

Designing an MTB-MLE for Linguistically Heterogenous Contexts: A Practitioner's Perspective

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Abstract : There is much research available on the benefits of adopting mother tongue-based multilingual education (MTB MLE) in primary school classrooms, but there is limited guidance available on how to design such programs for low-resource and linguistically diverse contexts. This paper is an effort to bridge the gap between theory and practice by offering a practitioner's perspective on designing an MTB MLE program for linguistically heterogeneous contexts. The research compounds findings from current academic literature on MTB MLE, the study of global MTB MLE programs, interviews with practitioners, policy-makers, and academics worldwide, and a socio-linguistic survey carried out in parts of Tharparkar, Pakistan, the area selected for envisioned pilot implementation. These findings enabled the creation of 'guiding principles' which provide structure for the development of a contextualized and holistic MTB-MLE program. The guiding principles direct the creation of teaching and learning materials, creating effective teaching and learning environment, community engagement, and program evaluation. Additionally, the paper demonstrates the development of a context-specific language ladder framework which outlines the language journey of a child's education, beginning with the mother tongue/ most familiar language in the early years and then gradually transitioning into other languages. Both the guiding principles and language ladder can be adapted to any multilingual context. Thus, this research provides MTB MLE practitioners with assistance in developing an MTB MLE model, which is best suited for their context.

Keywords : mother tongue based multilingual education, education design, language ladder, language issues, heterogeneous contexts

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