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## **ROLE OF COLLABORATIVE READING IN LEARNERS' HOME LANGUAGE(S) IN DEVELOPING READING COMPREHENSION IN ENGLISH**

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**Abstract.** This paper reports the findings of a study that the researcher undertook in order to develop the reading comprehension of a group of tertiary level ESL students. The researcher teaches in the department of English Language Teaching to a linguistically diverse class of thirty four students in an Indian university. It was observed that the students were not able to critically engage with the text, and the assignments that were submitted indicated a lack of understanding of the course materials. An intervention was planned which aimed to determine whether the use of home languages while making notes facilitates the comprehension of challenging academic texts. In the first stage of the study, the participants read the texts on their own and made notes on them based on which they wrote individual summaries in English. In the second stage, the participants discussed the content in English in groups of three and made notes based on which they wrote individual summaries in English. In the last stage, the participants discussed the content in their home language/s in the same groups and made notes in whichever language/s they were comfortable in. Then they wrote individual summaries in English based on the notes. The scores for each stage were compared. The findings revealed that the participants successfully produced more detailed notes and summaries when they worked collaboratively and used their own home language/s for discussion and taking notes.

**Keywords:** collaborative reading; home language; reading comprehension; summarization; translanguaging.

### **Introduction**

Reading is a complicated process in which the reader engages actively with the text using their “cognitive and metacognitive skills” in order to understand the text (Kintsch, 2002). According to Bermillo, Lycol and Merto (2022), the ability to read with proper understanding is a *desideratum*

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to academic success. The ability to read with proper understanding is of paramount importance for the academic progress of both foreign and second language learners (Grabe, 2009). However, tertiary level students are yet to master the skill of comprehending big chunks of academic texts in "a fast, efficient, and effective manner" (Trudell, 2019). Another reading challenge for English as a second language (ESL) readers is that most of the college textbooks and reading materials are in English (Van Weijen, Tillema, & Van den Bergh, 2012). Students have very little exposure to challenging academic texts in English and, therefore, they have very limited "reading expertise and background" to deal with the texts that they encounter in higher education (Beeker, 2012 as cited in Yapp, de Graaff, & van den Bergh, 2021). Though it is an important and relevant issue (Grabe & Stoller, 2011), research into second language (L2) reading strategies has been scant (Zoghi, Mustapha, & Maasum, 2014).

In India, at the primary and secondary levels of education, the language of instruction (LOI) may either be the local language or English. However, English predominantly becomes the LOI at the higher education level across most disciplines, and the prescribed course books are also in English. Consequently, students who have been educated in their home languages at the primary and secondary levels of education are often required to engage with academic texts in English at the tertiary level. This shift in the medium of instruction is frequently cited as a significant factor contributing to the challenges that many Indian students face in comprehending academic texts in English.

The researcher teaches English Language Teaching (ELT) to a linguistically diverse class of thirty four students in an Indian university. As part of the course requirements, students are expected to engage with a variety of academic texts in English. For classroom assignments, students are required to write essays, reports, and other types of written work in English, drawing upon their readings of the academic texts. The researcher observed that her students were finding it difficult to critically engage with the text and their written assignments indicated a lack of adequate reading comprehension. As a solution to this problem, the researcher decided to intervene by making her students discuss the content of the texts using all

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the languages that they had access to including their home language(s). This approach was primarily implemented to accommodate students in a multilingual classroom who do not speak the majority language or the local language. Moreover, the language varieties that the students speak are sometimes mutually unintelligible. At times, they are seen to be resorting to the use of "link languages" (Chapia, 2020), such as Hindi and English to communicate with their fellow students.

Recent studies have highlighted the significant role of learners' home language or L1 as "resource for learning" (Omidire& Ayob, 2022, p.106). These studies have emphasized the importance of incorporating the home language as a scaffolding tool for learning in multilingual classrooms. A number of studies such as Garcia and Wei (2014), Makalela (2015b) and Mqijima and Makalela (2016), as cited in Omidire and Ayob (2022), have supported the shift from monolingual orientations in multilingual contexts where learners' entire linguistic repertoire is harnessed to achieve optimal learning. Although the study cites Duarte (2019) in support of the benefits of translanguaging strategies in multilingual classrooms, it also highlights the lack of sufficient research on how these strategies are implemented in multilingual classrooms. The present study investigates whether a translanguaging strategy, such as collaborative reading in learners' home language(s), can improve reading comprehension of challenging academic texts.

Son and Kim (2021) have defined translanguaging as the process in which speakers use the languages at their disposal without any restriction to create meaning according to "the communicative context". Wei and Garcia (2022) sought to clarify the misunderstanding that the term "translanguaging" is often interpreted as the use of the "first language" of multilingual students. However, they emphasized that in order to understand the concept of translanguaging one needs to go beyond the "socially constructed interpretation of language" (p. 314); instead, it should be regarded as "a unitary repertoire" (p. 322) enabling students to engage with the entire repertoire of language elements at their disposal.

The present study investigates whether peer discussions that draw on all the languages in learners' repertoire, including their home language(s),

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facilitate the comprehension of challenging academic texts in English. For the purpose of the study, three sets of three different types of texts were identified from the prescribed course books. All three sets had a narrative text, an expository text, and an argumentative text each. The researcher instructed the students to discuss the texts in groups and take notes. This was followed by writing individual summaries based on these notes. The summarization technique was employed to determine whether there was any change in the learners' reading comprehension after using their entire linguistic repertoire to discuss the content of the texts. This technique was considered suitable because a summary demonstrates the extent of comprehension, as it requires students to rewrite or outline only the most important parts of a passage (Zafarania & Kabgani, 2014). The student's focus is on identifying the most important parts of the text. More importantly, it also enables them to realize how different parts of the text come together to form a cohesive whole and how they support the title or main topic of the text.

The two research questions were:

- Could participants produce better summaries when using all the languages at their disposal, including their home language(s), to discuss the provided texts?
- Were they able to comprehend all three types of texts equally well when using their full linguistic repertoire?

### **Literature Review**

Academicians and English language teaching professionals involved in the field of English as a Second Language (ESL) have been attempting to develop effective second language (L2) programs, and one of the most challenging areas has been the use of the learners' first language (L1) in the second language (L2) classroom. The extant literature on strategic reading instruction in L2, especially in ESL contexts, is limited. There is a pressing need for more research on L2 reading instruction aimed at developing reading comprehension in ESL contexts (Young-Mee Suh as cited

in Grabe, 2004, p. 55). Though the use of L1 in the L2 classroom is a controversial one, and the use of L1 is usually not encouraged in the L2 classroom, research has shown that learners may benefit from the strategic use of the L1 in the L2 classroom (Storch & Wigglesworth, 2003).

An in-depth literature review follows that would help justify the need for the present study. The following six headings under literature review present the six research areas related to the present study.

### **Teaching of Reading Strategies**

Though the burgeoning volume of research on teaching of reading strategies is proof of the importance attributed to developing learners' reading skills, it is still a neglected area in the ESL classroom. Some recent studies have explored various aspects of reading strategies and schema building, which also allow for the incorporation of strategies such as collaborative reading and the use of home language(s), as investigated in the present study. Studies such as Sengupta's (2002) highlight the necessity of going beyond simple strategies which is encouraging for the present study that explores the role of learners' home language in teaching reading. Although Shen's (2009) study investigates the role of discussions among learners in building their schema and increasing their motivation, it does not explore the use of learners' home languages in these discussions. It focuses more on relying on one's memory to search for items in L2 to express what learners have in mind. More recently, Stoller, Anderson, Grabe, and Komiyama's (2013) study further emphasized the importance of class discussions to understand the main idea and help learners to relate the text content to their background knowledge. Yang (2010) in her study examined the differences and similarities between L1 and L2 reading and explored the role of schema. The argument put forward was that if learners, irrespective of the language(s) they spoke, were acquainted with the content as well as the formal and linguistic schema, they could understand any text. These studies suggest that leveraging a learner's L1 could be an effective strategy for enhancing L2 reading comprehension.

## **Collaborative Reading**

A number of studies have proven the efficacy of collaborative reading but, as the following discussion shows, only a handful of them have actually looked at the use of learners' home languages during class discussions. Modified Collaboration Strategic Reading (MCSR) combines collaborative learning and reading strategy instruction. Klingner and Vaughn (1996) in their study assessed the attitudes of the students towards the effectiveness of MCSR. Vaughn and Edmonds (2006) also showed how collaborative reading helps in comprehending the reading material better. Since then, a series of studies—such as those by Stoller et al. (2013), Zoghi, Mustapha, and Maasum (2014), and Bermillo (2022)—have revealed that Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR) is effective in improving reading comprehension among various groups of learners, as well as enhancing their reading motivation. More recently, Turnbull and Evans (2019) found that the group using their L1 during discussions demonstrated higher recall.

## **Reading and Taking Notes**

Though Özçakmak and Mustafa's (2019) study indicated that note taking did not affect comprehension, it was strongly refuted by other studies (Faber et al., 2000; Belet, 2005; Tok & Beyazıt, 2007). They also acknowledged that factors such as the nature of the text and the length and the interest factor of the content might have had an impact on the findings. While commenting on the dearth of literature on the effectiveness of note taking on listening and reading comprehension, they also noted that taking notes enables students to understand the content of the text better since they read more attentively.

## **Use of Home Language in L2 Classroom**

Recent studies have emphasized the benefits of using the L1 as a scaffold for learning, as it facilitates better comprehension of content.

Storch and Wigglesworth's (2003) study explored an important aspect of L1 use in language learning, specifically focusing on learners' attitudes towards the use of their first language (L1) in the classroom. Their study found that although the learners were aware of the benefits of using L1 as a tool, they were reluctant to use it when completing the tasks. The researchers strongly advocate for allowing students to use their L1 during collaborative work (p. 768). They recommend follow-up research on the "potentially valuable role of the L1" (p. 768). Eisenclas, Schalley, and Guillemin (2013) used the term "home language", which they defined as the language that is picked up by a child at home, and the language that the child knows best before their formal education begins. Although that study focused on young children, the term "home language" deemed most suitable for the present study, referring to the language(s) spoken at home in which the speaker feels most comfortable. Conteh (2018) highlights the "pedagogic potential" of translanguaging, noting that an increasing number of researchers working in multilingual teaching and learning contexts have begun to refer to "Translanguaging" as the practice of speaking and writing in different languages. Omidere (2019) comments that the use of home languages is instrumental in making classrooms more interactive and for learning to take place in the process.

Dougherty cites Celic and Seltzer's (2011) review of translanguaging strategies in classrooms that have been used successfully in places as varied as the UK and Africa. The process of planned and strategic translanguaging, or the strategic use of all the language varieties at the student's disposal, can be defined as pedagogical translanguaging (Cenoz, 2017, p. 194). It has also been defined as "a theoretical and instructional approach" to improve students' linguistic and content competences through the use of all the language varieties in their repertoire (Cenoz & Gorter, 2021). Pedagogical translanguaging is also considered as an effective means for consolidating what has been learnt and offering opportunities for increased flexibility in language use by multilingual speakers (Duarte & Kirsch, 2020). Dougherty (2021) discusses translanguaging strategies in the language classroom, highlighting how a "translanguaging space" can be created either spontaneously or strategically to support both the academic and social

aspects of a lesson. Anderson (2024) acknowledges the growing interest in translanguaging as a theory and as a pedagogical tool. According to the weaker definition of translanguaging, any practices that draw on learners' broad linguistic repertoire to facilitate communication and understanding can be considered translanguaging, although this also depends in part on how it is implemented in the classroom. Although he acknowledges that translanguaging has long been prevalent in multilingual contexts such as India, researchers have a responsibility to observe, analyze and learn from these practices.

### **Use of Learners' Home Language(s) in Reading**

The benefits of using the learners' L1 as an "essential tool" for reading was acknowledged as far back as the 1990s by Villamil and De Guerrero(1996) that listed five strategies used by Spanish college students during collaborative reading. Three of these five strategies that are of interest in the context of the present study are: using the L1, providing scaffolding, and resorting to interlanguage knowledge. Seng and Hashim's (2006) study showed that while reading texts in their L2, learners use their L1 to think about the content and to understand the text better. Garcia and Sylvan (2011) acknowledged the multilingual/ multicultural reality of today's classrooms, and how students' abilities can be developed by exploiting the different languages present in the classroom. Their paper presents translanguaging as an effective tool for enhancing understanding and addressing the needs of individual learners in multilingual classroom contexts. This is supported by studies such as Ocampo's (2023), which found a strong connection between translanguaging and reading comprehension. The conclusion drawn emphasizes the importance of increased group discussions and classroom interactions, as a high degree of correlation was found between reading comprehension and the use of translanguaging.

According to Hungwe (2019), translanguaging could be used to develop fluency in both L1 and L2. Moreover, it also aids in improving reading comprehension and in understanding various concepts more effectively. Ocampo (2023) interprets translanguaging as the technique in which learners

use all languages in their repertoire to learn concepts. The study also emphasizes the use of translanguaging to foster the development of higher-order thinking and highlights the crucial role of teachers in allowing and encouraging ESL students to express their thoughts in their native languages. A study conducted by Yapp, Graaff, and Bergh (2021) recommends further research on the use of various reading strategies in L2 reading, especially for vocational students. Several studies, including Li and Clariana's (2019), have acknowledged the lack of research on text-level reading on reading comprehension in a language that is not the reader's native language. Building on these findings, the present study seeks to bridge this research gap by evaluating the effectiveness of a translanguaging strategy implemented in a multilingual classroom.

### **Use of Summary to Assess Reading Comprehension**

In the past few decades, a significant amount of research has been conducted on the relation between the summarization technique and reading comprehension. Asención Delaney's (2008) study suggested that there was a connection between summarizing and L2 reading. Summarizing and reading comprehension are strongly interlinked as in order to write a good summary the writer must first understand the text (Kintsch & van Dijk, 1978). This is the reason why summary writing is frequently used to measure the reading comprehension of participants (e.g., Cohen 1994; Yu 2008). Zafarania and Kabgani (2014) recognize summarization as a "complex process" (p. 1961) that requires readers to sift through and differentiate between the more important and less important ideas and then recreate them as a new text that could replace the original. In their study, the focus is more on what goes into writing a good summary and the emphasis is mainly on writing. In another study by Yamanishi, Ono, and Hijikata (2019), the summarization technique is a component of a larger reading comprehension assessment. The present study focuses exclusively on the summarization technique, as it aims to explore how summaries can be used to determine to what extent the reader is able to identify the main idea, supporting points, and related elements. The summaries were evaluated based on these comprehension criteria rather

than the conventions of summary writing. As a result, the writing process itself was not emphasized or assessed.

The relevance of the present study becomes particularly evident in the context of such studies, as it determines whether allowing learners to draw on all the language varieties in their repertoire enhances their ability to comprehend dense academic texts in a multilingual teaching-learning context. A significant portion of this literature review aims to underscore gaps that exist in the use of translanguaging strategies in complex multilingual teaching-learning settings. This gap, particularly evident in the researcher's own teaching-learning context, served as a powerful motivator for undertaking the present study.

## **Methodology**

### **Participants**

The researcher teaches a linguistically diverse group of students in an Indian university. The participants were a cohort of 34 postgraduate students in the department of English Language Teaching. They were selected using a convenience sampling method. Convenience sampling or availability sampling is a method that involves collection of data from participants who are available to participate in the study (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2012). For the present study, 34 participants attending the English for Specific Purposes course taught by the researcher were selected. The mean age of this group was 20 years. The majority of them were speakers of different varieties of Assamese (the dominant indigenous language in the region), but there were also speakers of based on (another indigenous language spoken in Assam), Naga (spoken in the neighboring state of Nagaland), varieties of Bengali (spoken in Assam and West Bengal) and a variety of Bihari (spoken in the state of Bihar). All of them had similar levels of proficiency in English. It is important to note that all the participants in the study took part voluntarily. Their involvement was based on informed consent, ensuring that they were fully aware of the study's objectives and procedures.

## **Data Collection and Procedure**

Although the participants' reading proficiency was already known to the researcher, as she had taught them for nearly one and a half years prior to conducting the experiment, the individual summaries written by the participants following the discussions were used as a tool to assess their reading comprehension. These summaries provided valuable insights into how well the participants understood the academic texts and reflected their ability to synthesize and articulate key ideas from the material. This method of assessment allowed for a more nuanced evaluation of their comprehension beyond the researcher's prior knowledge of their abilities.

Three sets of three different types of texts were used for this purpose. They were mainly excerpts from two books on English for Specific Purposes (ESP) viz. *English for Specific Purposes: a learning centered approach* by Hutchinson and Waters (1987) and *Developments in English for Specific Purposes: A multidisciplinary approach* by Dudley Evans and Jo St John (1998). For the purpose of this study, three types of texts were identified: narrative, expository and argumentative. The extant literature on different types or genres of texts presents conflicting viewpoints on the criteria for classification of different types of texts. For ease of study, the following interpretations of the three types of texts were considered. A loose definition of a narrative text would be a text that presents a series of events arranged on a timeline of related elements (Brewer, 1980, as cited in Wannagat, Henkel, & Nieding, 2020). An expository text often contains ideas or information that is usually "new to the reader" (Mar, Li, Nguyen, & Ta, 2021, p. 733). Argumentative texts, on the other hand, are those texts that contain structured text content through "high level thinking skills" (Ozdemir, 2018, p. 112), where the argument is presented from different perspectives and where the arguments and the rebuttals may not be organized in an explicit manner.

All three sets of texts in all three stages included a narrative text, an expository text and an argumentative text. In each of the stages, the participants were first made to read the three different texts and write a summary for each of the passages. They were scored on the basis of

writing about the main idea and specific details from the original passage in their own words, including the important details from the original text in the summary. In the first stage (Stage 1) of the study, the participants read the first set of texts on their own and took notes based on which they wrote individual summaries in English. The participants were divided into groups of three for the next two stages of the study. According to Harvey and Goudvis (2000), organizing students into discussion groups enhances their understanding of texts. The groups were composed of students who spoke different language varieties. In the second stage (Stage 2), the participants discussed the content of the second set of texts in English in their groups and took notes. Then they wrote individual summaries in English based on these notes. In the final stage (Stage 3), the participants discussed the content of the third set of texts using all the languages that were available to them in the same groups and took notes in whichever language(s) they were most comfortable with. Then they wrote individual summaries in English based on the notes. Students were required to write their summaries in English, as tertiary-level students are expected to demonstrate proficiency in academic writing skills and complete assignments in English after reading texts in the same language. Moreover, the primary objective of this study was to determine if students wrote better summaries after discussing the content of the academic texts in their home language(s). Since in the previous two stages they wrote their summaries in English, they were required to write the third set of summaries in English in order to maintain uniformity and for more reliability in scoring. The scores for each stage were compared.

The summary was used to determine the level of reading comprehension because numerous studies have proved that summaries measure and promote reading comprehension. As mentioned earlier, a good summary has been found to be a strong indicator of effective reading comprehension. Each summary written by the students was scored according to a holistic rubric that assigned grades based on a set of holistic criteria rather than on individual aspects of writing. In other words, the summaries were scored based on a set of holistic criteria and not on how the participants actually wrote their summaries. An analytical scoring rubric was used to evaluate participants' pre and post-intervention summary scripts. The four

different aspects included in the rubric were: identifying the central idea, finding the supporting details, understanding vocabulary, and making inferences (Sam & Rajan, 2013). The rubric for the summarization technique has been borrowed from Madnani, Burstein, Sabatini, and O'Reilly (2013), and is provided in the Annex. Although their study primarily focused on the use of automated scoring for summaries, they also recommended using summaries as an effective tool for assessing reading comprehension. It was believed that, to determine whether students were able to construct the mental models necessary for reading, they should be asked to identify the central idea of a text, locate specific information within it, and make connections between its different points. According to studies such as Yu (2008), these four cognitive functions are most effectively demonstrated through summary writing. The summaries were checked for the presence of these four aspects and each aspect was scored on a scale of 4 and the total scores were calculated. It is important to note that participants were asked to write summaries as a "performative activity" (Brown & Abeywickrame, 2018) to demonstrate their reading comprehension. As such, the summaries were evaluated not on the quality of writing, but for the extent to which they reflected the participants' understanding of the provided texts. The researcher scored the summaries using a scoring rubric. Intra-rater reliability was maintained by going through all the summaries once without assigning scores and then coming back to the same set and giving final scores or grades, as recommended by Brown and Abeywickrame (2018).

The participants were asked to complete the tasks as home assignments. They were instructed to read the text and then write a summary of not more than 500 words. The quality of writing was not checked since summarizing involves a set of writing skills that differ from, and may be more complicated than reading skills. Instead, the focus was on how well the student was able to convey their interpretation of the texts in their own words. The emphasis was placed on assessing how effectively participants could distill the main ideas and essential content from the text, rather than on the mechanics of their writing.

## Data Analysis

One of the aims of this study was to determine if there is a difference in the scores obtained by the students between the three stages, and if there is a significant difference in Stage 3 in which the participants used their home language(s) to discuss the content of the three types of texts. The scores of Text 1 (narrative), Text 2 (expository) and Text 3(argumentative) for each stage were added and tested for the difference in the mean text scores between the three stages, i.e., Stage 1, Stage 2, and Stage 3. A single-factor ANOVA was conducted to compare the means of the three groups. Another aim of this paper was to investigate whether there was any difference in difficulty level among the three types of texts. In order to determine this, the average score of Text 1 overall (for Stages 1, 2 and 3) was taken and the same was done for Text 2 and Text 3. The average scores between Texts 1, 2 and 3 were compared.

## Findings

The findings of this study are presented in two sections: (1) statistics illustrating score differences across all three stages, and (2) statistics comparing scores among the three types of texts.

### Difference in Scores in All Three Stages

**Table 1**

*Sample Summary Statistics (N=34)*

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Mean</b>
No discussion (Stage 1)	4.30
Discussion in English (Stage 2)	5
Discussion in own language(s) (Stage 3)	8.35

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The results, as shown in Table 1, indicate a significant difference in the means between the three stages as seen from the p-value which is less than 0.01. Discussion in own language (Stage 3) had the highest mean scores out of the three and this difference was statistically significant.

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**Table 2**

*Comparison between Students' Scores Obtained in Stage 1, Stage 2, and Stage 3*

<b>Source</b>	<b>SS</b>	<b>Df</b>	<b>MS</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>p</b>
Between Groups	319.76	2	159.88	71.68	0.00
Within Groups	220.82	99	2.23		
<i>Total</i>	<i>540.60</i>	<i>101</i>			

*Note:* SS = Sum of Squares, df = degrees of freedom, MS = Mean Square, F = F-statistic, p = significance level.

The F-statistic of the ANOVA will be higher and the p-value will be lower if the variation in the between-group is high compared to the within-group. In such a scenario, the null hypothesis that the group means are equal can be rejected. In Table 2, since the p-value is less than 0.01, it can be conclusively proved that there is a significant difference between the mean scores of the three stages and Stage 3 has a significantly higher mean test score than Stage 1 and Stage 2.

### **Comparison of Scores Obtained for the Three Types of Texts**

**Table 3**

*Sample Summary Statistics (N=34)*

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Mean</b>
Narrative	2.2352
Expository	2.1764
Argumentative	1.598

The present research also aimed to investigate whether certain texts are easier to comprehend. To determine this, the overall average score for Text 1(narrative), based on Stages 1, 2, and 3 was calculated. The same was done for Text 2 (expository) and Text 3(argumentative). The average scores of Texts 1, 2 and 3 were then compared.

**Table 4**

*Comparison between Overall Average Scores in Narrative, Expository, and Argumentative Text Styles*

<b>Source of Variation</b>	<b>SS</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>MS</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>p</b>	<b>F crit</b>
Between Groups	8.43	2	4.21	20.08	0.00	3.10
Within Groups	20.78	99	0.20			
Total	29.22	101				

*Note:* SS = Sum of Squares, df = degrees of freedom, MS = Mean Square, F = F-statistic, p = significance level, Fcrit = critical F-value

ANOVA results in Table 4 show that overall narrative texts were easier to comprehend compared to expository and argumentative texts and the difference is significant as seen from the p-value which is less than 0.01. The results also indicate that the argumentative texts were found to be most difficult to comprehend.

## Discussion

The present study aimed to explore the role of home languages in facilitating better comprehension of academic texts in L2. The research used summarizing as a tool to assess how far the reading material could be comprehended. The results strongly indicate that appropriate translanguaging strategies can be effective in facilitating reading comprehension in L2. It was found that there was a positive correlation between group discussions in learners' home languages and a greater understanding of academic texts in English. The findings of this study align with several studies such as Turnbull and Evans (2017) who observed that use of learners' home language(s) in group discussions while reading led to greater engagement with the text.

The summaries of all three types of texts in Stage 1, where participants did not engage in classroom discussions, indicate a relatively low level of understanding of the text. On the other hand, the participants in Stage 2 in which they discussed the texts in English, displayed a better understanding of the text than in Stage 1, suggesting benefits of group discussion in general. This finding is consistent with those reported by studies such as Rizwanand Rachmijati (2021) and Ningsi, Amin, and Muhsin (2021)

which established that group discussions enable learners to read with better comprehension. The participants in Stage 3, who discussed the texts in all the languages that were available to them, wrote better summaries with the main idea and the supporting ideas that were intact and in their own words.

However, the summaries created for the argumentative texts indicated a lack of adequate understanding of the text. This trend was also evident in Stage 1 and 2 where, although the overall scores obtained by participants were lower in case of all three texts as compared to Stage 3, they were far lower in case of the argumentative texts. The reason for this may be because in argumentative texts, the main claim is not explicitly stated and readers are required to associate ideas across sentences (Diakidoy, Ioannou, & Christodoulou, 2017). In studies such as Larson, Hazlett, Chaparro, and Picard (2006), it was reported that readers could identify these argument elements with only 30% accuracy. The findings strongly suggest that the collaborative use of learners' home language(s) can yield similar results across various multilingual teaching learning contexts and teachers can plan and adopt such strategies in the classroom.

## **Conclusion**

Although ELT practitioners are still divided about the use of learners' home language(s) in the teaching and learning of L2, the present study provides further evidence in support of the use of learners' home languages to facilitate their reading comprehension in L2. It was observed that participants were able to generate summaries that demonstrated better comprehension when they worked collaboratively by using the languages that they had in their linguistic repertoires. It proves that collaborative work and translanguaging techniques can facilitate meaning-making and deep understanding of texts. In other words, this paper has provided evidence to indicate how translanguaging can be a useful tool to understand academic texts in the L2. It is also noteworthy that although participants used different language(s) at their disposal to understand the text, they produced summaries in English which indicated that they could comprehend the texts

that they summarized. This confirms that, rather than causing confusion, the use of different languages leads to greater understanding. The use of their home languages or the language(s) that they have access to allows participants to engage with the text with more confidence and in greater depth. Therefore, the researcher recommends a translingual approach in classrooms to facilitate better comprehension of texts.

In the process of discussing and summarizing, the students drew on the different languages at their disposal to highlight, summarize, and review key ideas, while also relating them to their existing knowledge. Another important finding of this study was that ESL learners may require extra assistance to deal with complex academic texts, such as argumentative texts. Although adopting strategies such as collaborative reading and use of learners' home languages facilitates greater comprehension, there may be situations where teachers may have to provide additional scaffolding, such as training them in the use of graphic organizers in order to make more sense of complex academic texts where the main points and relevant details may not be explicitly stated.

The two major takeaways from this research would be: collaborative work assists in developing reading comprehension in an L2 class and appropriate use of learners' home language(s) can facilitate the development of L2 reading skills. Opportunities for collaborative learning and speaking, as implemented in this research, are important ways through which extensive reading helps students to internalize and fully comprehend academic texts. The researcher acknowledges that the sample size in this study was too small to support broad generalizations. Further studies with a larger sample may yield results that are more widely applicable. Moreover, several important factors that could have a significant impact on the findings, such as potential biases in group dynamics during collaborative tasks, individual differences in linguistic repertoires, and the use of convenience sampling, were also not considered. These limitations, however, cannot undermine the significant changes in L2 reading behavior among students when they use their own language(s) to make sense of challenging academic texts. The present research strongly advocates for the incorporation of collaborative use of learners' home language(s) for better comprehension of academic texts. It

also highlights the need to raise awareness among teachers, learners, and other stakeholders about the benefits of adopting translanguaging pedagogy in multilingual classrooms.

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**SKAITYMO BENDRADARBUJANT MOKINIŲ  
GIMTĄJA (-OSIOMIS) KALBA (-OMIS) VAIDMUO UGDANT  
SKAITYMO SUPRATIMĄ ANGLŲ KALBA**

**Anotacija.** Šiame straipsnyje aptartas tyrimas, atliktas siekiant tobulinti aukštosios mokyklos studentų, besimokančių anglų kaip antrosios kalbos, skaitymo supratimą, ir pateikti jo rezultatai. Tyrėja Indijos Guvahačio universitete dėsto anglų kalbą lingvistiškai įvairiai trisdešimt keturių studentų grupei. Pastebėta, kad studentai nesugebėjo kritiškai analizuoti tekstų, o pateiktos užduotys rodė, kad jie nesupranta kurso medžiagos. Buvo parengta strategija, kuria siekta nustatyti, ar gimtosios kalbos vartojimas konspektuojant palengvina suprasti sudėtingus akademinus tekstus. Pirmame tyrimo etape dalyviai skaitė savarankiškai ir kai ką pasižymėdavo, vėliau remdamiesi šiais užrašais rašė individualias santraukas anglų kalba. Antrame etape dalyviai grupėse po tris anglų kalba aptarė tekstų turinį, taip pat konspektavo ir remdamiesi tais užrašais rašė individualias santraukas anglų kalba. Paskutiniame etape dalyviai tose pačiose grupėse aptarė turinį gimtąja (-osiomis) kalba (-omis) ir užsirašė pastabas ta kalba (-omis), kuri (-ios) jiems patogiausia (-ios). Tuomet remdamiesi užrašais rašė individualias santraukas anglų kalba. Kiekvieno etapo rezultatai buvo palyginti. Išvados atskleidė, kad dalyviai išsamesnius užrašus ir santraukas parengė bendradarbiaudami paskutiniame etape – grupėse aptarę turinį gimtąja (-omis) kalba (-omis), užsirašę pastabas ta kalba (-omis), kuri (-ios) jiems patogiausia (-ios) ir parašę individualias santraukas anglų kalba.

**Pagrindinės sąvokos:** skaitymas bendradarbiaujant; gimtoji kalba; skaitymo supratimas; apibendrinimas; vertimas iš vienos kalbos į kitą.