“Translanguaging”: a pedagogical tool to improve reading comprehension of learners in a multilingual setting in Odisha, India

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The present study focuses on mother tongue-based teaching practices in a multilingual education setting (MTB-MLE), with specific references to third language acquisition (TLA). It attempts to make inclusive education a success by integrating minority language with mainstream education. It is argued in the study that translanguaging as a strategy and practice can be effective in developing reading comprehension of Munda-speaking learners of English, with Odia as their second language.

The sample consisted of 29 learners from grades 3-5. A three-phased experimental procedure with a pretest, intervention, and posttest was administered. Mixed methodology was adopted in which the scores obtained from the pretest and posttest were analyzed using a paired t-test. The difference was significant with an alpha value of 0.05. Video recording of three multilingual lessons taught in each grade were analyzed quantitatively by calculating the percentage of utterances produced by both the intervener and the sample in L1, L2, and L3. Finally, scores obtained from read-aloud test administered during the three phases were calculated using correct words read per minute (WPM) software.

It was apparent from the findings that there was an improvement in the learners’ approach to reading and comprehension in L3. The strategies used were useful in facilitating word recognition, pronunciation, and reading comprehension. Hence, the study calls for a departure from the fixed notion of language(s) use in classroom teaching, thereupon encouraging a fluid usage of all the languages available in pedagogical praxis.