The editor Prof. Geetha Durairajan in putting together this wonderful collection of Prabhu’s work has aptly explained the challenge of bringing his original work at one place in an interesting format so that coming generations of ELT practitioners can benefit from this anthology. To conclude, the book invites readers to introspect their classroom teaching and build perceptions of their practices in the light of Prabhu’s foundational work on language education.

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**Reviewed by Vrishali Patil**

*The Multilingual Reality: Living with Languages* is a well-researched, theoretical reappraisal of bi/multilingual education in India. The book engages with the issues of “the indigenous, tribal, minority, and minoritized” (ITM) Indian languages (p. 23). ITM languages, as Mohanty aptly points out, are at the periphery of mainstream educational structures and policies. The book is a comprehensive study and thorough critique of the hierarchical separation of multi-languages in India in terms of education, employment and economic benefits for the speakers of ITM. This seminal book is an outcome of Mohanty’s decades of tireless research and field-work amongst the Kond tribe in India, where he has worked for the education of these tribal children and their social justice. It is a detailed account of the various projects that Mohanty did with the ITM communities in India.

The book is spread across nine chapters interconnected thematically with the concept of ‘multilingualism’ and the ‘double divide’. The major themes in the book are:
• Multilingualism and its features
• Multilingualism as a cognitive resource
• The double divide due to language, power and hierarchy
• Negotiation of identities in multilingual marginalized communities and assertive maintenance of identity
• Socio-economical disadvantages of absence of home language in education
• Multilingualism and educational policies
• Possibility of multilingual education (MLE) in India
• The dominance of English in a multilingual world

In an autobiographical tone Mohanty portrays a clear outline and purpose of the book, which is to understand the multifaceted concept of multilingualism within the framework of marginalized population and the place of ITM in education. The book can be theoretically understood in three parts as follows: Firstly, Chapters 1 to 3 focus on the case of multilingualism in India, unlike other multilingual nations as a simple withdrawal from monolingualism to a natural progression towards bilingualism. Citing from Annamalai (2003, 2008) he asserts that it is the “functional relationship between many languages in different domains of use that makes India multilingual” and establishes the construct “multilingualism at grassroots” (pp. 41-43). Further, he gives an account of early views on bilingualism and in the context of the Kond tribe to demonstrate the metalinguistic advantages bilingual children have. He also discusses the limitation of considering bilingualism as one language at the cost of another. Rather he argues that multilingualism is a cognitive resource and not a disadvantage for multilingual children (pp. 75-88).

Secondly, Chapters 4 to 6, illustrate the concept of ‘the double divide’ with Mohanty arguing that “there is a divide between the elitist language of power and the major regional languages and another divide between the regional languages and the dominant one” (pp. 91-117). This brings about a discrimination and marginalization of ITM languages leading to serious disadvantages at many levels for the speakers of these languages. ITM languages struggle for recognition and maintenance due to official non-recognition. This results in social, psychological, educational, and socio-political linguistic suppression. Due to educational neglect,
exclusion, poverty and deprivation to develop capabilities among the marginalized ITM speaking children, this ‘double divide’ continues to challenge the mainstream education system of India.

Thirdly, Chapters 7 to 9 present an analysis of language-in-education policies where the author gives strong reasons behind the failure of experiments in different Indian states on early language education. He highlights that the implementation and practices have failed to bring about the change that Education Policies in independent India have visualized. He asserts that the limitations in implementing policies are due to “treating languages as problems rather than resources” (p.175). However, Mohanty rings in a positive note about the future of multilingual education (MLE) irrespective of the challenges of ITM in education and dominance of English over all other languages. He is optimistic about reducing the ‘double divide’ by practicing MLE.

The book is an excellent resource for language teachers in a multilingual context where children from all socioeconomic backgrounds come to learn. It is a demonstration of the fact that a teacher-researcher can be an “agent of change” (p. 23) by enabling children to use their home languages, by demonstrating inclusiveness, and by respecting sociolinguistic identities in multilingual classrooms, otherwise dominated by English and the so-called state languages with their academic variety. The book is a helpful documentation of the history of development of multilingualism among the other knowledge takeaways. However, new readers may find the third part a little heavy for conceptualization of policy and the role of English in a multicultural context if they are not aware of the socio political background and linguistic heritage of India.

To conclude the book is a valuable resource at the onset of National Education Policy 2020 in India and presents a dynamic perspective for teachers, researchers, students and policy makers to understand social mobility, inclusion, and equality through the lens of multilingual learning mechanisms.

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