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## The Influence of First Language and Cultural Factors on English Language Teaching Practices

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**Abstract:** This paper explores how English Language Teaching (ELT) activities in multilingual classrooms are affected by the two factors: first language (L1) and culture. The data were gathered using a mixed-method which involved taking of a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews to 20 Teachers and 50 students. The results indicate that L1 is relevant in language acquisition where 78 per cent of the students have agreed that it assists in grasping English concepts and 68 per cent have said that it causes grammatical errors through negative transfer. It was also established that cultural factors have a strong impact on classroom behaviour with 52% of the participants reporting that it had a high impact on the participation in a classroom and 65% reporting that the issue of cultural norms had a pronounced influence on honoring teacher authority. As to teaching activities, the vast majority of teachers (60 per cent) often resorted to code-switching, and 70 per cent of them applied visual aids to understand the information better. Nevertheless, the language barriers (65%) and the lack of culture diversity management training (55%) were considered as the major barriers. The research findings are that a successful ELT should involve the balanced combination of the L1 and culturally responsive teaching practices to enhance student engagement and learning performance. The conclusions offer important ideas to teachers and policy makers who wish to make teaching effective in a diverse teaching setting.

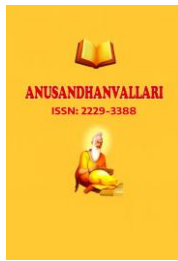
**Keywords:** *First Language (L1), Cultural Factors, English Language Teaching, Language Transfer, Multicultural Classrooms*

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### I. INTRODUCTION

With growing globalization of education, linguistically and culturally diverse education has emerged in large numbers, especially within the domain of English Language Teaching (ELT). With the English language still serving as a lingua franca in the international system, learners with diverse first language (L1) backgrounds are involved in the learning of English in various learning environments. This heterogeneity poses both threats and opportunities to the teaching fraternity in that students come along with their own systems of language and cultural rules that affect their perception, processing, and learning a foreign language. First language effect is key in the acquisition of a second language [1]. Through the acquisition of English, learners tend to use their L1 as a guide and this leads to language transfer. This transfer may be positive when one language resembles another and learning is made easier and negative when one language is different from another and one makes mistakes in grammar, prosody and use of words [2]. Teachers therefore need to be aware of the effects of L1 in order to be able to come up with effective teaching methods that can assist learners with minimal interference.

Besides language aspects, culture also plays a significant role in defining the attitude, behaviour and expectations of learners in the classroom. Cultural norms affect the mode of communication, level of participation and attitude to authority all which impact on the process of teaching and learning. An example is that some cultures have students who might not be willing to participate in an open discussion whereas other cultures content themselves with learning in groups [3]. Such diversities necessitate the need that teachers



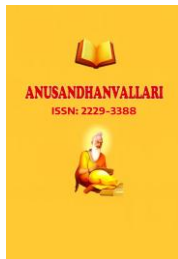
should implement culturally responsive teaching methods that can cater to the needs of the various learners. The purpose of this study is to examine the implication of first language and cultural aspects and the practice of teaching English language. Through reflection of these influences, the study aims to shed some light on how teachers can modify their teaching strategies to make their teaching practices inclusive, effective and culturally sensitive to support the acquisition of language and overall learning among the students.

## II. RELATED WORKS

The impact of linguistic and cultural factors on English Language Teaching (ELT) is a highly studied area in recent research, where the associated complexity of teaching is emphasized as the multilingual and multicultural environment sets in. Much of the research is dedicated to understanding the impact of teacher knowledge, characteristics of learners, and socio-cultural contexts on language learning outcomes on the basis that these factors influence learning outcomes. The assessment of literacy in the language has been singled out as an important aspect in good ELT. As an example, Festif et al. [15] employed a sample of tertiary-level EFL teachers in Indonesia and discovered that the knowledge of assessment practice by teachers is a significant factor in influencing teacher retirement in assessing the students with a varied linguistic background. This is an indication that teachers should be supplied with the relevant evaluation expertise in order to explain the L1-related differences in the performance of learners. Emotions and psychology are also important aspects that contribute to language learning. The study of Gordani et al. [16] determined that emotional contagion is relevant in language classrooms, and teacher emotions have a direct impact on student motivation and achievements. This especially applies in the case of culturally diverse classrooms where emotional expressions and interpretations may be different in different cultures hence affecting classroom interactions.

In recent years, the teaching of content and language has been integrated. Haan and Gallagher [17] were in support of faculty development in the context of content-language integration, and Lap et al. [21] focused on the awareness of Teachers about Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL). According to their results, teachers tend to need extra training to be able to combine the instruction on language with the subject matter, particularly when they have to teach students with other cultural and linguistic backgrounds. The idea of psychotypology, which is mentioned by Hiemstra et al. [18], also describes the ways in which the learners can see similarities between the English language and their native tongue. It affects vocabulary learning as well as grammar and is, therefore, a perception that affects language transfer. In favor of this, Hu and Luo [19] proved that the implementation of socio-cultural and metacognitive strategies has a significant positive impact on the vocabulary acquisition of the Chinese students and it should be emphasized that culturally informed approaches to teaching are useful strategies. The learning practices of language have also been transformed by digital spaces. As Jin [20] studied the connection between social media and the writing ability of students, the study found that the use of digital media can assist in improving the interaction capabilities of students, but this might also cause the development of writing anxiety. Also, Liao [24] emphasized on the effectiveness of technology-mediated peer evaluations in enhancing language proficiency and that digital tools may be able to assist a variety of learners provided that they are used effectively. Other important considerations are cultural identity and language perception. A study by Leah et al. [22] on the attitudes against the Philippine English in the Filipino-Americans indicated that cultural identity affects the attitude toward language acceptance and intelligibility. This is in line with Marcial and Basurto Santos [25], authors who confined their study on the examination of the professional identity of EFL teachers and discovered that teaching practices and beliefs are influenced by cultural and institutional contexts.

Support of the teacher and learner resiliency is also found to be significant elements affecting the success of students. Li et al. [23] results indicated that perceived teacher support decreases academic burnout and improves academic buoyancy especially in the difficult learning conditions. Furthermore, Mohamud et al. [26] were able to come up with various influences on listening proficiency such as language background and encountering a



real-life use of the language. All in all, these papers have proven that ELT practices are strongly affected by the first language, culture, emotions, and technology. The literature faces the issue to meet the requirements of the culturally responsive pedagogy, training of teachers, and adaptive approaches in teaching in order to become competent to meet the diverse needs of the learners in contemporary English language classrooms.

### III. METHODOLOGY

This chapter is a description of the research design, method, data collection techniques, sampling, and the analysis processes that were employed in investigating the effects of the first language (L1) and cultural aspects on English Language Teaching (ELT) activities. The methodology will be used in a way that will give reliability and validity, as well as the overall picture of the research problem.

#### 3.1 Research Design

The research design that will be utilized in the study is a mixed-methods research design, using both qualitative and quantitative methods. Such design is suitable because it will enable further investigation of the experiences and the perceptions of teachers as well as bring the data that will be measurable in terms of patterns and trends [4]. The qualitative element was able to assist in the perception of the contextual and cultural undertones that impact the teaching practices and the quantitative element offered a statistical backing to generalise the results.

Descriptive and exploratory research design is used. The descriptive one is aimed at finding out existing ELT practices affected by L1 and cultural diversity, whereas the exploratory one tries to find out the hidden factors and issues that teachers have in multilingual classrooms [5].

#### 3.2 Research Approach

The research is based on a pragmatic way of research, which incorporates both inductive and deductive reasoning. The deductive method is applied to test available theories regarding language transfer and culturally responsive teaching whereas the inductive applies to elicit a new insight out of the experience of participants [6].

#### 3.3 Research Setting and Participants

The study is done in research institutions in which English is a second or foreign language to be used. The target group comprises English language teachers and students that may have different linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

Participants who participated will be selected using a purposive sampling technique and include those with direct experience with multilingual classrooms [7]. Approximately, the sample is composed of:

- 20 English language teachers
- 50 students from different L1 backgrounds

This is already believed to be a huge enough sample that will bring depth and diversity of opinion.

#### 3.4 Data Collection Methods

There are two main sources of data collection, namely, questionnaires and semi-structured interviews.

##### a) Questionnaires

Teachers and students are administered structured questionnaires. They include closed-ended questions with a Likert scale in order to gauge perceptions of L1 impact, cultural influences and teaching effectiveness. The questionnaires assist in forming numerical data to be analysed statistically [8].

##### b) Interviews

Semi structured interviews will be used to interview selected teachers in a bid to get a greater insight into their experiences in teaching. Open-ended questions would enable the participants to talk about the hardships, measures, and accommodations to language and cultural diversity.

**Table 1: Summary of Data Collection Methods**

Method	Participants	Purpose	Type of Data
Questionnaire	Teachers & Students	Identify patterns and perceptions	Quantitative
Semi-structured Interview	Teachers	Explore experiences and teaching strategies	Qualitative

### 3.5 Data Analysis Techniques

The quantitative and qualitative methods are used to analyse the data collected.

- The analysis of **quantitative data** in questionnaires is done through descriptive statistics like percentages, mean scores and charts. This aids in determining trends with regards to the influence of L1 and cultural influence.
- Thematic analysis is employed in the analysis of **qualitative data** in the form of interviews. The responses will be coded and grouped into the themes including language transfer, cultural barriers, teaching adaptation and classroom interaction [9].

A combination of this analysis will be certain to have a complete interpretation of the data.

### 3.6 Reliability and Validity

To ensure validity of the research:

- Questionnaires are pilot-tested so that the question can be refined and better clarity is obtained.
- Triangulation is integrated through the merger of various sources of information (questionnaires and interviews).
- Consistency is ensured because one and the same set of questions is used with all participants.

These steps increase the quality and veracity of the results.

### 3.7 Ethical Considerations

Ethical issues are observed in the study. The participants are made aware of the reason behind the research and they are consenting before the data is collected. The privacy and anonymity are guaranteed, and the participants are provided with the ability to exit any point [10]. No personal information is released and all of the responses are utilized exclusively to academic ends.

**Table 2: Summary of Research Methodology**

Component	Description
Research Design	Mixed-method (Qualitative + Quantitative)
Research Approach	Pragmatic (Inductive + Deductive)
Sampling Technique	Purposive Sampling
Sample Size	20 Teachers, 50 Students
Data Collection Tools	Questionnaire, Interviews
Data Analysis Methods	Descriptive Statistics, Thematic Analysis
Ethical Considerations	Consent, Confidentiality, Anonymity

### 3.8 Limitations of the Methodology

In spite of the planning, there are certain constraints. Generalisability of findings may be reduced by the purposive sampling method. Furthermore, the subjective views of the respondents can also lead to responses. Interviews might also be limited by time. These limitations are however overcome by triangulation and close examination.

### 3.9 Summary

To conclude, this methodology is the mixed-method approach that is used to test the effect of first language and cultural variables on ELT practices. Using quantitative and qualitative data, the study would guarantee a wholesome and credible analysis of the research problem [11]. The overall validity of the research is enhanced through the use of tools, ethical practices, and systematic analysis.

## IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter summarizes the findings on the data gathered and discusses at length the effects of first language (L1) and cultural issues on the English Language Teaching (ELT) practices. Through the analysis, both quantitative responses of questionnaires and qualitative studies of interviews are combined to provide a complete picture of the research problem [12].

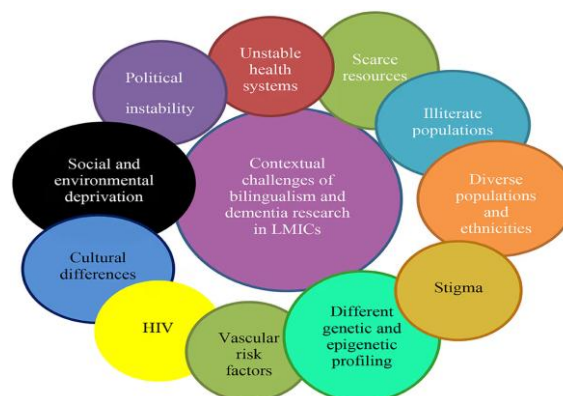


Figure 1: “Factors influencing language maintenance and revival”

#### 4.1 Demographic Profile of Participants

The research was conducted among 20 instructors and 50 students who belonged to different languages and cultures. The ethnic variety provided a variety of opinions on the ELT practices.

**Table 1: Demographic Distribution of Participants**

Category	Group	Frequency	Percentage
Teachers	Male	9	45%
	Female	11	55%
Students	Male	28	56%
	Female	22	44%
L1 Background	Bengali	30	43%
	Hindi	20	29%
	Others	20	28%

The table shows that there were even representations of gender and a broad variety of linguistic backgrounds. This heterogeneity plays an important part in learning the role of L1 in acquiring English.

#### 4.2 Influence of First Language on English Learning

The results show that L1 has a significant effect on the acquisition of English language among students. Most of the students said they depend on the language they speak to grasp complex concepts in English. Even teachers were not denied that L1 can somehow play a twofold role, i.e., on the one hand, it helps to understand the presented information, but on the other hand it is also understood that it can, at times, be a source of interference [13].

**Table 2: Impact of L1 on Language Learning**

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
L1 helps in understanding English concepts	40%	38%	12%	6%	4%
L1 causes grammatical errors	32%	36%	14%	10%	8%
Translation is frequently used by students	45%	30%	10%	10%	5%

The positive transfer to English is proven by these results that mean that learning is supported by similarities between L1 and English. Negative transfer is however found in pronunciation and sentence structure errors. These responses during the interview also showed that students tend to think in their native language and then translate the ideas into English, thus slackening the fluency [14].

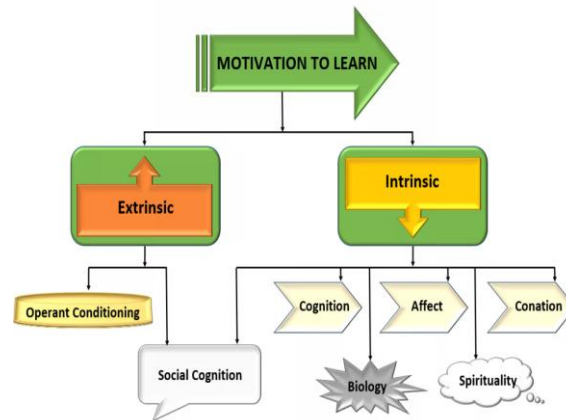


Figure 2: “Factors affecting second language learning”

#### 4.3 Cultural Factors Affecting Classroom Behaviour

This was found to vary greatly with the cultural background and its effects on the classroom interaction and the learning styles. Students in some cultural backgrounds were not talkative, and some were collaborative.

**Table 3: Cultural Influence on Learning Behaviour**

Behaviour Aspect	High Influence	Moderate Influence	Low Influence
Class participation	52%	30%	18%
Respect for teacher authority	65%	20%	15%
Preference for group work	48%	35%	17%

The results indicate that cultural norms influence the way the students will relate in the classroom. As an example, students belonging to hierarchical cultures are more respectful and less interactive, whereas students of the more open cultures face discussions actively [27]. Educators emphasised that cultural sensitivity is needed to create an inclusive participation.



Figure 3: “Learning language through interaction”

#### 4.4 Teaching Strategies Adopted by Educators

The teachers also indicated that they have been modifying their instruction to impact the linguistic and cultural diversity. Such common techniques as code-switching, use of visual aids, and collaborative learning were used.

**Table 4: Teaching Strategies Used in Multilingual Classrooms**

Strategy	Frequently Used	Occasionally Used	Rarely Used
Code-switching	60%	25%	15%
Use of visual aids	70%	20%	10%
Group activities	55%	30%	15%
Culturally relevant content	50%	35%	15%

The statistics indicate that educators are very active in the transformation of their learning styles to suit the needs of students. Switching codes came in handy especially when trying to explain complex ideas whereas culturally-related text served to boost student activities [28].

#### 4.5 Challenges Faced by Teachers

Although teachers have resorted to different strategies, they have shared some difficulties when dealing with a linguistically and culturally diverse classroom.

**Table 5: Key Challenges in ELT Practices**

Challenge	Percentage of Teachers Reporting
Language barriers	65%
Cultural misunderstandings	50%
Lack of training in diversity	55%
Limited teaching resources	45%

The most challenging issue that was mentioned was language barriers, then the lack of training on managing multicultural classrooms. The teachers said they needed to be given professional development programs that were centered on inclusive instructions.

**4.6 Discussion of Findings**

The results of this research indicate the complicated interaction of the first language and cultural aspects, as well as English language teaching practices. The findings confirm that L1 is critical in least influencing language acquisition. As is expected, according to the existing theories of language transfer, it is proved that L1 may both facilitate and impede learning [29]. Although it helps to understand using the structures that they are familiar with, it also creates errors in the case of any significant linguistic differences.

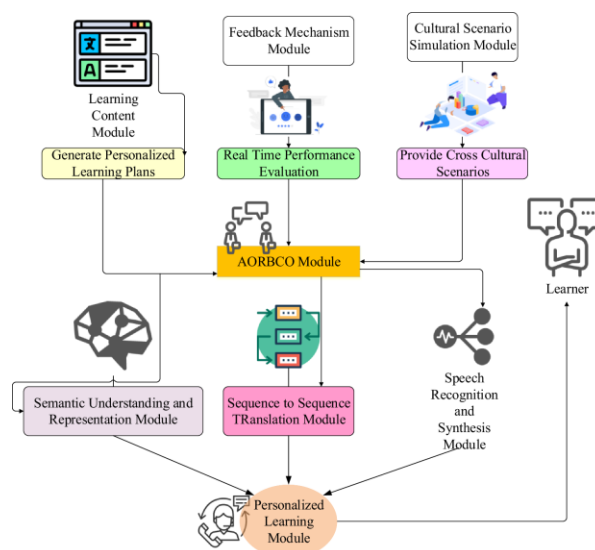
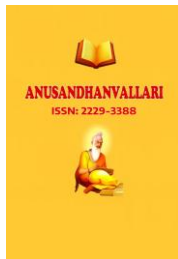


Figure 4: “Artificial intelligence-enhanced language learning on youths' intercultural communication competence”



The culture also has some contribution to the way students embrace the learning process. The research shows that cultural norms contribute to the participation in the classroom, communication styles and the learning preferences. These results concur with the culturally responsive teaching concept, which underscores how changes in instructions should be done depending on the culture of students [30].

The concern on these challenges is seen in the adoption of varied teaching strategies by the educators. Such methods as code-switching and utilization of culturally pertinent materials have been effective in eliminating linguistic and cultural separation. Nevertheless, the problem of still having issues with language barrier and lack of training may indicate that additional measures should be systematized.

Furthermore, the results also show that the successful ELT activities need a balance between English and L1 immersion and strategically, incorporating language. The over dependence on L1 can reduce exposure to English and when dependence is a hundred percent it can result in poor understanding. Hence, there is a need to have a flexible and context-sensitive approach.

The other valuable lesson is the issue of teacher awareness and flexibility. Those teachers who had exhibited cultural sensitivity and flexibility in their pedagogical method had a higher success rate in engaging the students into learning and enhancing the learning results. This brings up the significance of the teacher education programs that pay attention to multicultural education and inclusion.

#### 4.7 Summary

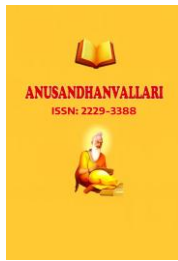
Overall, it can be argued that the results of the study allow concluding that first language and cultural influence are significant factors in English language teaching. Although L1 can be facilitative of learning, it can also lead to some difficulties that are to be carefully addressed. Cultural diversity is the richness of the classroom which involves adaptive teaching. The article explains that culturally responsive pedagogy, teacher training and development of resources are required to make ELT more effective in various learning settings.

#### V. CONCLUSION

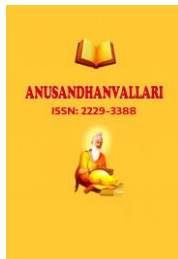
To summarize, this study has underscored how first language (L1) and cultural factors have a crucial impact on teaching English Language (ELT). These results prove that the native language of learners has a dual nature in language acquisition as it helps to make meaning during the process of positive transfer, as well as contributes to errors of linguistic interference. Simultaneously, the cultural background predetermines the classroom behaviour, the participation of students and their learning preferences, hence it directly influences the process of teaching and learning. It is also found in the study that teachers proactively change their teaching methods like the use of code-switching, culturally based materials and learning in small groups to meet the needs of the heterogeneous learners. Nevertheless, obstacles that include language barriers, lack of training towards multicultural education and the shortage of resources remain to be a deterrent to effective teaching. Comprehensively, the study focuses a lot on the significance of the culturally responsive pedagogy and the strategic nature of L1 in ELT. According to it, teacher training courses and institutional support must be rendered towards improving the capacity of educators to cope with the language and cultural diversity. Through diverse and inclusive pedagogies, teachers may provide better learning conditions, which enhance student participation, literacy along with total educational success in English language-involving scenarios.

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