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A systematic review of the efficacy of a translanguaging pedagogy in developing reading comprehension among EFAL multilingual FP learners.

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Abstract

The low literacy level in South Africa is of great concern. The 2016 PIRLS literacy results revealed that 78% of Grade 4 children in South Africa are unable to read for meaning. These low literacy levels indicate a poor literacy foundation and limit learners' ability to learn effectively. Due to these low reading comprehension levels and the evident neglect of meaning and comprehension in many South African foundation phase classrooms, the purpose of this study was to investigate the efficacy of a translanguaging pedagogy in developing reading comprehension amongst multilingual foundation phase English first additional language learners. Monoglossic ideologies are prevalent in educational institutions in South Africa and around the globe. A translanguaging pedagogy presents an opportunity to counter linguistic and social injustices by providing learners with an equal opportunity to learn in a linguistically diverse classroom and a socially just education system. The research design employed by this study was a systematic review. Six studies that implemented translanguaging in educational contexts globally were carefully selected, reviewed and analysed using a thematic analysis approach. The themes that emerged from the studies were common translanguaging techniques and strategies that generated positive outcomes. A key finding that emerged from this study is that learners' home language or first language should be considered as a resource for attaining deeper levels of meaning. Further, the findings revealed that foundation phase teachers can enhance multilingual learners' English reading comprehension through the following strategies: home-languaging, the use of translation, juxtaposing languages, multilingual resources, eliciting learners' background knowledge through their home language, and the flexible and dynamic use of the multimodal semiotic repertoire. The study recommends a proposed translanguaging model to develop reading comprehension among foundation phase EFAL learners. However, future research is recommended to investigate the efficacy of this model.

Keywords: literacy, language, reading, comprehension, translanguaging, multilingualism, multilingual classrooms, foundation phase, home language, first language, second language.