

Teaching English in Multilingual Class is an Amazing Experience

* **R. Sridevi**, Research Scholar, Koneru Lakshmaiah Educational Foundation, Guntur-AP

** **Dr. M. Sandra Carmel Sophia**, Prof of English, KLEF Deemed University, Guntur

ABSTRACT

A multilingual class is defined as a hybrid class comprising students of different ethnicities and linguistic backgrounds. These students possess different cultures and speak their own vernacular/native languages. The important issue that a teacher can face in a multilingual classroom is the use of a universal language spoken by the class. The students speak different languages as they hail from different communities across the globe and eventually it becomes a communication barrier among the students. In this context English language emerges as a savior because all communications need to be carried out through a common language even though it is difficult. Since the students come from different countries with their own culture, great conversation among students starts in the classroom. It is the bounden duty of the teacher to take to task the cultural background as a springboard to motivate the students with new insights. Students in such an ambience usually commit errors because of regional differences. For instance, a classroom consisting of Indian students may find difficult with the 'V' sound in English and mispronounce it as 'W', while in a multilingual class, students other than Indian realize the mistake and correct themselves and other students. So, every student in the classroom becomes a listener first and then a good speaker. A teacher can get an interesting and amazing experience with his/her teaching to multilingual batches of students in an institution. As a result of this experience, the teacher's responsibility in teaching a multilingual classroom becomes strenuous.

Key words: Multilingual, Hybrid, Language, Teaching, Amazing, Experience

Introduction

Globalization of English Language Multilingual classes are spaces where the learners speak a variety of languages since they hail from different communities. Such a classroom is a single window system where the students communicate in a 'lingua franca'. One can come across such type of situations typically when learners travel from distant lands for different reasons and purposes. Hence, in a multilingual class, it is necessary to employ a common language between the learners who for easy interactions.

Globalization has influenced societies so much so that there is vast migration of people to different countries irrespective of the cost of living or the expensive education. Parents wish to educate their children to the maximum extent and are willing to shed their blood in the form of money for the success of their children's career. Hence, migration of people has brought about changes in the economic standards and lifestyle of people, thus bringing about changes in the classroom ambience too. Non- native speakers of English language have the right to get access good quality of education and interacting in the common language such as English is a necessity.

“Language is the principal medium
through which we connect with our
fellow human beings”.

- Debra Gracelimjaen

As an international and global social channel, Language ensures people to communicate with others and English language communication validates to interact meaningfully with people from all multicultural set up. Knowledge of English allows one to explore tremendous knowledge.

Communicating in a common tongue opens avenues to the diversity of cultures and applaud the different dimensions. This is possible only with a globalized English which has the potency to influence and inspire people from across the globe in the long run. Walt Whitman, the American poet was right when he said:

“The English language is the accretion and growth
of every dialect, race, and range of Time”.

Implementation of Teaching Strategies in Multilingual Class

The teachers should interact with students and learners and get to know about their interests, hobbies, culture, food etc., to choose a topic before teaching. The facilitator can divide them into groups in such a way that a group doesn't comprise all students from the same nations/countries. Assigning topics can be related to real life situations. Announcing the topic well in advance helps students to put their ideas and thoughts together. The teacher can transform their classroom that encourages active participation from young learners. Use of active listening strategies provides students to come out openly.

Objectives of Teaching in Multilingual Class

Planning language objectives is not an easy, straight ward process. It should be based on Students' interests only. Teaching in a multilingual class allows learners to go through the cultural resources and strengthens the personal essence of classroom tasks, giving more flexibility to knowledge through multiple texts in more than one language.

Advantages of Multilingual Class

Cross-cultural learning is beneficial in many ways to both teachers and students. There is absolutely no choice for learners to speak in their mother tongue because of the multicultural students in the class. The burden become heavy for students to interact with each in local language and so there is a benefit for students to speak only in English, the universal language of communication. Without any outside influence or push from the teacher, the students begin to speak in English which is amazing and interesting for the teachers when they observe the students. This is a starting point for many interesting deliberations and conversations among the students. Eventually the learners are exposed to varied and multiple teaching environments and different learning styles. Teachers can implement various teaching pedagogies to prevent students from becoming bored because they cannot comprehend the other tongue.

Disadvantages of Multilingual Class

Meaningful communication cannot take place between teachers and students if there is imperfect mastery of the language in a multilingual and multicultural set up. In a multicultural classroom, some students may understand only certain things the teacher says. Some may feel embarrassed to speak at all. In such a situation, teachers, the teacher should be able to create a safe and congenial learning environment to please and promote unbiased teaching. The teacher can go in for translation method for effective communication and flexible learning of all students.

Conclusion

The teachers may encounter problems and challenges in a multicultural class while teaching English. Nonetheless, such a classroom is an eye-opening experience. Teachers should be tolerant and resolute in the classroom and be able to understand styles of their students. Attitude and instruction methods influence students' behavior, confidence, and sense of community. Cultural differences can be a barrier to effective communications in the classroom, but it is possible for teacher and student to have predisposed ideas about other person's culture. It is the sole responsibility of the teacher to dispel pre-meditated thoughts and prejudices based on cultural differences in a classroom thus teaching English in multilingual class plays a vital role in students' academic performance and is certainly an amazing experience,

References

- [1] Admiraal, W., Westhoff, G., and de Bot, K. (2006). Evaluation of bilingual secondary education in The
- [2] Netherlands: Students' language proficiency. *English Educational Research and Evaluation*, 12(1), pp.75–93
- [3] Alba, R., and Holdaway, J., eds., (2013). *The Children of Immigrants at School*. New York and London: New York University Press.
- [4] Baker, C. (1995). *A Parents' and Teachers' Guide to Bilingualism*. Bridgend, England: Multilingual Matters publishers.
- [5] Jacobson. R. (1990). *Codeswitching as a Worldwide Phenomenon*. New York, Peter Lang.
- [6] Numan, D. & Carter, D. (2001). *Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [7] Trudgill, P. (2000). *Socio linguistics*. London: Penguin
- [8] Cummins, J. (1983) *Language Proficiency, Bilinguality and French Immersion*. *Canadian Journal of Education / Revue Canadienne De L'éducation*, 8 (2)
- [9] Kroll, J. and Dussias, P. E. (2017) *The Benefits of Multilingualism to the Personal and Professional Development of Residents of the US*. *Foreign Language Annals*, Vol. 50, Iss. 2
- [10] <https://www.teaching.org.uk>
- [11] www.yourcommonwealth.org