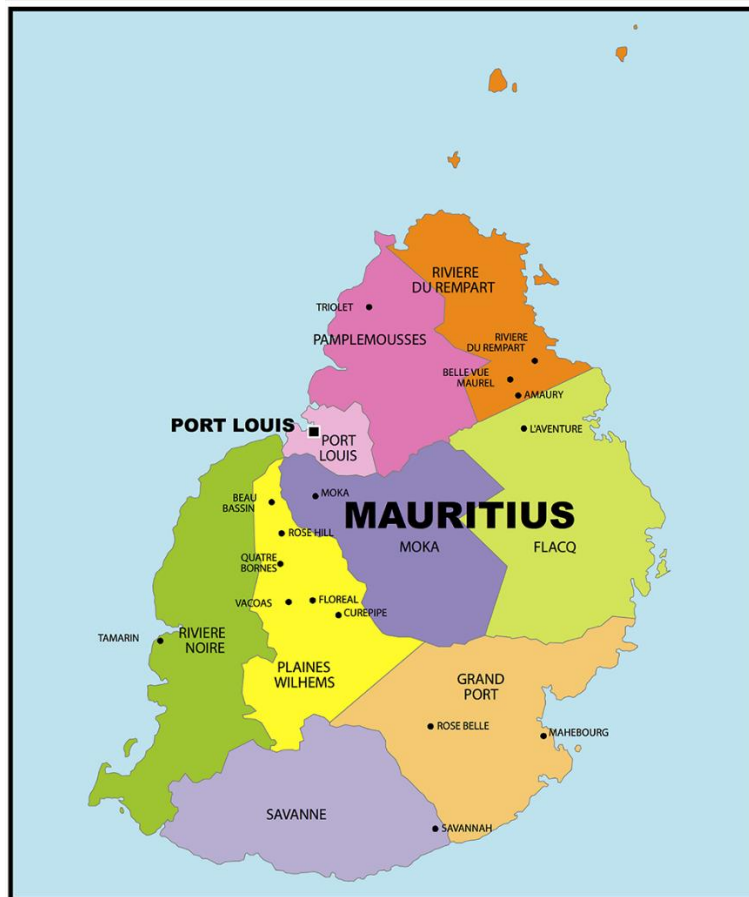


Translation Exercises in Mauritius Multilingual Education

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Courtesy: <http://mauritiusmap.facts.co/mauritiusmapof/mauritiusmap.php>

Learning Multiple Languages in Mauritius Curriculum

In Mauritius, our students learn several languages as part of their educational curriculum right from the Elementary School stage. Children learn to read and write our pan-Mauritius Creole (*Kreol Morisien*) in the elementary classes when they join the formal schooling system. Indeed, our Kreole may be considered as the first language of Mauritius children. Then they are

introduced to English as well as French as required languages at the Pre-Primary level. Students also begin to learn their Indian Ethnic Identity languages. If they are of Bhojpuri ethnicity, students usually prefer to learn Hindi. If they are of Tamil ethnicity, students generally prefer to learn Tamil. Telugu ethnic students of Mauritius learn Telugu. Similar is the case with the students of Marathi and Urdu backgrounds.

Textbooks in Indian Ethnic Identity Languages and Translation

Textbooks in ethnic identity languages such as Hindi, Tamil, etc. invariably offer translation exercises from English to Indian Ethnic Language and from Indian Ethnic Language to English. Such exercises help students not only to strengthen their skills in Indian Ethnic Language but also in English, which is an internationally useful language. In addition, medium of instruction in all disciplines such as social sciences and physical sciences is English at the collegiate/university level. In other words, in a multilingual context, both for inter-personal communication and for career and business, translation skills become very important in Mauritius. In addition, we are a truly multilingual society in day to day life and this also helps develop translation skills.

Need to Focus on Oral and Written Translations

We need to focus on both oral and written translations. When guests invited from India or any other nation for religious functions, a very common and encouraging feature of Mauritian life, the speech and blessings of the guest may be translated into our local dialects such as *Kreol* *Morisien*. When family guests and tourists from India and other South Asian nations as well as from Singapore, USA, UK, France, etc. visit the beautiful beaches of Mauritius, effective communication demands skill in oral translation. Likewise, skill in written translation is needed for government and formal communications.

Translation Exercises in Textbooks

A quick review of some Mauritian textbooks in Indian ethnic languages such as Tamil reveals that the following exercises are presented to the students. In Grade 7 Tamil textbook, we find several translation exercises that offer various grammatical constructions for English to

Tamil and Tamil to English: *the boy who eats, the students who write*. While translating the English phrase, the students may wonder how to translate the finite article *the* in Tamil. There is no need for translating the finite article here in Tamil, because the qualifying phrase contains inherently in itself the meaning of *the*. Teachers are expected to explain such intricacies of Tamil to students when they want their students to do some translation from Tamil to English and English to Tamil.

Problems of Embedded Sentences in Translation

Another feature that needs greater attention in doing the translation from Tamil to English and vice versa is the problem of embedded sentences and phrases. No language uses all the time simple sentences, and we have both compound and complex sentences in English and Tamil in their structures. The word order of a sentence in English is different from the word of a sentence in Tamil. Since the Indian Ethnic Language Tamil is SOV (Subject-Object-Verb) language, and since Indian Ethnic Student is learning his or her Identity Language, without having much oral or written competence in the Indian Ethnic Identity language, we notice more problems in following the right order of phrases and embedded sentences, while they translate into Indian Ethnic Identity language. We need to devote greater attention to this aspect.

Lexical Translation

Lexical translation also could be a problem. While some of the vegetables, fruits and foods, etc. may be identical between Indian Ethnic Identity Tamil and Tamil spoken in Tamilnadu, there are many objects of Tamilnadu which may not be familiar to Indian Ethnic Identity Tamil students in Mauritius. In addition, since we demand appropriate pronunciation and spelling, lexical translation also becomes a very important issue here. For a student of Tamilnadu learning Tamil in India, his or her environment is familiar to them with skill in identifying names of objects in Tamil and English. The Indian Ethnic Identity Tamil student has to learn words in Tamil formally, through his or her Tamil lessons and then apply these appropriately in their translation work.

To Conclude

We notice improvement in the translation skills as the Indian Ethnic Identity students move to higher classes. With greater appreciation of the need for translation skills, students and teachers will be able to give due attention to translation exercises. In any case, the translation process and teaching of translation in Mauritius do offer some special features of processes and further research will give us greater insights.

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