



Role of Mother Tongue in Learning English as a Foreign Language

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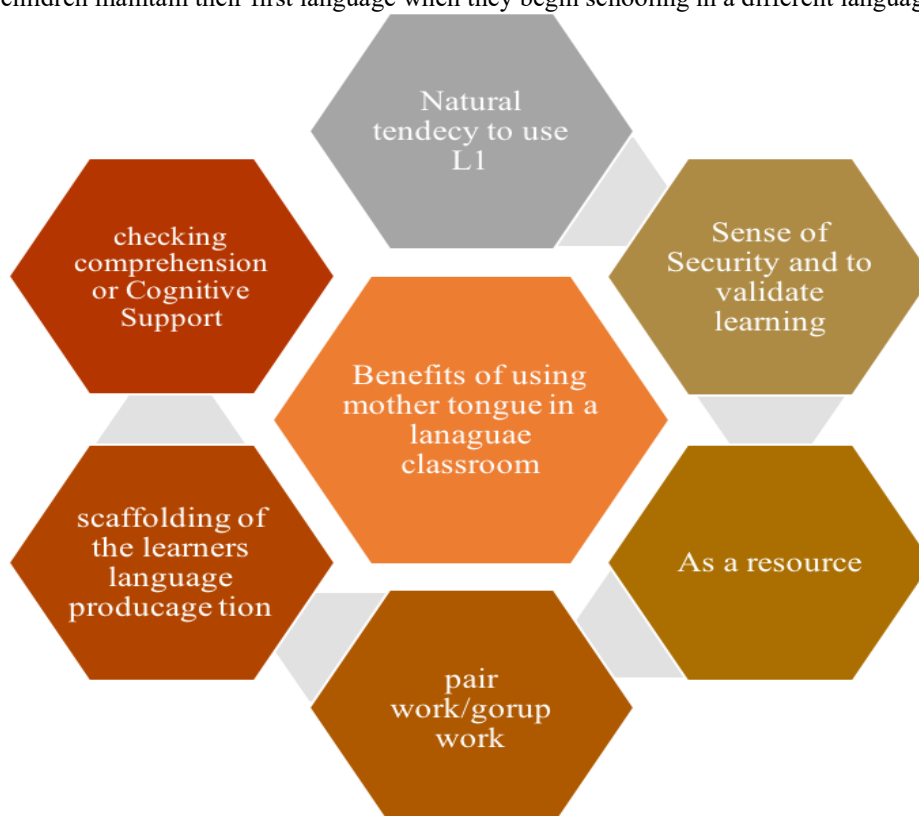
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ABSTRACT: The role of mother tongue in second language learning has been the subject of much debate and controversy. Most teachers feel that the use of L1 should be minimized and they feel guilty if they use it a lot. When challenged they find it difficult to say why. Against the use of L1, it is the general assumption that English should be learned through English, just as you learn your mother tongue using your mother tongue. But the idea that the learner should learn English like a native speaker does, or tries to 'think in English', is an inappropriate and unachievable thought. The role of mother tongue in teaching and learning of English has been discussed in literature. The influence of mother tongue is proved both positive and negative in teaching and learning of English. A learner's L1 is an important determinant of Second Language Acquisition. The L1 is a resource which learners use both consciously and subconsciously to help them arrange and re-arrange the L2 data in the input and to perform as best as they can. The cultural features connected with L1 use can be put to good effect when teaching L2. Second language acquisition is a developmental process; L1 can be a contributing factor to it.

KEYWORDS: English, mother tongue, foreign, language, role, learning

I. INTRODUCTION

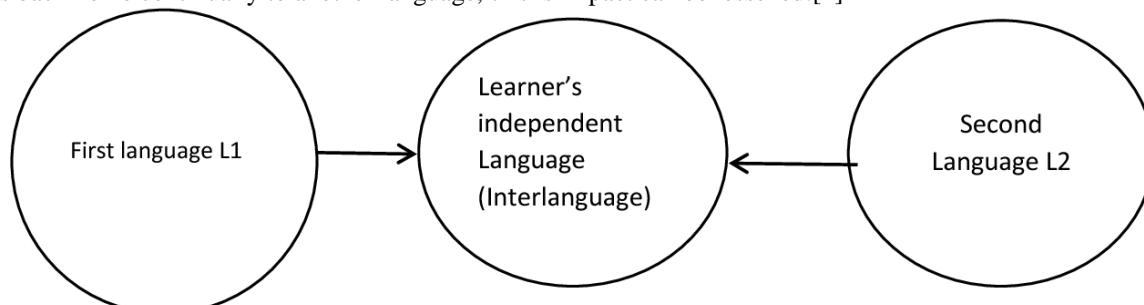
With increased migration and the growing popularity of international schools, the number of children learning in a language other than their mother tongue is growing rapidly. Research indicates that having a strong mother tongue foundation leads to a much better understanding of the curriculum as well as a more positive attitude towards school, so it's vital that children maintain their first language when they begin schooling in a different language.[1]



Mother tongue can often be referred to as your first language or native language. It is the language that you most commonly speak. However, mother tongue is always referencing the language that the child has used from birth and in

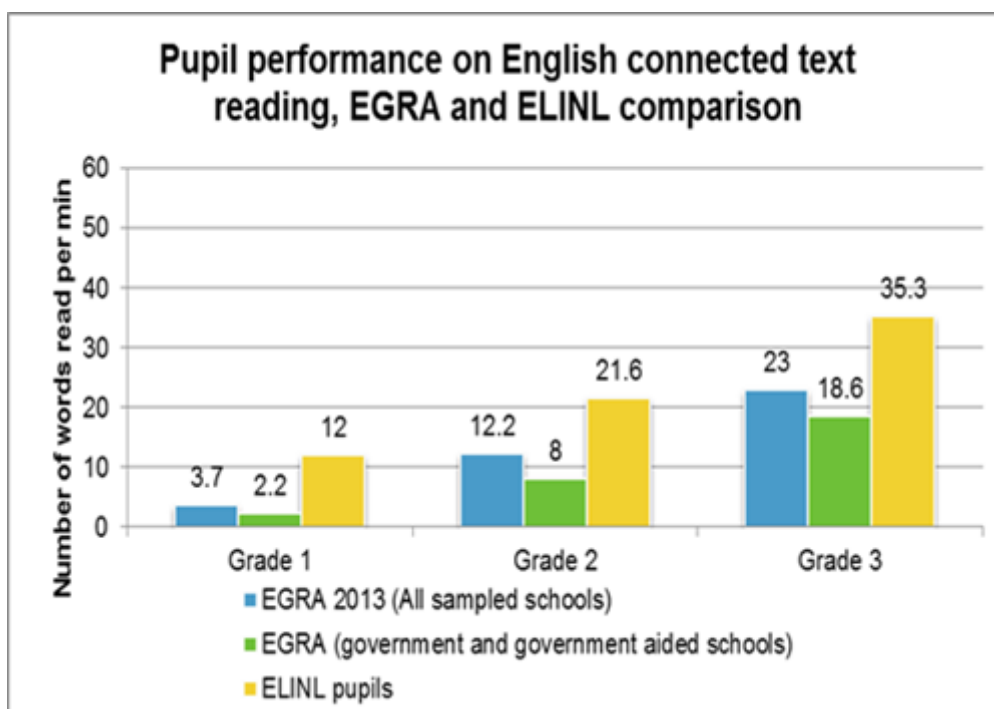


important and impacting times in the child’s life. For example, there are instances where a child is brought up until school age using a particular language at home spoken by their mother, father or other family members, but due to living in another country begins to adopt the language spoken in their interactions in groups or school. But if the child comes back home continually to another language, this is impact can be lessened.[2]



Mother tongue for a child involves more than just language and includes the child’s personal, social and cultural identity. The choice of words and expression carry different meaning across cultures and where in one language asking direct questions is considered intrusive, in another it is inquisitive. This means that the language chosen when speaking is thought about before it is delivered. Mother tongue in education refers to when a school or educational institution integrates the language a child is most familiar with (their mother tongue) into the classroom lesson along with the school’s lesson (such as English). This is normally the language that the child speaks at home with their family. Some children (particularly those that grow up in a mixed race parent household or those living abroad) already know two or more languages by the time they reach school age, which in education terms means that their mother tongue is the language most spoke at home.[3]

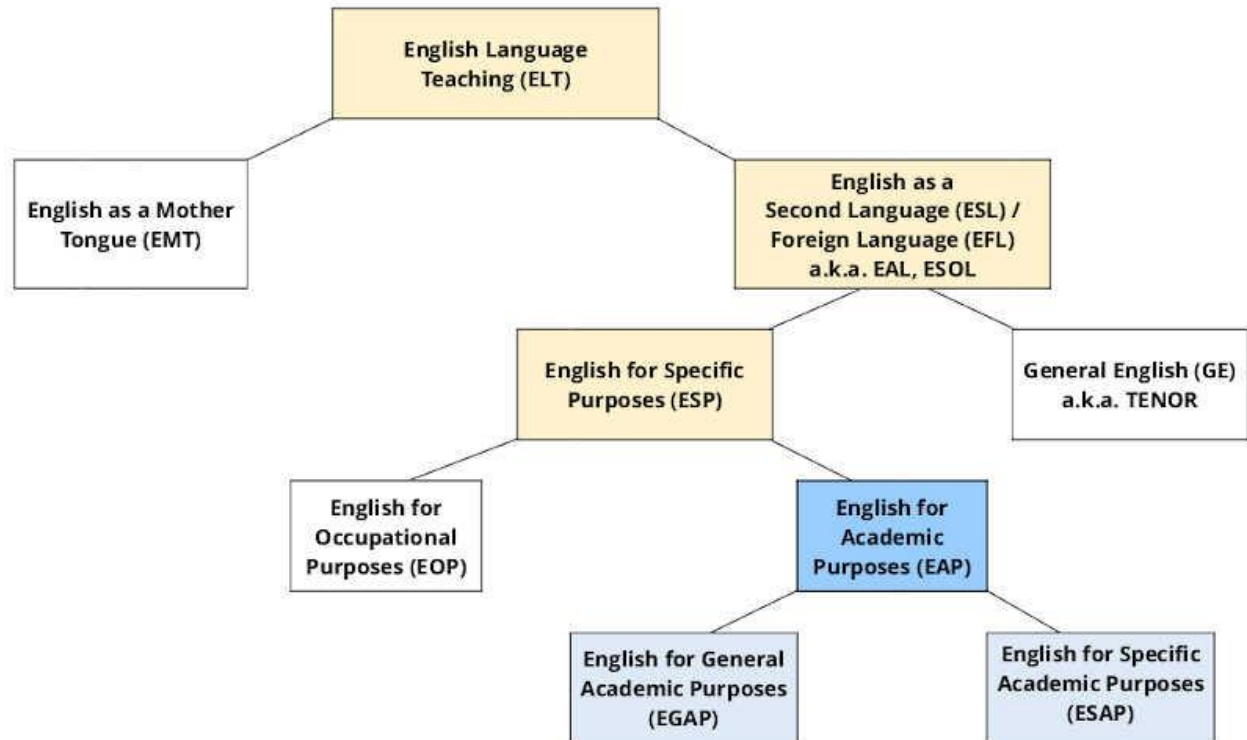
If this is two languages, then the child is lucky enough to have two mother tongue languages since their ability in both languages is equal. However, this is very rare as most commonly in households, one of the languages is predominantly used over another. Research shows that children learn better when taught in their mother tongue, however it is not always possible. The importance of mother tongue is studied because when children develop their mother tongue, they are simultaneously fostering a whole host of other essential skills, such as critical thinking and literacy skills.



It is these skills that they take with them into formal education, and research tells us that any skills and concepts gained in the learner’s home language don’t have to be re-taught when they transfer to a second language. For example, if a child has developed the ability to guess the meaning of a word through its context, or to infer meaning by reading between the lines, these skills are easily transferred when they begin studying in a second language. It is much harder, however, to teach these abstract skills directly through a second language.



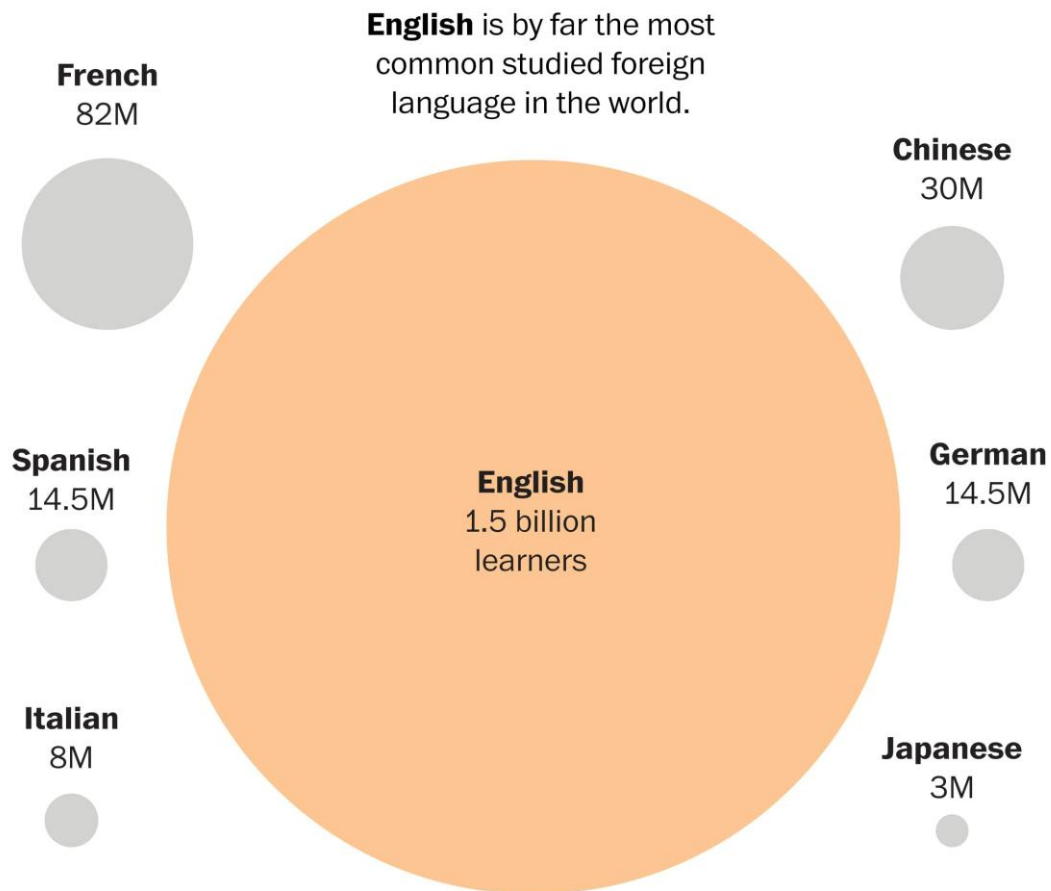
It's also well known that a strong mother tongue foundation equips children with the skills they need to learn additional languages, allowing them to transfer their understanding of the structure of language to several new languages. The intuitive understanding of grammar that develops when children learn their first language can easily be passed on to other languages.



With multilingualism becoming an increasingly sought-after attribute within the workplace, this advantage cannot be overstated; globalisation and increased co-operation between nations mean that, in many organisations, it has become a requirement to have language skills in addition to being a specialist within a particular field. Language and mother tongue also play a huge role in the development of personal, social and cultural identity. Children with a strong foundation in their first language often display a deeper understanding of themselves and their place within society, along with an increased sense of wellbeing and confidence. Naturally, this flows down into every aspect of their lives, including their academic achievement.[4]

II. OBSERVATIONS

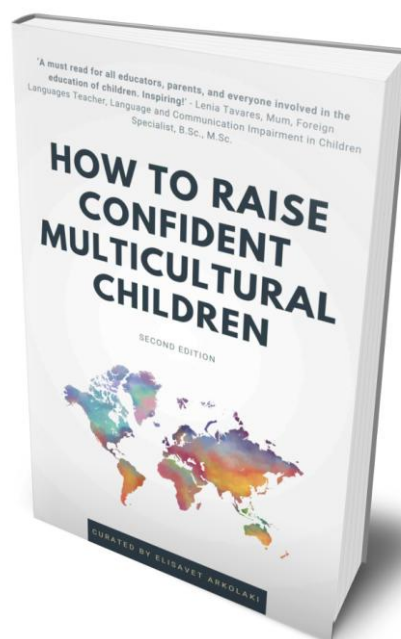
Second language acquisition is a psychological process. Naturally the learner achieves in acquiring the first language. The learner may fail in attaining a new language, because the students are not interested in learning a new language. The instructor can teach the importance of the second language and instill interest in the learners.



Sources: Ulrich Ammon, University of Düsseldorf

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Natural process is the best method in language acquisition. In learning a new language, the learner needs to spend extra force to overcome the learning disability.



They may involve in psychological process of acquisition, because acquisition is given more priority than learning a language. The factors which involved in acquisition are communication, recapitulation, stability in learning, trial and



error, interference of the acquired language, translation method. There are so many people out there who want to contribute to science, but can't because they don't know enough English. Funding agencies could help by including clauses to encourage visiting researchers to hire local residents, even if they aren't fluent in English. These locals understand the problem better than does a scientist who has never been to the area, and that knowledge matters whether it's expressed in Hindi or English.[5]

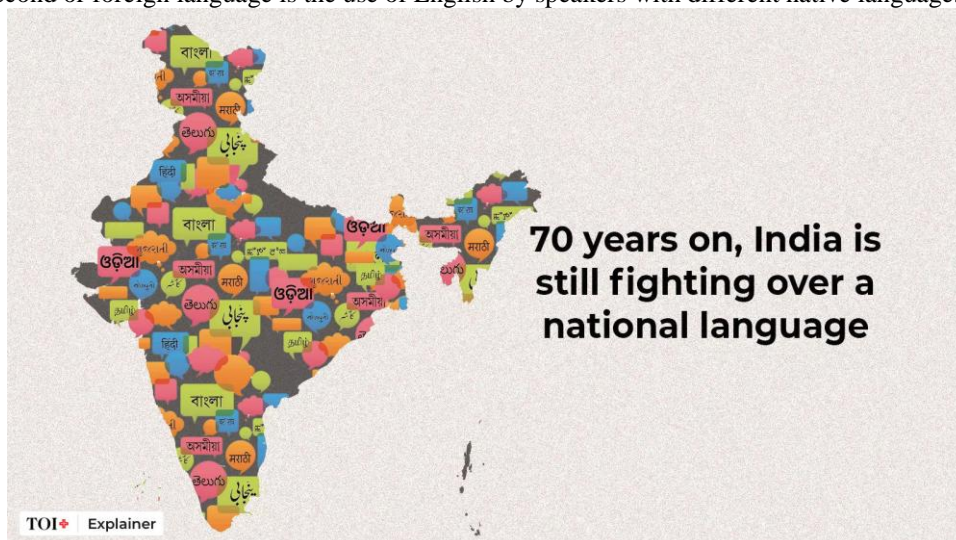
Although mother tongue and foreign languages are separate school subjects, the curriculum underlines that the subjects should together contribute towards a more general educational goal: the development of citizenship in a global world. The joint contribution of all language subjects towards this goal consists of developing insight into the nature of languages, language learning processes, communication and culture, and also developing ability to participate and communicate across cultures.



In our perspective, the new curriculum emphasises the relevance of our research topic. Language teachers need to deal with fundamental questions such as: What is a language? What is language competence? What does developing language competence mean? Today, however, a renewed interest in the relationship is no longer restricted to either a purely psycholinguistic concern or to investigations about how mother tongue influences foreign language learning. The assumption is rather that mutual influence takes place, consciously or unconsciously. In mother tongue learning and teaching as well as in foreign language classrooms, there is an increased interest in what kind of relationship we are dealing with and how learning, in respectively mother tongue and foreign language, can be mutually beneficial. If we choose to see the pupil's text, not only as a manifestation of competence in grammar structures and vocabulary, but as manifestations of the struggle to create meaning, we will, in addition to discovering connections between the mother tongue and the foreign language, be forced to reconsider our understanding of what language is and how it is learnt and developed.[6]

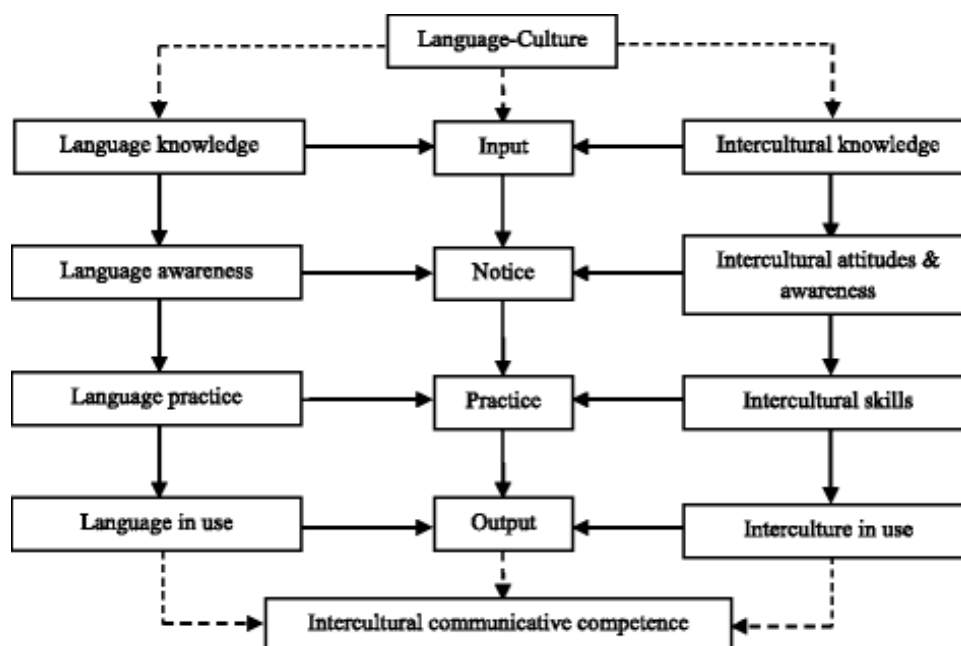
III. DISCUSSION

English as a second or foreign language is the use of English by speakers with different native languages.





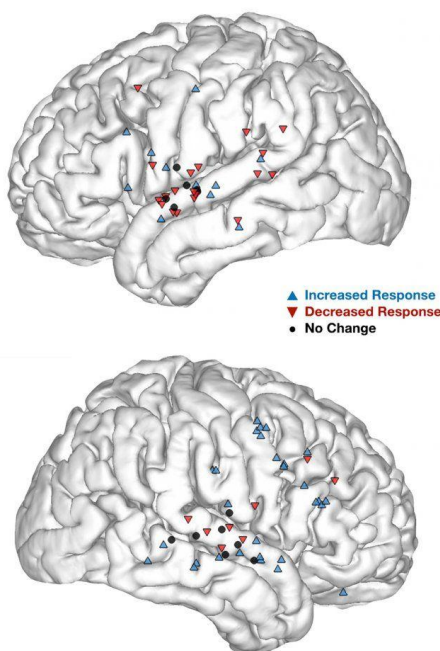
Language education for people learning English may be known as English as a second language (ESL), English as a foreign language (EFL), English as an additional language (EAL), or English for speakers of other languages (ESOL). The aspect in which ESL is taught is referred to as teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL), teaching English as a second language (TESL) or teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL). Technically, TEFL refers to English language teaching in a country where English is not the official language, TESL refers to teaching English to non-native English speakers in a native English speaking country and TESOL covers both. In practice, however, each of these terms tends to be used more generically across the full field. TEFL is more widely used in the UK and TESL or TESOL in the US. The English language has a great reach and influence, and English is taught all over the world. In countries where English is not usually a native language, there are two distinct models for teaching English: Educational programs for students who want to move to English-speaking countries,



and other programs for students who do not intend to move but who want to understand English content for the purposes of education, entertainment, employment or conducting international business. The differences between these two models of English language education have grown larger over time, and teachers focusing on each model have used different terminology, received different training, and formed separate professional associations. English is also taught as a second language for recent immigrants to English-speaking countries, which faces separate challenges because the students in one class may speak many different native languages.[7]

IV. RESULTS

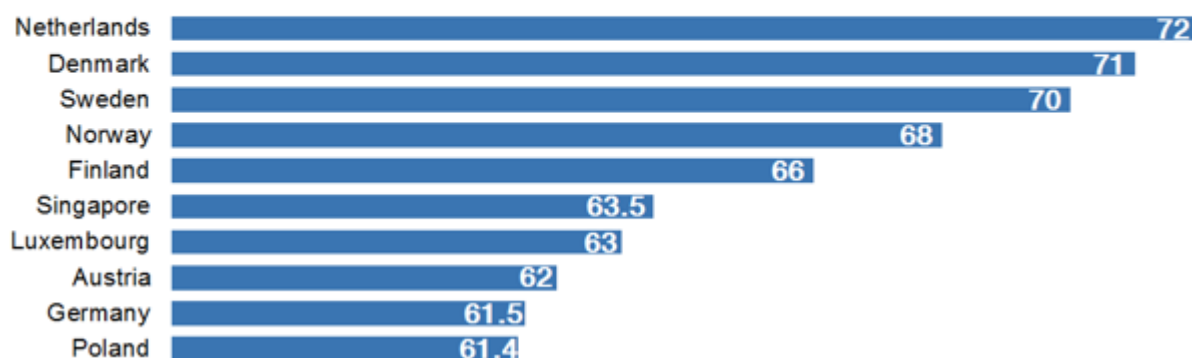
The mother tongue is the greatest asset people bring to the task of foreign language learning and provides Language Acquisition Support System. The importance of English in this modern time cannot be denied. English is one of the greatest second languages of the world. It has become international language of science, technology, commerce, business, international politics and diplomacy. It is estimated that 1.4 billion people use English as their official language. It is the language of more than 1500 million non native speaker's .



It is claimed that three out of four speakers of English are non natives. In Pakistan English is taught as a compulsory subject in primary and secondary schools. It is considered a source of bright and prestigious future. The use of mother tongues goes side by side with English. So their influence in learning English cannot be denied and over ruled. It is interesting to note that most of our languages in Pakistan including Urdu, Punjabi & Saraiki belong to the Indo European family of languages. English also fall in this family.

Countries best at English as a second language

The English Proficiency Index 2016



So they must have some common parent language which gave birth to other languages. According to Stephan Krashen learning is a Continuous process of developing a foreign language through language lessons and a focus on the Grammatical features of that language. He makes the claim that voluntary reading may be the most powerful educational tool in language education. It proves that there is no direct impact of mother tongue on second language. The logic behind this fact is that English is quite a different language for the learners belonging to the students of three different mother tongues. The phenomenon of impact of mother tongue is still there but our present study proves it otherwise. [8]



V. CONCLUSION

Globally, there are 50-75 million ‘marginalized’ children who are not enrolled in school. Children whose primary language is not the language of instruction in school are more likely to drop out of school or fail in early grades. Research has shown that children’s first language is the optimal language for literacy and learning throughout primary school. In spite of growing evidence and parent demand, many educational systems around the world insist on exclusive use of one or sometimes several privileged languages. This means excluding other languages and with them the children who speak them .[9]



It is not hard to grasp all that is at stake: parents not enrolling their children in school at all, children not able to engage successfully in learning tasks, teachers feeling overwhelmed by children’s inability to participate, early experiences of school failure, and so on. Some children do succeed, perhaps through a language transition program that helps them to acquire the language of instruction. But there is the risk of negative effects whereby children fail to become linguistically competent members of their families and communities and lose the ability to connect with their cultural heritage.[10]

V. FUTURE SCOPE

Questions need to be explored about what are the most important outcomes and how best to measure them in various teaching and learning contexts. How should assessment of pedagogical effectiveness take into account the different pace of children’s growing competence in core skills including reading, writing, numeracy and problem solving when they learn through multiple languages? There is also a gap in research on effective approaches for successful transitions of mother-tongue educated children to secondary school in a dominant language.[10]

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