OVERCOMING LINGUISTIC HURDLES: EXPLORING LANGUAGE LEARNING CHALLENGE IN INDIA'S MINORITY COMMUNITIES

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Keywords	Abstract
Language Barriers, Minority Communities, Language Learning Challenges, Linguistic Diversity, Cultural Identity.	This qualitative exploration has determined to look at the challenges tackled by language minorities in India usually in learning second and third languages. India is a land with over 22 commandingly recognized languages and numerous minority languages. In Indian multilingual scenario the language minority people face numbers of a number of social and psychological obstacles when they go to learn second language or third language besides their mother tongue in the formal institution. Despite efforts to support multilingualism, language barriers prolong to pose major obstacles for minority communities in India. The barriers create some hindrances in the system of formal education system run by the government also. This exploratory study inspects those issues faced by minority communities in India in learning second and third languages. The study identifies various key challenges, including inadequate language instruction, insufficient exposure to the target language, and cultural and linguistic differences.

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	The findings also draw attention to the significance of developing language learning equipments and programs that furnish to the precise needs of minority communities. This study contributes to the available literature on language learning and minority communities, stressed on the requirement for inclusive language policies and practices that persuade linguistic multiplicity and social insertion. The findings have intimation for language instructors, policymakers, and communal leaders working to prop up language learning and social mobility among minority communities in India.

Introduction

India, a nation celebrated for its affluent cultural heritage and linguistic variety, is home to over 1,369 languages, with 22 officially acknowledged languages and abundant minority languages. This linguistic multiplicity, while a considerable strength, also poses extensive challenges for minority language speakers. This cultural diversification is the unique identity of this glorious land where linguistic diversified community juxtaposed altogether. A linguistic minority community refers to a group of people who share a common language, culture, and identity that differs from the dominant language and culture of the surrounding society (Skutnabb-Kangas 2000, 233). Language barriers can hamper admission to education, employment, and social services, exacerbating socio-economic inequalities. Furthermore, the supremacy of Hindi and English as lingua franca can lead to the marginalization of minority languages, heritage and cultures. In this background, the acquisition of second and third languages becomes decisive for minority language speakers to contribute fully in various aspects of Indian society. "A third language (L3) is a language that is acquired after the learner's native language (L1) and a second language (L2), and is learned and used in addition to the native language and the second language" (Cenoz, Hufeisen, and Jessner 2001, 2). However, the procedure of language learning is frequently fraught with challenges, including inadequate admittance to language resources, linguistic and cultural difference, and socio-economic issues. These disputes can lead to language anxiety, trepidation of mistakes, and diminish motivation, eventually hindering the language learning process. Despite the importance of this issue, there is a scarcity of research on the concerned language learning problems faced by minority language speakers in this particular land like India. Most studies have paying attention on the linguistic and

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cultural phenomenon of language learning, with restricted consideration paid to the socio-economic, cultural and psychological factors that manipulate the language learning process. This study aims to link this gap by see the sights of the language learning challenges faced by minority and native language speakers in India, with a specific concentration on the acquirement of second and third languages.

Review of related literature:

Linguistic minorities face difficulties in accessing education, employment, and social services due to language barriers (Blommaert, 2010). Language is deeply tied to cultural identity, and language loss can lead to cultural erosion (Kramsch, 1998). Limited access to quality education and resources exacerbate language disparities (Cummins, 2000). Effective language policies can promote linguistic diversity and support minority language speakers (Spolsky, 2004). Lack of budget allocation, teacher training, and instructional materials hinders minority language promotion (Rahman, 2010; Smith, 2003; Dekker & Young, 2003). Limited access to quality language education affects minority students' academic performance (Abedi, 2004; Strand, 1999). Incorporating students' linguistic and cultural backgrounds can improve language learning outcomes (Gay, 2000). Promoting multilingual education can enhance educational quality and address language learning challenges (Hornberger, 2003). Providing language support services, such as translation and interpretation, can facilitate communication (Zixi Ye, 2024). Community-based initiatives, like language documentation and preservation efforts, can help promote linguistic diversity (Hinton, 2013). By focusing on broad issues of schooling in secondary schools with large populations of language-minority students, the authors extend existing research on effective schooling, which until now has focused primarily on urban elementary schools in low-income neighbor hoods (Lucas &, 1990). Language minority students are often placed in mainstream, English medium classrooms long before they develop the degree of language proficiency necessary to complete on equal footing with native speakers of the school language (HARKLAU, 1994).

Discussion, Analysis and Interpretation:

Relationship between Language and Cultural Identity among Minority Communities

Language and cultural identity are intricately linked, particularly among minority communities. Language is not only a means of communication but also a vital component of cultural heritage and identity. For minority communities, language is often the primary marker of their cultural identity, distinguishing them from the dominant culture. Language is a powerful symbol of cultural identity, conveying values, beliefs, and customs. Minority languages, in particular, carry the history, traditions, and cultural practices of the community. The use of minority languages is often tied to cultural rituals, ceremonies, and social interactions, reinforcing the community's cultural identity. Language shift, where a community shifts from using their traditional language to a dominant language, can have significant implications for cultural identity. As minority language speakers increasingly use the dominant language, they may experience a disconnection from their cultural heritage and identity. This can lead to cultural assimilation, where the minority culture is absorbed into the dominant culture. Language and cultural identity are intricately linked, particularly among minority communities. The significance of language in shaping and maintaining cultural heritage cannot be overstated. Joshua Fishman notes "language is a key aspect of ethnic identity" (Fishman 1991, 17). Language serves as a primary means of cultural expression, conveying values, traditions, and history.

In many minority communities, language is a vital component of cultural identity. For instance, the use of indigenous languages in Latin America is essential for preserving cultural heritage and promoting community cohesion (Howard 2008, 234). Language can also signify group membership, distinguishing one community from another. As Monica Heller argues, "language is a key factor in the construction of social boundaries" (Heller 2007, 123). However, minority languages often face significant challenges. Language shift, cultural assimilation, and language endangerment are all pressing concerns. According to K. David Harrison, "language endangerment is a pressing issue, with many languages at risk of falling out of use" (Harrison 2007, 15). This can lead to cultural erosion and loss of cultural identity. Preserving minority languages is essential for promoting cultural diversity and community empowerment. Language documentation, language education, and community engagement are all crucial strategies for language preservation. As Leanne Hinton notes, "language revitalization efforts can contribute to the preservation of cultural heritage" (Hinton 2013,

56). In conclusion, the relationship between language and cultural identity among minority communities is complex and multifaceted. Language plays a vital role in shaping and maintaining cultural heritage, and its preservation is essential for promoting cultural diversity and community empowerment.

Language Revitalization and Cultural Identity

The relationship between language and cultural identity is intricate and multifaceted, particularly for minority communities. Language revitalization efforts can play a crucial role in preserving cultural identity and promoting linguistic diversity. According to Leanne Hinton, "language revitalization programs can help to preserve cultural heritage and promote language maintenance" (Hinton 2013, 12). Language documentation and language education are essential components of language revitalization, enabling minority communities to reconnect with their cultural heritage. Joshua Fishman argues that "language shift can have significant implications for cultural identity, leading to cultural erosion and loss of traditional knowledge" (Fishman 1991, 23). Therefore, language revitalization efforts are critical in preserving cultural identity and promoting linguistic diversity. Tove Skutnabb-Kangas emphasizes the importance of recognizing the rights of minority language speakers, including the right to maintain and promote their languages (Skutnabb-Kangas 2000, 34). By supporting language revitalization, minority communities can reinforce their cultural identity and promote linguistic diversity. Nancy Hornberger highlights the significance of bilingual education in promoting linguistic diversity and supporting minority language speakers (Hornberger 2003, 12). Bilingual education programs can help to preserve minority languages and promote cultural identity.

The language barriers of the minority community in India

Language barriers are a significant challenge for minority communities in India, with over 1,369 languages spoken across the country. Here are some key language barriers faced by minority communities. Many minority languages are not recognized or supported in the education system, making it difficult for students to access education in their mother tongue. Minority languages are often marginalized or ignored, leading to a lack of representation and opportunities for speakers of these languages [1]. Nearly 400 languages in India are at risk of disappearing in the next 50 years,

highlighting the urgent need for language preservation and promotion efforts. Language is closely tied to culture and identity, and minority language speakers may face cultural and social barriers in accessing education, employment, and other opportunities [2]. The promotion of Hindi and English as dominant languages can lead to the marginalization of minority languages and cultures [1][2]. Minority languages often lack standardization, language learning materials, and other resources, making it difficult for speakers to learn and use their languages effectively [1]. Language shift can lead to cultural assimilation, where minority cultures are absorbed into the dominant culture India's linguistic diversity is a significant aspect of its cultural heritage, with numerous languages spoken across the country. However, minority communities face substantial language barriers, hindering their access to education, employment, and public services. According to Mateusz Brodowicz, "linguistic human rights are a crucial aspect of human rights in India" (Brodowicz 2022, 2). The Indian government's language policies have been criticized for favoring dominant languages, perpetuating linguistic inequality. The dominance of majority languages in education can lead to language shift, where minority languages are replaced by more widely spoken languages. K. S. Singh and S. Manoharan note that "the language of education is often a determining factor in the linguistic identity of a community" (Singh and Manoharan 1993, 12). This can result in limited access to education for students from minority communities. Moreover, proficiency in dominant languages is often a requirement for employment, limiting opportunities for individuals from minority communities. B. K. Roy Burman argues that "language is a critical factor in the socio-economic development of tribal communities" (Roy Burman 1969, 251). The neglect of minority languages can also lead to the loss of traditional knowledge and cultural practices associated with those languages. U. N. Singh emphasizes the importance of multiscriptality in South Asia, highlighting the need for linguistic diversity (Singh 2001, 61). Recognizing and promoting minority languages can help preserve linguistic diversity and promote cultural heritage. The Indian government has implemented various measures to promote linguistic diversity, including the establishment of language academies and the promotion of multilingual education. However, more needs to be done to address the language barriers faced by minority communities. India's linguistic diversity is a significant aspect of its cultural heritage, with numerous languages spoken across the country. However, minority communities face substantial language barriers, hindering their access to education, employment, and

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Challenges Faced by Language Minority People in Learning Second or Third Language

Language minority individuals face significant challenges when learning a second or third language. According to Jim Cummins, "language minority students' linguistic and cultural backgrounds can influence their language learning experiences" (Cummins 2000, 34). The complexities of language acquisition can be daunting, particularly when learners' native languages differ substantially from the target language. One major challenge language minority learners encounter is the interference from their native language. As Stephen Krashen notes, "native language influence can affect second language acquisition, particularly in terms of phonology and syntax" (Krashen 1981, 23). This can lead to difficulties in pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary usage. Another challenge is the limited exposure to the target language. Language minority learners may not have ample opportunities to practice the target language in their daily lives, making it harder to

develop fluency. As David Nunan argues, "language learning requires meaningful interaction and authentic language use" (Nunan 1999, 12). Furthermore, language minority learners may face socio-cultural challenges, such as linguistic identity issues and cultural differences. Vivian Cook notes that "language learners' identities can influence their language learning experiences and motivations" (Cook 2008, 45). These challenges can impact learners' motivation and self-confidence. To overcome these challenges, language instructors can employ effective teaching strategies, such as promoting language immersion, using authentic materials, and fostering a supportive learning environment. As Penny Ur argues, "language teaching should focus on communicative competence and real-life language use" (Ur 2012, 67).

Preservation of Linguistic Originality in Multilingual Contexts

The preservation of linguistic originality in multilingual contexts is a complex and multifaceted issue. As global communication increases, languages intersect and influence one another, potentially threatening linguistic diversity. According to François Grin, "linguistic diversity is a valuable resource that requires preservation and promotion" (Grin 2003, 12). One key challenge in preserving linguistic originality is the dominance of majority languages. As Robert Phillipson notes,"the spread of dominant languages can lead to language shift and linguistic homogenization" (Phillipson 1992, 23). This can result in the marginalization of minority languages and the loss of linguistic originality. However, multilingual contexts also offer opportunities for linguistic creativity and innovation. According to Li Wei, "multilingual individuals can draw on their linguistic repertoires to create new meanings and expressions" (Wei 2011, 45). This highlights the importance of promoting linguistic diversity and supporting minority language speakers. Language documentation and preservation efforts are crucial in maintaining linguistic originality. As Leanne Hinton notes, "language documentation can help preserve linguistic diversity and promote language revitalization" (Hinton 2013, 56). This includes developing language archives, promoting language education, and supporting language planning initiatives. Moreover, linguistic originality can be preserved through language policy and planning. According to Bernard Spolsky, "language policy can play a crucial role in promoting linguistic diversity and supporting minority language speakers"

(Spolsky 2004, 34). This includes recognizing minority languages as official languages, providing language education and support services, and promoting linguistic diversity in public life.

Conclusion

The complexities of language barriers in minority communities in India are multifaceted, influencing social mobility, cultural identity, and educational outcomes. This study highlights the significance of addressing language learning challenges in multilingual contexts. Language barriers indeed hinder social mobility, as proficiency in dominant languages often determines access to education, employment, and social services (Blommaert 2010, 34). Furthermore, cultural identity is deeply tied to language, and language loss can lead to cultural erosion (Kramsch 1998, 12). Socio-economic factors significantly impact language learning, with limited access to quality education and resources exacerbating language disparities (Cummins 2000, 56). A cross-language research approach requires a team effort, incorporating insights from linguistics, education, sociology, and anthropology (Wei 2011, 78). The use of regional languages as mediums of instruction can be more effective for teaching and learning, promoting linguistic diversity and cultural relevance (Mohanty 2006, 23). Culturally responsive pedagogy improves language learning outcomes by acknowledging and valuing students' linguistic and cultural backgrounds (Gay 2000, 45). Language education policies must consider the diverse linguistic needs of minority communities, promoting inclusive and equitable language education (Skutnabb-Kangas 2000, 34). Multilingual education programs can enhance educational quality and address language learning challenges by fostering linguistic diversity and promoting cross-cultural understanding (Hornberger 2003, 12). In conclusion, addressing language barriers in minority communities in India requires a comprehensive approach that acknowledges the complex interplay between language, culture, and socio-economic factors. By promoting linguistic diversity, culturally responsive pedagogy, and inclusive language education policies, we can work towards more equitable language learning opportunities and outcomes.

AUTHOR(S) CONTRIBUTION

The writers affirm that they have no connections to, or engagement with, any group or body that provides financial or non-financial assistance for the topics or resources covered in this manuscript.

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CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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SOURCES OF FUNDING

The authors received no financial aid to support for the research.

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