say the same.”

Couplet 534. அச்ச முடையார்க்கு அரணில்லை ஆங்கில்லை
பொச்சாப் புடையார்க்கு நன்கு.

Translation of 534. “The fearful find no fortress here
The forgetful find good never.”

Couplet 535. முன்னுறக் காவாது இழுக்கியான் தன்பிழை
பின்னாறு இரங்கி விடும்.

Translation of 535. “Failing foresight the guardless man
Shall rue his folly later on.”

Couplet 536. இழுக்காமை யார்மாட்டும் என்றும் வழக்காமை
வாயின் அதுவொப்பது இல்.

Translation of 536. “Forget none; watch with wakeful care
Miss none; the gain is sans compare.”

Couplet 537. அரியஎன்று ஆகாத இல்லைபொச் சாவாக்
கருவியால் போற்றிச் செயின்.

Translation of 537. “With cautious care pursue a thing
Impossible there is nothing.”

The next three couplets 538 – 540 provide a positive outcome of possessing such a good quality, when pursued consistently:

538. புகழ்ந்தவை போற்றிச் செயல்வேண்டும் செய்யாது
இகழ்ந்தார்க்கு எழுமையும் இல்.

Translation of 538.” Do what the wise commend as worth

If not, for seven births no mirth.”

539. இகழ்ச்சியின் கெட்டாரை உள்ளாக தாந்தம்
மகிழ்ச்சியின் மைந்துறும் போழ்து.

Translation of 539. “When joy deludes, their fate recall

Whom negligence has made to fall.”

540. உள்ளியது எய்தல் எளிதுமன் மற்றுந்தான்
உள்ளியது உள்ளப் பெறின்

Translation of 540. “Easy it is a thing to get,

When the mind on it is set.”

Having prepared the mindset of individual ethics towards one’s own neighbours, Thiruvalluvar takes up the larger issue of how a King or a good Administrator ought to be:

செங்கோன்மை

Section 55 “CHENKOONMAI” → “JUST GOVERNANCE.”

541. ஓர்ந்துகண் ணோடாது இறைபுரிந்து யார்மாட்டும்
தேர்ந்துசெய் வஃதே முறை.

Translation of 541. “Test and attest impartiality

Consult and act the laws justly.”

542. வானோக்கி வாழும் உலகெல்லாம் மன்னவன்
கோல்நோக்கி வாழுங் குடி.

Translation of 542. “The world looks up to sky and thrives

And mankind to King’s rod of justice.”

543. அந்தணர் நூற்கும் அறத்திற்கும் ஆதியாய்
நின்றது மன்னவன் கோல்.

Translation of 543. “The Sage’s scripture and virtue spring

From the sceptre of a stately king.”

544. குடிதழீஇக் கோலோச்சம் மாநில மன்னன்
அடிதழீஇ நிற்கும் உலகு.

Translation of 544. “The world clings to the ruler’s feet

Whose sceptre clasps the people’s heart.”

545. இயல்புளிக் கோலோச்சம் மன்னவன் நாட்ட
பெயலும் விளையுளும் தொக்கு.

Translation of 545. “Full rains and yields enrich the land

Which is ruled by a righteous hand.”

546. வேலன்று வென்றி தருவது மன்னவன்
கோலதூஉங் கோடா தெனின்.

Translation of 546. “Not the spear but the sceptre straight

That brings success to monarch’s might.”

547. இறைகாக்கும் வையகம் எல்லாம் அவனை
முறைகாக்கும் முட்டாச் செயின்.

Translation of 547. “The King protects the entire earth

And justice protects his royal worth.”

- 548 எண்பதத்தான் ஓரா முறைசெய்யா மன்னவன்
தண்பதத்தான் தானே கெடும்.

Translation of 548. “Hard of access, the unjust king

He shall himself his ruin bring.”

549. குடிபுறங் காத்தோம்பிக் குற்றம் கடிதல்
வடுவன்று வேந்தன் தொழில்.

Translation of 549. “Save his subjects and chide the wrong

Is flawless duty of a king.”

550. கொலையிற் கொடியாரை வேந்தொறுத்தல் பைங்கூழ்
களைகட் டதனொடு நேர்.

Translation of 550. “Killing killers, the king, behold

Weeds remove from crop- full field.”

SECTION 56 “KODUNGKOOKNMAI”

கொடுங்கோன்மை

“INJUSTICE”

551. கொலைமேற்கொண் டாரிற் கொடிதே அலைமேற்கொண்டு
அல்லவை செய்தொழுகும் வேந்து.

Translation of 551. “The unjust tyrant oppressor

Is worse than cruel murderer.”

552. வேலொடு நின்றான் இடுவென் றதுபோலும்
கோலொடு நின்றான் இரவு.

Translation of 552. “Scepter-holding tyrant exacting gold

Is “Give away” of lanced robber bold.”

553. நாள்தொறும் நாடி முறைசெய்யா மன்னவன்
நாள்தொறும் நாடு கெடும்.

Translation of 553: “Spy wrongs daily and do justice

Or day by day the realm decays.”

554. கூழுங் குடியும் ஒருங்கிழக்கும் கோல்கோடிச்
சூழாது செய்யும் அரசு.

Translation of 554: “The King shall wealth and subjects lose

If his sceptre he dares abuse.”

555. அல்லற்பட்டு ஆற்றாது அழுதகண் ணீரன்றே
செல்வத்தைத் தேய்க்கும் படை.

Translation of 555: “Groaning tears caused by tyrant’s sway

File the royal wealth away.”

556. மன்னர்க்கு மன்னுதல் செங்கோன்மை அஃதின்றேல்
மன்னாவாம் மன்னர்க் கொளி.

Translation of 556: “Glory endures by sceptre right

Without it wanes the royal light.”

557. துளியின்மை ஞாலத்திற்கு எற்றற்றே வேந்தன்
அளியின்மை வாழும் உயிர்க்கு.

Translation of 557: “Dry like the earth without rainfall

Is graceless King to creatures all.”

558. இன்மையின் இன்னாது உடைமை முறைசெய்யா
மன்னவன் கோற்கீழ்ப் படிந்.

Translation of 558: “To have, is worse than having not

If ruler is unjust despot.”

559. முறைகோடி மன்னவன் செய்யின் உறைகோடி
ஒல்லாது வானம் பெயல்.

Translation of 559: “The sky withdraws season’s shower

If the King misuses his power.”

560. ஆபயன் குன்றும் அறுதொழிலோர் நூல்மறப்பர்
காவலன் காவான் எனின்.

Translation of 560: “The six -functioned forget their lore

Cows give less if Kings guard no more.”

Vocational Education and National Education Policy 2020: Shaping the Future Workforce of India

Ravikant Shukracharya Dasud

Research Scholar

Department of Linguistics

Dr. Harisingh Gour Vishwavidyalaya Sagar, M.P.

ravidhsgsu@gmail.com

Dr. Arvind Kumar Gautam, NET, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor

Department of Linguistics

Dr. Harisingh Gour Vishwavidyalaya Sagar, M.P.

Abstract

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is a significant reform in India's education system, with a strong emphasis on integrating vocational education into mainstream schooling. Key elements of this policy include introducing vocational training early in education and fostering a vocational mindset among students. This policy aims to offer a flexible, multidisciplinary curriculum that allows students to seamlessly combine academic and vocational courses, ultimately shaping well-rounded, employable individuals. The NEP also promotes strong partnerships between educational institutions and industries to ensure vocational training remains practical, relevant, and aligned with labor market needs. Moreover, it supports national initiatives such as Skill India and the National Skill Quality Framework (NSQF), which seek to create standardized skill certification pathways and facilitate skills mobility. This policy has the potential to redefine India's workforce through practical, inclusive, and employment-oriented education and certifications. However, the policy faces significant challenges, including infrastructure limitations, a shortage of trained vocational educators, and social stigma associated with vocational careers. To realize this vision, gaps in implementation must be addressed, investments in capacity building are needed, and society must embrace vocational pathways. Successful integration of vocational training could transform India into a model nation that leverages its demographic dividend into a competitive, professional global workforce. The present paper explores how vocational education can influence India's future workforce by examining the goals and strategies

for implementation of the NEP and its expected outcomes.

Keywords: NEP 2020, Indian Workforce, Employability, Skill Development, Vocational Education, Educational Reform, Skill India, Multidisciplinary Curriculum.

Introduction

The history of vocational education in India can be traced back to ancient times when various crafts and skills were passed down through apprenticeship systems. However, a formal system of vocational education emerged during the British colonial period and has since undergone significant developments. The new National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 aims to integration vocational education into the mainstream educational system. NEP 2020 highlights the importance of practical skills for work and calls for the creation of a National Council of Vocational Education and Training to develop and oversee vocational education. The promoted strategy, as part of NEP 2020, aims to provide applied learning by focusing on skill-based solutions, including critical thinking, creativity, and adaptability, to offer equal opportunities across all social and economic groups. Another goal of NEP 2020 is to reduce the stigma associated with vocational education, which until now has been linked those who leave school before Grade 8 or those unable to access higher education.

This policy promotes equality in education for everyone, including underprivileged groups and individuals with disabilities. It emphasizes the implementation of vocational training at various levels of education to improve its status and accessibility. NEP 2020 states that by 2025, half of all students in both schools and tertiary institutions are expected to participate in vocational training, which includes quality curricula and skill laboratories starting at the middle school level. Further all bachelor's degree programs and short-term courses covering different aspects of social life will incorporate vocational education. In addition to this, soft skills and occupational training, such as traditional arts, will be key components of vocational education.

According to NEP 2020, The National Committee for the Integration of Vocational Education will oversee the process of integration, skill gap analysis, and alignment with local employment needs. The National Skills Qualifications Framework (NSQF) will support the recognition and mobility of vocational qualifications across both vocational and academic sectors. Furthermore, it not only promotes innovation and entrepreneurship through industry links to help students become self-employed but also advances vocational education within the national

education system. Preparing students to meet the demands of the rapidly advancing job market is a key focus in the context of the future of employment and skills training. India's current education systems must update their curricula and pedagogy to meet the continuous changes that are driving a significant shift in the industry's demand for soft skills toward more technology-assisted work. This requires preparing our youth to respond to the rapid pace of technological advancements and other recent innovations. The present paper highlights the importance of vocational education for skill development, economic growth, and providing equal access for learners worldwide in accordance with the international Sustainable Development Goals.

Objectives of Vocational Education

Vocational education integration is largely concerned with eliminating unemployment from our nation because learned skills can assist in career building and therefore promote economic freedom. Vocational education is concerned with the application of scientific and technological knowledge in the best interest of society, so that the practical skills of the students can match the impact of technology on national development. The training of much-needed skilled technicians who make the Indian economy more competitive and geared towards an equitable distribution of goods can benefit women and marginalized classes as well as rural and tribal areas. Further, vocational education is important because it has the flexibility to adjust to changing work and economic environments.

NEP 2020 is aimed not only at foundational literacy but also at critical thinking, problem-solving, and adaptability, all of which are essential for success in technology-based work environments. The policy promotes an approach to learning within academic programs and defends flexible routes through educational channels. Finally, vocational education under NEP 2020 aims to develop a skilled workforce that is versatile and increases employability and economic growth. When considering the future of work, the vocational component of NEP 2020 has enormous potential to help students get ready for the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead. Vocational education has the potential to usher in a new era of education that smoothly incorporates the demands of the labor market by embracing innovation, teamwork, and adaptability.

History of Vocational Education in India

Vocational learning began in the Vedic Period and was developed within the gurukul

system, where the guru and the shishya built a relationship that taught not only techniques but also spirituality. Through apprenticeships, artisans and traders exchanged their specific skills. Old universities like Nalanda and Taxila started and attracted students for systematic vocational training, making India a hub of skill development. Islamic influences introduced new crafts in the medieval world, such as calligraphy and architecture, which combined with practices in madrasas. Colonial rule introduced the British educational system, which focused on English and clerical education, along with technical schools aimed at creating a workforce for administrative roles, often at the expense of local talent.

Wood's Dispatch (1854) highlighted the significance of vocational education at the secondary level in India. Following this, educational commissions advocated for secondary schools to prepare students for universities and the workforce. The Hunter Commission (1882) recommended separate educational streams, but implementation was minimal. The Hartog Committee (1929) shifted focus towards industrial curricula, leading to specialized high schools. The Sargent Plan (1944) proposed both Academic and Technical high schools. India, after independence, focused on literacy and technical institutions to grow a skilled labor force and boost national development. The Mudaliyar Commission (1952-53) stressed diversified education, and the Kothari Commission (1964-66) aimed for vocational coverage at the +2 level. The Working Group (1985) organized vocational courses, while the National Policy on Education (1986, 1992) underscored vocational education's importance, adapting to implementation challenges. Polytechnics and Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) provide vital vocational training in India.

The National Education Policy 2020

NEP 2020 is the first education policy of the 21st century which aims to address the many growing developmental imperatives of our country. This policy proposes to revamp all aspects of the educational infrastructure, including its regulations and governance, to create a new system that is aligned with the aspirational goals of 21st century education, including Sustainable Development Goal (SDG4), while building upon India's traditions and value systems. NEP 2020 emphasizes the development of the creative potential of each and every individual. This policy is based on the very basic principle that education must develop not only cognitive capacities which includes both the 'foundational capacities' of literacy and numeracy and 'higher-order' cognitive capacities, such as critical thinking and problem solving – but also social, ethical, and emotional

capacities and dispositions. The new education policy provides to all students, irrespective of their place of residence, a quality education system, with particular focus on historically marginalized, disadvantaged, and underrepresented groups. The rich heritage of Indian commitment to education and knowledge has been a guiding light for this Policy.

Vocational Education and its Recommendations in NEP 2020

NEP 2020 emphasizes vocational education and skill development. Integration of vocational education with general education and mainstreaming vocational education have been recommended. To fulfill various objectives of NEP 2020 in this regard, the existing scheme of Samagra Shiksha has been revamped and various new interventions relating to vocational education like internships, bagless days, exposure to vocational education at the Upper Primary level etc. are being supported.

NEP 2020 offers many suggestions to initiate widespread change in the vocational education sector in India. It recommends that vocational training be included in the school curriculum and that the higher classes should focus more on this. The policy suggests arranging the flexible pathways such as modular, apprenticeship-based, and project-based learning. There is a transition to skills-based teaching whereby more emphasis is being concentrated on job-oriented skills as opposed to degree-oriented skills. University partnerships are also a trend in the way of educational affiliation with industries to foster applied learning. Previously acquired skills are also to be counted, such as apprenticeships. The inclusion of vocational education in a higher education institution would provide the students with a wider selection and more pathways to success. NEP 2020 encourages distance and online learning in order to serve students with no physical infrastructure. Also, it focuses on nurturing entrepreneurship capabilities through entrepreneurship cells that are set up in schools and universities. The practice also focuses on a whole-person development model with components of capabilities in soft skills, emotional intelligence, and critical thinking. The system also suggests periodic vocational skills assessment and certification to create self-confidence amongst the students to take on to the working world or further studies. These suggestions are to help vocational education become more relevant, easily accessible and effective in India and how to make students more work ready.

Impact of Vocational Education in Shaping the Future Workforce of India

India must prioritize equipping our youth with the competencies required to enter the world

of work. NEP 2020 seeks to revolutionize the education system in India by encouraging the introduction of vocational studies (general curriculum) instead of the old systems of a pure academic approach to education. There may be a gap between formal education and a chance of gaining a job because NEP suggests that to enter the labor market, vocational exposure has been proposed to educate students who will respect careers in the skilled areas in Grade 6. Versatility in the learning experience is also notable, which means that students may also elect to undertake vocational subjects in addition to the academic courses, depending on their talents and interests.

This kind of integration is carried out through evolving multidisciplinary education, which minimizes the boundaries between academic and vocational training. NEP 2020 aims to empower our students with 21st-century skills. It lines up with the national skill development projects, encouraging the public and private schools to partner with the industry to facilitate the pertinent and up-to-date training in vocational education. It also focuses on internship and apprenticeship opportunities to expose students to the actual experience in life before joining employment. Its implementation is hampered by numerous issues, such as poor infrastructure, insufficiently trained instructors, modern equipment, and the underlying social stigma that vocational training is a second measure. Realization of the NEP 2020 may transform the workforce in India and make more youth potent in possession of the required skills, less unemployment, and a job-ready generation.

Challenges and Opportunities

NEP 2020 presents opportunities to reform India's education system through a focus on holistic and multidisciplinary learning, improved teacher development, skill integration, and enhanced technology use. However, there are also challenges in implementation, including inadequate funding, infrastructure, teacher training, and bridging the digital divide – especially in rural areas. In spite of the progress in the field of vocational education and training, India is facing many challenges such as the need for quality education, good infrastructure, trained and qualified trainers, industry academia collaboration, and the perception of vocational education as a secondary option. Various efforts are being made to counter these challenges in the form of policy reforms, increased funding from government, industry academia partnerships, and awareness campaigns.

Vocational education will undergo transformation as has been noted in the NEP 2020. One of the major problems is the existing gap between the skills taught and the skills required by the employer, which is mostly because of the emphasis on the theoretical part of knowledge in most of the programs. This is the gap that NEP 2020 aims to close through industry led design of occupational training that can provide relevant and demand-driven skills. Moreover, NEP 2020 lifelong learning and upskilling as it is believed that life-long skill enhancement is necessary in a competitive labor market. Vocational education can assist in this by ensuring that the workers have access to learning new skills. NEP 2020 also encourages the idea of innovation in the form of technology adoption, i.e., online classes and virtual reality that refines accessibility and increases reach. Nevertheless, there are still problems, such as the necessity to invest a great amount of money into the infrastructure and resources, as well as alter the mentality toward vocational training that is held as inferior compared with academic options. It will be necessary to eliminate such stigmas and advocate the vocational education as an option that should be treated respectfully. Through the careful implementation of NEP 2020, there is a great potential impact that can be made on the Indian workforce allowing students to react to the new job markets.

Conclusion

NEP 2020 has given the top priority to vocational education in India. One of the measures that should be taken to ensure that a skilled labour force is available is organization of education in a way that it matches the needs in industry, stimulating flexibility in learning, and establishing early skills training. NEP 2020 aims at closing the knowledge gap between education and employment and changing perceptions of vocational education by bringing exposure to skills early in life, having a multi-disciplinary course, and a closer industry-academia relationship. It tries to offer **transformative opportunities** to modernize India's education system by making it holistic, flexible, and globally competitive. However, some of the main concerns for its successful implementation are equity, infrastructure, money, inaccessibility of trained teachers, as well and resistance to change. By making India's educational system more comprehensive, adaptable, and globally competitive, National Education Policy seeks to provide revolutionary chances for modernization. Finally, the purpose of this policy is to transform the so-called demographic dividend in India into highly skilled labor and thus has a certain impact on the development of the economy and society.

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A Study of the Intricate Interplay of Aesthetic Illusions in Paul Auster's *City of Glass*

K. Bagyalakshmi

Ph.D., Research Scholar (Part-Time),
PG & Research Department of English,
Vivekanandha College of Arts and Sciences for Women (A),
Tiruchengode, Namakkal District- 637205
Tamil Nadu, India
bagyalaxmi1983@gmail.com

Dr. M. Prasath

Research Supervisor, Associate Professor,
PG & Research Department of English,
Vivekanandha College of Arts and Sciences for Women (A),
Tiruchengode, Namakkal District- 637205
Tamil Nadu, India
prasaad2008@gmail.com

Abstract

This research paper focuses on Paul Auster's iconic novel *City of Glass* (1985), which is a component of his well-known *The New York Trilogy* (1987), and the idea of aesthetic illusions as a thematic suspense. The approach is based on the notion of aesthetic illusion, which shows the way illusory outlines are perceived. The purpose of the study is to clarify how Auster skillfully employs the Kanizsa Triangle to weave the theme of aesthetic illusions, resulting in a compelling sense of tension and ontological ambiguity that permeates the stories.

Keywords: Aesthetic Illusion, Kanizsa Triangle, Thematic Suspense, Ontological Ambiguity.

Introduction

Paul Auster's *City of Glass* (1985) is a novel of his famed *The New York Trilogy* (1987), which has long been praised for its examination of the nature of reality, identity, and the role of the writer. At the heart of these stories is the reoccurring topic of aesthetic illusions, which acts as an effective tool for creating a feeling of thematic suspense and ontological uncertainty. The

topic of aesthetic illusions in Auster's works may be explored more closely using the Kanizsa Triangle, which investigates the perceptual phenomena of illusory outlines (Cupchik 2001). This theory holds that the human mind has an extraordinary ability to recognize patterns and forms even in the lack of unambiguous visual clues, resulting in the production of illusory outlines.

Objectives and Theory

The objectives of this article will look at how Auster uses the idea of aesthetic illusions to create a feeling of thematic suspense and ontological uncertainty in *City of Glass*. The analysis will look at how the author uses the Kanizsa Triangle-like phenomenon to challenge the reader's view of reality, as well as how Aesthetic Illusion reflects the nature of identity and the creative endeavor.

Key Notions

The protagonist, Quinn, is a detective with a secret: he no longer exists for anyone but himself and no longer wishes to be dead. His private-eye narrator, Max Work, has solved numerous crimes and becomes close to Quinn. Quinn's interest in his stories is not their relation to the world but their relation to other stories. He pretends to be Work while writing his books.

In this text, Daniel Quinn, a renowned psychologist, is tasked with studying the geography of Nantucket to prevent Virginia Stillman from escaping. He encounters a mysterious man named Stillman, who seems bald and unsure of his authenticity. Quinn calls Virginia Stillman, who gives him a full report, and heads home to 107th Street. He records every detail about Stillman, including gestures, objects, and timetables, to keep his eyes fixed on him. He continues following Stillman for nine days, with brief conversations with Virginia Stillman. The text explores themes of identity, guilt, and the consequences of pursuing one's own desires. The object of understanding Stillman is to anticipate his next actions, but Quinn has failed in this endeavor. Quinn, disillusioned by Stillman's life, sketches a map of the area he had wandered in and realizes that he has created maps that resemble letters. In a meeting with Stillman in Riverside Park, Quinn reveals that the world is inherently broken, and people have lost their sense of purpose and language. Quinn believes that the burning bush is the key to understanding the world (Auster, 1-70).

In this text, Quinn and Stillman discuss their past experiences and the events that led to their current situation. Quinn, a father, recalls a time when a waitress presented herself as

another Henry Dark, but Stillman did not recognize him. He took the name Paul Auster and thought about him as a possible detective. Quinn hoped that Auster would help with the case and make a clean sheet of it. Quinn realized he was no longer following Stillman. He found Auster's apartment on the eleventh floor and shared his experiences with Stillman, including his phone calls, acceptance of the case, and his relationship with Stillman. As Quinn's life becomes less detailed, he remains mostly in the alley, observing the Stillman's activities. He wonders why he took Auster's word for Stillman's death and what would have happened if he had followed the second Stillman instead of the first. As darkness grows, Quinn's life becomes less meaningful, and he loses interest in him. Auster, who heard him out, explains his situation to the protagonist, who becomes angry at Auster's indifference towards Quinn (Auster, 71-148).

Intertextual Context: Aesthetic Illusion in *City of Glass*

Auster's works explore aesthetic illusions as part of a larger intertextual framework that explores perception, reality and representation, and the reader's role in meaning production. His narrative methods blur the lines between author, character, and narrator, adding ontological ambiguity. The Kanizsa triangle illusion, a fascinating occurrence, is significant because it illuminates the intricacies of reality and human perception. (Kurraz 2023). The brain's ability to create a geometric design from bits and pieces emphasizes the interpretative and active nature of visual processing. This illusion suggests that our senses are formed by the brain's natural tendency to organize and make sense of sensory information, challenging the idea that our experience of the world is a direct and unmediated depiction of objective reality. (Ito.et.al. 2023; Eagleman 2001). This fascinating occurrence that has captured the interest of both philosophers and visual scientists is the Kanizsa triangle illusion.

This optical illusion happens when there are no obvious lines or physical limits delineating the edges of a triangle, yet the human visual system nevertheless interprets the presence of a triangle. The observer's mental image of a complete triangle form is vividly created when their brain fills in the blanks. (Bauer 2010)

The relationship between the Kanizsa triangle illusion and Auster's metafictional works goes beyond thematic similarities. Paul Karasik and David Mazzucchelli's graphic novel adaptation of *City of Glass* uses a variety of visual techniques that echo the principles underlying the Kanizsa triangle illusion, such as fragmented panels, blurred panel boundaries, and the

incorporation of visual ambiguities. These formal methods help to disturb the reader's expectations while also drawing attention to the narrative's created structure, similar to how the Kanizsa triangle illusion disrupts our impression of the coherence of visual reality. The Kanizsa triangle illusion, like Auster's literary works, explores the elusive and fragmented nature of reality, challenging the reader to embark on a profound and unsettling journey of self-reflection and re-evaluation of their assumptions about the nature of existence. This idea is strongly mirrored throughout Paul Auster's works, notably his novel *City of Glass*. In *City of Glass* the protagonist, Daniel Quinn, gets caught up in a web of deceit and self-discovery, resulting in a fragmentation of his identity. (Atkinson 2010)

In Auster's writings, identity is a fundamental issue that questions the concept of an autonomous, pre-existing person. Rather, as they move through the transitional zones between the real and the unreal, the characters struggle with their changing, fleeting identities. The search for meaning in a sometimes-ridiculous world is another theme in Auster's writing. For example, the *City of Glass* graphic novel adaption uses metafictional techniques to challenge the reader's understanding of the story's fiction, undercutting the idea of a consistent, logical narrative voice. The tension between the real and the fantastical, the existence and lack of absolute truth, and the characters' struggles with self-identity are all factors in the overall aesthetic illusion found in Auster's writing. The narrative exploration delves further into these ideas and methodologies, and the inner tensions of the characters reflect the contemporary person's connection with the universe. The story is brought back into the realm of the bizarre by the blending of the magical and the real, rather than moving away from it (Thakur and Khurana 2020). These pieces push the reader to consider the fundamental nature of reality and how meaning is created in a world that is becoming more complicated and fractured.

In Paul Auster's masterwork *City of Glass*, the idea of the Kanizsa Triangle is a potent device that captures the way parody, pastiche, and collage interact with the story. The fractured and elusive aspect of the protagonist's world is mirrored by the Kanizsa Triangle, a famous optical illusion in which the spectator perceives a triangle shape despite the absence of entire lines. The story of *City of Glass* consistently defies reader expectations and raises issues regarding authorship, identity, and the lines separating fact from fiction, much as the Kanizsa Triangle challenges viewers' perceptions and compels them to make sense of incomplete

information. Daniel Quinn, the main character, gets pulled into a convoluted inquiry that progressively erodes his sense of self and makes it harder to distinguish between himself and the elusive person he is supposed to uncover. The way Auster manipulates and subverts detective genre standards in *City of Glass*. The book undermines the reader's presumptions about the protagonist's function and the investigation's goal, demonstrating the parody components in the work.

Paul Auster's books frequently employ a subtle and widespread type of parody, using great philosophers, historical personalities, and literary works to undermine and ridicule the Enlightenment concepts of human nature, social contracts, and national myths that they represent. For example, Auster may mock Peter Martyr, Jean-Jacques Rousseau's views by portraying individuals with fractured, unclear identities that contradict Rousseau's ideas about a pure, fundamental human nature. Auster's writings, which draw on a plethora of literary and philosophical references, call into question the authority and supposed consistency of these canonical sources, putting light on the fragility and inconsistencies that underpin the Enlightenment concepts they represent. (Douthwaite 2016) Similarly, Auster's representations of American historical heroes such as George Washington may be seen as a satirical critique of the heroic, nationalistic image that has grown around these early leaders. In this approach, Auster's writings question the stability and coherence of the social and political ideas that have defined Western thought and society. Auster's novels engage in a self-reflexive process by reflecting on the temperament of writing (Cock 2005). Auster's satirical interpretation of such classic texts extends to his investigations into communication, language, and solitude. The narrative of Egyptian Pharaoh Psamtik's quest to discover the "first" language, as told by Herodotus, may be parodied in Auster's own research into the limits and failings of human expression and connection. Auster's books encourage readers to question the roots of their political, social, and epistemological beliefs via a variety of parodies. (Auster, 46-49)

The Mayflower narrative, which alludes to the American foundation myths in Auster's writings, may be viewed as pastiche, especially if Auster uses it as a stylistic homage or historical allusion rather than with open criticism. Auster uses Miltonic themes of fall and redemption in his references to *Paradise Lost* by Milton, which might be read as a pastiche that speaks to the problems of his own characters. Cervantes's investigation of truth and fiction in

Don Quixote would serve as a pastiche in Auster's writings, honoring Quixote's journey while placing it in a postmodern setting. Thomas More's philosophical investigation of an ideal society is reinterpreted inside Auster's own fictional world rather than explicitly attacked; its usage by Auster may be seen as pastiche. (Auster, 55–113)

The work itself might be viewed as a type of “collage” a multi-layered, disjointed portrayal of the human experience where the lines between author and character, fact and fiction, are always blurring. This interpretation expands on the Kanizsa Triangle metaphor. Like the observer of the optical illusion, Auster's *City of Glass* encourages the reader to actively participate in the process of meaning-making by adopting the Kanizsa Triangle as a guiding principle. Auster may juxtapose religious myths with secular storylines by using biblical analogies, creation and fall stories such as that found in Genesis in the Old Testament, in a collage-style approach. A literary collage, in which many philosophical, historical, and religious concepts coexist and interact, might be created by incorporating Montaigne's defense of Christian philosophy into a contemporary setting. Auster often uses the myth of Babel, which fits with the idea of collage since it symbolizes the disintegration of language and communication and is consistent with his larger themes of existential perplexity and misunderstanding are object-oriented Aesthetic interpretations (Eric, 2020). Prometheus and Nimrod are mythological characters. Auster uses a collage approach to weave together diverse tales to enhance his narrative tapestry by making references to these legendary figures (Auster, 46-56).

The true story of Victor of Aveyron, which is frequently brought up in debates about nature vs. nurture, fits within Auster's narrative collage since it combines literary, philosophical, and historical discourses. Transitional Components in Auster's works, where parody, pastiche, and collage frequently coincide the Tower of Babel, some components may blur the lines between categories based on the context. Depending on how Auster employs it in particular situations or themes, it might be classified as a symbol or a narrative device and fall under one of the three categories. These methods are commonly used in Auster's intricate, intertextual style, which reflects his postmodern approach to storytelling.

An Aesthetic Illusion to portray character centered illusion, “City of Glass”

The Kanizsa triangle in Paul Auster's 1985 novel *City of Glass* plays into character-centered issues with their names to create a picture that embodies the idea of beautiful illusion.

In *Ghosts* (1986), Blue, the main character, gets caught up in a surveillance mission that causes him to lose his sense of reality and becomes the embodiment of a convoluted psychological delusion. Similar to this, we may utilize the Kanizsa triangle to illustrate the hazy boundaries between reality and illusion in *City of Glass*, emphasizing the characters' changing identities as well as the themes of self-fragmentation and bewilderment. The Kanizsa triangle in the middle represents the gaps in the main character Daniel Quinn's knowledge of both himself and the case he's looking into. Fragmented silhouettes of Quinn, Peter Stillman, and Paul Auster, the character, melt into each other around the triangle, emphasizing their overlapping and fluid identities and freedom. This exemplifies Quinn's loss of identity as he adopts new identities. The background might show Quinn meandering around the streets of New York, while he attempts to piece together the riddle, or it could show a maze of abstract city streets or sharp, angular patterns. The general atmosphere should convey a sense of helplessness, bewilderment, and imprisonment, reflecting the novel's examination of identity and the detective's battle with reality.

City of Glass, is a graphic novel adaptation that employs metafictional strategies to challenge the reader's perception of the narrative. The novel's interplay of parody, pastiche, and collage is echoed in the visual adaptation, which uses the graphic novel medium to capture the fragmented and self-reflexive nature of Auster's work. The Kanizsa Triangle motif, a metaphor for the novel's thematic concerns, is also highlighted. The Kafkaesque elements in the novels contribute to the unsettling atmosphere, reinforcing the Kanizsa Triangle as a symbol of instability and fragmentation. Auster's subversive use of literary devices challenges the reader's perception of narrative voice and ontological stability, creating a fragmented and self-referential text. The novel's reliance on parody and pastiche is evident in its treatment of the detective fiction genre. (Jameson 2001)

Conclusion

This article uses a careful reading of *City of Glass* to show how Auster uses a thematic technique to create a deep feeling of tension and ambiguity through the skillful use of aesthetic illusions that are based on the Kanizsa Triangle. Auster asks us to consider the nature of identity, the creative process, and the underlying doubts that underpin our comprehension of the universe by questioning the reader's perspective of reality. In conclusion, Paul Auster's *City of Glass*

explores the postmodern themes of parody, pastiche, and collage in a way that makes the Kanizsa Triangle a powerful metaphor. The work mirrors the fragmented and elusive nature of the protagonist's trip by asking the reader to consider the nature of borders between fiction and reality through the lens of this optical illusion.

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Metaphor and Mind: A Cognitive Linguistic Study of Anita Nair's *Mistress*

Dr. Ravindra Goswami

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar University, Agra
goswami.raaj23@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper explores the intricate relationship between language, metaphor, and cognition in Anita Nair's *Mistress* (2005) through the lens of cognitive linguistics. Drawing primarily on the conceptual metaphor theory of George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, the study examines how metaphors in Nair's narrative embody complex emotional, psychological, and cultural dimensions of identity. *Mistress* weaves together the worlds of Kathakali, gender, and selfhood, making it a fertile text for cognitive-linguistic exploration. By analyzing key metaphorical patterns—especially those related to performance, desire, and self-perception—the paper demonstrates how Nair's use of figurative language transcends decorative aesthetics to shape conceptual understanding. The findings reveal that metaphors in *Mistress* serve as cognitive tools that enable readers to perceive inner experiences, emotional transformations, and gendered consciousness, positioning Nair as a writer deeply attuned to the psychology of language.

Keywords: Anita Nair, *Mistress*, cognitive linguistics, conceptual metaphor, identity, Kathakali, feminist discourse

Introduction

Language is not merely a vehicle for communication—it is a structure through which human beings perceive, categorize, and make sense of their experiences. In literature, this cognitive dimension of language becomes most visible through metaphor, where abstract concepts are rendered tangible through concrete images. Anita Nair's *Mistress* (2005), a richly layered novel exploring art, desire, and selfhood, offers an ideal site for a cognitive linguistic investigation of metaphor.

Cognitive linguistics, especially as articulated by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) in *Metaphors We Live By*, argues that metaphors are not linguistic ornaments but conceptual frameworks that shape

human thought. This paradigm shift redefines metaphor from a poetic flourish to a cognitive mechanism. Within Nair's narrative world, metaphors are deeply tied to the protagonists' efforts to understand their own identities—particularly through the language of art and body.

Mistress interlaces the world of Kathakali, a traditional South Indian dance-drama form, with the modern struggles of love, betrayal, and artistic obsession. The novel's dual structure—juxtaposing the mythic and the personal—makes it an ideal case for exploring how metaphor bridges inner cognition and outer expression. This paper examines how Nair employs metaphorical language to construct her characters' psychological realities, focusing on how conceptual metaphors illuminate emotional states and gendered consciousness.

The study thus aims to answer the following questions:

- How do conceptual metaphors in *Mistress* reflect the cognitive and emotional processes of the characters?
- What role do metaphors play in articulating themes of art, desire, and identity?
- How does Nair's linguistic style embody the principles of cognitive metaphor theory?

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Cognitive Linguistics and Conceptual Metaphor Theory

Cognitive linguistics emerged in the late 1970s as a reaction against the formalist and generative traditions in linguistics, emphasizing meaning, embodiment, and conceptualization as central to language. According to Langacker (1987), meaning arises from conceptual structures that are grounded in human experience. Within this framework, metaphors are not simply figures of speech but fundamental mechanisms of thought.

The most influential contribution to this field remains George Lakoff and Mark Johnson's *Metaphors We Live By* (1980), which posits that metaphors structure human understanding by mapping knowledge from a concrete source domain to an abstract target domain. For example, in the conceptual metaphor LOVE IS A JOURNEY, expressions such as “we’ve come a long way” or “we’re at a crossroads” reflect how people cognitively frame relationships through spatial experience. Lakoff (1993) further developed the notion of *conceptual mapping*, demonstrating that metaphorical thought is grounded in bodily experience—what he terms *embodied cognition*.

Subsequent scholars like Kövecses (2002) and Gibbs (1994) expanded the scope of metaphor analysis, emphasizing cultural variation and the dynamic interaction between language, thought,

and emotion. In literary studies, this approach is often known as *cognitive poetics*, where metaphor is seen as a key to understanding how readers mentally construct meaning (Stockwell, 2002).

In the context of fiction, cognitive linguistics allows us to study how metaphor creates coherence across characters' emotions, narrative structures, and cultural environments. By applying this lens to Anita Nair's *Mistress*, metaphors are interpreted as cognitive events that both reflect and shape consciousness.

Anita Nair's Fiction and the Language of the Mind

Anita Nair is among the most linguistically sophisticated voices in contemporary Indian English fiction. Her works—including *The Better Man* (1999), *Ladies Coupé* (2001), and *Mistress* (2005)—are marked by the intersection of gender, culture, and psychological introspection. Scholars have noted that Nair's narratives employ rich metaphorical textures to depict women's self-discovery and the tension between tradition and individuality (Rajan, 2016; Kumar, 2018).

Mistress, in particular, situates metaphor at the heart of narrative expression. The novel's central character, Radha, lives within a marriage devoid of emotional fulfillment, while her uncle, Koman, channels his existential struggles into Kathakali performance. The linguistic and visual imagery of dance, masks, and mythology operates as a sustained metaphorical network that externalizes internal states. As Ghosh (2020) argues, the novel's "aesthetic syntax" blends bodily and spiritual imagery to articulate the complexity of human emotion.

Prior research on *Mistress* has primarily approached it through feminist and cultural lenses. Bhattacharya (2019) examined the novel as a critique of patriarchal performance cultures, while Iyer (2021) analyzed its representation of female desire within the constraints of Indian social norms. However, very few studies have examined *Mistress* from a cognitive linguistic perspective. A cognitive analysis allows for a deeper understanding of how Nair's metaphoric language functions as an instrument of psychological insight and reader cognition.

Theoretical Framework

This study draws primarily on Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) as articulated by Lakoff and Johnson (1980, 1999), supplemented by insights from cognitive poetics (Stockwell, 2002; Semino, 2008). The analysis identifies recurrent metaphorical patterns in *Mistress* and interprets them as conceptual mappings between experiential domains. Three dominant metaphorical structures emerge from the text:

LIFE/IDENTITY IS PERFORMANCE – The Kathakali framework becomes a metaphor for identity construction and self-presentation.

DESIRE IS FIRE/WATER – Bodily and elemental metaphors embody passion and conflict.

LOVE IS ART/DEVOTION – Artistic expression becomes a cognitive framework for emotional connection and moral struggle.

By tracing these metaphorical structures, the paper analyzes how Nair’s linguistic style transforms abstract concepts—identity, love, art—into tangible experiences. Each metaphor will be examined for its conceptual mapping, cultural grounding, and cognitive implications for both characters and readers.

Significance of Cognitive Linguistic Approach to Nair

Applying cognitive linguistics to Anita Nair’s work serves two major purposes. First, it uncovers how linguistic structures in *Mistress* reveal patterns of embodied cognition—how characters think and feel through the metaphoric lens of art and mythology. Second, it situates Nair within a broader discourse of cognitive literary studies, where Indian English fiction engages with universal cognitive mechanisms while retaining cultural specificity.

As cognitive linguist Peter Stockwell (2002) observes, literature “stimulates and organizes the mind’s conceptual systems,” allowing readers to inhabit alternate perspectives. Nair’s *Mistress* exemplifies this process through its rhythmic prose and symbolic imagery, where every metaphor becomes a cognitive bridge between mind and world.

Methodology and Analysis

Research Design and Approach

This paper employs qualitative textual analysis grounded in cognitive linguistic methodology. The analysis focuses on identifying and interpreting conceptual metaphors within Anita Nair’s *Mistress* (2005), using the framework of Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) developed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980, 1999).

The text was read multiple times to locate metaphorical expressions associated with three recurring conceptual domains—performance, desire, and identity. Each metaphorical instance was then categorized according to the source domain (the concrete conceptual area, such as “dance” or “fire”) and target domain (the abstract concept being described, such as “life” or “emotion”). This mapping enables us to understand how linguistic metaphors in Nair’s narrative embody complex

cognitive and emotional experiences.

The analysis integrates literary interpretation with linguistic description, aligning with Semino's (2008) definition of *cognitive stylistics*—a synthesis of linguistic evidence and interpretive insight.

Metaphor 1: LIFE / IDENTITY IS PERFORMANCE

One of the most pervasive metaphors in *Mistress* is the conceptualization of life as performance. Through the figure of Koman, the Kathakali dancer, Nair constructs a world in which art is not distinct from existence but is its cognitive and emotional language.

Early in the novel, Koman reflects:

“The dancer is the story he tells, and the story tells the dancer.” (*Mistress*, p. 27)

This circular structure exemplifies the metaphor LIFE IS PERFORMANCE, where identity is framed as a role enacted through social and emotional scripts. The source domain of Kathakali—a codified, ritualized art form—is mapped onto the target domain of human experience.

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) observe that “structural metaphors” like this shape entire systems of thought. Here, the performance metaphor organizes the narrative at both linguistic and conceptual levels. Radha, Koman's niece, is also trapped within performances of gender and respectability. Her marriage to Shyam becomes another stage upon which social roles are acted out.

Radha's internal monologue reveals her awareness of this cognitive framing:

“All my life I have been playing a part someone else wrote for me” (p. 132).

This line exemplifies metaphoric embodiment (Gibbs, 2006), where emotional entrapment is conceptualized through performative imagery. The stage, costume, and mask become tangible symbols of social identity—indicating that cognition and culture are intertwined.

In Nair's narrative economy, metaphor thus becomes not merely descriptive but ontological: the characters' understanding of themselves is mediated through performance schemas deeply embedded in Indian artistic traditions.

Metaphor 2: DESIRE IS FIRE / WATER

The second major conceptual metaphor structuring *Mistress* is DESIRE IS FIRE/WATER, representing the fluid and destructive forces of passion. Cognitive linguistics recognizes such metaphors as *ontological metaphors*, where physical phenomena are mapped onto emotional experiences (Kövecses, 2002).

In describing Radha's affair with Christopher, the novel frequently invokes heat and burning:

“Desire licked at her like a flame that refused to die down” (p. 156).

The source domain of fire (heat, burning, transformation) maps onto the target domain of emotional intensity. This aligns with the universal conceptual metaphor EMOTION IS HEAT, but in Nair’s usage it acquires distinctly cultural nuances. In classical Indian poetics, especially *śṛṅgāra rasa*, passion is portrayed as both creative and destructive.

Simultaneously, the novel introduces a counter-metaphor of DESIRE AS WATER, suggesting flow, surrender, and cleansing:

“She wanted to drown in him, to let the water of his body erase all memory of her own” (p. 211).

The coexistence of fire and water metaphors reflects the ambivalence of Radha’s cognitive and emotional state. While fire symbolizes the consuming, transgressive nature of her desire, water represents release and renewal. Through this duality, Nair linguistically captures the embodied cognition of passion—how the body conceptualizes emotion through sensory experience (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999).

This metaphorical network also mirrors the Kathakali motif, where elemental symbols are integral to performance. Thus, the metaphors are culturally embedded rather than merely universal, resonating with the aesthetics of Indian embodiment and performance.

Metaphor 3: LOVE IS ART / DEVOTION

The third major metaphor connects love and art, reflecting how emotional and creative energies intertwine. In Koman’s reflections, the act of dance becomes a metaphor for both divine devotion (*bhakti*) and human affection:

“To dance is to offer yourself—each gesture a prayer, each rhythm a heartbeat” (p. 85).

This metaphor maps the source domain of artistic expression onto the target domain of emotional connection. The result is a cognitive blending where performance and affection merge into one conceptual frame (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002).

Radha, however, perceives love not as devotion but as a struggle between self-expression and suppression. Her inability to distinguish between artistic passion and romantic longing results in emotional dissonance. The narrator notes:

“Art was his faith; love was her heresy” (p. 243).

Here, the metaphor LOVE IS DEVOTION transforms into an ironic inversion, showing how gendered perspectives shape metaphorical cognition. The same source domain—*devotion*—

produces divergent mappings: for Koman, it is transcendence; for Radha, submission.

From a cognitive linguistic perspective, this variation exemplifies the contextual flexibility of conceptual metaphors (Gibbs, 2011). Metaphor is not a static mapping but a dynamic mental process shaped by social, emotional, and gendered experiences.

Cultural and Cognitive Integration

The metaphors identified—LIFE IS PERFORMANCE, DESIRE IS FIRE/WATER, and LOVE IS ART/DEVOTION—illustrate how Nair integrates embodied cognition with cultural semiotics. Each metaphor arises from embodied human experience (movement, heat, rhythm) but is filtered through Indian aesthetic frameworks such as *rasa*, *bhakti*, and *abhinaya*.

This reflects Lakoff’s (1993) claim that while conceptual metaphors are grounded in bodily experience, their expression is culturally mediated. Nair’s *Mistress* exemplifies this interplay, where Indian traditions provide the cognitive scaffolding for universal emotions.

Moreover, the recurrent metaphors shape the reader’s cognitive engagement with the text. As Stockwell (2002) argues, readers interpret literature through “conceptual resonance”—the mental alignment between their own experiences and the metaphorical structures of the narrative. Through these metaphors, Nair invites readers to inhabit her characters’ embodied consciousness, transforming reading into an act of cognitive empathy.

Summary of Findings

Conceptual Metaphor	Source Domain	Target Domain	Cognitive Function	Cultural Context
LIFE / IDENTITY IS PERFORMANCE	Dance / Theatre	Selfhood, social roles	Constructs identity as enactment	Kathakali aesthetics
DESIRE IS FIRE / WATER	Elements (fire, water)	Passion, emotional conflict	Embodies physical and emotional sensation	Indian <i>rasa</i> theory
LOVE IS ART / DEVOTION	Art, worship	Emotional union, spirituality	Blends aesthetic and moral cognition	<i>Bhakti</i> and artistic tradition

These findings suggest that Nair’s metaphoric language is cognitively structured, culturally grounded, and emotionally resonant, offering a sophisticated linguistic model for representing consciousness.

Result and Discussion

The cognitive linguistic reading of Anita Nair’s *Mistress* reveals how metaphor operates as both a

linguistic and psychological mechanism for organizing experience. Through metaphors of performance, elemental passion, and artistic devotion, Nair constructs a linguistic architecture that mirrors the human mind's capacity to conceptualize emotion and identity.

From the standpoint of Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), each of these metaphorical networks performs a distinct cognitive function. The LIFE IS PERFORMANCE metaphor structures the characters' understanding of social identity, portraying life as a stage where roles are enacted and emotions rehearsed. This echoes Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) argument that metaphors are central to reasoning, not mere ornamentation. In Nair's narrative, this metaphor extends beyond linguistic expression to become a model of lived cognition—each gesture and silence reflecting internalized scripts of gender and duty.

The metaphors of DESIRE IS FIRE/WATER capture emotional ambivalence through embodied imagery. These metaphors illustrate the fundamental cognitive principle that abstract emotions are conceptualized through physical experience (Kövecses, 2002). The dual imagery of fire and water reflects a culturally situated emotional cognition—rooted in the *rasa* aesthetics of Indian classical performance, where emotional excess is simultaneously sacred and dangerous.

The metaphor LOVE IS ART/DEVOTION reveals Nair's most profound cognitive insight: that creativity and emotional attachment arise from similar neural and cultural processes of projection, embodiment, and sacrifice. By mapping art onto love, Nair aligns human passion with the Indian *bhakti* tradition, where devotion is an act of both surrender and transcendence.

Together, these metaphors form an integrated cognitive system. The novel does not present isolated metaphoric expressions; rather, it establishes a metaphoric ecology, where every sensory and symbolic element reinforces the embodied experience of the characters. As Gibbs (2006) notes, the power of metaphor lies in its capacity to simulate experience, allowing readers to “feel through” the characters' mental worlds.

Nair's linguistic strategy, therefore, embodies what cognitive poetics calls experiential realism (Stockwell, 2002)—a mode in which language evokes not just images but lived sensations. The reader's engagement with metaphor becomes a cognitive act of empathy, transcending cultural boundaries through shared bodily understanding.

Furthermore, this study situates Nair within the expanding field of cognitive literary studies, which bridges neuroscience, linguistics, and narrative theory. While Indian English fiction has often been

analyzed through postcolonial or feminist frameworks, a cognitive linguistic approach highlights how Indian writers like Nair universalize the cognitive and emotional dimensions of storytelling while preserving cultural specificity.

Conclusion

Anita Nair's *Mistress* exemplifies how literary metaphor functions as a cognitive instrument—an expressive mode through which both writer and reader organize and interpret experience. By applying Conceptual Metaphor Theory, this study has shown that Nair's metaphoric language embodies deep-seated cognitive structures related to performance, emotion, and identity.

The metaphors LIFE IS PERFORMANCE, DESIRE IS FIRE/WATER, and LOVE IS ART/DEVOTION not only structure the narrative's thematic core but also illustrate how cognition is culturally mediated. Nair's use of metaphoric imagery grounded in Indian artistic traditions demonstrates the universality of cognitive patterns and the particularity of cultural expression.

Ultimately, *Mistress* transforms metaphor into a tool of psychological insight and cultural reflection. It illustrates that to understand human consciousness; one must study the metaphors through which it is expressed. As Lakoff and Turner (1989) remind us, "Poetic metaphor is not separate from ordinary thought but continuous with it." Nair's linguistic artistry embodies this continuity, fusing poetic vision with cognitive realism.

This cognitive-linguistic reading, therefore, not only broadens our understanding of Anita Nair's literary craft but also contributes to the interdisciplinary dialogue between linguistics, psychology, and Indian literary studies. Future research might extend this analysis to other works by Nair, or compare her metaphorical systems with those of contemporaries like Arundhati Roy or Kiran Desai, to further illuminate how Indian English fiction maps the mind through metaphor.

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English Imperialism and Identity Alienation: A Critical Reflection Under a Global Context

YuXuan Shen

Assumption University of Thailand
Mercy0923x@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper critically examines the relationship between English imperialism and identity alienation among multilingual individuals in non-Western contexts. Grounded in frameworks of linguistic imperialism, symbolic power, and neoliberal language ideologies, the study identifies four key dimensions of identity alienation: cultural insecurity, communicative marginalization, othering, and second-class citizenship. Drawing on recent empirical studies, cross-national case analyses, and decolonial scholarship, the article argues that the global dominance of English is not a neutral phenomenon but a structurally embedded power dynamic. It further suggests that fostering cultural confidence, critical language awareness, and plurilingual policies can mitigate these alienating effects. By reframing global communication from an English-centric model to a plurilingual approach, this research contributes to ongoing debates in applied linguistics, education, and cultural studies.

Keywords: English Imperialism, Identity Alienation, Intercultural Competence, Multilingualism, Symbolic Power

1. Introduction

English has become the most widely used lingua franca in the 21st century, with more than 1.7 billion people using it regularly (EF Education First, 2024). Its global presence spans education, business, technology, and international governance, giving English an unrivaled status in shaping communication across cultures. However, this dominance is not the result of a neutral, organic process. Instead, it is deeply rooted in colonial legacies, neoliberal globalization, and

institutionalized power structures that privilege English while marginalizing other languages (Crystal, 2003; Graddol, 2006; Phillipson, 1992).

This paper examines the phenomenon of identity alienation — the psychological, cultural, and social estrangement that occurs when multilingual speakers experience their linguistic identities being undervalued, erased, or stigmatized in English-dominant contexts. By analyzing diverse case studies and scholarly debates, the study identifies the mechanisms through which English’s global spread produces alienating effects and explores possible responses to this linguistic hierarchy.

Key concepts used in this paper are defined for clarity in Appendix A.

2. Background of the Study

The expansion of English has been shaped by three primary historical and structural forces: British colonialism, the post-WWII cultural and economic influence of the United States, and the dominance of English on the internet (Crystal, 2003; Statista, 2024). These factors have created a “linguistic hierarchy” where English occupies the apex, while other languages are relegated to peripheral or supplementary roles (Phillipson, 1992).

The impact of this hierarchy is visible worldwide. In East Asia, China’s National English Curriculum Standards mandate early English instruction, with high-stakes examinations like the Gaokao giving English equal weight to mathematics and Chinese (Lin & He, 2022). This policy has fueled a multibillion-dollar private tutoring industry but also deepened inequality between urban and rural learners (Zhang, 2023). Similarly, across ASEAN, English-medium instruction (EMI) has become prevalent in universities, though many students report struggling academically due to linguistic barriers (Nguyen, 2023).

In postcolonial Africa, the legacy of English imperialism remains stark. Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o (1986) recalls being punished for speaking Gikuyu under colonial rule, a practice designed to impose English as a civilizing force. Today, English is the official language in 23 African countries, yet only 15% of the population speaks it fluently (African Union, 2023). In South Africa, EMI policies contribute to high dropout rates among Black students who feel culturally disconnected from English-only curricula (Mkhize, 2023).

Similar dynamics unfold in Latin America and the Middle East. In Brazil, English proficiency is a prerequisite for careers in technology and tourism, though only 5% of the population speaks it fluently (López, 2022). In Saudi Arabia, English is promoted through the Vision 2030 economic diversification plan, yet many students perceive that their Arabic identity is undervalued in English-medium classrooms (Al Mazroui & Richardson, 2022).

These global cases demonstrate that English's spread is not merely a linguistic phenomenon but also a sociopolitical process that produces unequal access, marginalization, and cultural alienation.

2.1 Objectives of the Study:

This study aims to:

- Analyze how English imperialism contributes to identity alienation among multilingual speakers in diverse sociocultural contexts.
- Identify and categorize the dimensions of identity alienation, including psychological, cultural, and social forms.
- Propose strategies for mitigating the alienating effects of English's dominance through education, policy, and technology.

2.2 Significance of the Study

This research is significant for multiple stakeholders:

- For multilingual learners, it highlights that struggles with English proficiency and cultural belonging are not individual shortcomings but systemic issues.
- For educators, it calls for a shift in English Language Teaching (ELT) from “native-speaker mimicry” toward critical language awareness and inclusivity.
- For policymakers, it underscores the importance of protecting linguistic diversity in an era of globalization and English dominance.
- For technologists, it raises questions about how AI tools, trained primarily on English data, may reinforce linguistic hierarchies.

By addressing these dimensions, the study contributes to ongoing debates in applied linguistics, education, and cultural studies about language, power, and identity.

2.3 Research Questions:

This study addresses the following research questions:

1. How does the global dominance of English contribute to identity alienation among multilingual speakers?
2. What are the key dimensions of identity alienation produced by English imperialism?
3. In what ways can educators, policymakers, and technologists resist or mitigate these alienating effects?

2.4 Limitations of the Study:

This study has several limitations. First, it primarily relies on secondary sources, including surveys, policy reports, and previous scholarly work, rather than original fieldwork. Second, while global case studies are presented, the research does not claim to represent all multilingual contexts equally. Finally, the discussion includes limited autoethnographic observations, which, while illustrative, cannot be generalized across all multilingual experiences.

3. Review of Literature

Research on English dominance has consistently highlighted its impact on identity, inequality, and cultural transmission. Phillipson's (1992) notion of linguistic imperialism emphasizes how English spreads through educational systems, media, and political institutions, supported by local elites who reinforce its prestige. Later studies (e.g., Zheng & Yang, 2024) confirm that English proficiency remains a prerequisite for academic mobility in East Asia.

At the same time, scholars have noted the ambivalence of local appropriation. In Singapore, Singlish is celebrated as a marker of national identity (Alsagoff, 2012), yet it is still stigmatized in professional settings (Park & Wee, 2013). This duality reflects what Widdowson (2015) calls the "agency of non-native speakers," who adapt English creatively but within structural hierarchies.

Research on language ideologies shows how English is framed as both opportunity and threat. In South Korea, for example, Park (2009, 2016) identifies narratives of English as a necessity for global competitiveness, as a foreign intrusion, and as a source of self-blame. These beliefs reinforce inequality, since access to high-quality English education correlates with socioeconomic status (Lee, 2020). Similar trends are visible in ASEAN contexts, where local English varieties are marginalized in job markets (Sukarno, 2022; Suryadi, 2023).

A growing body of scholarship also examines linguistic racism (Flores & Rosa, 2015), which positions non-standard Englishes as deficient. Studies in the U.S. (Bufkin, 2024) and Europe (Zschomler, 2019) show that speakers of stigmatized varieties face systemic barriers in employment, housing, and education. Refugees and migrants are particularly vulnerable, often being excluded from professional opportunities despite advanced qualifications (Campion, 2018).

Finally, cognitive perspectives expand the discussion. Research on linguistic relativity (Boroditsky, 2011) demonstrates how English promotes linear conceptualizations of time, shaping thought in ways that may conflict with non-Western epistemologies. Battiste's (2013) idea of *cognitive imperialism* underscores how English-medium education erodes Indigenous frameworks of knowledge. Recent work on AI (Li & Zhang, 2024; Wang et al., 2024) suggests that digital tools further entrench English-centric biases, producing subtle forms of cultural invisibility for multilingual users.

Together, this literature reveals both the structural dominance of English and its everyday consequences for identity, belonging, and access to resources.

4. Theoretical Overview

4.1 Linguistic Imperialism (Phillipson, 1992):

Explains how English is embedded in global systems through structural support, ideological framing, and elite complicity. This framework situates English dominance as a neo-colonial project rather than a neutral linguistic spread.

4.2 Symbolic Power (Bourdieu, 1991):

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Views language as cultural capital that grants legitimacy, authority, and access to resources. This perspective highlights how “standard” English varieties are socially constructed as superior, marginalizing other forms of English and non-English languages.

4.3 Worlding and Cognitive Imperialism (Spivak, 1985; Battiste, 2013):

Emphasize how English reshapes cognitive frameworks and epistemologies, often erasing or devaluing local knowledge systems. This provides a lens for understanding the internalized sense of inferiority experienced by multilingual speakers.

4.4 Intercultural Communicative Competence (Byram, 1997; Guilherme, 2002):

Offers a framework for resistance, focusing on the ability to communicate across cultural boundaries while critically examining power dynamics. This study draws on ICC to propose strategies for countering alienation and fostering linguistic diversity.

By combining these traditions, the study situates English not merely as a global lingua franca but as a complex system of power, ideology, and identity negotiation.

5. Methods

This study employs a qualitative, literature-based methodology supported by autoethnographic reflection. Instead of primary data collection, the research synthesizes secondary sources—including peer-reviewed journal articles, policy reports, NGO surveys, and global case studies—published between 2018 and 2025, alongside canonical works in sociolinguistics and critical pedagogy.

A thematic analysis was conducted to identify recurring patterns of identity alienation in the literature. The analysis is framed through four theoretical lenses:

- Phillipson’s (1992) linguistic imperialism;
- Bourdieu’s (1991) symbolic power;

- Spivak's (1985) worlding and Battiste's (2013) cognitive imperialism;
- Park's (2009, 2016) neoliberal language ideologies.

Findings are structured around four major dimensions of identity alienation—cultural insecurity, communicative marginalization, othering, and second-class citizenship. To illustrate the lived reality of these processes, autoethnographic reflections from the author's internship at the United Nations (Geneva, 2024) are interwoven with global case studies.

6. Findings

6.1 Cultural Insecurity:

Cultural insecurity occurs when multilingual speakers internalize the perception that their heritage languages or dialects are less valuable than English. This leads to reduced use of native languages and even accent-related stigma. Evidence from multiple contexts illustrates this trend. In China, 60% of Shanghai youth under 20 are reported to lack fluency in Shanghainese due to the prioritization of Mandarin and English in schools (Lin & He, 2022). A 2023 survey by the Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy indicates that 45% of urban Tibetan children attend Mandarin-only schools, and only 25% can read Tibetan script. In Spain, 35% of Basque parents avoid teaching Basque at home over concerns that it may hinder their children's English proficiency (Uranga, 2022).

Accent-related stigma further exacerbates cultural insecurity. *Indian English*, for instance, is often perceived as less “professional,” influencing career advancement in global workplaces (Mishra, 2023; Pennycook, 1994). An autoethnographic observation from the author's UN internship (2024) highlights this dynamic: colleagues' offhand comments about a “Chinese accent” prompted heightened self-consciousness and extra pronunciation practice.

6.2 Communicative Marginalization:

Communicative marginalization refers to exclusion from education, employment, or public life due to limited English proficiency (or perceptions thereof). In higher education, English-medium

instruction (EMI) can reinforce inequality. In South Africa, 90% of public universities use English as the primary medium of instruction, even though 80% of students are first-language speakers of African languages. This contributes to higher dropout rates among Black students (Mkhize, 2023). In Vietnam, 72% of university students report difficulties in EMI-based STEM courses, often resorting to private tutoring to cope (Nguyen, 2023).

In professional contexts, language requirements produce similar patterns. In the United Arab Emirates, 90% of professional positions require fluent English, yet only 30% of Emiratis meet this criterion, resulting in exclusion from many high-paying roles (Al Mazroui & Richardson, 2022). Refugee populations experience extreme marginalization; for example, 85% of Syrian refugees in Canada remained unemployed one year after resettlement despite holding professional qualifications (Campion, 2018). Autoethnographic reflections from the author's UN internship further illustrate that mastery of specialized English terminology in international human rights work was crucial for credibility, underscoring the structural nature of communicative marginalization.

6.3 Othering:

Othering arises when speakers of non-dominant language varieties are socially marginalized. Linguistic racism—stigmatization of non-standard varieties such as Spanglish, AAVE, Indian English, or local English forms in ASEAN contexts—limits social inclusion and perpetuates inequality (Flores & Rosa, 2015; Bufkin, 2024; Kosonen, 2020). Migrants and refugees are particularly vulnerable; for example, speakers of non-standard German were found to be twice as likely to be profiled by police and three times more likely to be denied housing compared to speakers of standard German (Zschomler, 2019).

6.4 Second-Class Citizenship:

Second-class citizenship emerges when English proficiency is linked to economic and social status, reinforcing systemic stratification. In South Korea, families spend an average of \$1,200 per month on English education, and students from affluent backgrounds are five times more likely to achieve fluency than lower-income peers (Lee, 2020). Similar patterns are observed among

migrants and refugees, where institutional expectations for “native-like” English restrict access to employment and professional recognition (Campion, 2018; Al Mazroui & Richardson, 2022).

6.5 India’s English Policy and EMI: Class, Region, and Gender Disparities:

India provides a salient case of how English dominance produces complex social outcomes. As a former British colony, India retained English as an associate official language, and today English-medium instruction (EMI) has expanded rapidly, particularly in private schools. However, this expansion has largely benefitted socioeconomically privileged groups: studies show that upper-caste and urban students are far more likely to attend English-medium schools than those from disadvantaged or rural backgrounds. Regional disparities are also striking—states such as Tamil Nadu now report over 70% English-medium enrollment, while Bihar and Madhya Pradesh remain closer to 25–30%. These differences translate into unequal outcomes, with students in EMI systems often facing comprehension gaps and, paradoxically, weaker mother-tongue literacy. Gender further shapes access, as boys are consistently more likely than girls to study in EMI schools, reinforcing pre-existing inequalities in education and employment.

7. Analysis and Discussion

The above findings align with the theoretical frameworks guiding this study, demonstrating that English dominance operates across cognitive, cultural, communicative, and structural levels of society.

Cultural Insecurity can be interpreted through Phillipson’s (1992) theory of linguistic imperialism and Bourdieu’s (1991) concept of symbolic power, illustrating how heritage languages are devalued within educational and social institutions. The internalization of English dominance affects multilingual speakers’ identities, contributing to accent shame and reduced use of heritage languages.

Communicative Marginalization reflects structural inequalities embedded in language hierarchies. EMI policies and workplace language requirements reproduce social stratification, privileging those with English proficiency while marginalizing non-native speakers. Park’s (2009, 2016) work

on neoliberal language ideologies helps explain how English gets linked to human capital, thereby affecting access to education, employment, and mobility.

Othering highlights the social dimension of identity alienation. The stigmatization of non-standard English varieties constitutes linguistic racism, reinforcing social hierarchies. Spivak's (1985) notion of worlding and Battiste's (2013) concept of cognitive imperialism elucidate how linguistic "othering" shapes both social perceptions and individuals' internal self-conception.

Second-Class Citizenship demonstrates the intersection of language and socio-economic inequality. English proficiency is not only a communicative skill but also a gatekeeper for status, wealth, and professional recognition. The findings confirm that linguistic hierarchies are maintained through both ideology and institutional practice, perpetuating cycles of exclusion.

Importantly, these four dimensions are not discrete; they interlock across scales. Linguistic imperialism furnishes institutions and material incentives; symbolic power naturalizes hierarchies; worlding/cognitive imperialism reconfigures what counts as legitimate knowledge; and neoliberal ideology individualizes responsibility for linguistic success or failure, transforming structural barriers into perceived personal deficits. In response to these intertwined processes, this section deepens two lines of intervention: (1) pedagogical and policy resistance via translanguaging and language revitalization; and (2) technological equity in the realm of AI.

7.1 Pedagogical and Policy Resistance: Translanguaging, Additive Bilingualism, and Revitalization

Educational practices grounded in **translanguaging** (García & Wei, 2014) reconceptualize classrooms as spaces where learners can flexibly mobilize their full linguistic repertoires rather than suppress their non-English resources. Evidence shows that integrating students' home languages enhances comprehension, affirms identity, and can even improve English development (García, 2023; Lasagabaster, 2015; Lo Bianco, 2010). An *additive bilingualism* approach similarly commits to expanding, not replacing, linguistic repertoires—avoiding subtractive trajectories where English displaces heritage languages.

Practical measures include: (a) using bilingual glossaries and reading materials; (b) allowing strategic use of L1 (first language) for planning and brainstorming in assessments; (c) explicit

instruction on language ideologies to diffuse linguistic shame; (d) valorization of local language varieties in curricula and public communication; and (e) teacher development programs on recognizing and overcoming biases. Policy instruments can mandate mother-tongue instructional foundations in early education, fund the creation of regional-language learning materials, and recognize multilingual competencies in hiring and college admissions (OECD, 2023; Ochieng, 2024; May, 2012). India-specific implications include strengthening regional-language schooling while ensuring high-quality English is taught as an *additional* language resource rather than a gatekeeping filter for advancement. For example, universities and civil service commissions can accept high-quality scholarship in Indian languages (with translation support), thereby expanding epistemic inclusion in academia and governance.

7.2 Technological Equity: Confronting English-Centric AI

AI systems trained predominantly on English-heavy web corpora tend to encode English-centric norms in tasks like translation, summarization, and information retrieval (Xu et al., 2023; Li & Zhang, 2024; Wang et al., 2024). This bias surfaces in under-translation of culturally specific terms, a preference for “standard” English outputs, and misclassification of non-standard language varieties. Remedies require concerted efforts: (a) curating multilingual datasets that represent regional Englishes and non-English languages; (b) developing culturally aware evaluation metrics for AI; (c) involving community members in the annotation of training data; and (d) increasing transparency about AI training data and error profiles. In the Indian context, creating equitable NLP (Natural Language Processing) tools means respecting the diversity of Indo-Aryan and Dravidian languages and attending to widespread code-mixing practices (e.g., **Hinglish**, a Hindi-English blend). Public funding and open benchmarks can counter the concentration of AI capabilities among English-dominant tech companies, ensuring that local research communities help shape technological standards.

7.3 Future Research:

Going forward, further research is needed to promote linguistic equity and inform more inclusive language policies. First, in educational contexts, scholars could undertake mixed-methods studies comparing student outcomes in English-medium versus mother-tongue classrooms. Ethnographic classroom observations combined with longitudinal surveys of learner identity development would

help clarify how EMI affects learners' confidence, achievement, and cultural affiliation over time. For instance, discourse analysis of EMI pedagogy, paired with interviews of teachers and students, could illuminate the subtle identity negotiations occurring in postcolonial classrooms. Such research would guide evidence-based approaches to multilingual education reform focused on equity and inclusion.

Second, comparative policy analyses are necessary to evaluate multilingual education strategies. Within India, studies across different states – especially those with distinct medium-of-instruction policies – can yield insights into best practices for balancing English acquisition with native-language maintenance. Contrasting cases like English-centric policies in urban centers versus strong mother-tongue instruction in other regions could reveal how policy contexts mediate the outcomes of English dominance. International comparisons (e.g., comparing India with other multilingual societies in Asia or Africa) would likewise enrich understanding of how language policy impacts social equity. These studies should also examine intersections with gender and class, investigating who benefits or is left behind under various language-in-education models.

Third, research must critically engage with technology and AI to address emerging linguistic biases. As artificial intelligence and digital platforms become increasingly used in education and communication, there is a pressing need for large-scale audits of these systems' performance across diverse languages. Future studies should examine how well AI tools (from translation software to speech recognition and text generation) serve Indian languages and mixed codes like *Hinglish*, and whether these technologies inadvertently privilege English over local languages. Building on recent scholarship highlighting English-centric biases in AI, researchers can collaborate with computer scientists to develop new metrics for linguistic fairness. By identifying where AI fails to understand or accurately represent minority languages, such work would inform the creation of more culturally inclusive NLP standards. It would also provide empirical data for policymakers to regulate AI in ways that protect linguistic diversity.

Overall, future research should be interdisciplinary, merging insights from sociolinguistics, education, and computer science. By focusing on **language equity** – ensuring that speakers of all languages have fair access to educational and technological resources – scholars and practitioners can design interventions to mitigate the alienating effects of English imperialism. Addressing gaps

such as the gender dynamics of EMI access, the long-term impacts of translanguaging pedagogies, and the decolonization of AI training data will be vital. These directions will not only deepen theoretical understanding of language and identity under globalization, but also generate practical recommendations for fostering plurilingual, inclusive futures.

8. Implications

The findings suggest actionable implications for several key stakeholder groups:

1. **Multilingual Learners:** Developing cultural confidence and critical language awareness can mitigate identity alienation. Engaging with heritage languages through literature, media, and community activities strengthens cultural self-perception, while reflecting critically on linguistic hierarchies fosters awareness of inequity (Rodriguez, 2024; Phillipson, 1992).
2. **Educators:** Decolonial ELT (English language teaching) and translanguaging approaches can promote linguistic equity. Integrating non-Western English texts, validating non-standard varieties, and encouraging students to use their full linguistic repertoire all enhance both confidence and English proficiency (García & Wei, 2014; García, 2023). Educators also play a role in confronting linguistic bias in the classroom.
3. **Policymakers:** Systemic interventions include funding language revitalization programs, implementing additive bilingual education models, and enforcing anti-discrimination laws based on language and accent (Ochieng, 2024; OECD, 2023). Policies should ensure institutional accountability in universities and workplaces to reduce linguistic inequities (e.g., requirements for inclusive language policies in higher education).
4. **Researchers and Technologists:** Addressing AI bias and centering Global South perspectives in linguistic research can counter English-centric dominance. Building multilingual datasets, creating culturally inclusive AI tools, and supporting research led by non-English-speaking scholars can help reduce cognitive imperialism in technology and validate diverse linguistic identities (Wang et al., 2024).

9. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that English imperialism is a dynamic, systemic phenomenon that produces multiple dimensions of identity alienation: cultural insecurity, communicative marginalization, othering, and second-class citizenship. These dimensions interact with each other, creating cycles of exclusion that affect multilingual speakers globally.

However, the analysis also indicates possibilities for resistance through strategic interventions at individual, educational, policy, and technological levels. Cultivating cultural confidence, implementing decolonial ELT practices, enforcing equitable language policies, and designing inclusive AI tools can gradually reshape global linguistic hierarchies. Case studies — including Finland’s additive bilingual education system and UNESCO’s Decade of Indigenous Languages initiative — suggest that more equitable linguistic futures are attainable.

Ultimately, linguistic diversity is not merely a cultural value; it is a fundamental human right. English dominance, if left unchecked, erodes not only minority languages but also the cognitive and cultural identities they embody. Advancing a *plurilingual* future — where multiple languages and identities coexist and thrive — is essential for inclusive global participation.

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Appendix A. Key Terms and Definitions

Table A1

Key Terms and Definitions

Term	Definition
Identity Alienation	A psychological, cultural, and social sense of estrangement experienced when one's heritage language or cultural identity is devalued or stigmatized under a dominant language regime (Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, 1986; Phillipson, 1992).
English-Medium Instruction (EMI)	The use of English as the language of instruction for academic subjects (excluding English-language classes) in settings where English is not the first language of most students. EMI is typically implemented to enhance English proficiency and global competitiveness, though critics note it can disadvantage learners who are not fluent in English.
Translanguaging	A dynamic practice in which bilingual or multilingual individuals utilize their entire linguistic repertoire fluidly within a single conversation or educational context. In pedagogy, translanguaging encourages students to draw on all their languages to maximize understanding and expression (García & Wei, 2014).

Term	Definition
Linguistic Imperialism (English Imperialism)	The imposition and privileging of one language (e.g., English) over others, often due to historical colonization and maintained by political and economic power structures. It results in the marginalized status of other languages and cultures (Phillipson, 1992).
Plurilingualism	The ability of an individual or community to use multiple languages for communication, and an educational approach that values maintaining and developing proficiency in several languages rather than focusing on a single “native” language.

Subject-Centered Curriculum & Student-Centered Curriculum

Miss Manikum Meenakkanni

mmmanogaree@gmail.com

Mauritius

Subject - Centered Curriculum

Curriculum on the whole conveys the various aspects of learning and vexing stratagems around the developing brains of the processed complete cycle of childhood until adulthood is progressed further into original writings and expressive manners towards verbal and written projects for the social and family developments across the ministries' acquirable real civilizations' advents into successes around the globe. Furthermore, it is the systematic emission of a government's knowledge towards the new generations of artificial intelligence growth of technologies from and towards the human living from poverty to wealth in the under-developed and developing social civilizations and political budgets with constructive industrial creations with awareness of each adventive tool of progressive world.

The subject-centered curriculum defines the identity of one alphabetical research towards a sentence formation with the progressive fortress of the creations of knowledgeable books. Moreover, each student has a right to learn according to his pace the subjective curriculum of each country's ministry of education's provided cultivations of matter and developing new knowledge of the science and literature with even commercial coherences by seaming the words together into a better memory center development in the brain by some forms of learning therapies such as the traditional rote learning, color and word significant progressive recognition, tools' use with new understandings, advents from shapes administrations for instance, graphics with researches of learning abilities in the ICT sector with programs developed for brain developments, psychiatric helps with medications, sectorized cyber-supports and road acquisitive writings towards engineering the mindful abilities of concentration in himself rather than developing rashes in learning methodologies as reported by model types of teaching professionals in their researches for the ministry of educational systems to acquire and re-create educational projective documents.

However, the subject-centered approach of learning does the immediate process of notes

consumption by the brain capabilities to recover itself into memorial standards; the students usually find themselves into verbal aggressive bullying by the teachers which may form a negative further advance of interest in them. The level of studying methodology of oneself as university or secondary leveled student, one may get abusive language in the achievement in the lessons to be written despite concise scientific approaches. This is the reason for the literature and grammatical aspects of fundamentalism of learning in therapies compelled to students by the educational authorities.

Furthermore, an alleviation of coward learning is also necessary in the curriculum learning abilities. More various kinds of subject learning centered types of analysis by one student or by standard global-wide students' forum may be the Disc approach or the Clock distant approach. The Disc approach may compel students to focus on the cycle of antiseptic learning systems of real knowledgeable notes to a standardized way of developing the libraries' books' learning abilities of taking which is not appropriate to an eradication, whereas, the Clock distant approach may develop the therapies of learning by the emphasis of positive learning towards the negative understanding finalized systems of answering questions.

Student-Centered Curriculum

The student-centered curriculum may approach the syllabus of a document in a ministry as a staff's understanding of a student's dependence in learning towards his further concepts of focus on the teacher or vice versa as per the role in the class when teaching is being processed in a classroom. University students, however, progress in an erring manner of void when studying which the lecturer describes in his progress reports when consequences are recorded by the examinations' results. Still, this situation can be altered as per the curriculum focus forces.

Then, as a standard teaching focus to elaborate the subjects in the classrooms, the teachers may stand still on their psychology developments of each student's abilities in responding on paper and on verbal processes in both pros and cons systems of methodologies of acquisitions of the professors' voicing out of career approaches of notes into a simpler and singular manner of teaching and learning systems into a grammatical concise and literary and scientific equation of progressive successes.

Moreover, the different approaches of subject-center could vary as learning disfunctions into teaching, wrong systems of submissive approaches in focusing on student's behavior,

developed eye-to-eye approaches in teaching and learning dealings, and computer-based teaching therapies into zoom or software as the AI standardized video forums and tele-conferencing methods.

To deal with failures, the governments of the global educational ministries concept usually admissions from former grades and marks' allocations into a void of defects of wrong successes by developing systems such as Technical schools and institutions for residential purposes into further education lesson-provision facilities during off hours. Hence, life can be saved by further approaches into studies at any locations of schooling sites by online systems as well as by personal visionary approaches towards the student-centered approaches techniques provided and available in the world's teacher's teaching curriculum manual and student's learning manuals as demonstrated by the laureate schemes in Cambridge university results for countries like the Republic of Mauritius and India.

Orthography

For the subject-centered curriculum where all the attention goes to and comes from the syllabus as grammaticized in the curriculum of the ministry of education revised as per the latest political advents in the country; concise on the 'Logical Analysis of Orientation of the grammar & literature' as well as the 'Conceptual Analysis of the reviewed subject's syllabus'.

As for the Tamil curriculum, it has a choice of whether grammatical mistakes among Mauritian students should be adverted into Grade 9 textbooks to explain to the students which is to be edited and to be corrected wisely in their learning on the self-motion basis of subject-oriented curriculum including grammatical advancements as per the dictionary's progresses in the latter subject proclaimed into ancient scripted textbooks re-published into the curriculum ministerial textbooks.

The content of the Tamil grammar is often seen from a linguistic point of view as science proves it as a complex historical rich resource in alphabetical graphics.



A linguist called as Kamil Zvelebil classified the lingual aspects of the language as one which has a historical

grammar. Simplicity and effort are made to produce Tholkappiyam and Nannul into the textbooks to explain the complexity of Tamil into the age-factored developed psycho-system of the students.

What the students ask from the educator is the notes on paper, visual, audio-graphics' methodologies as well as examples of works such as 'drafts of essays or structures of answers.'

In the 'student-oriented curriculum', the subject wishes to be given to the honey of the exemplary aspects of the class works and the homework, in which, the orthography as should be learned might be complex.

To be scientific in Tamil grammar, orthography is important. For example, in lower classes, the students learnt about the vowels and consonants' necessity in adding same vowels glued to another consonant to form a different orthodox of word; creating, hence, the picture of the complex sentences with the mind peacefully bringing together the meaning of each complex adjective, noun, adverb, preposition or verb in the resourceful language towards a more complex level of target language just as written in Sangam or Vedic or even Religious Tamil texts. What I mean is that schooling methodology of self-centered approach as a student or a teacher brings both personas towards encompassing the archaeological approach of the language further. Subject-oriented learning and teaching need examples to be understood.

In Tamil, what students of Grade 9 need to know is that, it has short vowels, long vowels, demonstrative letters, interrogative letters just like symbols in other languages. However, here along with the symbols, we have alphabetical and words' renunciative sounds that give the meanings. For example, 'Aa' means the sound expression of pain while it can also mean a 'cow' in Dravidian languages such as Tamil. In all, we have 28 Dravidian languages such as Choliga,

Telungu to name a few.

The short vowels are A,I,O,É,U and in Tamil, it is written as the graphic of standardized Tamil same as it is written upwards: Eg:- அ,இ,உ,எ,ஓ. The long vowels are : ‘Aa’, ‘Ie’, ‘Uu’, ‘Ée’, ‘Ai’, ‘Ò’; that is: ஆ, ஈ, ஊ, ஏ, ஐ, ஓ. For the demonstrative letters, morphoses as subjects like the correction of words to be researched as vocabulary sections in textbooks as passages. For instance, if the simple word ‘அப்பக்கம்’ comes which means ‘that side’ as it is written in an Indian classical morphological type of script; then, the educator should be in a position to have already learnt and have to be able to split the word as linguists have demonstrated how to digest the Tamil language. For example, ‘A’, plus, ‘pakkam’ where ‘A’ is a demonstrative letter for the meaning, ‘that’, whereas ‘pakkam’ means book, side, area, page as a mastered word of various meanings.

Moreover, Tamil contains differentiations with the northern-known Asian languages of about the interrogative ways of asking questions. For example, in Andhra Pradesh a question ends up with the pronunciation ‘Ù’. However, Tamil ends up alphabetical renunciative vowels and a consonantal vowel alphabet like: ‘E’, ‘É’, ‘Ā’, ‘Ò’ and lastly ‘Yaa’. In English, an interrogation is simple as just taught by linguists as to be articulated as a doubt in a question with a question mark or sound of a complexity of understanding by putting an interrogative mark like ‘?’- the key formation of alphabet-symbol. The examples of an interrogative verb are as such: ‘Varuvaan’ which means ‘will come’ as a question and the same word comes as 1) ‘Varuvaan’+ ‘ā’ becoming hence, as, ‘varuvaana?’ or 2) ‘ketpaay’ which changes as ‘ketpaaya’.

Furthermore, according to the subject-oriented curriculum, what the teacher needs to make the students learn and assess in their own comprehension after the evaluative explanation, is the different lengthened and shortened vowels and consonants along with mixtures of words, syntax of the words and verbs as ‘Solvaan’, ‘Solvaana’ complexed with adjectivity of effect on the audible pronunciation of the word giving : ‘V̄’+‘a’ as VA or ‘Ŝ’+O =‘SO’ or ‘L̄’+ ‘V̄’+ ‘a’+ ‘n̄’, gives solvaan; but when complex new vocabulary is being found out in carvings and scriptures isolated away in old histories before the last disasters of the world by the submergement of the Indian Oceanic continent along with the environmental calamities; the long sounds of the mixable adverbs, verbs, nouns, subjects and adjectives also tend to shorten such as 1) ‘தூக்கு’, in primary schools, students learn the word ‘lift’ a ‘Tookkou’ but in secondary level it is being pronounced as ‘Tookku’ with the sound ‘oo’ shortened to ‘U’.

As linguists convey the researches of what they have been toiling for about the languages' existence and realities, it gives centuries of more scientific theory and study to reach the source of the existence towards the target language. Therefore, as a report, English and French could be a translative method of developing the Tamil language into reportive developments of researches as per the systems of learning and teaching approaches for the primary standards until the research-based lecturing classrooms' clearances of failures into progresses off the tables for inventing new methods of developing the lingual teaching and learning capacities in learners.

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Pragmatic Language Development and Impairments in Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD): A Review

KSH Rameshori Devi

Ph.D. Research Scholar,
Department of Linguistics
Manipur International University, Manipur
ramyrameshori@gmail.com

Prof. Mayengbam Bidyarani Devi

Professor, Department of Linguistics
Manipur International University, Manipur
bidyaranimayengbam5@gmail.com

Abstract

Pragmatic language refers to how individuals use language effectively and appropriately within social contexts. It involves the ability to interpret meaning beyond words understanding tone, intent, and nonverbal cues during communication. This review examines the development of pragmatic language in typically developing children and highlights the nature of pragmatic impairments in individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). In typical development, pragmatic competence emerges gradually through early interactions, joint attention, and social engagement. In contrast, children with ASD often display difficulties in conversational reciprocity, topic maintenance, and interpreting figurative or nonliteral language, even when their grammar and vocabulary are intact. These challenges are linked to underlying differences in joint attention, theory of mind, and executive functioning. The review further discusses the social, educational, and long-term implications of pragmatic deficits and emphasizes the need for culturally sensitive, technology-supported, and ecologically valid interventions. Strengthening pragmatic competence is crucial for enhancing communication, social integration, and overall quality of life in individuals with ASD.

Keywords: Pragmatic language, social communication, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Joint attention, Theory of mind, Intervention

1.Introduction

Pragmatic language refers to the ability to use language in ways that are socially appropriate and contextually meaningful. It encompasses the unspoken rules of social communication that guide how individuals initiate and respond during interactions. Beyond correct grammar and vocabulary, pragmatics enables people to build relationships, interpret intentions, and use nonverbal cues such as gestures, tone, and eye contact effectively (Bishop, 1997; Tager-Flusberg, 2000).

Language can be understood as having both structural and functional components. The structural aspect includes syntax, semantics, and phonology, while the functional component pragmatics focuses on how language is used to achieve communicative goals in specific contexts (Paul, Norbury, & Gosse, 2018). Whereas structural accuracy ensures linguistic correctness, pragmatic competence ensures social appropriateness.

Pragmatic ability underpins the development of peer relationships, classroom participation, and broader social inclusion. When impaired, as seen in various developmental conditions, difficulties in conversational reciprocity, topic maintenance, and interpreting figurative meaning can lead to social withdrawal and communication breakdowns.

2. Pragmatic Language Development in Typical Children

In typically developing children, the ability to use language socially unfolds in a natural and predictable sequence, reflecting the integration of linguistic, cognitive, and social growth rooted in early relationships. Pragmatic development starts in infancy, as infants engage in early turn-taking through cooing and babbling interactions with. They learn to share attention by following

a parent's gaze or point, a foundational skill known as joint attention (Bruner, 1983). By their first birthday, they are using gestures to point out interesting things, not just to ask for them, showing a desire to share their world (Tomasello, 2003).

Between 18 and 36 months, children expand their communicative repertoire by initiating and responding in conversations, using language to request, protest, and comment, and maintaining brief exchanges (Tomasello, 2003). During the preschool years, pragmatic competence grows to include adjusting speech to the listener, employing politeness markers, and using prosody appropriately. By school age, children demonstrate the ability to maintain extended topics, infer implied meanings, understand humor, and interpret figurative language (Nippold, 1998).

Social interactions provide the scaffolding for pragmatic language development. Responsive caregiver communication, such as contingent replies and modelling of conversational turn-taking, is strongly associated with growth in children's pragmatic skills (Snow, 1999). Peer interaction during the preschool and school years further supports pragmatic development by offering opportunities for practicing negotiation, conversational repair, and conflict resolution. Importantly, pragmatic norms are embedded in cultural contexts, with variations in politeness, eye contact, and conversational expectations shaping how children acquire pragmatic competence (Ochs & Schieffelin, 1995).

3. Pragmatic Language Impairments in Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

For children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), navigating the social aspects of conversation is often one of the most significant challenges. Even when a child has a strong vocabulary and can form complex sentences, they may struggle profoundly with the social use of this language

(American Psychiatric Association, 2013) which significantly impacts peer relationships, education, and daily functioning. Children with ASD frequently show impairments in initiating and maintaining conversations, interpreting the intentions of others, and using nonverbal communicative behaviors such as gestures, eye gaze, and facial expressions. These difficulties are linked to challenges in joint attention, theory of mind, and perspective-taking (Tager-Flusberg, 2000). Consequently, conversational exchanges often appear one-sided, repetitive, or poorly attuned to the communication partner's needs.

It's important to recognize that these challenges look different across individuals. Some children may be minimally verbal, communicating primarily through gestures or assistive technology, with their social communication focused on basic needs like requesting. Others may be highly verbal, but their conversations can feel one-sided, scripted, or overly formal, lacking the natural flow of reciprocity (Paul et al., 2009). Pragmatic challenges in ASD are evident in everyday interactions. Common examples include literal interpretation of figurative language, sarcasm, or jokes (Happé, 1995); poor conversational turn-taking, such as interrupting or dominating interactions; topic fixation on restricted interests without regard for the listener's perspective; reduced use of nonverbal cues to supplement speech; and difficulties in repairing communication breakdowns. These pragmatic deficits are not merely secondary to structural language delay but reflect core social-communication differences that define ASD (American Psychiatric Association, 2013).

4. Underlying Mechanism

Pragmatic language competence in children is not only dependent on structural linguistic skills but also shaped by a set of underlying cognitive and socio-communicative mechanisms. In Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), deficits in these foundational processes—particularly joint attention,

theory of mind, and executive functions—are closely linked to the pragmatic impairments that characterize the condition.

4.1 Joint attention and its role in pragmatics.

The early ability to share focus with another person is like a social gateway. When this is challenging, as it often is for children with ASD, it disrupts the very process of learning through shared experience (Mundy & Newell, 2007). Without this, building the back-and-forth of conversation is much more difficult (Kasari et al., 2006) and it is considered a precursor to pragmatic language development (Mundy & Newell, 2007). Through joint attention episodes, children learn to share experiences, establish common ground, and interpret communicative intent. In typical development, joint attention emerges in the first year of life and provides the foundation for turn-taking, conversational reciprocity, and topic maintenance. In contrast, children with ASD often show significant deficits in both responding to and initiating joint attention, which directly undermines their ability to develop socially functional language (Kasari, Freeman, & Paparella, 2006).

4.2 Theory of mind (ToM) and perceptive taking.

This is the ability to understand that others have thoughts, feelings, and perspectives different from your own. Pragmatic language relies heavily on this skill. To tell a story, you must consider what your listener already knows. To detect sarcasm, you must infer the speaker's true intent. Difficulties with theory of mind can lead to conversations that feel egocentric or out-of-sync (Baron-Cohen et al., 1985; Tager-Flusberg, 2001). Research consistently demonstrates that many children with ASD have difficulties with ToM tasks, which contributes to challenges in

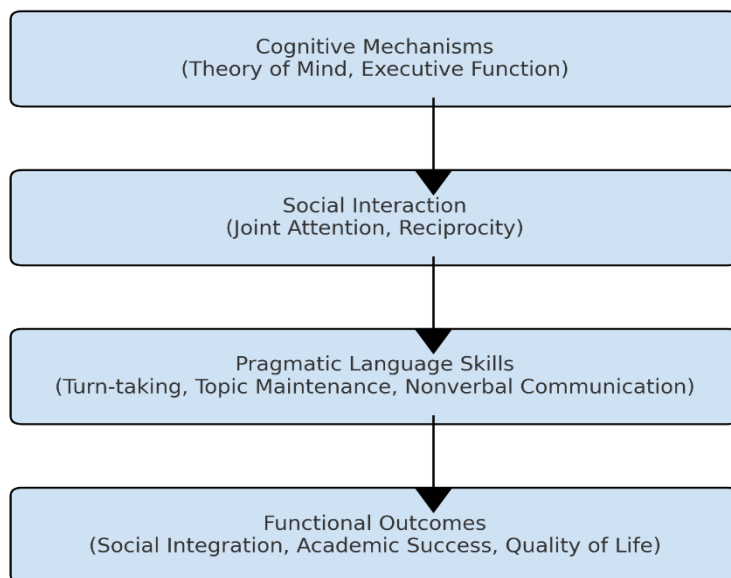
conversational adaptation, interpreting sarcasm or irony, and avoiding egocentric speech patterns (Baron-Cohen, Leslie, & Frith, 1985; Tager-Flusberg, 2001).

4.3 Executive functions

Everyday conversation requires a suite of mental management skills. We need working memory to hold onto the thread of the discussion, inhibitory control to stop ourselves from blurting out, and cognitive flexibility to switch topics smoothly. When executive functions are impaired, it can lead to topic fixation, difficulty repairing a misunderstood comment, and problems adapting to the unpredictable flow of social interaction. Effective conversation requires children to plan utterances, monitor their partner's responses, inhibit inappropriate comments, and shift topics smoothly. Deficits in executive functioning, widely documented in ASD, are associated with difficulties in turn-taking, staying on topic, and repairing communication breakdowns (Hill, 2004). For example, reduced cognitive flexibility may contribute to perseverative speech or topic fixation, while poor inhibitory control can lead to interruptions or socially inappropriate comments.

Figure 1. showing the relationship between pragmatic deficits and ASD outcomes.

Figure 1. Conceptual Model of Pragmatic Language Development



5. Consequences of Pragmatic Deficits

Pragmatic language difficulties in Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) extend beyond linguistic performance and have profound consequences for social, academic, and long-term functional outcomes. Because pragmatics governs how language is used in context, deficits in this domain disrupt children's ability to build relationships, engage effectively in learning environments, and achieve independence in adulthood.

5.1 Impact on peer relationships and social participation.

Making and keeping friends is a complex linguistic task. Children who struggle with social communication are often left on the sidelines, leading to loneliness, peer rejection, and missed

opportunities to practice social skills (Bauminger & Kasari, 2000; Capps et al., 1998). Pragmatic impairments often lead to difficulties in forming and maintaining friendships. Children with ASD may struggle to interpret social cues, follow conversational rules, or engage in reciprocal play, which can result in peer rejection or social isolation (Bauminger & Kasari, 2000). Even verbally fluent children with ASD frequently show restricted conversational styles, perseverative interests, or difficulties adapting to their partner's perspective, reducing the quality of peer interactions (Capps, Kehres, & Sigman, 1998). Limited pragmatic competence also reduces opportunities for collaborative play and group activities, thereby restricting social participation in naturalistic settings.

5.2 Educational challenges.

The classroom is a highly social environment. A student may misunderstand a teacher's nuanced instruction, struggle to contribute appropriately to group work, or have difficulty with the narrative language required for reading comprehension and writing (Norbury & Sparks, 2013). These challenges can hinder academic achievement even for intellectually capable students. Pragmatic deficits pose significant challenges in the classroom, where communication extends beyond basic language comprehension. Children with ASD may misinterpret teacher instructions, fail to ask clarifying questions, or struggle with narrative and discourse skills necessary for academic tasks (Norbury & Sparks, 2013). Group work and peer-based learning, which require effective turn-taking, negotiation, and cooperative problem-solving, often highlight pragmatic weaknesses. These challenges contribute to difficulties in both academic performance and classroom inclusion.

5.3 Long-term effects on independence and quality of life.

Limited conversational competence and difficulties interpreting subtle social cues can hinder employment opportunities, romantic relationships, and community integration. Difficulties with job interviews, workplace small talk, and building romantic relationships can limit independence and vocational success (Howlin et al., 2004). Many adults with ASD report that these ongoing social challenges contribute to anxiety, depression, and a reduced quality of life (Mazurek, 2014). Thus, pragmatic deficits not only affect immediate social and educational outcomes but also have enduring implications for independence, vocational success, and overall quality of life. Overall, pragmatic language deficits represent one of the most socially disabling features of ASD, underscoring the importance of early identification and intervention to mitigate their long-term impact.

6. Current Gaps and Future Directions

Although considerable progress has been made in understanding pragmatic language deficits in Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), important gaps remain in both research and clinical practice. Addressing these limitations is crucial for developing more effective, inclusive, and sustainable intervention approaches.

6.1 Need for longitudinal studies.

We need more research that follows individuals over many years to understand how their social aspect communication skills change throughout their lives and which early interventions lead to lasting benefits (Pickles et al., 2014). Much of the existing literature on pragmatic language in ASD is based on cross-sectional designs, which provide snapshots of development but fail to capture individual trajectories. Longitudinal studies are necessary to understand how pragmatic

skills evolve across childhood, adolescence, and adulthood, and how early interventions influence long-term outcomes (Pickles et al., 2014). Such research can clarify whether pragmatic improvements achieved in therapy are sustained over time and whether they generalize to real-world functioning.

6.2 Cross-cultural perspectives.

Pragmatic norms vary across cultures, influencing what is considered appropriate eye contact, turn-taking, or politeness. However, most research on ASD has been conducted in Western, English-speaking populations. Cross-cultural studies are needed to examine how pragmatic deficits manifest in diverse cultural and linguistic contexts, and to ensure that assessment tools and interventions are culturally valid (Norbury & Sparks, 2013). This perspective is particularly critical in multilingual societies, where pragmatic expectations may differ across languages.

6.3 Integration of technology-based interventions.

A major challenge is ensuring that skills learned in a therapist's office are used spontaneously at home, on the playground, or at work (Adams et al., 2012). Future interventions must be designed to bridge this gap by actively involving families, peers, and community settings. Emerging technologies offer promising avenues for supporting pragmatic development in ASD. Computer-based programs, mobile applications, and telepractice platforms have shown potential in enhancing social communication skills, particularly when access to in-person services is limited (Parsons & Cobb, 2011). Virtual reality environments, for example, provide safe spaces for practicing conversational skills, while telepractice expands service delivery to underserved areas.

Nonetheless, more controlled trials are needed to evaluate the efficacy and sustainability of these approaches.

6.4 Emphasis on generalization across contexts.

One of the persistent challenges in pragmatic intervention is ensuring that gains achieved in therapy settings generalize to natural environments such as homes, schools, and communities. Studies frequently report improvements in structured therapy sessions but limited transfer to spontaneous conversation (Adams et al., 2012). Future research must focus on designing interventions that incorporate multiple partners, varied contexts, and functional activities to enhance generalization and long-term maintenance of skills.

Conclusion

Pragmatic language difficulties are a defining feature of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), affecting conversational reciprocity, nonverbal communication, and interpretation of implied meaning. These challenges often persist despite intact structural language and significantly impact social, educational, and life outcomes. Early, targeted, and context-sensitive interventions—especially those emphasizing joint attention, social cognition, and caregiver involvement—can foster meaningful improvements in pragmatic competence (Kasari et al., 2006; Adams et al., 2012). Future research should prioritize longitudinal, cross-cultural, and technology-integrated approaches that support generalization to real-world contexts.

In summary, pragmatic language represents both a challenge and an opportunity in ASD. Aligning research and clinical practice toward individualized, socially embedded interventions can enhance communicative competence and improve life outcomes for individuals on the spectrum.

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The Man-Animal Bond and Conflict: Exploring Voices of the Unheard in *The Tusk that Did the Damage* by Tania James and *Larger than Life* by Jodi Picoult with Literary, Critical and Theoretical Perspectives

Dr. N. Vijaya Samundeeswari

Associate Professor
PG & Research Department of English,
Government Arts College (Autonomous)
Coimbatore
nvijayasamundeeswari@gmail.com

K. Iswarya

Research Scholar
PG & Research Department of English
Government Arts College (Autonomous)
Coimbatore
sanjiaishu@gmail.com

Abstract

Studies that examine the relationship between literature and the environment are often referred to as "ecocriticism" or "environmental criticism." Environmental literature seeks to explore the ecological aspects present in literary works, while ecological writings analyze how nature is represented in scholarly texts. Researchers and scholars approach these works from an environmental perspective, aiming to offer fresh insights into their content. Among the many issues concerning humans and the environment, human-wildlife conflict stands out as a significant concern. Numerous species across the world face endangerment or threats due to various forms of environmental degradation. This conflict is particularly important as it primarily impacts local communities, especially farmers. Tania James' novel, *The Tusk That Did the Damage* and Jodi Picoult's *Larger than Life* explore the issue of human-wildlife conflict and bonding. This research study focuses on examining how this conflict is portrayed in these two works. Tania James is an

Indian American writer. She teaches in the MFA program at George Mason University and lives in Washington DC. Tania James has authored the novel *Atlas of Unknowns*, the short story collection *Aerograms*, and her second novel is *The Tusk That Did the Damage*. In 2016, the novel was shortlisted for the International Dylan Thomas Prize and long listed for the Financial Times/Oppenheimer Award. Jodi Picoult is the author of twenty-two novels, including the New York Times bestsellers *Lone Wolf*, *Between the Lines* and *My Sister's Keeper*. She lives in New Hampshire.

Keywords: Man-animal bond, Man-animal conflict, the power of memory, family and community, Human- nature relationship, Loss and grief, trauma and suffering, Ecocriticism, Zoopoetics, Zoocentrism.

Ecocriticism, Zoopoetics, and Zoocentrism: Exploring the Intersection of Literature and Ecology

In contemporary literary studies, there is a growing interest in how literature and culture engage with the natural world and nonhuman life. This has led to the development of fields such as ecocriticism, zoopoetics, and zoocentrism, which challenge human-centered perspectives and encourage more inclusive ways of thinking. Ecocriticism explores environmental themes in literature, shedding light on humanity's relationship with nature. Zoopoetics examines how animals are represented in literary texts, revealing the complexities of their existence beyond mere symbols or metaphors.

Traditionally, animals in literature were treated symbolically — as metaphors, allegories, or moral lessons (e.g., fables and parables like *Aesop's Stories*). Zoopoetics moves beyond this representational function to consider how animals themselves contribute to the shaping of human creativity. Instead of being reduced to symbols of human concerns, animals are recognized as having their own agency and presence that influences artistic production.

Zoopoetics asks how literature can approach or approximate animal forms of expression. While humans cannot directly inhabit an animal's consciousness, writers and poets experiment with language, rhythm, and form to capture the strangeness, otherness, or vitality of non-human life. For instance, mimicking the movements of a bird in verse, or structuring prose in ways that reflect non-human temporality, can be seen as zoopoetic gestures.

By rethinking how animals are represented in texts, zoopoetics becomes an ethical practice. It challenges anthropocentric tendencies to reduce animals to caricatures or resources and instead calls for attentiveness to their uniqueness. In this sense, zoopoetics overlaps with zoocentrism — both advocate inclusion of animals in moral and cultural frameworks, but zoopoetics does so through the medium of art and literature.

Expanding the Literary Canon

Zoopoetics also invites us to re-read literary history. From ancient epics and fables to modern eco-literature and experimental poetry, animals have always been central to storytelling. Zoopoetic analysis uncovers how writers across cultures have engaged with animal lives — whether through empathy, imitation, or co-creation — and how such engagement reshapes literary form itself. Jacques Derrida’s reflections on the “gaze of the animal” inspired discussions of how animals disrupt human-centered language and philosophy. Contemporary eco-poetry often experiments with non-linear narratives, fragmented rhythms, or sounds to evoke the presence of animals beyond symbolic use.

Zoopoetics is not just a literary curiosity; it’s part of a broader cultural and ethical shift. In an age of ecological crisis, it asks us to reconsider the boundaries between humans and non-humans and to find creative ways to listen to and learn from other species. It bridges art, ethics, and ecology, suggesting that literature itself can be a site of interspecies dialogue.

Zoocentrism goes a step further, advocating for an ethical and philosophical approach that recognizes animals as central to our shared world. Together, these perspectives reshape how we understand and portray human-animal relationships, fostering a deeper sense of connection and responsibility toward all living beings.

Zoocentrism and Intrinsic Moral Value

Zoocentrism is the ethical perspective that argues that some animals possess intrinsic moral worth, independent of their utility to humans. This view challenges the long-standing belief that animals exist merely as resources or instruments for human benefit. Instead, zoocentrism recognizes that animals, as sentient beings capable of experiencing pain, pleasure, and a range of emotions, deserve to be acknowledged within the moral community. By attributing intrinsic value

to animals, zoocentrism emphasizes that their lives and well-being matter in their own right and should not be dismissed simply because they are non-human.

At the heart of zoocentrism is the rejection of the idea that humans inherently occupy a superior moral position in the natural order. As per the zoocentrism, human beings belong to animal kingdom and his occupying space is based on his moralistic values. This stance opposes anthropocentrism, which places human beings at the center of ethical and philosophical frameworks, often justifying exploitation of the non-human world. Zoocentric thought instead argues that human dominance is not a valid basis for moral hierarchy. By denying the assumption of human superiority, zoocentrism opens space for more egalitarian relationships between humans and other living creatures, where respect and responsibility replace domination and exploitation.

Ethical Inclusion of Animals

One of the main goals of zoocentric philosophies is to expand the scope of moral consideration to include animals as legitimate members of the moral community. This involves recognizing that animals have interests — such as the desire to avoid suffering, to seek nourishment, and to live freely according to their nature — that deserve moral weight. Ethical inclusion means that the well-being of animals should be factored into human decision-making, whether in areas such as food production, scientific research, or environmental policy. By granting animals ethical recognition, zoocentrism promotes a shift from seeing them as mere property or tools toward understanding them as beings with rights, needs, and dignity.

Emerging as a prominent field in the 1990s, ecocriticism explores the connection between literature and the natural world. It challenges traditional human-centered perspectives in literary studies, advocating for greater environmental awareness and a focus on ecological sustainability. Scholars like Cheryll Glotfelty and Lawrence Buell have been instrumental in shaping ecocriticism, emphasizing the power of literature to influence ecological consciousness and inspire a deeper appreciation for the environment. Zoopoetics, a concept introduced by Jacques Derrida and later expanded by Matthew Calarco and others, explores how literature and poetry give voice to the experiences and agency of animals. Unlike ecocriticism, which addresses broader environmental concerns, zoopoetics focuses on the creative ways writers represent animals, honoring their perspectives and presence in the world. Through language and storytelling,

zoopoetics seeks to bridge the human-animal divide, fostering empathy and a deeper understanding of their lives.

The central theme explored in both *The Tusk That Did the Damage* and *Larger Than Life* is the complex and often tragic conflict between humans and animals. These novels thoughtfully examine the deep and intricate connection between human beings and the natural world, particularly the ways in which people coexist with—and often encroach upon—wildlife and their habitats. The authors highlight that while humans and animals are inherently linked through shared ecosystems and overlapping spaces, conflict arises when this delicate balance is disrupted. This disruption typically occurs when human expansion—such as deforestation, agriculture, urbanization, or tourism—invades the natural territories of wild animals. As a result, both species are forced into close contact, often with devastating consequences.

When humans interfere with the natural migratory paths, breeding grounds, or feeding areas of wild animals, it leads to a collision of needs and survival strategies. These interactions can become dangerous and unpredictable, frequently resulting in physical harm or death for both humans and animals. Human lives and livelihoods—such as crops, homes, and livestock—can be destroyed, while animals may be injured, captured, or killed in retaliation or as a preventive measure. Moreover, the novels explore not only the physical consequences of such conflicts but also the emotional and psychological dimensions. Animals, especially intelligent and social species like elephants, are portrayed as sentient beings capable of experiencing trauma, grief, and resistance. The exploitation of animals for labor, entertainment, or other human purposes is depicted alongside the ways humans suffer loss and fear due to animal encounters. In some cases, animals retaliate or resist, demonstrating that they are not passive victims but agents in their own right. Ultimately, both novels serve as a powerful critique of the imbalance in human-animal relationships and challenge readers to reconsider the ethical and ecological implications of human dominance over the natural world.

The Tusk that Did the Damage and *Larger than Life*, both the novels reassure the need of environmental sustainability and reinforce the coexistence of man and animal. The writers of these novels portrayed the importance of rights of elephants, the bond and conflict between man and animal, trauma and suffering of both human and animal, illegal poaching of elephants for their

tusks, exploitation and much more. It helps the readers to have an understanding and awareness towards non-human animals and their right to live in peace.

In both *Larger than Life* and *The Tusk that Did the Damage*, the authors explore the deep emotional and social lives of elephants, particularly focusing on the traumatic experiences of orphaned calves. In *Larger than Life*, Alice, a dedicated elephant researcher, witnesses a brutal elephant massacre and risks her career, safety, and reputation—to rescue a helpless calf left behind. Similarly, in Tania James' *The Tusk that Did the Damage*, a young elephant also loses its mother to poachers and is later captured and tamed. Both narratives emphasize the devastating impact of maternal loss on elephant calves and the subsequent efforts to save them. Alice's work in observing elephant behavior sheds light on the complex ways in which elephants learn from one another, especially how elder females guide and mentor younger ones in preparation for motherhood, passing down crucial social and survival knowledge through generations.

The two novels exhibit notable parallels, particularly in their depiction of elephants' extraordinary olfactory capabilities. Both authors emphasize the elephants' ability to identify individuals and recall places or people through scent, even after extended periods, highlighting their exceptional memory and cognitive complexity. These heightened sensory faculties, coupled with profound emotional intelligence, render the elephants in both narratives powerful and evocative symbols of resilience and remembrance. Moreover, the novels compellingly portray the intricate bonds of affection, mutual dependence, and emotional connection between humans and elephants. In James's novel, the narrative perspective is partially assumed by an elephant, whose account chronicles its harrowing experience as a victim of poaching and its subsequent domestication. Over time, the elephant forms close relationships with its human caretakers, ultimately culminating in a tragic incident where it kills one of them before returning to the wild.

Picoult's portrayal of the bond between an orphaned calf and a researcher who risked her job to rescue the elephant is captivating. The writer has shown the struggles and effort taken by the protagonist to save the life of an innocent elephant calf which helps the reader to understand the dependency and also it shows how the elephant is developing the immense bond and vice versa. The writer has also shown the struggle of returning the calf to the wild and eventually fails in that. Even when the protagonist left the calf for one-week in order to find a place for her, she refused to eat and became very sad and weak. That shows the bond an elephant had on its human. Elephant is

more dependent on human than the human ever will be. The protagonist in the novel *Larger than Life*, says the words “thought I could not live without her, when all along, she was the one who could not live without me”.

Picoult highlights the individuality and emotional depth of elephant personalities throughout the novel, particularly in their social interactions and inner lives. Much like humans, each elephant possesses a distinct temperament, set of preferences, and unique way of relating to others. While some are outgoing and playful, others may be quiet or more solitary. Simply placing two elephants together doesn’t ensure a bond will form—just as two strangers don’t automatically become friends. Their ability to connect depends on compatibility, underscoring that elephants are as uniquely individual as humans.

Conclusion

The emerging theory of zoopoetics emphasizes the concept of representing or giving voice to animals in ways that go beyond traditional anthropomorphism. Rather than treating animals as mere symbols or metaphors, zoopoetics asks how animals might participate in meaning-making. It questions whether literature can provide space for animals to express themselves in ways that humans can interpret—without erasing their otherness. In the novel *The Tusk That Did the Damage*, the writer gives voice to an elephant by making it one of the narrators of the story, allowing the elephant to recount its own journey. The author conveys the struggle and trauma of a tamed elephant through the animal’s perspective. The novel further explores the elephant’s relationship with its caretakers and with other elephants, particularly focusing on how elephants communicate and understand each other’s emotions.

Zoocentrism is an ethical perspective that gives central moral importance to animals, often focusing particularly on non-human animals. It stands in contrast to anthropocentrism, which centers human beings as the most significant entities, and to biocentrism or ecocentrism, which extend moral consideration more broadly to all living beings or ecosystems. These two novels, *Larger than Life* and *The Tusk that Did the Damage* are a reminder that elephants, like humans, have rich emotional lives and should be treated as individuals, not as interchangeable members of a species.

When managing or caring for elephants whether in sanctuaries, zoos, or conservation

projects it is essential to prioritize their personalities, social bonds, and freedom, instead of forcing them into human-defined roles. Human–elephant conflict often arises not because elephants are inherently vicious when its safety and needs are questionable. The main reason for their growing viciousness is due to its survival instinct. When human habitation encroaches on their habitats and disrupt their lives, their evolutionary process towards timidity takes a U turn. While humans attempt to tame or hunt elephants down for their tusks, the elephants which are sentient beings with deep emotions, memories, and relationships in reality, get agitated and become aggressive. Transforming a wild elephant into a captive one may create dependency, but it also strips them of their natural rights. The true irony is that elephants, despite the harm done to them, can still show remarkable tolerance toward humans. Therefore, the focus should not be solely on human safety around elephants, but on creating conditions where both humans and elephants are safe from harmfulness and exploitation. Protecting their autonomy and respecting their nature is the only way forward for genuine coexistence.

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The Impact of Comic Stories on L2 Speaking

Mr. V. S. Civa Prasaanth

Ph.D. Research Scholar (Part-Time),
Department of English,
Thanthai Periyar Government Arts & Science College (Autonomous)
Affiliated to Bharathidasan University
Tiruchirappalli- 620 023, Tamil Nadu
civaprasaanth@gmail.com

Dr. S. Shanmugasundaram

Associate Professor,
P.G & Research Department of English,
Thanthai Periyar Government Arts & Science College (Autonomous)
Affiliated to Bharathidasan University,
Tiruchirappalli- 620 023, Tamil Nadu.
srishanmuga75@gmail.com

Dr. P. Thiyagararajan

Associate Professor,
P.G & Research Department of English,
Rajah Serfoji Government College (Autonomous),
Thanjavur – 613 005, Tamil Nadu.
ptrajan22@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper attempts to highlight the use value of comic stories in L2 speaking. For this purpose, it makes use of interesting comic stories chosen from the point of view of ESL learners. Comic stories such as Kalia the Crow, Shikari Shambu, Tantri the Mantri, Champak, Tenali Raman, and Akbar & Birbal are used. These stories include spoken utterances and visual clues that are essential for comprehension and reproduction. The learners in the study are from Rajah Serfoji Government College, Thanjavur. Making use of these stories, the target group of students are given immersion practice in L2 speaking for 14 sessions. They are given a speaking task in which they are supposed to go through the comic stories and narrate them in their own language. The experiment, based on this structured speaking task proves to be effective in terms of

- i. their ability to expand or generate spoken utterances.
- ii. narration based on the prompt (comic stories).
- iii. confidence level

Further, the evaluation of the scores for the speaking performance of the learners shows that there has been a significant improvement in terms of speaking in the second language.

Key words: L2 Speaking, evaluation, utterances, visual clues, immersion practice, use value, ESL learners,

1. Introduction:

Speaking in the second language has been given great attention for about five decades. Though there have been many approaches, methods, strategies and experiments that continue to contribute to the development of speaking skill, even today there are experiments being attempted to enhance the same skill. Because of the subtle complexity and inherent nature of acquisition, it presents a great challenge to the learners.

Some of the processing skills involved in speaking are very complex in nature. For instance, the generation of spoken utterances by the ESL learner comes after a linear thought process - conceptualization, formulation, articulation and self-monitoring (as referred to by Levelt, W. J. M. 1989). This paper attempts to give an immersion practice with the help of popular comic stories such as Kalia the Crow, Shikari Shambu, Tantri the Mantri, Champak, Tenali Raman, and Akbar & Birbal. Each comic story has a word limit of 300 to 500. The very reason why comic stories are chosen is that they are in the spoken format (unlike complete written sentences) which is essential for L2 speaking practice as well as comprehension.

Unlike the written language, spoken language / oral communication depends on spoken units and utterances (at the time of speaking). In other words, it is an online, or real time, process. People take no time to respond or reply in the middle of a conversation. Moreover, there is a lot of difference between spoken and written language. As said in *Key Differences*, 2023, “Oral communication is the process of conveying or receiving messages with the use of spoken words... This mode is highly used across the world because of rapid transmission of information and prompt reply. Written communication, on the other hand, is a formal means of communication, wherein

the message is carefully drafted and formulated in written form. It is kept as a source of reference or legal record.”

Hence, this study attempts to give structured input and to see how this may affect the way learners process input and reproduce or regenerate what they have comprehended. As comic stories offer an engaging and effective way to facilitate learning, a couple of tasks were designed after choosing six different comic stories. Their interesting and entertaining nature captures students’ attention more easily than traditional texts. Comics present language through spoken utterances, closely resembling real-life conversations, which helps learners to develop their speaking and listening skills more naturally. Moreover, the use of visual elements, such as pictures and illustrations, supports comprehension by providing context clues and reducing the cognitive load. The simplicity of the language and the strong connection between text and visuals make comic stories especially suitable for learners who struggle with conventional reading materials.

2. Review of Literature

Aldaka, Susanto, and Suparman (2023) conducted a classroom action research study at SMP Negeri 1 Surabaya to evaluate the effectiveness of comic strips in enhancing English speaking skills among seventh-grade students. Through two instructional cycles involving comic-based dialogues, group presentations, and creative strip-making, the researchers observed a marked improvement in students’ fluency, grammar, and pronunciation. The percentage of students achieving scores above the school’s passing criterion (KKM) rose from 28.5% in the pre-cycle to 65.7% in cycle one and reached 85.7% in cycle two. The study concludes that comic strips not only foster a more engaging and confident learning environment but also significantly improve students’ ability to express themselves orally in English.

Sriwahyuni, Wulansari, and Ramadhiyanti (2023) in their classroom action research titled “*Comics to Improve Speaking Skill*” explored the pedagogical impact of comic strips on enhancing speaking skills among ESL learners. The study revealed that the use of comic strips significantly improved students’ ability to comprehend word meanings and express ideas with greater confidence. By creating meaningful and engaging situations during classroom interactions, the intervention fostered active participation and reduced anxiety among learners. The researchers emphasized that comic-based instruction not only facilitated better understanding but also

encouraged students to present their thoughts more freely, thereby contributing to the development of communicative competence in a supportive learning environment.

Rojas Murillo (2022), in his thesis titled *Improving English Speaking Skills of Primary Students Through Comic Strips* at Greensboro College, investigated the pedagogical potential of comic strips in enhancing oral proficiency among young EFL learners. The study introduced a website featuring ten Grimm's Fairy Tales adapted into comic strips, which were used to facilitate pre-speaking and speaking activities in the classroom. Through visual storytelling and character-based interaction, the intervention helped students improve vocabulary, pronunciation, and confidence in expressing ideas. The research emphasized that comic strips created a stress-free, engaging environment that encouraged spontaneous speech, role-play, and peer collaboration, thereby supporting the development of communicative competence in a dynamic and learner-centered setting.

Sarma (2016), in the article *Visual Literacy and Language Learning: The Role of Comics in ESL Classrooms* published in *ELT Voices India*, examined how comics contribute to the development of speaking skills through multimodal learning. The study highlighted that comics, with their combination of text and imagery, support learners in interpreting meaning, organizing ideas, and expressing thoughts more effectively. By presenting relatable scenarios and emotional cues, comics helped reduce anxiety and encouraged active participation in speaking activities. Sarma concluded that comic-based instruction aligns with visual literacy principles and enhances oral communication by creating a learner-friendly space that promotes creativity and confidence in language use.

3. Significance of the study

This study primarily explores the use value of comic stories to enhance the speaking skills of students studying in government colleges. To date, no focused research has been conducted on this topic with reference to government college students in the district of Thanjavur. Speaking is a crucial macro skill, especially during interviews and for sustaining employment in various sectors. However, many students in government colleges come from financially underprivileged backgrounds and they need a lot of practice and teacher mediation to develop their speaking ability. Their limited exposure to English outside the classroom and lack of access to immersive linguistic

environments underscore the need for innovative, culturally resonant teaching strategies. As stated earlier, this experiment aims to address the said issue by contributing to the improvement of their speaking skills through the integration of comic-based pedagogy in a task-based environment.

4. Students Profile

This study investigates the pedagogical impact of comic-based speaking task of twelve students selected from Rajah Serfoji Government College, Thanjavur. The participants were selected after their performance in the English language proficiency test, i.e. a base line / foundation test. The students who performed below average, namely who scored between 35% and 50 % in the baseline test were identified to participate in the study. In order to enhance their speaking / communicative ability, the study attempts to integrate comic narratives into speaking tasks. In this process, it provides scaffolding platform which is contextually-rich, interesting as well as engaging that mirrors authentic communicative situations. The intervention is designed not only to enhance linguistic competence but also to empower students with their own confidence level and expressive techniques necessary for academic and professional advancement.

5. Research Question

What is the impact of comic stories on L2 speaking skills among ESL students studying in government colleges in the Thanjavur district?

6. Methodology

At the outset, first year math students from Rajah Serfoji Government college were met and briefed about the purpose of the study. They were extrinsically motivated by highlighting the advantages of the study. After this, the students were given pre-task instructions about the task that they were going to perform. They were also motivated by the proposed benefits of this task. After this, volunteers alone were chosen to participate in the study. They were divided into two groups, namely control and experimental group. They were also informed about their class schedule. In the next contact hour, the experimental group of students were given comic stories (i.e. Kalia the Crow, Shikari Shambu, Tantri the Mantri, Champak, Tenali Raman, and Akbar-Birbal). A sufficient amount of time was given to them to go through the comic stories, which was followed by a discussion between the students and the researcher to ensure comprehension. They were free to

choose the comic story of their choice and students who couldn't choose one were offered help. After choosing one story, they were supposed to retell the story as they have understood. In this way, they were made to reconstruct the narrative in English through their own language, and their speech was recorded. Certain difficult expressions (from the point of view of the learners) in the comics were simplified with the help of defining vocabulary so that they can make use of it. Spoken utterances like phrasal verbs, idioms, useful phrases and so on were also given.

Likewise, the control group of students were also given the same stories but without illustrations (comics). All the other steps were similar to that of the experimental group (assistance for difficult expressions, utterances like phrasal verbs, idioms, useful phrases and so on). Their spoken performance was also analysed at the end by a formal achievement test. The results of the two groups showed that there was a significant difference between these two groups.

7. Criteria for evaluation

They were given marks according to the following criteria – fluency, coherence, accuracy, complexity, pronunciation, ability to expand idea and volume. In this context, fluency, (*Fluency can be described as the ability to process language receptively and productively at a reasonable speed.*” — Nation (2014). contact.teslontario.org) coherence and ability to expand ideas were given more marks comparatively. This is because the study attempts to enhance their overall ability to speak in the target language. Accuracy and complexity were given less weightage comparatively. (Steven Pinker: *“Syntax is complex, but the complexity is there for a reason. For our thoughts are surely even more complex, and we are limited by a mouth that can pronounce a single word at a time.”* — from *The Language Instinct*. This suggests that complexity in language reflects complexity of thought. [Goodreads](https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/12100913-The-Language-Instinct))

As the students belong to an underprivileged background, an acceptable level of pronunciation was considered. This was because the accuracy in pronunciation was not the purpose of the study.

Levis (2005) – “Intelligibility, not nativeness, is the goal.”, “The appropriate goal for pronunciation teaching is intelligibility, not accent reduction or native-like pronunciation.”

— Levis, J. M. (2005). *Changing contexts and shifting paradigms in pronunciation teaching. TESOL Quarterly*, 39(3), 369–377.

On the other hand, volume was analysed to know their confidence level. (i.e. high volume and facial expressions in speech shows one's confidence)

8. Results

Table 1: Control Group

Roll No.	A Max:5	B Max:5	C Max:2	D Max:3	E Max:2	F Max:5	G Max:3	Total Max:25
23ME1803	2	2	1	1	1	1	2	10
23MT1724	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	9
24CS4126	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	9
23ME1816	2	3	1	1	1	1	3	12
23PZ04619	2	2	1	1	1	2	2	11
23ME1821	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	9
23ME0822	2	2	1	1	1	2	1	10
23MT1718	2	2	1	1	1	1	2	10
23MT1721	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	8
23MT1722	2	3	2	1	1	2	2	13

(A- Fluency, B – Coherence, C-Accuracy, D-Complexity, E-Pronunciation, F-Ability to expand idea, G-Volume)

Table 2: Experimental Group

Roll No.	A Max:5	B Max:5	C Max:2	D Max:3	E Max:2	F Max:5	G Max:3	Total Max:25
24ST3104	4	4	2	1	1	3	3	18
23PT1904	5	4	1	1	1	2	3	17
24ST3129	3	4	1	1	1	3	3	16

24ST3120	4	4	1	2	1	3	2	17
23ME1831	4	4	1	1	1	3	2	16
23ME1832	4	4	1	2	1	4	3	19
24ST3113	4	4	2	1	1	4	3	19
23ME1842	4	4	1	1	1	4	3	18
23MT1704	4	5	1	1	1	3	3	18
23MT1707	4	5	1	1	1	2	3	17

(A- Fluency, B – Coherence, C-Accuracy, D-Complexity, E-Pronunciation, F-Ability to expand idea, G-Volume)

9. Discussion

Overall, the results of the study showed that there is a significant difference between the control and experimental group. The experimental group of students have scored higher scores in their oral speaking task. The mean of their score is 17.5. Whereas, the control group of students performed poorly. Their mean is 10. This indicates that comic stories with illustrations not only helped them to comprehend the spoken utterances and the narrative structure of the story but it also has an impact on their subconscious mind. In fact, it has helped them to narrate the story confidently. In line with the theory of subconscious Language acquisition, these learners are able to narrate what they have grasped. Though the accuracy of their language is not too good, (marks range 1 - 2) their overall communication was effective.

On the other hand, the control group of students did not make much impact. A clear-cut reason is that they were not able to visualize the narrative structure in their mind, which in turn affected their comprehension. Hence, they could not retell the story in an effective way. They missed out certain significant parts of the narration. It can be inferred that the control group lacked the advantage of illustrations, which were provided to the experimental group students.

10. Limitations:

The study involved only 20 students, which limits the generalizability of the findings to a broader population.

Less number of training or teacher intervention hours due to administrative constraints.

The research was confined to students from one government college and did not include learners from other institutions.

Assuming basic comprehension, all activities were conducted in English and did not offer L1 support.

The study limited its materials to comic stories as the main tool for speaking development, excluding other multimedia tools like videos or podcasts.

11. Conclusion

The results go on to show the impact of comic stories on language acquisition, particularly with reference to L2 speaking. The results indicate that visual representations studied along with spoken utterances assist the conceptualization process of the mind, which is essential for formulation and articulation of L2 speech. The significant difference in the scores of the experimental group clearly highlights the value of comic stories particularly when it is being used in a task-based environment. Besides, the feedback (observed and noted in the researcher's diary at the end of each task) of the students about the task in which they have participated, is positive. Hence, it is recommended that future studies in the same field may be continued with reference to the impact of visual illustrations on other skills too. (i.e. reading, writing) Comic stories, YouTube videos, documentaries and so on may also be utilized to promote L2 speaking as well as other language skills.

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Smart Learning for Marginalized Tribes: A Study on Digital Tools in Irula Education

Sudharsini K

Assistant Professor, Department of English,
Suguna College of Arts and Science, Coimbatore

Girishwar. T Ph.D. Research Scholar (FT)

PG and Research Department of English,
Chikkanna Government Arts College, Tiruppur
girishwarmoorthy@gmail.com

Abstract

In this digital era education is a fundamental right, yet it is not an easy access to many facing significant barriers for quality education, peoples in marginalized communities like the Irula tribe of Tamil Nadu. Digital learning is revolutionizing education and as a transformative tool in bridging educational gaps for indigenous communities. This paper explores the role of e-learning and technology integration to Irula community education, dealing how far digital platforms, learning through smart phones, and government initiatives have enhanced their literacy level. Despite these potential benefits, challenges exist like low infrastructure, lack of digital literacy, and economic constraints obstruct their widespread learning adoption. The paper emphasizes case studies of digital developments, including online learning programs and mobile classrooms, which have shown gradual growth in educational outcomes. Additionally, dealing with digital contents that are culturally relevant and align with Irula tribes linguistic needs. Through analyses and identifying the areas to be developed the study advocates for inclusive policies, sustainable technology incorporation and training teachers for improving digital literacy. The findings state that needs for collaborative actions of involving government agencies, NGO's and interested private institutions who come forward to make sure the equitable digital access for learning. Ultimately, incorporating technology to Irula tribe for their education will empower their community, preserve their cultural, and improve their socio-economic background.

Keywords: Digital Learning, E-learning, Irula Tribe, Tribal Education, Technology Integration

Introduction

Education is a powerful tool to improve our socio-economic background, still lots of people from indigenous communities, remain periphery of mainstream education, including the Irula tribe of Tamil Nadu. The Irula's, have strong history that they are relied on oral tradition rather than formal education; they are commonly known for their tradition and closely connected with nature. While government and few NGOs (non-governmental organizations) gave an attempt to improve their literacy rate, faced systematic challenges like poverty, regional isolation, and language barrier persist. Digital learning has emerged to with potential challenges to overcome these challenges by providing equitable education and opportunities such as online education, mobile classroom, e-learning are capable of bridging the gap of educational divide among Irula children. Tamil Nadu government initiated smart classrooms, mobile based education, campaigns for digital literacy to incorporate technology into their education and improve literacy rate of Irula people's education. However, challenges like lack of infrastructure, and low digital literacy present among both teachers and students remains significant hindrance. The study deals with the impact, advantages and challenges of digital learning on Irula education. Further, it explores successful case studies, implementation barriers; suggest techniques to make an inclusive digital learning environment. Through this technique, research underscores technology not only improves their literacy rate but also preserves their culture and identity in developing digital world

Education among the Irula Tribe

Irula tribe's oral tradition and their relationship with nature have historically shaped their education system. They are most resident of Tamil Nadu and some parts of Kerala; they usually rely on experimental learning rather than formal schooling. As commonly said to be semi-nomadic community they are deeply rooted with nature and expertise in herbal medicine and snake-catching and agriculture being down over generations. However, mainstream education system is not promising in accommodating their linguistic and cultural uniqueness, leading to high dropout rates in Irula communities (Kumar and Devi 78). Government has initiated to improve the literacy rate among tribal communities and established tribal schools and midday meal schemes which received

a high welcome in beginning. The Tamil Nadu government has launched various programs like Ekalavya Model Residential Schools and Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, focusing on integrating formal education for tribal children. However, access to education remains a challenge due to socio-economic barriers, geographic isolation, and linguistic differences. Many Irula students find it difficult to adapt to Tamil- or English-medium instruction, leading to disengagement and early dropout (Sundaram 32). The lack of trained teachers who understand tribal cultures further exacerbates the problem. Thus, alternative approaches such as digital learning have been explored as a potential solution to bridge this gap.

The Role of Digital Learning in Tribal Education

Digital learning has emerged as a transformative tool for improving education in marginalized communities, including the Irula tribe. With the advent of mobile technology, online platforms, and e-learning initiatives, digital education offers flexibility and accessibility to students who face difficulties attending traditional schools. Recent efforts in Tamil Nadu, such as the Tamil Nadu Smart Classroom Initiative and the use of Diksha (a government-supported e-learning platform), have shown promise in delivering quality education to rural and tribal students. One of the key benefits of digital learning is its ability to provide customized, multilingual content tailored to the needs of tribal learners. Educational apps and video-based learning programs can offer lessons in the Irula language, making education more engaging and culturally relevant (Meenakshi 89). Additionally, mobile learning solutions enable children in remote areas to access educational resources without requiring them to travel long distances. For example, NGOs like Pratham and Adivasi Education Foundation have introduced digital literacy programs to train Irula students and teachers in using technology for learning. Despite its potential, the integration of digital education faces several challenges. Many Irula villages still lack basic infrastructure such as electricity and internet connectivity, making it difficult to implement online learning programs. Moreover, digital literacy remains low among students and teachers, requiring additional training and support. Addressing these issues requires a multi-stakeholder approach involving government agencies, educational institutions, and community organizations. By leveraging digital technology effectively, education can be made more inclusive and accessible to the Irula tribe, helping bridge the educational divide.

Challenges in Implementing Digital Learning for Irula Students

Despite the transformative potential of digital learning, the implementation of technology-driven education for the Irula tribe faces multiple challenges. One of the primary obstacles is the lack of infrastructure, including unreliable electricity, poor internet connectivity, and insufficient access to digital devices in remote Irula settlements. Many villages still lack basic amenities, making it difficult for students to engage with digital content. According to Kumar and Devi, "Without stable infrastructure, digital learning remains an inaccessible dream for most tribal students". Another major barrier is digital literacy. Both students and teachers often lack adequate training to use e-learning tools effectively. Teachers in tribal schools are frequently unfamiliar with digital pedagogy, making it difficult for them to incorporate technology into their lessons. This results in a limited ability to engage students in interactive, technology-driven learning experiences.

Moreover, most digital educational materials are in Tamil or English, posing a language barrier for Irula children, whose first language is often their indigenous dialect (Meenakshi 92). The absence of culturally relevant and linguistically accessible content discourages students from actively participating in digital learning initiatives. Socioeconomic constraints further hinder digital learning adoption. Many Irula families live in poverty and cannot afford smartphones, tablets, or internet data for online education. Additionally, gender disparities exist, as girls are often less likely to be encouraged to use digital technology compared to boys. Overcoming these challenges requires a holistic approach that includes policy reforms, investment in digital infrastructure, localized educational content, and comprehensive teacher training programs.

Case Studies and Success Stories

Despite the challenges, several initiatives have successfully integrated digital learning into Irula education, demonstrating its potential to bridge educational gaps. One notable example is the Pratham Education Foundation, which introduced a mobile learning initiative in Tamil Nadu's tribal areas. Through the use of low-cost tablets and offline educational content, Pratham has provided Irula students with access to interactive lessons in their native language. The initiative has shown promising results, improving literacy and numeracy skills among tribal children.

Another success story is the "Digital Gurukul" program, implemented by the Tamil Nadu government in collaboration with NGOs. This initiative equips teachers with digital resources, enabling them to create engaging and interactive lesson plans. "By integrating digital technology into the existing curriculum, the Digital Gurukul program has helped bridge the gap between traditional and modern learning methods," states Sundaram (35). The program has particularly benefited students in rural and tribal areas, where access to quality education is limited. Also, AI-powered learning applications have played a crucial role in enhancing education for Irula students. Organizations such as the Adivasi Education Foundation have developed AI-driven platforms that adapt to the learning pace and needs of students. These platforms use gamification and voice-based instruction in local dialects to improve engagement and comprehension. Studies have indicated that students using AI-assisted learning tools show significant improvements in academic performance. Community-driven efforts have also contributed to the success of digital learning. In one Irula village, a grassroots initiative led by local teachers introduced radio-based education to reach students who lacked access to digital devices. The program provided educational content via community radio, ensuring continuity of learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. This approach not only maintained educational engagement but also fostered a sense of inclusivity among tribal students. These case studies highlight the importance of adapting digital education strategies to the specific needs of marginalized communities. By leveraging localized content, AI-powered tools, and community participation, digital learning can become a sustainable solution for improving education among the Irula tribe.

Strategies for Effective Digital Learning Integration

The integration of digital learning in the education of the Irula tribe requires a multi-faceted approach that addresses infrastructural, pedagogical, and socio-economic challenges. The following strategies can help ensure the successful implementation of digital education in tribal communities:

Infrastructure Development and Accessibility: Establishing digital learning centers in Irula villages with access to electricity, internet, and affordable digital devices is crucial. Government programs like Digital India and NGO-led initiatives should prioritize the expansion of digital

infrastructure in tribal regions. Low-cost, solar-powered devices can be introduced to ensure sustainability in off-grid areas.

Localized and Culturally Relevant Content: Developing digital educational materials in the Irula language and integrating their traditional knowledge systems into the curriculum can enhance engagement. Storytelling and gamification methods, rooted in Irula folklore and oral traditions, can make learning more relatable.

Teacher Training and Capacity Building: Training local educators in digital pedagogy and ensuring they are proficient in using e-learning tools will help bridge the technological divide. Providing financial incentives and scholarships for teachers working in remote tribal areas can improve teacher retention and quality of education.

Mobile and Offline Learning Solutions: Since internet connectivity remains a challenge, initiatives like preloaded educational tablets and offline digital libraries can provide continuous learning opportunities. Radio-based and SMS-based learning programs can serve as effective supplements for students in areas with limited digital access (Sundaram 38).

Community Involvement and Awareness Programs: Encouraging parental involvement through community workshops on digital literacy can help build a supportive learning environment. Partnering with local NGOs and tribal leaders to promote digital education will ensure culturally sensitive implementation (Meenakshi 99).

Future Prospects and Recommendations

As technology continues to evolve, digital learning presents immense opportunities to bridge the educational divide for the Irula tribe. However, the sustainability of digital learning initiatives depends on long-term policy commitments and continuous innovation. The following recommendations can guide future efforts:

Government Policy and Funding: The government should allocate more resources to tribal education, ensuring that digital learning programs are included in national and state-level education policies. Expanding financial assistance programs, such as subsidies for digital devices and free internet access in rural schools, can increase student participation.

Artificial Intelligence and Adaptive Learning: AI-powered educational tools can personalize learning experiences based on individual student needs, helping overcome language and comprehension barriers. Voice-assisted AI learning applications in the Irula language can further enhance accessibility.

Public-Private Partnerships: Collaboration between the government, technology firms, and non-profit organizations can accelerate digital education reforms. Companies specializing in EdTech should be encouraged to develop customized learning solutions for tribal communities.

Monitoring and Assessment Systems: Regular evaluation of digital learning initiatives through data collection and impact assessment studies will help refine educational strategies. Incorporating feedback mechanisms from teachers, students, and community members can ensure that programs are effective and relevant.

Expanding Digital Literacy Beyond Students: Introducing digital skills training for adults in the Irula community can help integrate technology into their everyday lives, promoting socio-economic development (Sundaram 42). Skill-based e-learning programs tailored for tribal youth can enhance employment opportunities and reduce dropout rates. By adopting these strategies and recommendations, digital learning can serve as a powerful tool for transforming education among the Irula tribe, ensuring inclusivity, accessibility, and cultural preservation in the learning process.

Conclusion

Digital learning has the potential to revolutionize education for the Irula tribe by bridging the accessibility gap and fostering inclusivity. However, its successful integration requires a holistic approach that addresses infrastructure, language barriers, teacher training, and community involvement. While initiatives such as mobile learning programs, AI-powered tools, and government-led projects have demonstrated positive outcomes, challenges such as poor digital literacy, economic constraints, and cultural adaptation persist. Future efforts should focus on localized content development, sustained policy support, and collaborative partnerships between government bodies, NGOs, and technology firms. By ensuring culturally responsive and technology-driven education, digital learning can empower the Irula community, preserving their heritage while equipping them with the skills necessary to thrive in a modern, interconnected

world. Continued investment and research in this domain will be essential for making digital education a sustainable and effective tool for tribal upliftment.

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