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Reimagining Multilingualism in English Language Textbooks: A Comparative Study from India

Shubham Kumar Pati

subhampati@gmail.com

University of Delhi https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2492-4481

Ravneet Kaur

Mata Sundri College for Women, University of Delhi

Rishabh Kumar Mishra

Dr B. R. Ambedkar University, Delhi, India https://orcid.org/0009-0008-8479-785X

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Abstract

Multilingualism has become an important concern in Indian language education, but relatively little attention has been given to how it is represented in English textbooks developed under different curriculum frameworks. This compares the two National Council of Educational Research and Training's (NCERT) Class IX English textbooks, *Beehive* and *Kaveri*, to examine how multilingualism is represented in each. The textbooks were examined through deductive qualitative content analysis using four theory-informed dimensions: linguistic, cultural, pedagogical, and ICT and graphical representation. The coding covered words, passages, activities, instructions, illustrations, maps, and digital resources, which were examined against a predefined analytical framework. Both textbooks recognise multilingualism as an educational resource, although they incorporate it differently into language content, classroom activities, cultural contexts, and visual and digital materials. In Beehive, multilingualism appears mainly through literary texts and cultural contexts. Kaveri takes it further into inquiry-based activities, culturally situated tasks, and multimodal resources that reflect recent curricular reforms. The comparison suggests that English textbooks can support multilingual awareness more effectively when multilingualism is woven into textual content, pedagogy, cultural representation, and visual design.

Introduction

Learning is shaped by the interaction of learners with their social, cultural, linguistic, and institutional environments. These interconnected contexts constitute the learning ecology within which knowledge is constructed and interpreted. Culture provides the framework through which individuals understand themselves and the world around them, influencing values, beliefs, social practices, and patterns of interaction (Spencer-Oatey, 2008). Since learners' experiences are embedded within these cultural contexts, educational processes cannot be understood independently of the environments in which learning takes place. Pedagogy therefore extends beyond classroom instruction to reflect the broader relationships among school, community, and society (Alexander, 2009). Learners bring diverse linguistic, cultural, and social experiences into classrooms, requiring teaching, assessment, and curriculum to respond to this diversity rather than assume uniform learning backgrounds (Moore, 2012). This perspective underpins culturally responsive pedagogy, which values learners' languages, knowledge systems, and lived experiences as meaningful resources for learning, particularly for historically marginalised communities (Pirbhai-Illich et al., 2017).

Within this framework, language occupies a central position as both a medium of instruction and a carrier of cultural knowledge. Language is closely connected with learners' identities and socio-cultural development, making it fundamental to educational processes (Garcia, 1993). Quist (2013) further conceptualises language as a cultural resource that transmits knowledge, values, and social meanings. He argues that language education should enable learners to draw upon their existing linguistic resources while also exposing them to wider linguistic and cultural contexts. Similarly, Garcia (1993) emphasises the educational value of multiple languages in linguistically diverse classrooms. As a result,

learners routinely encounter multiple languages in educational, social, and digital spaces. These realities foreground the importance of multilingualism in education.

Multilingualism is increasingly recognised as an educational, social, and cultural resource rather than simply the ability to use more than one language. Garcia and Wei (2013) describe multilingualism through translanguaging, where learners draw upon their complete linguistic repertoire to construct meaning. Research has further shown that multilingualism supports cognitive development, identity formation, intercultural communication, and meaningful classroom learning (De Groot, 2010; Clyne, 2011; Prasad et al., 2022). These perspectives position multilingualism as an important principle for contemporary language education.

Recognising this, the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and the National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCFSE) 2023 place multilingualism at the centre of language education and view learners as naturally multilingual. Although India has long promoted multilingualism through initiatives such as the Three-Language Formula but policy alone cannot foster multilingual competence. School textbooks, as learning material, also play a central role by translating curriculum into classroom practice and creating opportunities for learners to engage with linguistic and cultural diversity (Cenoz & Gorter, 2015).

Against this background, the present study compares the two successive NCERT Class IX English textbooks, *Beehive* and *Kaveri*, which represent two different curricular phases. *Beehive*, developed under the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2005, adopts a language-across-the-curriculum perspective, while *Kaveri*, developed following NEP 2020 and NCFSE 2023, places greater emphasis on multilingual learning, cultural diversity, experiential learning, and technology-supported pedagogy. As India's national curriculum body, NCERT plays a central role in translating educational priorities into school textbooks, making these texts an appropriate source for examining changes in the representation of multilingualism.

The multilingual orientation of *Beehive* is explicitly stated in its introductory note, which describes the textbook as adopting "a language-across-the-curriculum, multilingual perspective" (Beehive, p. 1). Although *Kaveri* does not use the term *multilingualism* directly, it emphasises linguistic skills, linguistic diversity, and learning through learners' everyday experiences, reflecting the vision of NEP 2020 and NCFSE 2023. The transition from *Beehive* to *Kaveri* raises important questions about how multilingualism is represented in English language textbooks and the extent to which recent curriculum reforms are reflected in textbook content and pedagogy. This study addresses these questions through a comparative analysis of the two NCERT textbooks.

Literature Reviews

Narrowing the concept of multilingualism as per the requirement of this research work, recent and trending literature related to the 'multilingual learning context' has been reviewed. This literature review is divided into three parts. In the first part, research works related to effective strategies being used to

enrich and sustain multilingualism in the classroom has been studied. In the second part, works published on the subject of textbooks and multilingualism has been analysed and in the third part, research works executed in India in the context of multilingualism has been reviewed.

To effectively incorporate multilingualism in the classroom, it is important to understand the approaches to fostering it. According to Norris (2019), students' linguistic diversity should be acknowledged in the classroom through adequate learning materials. Extending this idea, Garcia and Wei's (2013) concept of translanguaging is an important strategy that allows students to switch from one language to another. Brevik & Rindal (2020) propose that teachers must have an adequate understanding of students' language repertoire before engaging students in a language classroom so that the teacher can manage the challenges posed by linguistic diversity. Iversen (2020) links Garcia's idea of translanguaging to students' 'funds of knowledge' that naturally connect learning materials to students' environment and culture. French (2019), and Catalano et al. (2018) highlight the significance of pedagogical approaches to effectively foster multilingualism, which includes strategies and activities that enrich and assess students' multilingual skills and provide opportunities for engaging with other languages. Libbrecht and Goosen (2016) noted the effective use of visuals and ICT graphics in textbooks as a way to foster multilingualism.

Research shows that there can be different approaches to fostering multilingualism through textbooks. Opoku-Amankwa's (2010) work on Ghana's standardized English textbooks shows that textbooks use a technical skills approach to enrich multilingualism that is not linked to students' funds of knowledge and focuses only on grammatical proficiency through stories and poems. Hu and McKay (2014) show that English textbooks in China previously focused only on the translation approach to fostering multilingualism which was ultimately a bilingual approach, while currently there is an emphasis on the use of more than two language through various pedagogical activities. Carlsen (2024) in his research paper, based on the analysis of textbooks taught in schools in Austria, Norway and Spain, shows how textbooks here ignore pedagogical approaches to foster multilingualism and are unable to connect with students' own language repertoire. Suuriniemi and Satokangas (2023) have shown through their research that multilingualism is at a marginalized place in the textbooks taught in schools in Finland and the it prioritises monolinguality. This research work also attempts to assess multilingualism through pedagogical approaches. Kjellevold (2020) highlights that in the elementary textbooks of Norway, the multilingualism is primary addressed through tasks and questions and sometimes through representations. Here the researcher focuses that effective representation is essential to address the challenges of fostering multilingual approaches.

Studies on multilingualism in India have been going on for the last six decades. These research works try to understand the dynamics of multilingualism in Indian classrooms. According to Patra (2000), opportunities for learners to engage with different languages are the most important for adequately developing multilingualism and for this cognitive and academic achievement important could be an essential tool; Datta (2017) has underlined that in the absence of standardized languages, students have limited language options in the Indian classrooms; Daswani (2001) has described the scopes of

multilingualism being limited by the ongoing discussions of the politics of 'language trilogy' in India; Alobaid (2021) has seen multilingualism as a feature inherent in India's historical heritage and supports the use of more and more languages in the classroom as a subject and instruction; Mohanty (2013) mentions that India's educational system has not effectively addressed the challenges of multilingualism because the system does not support weaker languages, and the emphasis is more on teaching languages as a subject rather than using them as instruction in the learning process.

From the above research review, it is found that approaches to foster and enrich multilingualism are being focused on addressing linguistic diversity in language, approaches to understanding the background of students, approaches to strengthen pedagogy and approaches to effective use of ICT and visuals. Also, the changes being made in textbooks to foster multilingualism in various countries are not enough as they are either not being implemented properly or they ignore some strategy to promote multilingualism. Moreover, the issue of multilingualism in India has mostly been seen in the context of 'how many' and 'which' languages to use, which is relevant but it is primarily as a solution to the ongoing socio-linguistic conflicts in India, and not in the context of fostering and effective use of approaches to multilingualism in languages. Therefore, this research paper attempts to fill this gap by analysing select textbooks.

Multilingualism in Indian Education and the Role of English

Groff (2018) examines the relationship between language policy and language ideology through the experiences of minority language speakers, showing how macro-level educational policies interact with multilingual classroom realities. In India, language has remained one of the most debated issues in education since independence, with decisions regarding the languages to be taught and the medium of instruction shaped by political, social, and cultural considerations. Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas (2009) explain that language policies emerge from the interaction of local, national, international, and global contexts, while also reflecting concerns related to linguistic majorities and minorities, indigenous and tribal languages, dialects, and oral and written traditions.

The National Policy on Education (1968) introduced the Three-Language Formula as the first major attempt to promote multilingual education in India. Although it sought to balance competing linguistic demands across different regions, its implementation varied considerably, limiting its intended multilingual outcomes (Jayaram, 1993). Subsequent policy documents have gradually shifted from treating multilingualism as the teaching of multiple languages to recognising it as a pedagogical resource. The National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2005 views India's linguistic diversity as "a resource to promote multilingual proficiency in every child" (NCERT, 2005, p. 1) and recommends using multilingual classrooms as learning resources rather than treating languages as separate entities (NCERT, 2005, p. 37). Building on this perspective, the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 highlights the cognitive benefits of multilingualism, emphasises the role of the mother tongue, retains the Three-Language Formula with greater flexibility, and introduces initiatives such as *The Language of India* to strengthen learners' understanding of India's linguistic diversity (Ministry of Education, 2020). The

National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCFSE) 2023 further recognises learners as naturally multilingual, promotes language learning across all stages of schooling, and recommends that textbooks reflect local and regional language diversity while supporting both cognitive and socio-emotional development (NCERT, 2023).

Languages evolve through continuous interaction with speakers and other languages, allowing vocabulary, structures, and cultural meanings to adapt to changing social contexts (Thomason & Kaufman, 1988; Matras, 2012). Such interaction supports multilingual communication through practices including code-switching (Auer, 1998), linguistic hybridisation (Mufwene, 2022), cultural hybridisation (Pieterse, 2019), and translanguaging (García & Wei, 2014). These processes are particularly visible in India, where English has developed through sustained interaction with Indian languages rather than remaining a colonial language alone (Kachru, 1983; Sedlatschek, 2009). Today, English functions alongside Hindi and regional languages across education, administration, business, and everyday communication, where multilingual language practices have become routine (Auer, 1998; García & Wei, 2014). Agnihotri (2010) similarly argues that multilinguality is the natural condition of Indian classrooms and that English develops most meaningfully when it grows alongside children's home languages.

This perspective is reinforced by Mohanty (2009, 2013), who views multilingualism as an educational resource that supports learning, identity formation, and literacy rather than as a challenge to be managed. Panda and Mohanty (2017) further argue that English should be understood as part of learners' broader multilingual repertoire rather than as a competing language. Evidence from Indian schools supports this position by demonstrating that multilingual learning environments and mother-tongue support strengthen literacy, including English literacy, when integrated meaningfully into classroom practices (Vogelzang et al., 2025).

Despite continuing debates regarding the relationship between English, Hindi, and regional languages in education (Jayaram, 1993), multilingualism has remained a consistent principle across successive national policy documents, including the National Policy on Education (1986), the National Curriculum Framework (2005), the National Education Policy (2020), and the National Curriculum Framework for School Education (2023) (Government of India, Ministry of Human Resource Development, 1986; National Council of Educational Research and Training, 2005, 2023; Ministry of Education, 2020). This continuing policy emphasis makes NCERT English language textbooks an important site for examining how multilingualism is translated into classroom practice. Accordingly, the present study compares the Class IX English textbooks *Beehive* and *Kaveri* to examine how multilingualism is represented across two successive curriculum frameworks.

Research Gaps

The reviewed literature demonstrates that multilingualism has been examined from diverse perspectives, including classroom pedagogy, translanguaging, language policy, textbook design, and multilingual education across different national contexts. Existing textbook studies have primarily focused on the

presence or absence of multilingual elements or on particular pedagogical strategies within individual educational settings. In the Indian context, research has largely centred on language policy, the Three-Language Formula, and the broader challenges of multilingual education. However, little attention has been paid to how multilingualism is represented across successive generations of NCERT English language textbooks in response to curriculum reforms. To the best of the authors' knowledge, no previous study has undertaken a comparative qualitative content analysis of the NCERT Class IX English textbooks *Beehive* and *Kaveri* to examine how the representation of multilingualism has evolved from the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2005 to the National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCF-SE) 2023. This study addresses that gap by examining the changing representation of multilingualism across these two textbooks.

Research Questions

In order to study the representation of multilingualism in the selected textbooks, the study was guided by the following research questions:

1. How is multilingualism represented in the NCERT Class IX English textbooks *Beehive* and *Kaveri*?
2. What similarities and differences exist in the representation of multilingualism between *Beehive* and *Kaveri* across linguistic, cultural, pedagogical, and multimodal dimensions?
3. To what extent does *Kaveri* reflect the multilingual vision articulated in the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and the National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCF-SE) 2023 when compared with *Beehive*?

Theoretical Framework and Thematic Categories

Combining Kjellevold's (2020) 'Effective Representation' with various theories, four themes for analysis have been identified. The first category is labelled as Linguistic Representation. This category is based on the idea of multilingual strategies proposed by Norris (2019), García and Flores (2012), and Garcia and Wei's (2013). According to García and Flores (2012), multilingual pedagogy implicates the fluidity of languages. This fluidity is implied in the presentation of languages within textbooks or curricula. In the context of this research, Here, Linguistic Representation means the space given to linguistic elements of other languages in a textbook of one language. Under this category, linguistic fluidity in the selected textbooks will be analysed to outline whether the selected textbooks present words, sentences or passages from a language other than English, scopes to value and recognise the student's language repository, and encourage learners to translate or search for meaning in different languages. This category is primarily based on the idea of translinguality, linguistic representation and linguistic hybridisation.

The second category is based on idea of understanding of students' language repertoire by Brevik & Rindal (2020) and Iversen's (2020) idea of students' 'funds of knowledge' and their relevance in

advancing the multilinguality. This category is ‘Cultural Representations.’ The cultural significance of multilinguality is essentially highlighted in multiple education policies in India. However, becoming more specific, based on the suggestions of Alobaid (2021), this theme will analyse cultural representation through other languages included in the selected textbooks. It will be observed that how do the selected textbooks address cultural diversity through multilingualism and, do the textbooks represent trans-glossic and cultural contexts of the various languages included? This theme is rooted in the idea of multiculturalism, transculturalism, and cultural awareness.

The third category is based on the pedagogical strategies of multilingualism of French (2019), and Catalano et al. (2018). This category is ‘Pedagogical Representation.’ Under this theme, the pedagogical strategies given in the textbooks from the perspective of the relevance of multilingualism will be analysed and investigate whether the textbooks suggest ways to encourage or use other languages by students, and what kind of activities are suggested in English textbooks to promote multilingualism among learners. This category is based on the pedagogical scope of multilingualism which felicitate the assessments, activities, instructions and add-on information included in the textbooks.

The Fourth category, ‘ICT and Graphical Representation’, is based on the study of multilingualism and ICT accomplished by Libbrecht and Goosen (2016). This theme is set to examine the pictures, illustrations, infographics, and ICT components such as QR codes, and links given in the textbooks to understand how the graphics given in the textbooks can promote multilingualism and how the subject of multilingualism has been addressed in the ICT elements included in them.

Methodology

This study adopts a deductive qualitative content analysis (Neuendorf, 2018) to examine how multilingualism is represented in two NCERT English textbooks prescribed for Grade IX at different curricular stages. The study compares *Beehive*, developed under the National Curriculum Framework (2005), with *Kaveri*, introduced following the implementation of the NEP 2020 and NCFSE 2023. The comparative design enables an examination of continuity and changes in multilingual representation across two curriculum frameworks. Purposive sampling was employed because the two textbooks represent successive curriculum frameworks for the same grade level. Comparing textbooks prescribed for the same grade reduces variation arising from learner age, learning outcomes, and curricular level, thereby allowing meaningful comparison of multilingual representation. Keeping in mind the limitations of the research work, a priori coding has been given priority under content analysis. Under this, codes are created before the analysis process based on available resources (selected textbook in the case of this paper) and theories (Neuendorf, 2018). Thematic categories were created by understanding and analyzing the theory of multilingualism through various sources, which have been described in the theoretical framework.

The study employed deductive qualitative content analysis, with a priori categories derived from the theoretical framework (Neuendorf, 2018). Following the unit-based analytical approach used by Virtue

and Vogler (2008), each chapter was divided into analytically meaningful units that carried analytical significance. A unit could be a paragraph, a sentence, a phrase, even a single word, questions, activities, additional information, means anything that revealed something about or related to multilingualism. A unit was recognised as analytically meaningful when it reflected one or more dimensions of the predetermined analytical framework. Specifically, a unit was selected if it represented multilingual linguistic practices through words, phrases, expressions, or references to more than one language; depicted cultural diversity or linguistic identities associated with different communities; incorporated pedagogical strategies that encouraged multilingual engagement, language comparison, translation, or translanguaging; or employed visual, graphical, or digital elements that supported multilingual learning and cultural understanding. Also, units that challenged conventional monolingual assumptions or revealed new patterns of multilingual representation during the coding process were also retained for further analysis. This approach ensured that the coding remained theoretically grounded while remaining sensitive to the contextual nuances embedded within the textbooks.

Table 1
Analytical Themes, Operational Indicators, and Units of Analyss

Themes	Operational Indicators	Units of Analysis
Linguistic Representation	Presence of multilingual vocabulary, indigenous or regional language words, code-switching, translanguaging, translation tasks, multilingual glossary, language comparison, references to different languages or language varieties	Words, phrases, sentences, passages, vocabulary exercises, language activities, glossary entries, Narrative contents, examples, illustrations, cultural notes, activities, additional information, Instructions, classroom activities, exercises, discussion prompts, assessment tasks, projects, LSRW activities
Cultural Representation	Representation of diverse cultures, traditions, festivals, folklore, indigenous knowledge, regional identities, local practices, multilingual cultural contexts, cultural values associated with language	
Pedagogical Representation	Activities promoting multilingual learning, language comparison, collaborative learning, translation, discussion, project work, experiential learning, reflective tasks, assessment questions encouraging multilingual engagement	
Visual and Digital Representation	Illustrations, photographs, maps, infographics, multilingual signages, QR codes, digital resources, visual representations supporting multilingual and cultural understanding	Images, graphics, maps, captions, QR-linked resources, digital content, design elements

Findings

Across the two textbooks, multilingualism appears increasingly as part of the pedagogical design rather than simply as a feature of linguistic diversity. The comparison shows that multilingual perspectives are present in the content, activities, visual materials, and suggested classroom practices of both books. At the same time, several areas of multilingual pedagogy remain only partly developed.

While the preceding sections have examined each analytical theme independently, the findings are best understood by considering their interrelationships. The comparison also makes clear that multilingual representation is not limited to the languages and words appearing in the textbooks. It is reflected in their cultural content, classroom activities, and visual and digital features as well. Table 2 brings these observations together and shows where Beehive and Kaveri follow similar patterns and where they differ.

Table 2
Comparative Synthesis of Multilingual Representation in Beehive and Kaveri Across the Four Analytical Themes

Dimension	***Beehive***	***Kaveri***	**Comparative Interpretation**
Linguistic Representation	Introduces multilingualism through regional vocabulary, literary contexts, and language awareness.	Integrates multilingualism through vocabulary, multilingual tasks, and explicit language connections.	In *Kaveri*, multilingual elements appear across a wider range of learning activities and are more directly connected to classroom tasks.
Cultural Representation	Cultural diversity is largely embedded within literary texts and narratives.	Cultural diversity is extended through activities, local knowledge, traditions, and everyday practices.	*Kaveri* connects language learning more directly with learners' cultural experiences and everyday knowledge.
Pedagogical Representation	Activities encourage discussion but multilingual engagement remains largely implicit.	Activities invite learners to use home languages, compare linguistic practices, and participate in collaborative inquiry.	In *Kaveri*, several activities give learners a more active role in using and comparing their linguistic and cultural resources.
ICT and Graphical Representation	Visuals mainly support comprehension of textual content.	Maps, illustrations, QR codes, and contextual graphics actively support multilingual learning.	Digital and visual resources are more purposefully integrated in *Kaveri*.
Overall Orientation	Multilingualism is acknowledged as a contextual feature of language learning.	Multilingualism is embedded as a pedagogical principle across multiple components of the textbook.	*Kaveri* gives multilingualism a more visible role in classroom activities, although this builds on elements already present in *Beehive*

Discussion

Linguistic Representation

The first theme focused on how the two textbooks represent linguistic diversity. The coding considered multilingual vocabulary, regional and indigenous language forms, references to linguistic identities, and opportunities for learners to draw on languages they already know. Here, linguistic representation refers to more than the appearance of words from different languages. It also concerns how the textbooks invite learners to notice, discuss, compare, or use the languages available in their own linguistic repertoires. This interpretation is consistent with multilingual perspectives that treat learners' languages as part of a shared linguistic repertoire rather than as separate and self-contained systems (García & Wei, 2014; King, 2018; Prasad et al., 2022).

Both textbooks reflect the multilingual context of India, but they do so in different ways. In *Beehive*, multilingual elements occur mainly within literary narratives. *Kaveri* brings these elements more directly into classroom activities and other aspects of instructional design. In *Beehive*, multilingual representation is mainly achieved through culturally embedded vocabulary. Chapters such as *The Sound of Music (Part II: The Shehnai of Bismillah Khan)* include expressions like *Shehnai*, *Pungi*, *Chaita*, and *Gilli Danda*, while *Kathmandu* introduces words like *Bansuri* and *Shakuhachi*. Because these expressions are retained in their original forms, learners encounter linguistic diversity through the literary contexts in which the words are used. Their use, however, remains largely contextual. The activities provide few opportunities for learners to examine the meanings of these expressions or relate them to languages they already know. *Kaveri* adopts a broader approach. *The interview with Dr. Deepa Malik* retains expressions such as *Namaste*, *Khel Ratna*, *Arjuna*, and *Padma Shri* within English discourse without translation. Likewise, the textbook presents multiple Indian names for flowers, including *Parijat*, *Parijata*, *Harsingar*, *Kurinji*, and *Neelakurinji*, recognising lexical diversity across Indian languages. The poem *I Hear Bharat...* deliberately uses *Bharat* instead of *India*, reflecting indigenous linguistic identity within English language learning.

A more significant difference appears in the pedagogical treatment of multilingualism. While *Beehive* exposes learners to multilingual vocabulary, its classroom activities remain primarily focused on English. It offers few opportunities for language comparison or multilingual interaction. Although the teacher's note refers to a multilingual perspective but this orientation is not consistently reflected in the learning tasks. In contrast, *Kaveri* explicitly encourages learners to draw upon their home languages. The introductory pages of *Kaveri* further reinforce this orientation by stating that the textbook has been developed in accordance with NEP 2020 and NCF-SE 2023, that emphasises learners' societies, lived experiences, cultural diversity, and varied literary traditions. Nevertheless, both textbooks continue to rely on monolingual English glossaries and provide limited translation-based activities, indicating that multilingual pedagogy remains only partially realised.

Cultural Representation

The second theme looked at the cultural meanings attached to multilingual elements in the two textbooks. The focus was on whether words, narratives, and activities were presented as part of wider

cultural contexts rather than as isolated language items. Both textbooks connect language with culture, although the connection is made differently in each book. In *Beehive*, cultural representation develops primarily through literary narratives. *My Childhood* presents the multilingual environment of Rameswaram alongside its traditions of communal harmony, thereby linking language, place, and cultural identity. Even the accompanying activity asking learners to identify the languages spoken in Rameswaram and the author's mother tongue encourages them to recognise the relationship between linguistic diversity and regional culture. *A Legend of the Northland* exposes learners to Scandinavian folklore, extending cultural awareness beyond Indian contexts. In most instances, however, learners remain observers of these cultural worlds, as the textbook seldom invites them to relate such experiences to their own cultural backgrounds. *Kaveri* takes a more active approach by asking learners to bring cultural knowledge from their own communities into classroom activities. Instead of limiting cultural representation to literary narratives, it integrates local knowledge, indigenous traditions, contemporary Indian society, and learners' own experiences into classroom learning. Learners are encouraged to collect poems and songs on similar themes in their own language and share them in class, creating opportunities for the cultural knowledge available within students' families and communities to enter the classroom. This reflects Iversen's (2020) concept of learners' funds of knowledge by recognising that meaningful learning can emerge from students' own cultural experiences.

The difference between the two books is therefore less about the amount of cultural material and more about how that material is used in learning activities. In Kaveri, multilingual activities give learners opportunities to connect their own cultural experiences with those represented in the textbook. This creates space for comparison and discussion across different cultural contexts. This broader treatment reflects the evolving emphasis on connecting language learning with learners' cultural repertoires and everyday experiences which make multilingualism as a vehicle for cultural learning.

Pedagogical Representation

The third theme focused on how multilingualism is taken into classroom practice through activities, instructions, assessment tasks, and other learning experiences. The two textbooks differ more clearly in their classroom activities than in the mere presence of multilingual content. Both books include activities for reading, writing, speaking, and listening, but they do not give learners the same opportunities to use their other languages during these activities. In *Beehive*, multilingualism is largely implicit. The textbook occasionally encourages learners to identify languages or discuss regional contexts but most classroom activities remain centred on English language learning. The pedagogical emphasis is primarily on comprehension, vocabulary development, grammar, and literary appreciation. As a result, the multilingual elements appearing in reading passages are often left within the text rather than taken up in the accompanying classroom activities. *Kaveri* makes multilingual engagement more explicit in its activities. Several activities intentionally encourage learners to connect English learning with their own linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Rather than treating learners' home languages as external to the classroom, the multilingual activities position them as legitimate resources for discussion, comparison, and meaning-making. The activities treat learners' existing linguistic knowledge

as something that can be used alongside English learning. Similarly, reflective and discussion-based tasks throughout *Kaveri* frequently invite learners to relate textbook themes to their own experiences, families, and communities. Although these activities are presented in English, they naturally allow learners to draw upon knowledge acquired through their home languages. This use of learners' existing languages is consistent with Catalano et al.'s (2018) argument that multilingual classrooms can make space for learners' full linguistic repertoires during classroom interaction.

The difference is also visible in the way classroom tasks are designed. In *Beehive*, multilingual pedagogy is generally dependent upon teacher initiative because the textbook itself provides few explicit multilingual instructions. In contrast, *Kaveri* embeds multilingual opportunities directly within classroom tasks. Students are asked to collect poems and songs on similar themes in their own language and share them in class. Such activities recognise learners' linguistic backgrounds as educational resources rather than treating English as an isolated language. This kind of activity is consistent with French's (2019) emphasis on giving multilingual learners space to participate through the languages they already use.

At the same time, neither textbook makes multilingual pedagogy fully consistent across all areas of language learning. Neither textbook systematically incorporates translation-based activities, collaborative translanguaging tasks, or multilingual assessment strategies. Grammar exercises and language practice continue to be predominantly English-centred, leaving considerable scope for integrating multilingual approaches into formal assessment and language instruction.

ICT and Graphical Representation

ICT and graphical representation were analysed to examine how visual and digital resources included in *Beehive* and *Kaveri* support multilingual learning. The analysis reveals a noticeable shift in the use of visual and digital resources between the two textbooks. In *Beehive*, visual resources primarily serve explanatory and aesthetic purposes. Illustrations generally depict characters, events, places, or cultural settings associated with the reading passages. While these visuals help learners understand the context of the stories, they rarely function as multilingual learning resources. The textbook also lacks ICT-based components that allow learners to explore linguistic diversity beyond the printed content.

Some illustrations in *Beehive* successfully reinforce cultural contexts (specifically in the chapters that comes under 'Linguistic Representation' and 'Cultural Representation'). These images enrich the reading experience by providing cultural context; however, they are seldom accompanied by activities that encourage learners to compare languages, identify multilingual elements, or investigate cultural diversity further. As a result, the pedagogical potential of graphical resources remains largely underutilised from a multilingual perspective. Meanwhile, *Kaveri* adopts a broader understanding of multimodal learning by integrating visual resources with classroom engagement and digital access. Photographs, illustrations, and graphical layouts are more closely aligned with learner activities, encouraging observation, discussion, and reflection before reading. For instance, learners are introduced to visual prompts such as the photograph of para-archer Sheetal Devi and are asked to interpret the image, discuss their

observations, and relate it to their own experiences before engaging with the accompanying text. Such activities transform illustrations from decorative elements into instructional resources that stimulate communication and contextual understanding.

Image 1: Example of multilingual pedagogical representation in Beehive (Chap. 6: My Childhood, Page 74): a map-based activity that combines graphical representation with inquiry-oriented learning to encourage learners to explore the relationship between geography, language, and cultural context

The most significant advancement in both *Beehive* and *Kaveri* is the systematic integration of QR codes across all units. The introductory note explicitly states that each unit includes QR codes providing access to additional reading materials and digital resources. Through QR-enabled resources, learners can extend classroom learning by exploring supplementary materials, thereby creating opportunities to encounter diverse linguistic, literary, and cultural content beyond the textbook itself. Although the linked resources are primarily in English. The digital architecture supports independent exploration and offers greater scope for incorporating multilingual resources in classroom practice.

Another noteworthy feature is the use of informational graphics and structured visual tasks throughout *Kaveri*. Graphic organisers, tables, reflective prompts, and observation-based activities encourage learners to interpret information through multiple modes rather than relying exclusively on continuous prose. These multimodal elements provide teachers with opportunities to integrate discussions around local knowledge, community experiences, and learners' linguistic backgrounds within classroom interaction. Consequently, graphical representation becomes an active pedagogical component rather than merely an aid for reading comprehension.

Image 2: An integrated classroom activity from Kaveri (Chap. 3, Winds of Change, p. 69) illustrating multilingual representation through learner-centred pedagogy, regional cultural knowledge, graphical organisation, and QR-enabled digital resources.

Despite these improvements, the analysis indicates that the multilingual potential of ICT remains only partially realised. Neither textbook explicitly uses QR-linked resources to provide multilingual glossaries, audio recordings in different Indian languages, comparative linguistic databases, or digital translation support. Similarly, graphical elements rarely encourage learners to analyse multilingual signboards, scripts, maps of language distribution, or visual representations of India's linguistic diversity. These areas offer considerable scope for strengthening multilingual learning through technology in future editions.

Conclusion

The comparison of *Beehive* and *Kaveri* shows a noticeable change in the way multilingualism is presented in Class IX English textbooks. *Beehive* acknowledges India's linguistic diversity mainly through literary texts, regional vocabulary, cultural references, and occasional language-related activities. *Kaveri* carries this orientation further by bringing learners' languages, cultural experiences, local knowledge, and

everyday contexts into a wider range of classroom activities. Multilingualism in *Kaveri* is therefore more closely connected with what learners are expected to do with the language. The difference is visible in the pedagogical treatment of multilingualism. *Beehive* provides some opportunities to notice linguistic diversity, but most of its learning activities remain centred on English. *Kaveri*, in comparison, gives learners more opportunities to bring their home languages and cultural experiences into classroom discussion and activities. Tasks that ask learners to collect poems or songs in their own languages, relate themes to their experiences, and engage with local knowledge create space for languages beyond English within the learning process. At the same time, the comparison also shows that multilingual pedagogy is still incomplete in both textbooks. Translation activities, multilingual assessment, collaborative translanguaging, and the use of digital resources in languages other than English remain limited.

The findings also suggest that multilingualism in a textbook cannot be understood by counting the number of languages or multilingual words it contains. The cultural context in which those languages appear, the activities through which learners engage with them, and the visual and digital resources surrounding them are equally important. This becomes visible in *Kaveri*, where photographs, illustrations, maps, QR-linked materials, and activity-based visual prompts are more closely connected with learner participation. The textbook therefore provides a wider multimodal space in which linguistic and cultural experiences can enter the learning process.

Viewed in relation to the two curricular phases represented by the textbooks, the comparison points to a change in the place given to multilingualism in English language education. *Beehive*, developed within the framework of NCF 2005. It acknowledges multilingualism as part of India's linguistic and cultural context. *Kaveri*, developed in the context of NEP 2020 and NCF-SE 2023. It gives greater attention to learners' lived experiences, linguistic diversity, cultural knowledge, and participation. The shift is visible in what the textbooks contain, and in how learners are invited to engage with that content. At the same time, the findings caution against assuming that curricular emphasis automatically leads to multilingual classroom practice. *Kaveri* provides more explicit opportunities for multilingual engagement, yet several aspects of multilingual pedagogy remain underdeveloped. The presence of multilingual intentions in a textbook does not by itself ensure that these intentions will become part of everyday classroom interaction. Teachers, classroom conditions, assessment practices, and access to appropriate multilingual resources will also influence how these possibilities are taken up.

The study suggests that English textbooks can provide meaningful space for multilingual learning when learners' languages and cultural experiences are treated as part of the learning process. The movement from *Beehive* to *Kaveri* provides an example of this changing orientation. Future textbook development can build on this direction by giving greater space to language comparison, translation, multilingual assessment, regional literature, indigenous knowledge, oral traditions, and community-based learning.

Educational Implications

The findings of this study suggest that multilingualism should be integrated into English language textbooks as a pedagogical resource. Future textbooks should create greater opportunities for learners to draw upon their home languages through activities that encourage language comparison, collaborative discussions, reflective tasks, cultural context and engagement with local knowledge. Such an approach would enable learners to connect English with their existing linguistic and cultural experiences. It would make language learning more meaningful and inclusive.

The study also highlights the need to strengthen the representation of India's linguistic and cultural diversity through authentic regional literature, indigenous knowledge systems, oral traditions, and community-based learning experiences. Digital resources such as QR codes and multimedia content should be utilised more purposefully to provide multilingual learning materials and culturally contextualised content that extend learning beyond the printed textbook.

The findings also underscore the importance of equipping teachers to implement multilingual pedagogies effectively. Teacher education programmes and curriculum developers should provide practical strategies for incorporating learners' linguistic repertoires into classroom practice. Such measures would help translate the multilingual vision articulated in NEP 2020 and NCF-SE 2023 into meaningful teaching-learning experiences and contribute to a more inclusive and culturally responsive English language curriculum.

Declarations

Data Availability Statement

The study is based on the analysis of publicly available NCERT Class IX English textbooks (Beehive and Kaveri). No additional datasets were generated during the current study. All materials analysed are publicly accessible through the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT). The analytical framework and coding procedures are described in the Methodology section.

Disclosure of Interest

The authors declare that there are no competing interests related to this study.

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Figures

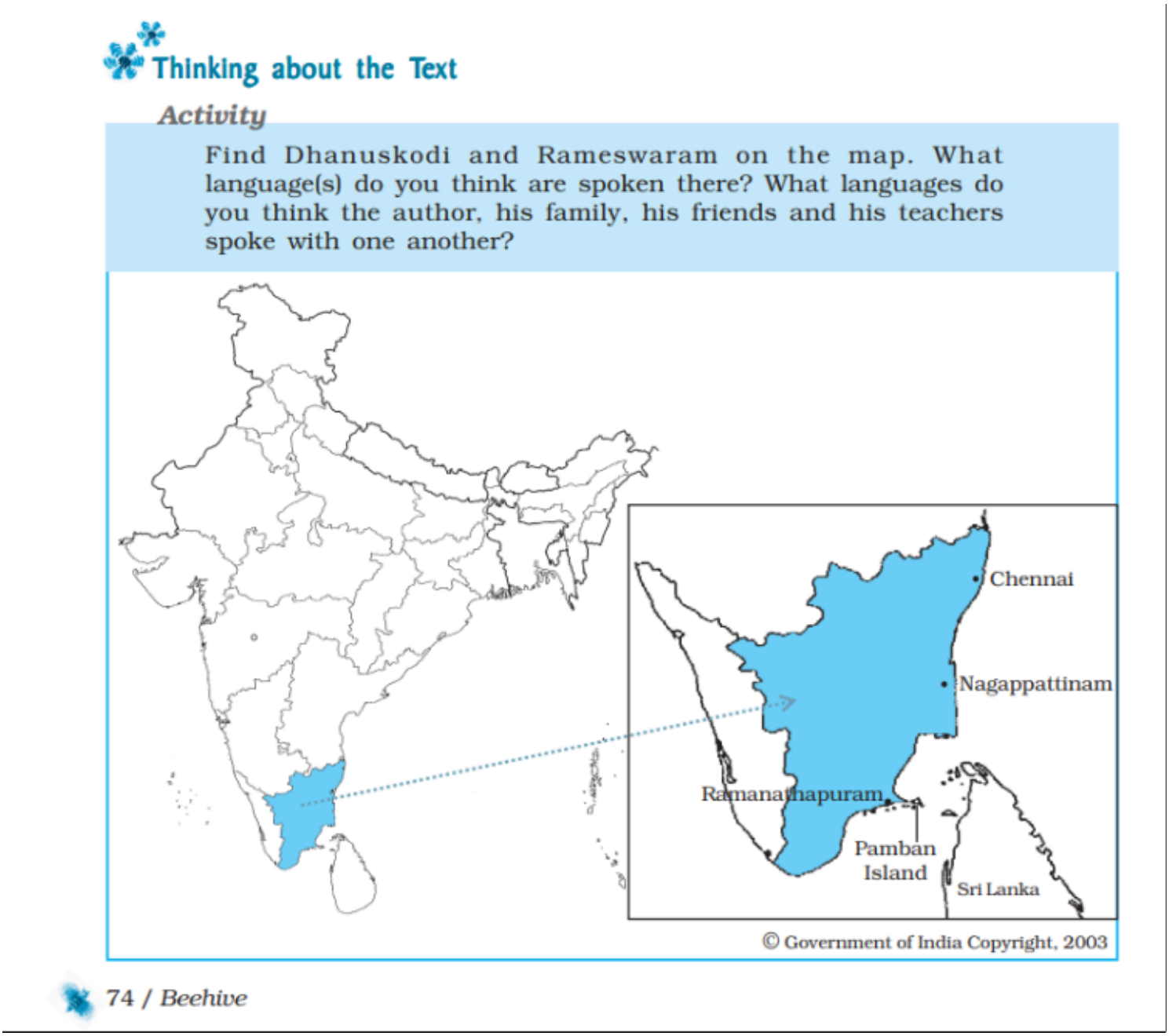


Figure 1

Image 1: Example of multilingual pedagogical representation in Beehive (Chapter 6: My Childhood, Page 74): a map-based activity that combines graphical representation with inquiry-oriented learning to encourage learners to explore the relationship between geography, language, and cultural context



Reflect and Respond

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I Does anyone in your family use a hand fan? What do you call it in your language? What is it made of?

II Work in pairs. Study the pictures given below carefully and complete the information. Discuss your answers with your classmates and teacher.

Fans			
The State it is from	Assam	Kerala	Uttar Pradesh
Shape	_____	_____	_____
Made of	_____	Palm leaf	*Moonj* grass

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Figure 2

Image 2: An integrated classroom activity from Kaveri (Chapter 3, Winds of Change, p. 69) illustrating multilingual representation through learner-centred pedagogy, regional cultural knowledge, graphical organisation, and QR-enabled digital resources.