Chapter -II

Review of Related Literature

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2.1   Introduction

In recent years, the idea of introducing young children to more than one language early in their education has become a growing focus—especially in India. With the launch of the National Curriculum Framework for the Foundational Stage (NCF-SE) 2023, there's a fresh push to encourage teaching in children's home languages or mother tongues during the early years of schooling. This approach is based on the understanding that learning multiple languages early on doesn't just help kids talk better—it also helps them think more clearly, connect with others, and do well in school.

This section looks at what researchers, educators, and policymakers have said about how multilingualism affects young learners. It explores different studies and ideas to see how using more than one language in the classroom shapes early learning, and how this tie into the goals of NCF-SE 2023. By going through this literature, we can better understand both the benefits and the challenges of multilingual education, and why it matters in shaping a strong foundation for children's future learning.

2.2.   Objectives of Literature Review

1. **To explore and analyze existing research** related to the subject of study to gain a comprehensive understanding of the field.

2. **To identify key theories, models, and frameworks** that support the research area.

3. **To examine the strengths and limitations** of previous studies relevant to the research problem.

4. **To highlight trends, patterns, and gaps** in the current body of knowledge.

5. **To provide a solid foundation** for the current research by building on existing findings and identifying areas that require further investigation.

2.3   Need of Review of Related Literature

1. To better understand the key terms and ideas related to the topic and get a clear picture of what it's all about.
2. To see how thinking around the topic has changed or grown over time.
3. To look at how other researchers have studied the topic and see what worked well for them.
4. To explore different opinions and viewpoints that have come up in past studies.
5. To learn from successful methods and approaches used in similar research.
6. To help shape the research questions, goals, and guesses (hypotheses) using insights from earlier work.
7. To give credit to past researchers and build this study on a strong and honest foundation.
8. To connect what's found in research to real-life use, especially in education and policy-making.
9. To show why this study matters by pointing out what earlier research missed or didn't fully explain.

2.4   Review of Related Literature

Multilingualism has become a key topic in education research worldwide, especially in diverse countries like India where many languages coexist. This chapter looks at previous studies about multilingual education, focusing particularly on young children. It explores how learning more than one language influences their thinking, social skills, and school performance, especially within the new educational policies like the NCF-SE 2023.

2.4.1 Multilingualism and Early Childhood Education

The early years of a child's life are extremely important for learning languages. Research shows that kids who are exposed to multiple languages early on often develop better thinking skills, like solving problems and paying attention (Bialystok, 2017). Cummins (2001) highlights how being strong in their first language helps children learn other languages more easily. This supports what NCF-SE 2023 suggests — starting literacy with the child's mother tongue or the language they know best (R1) helps build a strong base.

2.4.2 The Cognitive Benefits of Multilingualism

Many studies find that children who grow up speaking two or more languages tend to have sharper mental skills than those who speak only one (Barac et al., 2014; Adesope et al., 2010). These kids are better at switching between tasks, remembering things, and solving problems. Their brains get used to handling different languages at once, which makes them more flexible thinkers (Bialystok, 2017).

2.4.3 Multilingualism and Academic Achievement

There is a clear link between knowing multiple languages and doing well in school. When children learn to read and write first in their mother tongue, they understand concepts better and find it easier to pick up other languages later (Skutnabb-Kangas & Heugh, 2012). UNESCO (2016) reports that children who start school in their first language usually perform better in reading, writing, and math in the higher grades. This backs the NCF-SE 2023's advice to use the mother tongue (R1) as the main teaching language in early education.

2.4.4 Social and Emotional Impact of Multilingual Education

Multilingualism isn't just about brain power—it also helps children connect socially and feel good about themselves. Grosjean (2010) explains that kids who speak multiple languages often feel closer to their cultural roots and get better at

interacting with different groups of people. This sense of belonging builds their confidence and helps them participate more actively in class, which is very important for young learners.

2.4.5 Multilingualism in the Indian Educational Context

India's incredible variety of languages makes teaching multiple languages both a challenge and an opportunity. The NCF-SE 2023 strongly supports the Three-Language Formula, encouraging kids to learn their mother tongue (R1) alongside a second (R2) and a third language (R3), depending on their region and background. Research shows that this approach helps students improve language skills and feel more connected to both their local culture and the nation as a whole (Mohanty, 2010; Annamalai, 2005).

2.4.6 Challenges in Implementing Multilingual Education

Despite its clear benefits, multilingual education is not without its hurdles. Many schools face shortages of teaching materials and trained teachers, and classrooms often have students speaking many different languages (Mohanty, 2010). These challenges can make it tough to successfully put policies like the NCF-SE 2023 into practice, especially in rural or under-resourced areas.

2.4.7 Gaps in Existing Research

While many studies have highlighted the cognitive and social benefits of multilingualism, there isn't much research focused specifically on young children in the context of the new NCF-SE 2023 guidelines. There's also a lack of detailed information on how learning multiple languages affects young students' confidence, understanding, and participation in the classroom. This study aims to fill that gap by looking closely at children in Grades 3 to 5 and how multilingual education influences their learning experience.

Understanding linguistic identity—especially for people who speak multiple languages—is not as simple as it might seem. It involves more than just the

languages they know; it's about how language connects to their sense of who they are. A recent study on the Kui minority community shines a light on this complexity. The researchers aimed to build a clear theoretical framework for how linguistic identity can be understood and, importantly, developed a standardized way to study it. This is a big step, since earlier research often overlooked or struggled with consistent methods for capturing linguistic identity.

The study shows that linguistic identity is a dynamic relationship between the languages people use and their own self-concept. Using the Kui community as an example, the research offers practical tools and approaches that can help others explore and document how linguistic identity works in multilingual settings.

This is particularly important because, in many multilingual contexts, the way people use language doesn't always fit neatly into fixed identity categories. By addressing this gap, the study provides a clearer path for future research that is both thorough and comparable across different groups.

Overall, this work makes a valuable contribution by offering both a fresh way of thinking about language and identity and a practical method for studying their connection. This can help deepen our understanding of multilingualism, cultural identity, and how language policies affect people's lives.

2.5   Multiple languages can shape both individual and societal experiences

1.   **Diaconu (n.d.)** provides a clear and thoughtful analysis of how the ability to speak multiple languages can shape both individual and societal experiences. Her work begins by highlighting that multilingualism is not just about knowing more than one language—it also reflects deeper cultural, political, and social dynamics. She points out that some countries, like Canada, Belgium, and Switzerland, officially recognize multiple languages, incorporating them into public life and education. In contrast, many other societies exhibit unofficial forms of multilingualism, where people speak several languages in their communities or homes without formal recognition.

Diaconu discusses how multilingualism brings about both linguistic and political changes. Linguistically, it encourages the development of common languages (lingua francs) to facilitate communication across groups, leads to the blending of languages, and promotes more effective cross-cultural interaction. Politically, it influences policies and national identities, sometimes reinforcing unity or, in some cases, revealing divisions.

In education, Diaconu emphasizes that multilingualism offers several important benefits. It helps students become more culturally aware and open-minded, supports cognitive and academic growth, and improves their ability to adapt to different social situations. Additionally, multilingual education can elevate the value of local and indigenous languages, giving students a stronger connection to their heritage.

Overall, her work underscores the importance of embracing multilingual practices in schools. She suggests that by implementing inclusive language policies and teaching methods, educators can help students not only learn better but also become more empathetic and culturally competent individuals.

2.6 Multilingualism, Speech-Language Competence, and Academic Outcomes

A significant longitudinal study by **McLeod and Harrison (n.d.)** offers valuable insights into how multilingualism and early speech-language competence interact to influence children's academic and social-emotional development over time. Drawing data from the kindergarten cohort of the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (LSAC), the researchers tracked the progress of four distinct groups of children based on their language background and presence or absence of speech and language concerns.

The study groups included:

(1) English-only children with typical speech and language development,

(2) multilingual children with typical development

(3) English-only children with speech and language concerns

(4) multilingual children with speech and language concerns. This design allowed for both cross-sectional and longitudinal analyses, offering a rare chance to examine whether early developmental differences persist or change with continued schooling.

At ages 4 to 5, multilingual children who had speech and language concerns surprisingly performed as well or even better than their English-only peers on measures of school readiness. However, they did show lower performance in English vocabulary and behavioral adjustment. These early differences were especially important, as they highlighted that multilingualism on its own was not a barrier to school readiness.

As the children advanced through school, assessed again at ages 6 to 7 and 8 to 9, the researchers observed that earlier gaps between English-only and multilingual groups had significantly diminished. Multilingualism itself did not predict lower outcomes in literacy or numeracy. Rather, the strongest predictor of academic outcomes over time was the presence of speech and language concerns in early childhood—regardless of whether the child was multilingual or monolingual.

Notably, the study found **no significant long-term differences in social-emotional outcomes** among the groups. This challenges commonly held assumptions that multilingualism, particularly when combined with language difficulties, places children at a disadvantage. In fact, the research supports a more nuanced view: while early speech and language issues may require attention, being multilingual does not inherently hinder academic or emotional development.

McLeod and Harrison's findings offer strong support for the idea that early identification and support for speech and language issues are crucial, but that multilingualism should not be viewed as a risk factor. On the contrary, children growing up in multilingual environments can thrive academically and socially,

especially when provided with supportive learning contexts and interventions where needed.

2.7 The Role of Multilingualism and Learning Patterns in Academic Achievement

Calafato and Simmonds (2023) carried out a compelling study that sheds light on how students' personal learning characteristics—such as their mindset, language background, learning preferences, and self-management strategies—affect their academic performance, especially when learning a new language. They focused on a group of 191 university students in France who were studying English as a foreign language (EFL), even though their main degree programs were not language-related.

Using an in-depth questionnaire with 185 items, the researchers explored how these students think about learning and how their habits connect to their academic success. One of the standout findings was that students who believed they could improve their English skills through effort—what's known as having a **growth mindset**—tended to perform better. Similarly, students who were **multilingual** and enjoyed **hands-on, practical learning experiences** also showed higher achievement in English. This points to the power of both mindset and learning style in boosting language learning.

Interestingly, when it came to subjects outside of language learning, these same traits—mindset, multilingualism, and learning styles—didn't show a strong influence on academic performance. In other words, being multilingual and having a growth mindset helped with learning English, but didn't necessarily make a difference in non-language subjects. Despite this, students reported using similar strategies—like setting goals, managing time, and planning their studies—for both language and non-language courses. Yet, these strategies didn't always lead to the same level of success in every area.

This study highlights the importance of tailoring education to fit both the subject matter and the individual student. Multilingualism, for example, clearly supports language learning, but may not carry the same advantages across all academic disciplines. Likewise, a growth mindset is helpful, but its impact may vary depending on the context.

essence, Calafato and Simmonds argue for a more thoughtful and flexible approach in higher education—one that recognizes the unique ways students learn and how their language background can shape their academic journey. Their findings support the idea that **personalized learning strategies** and **subject-specific teaching methods** can play a key role in helping students succeed.

2.8 Attitudes Toward Multilingualism in a Changing European Context

In an increasingly mobile and globalized world, language diversity has become both a reality and a necessity. Tina Rozmanič of the University of Ljubljana addresses this in her large-scale study, which focuses on how students and pupils in Slovenia perceive and engage with multilingualism. Her work is particularly valuable given the lack of empirical data in the Slovenian educational context, where research on multilingual competence remains limited.

The study included a broad sample of 2,882 participants and aimed to examine their **knowledge, skills, attitudes, and language usage**. Using the FREPA/CARAP framework—a recognized set of descriptors for multilingual ability—Romanic designed a detailed 36-question survey divided into three parts: demographics, language use, and participants' reflections on their multilingual knowledge and attitudes.

One of the most significant findings of the study was that **students and pupils generally held positive attitudes toward multilingualism**. Many expressed curiosity and enthusiasm for learning new languages, recognizing the cultural and communicative value that multilingualism offers in a diverse and interconnected

Europe. This reflects an encouraging openness to language diversity and suggests a readiness among young people to engage with multilingual practices.

However, the study also revealed a notable segment of participants who remained **uncertain or hesitant about the value of multilingualism**. Some still viewed **monolingualism as the norm**, indicating that despite positive trends, traditional mindsets around language learning persist in certain areas. This highlights the ongoing need to **challenge outdated perceptions** and promote a broader understanding of the benefits of multilingual competence—not just in educational settings, but also in everyday life and future careers.

Romanic's findings underscore the importance of **consistent promotion and support of multilingual education**, especially in regions where language policy and practice may not yet fully reflect the dynamic linguistic landscape of modern Europe. Her study contributes to the growing body of literature that emphasizes the **transformative role of language education** in fostering openness, intercultural understanding, and lifelong learning skills.

Overall, this research supports the argument that **multilingualism should be viewed as a valuable resource**, rather than an exception. It also highlights the role of education systems in shaping how young people perceive and use language in a multicultural society.

2.9 The Role of Primary Language and Multilingualism in Early Childhood Development

According to researchers Shafiq and Saeed, a child's primary language plays a crucial role in shaping early development, particularly in cognitive, emotional, and social growth. In their study on the impact of multilingualism in early childhood, they highlight how children are better able to understand, express themselves, and engage with learning when instruction begins in their **mother tongue**.

Their research aligns with what is emphasized in Pakistan's **National Education Policy 2009**, which recognizes the foundational value of teaching young learners in their first language before gradually introducing second or third languages. This approach has been supported by global research as well, showing that **mother tongue-based education** promotes better comprehension, sustained academic interest, and higher levels of achievement over time, especially when used as a stepping stone into bilingual or multilingual education systems.

Shafiq and Saeed's study also draws attention to the linguistic and educational challenges experienced by children in **Quetta and other areas of Baluchistan**. In many schools—especially private ones—**English or Urdu** is used as the medium of instruction. However, most children in these communities grow up speaking **Pashto, Balochi, Brahui, or Haz Aragi** at home. This language gap between home and school environments can lead to **academic struggles and reduced engagement**, particularly in the early years when understanding classroom instruction is vital for learning.

The researchers argue that the already weak education system in the province—both in public and private schools—is further strained by this linguistic mismatch. Many students are forced to learn in a second or even third language without adequate preparation or support, which creates unnecessary hurdles in their educational journeys. These challenges are not just academic but also **social and emotional**, as students may feel disconnected from the learning process.

Shafiq and Saeed ultimately advocate for the adoption of **multilingual education models** that start with the mother tongue and progressively integrate other languages. They suggest that such inclusive approaches not only improve learning outcomes but also help preserve children's **cultural and linguistic identities**, which are vital to their holistic development.

2.10 Multilingualism and Early-Stage Learning: A Review in the Light of NCF 2005

According to the **National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2005**, language is more than just a subject—it's the foundation on which a child's entire learning journey is built. From the very beginning, children bring with them the rich linguistic experiences of their home environments. Rather than pushing these aside, NCF 2005 encourages educators to embrace and build upon these diverse language backgrounds, especially in a country like India where multilingualism is the norm, not the exception.

One of the core ideas in NCF 2005 is the importance of teaching in the **child's mother tongue** during the early years of education. When children learn in a language, they're most comfortable with, it becomes easier for them to grasp concepts, express their thoughts and emotions, and participate confidently in class. Research and classroom experiences both show that introducing second or third languages too early—without anchoring learning in the home language—can lead to confusion, slower understanding, and even a loss of interest in learning.

The framework doesn't view language learning as switching from one language to another. Instead, it sees it as an **additive process**, where multiple languages can support and enhance each other. This is why NCF 2005 promotes the **three-language formula**—including the home language, a regional or national language, and a foreign language. This approach respects the child's linguistic identity while encouraging new language skills.

Supporting this, researchers like **Shafiq and Saeed** have observed similar challenges in multilingual communities, such as in Quetta, Pakistan. They found that children often struggle when there's a disconnect between the language spoken at home and the one used in school. When education starts in a language children understand well, they tend to perform better—not just academically, but also socially and emotionally.

Additional studies, like those by **Calafato and Simmonds (2023)** and **Rozmanič (2022)**, further confirm that multilingualism has broader benefits. Children exposed to multiple languages often show stronger motivation, greater flexibility in thinking, and improved problem-solving skills—especially when teachers and schools value and actively support their language background.

Despite NCF 2005's clear vision, **putting these ideas into practice remains a challenge**. Many schools, particularly in urban areas or private institutions, still prioritize English as the primary language of instruction. This often sidelines home languages and goes against the inclusive, learner-centered philosophy that the framework promotes.

We can say that, NCF 2005 laid a strong foundation for recognizing multilingualism as an asset, not an obstacle. It called on educators and policymakers to create learning spaces that honor every child's linguistic roots. As India moves forward with newer frameworks like **NCF-SE 2023**, the message remains clear: **valuing the languages children bring into the classroom is not just good pedagogy—it's essential for meaningful and equitable education**.

2.11 Multilingualism and Its Impact on Early-Stage Learners in Light of NCF-SE 2023

In a linguistically diverse country like India, the importance of multilingualism in early education is becoming increasingly recognized. The **National Curriculum Framework for Foundational Stage Education (NCF-SE) 2023** strongly advocates for the use of a child's **home language** during the crucial early years of learning, typically between the ages of 3 and 8. The framework positions multilingualism not just as a helpful tool for teaching but also as a key contributor to a child's overall development—socially, emotionally, and cognitively.

Studies have long shown that children tend to thrive when they are taught in the language, they are most comfortable with—their **mother tongue**. For instance, research by **Shafiq and Saeed** (n.d.) demonstrated that children in multilingual

communities like **Quetta, Pakistan**, often faced difficulties in understanding lessons and engaging emotionally when taught in a language that wasn't spoken at home. These findings align closely with the principles set forth in NCF-SE 2023, which encourages using the **mother tongue or regional language** in classrooms to create more meaningful and inclusive learning experiences.

In a different context, **Calafato and Simmonds** (2023) found that students who spoke multiple languages and held a **growth mindset** about learning showed stronger motivation and adaptability, particularly in language learning environments. Their study highlights how recognizing and valuing students' linguistic backgrounds can enhance both language acquisition and overall academic performance. Likewise, **Romanic** (2022) noted that while many students are curious and open to learning new languages, a lack of awareness or support for multilingualism in some educational systems can prevent students from fully benefiting from their language skills. This points to the importance of teacher training and thoughtful policy implementation.

What makes the NCF-SE 2023 particularly forward-thinking is its recognition of how multilingual education can help children develop **critical thinking, intercultural awareness**, and a strong **sense of identity** from an early age. Rather than rushing children into a second or third language, the framework promotes a gradual, child-centered approach that respects their linguistic roots while preparing them for a globalized world.

To sum up, the literature clearly supports the idea that **multilingual education**, when thoughtfully integrated into early-stage classrooms, has the potential to significantly boost children's learning outcomes and well-being.