

Three Language Formula and Hindi Language in Mizoram

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Abstract

Language is the core of education processes. It affects our cognitive capacity not only as a means of education but also as a component of our thought process. The more languages, the more diversified the tools of thinking. Through NCF 2005 and later documents, the policy of three language formula has been reiterated and vindicated with new evidences from researches in sciences and social sciences. The historical policy of teaching three languages which was initiated in India in 1961 for the sake of national integration presently has been grounded deeper because exposure to multiple languages brings better dividends to the academic achievement of students. The present paper attempts to justify the demand of quality language education with special reference to Hindi teaching in Mizoram. Besides justifying the three language formulae in the country as well as in Mizoram, the paper analysed the status of teaching Hindi as a third language in the state. The paper suggests that teachers with good competencies in Hindi language should be hired in the schools of Mizoram by the government. Qualified teacher-educators should be recruited in teacher education institutions for pedagogy of Hindi. Whosoever is recruited against the post of Hindi teacher, and not trained in pedagogy of language should be sent to teacher training institutions for special courses developed in language pedagogy.

Key Words: Language, Three-Language Formula, Hindi Language

Introduction

Language is a life itself (Juluri, 2019). It has great impact on human mind. It is not only a means of communication, but it influences our intelligence, personality, social status, educational achievements and many other areas of our identity and social survival. Language is a cultural entity and a very powerful socio-political identity. Language and culture are intermingled. It is the most complex and abstract system of communication (Dua, 2008) and

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our everyday familiarity with it can make it difficult to appreciate the complexity of the skills we have learned (Crystal, 2010).

India is well-known as a multilingual nation. There are a number of languages, dialects, mother tongues and speech varieties spoken in the country. For multilingual society, it is essential to preserve its multilingual characteristic and ensure the development of all languages and cultures (Dua, 2008). According to the census 2001, the total number of languages was counted to be 122 (in which 22 were scheduled). Nonetheless, after independence, the states are formed on the basis of language. The multilingual and pluri-cultural nature of our society makes it clear that we need more than one language for national cohesion, cultural integration and social area mobility (Ramaswamy & Sethi 2017).

Languages of India

There are 22 scheduled languages and 99 non-scheduled languages in India (Census 2011). The 121 scheduled and non-scheduled languages of India have their roots in these five language families: Indo-European, Dravidian, Tibeto-Burman, Austro-Asiatic, and Semito-Hamitic (census 2011). The table 1 shows the language families and their speakers in India.

Table 1
Language families and its Speakers in India

S.no.	Language Family	Sub family	Number of Languages	Number of Speakers	Percent of Speakers
1	Indo-European	Indo-Aryan	21	94,50,52,555	78.05%
		Iranian	1	21,677	0.00%
		Germanic	1	2,59,678	0.02%
2	Dravidian		17	23,78,40,116	19.64%
3	Astro-Asiatic		14	1,34,93,080	1.11%
4	Tibeto- Burmese		66	1,22,57,382	1.01%
5	Semito-Hamitic		1	54,947	0.00%
Total			121	1,20,89,79,435	99.85%

Source: Census of India 2011

The majority of Indian language speakers are from the Indo-European and Dravidian groups. Approximately 98% speakers are from these two families (Indo-European and Dravidian groups). The remaining language speakers are from Astro-Asiatic, Tibeto-Burmese and Semito-Hamitic families.

Three language formula

It can be said that India is the land of languages. In order to encourage multilingualism and facilitate language acquisition throughout the nation, a policy which fulfills the need of

the multilingual nation is needed. The Three Language Formula was such that it was implemented as a national educational policy in India in the 1960s. This policy has been reinforced and supported by many commissions and committees, including the Kothari Commission (1964-66), the National Policy on Education (NPE) 1968 and NPE1986 (as modified in 1992), and the National Education Policy 2020. The Three-Language Formula emphasized the importance of teaching at least three languages at the school level, as well as the need for sufficient language proficiency for students passing from the secondary schools. The Three Language Formula encourages students to study three languages, consisting of:

1. The mother tongue or the regional language.
2. The nation's official language or its associate official language, if either exists (Hindi is the official language, and English is its associate official language).
3. A modern Indian language or a foreign language that is not listed in items 1 and 2 above and is not being used as a medium of instruction.

The three language formula is an effort to handle the potential and limitations of India's linguistic environment. The primary aim of the formula is to promote multilingualism and national harmony (Ramaswamy & Sethi 2017). In the first decade of the twenty first century, National Curriculum Framework (NCF), 2005 emphasised again on three language formula, but the reasons this time, were different. Whereas the three-language formula was started and implemented with principal motive of national integration; NCF 2005 marked a shift in ideology to cognitive development, social tolerance, divergent thinking and scholastic achievement (NCERT, 2005).

While the three-language formula is a well-known policy intervention in language education, it has not been free of political disagreements and conflicts. The three-language formula has not been implemented adequately throughout the country. The political parties of southern states strongly opposed this formula. The continuation of three language formula with add-on features was proposed in the Draft NPE, 2019. With the declaration of the draft only, battle ground for political words was prepared. Some quotes are given as below. Following the words of chief minister of Karnataka, Siddaramaiah, the ex-chief minister and ex-cabinet minister said,

"Nothing should be done against our opinion. There is no need for three languages. English and Kannada are there... they are enough. Kannada is our mother tongue, so primacy should be given to Kannada," (Bussiness-Standards, 2019).

Tamil Nadu says it would adhere to its current policy of two languages and has rejected the NEP 2020 proposal for three languages (Jesudasan, 2020). Owing to such apprehensions, the Government of India had to make a declaration that Hindi would not be imposed (The Times of India, 2019). While other states, particularly those in the north, adopted this formula without providing south Indian languages a place in the curriculum, it became four language formula in some states (Ratti, 2015). NEP 2020 advocates that the three-language formula should be implemented throughout the country with the spirit to promote multilingual communicative abilities for a multilingual country.

Importance of Hindi

The question is, why is so much importance given to Hindi, inspite of there being a huge number of languages in India? The resistance of Hindi as a national language gives a sound platform to English indirectly. There is no Navodaya Vidyalaya in Tamilnadu because it is based on three-language formula. The English language, though made into an associate official language in 1967, has not been included in the schedule (Sarangi, 2015). Would it be OK to make English a national language when it is not the language of India? Undoubtedly, English is the language of the world and knowledge, but it cannot be the language of the nation. During the debate on the Official Language Amendment Bill, 1967, a member of parliament pointed out that 'the languages in the schedule should be the language of the country (proceedings of the Official Languages Amendment Bill 1967, page 6092; as cited in Sarangi 2015, page 27). The question of national language, its recognition and representation over and above the colonial language and other regional languages has remained central to the national policy in independent India (Dua, 1993). Regarding the issue of the national language, if it is not Hindi, then what should it be? The ability to unite the whole country lies in Hindi. Hindi (41.03 percent) is the language that is most often spoken in India, followed by Bengali (8.11 percent), Telugu (7.19 percent), Marathi (6.99 percent), and other Indian languages. The majority of the population speaks Hindi; based on this, Hindi can be a language of the Indian community as a whole. It is a language of national integration. According to Sridhar (1989), three language formula is; the interests of group identity (mother tongues and regional languages), national pride and unity (Hindi), and administrative efficiency and technological progress (English). Setting aside all the controversy and debates, it cannot be denied that the more languages, the more cognitive capacities (Marian & Shook, 2012); and undoubtedly Hindi occupies a prominent space in the educational curriculum and finds full support at the national level. Therefore, third language teaching should not be for namesake only or because of political commitment, but it should be developed at the higher level so that students can use it as effective cognitive tool. Hindi is the official language of the union and the only scheduled language that the state must promote (Kidwai, 2020). Hindi is not a national language but we cannot deny that it is the language of national importance. As one of the two official languages of the Indian government, along with English, Devanagari-written Hindi is designated in Article 343 of the Constitution. Hindi is scheduled language along with 21 other languages. Propagation and implementation of Hindi language across the national territories is a constitutional responsibility of the central government (Article, 351). On account of market forces and substantial migration of Hindi speaking people to various countries, Hindi is also getting recognition as an international language too. As per one estimate, it is the third most spoken language in the world. According to J. P. Nautiyal (2015), Hindi is the firstmost spoken language in the world. In the northeast region of the country, Hindi has started getting recognition. Outside the country (India), Hindi has been an official language in Fiji since the year 1997, as around four lakh people in Fiji speak Hindi, which is known as Fiji Hindi. Also, Madhesi community of Nepal uses this language. Besides, large numbers of people in other Asian countries like Bangladesh, Pakistan, Mauritius, Surinam etc. also use this language. As per the census of the United States, Hindi is the largest spoken Indian language in US (The Economics Times, 2015)

Hindi in Mizoram

Mizoram is also teaching three languages at elementary level. Learning three languages (Mizo, English, Hindi) creates heavy demand in educational processes. It is required to make teaching more meaningful and relevant not only for mental, cognitive and socio-cultural development but also to help cope with the heavy demand of language learning by the children of minority linguistic groups (Dua, 2008). For the development of Hindi, English and regional language as a second or third language, there are three points which must be taken into consideration: first, to characterise the nature and scope of the language; second, to develop suitable curriculum at various stages of school education, and third, to establish links between the mother tongue and education in the case of linguistic minorities (Dua, 2008). English is a predominant second language for higher education and socio-economic mobility and it is valued by the minority language speakers. Besides English, minority speakers are also required to acquire other languages of national importance for socio-political participation and occupational mobility. Hindi is that 'other language' of national importance. Hindi is a compulsory subject from class III to class VIII and seven Higher secondary schools are also providing Hindi as a school subject (Lalmachhuani, 2019). Besides this, MICE (Mizoram Institute of Comprehensive Education) affiliated to Central Board of Secondary Education, New Delhi was established by the state government for the promotion of Hindi language. At undergraduate level, two-degree colleges i.e., Government Aizawl College, Aizawl and Government Kamla Nagar College, Chakma Autonomous District Council (CADC), Lawngtlai are offering Hindi as a subject. Post graduate degree is being provided by the only university of the state; Mizoram University, Aizawl. But natural skills of Hindi language are less visible among the youngsters of the state. Moreover, native languages of the states also belong to language families which are different from Hindi language. However, the same students also sometimes happen to be good in English, although English is also different in nature.

Owing to its accountability towards Hindi and special status of the state, more than one thousand Hindi teachers were recruited in the state whose salaries were paid by the central government. The Government of Mizoram also created a Hindi teacher training institute in 1975, which is associated with the Central Hindi Institute in Agra. Hindi Shikshan Parangat, Hindi Shikshan Praveen, and Hindi Shikshak Diploma were the three courses that the college offered, all of which were under the administrative jurisdiction of the Directorate of Higher and Technical Education. Another institution which offers courses in Hindi up to B.A.(Hindi) is Mizoram Hindi Prachar Sabha established in 1971. There is also a Hindi wing established in 1973-74 under the Directorate of School Education.

Hence a lot of works for the development of Hindi language have been done in Mizoram. But the success of the propagation and promotion of Hindi (as a language or a subject) depends mainly on the teachers. The educational and professional qualification of the teachers plays an important role towards the betterment of the education system. For the development of Hindi in Mizoram, a highly proficient Hindi teacher with good communication skills is required. Mizoram is facing severe shortage of qualified and motivated school teachers of language pedagogy. National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education 2009 (NCFTE,

2009) pointed that training of pre-service and in-service training of school teachers are extremely inadequate and poorly managed in most of the states. According to Lalhmachhuani (2019), there are large numbers of Hindi teachers (41.63%) who are not qualified and more than half of the Hindi teachers (54.54%) are appointed on contractual basis. It also reveals that the prevailing method of teaching of Hindi is found unsatisfactory by both the teachers and the students. The only training college in Mizoram that offers pre-service and in-service training for Hindi teachers is Mizoram Hindi Training College. Though the one programme which seems more popular in the state run by the college is not fulfilling NCTE norms and not recognised by NCTE. Hence, their validity is doubted outside of the Mizoram and before national level teacher recruitment agencies.

Suggestions

It is recommended that teachers with good competencies in Hindi language should be hired in the schools of Mizoram by the government (Central/State). It would be better if the number of teachers who are native speakers of Hindi language be given weightage in the recruitment of teachers of Hindi language. The suggestion of recruitment of native speaker of Hindi language is conforming to the ideology of communicative approaches of language teaching and constructivist approach to teaching-learning in general. NEP 2020 also emphasises the investment in language teachers by both the Central and State governments in all regional languages. There is also an urgent requirement of qualified teacher-educators in teacher education institutions since all the teacher education institutions excluding Hindi Training College are running without teacher educator for pedagogy of Hindi. Whosoever is recruited against the post of Hindi teacher, and not trained in pedagogy of language should be sent to teacher training institutions for special courses developed in language pedagogy. But such facility is not available in the state. Hindi teacher training college also focuses on pre-service teacher education only. The provision of any in-service training programmes being offered by the teacher training colleges is not known by the authors. Recently, Faculty Development Centre, Mizoram University has started short term training programmes for Hindi teachers in Mizoram. As per the ongoing research work by the authors, there is urgent need to upgrade the pedagogical skills of Hindi teachers in the state.

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