



LANGUAGE TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS AND THE EVOLVING NATURE OF THEIR ROLES IN RESPONSE TO NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY 2020

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Abstract

The current decade is about introducing and implementing the National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020). The Policy's vision is translated into the National Curriculum Framework for Foundational Stage (NCF-FS) 2022 and the National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCF-SE) 2023. These documents provide guidelines for educational reforms, curriculum changes, pedagogical practices and their effective implementation. This paper intends to study language teachers' perceptions and the evolving nature of their roles in response to NEP 2020's philosophy and ideology. The evolving nature of the roles of language teachers as perceived by them is explored based on their opinions, beliefs and reflections. The discussion focuses on how language teachers can address effective language teaching. The study involves language teachers from various school systems to gather their perspectives on the nature of the evolving roles of teachers in light of the new education policy.

Keywords: Language Teacher, Evolving Roles, NEP 2020, Multilingual Education and Curriculum.

1. Introduction

The current decade is about introducing and implementing the National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020). The Policy's vision is translated into the National Curriculum Framework for Foundational Stage (NCF-FS) 2022 and the National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCF-SE) 2023. These documents provide guidelines for educational reforms, curriculum changes, pedagogical practices and their effective implementation.

The policy brings out a major transformative reform in the existing education system, and it begins all with the crucial role that teachers play in the classroom. It states, "Teachers truly shape the future of our children – and, therefore, the future of our nation" (NEP, 2020, p. 20). They are "required to be grounded in Indian values, languages, knowledge, ethos and traditions, including tribal traditions, while also being well-versed in the latest advances in education and pedagogy" (NEP, 2020, p. 42). This paper intends to study language teachers' perceptions and the evolving nature of their roles in response to NEP 2020's philosophy and ideology. The evolving nature of the roles of language teachers as perceived by them is explored based on their opinions, beliefs and reflections.

2. How is Language Teacher envisaged?

NEP 2020 gives ample space and attention to language education under the title 'Multilingualism and the power of language' (NEP, 2020, p.13). It stresses the importance of mother tongue/home language/first language/local language/regional language as a medium of instruction until at least Grade V, but preferably till Grade VIII, along with the flexible three-language formula. The Indian Constitution in its Article 350A states, "It shall be the endeavour of every state and of every local authority within the state to provide adequate facilities for instruction in the mother tongue at the primary stage to children belonging to linguistic minority groups." Early education in the mother tongue could serve as a crucial factor in learning new languages, fostering understanding, confidence and a love for learning. It enables a deeper grasp of concepts, encourages critical thinking and strengthens cultural connections (Jhingran, 2024). Since children take up languages very quickly between the ages of 2 and 8, the policy statement emphasises the importance of introducing different languages to kids at an early age. The policy predicts that 'no language will be imposed on any state' and that 'there will be a greater flexibility in the three-language formula' (NEP, 2020). Nonetheless, NEP states that 'at least two of the three languages (R1 by the age of 8, or grade III, and R2 by the age of 11, or grade VI) are native to India'. By the time they are



14 years old, or in grade IX, the policy hopes to have children thinking and speaking about the two subjects – Science and mathematics – ‘in their home language/mother tongue and in English’ (NEP, 2020, p. 14). It further states,

“All efforts will be made early on to ensure that any gaps that exist between the language spoken by the child and the medium of teaching are bridged. In cases where home language/mother tongue textbook material is not available, the language of transaction between teachers and students will still remain the home language/mother tongue wherever possible. Teachers will be encouraged to use a bilingual approach, including bilingual teaching-learning materials.... All languages will be taught in an enjoyable and interactive style, with plenty of interactive conversation, and with early reading and subsequently writing in the mother tongue in the early years, and with skills developed for reading and writing in other languages in Grade 3 and beyond” (NEP, 2020, p. 13).

Thus, this multilingual education policy expects the students to learn ‘other tongues’ along with their ‘mother tongues’, as these ‘plural tongues’ can expand their personal horizons and make them competent citizens of the 21st century and beyond. NCF-SE (2023) emphasises multilingualism, saying, “learning multiple languages enriches children intellectually and culturally, enabling them to think in more than one way by being equipped with the structures of expression, vocabulary, idioms, and literature of more than one language” (NCFSE p. 235). This “multilingual competence encompasses multiple literacies and multimodality and increases the channels of communication available for individuals from different linguistic backgrounds to connect with one another” (Patel, 2023, p. 176).

UNESCO has identified “multilingual education – a necessity to transform education” as the theme of the 2023 edition of International Mother Language Day. It further states that “transforming education through multilingual education based on mother tongue is a necessity in our fast-evolving global contexts” (Tadakamalla, 2023). Therefore, “teachers will be encouraged to use a bilingual approach, including bilingual teaching-learning materials, with those students whose home language may be different from the medium of instruction” (NEP, 2020). Studies have shown that such approaches can boost classroom participation, improve retention rates and encourage family and community involvement in education. They also play a vital role in mitigating the challenges faced by migrant and refugee learners, promoting a sense of safety and resilience (UNESCO, 2024).

National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) places a teacher at the centre of the fundamental reforms in the education system in India, as it envisions providing high-quality education to all (NPST, 2023, p. 1). The policy recommends:

A common guiding set of National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST) will be developed by 2022 by the National Council for Teacher Education in its restructured new form as a Professional Standard Setting Body (PSSB) under the General Education Council (GEC), in consultation with NCERT, SCERTs, teachers from across levels and regions, expert organisations in teacher preparation and development, expert bodies in vocational education, and higher education institutions. The standards would cover expectations of the role of the teacher at different levels of expertise/stage and the competencies required for that stage. It will also comprise standards for performance appraisal, for each stage, that would be carried out on a periodic basis (NEP, 2020, pp. 22-23).

As the follow-up to the recommendation National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) prepared the National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST) in 2023. With the evolution in the education system and the changing role of teachers, enhancing teacher quality becomes a task of utmost importance for long-term and sustainable nation-building (NPST, 2023, p. 3).

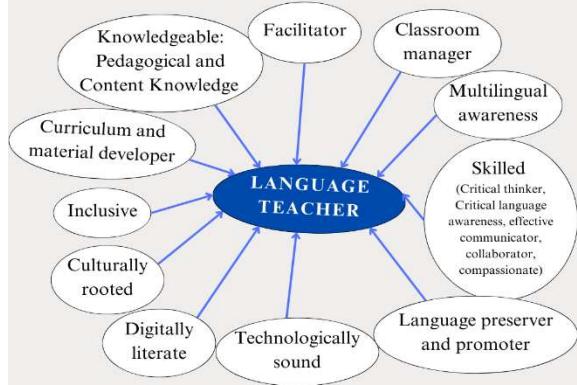
The NEP 2020 draws attention to specific challenges to which teachers’ pedagogical practices should be responsive: i) shift learning from rote to higher-order thinking, critical thinking, inquiry and 21st-century skills; ii) make learning multidisciplinary, experiential and hands-on; iii) multilingualism; and iv) enable students to value and integrate the indigenous legacy of knowledge. Proficient Teacher (Praveen Shikshak), Advanced Teacher (Unnat Shikshak) and Expert Teacher (Kushal Shikshak) are the three levels of teachers on the basis of acquired competencies. Language teachers are likely to handle language diversity and multilingualism. A proficient teacher is expected to demonstrate inclusiveness towards all children, irrespective of language diversity and proficiency in relevant language(s). She switches between the



medium of instruction and local languages as required during classroom transactions. An advanced Teacher is expected to support colleagues in employing multilingualism in class to facilitate teaching and learning. She will mentor peers on strategies adopted in a linguistically diverse classroom. An expert Teacher advocates the use of multilingualism to facilitate teaching and learning among peers. She demonstrates the need for multilingual pedagogy for better learning in classrooms through practices, by writing articles, in peer group discussions, etc. (NPST, 2023, p. 33). Thus, the function of the teacher in today's environment has expanded beyond instruction.

The teaching-learning process depends on classroom composition, modes of transaction and classroom environment. Goals, curricula, learning material, school climate broadly affect on teaching and learning (2021, pp. 91-92). Moreover, there are several aspects of and assessment processes that play a key role in quality of learning in the classroom. For instance, content to be transacted; pedagogy to reach out to diverse backgrounds and address their different learning management strategies that include flexibility, physical working in smaller groups, and working in mixed ability understanding learners' socio-cultural background and learner-teacher relationship (NCERT, 2021, pp. 91-93).

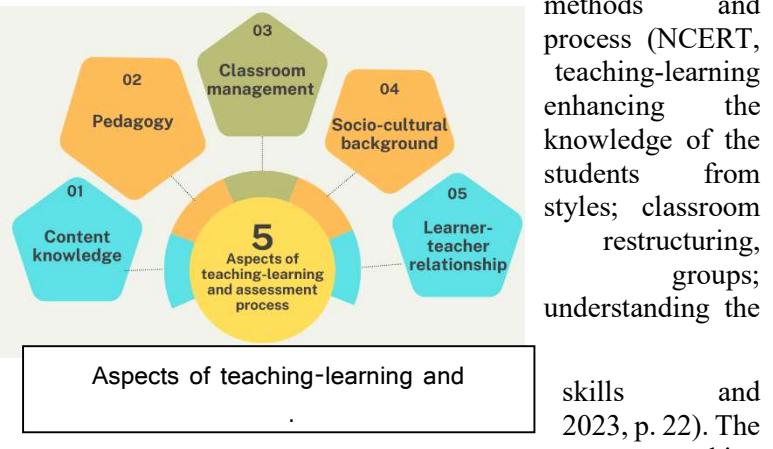
NPST states that teachers need to develop their competence throughout their teaching career (NPST, 2023, p. 22).



Roles of a language teacher

Enabling learners to use and apply knowledge in their daily lives is one of the present obligations in mentoring and counselling (Chandra, 2024, p.96).

Indian linguistic diversity demands proficiency in two or more languages for many things, ranging from interstate communication to cultural enrichment, cognitive benefit and national integration; hence, language teachers need to be bi/multilingual. The policy underscores, "Teachers will be encouraged to use a bilingual approach, including bilingual teaching-learning materials, with those students whose home language may be different from the medium of instruction" (NEP, 2020, p.13). The responsibility lies on teachers' shoulders for the effective and meaningful use of learners' languages. It is said that the children will be exposed to different languages at an early age, as they have an inherent ability to acquire multiple languages. This is also the teachers' responsibility to teach languages interactively. This interactive approach is essential for several reasons, including enhanced learning experience, incorporating local/native languages in the learning process, and acknowledging linguistic diversity.



Aspects of teaching-learning and

skills and 2023, p. 22).

The century teaching demands that language teachers be empathetic, proficient, skilled, multitaskers, multi-planners, multilingual, digitally literate, technologically sound, and culturally rooted. Their role is to cater to the needs of a globally minded and locally rooted learner community. They must be good at introducing transformative practices, which are about "helping learners to critically reflect on, validate, and effectively act on their interpretations and ways of thinking" (Kelly, 2009) and fulfilling the needs of linguistically diverse learners in the classroom. Language teachers are expected to shift from traditional rote learning to developing competencies in language skills (LSRW), communication skills, along with higher-order thinking, critical thinking, creativity, a collaborative approach, inquiry-based attitude, and 21st-century skills. They are expected to be multilingual, multidisciplinary, and culturally rooted.



Bilingual education in the long run leads “to the breakdown of barriers in daily life – in economic, social, and cultural” (Stern, 1972, p. 06). The policy, further, visualises creating high-quality bilingual textbooks and teaching materials for science and mathematics. Teachers need to have bilingual proficiency to accommodate language spaces. They are expected to use L1/home language/familiar language/mother tongue strategically to build confidence in R1/school language/target language as “home language use could increase the engagement of young multilingual children and access to opportunities for learning” (Sousa, 2024, p. 10). This requires strategic planning of language delivery. Teachers may use learners’ multiple home languages (L1, L2, L3,...) as resources and as pedagogy for language proficiency. Language proficiency at the foundational stage is crucial “because that will be the foundation upon which the success of NEP 2020 in the later educational stages will depend” (Samantay, 2024, p. 9). This approach validates learners’ languages and establishes a sense of pride, “facilitating opportunities for all children to have their voices valued” (Sousa, 2024, p.10) and leads to a more inclusive and equitable classroom.

NEP 2020 advocates for a flexible three-language formula to accommodate multilingual situations. NCF-SE 2023 makes it clear that learners are expected to learn the first language/R1 by Grade 3, the second language/R2 by Grade 6 and the third language/R3 by Grade 9. It further states that “at least two of the three languages – R1, R2 and R3 – must be native to India” (NCFSE, 2023, p. 239). Now it comes to a teacher to develop proficiency in these languages. Teachers’ patience, positivity, and attitude towards linguistic diversity and cultural sensitivity are remarkable factors in dealing with diverse language situations and language learners. They must encourage learners to use and express their native languages extensively in the early stages of learning. This approach would assist in explaining difficult concepts and instilling a sense of pride among learners. It is even crucial for teachers to teach languages and make them more interactive through the application of various multimedia resources.

Moreover, language teachers are expected to assess language proficiency continuously. The flexible assessment and evaluation method allows for assessing individual abilities and competencies. Assessment tools, including ‘assessment for learning’, ‘assessment of learning’, and ‘assessment as learning’, are aligned with the learning outcomes, skills, and dispositions. These assessments are focused on conceptual understanding instead of memorisation and rote learning. Ongoing and continuous methods of assessment are expected to be used for assessing the overall growth of a learner as a language user or carrier.

3. Review of research

NCERT has developed a handbook, namely *Reflective Teaching: A handbook towards preparing a Reflective Teacher* in 2021. It provides a reference material to improve teacher students, teachers, teacher educators, and researchers to become reflective practitioners for professional practice and expertise. Teachers are expected to be competent to use multiple methods and techniques to engage the learners, keeping in consideration the socio-cultural context and varied experiences of learners (NCERT, 2021). Kour examines NEP 2020’s language-in-education policy in *NEP 2020 and Language Learning in India: A Critical Assessment* (Kour, 2022). Meganathan (2023) recommends several practices for teachers to be strong proponents of language education. He urges teachers to develop a critical understanding of language, read relevant policy documents, recognise the significance of language across a curricular perspective and centrality in language learning. Additionally, he encourages the use of translanguaging as a pedagogy and suggests conducting an analysis of language use in various domains (pp. 7-8).

In Para. 5.20 NEP recommends developing a common guiding set for National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST) to the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE). Accordingly, the NPST Guiding Document 2023 sets standards for the role of a teacher at different levels of expertise/rank and the competencies required for that stage. NPST is “essential for ensuring the quality of education by delineating the expectations and guidelines for effective teaching practices. These standards play a vital role in shaping the skills, knowledge, and competencies of teachers” (Pradhan, 2023). NPST assures that all teachers should be enthusiastic, driven, highly qualified, well prepared, and equipped to teach all learners at all levels of schooling.



Mukhopadhyay explores language and pedagogy in Indian multilingual classrooms. She underlines the need to strengthen teacher identities, critical language awareness, agency, systematic support and creation of safe spaces in class to practice translanguaging and multilingual pedagogies (Mukhopadhyay, 2024). Samantray in her study of *NEP 2020 and Emerging Language Teacher Identities*, discusses certain new aspects arising from the NEP 2020 and its expectations for teachers to adapt to fresh identities (Samantray, 2024).

A review of research reveals that various dimensions of teaching practices have been discussed and examined. However, special attention needs to be given to teachers' perceptions and their evolving roles in response to the educational reforms.

4. Objectives

- To explore and evaluate language teachers' perceptions and perspectives in response to the educational reforms.
- To examine the changing nature of the roles of language teachers in response to NEP 2020

5. Methodology and tools

A survey method is used to study language teachers' perceptions and the nature of their evolving roles in response to the national education policy. Language teachers of the foundational, the preparatory, the middle and the secondary stages are involved in the study. A comprehensive questionnaire was prepared to collect language teachers' perceptions regarding the nature of their evolving roles in light of NEP 2020 and its impact on curriculum, teaching strategies, assessment processes and learning outcomes. The questionnaire was prepared using Google Forms and distributed widely through email and WhatsApp to ensure that it reached a diverse group of language educators.

6. Sample

A total of 255 language teachers willingly participated in the survey, which is designed to generate teachers' insights on their evolving roles in response to NEP 2020, NCF-FS 2022 and NCF-SE 2023, representing schools under the Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan and various State Board schools. The data collected from their responses is critically evaluated to understand the current landscape of language education and guide future improvements in teaching strategies, curriculum development and assessment practices.

7. Profile of participated language teachers

As shown in Figure-1 teachers who participated in this survey range from Foundational Stage (22.7%), Middle Stage (18.4%), Secondary Stage (25.9%), and Higher Secondary Stage (26.7%). Language wise composition of teachers shows that overall, 60.8% of them have had an experience of teaching more than 10 years (Figure-2).

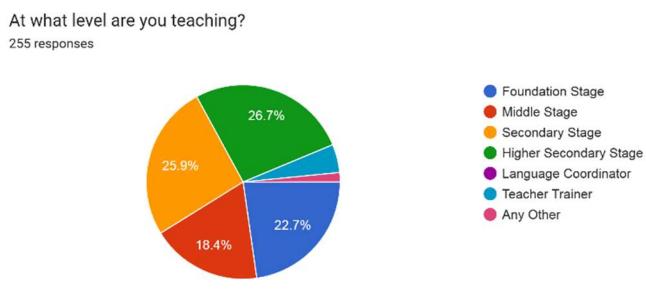


Figure 1: The level at which teachers engage classes

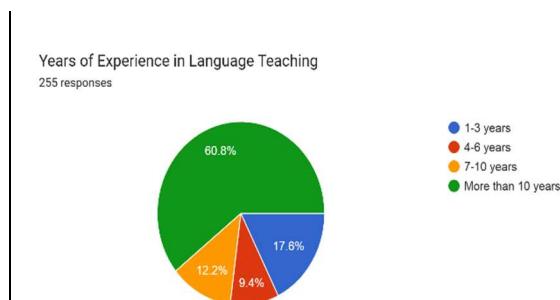


Figure 2: Years of Experience

Profiles of language teachers



8. Language teachers' perceptions

Language teachers' reflections on the nature of changing roles and responsibilities in response to the new education policy and reforms are analysed and interpreted in the following section:

8.1 Familiarity with the key ideas of NEP on language education

The very first concern is to know about language teachers' familiarity with the key ideas promoted by NEP 2020 in regard of language education.

How familiar are you with the key ideas of National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 related to language education?

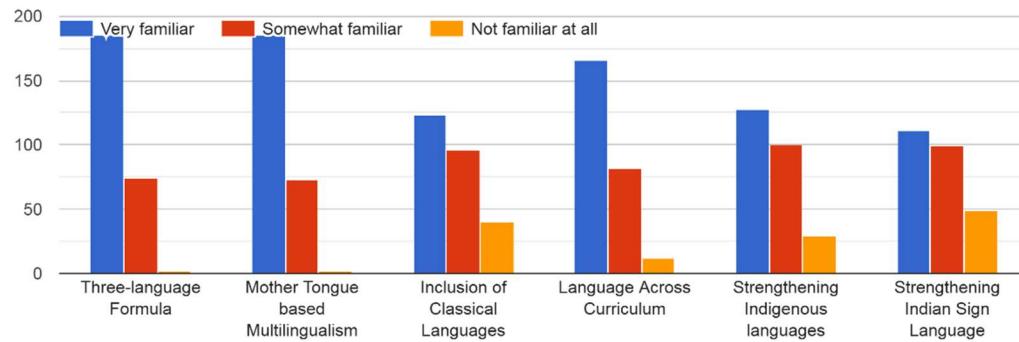


Figure 3: Teachers' familiarity with the key ideas

Figure 3 reveals that almost 72.5% of teachers are familiar with the language strategies known as 'the three-language formula' and 'the mother-tongue-based multilingualism'. More than 50% of teachers are aware of key concepts of the policy, namely language across the curriculum and empowering indigenous languages. They are also aware of the ideas of the inclusion of classical languages and the strengthening of Indian sign languages.

8.2 Teachers' perspective on the impact of the policy

Teachers' dimensions are under drastic change due to the educational reforms. These educational reforms demand change in curriculum, teaching and learning process, assessment practices and classroom management.

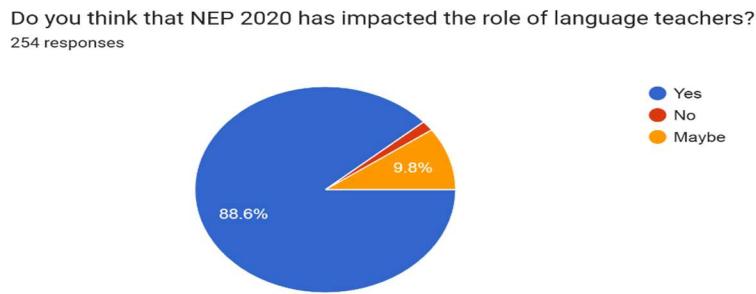


Figure 4 Perspective on the impact of the policy

Teachers' perspective on the impact displayed in Figure 4, which specifies 88.6% of teachers experience changes in their roles and responsibilities occurred due to educational reforms.



8.3 Influence on roles and responsibilities

Sl. No.	Roles and Responsibilities	Impact in %
1	Expectation to foster multilingualism	88.89%
2	Need to emphasise local languages	80.95%
3	Need to adopt teaching material and methods based on students' need and interest	96.03%
4	Requires broader understanding of language across curriculum	90.05%
5	Need to incorporate digital tools and resources	87.72%
6	Focus on competency-based assessment	92.46%

Table 1 Influence of NEP 2020

The figures in the above table reflect a trend towards more personalised, adaptable, inclusive language education. 96.03% of teachers feel the need to adopt teaching material and methods based on students' needs and interests that reflect trends towards more student-centred learning. This requires teachers to be adaptive and flexible in the delivery of lessons with innovative activities to cater needs of diversified learners. They need to understand that language skills develop across disciplines, as 90.05% of the participants said that there is a need for a broader understanding of language across the curriculum. The growing role of technology in every sector is quite visible, and language education is no exception to this. 87.72% of teachers are experiencing the need to incorporate digital tools and resources. The high percentage, i.e., 92.46%, suggests the significant change in the assessment method, which might emphasise real-world applications instead of rote memorisation and abstract grammar knowledge. These changing dimensions add new responsibilities.

8.4 New responsibilities

Since the release of NEP 2020, a number of new responsibilities have been added to provide high-quality language education to all.

Figure 5 Perceptive on new responsibilities

What new responsibilities do you feel have been added to your role as a language teacher since the

implementation of NEP 2020?

255 responses

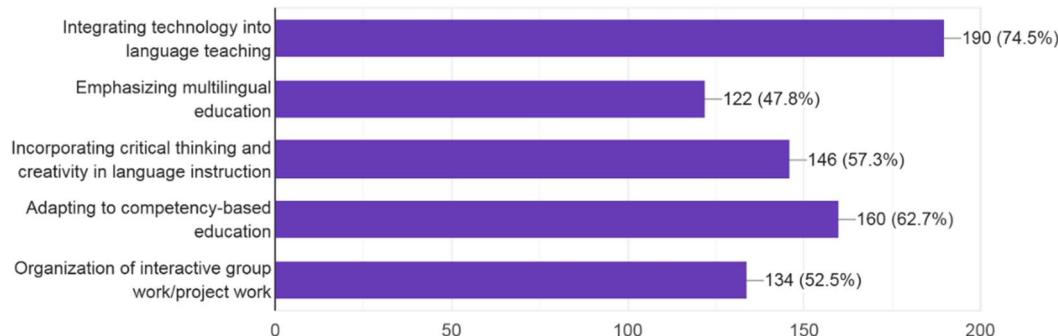


Figure 5 reveals that out of 255 respondents, 187 (74.5) conveyed that it had added the responsibility of integrating technology into language teaching, 120 (47.8) respondents agreed that it requires emphasising multilingual education, 144 (57.3) respondents expressed the need to incorporate critical thinking and creativity in language education, and 158 (62.7) respondents stated that it is essential to adopt competency-based education, while 132 (52.5) reported the necessity of organising interactive group or project work. This indicates that since the implementation of NEP 2020, the number of new responsibilities has increased. The additional tasks are being targeted to provide high-quality language education to all.



8.5 Impact on teaching method

The changes in curriculum, syllabus, textbooks and teaching-learning material require new pedagogical practices to teach language as a system and language as a subject.

Figure 6: Impact on teaching methods

Which of the following teaching methods/strategies do you now use more frequently?

255 responses

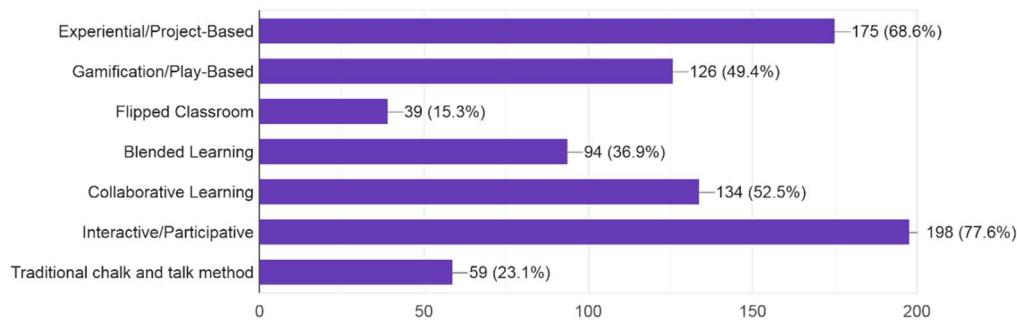


Figure 6 reveals that almost 77.04% of teachers are now using interactive and participative methods, while 68.07% are employing experiential or project-based methods. The figure clearly indicates that the traditional chalk and talk method is declining in popularity and there is a growing interest in gamification and play-based methodologies. The data shows the need for more training and learning sessions for flipped classroom and blended learning strategies.

8.6 Use of a bilingual approach

Generally, it is said that no school in India is monolingual, and all school systems use a bi/multilingual approach, as India has an incredibly diverse linguistic landscape.

Do you use a bilingual approach, including bilingual teaching-learning materials, with the students whose home language may be different from the medium of instruction?

255 responses

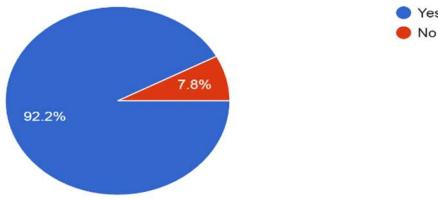


Figure 7: Using a bilingual approach

It seems that teachers are handling the responsibility of being bi/multilingual satisfactorily, as Figure 7 indicates that 92.1% of teachers use a bilingual approach, including learning-teaching materials, with the students whose home language is different from the medium of instruction. However, it needs to be examined how teachers understand bilingualism or it is taken as mere translation from one language to another.



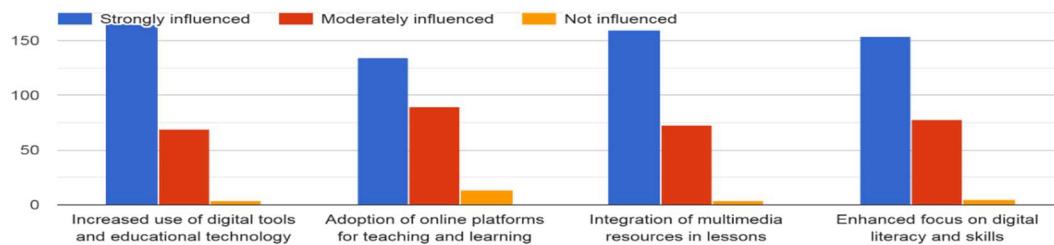
8.7 Technology integration

Integrating technology into the language learning process enhances students' engagement and provides an interactive learning environment that surpasses time and place barriers.

Figure 8: Integrating technology into language teaching

As taken from Figure 8, 70.51% of teachers stated that NEP 2020 has significantly increased the use of digital tools

How has NEP 2020 influenced your approach to integrating technology into your language teaching?



and educational technology. Additionally, 57.26% of them felt the need to adopt online platforms for the teaching-learning process. Meanwhile, 68.38% of them responded positively to the need for integrating multimedia resources into lessons, and 65.81% of participants noted an increased focus on digital literacy and skills. The result, here, underscores the significant impact of technology on language education. This definitely requires digitally sound teachers having knowledge of cybersecurity and cyber safety.

8.8 On the influence of the policy on curriculum and pedagogy

NEP 2020, NCF-FS 2022 and NCF-SE 2023 indicate that there is a significant change needed in curriculum design.

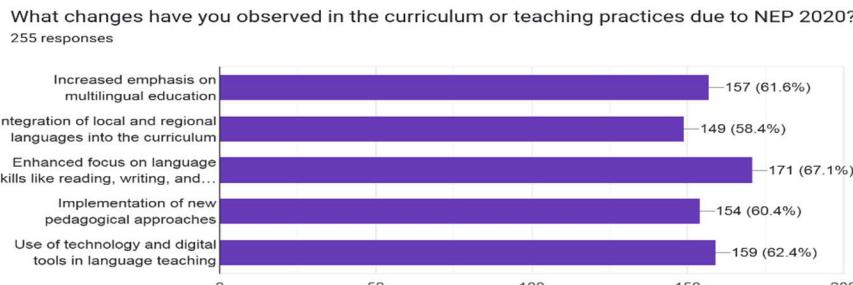


Figure 9: Influence on curriculum and pedagogy

Figure 9 reflects the teachers' perceptions on the percentage of changes that they have observed in curriculum and teaching practices since 2020. According to the data, 66.2% of teachers stated that post-2020 language pedagogy has become more focused on enhancing language skills. Moreover, 61% observed an increased emphasis on multilingual education along with increased use of technology and digital tools in language teaching. Additionally, 57.3% of them reported the requirement of integration of local and regional languages into the curriculum, while 58.5% of them observed the necessity of implementing new pedagogical applications in language teaching.



8.9 Influence on assessment methods

NEP 2020 extensively talks about the formative assessment. Language teachers are expected to assess language proficiency. The flexible assessment and evaluation method allows for assessing individual abilities and competencies.

How has NEP 2020 influenced the assessment methods used in language teaching?

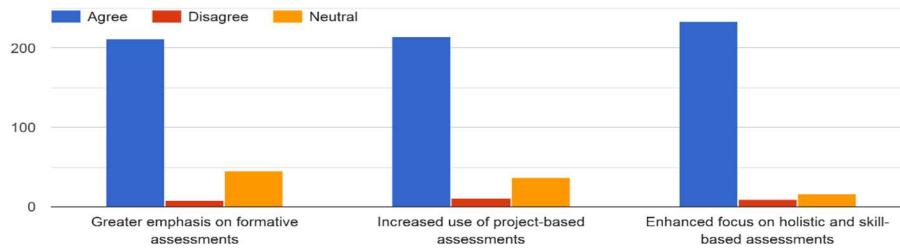


Figure 10: Influence on assessment methods

It is clear that assessment methods have also been evolving in response to NEP 2020 and NCF-SE 2023. Figure 10 shows that 84% of participants have strongly expressed their agreement that there is a greater emphasis on formative assessments and project-based assessments. Moreover, 92.74% of participants have experienced an increased focus on holistic and skill-based assessments.

9. Discussion and findings

The present study aimed to evaluate language teachers' perceptions and perspectives in response to NEP 2020 and understand the changing nature of their roles. It is said that "language is not everything in education, but without language there is nothing in education" (Wolff, 2011, p. 92). Keeping in view, "the policy considers language as an important aspect in the transaction of the teaching-learning process" (Srivastava, 2024). Language education plays a vital role in the holistic development of a learner, and therefore, a strong understanding of 'language-in-education policy' is essential for language teachers. In this regard, Meganathan states that 'critical language awareness' is necessary for language teachers. They need to understand multilingualism as philosophy, multilingualism as a resource, multilingualism as pedagogy, and multilingualism as strategy (Meganathan, 2025). Moreover, the initiatives to incorporate classical languages, indigenous languages and sign language into learning-teaching practice will enable understanding of a comprehensive language education framework.

This perception study indicates that teachers are aware and positive towards the changes happening in the process of language teaching and learning; at the same time, they acknowledge their responsibility to promote and preserve native languages and foster multilingualism for the overall well-being of a child. Most of them are familiar with the language strategies known as 'the three-language formula' and 'the mother tongue-based multilingualism'. There is a need for bi/multilingual teachers who are proficient in more than two languages, and they should teach English effectively and support the promotion and preservation of indigenous languages. National Curriculum Framework 2005 states, "The aim of English teaching is the creation of multilinguals who can enrich all our languages" (NCERT, 2005, p. 39). Thus, English teaching can empower individuals to foster global awareness by being rooted in the native soil and culture. This will help to appreciate and enrich the coexistence of different cultures and languages.

Teachers believe that the policy has significantly impacted language education and feel responsible for bilingual teaching as the majority of teachers (92.2%) agreed that they use a bilingual approach, teaching-learning method with the students whose home language (L1) is different from the target language (R1). They acknowledge the high expectation to foster multilingualism, which underlines cognitive benefits of multicompetence along with intercultural understanding and communication. They are expected to instil cultural pride among learners through the legacy of a rich linguistic heritage.



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The emphasis on strengthening local languages and cultures instils a sense of pride and rootedness as it is made clear stating that “all young Indians should be aware of the rich and vast array of languages of their country and the treasures that they and their literatures contain” (NEP,2020, p.15), and it is the overall responsibility of language teachers to promote cultural heritage using literature as a resource and as a pedagogy. The appropriate use of literary pieces to explain difficult concepts will make learners sound literate. Literary pieces can be used to instil values and ethics among young learners. NEP in Points 4.17, 4.18 and 4.20 extensively talks about the use of classical languages and foreign languages for the enrichment of children with the help of artistic treasures. These efforts, definitely, will help to establish a sense of ownership and glory among the budding human beings.

NEP 2020 calls for a significant shift in teaching methods, strategies and the overall education system. Language teachers are expected to incorporate advanced teaching methods and strategies to cater to 21st-century skills and demands, including learner-centric attitude, activity-based teaching, multidisciplinary teaching, skill-orientated teaching, vocational training, play-based pedagogy or gamification, flipped classrooms, blended learning, and collaborative learning. They need to adopt flexible, interactive, participative, experiential and project-based methods to make language learning a lively experience. To gain insight into this, teachers were asked which teaching methods or strategies they used. They reported applying experiential, project-based, interactive, participative, and game/play-based methodologies over the traditional chalk and talk method.

It seems that the majority of teachers experience technology integration in language teaching and learning process. They are aware that there is need to apply and integrate innovative tools and techniques to create a rich and effective learning environment and provide a dynamic and responsive education system. They believe on the use of ICT and educational technology in language teaching for making it more engaging and interesting. That reflects on their focus on real-world applications of language with the integration of digital tools and techniques. However, for some of the teachers it is still challenging to adopt online platforms and integrate multimedia resources. However, it is a concern of teachers to teach languages and make them livelier and more interactive through various multimedia resources. They need to teach languages in “an innovative way, such as gamification and apps” (NEP, 2020, p.15). It seems that teachers still need training and learning sessions for flipped classroom and blended learning strategies, as the majority of them do not prefer them. It leads to the need for training sessions even on digital literacy, cyber safety and security for a tussle free learning environment.

The findings also suggest that the majority of language teachers prioritise formative assessment, project-based assessment and skill-based assessment to promote the holistic development of learners. The policy views assessment as a continuous process. Instead of focusing only on learners’ grades, certificates, rankings and recognitions, teachers should focus on strengthening humanitarian values, fostering a supportive environment and developing 21st-century skills. These practices are essential for learners’ academic achievement, wellbeing and for sustainable and holistic development in the long run. Thus, in their responses, many teachers highlighted the positive trend of placing greater emphasis on multilingualism, integrating local languages, enhancing language skills, advancing language pedagogy, and incorporating technology in curriculum and teaching practices. This reflects a collective commitment to enriching the learning experience and fostering a more inclusive educational environment.

In short, teaching is essentially a form of human communication, and the function of a teacher is to educate the totality of the human mind regardless of any type of discrimination. The teacher, at the end, should be able to nurture the human element of each and every learner. However, there are certain challenges in implementing all the requirements. A teacher is frequently caught between the pressures of the policies and the needs of individual learners. Teachers often face “challenges such as addressing individual student needs, managing classroom dynamics, and adapting instructional materials to cater to diverse learning styles” (Samantray, 2024, p. 13). It requires a structured pedagogy, which is “a scientific, evidence-based, learner-entered approach to teaching that equips every teacher with clearly defined objectives, proven methods, well-structured tools, and practical training” (Upreti, 2020), instead of uniform pedagogy to accommodate diverse learners and their needs in the learning-teaching process.



10. Conclusion

The roles of language teachers have evolved due to the educational reforms initiated by NEP 2020, NCF-FS 2022, and NCF-SE 2023. In this whole education process, language learning plays a central role, as it encourages independent thinking, free and effective expression of opinions and logical interpretation of present and past events. It nurtures natural creativity and imagination. The above discussion and findings highlight the necessity of having awareness drives and orientation programmes to bridge the gaps between the policy expectations and actual practices. The workshops, seminars, and capacity-building programmes will help to provide knowledge, training, and resources. These initiatives will enhance teachers' abilities, empowering them to support promising youth, promote multilingualism, and ensure inclusive education.

The updating and upgrading language pedagogy is a crucial factor in the holistic development of a learner – as language is not just a means of communication – it voices culture, it assists in speaking and listening, it organises thoughts, it helps to read and write, it fosters reasoning ability, it supports problem-solving, it supports not only at the verbal level but also at an intellectual level and it ultimately leads to the holistic (cognitive, creative, physical, social and emotional) development.

Thus, language teachers have a variety of important responsibilities. They are seen as providers of knowledge, facilitators of learning, preservers and promoters of language, cultural advocates, educators, multilingual pedagogues and tech-savvy mentors. To effectively implement language-in-education policy, they are expected to be proficient, adaptable, and culturally sensitive. Continuous professional development is essential for them to create a holistic educational environment.

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