

Reimagining English Language Education through Indian Knowledge Systems: Pedagogical Approaches and Challenges

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Abstract: In English Language Education we saw a great shift in recent time which included the introduction of Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS). This mainly puts the learner at the center of the educational process, their identity, importance, cultural relevance and epistemological pluralism. In the 2020 National Education Policy (NEP) which put forth a framework for integration of the Indian Knowledge System in to the academic structure, English Language Education also had a role to play. While it is a universal language, we as Indians must adopt and use foreign languages but at the same time not lose touch with our own Indian knowledge. In this study we look at which pedagogical models do best in the implementation of IKS in to English Pedagogy. We also present in this article a synthesis of theory, useful strategies and issues related to the inclusion of IKS in English Pedagogy. We looked at past research to achieve the main aim of the study. What we found is that the integration of IKS in to English Pedagogy does in fact increase engagement and cultural affirmation. Also we discuss from a teacher training and curriculum design point of view what can be done to support this integration which also plays in to the goals of the NEP 2020.

Keywords: Indian Traditional Systems, Pedagogic Methods, English Language Education, Cultural Relevance, NEP 2020.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the 21st century English Language Education (ELE) has taken a central stage in the world's education systems and is present in all academic and professional fields. As it is the medium through which knowledge is produced and global engagement is achieved, also in terms of its institutional structure (ELE) has embraced a very diverse social cultural and linguistic setting. At the same time this growth has seen the promotion of what may be described as a Western body of thought, literary heritage and communication which has been put forth by most education systems around the world to question is that we are at a point which large scale, still we have a very large scale, mono cultural, which is to say that the pedagogical practices and curricular models which we see put in place are very much dominated by Western ways of knowing.

This has seen a growth in what may be described as pedagogical approaches and curricular frameworks that favor Western ways of knowing, literary canons, and communication styles. Also, in many postcolonial and multilingual settings English language curricula still do not enough take into account learners' local cultures, languages, and knowledge systems (McKinley Rose, 2018; Ladson-Billings, 2014). That which is put forth is that this lack of alignment is a cause for issue in terms of learner engagement, epistemic equity, and the cultural relevance of English language education.

Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) have seen to grow in academic interest as a way to put issues related to them into perspective and also to redress epistemological imbalances. IKS are presented as local bodies of knowledge which have developed out of the in depth interaction between communities and their social, cultural, and ecological settings (Dei, 2011; Smith, 2012). They include elements of language practice, oral tradition, cultural stories, ethical structures, and experiential methods of learning. Although very important they have in the past been left out of the formal education framework which in fields like that of English language education is very much a product of colonial past and global standardization.

Recent there has been a push for the relevance of Indian knowledge in formal curricula through policy and educational reform. For instance the National Education Policy of 2020 which is that of India puts forth the integration of Indian Knowledge Systems into all subjects of study to promote cultural rootedness and holistic learning. Also we see in other multi linguistic and post colonial settings a trend toward decolonization of curriculum, cultural sustainability, and epistemic pluralism. In this wide scale reform we see that of the English language education put forward as a complex issue which it must play out between global communication requirements and also that of the local social cultural realities.

The incorporation of Indian Knowledge Systems into the English language curriculum is not to see the global standing of English diminish. Instead we see a reimagining of English pedagogy as a culture aware practice which uses students' present language and cultural assets. Research in cultural responsive pedagogy reports that students do better in terms of engagement and academic performance when what is put forth to them is related to their cultural background and what they bring to the table (Gay, 2018). Also we see from research in multilingual education that the use of students' first languages and Indian language resources supports in depth conceptual development and also improves second language growth (Cummins, 2007). These results point to the pedagogical value of IKS as a resource instead of a barrier in the study of English.

From a theoretical standpoint the inclusion of IKS in English language education is out of culturally relevant pedagogy, critical pedagogy, and decolonial educational theory. Culturally relevant pedagogy which puts forth that academic success is achieved through cultural competence and critical awareness does at the same time advocate for instruction that supports learners identity (Ladson-Billings, 2014). Critical pedagogy places language learning in the midst of larger social political issues and gets students to look at the play between language, power and knowledge. Decolonial educational theory on the other hand puts forth that we question the preeminence of Western epistemology and put forward Indian ways of knowing as equal and valid within the structure of formal education (Smith, 2012). Together these theories form the base from which we may study how IKS may be put into practice in English language pedagogy. In English language education which is the setting for use of IKS we see the incorporation of Indian stories, oral histories, local literatures and culturally based communication practices into the curriculum. These approaches have the advantage of getting students engaged with English via what they are familiar with at the same time they are building up their language skills and critical literacy. Also we see in this model of instruction the role of the community in the learning process, the use of experience based pedagogy and multi lingual practices which in turn support the relevance of the material presented and which also play into constructivist models that put forth the idea that students themselves make meaning and are agents in the learning process.

In spite of what is put forth by way of pedagogic possibilities, the inclusion of Indian Knowledge Systems in English language education brings up issues. Issues like that of rigid curricular structures, large scale assessment models geared towards standardization, which in turn also see to the lack of teacher training in IKS based methods and the issue of very few cultural specific instructional materials. Also we see that in many cases English is put on a higher pedestal as opposed to Indian languages thus at the same time we have a reinforcement of epistemic hierarchies and a narrowing of multi-lingual pedagogical practices. Also issues of what is included in what is taught out of Indian Knowledge Systems' from an ethical point of view, questions of who owns this knowledge and the issue of it's possible appropriation also require us to think through carefully (Dei, 2011). Also these issues bring to the fore the need for in depth research that looks at the what, how and why of IKS in the English language education setting.

In this context which we are looking at the role of Indian Knowledge Systems in English language education the present article puts forth. We look at which pedagogical approaches are used and also at the issues which come up in that. Also the study which we are presenting here is to (a) put forward what we think is the role of IKS in English language education, (b) look at pedagogical methods which support a responsive and decolonial approach to teaching English, and (c) to also put out what we see as the structural, pedagogical and ethical issues which play out in the class room. By looking at theory from language education and Indian studies we seek to add to the present talk which is out there on epistemic equity, culturally based pedagogy and the direction which we see for English language education in multi cultural and post colonial settings.

2. Conceptual Framework: Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS):

Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) present as very much in the eye and practice of the local and Indian communities which over time have developed and maintained them in the context they are in. These knowledge systems include what is known, how we live and what we do that is passed down through the generations via oral tradition, our practices, rituals, what we see around us and in our community. Different from what we see in the disciplinary knowledge systems which tend to be very separate and text based, the IKS are of a whole piece which include language, culture, ethics, spirituality and environmental awareness in one epistemological package.

Scholarly discussion reports that IKS is a living, breathing field as opposed to a static one, that it is adaptive not archaic, and that it is rooted in context as opposed to being universal in application. This is a shift from former colonial which presented Indian Knowledge Systems as informal, unscientific, and of lesser value to that of the West (Shizha, 2014). Today we see IKS put forth as legitimate epistemologies that play a large role in topics like education, sustainability, health, and social organization. In the field of educational study we are also starting to see calls from within and beyond the community for epistemic diversity also included in this is the push forward to include Indian ways of knowledge into that of the curriculum which previously left it out.

From the epistemic standpoint IKS differ from what is put forth in the West in terms of how knowledge is created and verified. In IKS knowledge is of an experiential, relational and place based nature which comes from collective memory and social practice as opposed to what is put forth by abstract theory alone (Dei, 2011). Language in this process is at the forefront; it is not just a tool for communication but a store of cultural meaning, value and cognitive structure. Also we see that the marginalization of Indian languages in formal education has played a large role in the decline and disrespect of Indian knowledge.

In former colonial settings we see that which Traditional Knowledge Systems are left out of the formal education picture is a result of the colonial past which pushed for a Eurocentric curriculum and language of power. English in particular came to symbolize modernity, progress and economic betterment while Indian languages and knowledges were put in the role of what hindered development. This epistemic order which put Western thought on a higher plane persists in present day education which still for the most part ignores the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of its students (McKinley Rose, 2018).

Recent in educational theory we see a push which is to redress these imbalances through the introduction of Indigenous Knowledge Systems into the school curriculum. Also, from a decolonial perspective it is put forth that the preferment of Western ways of knowing is a form of epistemic injustice and that we instead should see Indian knowledge as equal in value (Smith, 2012). Also in that which we may call a cultural turn in pedagogy, there is a push for the bringing into the classroom of students' cultural knowledge, languages, and identities which in turn is to foster equity and very meaningful engagement (Gay, 2018; Ladson-Billings, 2014).

In our model we see IKS (Indigenous Knowledge Systems) growing to be used as pedagogical tools in which they are no longer just add on elements of culture. Their role in education is to put learning in context which in turn links academic theories to what is present in the local community and the lives of the students. Also we see from research that which is rooted in culture improves student motivation, their comprehension and critical thinking which in turn is very much the case in multilingual and in marginalised communities (Cummins, 2007). This is very much the issue in fields like language education which reports that which we see in home languages is different from what is presented in the school setting.

In the issue of Indian Knowledge Systems' relevance we have seen a revival in the Indian context which is a result of policy measures like the National Education Policy 2020 that put forth the idea of inclusion of Indian Knowledge Systems at all levels and across all fields of study. Indian IKS include many elements of our traditional past, we see that in our philosophies, in our literary works, in the way we use language, in our environmental know how, in our pedagogy which the gurukul is a great example. These policies present IKS as very much at the base of what gives a student a root in their culture, in which also brings out ethical growth and also an approach to development that is whole and complete. Also we can see this as part of a big movement which is the push for that which is Indian in its epistemology to take its place in the curriculum.

However in the case of IKS introduction into the academic setting we see that which issues of representation, authenticity and ethics come to the fore. We see that which scholars report on the practice of tokenism inclusion of Indian knowledge via single out of context cultural references which in turn do not engage with the epistemological base (Hashish, 2014). Also of issue is the appropriation or misrepresentation of Indian knowledge which happens when it is taken out of its cultural context or put to use without community buy in. What we do see is an argument for the ethical practice of

including IKS which includes collaboration with Indian communities, respect for issues of knowledge ownership and attention to cultural protocols (Dei, 2011).

In terms of research and pedagogy IKS calls for a methodological reorientation. We see that traditional research frameworks which are into objectivity, detachment, and use of text may not be the best for present day knowledge systems which are based in oral traditions, relational epistemologies, and collective meaning making. Also scholars have put forth methodological pluralism which includes Indian research methods and which value community input, reflexivity, and reciprocity (Smith, 2012). This change has results which play out in the field of teacher education, curriculum design and assessment in disciplines which depend heavily on language for knowledge production.

In total Indian Knowledge Systems are a key site for rethinking what we aim for and which practices we put in place in present day education. Their inclusion challenges the preexisting epistemic structures, supports culture based learning, and brings about epistemic equity in multilingual and post colonial settings. For research in the field of English language education and related areas we see in IKS an opportunity to reframe language teaching as a culture rooted, social issue responsive and ethical practice. Also we must do more research to see how IKS may be put into formal education systems in a systematic and responsible way which at the same time preserves their epistemological integrity and cultural value.

3.What is the importance of integrating English Language Education?

Validating students identities and connecting learning to their lived experiences. In Nigeria, empirical research reports that the use of Indian culture in the classroom which includes the use of folktales, proverbs, and idioms greatly improves literacy in English as compared to the traditional textbook based approaches.

Also through IKS integration we see that which is an increase in linguistic diversity and cognitive engagement as it links in known cultural elements to academic language work. In the classroom through the use of Indian stories and linguistic structures in English based activities which is what we mean by embedding, we as educators can enable students to transfer their present language skills into new communication settings at the same time which also improves the cognitive and affective aspects of learning.

4.Theoretical Underpinnings of IKS-Infused Pedagogy: Foundations of IKS in Pedagogy:

4.1.Culture-based-education

Culturally relevant teaching is about recognizing students cultural backgrounds as resources which in turn we use to fuel their learning. This practice sees teachers include local stories, community resources, and what is familiar to the culture of our students in to what we present as curriculum material which in turn validates students' identities and promotes their engagement.

In English language classrooms we see value in tying instruction to students' cultural backgrounds which in turn reduces feelings of alienation which students may feel from foreign cultural materials. This also plays into the greater goals of cultural responsive pedagogy which puts forth inclusion, relevance, and equity as primary values.

4.2.Pedagogy And Non - Western Models

Critical pedagogy is a framework which draws from Freire's work that puts forth the value of empowerment via context specific knowledge and dialogue in the classroom. In to the school setting we see that International Knowledge Systems when used in English language instruction⁰ which is a term I will use instead of IKS as it is more familiar does this which in turn promotes critical consciousness by which students look at the issues of language, power and identity.

Decolonial education also puts forward that which is outside of Western epistemology as of equal value and importance as Indian knowledge. This perspective we see as a way to break up colonial legacies in language education and at the same time to put forward Indian linguistic traditions.

5.Pedagogical Approaches to IKS Integration in English Language Education

5.1.Storytelling and Indian Literatures

Story in many Indian cultures is at the core which serves as a great tool for language acquisition. Into the English curriculum we can bring in Indian folk tales, myths and oral histories which in turn give extensive language input which includes narrative structure, vocabulary and cultural connotations that speak to learners' cultural identity.

Teachers may present in class as facilitators for discussions, dramatizations, and creative writing from within students' own cultural stories, thus they enable the application of English language skills which relate to students' life and culture.

5.2. Community Driven Content Creation.

Collaborative development of curricula which includes input from community elders and knowledge keepers is a way to authentically report IKS in to English language instruction. We see that which which we include Indian communities as we create learning materials together the curricular content will reflect local epistemologies, norms and values instead of what may be only surface level cultural elements.

This approach also puts forward the issues of sustainability and community knowledge at the fore which is a step away from what we may term as tokenistic inclusion toward more in depth integration.

5.3. Multilingual and Language blending practices

In many languages pedagogies we see value in using students' first languages along side English which in turn supports better comprehension and cultural affirming. Also we see that translanguing practices which have students use many languages flexibly in class tasks do well to put Indian languages forward as cognitive tools which in turn enrich the learning of English. Such of these approaches is that they put forward IKS which present language as a living and dynamic entity as opposed to a set of abstract rules.

5.4. Inquiry based and Experiential Learning

Inquiry in which the local setting is the base for study helps students to look into Indian knowledge and see that's how it ties into what they are doing in English class. For instance we see that which in which students do field work projects that have to do with collecting oral history from the community, documenting what they see in terms of community practice, or analyzing cultural products this is when they are most engaged and putting that which is in their own backyards into the English language work.

5.5. Teacher Preparation and Professional Development

The teacher professional program also includes development and spread of IKS into the English pedagogy. Also see below which will detail the role of the teacher education program in the integration of IKS.

5.6. Teacher Induction and Professional Growth in IKS adoption

- **Inclusion of IKS in Pre-Service Teacher Education:** Teacher education programs should include Indian Knowledge Systems as a key element in English language pedagogy. This which in turn will enable future teachers to study Indian epistemologies, cultural stories, and methods of knowledge transmission before they enter the profession.

- **Training in Culturally Responsive and Decolonial Pedagogies:** Teachers' entry into the practice of culturally responsive teaching and decolonial frameworks is required which in turn challenge Eurocentric assumptions in English language education and put forth epistemic inclusivity.

- **Interdisciplinary Academic Exposure:** Professional training should put forth an interdiscipline approach which sees to include English language teaching with history, philosophy, anthropology, and cultural studies to which in turn will add to the depth of teachers' knowledge of IKS.

- **Development of Curriculum Design Competence:** Teachers are to be trained in the development of flexible, context appropriate curricula which include Indian texts, oral traditions and local knowledge practices at the same time we do not sacrifice linguistic learning outcomes.

- **Pedagogical Use of Indian Literatures and Oral Traditions:** Professional development programs should present strategies for the use of folktales, myths, proverbs, and oral histories as valid pedagogical tools in English language classrooms.

- **Capacity Building for Multilingual and Translanguaging Practices:** Teachers should be trained in the use of students' Indian languages as tools for cognition and culture which in turn will support effective translanguaging that in turn supports English language acquisition.

- **Ethical Engagement with Indian Communities:** Professional preparation must include ethical guidelines for working with Indigenous knowledge which includes consent, authenticity, respectful representation, and which also avoids appropriation.
- **Assessment Literacy for IKS-Based Learning Outcomes:** Teachers should design assessment which includes cultural elements of learning, critical thinking, and communication which go beyond what is seen in traditional standardized tests.
- **Digital Documentation and Archiving Skills:** Teachers must train in documenting Indian narratives and cultural practices with digital tools, which is at the same time preserving the culture and also making it appropriate for use in the classroom.
- **Reflective Practice and Teacher Identity Development:** Continuous professional growth should see in to the development of reflective practices which in turn encourage teachers to look at their own positionality, biases, and role in the transmission of Indian and global knowledge.
- **Collaborative Professional Learning Communities:** Professional education networks of which teachers, researchers, and Indian knowledge keepers are a part which in turn supports ongoing dialogue, resource development, and pedagogical innovation.
- **Policy Literacy and Institutional Alignment:** Teachers must have knowledge of national and institutional policies (like NEP 2020) in which to base classroom practices that support larger scale educational reforms which in turn promote IKS integration.

5.7. Teacher Education and IKS Pedagogies: Teacher Training and IKS Pedagogies:

Effective in the implementation of IKS into English education is teacher preparation which gives educators a clear concept and practical skills. In to prepare the teachers we put in for study material on Indian epistemologies, culturally responsive teaching, and decolonial approaches.

Research shows that which teachers' confidence is raised in the use of culturally relevant materials and pedagogical approaches that put IKS elements into English language instruction.

5.8. Collaborative Professional Communities:

Professional language teaching communities which bring in community elders and Indian knowledge keepers see also to great for shared learning, resource exchange and reflection. These networks which put together diverse expertise support the in depth integration of IKS by combining pedagogical and cultural know how.

6. Challenges in Integrating Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) in English Language Education

For the introduction of IKS into the English language we have discussed that which presents.

- **Curricular Rigidity and Examination-Driven Frameworks:** Most of what is present in the English language curriculum is very structured by what is in the standard syllabi and what is to be covered in terms of examinations which leaves little room for local or contextual issues related material (IKS) to be included in a relevant way. This issue of integration is only to be solved through large scale reform of the curriculum.
- **Dominance of Western Epistemologies:** English language education in the past has favored Western literary canons, pedagogical models, and linguistic norms. This epistemic dominance which in turn marginalizes Indian worldviews and presents IKS in a supplementary rather than a foundational role.
- **Lack of Teacher Preparedness and Training:** Many English as a second language instructors do not have background in Indian Knowledge Systems, cultural relevant pedagogy, or decolonized education which in turn leads to uncertainty, superficial inclusion, or total avoidance of IKS in the classroom.
- **Insufficient Teaching and Learning Resources:** There is a lack of quality, peer reviewed, and grade level appropriate English based teaching materials which present IKS. Also it is a fact that Indian knowledge which is mostly passed down orally is a challenge to put into a structured classroom setting which in turn is a resource issue.
- **Language Hierarchies and Linguistic Prejudice:** In many formal education settings Indian languages are looked down upon in favor of English. These linguistic hierarchies also which in turn push aside the practice of translanguaging and at the same time do a disservice to the cognitive and cultural value of the learners' native languages.

- **Risk of Tokenism and Superficial Integration:** Without which there is no in depth analysis IKS integration falls into the practice of the symbolic that is to say limited to putting in of cultural elements which are separate from the main structure, rather than a which is a deep rooted inclusion that permeates pedagogy, assessment and learning outcomes.
- **Assessment and Evaluation Challenges:** In English language education we see that which is conventional is the teaching of grammar, vocabulary, and writing in a very by the book approach. Also we note that these methods do not include assessment of cultural awareness, critical thinking, and Indian knowledge systems.
- **Ethical Concerns and Knowledge Appropriation:** Integrating IKS into global health care practices raises issues of who owns that knowledge, what consent was given for its use, and how it is represented. Also we see that which community knowledge is used out of context or inappropriately as a form of cultural exploitation which in turn causes loss of epistemic integrity.
- **Limited Institutional and Policy Support:** Although the NEP 2020 puts forth the inclusion of IKS in its policies, what we see is that institutions which are the enforcers of these policies in terms of funding, academic incentives, and curriculum design are not well developed which in turn limits wide scale adoption.
- **Resistance from Stakeholders:** Resistance also comes from educators, parents, and academic institutions which see IKS based pedagogy as a threat to global competitiveness and academic rigor of English education which in turn is tied to social economic mobility.

7.Conclusion: From which we have discussed, it is put forth that IKS is a very key field of study which we as a body must familiarize ourselves with and which only through the process of instruction we will be able to do so. Also of great issue is the role of teacher training program which is that of producing the personnel that will in turn build our nation's future. Many issues will present itself but it is upon us to address these in order for IKS to do well and we to achieve the goals of NEP 2020.

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