Student-Teachers' Perspectives on Bilingual Education and Resources A Case Study from the University of Lucknow

RITIKA SRIVASTAVA*

Abstract

This research study explores student-teachers' perspectives on bilingual education and the availability of hindi-english resource materials for the Bachelor of Education programme at the University of Lucknow. Using a qualitative, exploratory case study approach, the study involves a purposive sample of twenty student-teachers (10 preferring hindi for exams and 10 preferring english), six university teachers, and three booksellers in Lucknow. The findings reveal mixed responses among participants, with some studentteachers viewing bilingual teaching as supportive, while others perceive limitations due to the unsatisfactory quality of teaching. The study highlighted the scarcity of updated, high-quality hindi resource materials and the use of quides or kunji by student-teachers. The biases of a few university teachers toward the english language are also found in the study. The empirical evidence suggests that various assessment methods are required as it is significant to focus on student-teachers' thoughts and dispositions, integrating bilingual teaching approaches to strengthen teacher education programmes. The study concluded that there is a need to prepare the 'bilingual teacher preparation programme as a linguistic model' for university teachers and student-teachers.

Keywords: Bilingual education, bilingual resources, bilingualism, teacher education

^{*}Ph.D Scholar, School of Educational Studies, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Hyderabad.

INTRODUCTION

In India, the National Policy on Education (1968) emphasised that a child's first language of instruction should be their mother tongue or a regional language, while in hindispeaking states, the second language should be another modern Indian language or english. The existence and use of hindi-english have been observed for many decades (Klingler, 2017). The use of two languages simultaneously switching and between two languages or codeswitching is called bilingualism. In most of the North Indian schools and universities, bilingualism or switching between two languages (hindi and english) has been used for everyday teaching and learning. This bilingual teaching involves mixing and using two languages in the context of teaching, in a colloquial language called 'hinglish'. Despite the general perception that students are either in a hindi or english 'medium'. The term 'medium' is employed in Indian classrooms as the language through which teachers and students construct knowledge and engage in meaning-making. However. there is a growing concern that it has evolved into a tool for domination and diglossia (Ferguson, 1959) within bilingual contexts. This situation is characterised by the dominance of one language and a particular group of people, leading to linguistic inequality and an imbalance in power dynamics.

Many schools employ bilingualism, with code-switching being the primary difference between the two. For instance, for a child who prefers hindi 'medium', translanguaging (Creese and Blackledge, 2010) involves using hindi as the first language (L1) and english as the second language (L2). On the other hand, for a child who prefers an english 'medium', the process of translanguaging is vice versa. Consequently, code-switching is common in both the 'medium' of instruction, and the use of L1 and L2 is observable in most Indian schools.

In higher education, most North Indian universities follow bilingual education (teaching-learning processes) without offering separate sections based on the choice of the 'medium' instruction. of According to Jayaram (1993), around 54.64 per cent of Indian universities provide bilingual instruction in one or more programmes. While teaching and learning in these universities often occur bilingually, students must write exams in either english or hindi, with 'hinglish' not accepted in university examinations. Students, who are comfortable in writing exams in hindi, can choose to write exams in hindi while those who prefer english can do the same in english. Therefore, in teaching-learning, the nature of bilingual education differs between schools and universities.

Given this context, it is crucial to explore student-teachers' perspectives regarding bilingual education and hindi-english resources available in the teacher preparation programme. The study focuses on Bachelor of Education student-teachers and uses the term 'bilingual' because 206 Journal of Indian Education

of the use of hindi-english codeswitching in education, and the availability of separate hindi-english resource materials for study. The literature review section emphasises bilingual teaching and bilingualismbased studies in teacher preparation programmes. It points out that the area of bilingual education remains relatively unexplored and less researched within university contexts.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review highlights that research on bilingual teaching and pedagogical translanguaging has been a topic of academic discourse for more than a decade. Benson (2004)emphasises the greater challenge of bilingual teaching compared to monolingual teaching due to the need to address the diverse backgrounds of students. Genesee (2006) highlighted the importance of bilingual competence and stated that it requires the effective and appropriate use of target languages for authentic personal, educational, social, and/or work-related purposes. The National Focus Group Paper Indian Languages (National on Council of Educational Research and Training, 2005) highlights the strong connection between bilingualism, and cognitive growth and scholastic achievement of students. Bialystok (2007) points out that bilingualism must be acknowledged and practiced bilingual individuals as exhibit greater cognitive flexibility compared to monolinguals. Cummins (2009)

advocates teaching for bilingual bilingualism strategies because effectively addresses challenges in the english language and supports students in their academic growth. Cho, Rios, Trent and Mayfield (2012); Menon, Vishwanatha, and Sahi (2014); and Giambo and Szecsi (2015) strongly assert that the bilingual approach does not hinder students' cognitive, linguistic, and affective development but strengthens language proficiency.

Despite these studies, it is also noted that there are studies that establishment focused on and significance of bilingual teaching in teacher education programmes, as it empowers students to shape their training, self-perception, and future aspirations according to their own cultural identity (Varghese, 2004). By highlighting the relationship between bilingual education and the quality of teacher education programmes, it is researched that studying the requirements for teacher training is crucial because the success of bilingual education is considered to be dependent on the quality of teacher preparation (Coyle, 2011 and Gisbert, 2011 as cited in Perez Canado, 2016). Signifying the research on teacher education programmes and bilingual teachers, Menon, Vishwanatha, and Sahi (2014) expressed there is a need to rigorously test bilingual frameworks for teacher education programme. However, while suggesting pedagogical possibilities for bilingual and multilingual teachers, they recommended an 'additive' bilingual

(individual develops approach proficiency in a second language by maintaining and strengthening their first language), valuing the meaningmaking process and participation to characterise emergent proficiencies. They added students and teachers must develop a critical understanding and stance towards language(s). By acknowledging bilingual teacher education, Caldas (2019) points out that classrooms for bilingual teacher preparation have the potential to serve as spaces where language ideologies are contested and possibly changed. The literature review indicated the need for studying bilingual teaching and resources for teacher education programmes in the Indian context. It also shows a dearth of studentteacher voices regarding bilingual education and resources which is necessary to unpack the perceptions they hold and believe they possess.

THE CONTEXT

The present study focuses on studentteachers' perspectives on bilingual education and the availability of hindi and english resource materials in the Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) programme at the University of Lucknow. The study was conducted in the Department of Education at the University of Lucknow and affiliated colleges, where bilingual teaching has been continued for more than fifty years. The University of Lucknow was founded in 1867 and is one of the old state universities of Uttar Pradesh. Students come from various urban and rural areas of North, and Central India to enroll in different programmes. B.Ed. is a preservice programme where studentteachers come from science, arts. and commerce streams. Most of the enrolled student-teachers in the B.Ed. programme finished their schooling either in hindi or english 'medium'. In the Department of Education, B.Ed. programme's teaching-learning process is continuing in bilingual, and resources have been available in hindi and english for over fifty years. Student-teachers are free to select their 'medium' of writing the exam in english or hindi. In this particular context, where bilingualism is used as a 'medium' of instruction and hindi-english resource materials are recommended to student-teachers, it becomes crucial to explore studentteachers' perspectives on bilingual teaching and the use of hindi-english resource materials.

OBJECTIVE OF THE **S**TUDY

This research study aims to explore student-teachers' perspectives about bilingual teaching-learning and available hindi-english resource materials in the Bachelor of Education programme at the University of Lucknow.

Research Questions of the Study

The study's research questions focus on:

• What do student-teachers perceive about bilingual teaching-learning in the Bachelor of Education programme? 208 Journal of Indian Education

• What are the student-teacher viewpoints regarding hindi-english resource materials for the Bachelor of Education programme?

Method

To meet the objective and research questions stated, the qualitative and exploratory case study was conducted within the context of the Bachelor of Education programme at the Department of Education, University of Lucknow. The group of student-teachers serves as the 'unit of analysis' (Yin, 2009) in this study. The case of student-teachers is tightly bound within its context, with a focus on exploring their perspectives on bilingual education and available resources. The strength of this study lies in contextual embeddedness in which 'the case only represents itself', as highlighted by Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2013). This aspect supports other researchers, academicians, or policymakers in understanding and exploring similar cases, phenomena, or situations.

Sample

The qualitative research approach involves purposive sampling of 20 student-teachers based on the criteria of preference, such as 10 student-teachers who prefer to write the exam in english and 10 who prefer to write the exam in hindi. The sample includes six university teachers, and three booksellers to ensure the validity and reliability of data through participant

triangulation (Smith, 1975). The inclusion of multiple participants with varied experiences, viewpoints, and insights on bilingual education and available hindi-english resources strengthens the data source triangulation (Denzin, 1978; Patton, 1990) and brings nuances.

Data Collection and Analysis

To attain the research questions the study, a semi-structured of interview schedule was prepared for student-teachers and university teachers. Non-formal interactions were held with three booksellers from the Aminabad market in Lucknow. Aminabad is an old city market in Lucknow that has operated since the time of the Nawabs of Awadh. It is located in a posh area and connected to the city. The semi-structured interviews and interactions were conducted in hindi, and transcribed and translated into english. То conceal the identity and privacy of the participants, the researcher has used pseudonyms for all the participants. The analysis of data was conducted using axial coding (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison. 2013). wherein codes related to student-teacher perspectives on bilingual education and hindi-english resource materials were identified. Subsequently, based on connections between codes and common patterns. these codes were categorised, and sub-themes emerged. By grouping the codes and sub-themes into larger categories or thematic patterns, overarching

themes were elicited from the empirical data.

FINDINGS FROM THE **S**TUDY

The thematic analysis has been conducted on the empirical evidence gathered from elicited responses. The following themes have been identified as major findings of the study:

1. Problematising pedagogy and paucity of hindi resource materials

Most of the student-teachers who prefer writing exams in hindi have conveyed that they do not encounter any difficulties in bilingual teachinglearning in the classrooms. Many of them appreciate the bilingual teaching mode. stating that it closely resembles their everyday conversations. For instance, а student-teacher expressed, "Teaching is like how we speak daily" (U_S16, semi-structured interview). However, of the student-teachers most expressed concerns consistently regarding the availability of highquality hindi medium textbooks and reference materials. All 10 students who prefer writing exams in hindi have highlighted that the resource materials available in hindi do not meet the same standards as their english counterparts. They believe that english materials are of superior quality while expressing a lack of authenticity in hindi materials. Despite these challenges, they continue to study using hindi materials and write their exams

in hindi because of their language comfort. For instance, the studentteacher shared,

"In hindi, we do not have as rich material as english medium students have. In hindi, I cannot say that we have authentic material with correct theories and explanations. A few are good but very limited. Availability of material is one of the reasons english medium students score better than hindi medium. I tried to read english medium material to know more about the content but language was a barrier for me." (U_S5, semistructured interview)

Most of the student-teachers who are comfortable writing exams in english added that while teachers explain all the content and concepts in hindi, it does not support them in improving their content knowledge in english. Also, some of them expressed that bilingual classroom teaching hardly supports them as they had to read content from english resources later. They hold a viewpoint that content in english resources are in-depth while teaching in classrooms is surface-level. student-teachers mentioned Some that a few teachers provide classroom notes in english, while others provide them in hindi. This situation creates difficulties for both hindi and english medium students regarding making notes during classroom sessions. Anwesha, who prefers to write exams in english, expressed,

"I am not in favour of any bilingual kind of teaching mode. They (faculties) teach mixed in languages and confuse me about the content. Sometimes I feel we get only a superficial understanding of the topic. I strongly feel that teachers should cater to the needs of students... There should be a separate section for hindi and english medium students. According to me, bilingual teaching is not bilingual, it is in 'hinglish'-Some hindi, some english." (U

S8. semi-structured interview) Student-teachers who prefer writing exams in english have expressed that they have ample access to resource materials in english. They have not encountered any challenges in obtaining content relevant to their syllabus. All six university teachers expressed that in comparison to hindi, english resource materials are abundant. Some university teachers added that it is even difficult for them to find better hindi reference materials for teaching topics like case studies, assessment, action research, philosophy of education, and sociology of education. However, they believe that teaching-learning in a bilingual mode benefits studentteachers, as language is not a criterion for selecting candidates for teacher education programmes. They expressed concerns that creating separate sections based on language would categorise student-teachers based on perceived superiority or inferiority of their language.

The findings from the section reveal that student-teachers who prefer writing exams in hindi are generally satisfied with the bilingual teaching mode but face challenges in accessing high-quality hindi language resource materials as mentioned by Niranjana (2013) and Perez Canado (2016).Furthermore. studentteachers who prefer to write exams in hindi express that they know they will score less than their classmates who will write exams in english. Studentteachers who prefer writing exams in english do not express worries about the availability of english resources but are dissatisfied with the bilingual teaching mode in the teacher education programme. University teachers were aware of the availability of resource materials in both languages and believe that bilingual teaching is beneficial as it supports students from a 'hindi medium' background. In this context, there is a need to produce better quality hindi language resource materials while also considering strategies to strengthen pedagogy that supports the learning of student-teachers who prefer to study in english or hindi.

2. Guide or *kunji* as a ubiquitous supplementary resource material

In available resource materials, student-teachers discussed the availability of guide or *kunji* in hindi and english. Guide or *kunji* is a supplementary resource material available in hindi and english. These are available in the market at low cost (compared to reference books) and students use them for different purposes. In teacher education. these are available for all the papers, including pedagogy papers. This resource material is widely used in teacher education programmes, as indicated by student-teachers and booksellers in the market. Studentteachers' mentioned that textbooks and reference books are available in both languages, but they also use the guide or kunji. University teachers acknowledged that the guide or kunji, in a question-answer format, has been available in the market for many vears. The student-teachers shared that various types of guide or kunji are available, such as paper-wise guides, five-in-one guides, and guides specifically focused on teaching methods, including grade-wise and topic-wise lesson plans. The three booksellers in the Aminabad market confirmed that many students visit their shops to purchase guide and students purchase B.Ed. guide more than books.

Regarding the widespread use of guide, many student-teachers mentioned that they rely on guides as a resource material available in the market. Guides are available in both hindi and english, eliminating language barriers. Student-teachers who prefer hindi or english writing expressed that guides provide similar translated content in both languages, ensuring that the content accessibility itself is not a problem. Some studentteachers who prefer writing exams in hindi highlighted that studying from guides gives them the feeling of studying the same material as their english medium counterparts.

Most student-teachers highlighted that the guide is an important resource for students who prefer to write exams in hindi as the Guide available in hindi language covers entire and revised syllabi. They added that getting a complete syllabus in hindi books is difficult. All studentteachers shared that the faculty never suggested studying from guide but the faculty also found it difficult to suggest hindi resource material. A student-teacher expressed the issue in a vignette—

"We do not have updated books in the hindi language. We know books that are recommended bv teachers and many books are very old, even few authors write books like a guide, then it is better to use a guide because in a guide every year publisher adds new questions and new knowledge. They add content that is available in english books. Hindi language books are old, they do not cover the syllabus." (U_S1, semistructured interview)

Student-teachers have highlighted that most prefer using guide because they are written in an easy, simple, and understandable language. However, they shared that the quality of content and knowledge provided by guide or kunji is unsatisfactory but they are forced to use it. It was found that in the market most popular resource material among studentteachers are *parichay* class notes and disha (in hindi and english) for all subjects. Some student-teachers pointed out that 'the available' guide contains faulty examples, incorrect pictures, and graphs, which only a few can identify and understand as errors. Yet, regarding availability, updated and easy content for the B.Ed. programme, guide is readily available, and exam-centric resource material is used by hindi and a few english preferred student-teachers. University teachers also acknowledge the use of guide and kunji by the students. However, they do not consider them suitable resource materials in any language.

The findings demonstrate that learning materials in vernacular languages would be expected to bridge the gap between students' conceptual understanding and the wealth of knowledge available in the world 2013). Unfortunately, (Niranjana, the presence of poor-quality resource materials like guide or kunji worsens the knowledge base of studentteachers. Jayaram (1993) has also expressed concerns about the study material at the undergraduate level, stating that materials like notes and guides written in a question-answer format are often of poor quality in terms of language proficiency. This widespread use of guides or kunji raises three essential aspects. First,

there is a lack of availability of resource materials in vernacular languages. Second, the focus must be given to the accessibility, cost, and quality of such materials and the need to produce economical, quality resource material for all student-teachers. Third, the situation highlights the need to restructure assessment methods and diverse ways of assessments must be included. Student-teachers must be involved in discussions, asking questions, and 'book talks' (Giambo Szecsi, 2015) which might and include language-related concerns, discussions, and debates too.

3. Experiencing english language bias

Student-teachers have highlighted that although they can write exams in hindi or english, there is a general perception within the department that 'students who write the exam in english tend to achieve higher scores'. Student-teachers' who prefer writing exams in hindi have observed that most of the student-teachers who write exams in english score well. They mentioned that in some instances, such as when examiners evaluate based on the use of headings, diagrams, and the neatness of their work, even student-teachers who write exams in hindi score well. However, all of them emphasised that the language in which the exam is written affects the assessment students. Soni, who of prefers writing exams in hindi, shared their perspective on this language-based assessment.

"...teachers themselves acknowledged in the classroom that students who write exams in english will score well in the examination." (U_S3, semistructured interview)

When the researcher inquired about the reason behind it, she added,

"Bias... everyone knows teachers are biased toward the use of the english language. I know this bias is not applicable when faculty teach, but it is related to student's selection of the english language in writing exams. For instance, if you write in english, you will score well." (U_S9, semistructured interview)

Some student-teachers have shared that their seniors advised them to write exams in english achieve better scores. As to а result, student-teachers who were initially comfortable writing in hindi attempted to write exams in english in forthcoming semesters. They did so because they perceived that english influenced the results. However, after trying to write one or two papers in english, they found it comfortable to express themselves in hindi, as they could articulate their thoughts better in their native language. Writing in english was a problem for them.

Some university teachers have expressed their belief that studentteachers who write exams in english tend to write more focused and organised content. In contrast, they believe that student-teachers' who write exams in hindi tend to write random content. For instance, Professor Sarla, who has over twentyeight years of teaching experience at the university, shared her viewpoint—

"Usually, those students or candidates with english backgrounds medium are better than hindi medium students, but ... it does not mean that all hindi medium students are not good. They are good, but the percentage of good performance of hindi medium students is lower than that of english medium students. Students who write in english, are better at analysing and have better insights and impressions." (UF 3, semi-structured interview)

Some university teachers believe student-teachers that who write in their vernacular tend to write conversationally, "they write the way they speak every day". Further, they argue that student-teachers who write in english must put in more effort to read and understand in a language that is not their first language. They believe that student-teachers who write exams in english, work hard to grasp and conceptualise the content english. Further, university in teachers reflected that they have noticed that student-teachers from 'english medium' backgrounds tend to grasp disciplinary vocabulary and terminology better, and they do not use vague explanations. The teachers used the word 'kuch bhi' (anything) to convey the understanding or meaning-making by most of the vernacular student-teachers.

While bilingualism is promoted by university teachers in classroom teaching, they tend to show bias towards english as a language for writing exams. Furthermore, the bias of university teachers towards one language highlights the unequal acceptance given to two languages which shows diglossia (Ferguson, 1959) within bilingual contexts. This complexity in using bilingualism within teacher education programmes marginalises students from vernacular backgrounds, limiting their access to better knowledge resources. It further reveals that the imbalance in the availability of quality resources and teaching in two languages is not easy, as highlighted by Benson (2004) and Genesee (2006).

These findings indicate that there is a need to prepare the 'bilingual teacher preparation programme as a linguistic model' (Caldas, 2019) for university teachers and studentteachers. It is also noteworthy to add a linguistic module to university teacher training, which must develop a critical understanding of the historical, social, and cultural nuances of language trajectory in India, among university teachers.

CONCLUSION

The paper concludes by highlighting three significant aspects. First, pedagogy-related issues that studentteachers experience during classroom interactions due to bilingual teaching and learning. Emphasising the importance of knowledge construction in both languages and the inclusion of hindi or english language for student-teachers. the studv advocates for university teachers to promote bilingualism. However, while content must be simplified, depth and criticality in teaching must be maintained. Second, the study concludes the lack of availability of quality hindi language resource materials and the ubiquitous use of guides or *kunji* as supplementary resource materials. The limited availability of hindi language resource materials represents unequal academic resources, access to hindering student-teachers access to knowledge. Third, it addresses the existing issues in bilingual education and student-teachers' beliefs on writing exams in english to achieve good marks. The existing bias toward a specific language negatively impacts educational outcomes and cognitive growth (National Council of Educational Research and Training, 2005; Bialystok, 2007; Cummins, 2009) of student-teachers.

The study concludes that the language divide among studentteachers is not explicitly based on categories like 'hindi and english medium' sections, as there were no such divisions during teaching. Instead, it is rooted in the choice of english as the language for writing exams. This concealed preference for english over hindi emphasises the dominance of the english language in teacher education programmes. Consequently, the choice of language significantly influences studentteacher results during the assessment process. These findings highlight the complexities of language in teaching in higher education, though many policies and educational frameworks like: the National Education Policy (1968; 1986); National Curriculum Framework (2005), the National Education Policy (2020), and the National Curriculum Framework for School Education (2023) advocated that multiple languages are used to construct knowledge and facilitate the meaning-making process in the classroom. Regrettably, the emphasis on and acceptance of english as the dominant and preferred language for achieving higher exam scores upsurges student-teacher challenges in the learning process.

The study concludes that the hegemony of english usage in the B.Ed. programme and the lower status of hindi has resulted in unequal treatment of the two languages. The present study concludes that teaching and learning in two languages and the availability of vernacular resources that cater to the needs of studentteachers need to be focused on. The study supports the viewpoints of Coyle (2011) and Gisbert (2011) as cited in Perez Canado (2016) and acknowledges that the success of bilingual education is considered to be dependent on the quality of teacher preparation. In the case of the selected B.Ed. programme, the

use of two languages in teaching, learning, and assessments, further shapes the culture of learning in the teacher education programme.

shape the knowledge To of student-teachers, who are regarded as 'prospective teachers', there is a need for a comprehensive understanding foundational of the aspects of philosophy, sociology, psychology of education, economics, development, gender, and other interdisciplinary Furthermore, knowledge. it is significant to acknowledge that in Indian universities, all these areas of knowledge are shaped and connected with vernacular language.

Therefore, university teachers should advocate bilingualism to enhance the quality of teaching and learning, shaping critical teachers, and focusing on knowledge construction and strategies that facilitate the meaning-making process in bilingual classrooms, as cited by Menon, Vishwanatha, and Sahi (2014). Unfortunately, the emphasis on and acceptance of english as the dominant language for achieving scores exacerbates higher exam student-teacher learning and leaves student-teachers unaware of various realms of knowledge.

Implications of the Study

The research addresses the prevalent issue of language diglossia (Ferguson, 1959) within the Bachelor of Education programme. The study advocates student-teachers should have access to an environment

conducive to learning and using both languages effectively. University teachers should adopt an 'additive' bilingual approach. increase student-teacher participation in the process of meaning-making in bilingualism, encourage them and other faculty members to develop a critical stance towards languages, as suggested by Menon, Vishwanatha, and Sahi (2014). Student-teachers should not be judged based on their language proficiency in exams but should be encouraged to think critically, ask questions, and engage in discussions.

It is also suggested that studentteachers and university teachers must participate in 'book talks' (Giambo and Szecsi, 2015), form studentteacher groups to share readings and thoughts in hindi and english, and establish a group of student-teachers and faculty to translate content into high-quality hindi resource material in the university to promote language diversity. These kinds of initiatives and activities might influence studentteachers, and university teacher's attitudes and beliefs about languages, and make them responsible for their role in promoting bilingualism. The study also emphasises the university teachers' role in revising assessment methods to focus on student-teachers thoughts and dispositions and integrate bilingual teaching approaches in the same. In teacher education programmes, the depth of content and concepts must be maintained, and a critical understanding of language could be developed through incorporating debates and assignments on language-related topics, such as language policies, conflicts, the power of language, language in education, and more.

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