

**K. Heugh et al., *Using Multilingual Approaches: Moving from Theory to Practice. A Resource Book of Strategies, Activities and Projects for the Classroom.* London, UK: British Council, 2019**

**ISBN 9780863559587, Accessible at [https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/sites/teacheng/files/Using\\_multilingual\\_approaches.pdf](https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/sites/teacheng/files/Using_multilingual_approaches.pdf)**

***Reviewed by Chelsy Selvan***

*Using multilingual approaches: Moving from theory to practice* is a ready-to-use practical handbook for English teachers. The book presents a range of successful teaching strategies found in exemplary bilingual education programmes in Africa, East and South Asia. The strategies are derived largely from the advances made in multilingual classrooms from different parts of the world. The book contains three parts: the first part with a guide contains research results from Africa and Asia; the second part reports projects with activities for multilingual classrooms while the last part contains an abridged list of useful multilingual resources. The book is well researched and articulated for ELT practitioners across multilingual societies.

This resource book is developed based on the foundations of six principles:

- The home and/or local languages that students bring to school are important foundations and cannot be replaced with English-only mode of education in Asia and Africa.
- The home/local language is the foundation for all learning and school education should be built upon this language.
- A minimum of six years under well-resourced conditions or a minimum of eight years under limited resourced conditions to learn enough of a second or third language is needed before children are ready to learn through this language.
- Curriculum needs careful planning and attention throughout the primary school years, and preferably also in secondary schooling for the development of strong biliteracy and trilateracy.
- To develop high-level expertise in at least two languages, the purposeful use of code-switching and translanguaging are important to promote bi-/multilingual pedagogy.

- The need to develop high level proficiency in a minimum of two languages is necessary for multilingual students.

The first part of the book is developed from the research evidence collected from language classrooms in Asia and Africa. Here the author rightfully argues that successful education in these regions need the foundations of home language. This remarkable aspect of the book stands in sharp contrast to the reductive and tendentious studies on ELT policies in multilingual societies. Through these research findings the authors showcase the intended advantage of multilingual practices. To establish their standpoint, the authors review works of Mohanty (2009, 2012) and Ramirez et al. (1991) and further reiterate that language learning to fulfil higher order academic goals need time.

Heugh et al. (2019) convincingly point out the intricacies existing in the use of terminologies such as mother tongue, home language, regional language and so on and elucidate the terms with various definitions given to regional language in the educational policies and legal documents of different countries. The socio-political conditions of countries like India and Ethiopia serve as rightful examples. The authors assure the reader of the inherent complexity of the topic. Evidence from the studies manifest the prevailing sense of teacher remorse involved in using code switching in class. To demonstrate the ill-consequences of English-only medium of instruction, the author discusses the system-wide assessment conducted in Western Cape Town provinces in South Africa where poor reading and writing skills affect children's mathematics learning (p.16). Alongside, the three language policy of India gets mentioned as a model where there is a possibility for the purposeful use of multilinguality in both language and subject classrooms. Translanguaging possibilities are postulated, and the activities provided in the second part suggest interesting ways in which ESL/EFL and/or subject teachers can strategize at every point in their teaching process.

In the second part of the book, the authors sharply point out that the linguistic mis-match between language of education and home language has been a matter of concern in the academic and education sectors from the mid twentieth century (review of Mohanty 2012 cited, pp. 17-18). To support the pedagogical benefits of transitioning from home to language of education, the authors now report a series of multilingual

pedagogical practices in limited resources classrooms. To activate students' multilingual awareness and support teachers in multilingual classrooms, these projects reveal some general strategies. The book discusses twelve projects all of which can serve as concrete guidelines for practising teachers and give them a unique opportunity to not only learn about new activities but also to reflect upon the task impact on learners' minds. The activities are developed with a well formulated theoretical framework of purposeful translanguaging between home and local language. The book significantly bases the credibility of its activities through teachers' feedback. Reviews of teachers' feedback suggest that the project activities were relatable to students, diverse in nature and adaptable for limited resource classroom contexts.

The third part of the book compiled by Mein French and Kathleen Heugh is a guide to assist teachers in multilingual classrooms. It has a fairly long list of currently available resources. The authors have been mindful in presenting explicit information on teacher education and teaching resources. Including sources containing e-materials is an innovative effort. Though the book does not delve deep into the social and political hierarchies of languages affecting education policies in multilingual countries, it provides the readers with some pragmatic and affordable classroom solutions to deal with the impending crisis looming large in many of our multilingual education systems. The disposition of the book fulfils all the required specifications of a resource book. By advocating several effective multilingual teaching practices, the authors have successfully documented multilingual pedagogies for the purpose of engaging diverse learners thereby reducing the 'double divide' that exists within the system.

*Chelsy Selvan, a doctoral student at The English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad is researching the impact on translanguaging on teaching practices in Indian multilingual classrooms.*

*chelsyselvan@gmail.com*