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## Translanguaging in tertiary language classrooms: A study of English and Bengali departments at a public university in Bangladesh

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## Abstract

This study explores students' and teachers' perceptions and experiences of translanguaging practices in English and Bengali teaching classrooms at a large public university in Bangladesh. Qualitative research has been conducted to collect data which included classroom observations, focus group interviews with students and a semi-structured face-to-face interview with teachers. Following Braun and Clarke's framework, data was analysed thematically, in order to determine repeated patterns of language use, participation and learning impacts. Based on the findings, it can be said that translanguaging is perceived to support developing English language proficiency and enhancing student engagement and confidence, by supporting grammatical clarification, lexical knowledge and idea formulation. Along with English, Bengali was used, and the majority of the students were engaged and then felt confident, especially at the time of peer interaction and problem-solving activities, which is found by the classroom observation and interview data. Moreover, most of the students stated that they felt less anxious and more motivated to participate. However, the study finds several challenges as well, such as monolingual policy, lack of formal teacher training in translanguaging pedagogy and peer judgment related to the use of Bengali in English classrooms. The study reveals that translanguaging can create an inclusive learning environment where students feel more encouraged to participate in classroom activities, comprehend the topics clearly and increase their confidence, in tertiary-level English language classrooms. In the context of Bangladeshi higher education, translanguaging which is complemented by teacher preparation and structural flexibility, can lead to successful multilingual education, which is suggested by the findings.



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## KEYWORDS

*translanguaging, English language teaching, multi-lingual classrooms, student engagement, linguistic inclusivity*

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## Introduction

Translanguaging is the dynamic and strategic use of many language resources in communication and learning, and it has become a prominent pedagogical tool in multilingual education (García & Li, 2014). Translanguaging provides students the opportunity to combine languages to help with comprehension, expression and involvement in multilingual classrooms by drawing from their whole language repertoire (Canagarajah, 2011). This strategy aligns with the many linguistic realities that many students in higher education experience, especially in nations like Bangladesh, where English language courses can have Bengali (the native language) alongside English. The students of this public university very often use English and Bengali spontaneously which raises the issue of how this behaviour can affect their language proficiency and educational experience.

In Bangladesh, the education of English has historically followed a monolingual, English-only pedagogical paradigm with an emphasis on linguistic competency development via immersion in the target language (Hamid & Baldauf, 2008). This strategy has been criticised, however, for neglecting the cognitive and academic worth of students' first languages (Hornberger & Link, 2012). Translanguaging proponents believe that teachers can assist students to perceive difficult English texts and academic material by including their first language (L1) into the classroom (Creese & Blackledge, 2010). This method encourages students to join in the classroom activities. Additionally, it decreases the anxiety-level of students and aids learners to not only achieve knowledge but also obtain critical thinking ability. The students feel more comfortable to actively participate in the discussions and interactive activities using their complete language resources which leads to a more inclusive classroom (Garcia & Wei, 2014).

Translanguaging does not only support language development, but also helps to get connected linguistically and culturally (Canagarajah, 2011). Besides, a comprehensive, student-centred style is promoted by translanguaging which is particularly helpful for the university students who face difficulty to acquire academic English (Pacheo & Miller, 2016). The advantages and practices of translanguaging have not been thoroughly investigated at the public university or within Bangladeshi tertiary-level education methodically. Additionally, no clear evidence is available regarding the impact of translanguaging on learners' English proficiency, participation, self-assurance and critical thinking. In the Bangladeshi context, further studies on this practice are needed to obtain deeper knowledge for its practical application, benefits and challenges for both students and teachers, contributing to the ongoing discussion on effective multilingual education in Bangladesh.

## Literature Review

### *Benefits of Translanguaging in ELT*

Research data demonstrates that using translanguaging methods leads to enhanced learning retention as well as better student involvement in English language education for multilingual educational centres. Translanguaging practices between native tongues and English improve cognitive performance according to Creese and Blackledge (2010) thus enabling students to understand difficult subjects better. Research carried out by Makalela (2015) demonstrated that multilingual students achieved better reading comprehension results by using translanguaging strategies. The students who practice translanguaging obtain better academic results due to their enhanced success rates because institutional growth depends on English proficiency (Vaish & Subhan, 2015).

The educational practice of translanguaging builds school equity because it recognises and values all student languages from the beginning. Students obtain empowerment through translanguaging, since the approach acknowledges their multilingual abilities and reduces discrimination faced by those who speak English as a second language based on Canagarajah (2011).

The educational approach of translanguaging fits well within critical pedagogy since it promotes education equality while giving power to underrepresented voices (Freire, 1970). Through its promotion of social justice and challenge to language hierarchies, translanguaging addresses the specific learning requirements of Bangladeshi students who view English as the key to global opportunities (Rahman & Pandian, 2018). The implementation of translanguaging needs both educational professionals to change their thinking and supportive government policies to create functional infrastructure (Barros et al., 2021).

Translanguaging significantly impacts students' academic writing and reading capabilities. Holistic multilingual meaning-making strategies augment compositional proficiency among burgeoning multilingual students by leveraging their repertoire, which was ascertained by Kiramba (2017). Through the implementation of translanguaging methodology, first-year university students underwent improved competence of restating concepts as well as heightened interpretive reading skills, as asserted by Hungwe (2019). Since multilingual strategies facilitate students expressing their insights in a finer way and enrich their comprehension of academic literature, academic writing requirements can be competently addressed. (Wei, 2011).

Translanguaging is a teaching method which builds upon the concepts of plurilingualism which acknowledge language blending and esteem polyglot education (Otheguy et al., 2019). Bangladeshi students can connect their native tongues with English education while enhancing their language synthesis through the educational practice of translanguaging (Sultana, 2014). Translanguaging instructional methods boost students' participation in reading sessions while optimising their perception, as stated by Vaish and Subhan (2015).

### ***Translanguaging Theory and Definitions in Bangladesh***

In Bangladesh, particularly at the university where the study took place, translanguaging has emerged as a formative teaching method in ELT classrooms. English is considered as a second or foreign language in Bangladesh and translanguaging has the potential to solve the linguistic difficulty and enhance academic performance of the students (Rahman & Singh, 2020). This study examines the theoretical ideas of translanguaging and its enforced teaching strategies while looking at the general problems faced when translanguaging is implemented in ELT classes, specifically at the public university. The description and definitions of translanguaging as a theory were first propounded by García and Wei (2014), who said that multilingual speakers use their languages as an integrated communicative repertoire to make meaning and negotiate communication. This view is consistent with sociocultural theories of learning (Vygotsky, 1978) which advocate collaborative learning through human interaction.

### ***Challenges and Implementation Issues in Bangladesh***

Albeit there are multiple benefits of the application of translanguaging methods in English Language Teaching classrooms, it has several limitations as well. Opposition to the approach arises from educators since they cling to monolingual beliefs and aim to preserve English language skills (Turnbull & Dailey-O’Cain, 2009). Rahman (2015) illustrates how Bangladeshi teaching staff consider translanguaging as deviating from conventional teaching methods that maintain strict language boundaries. García and Kleyn (2016) evidenced through research that translanguaging elevates English language development through a broad-based learning method.

Teachers have an indispensable role in executing translanguaging because they create scope for students to attain linguistic and academic progress. Allard (2017) endorses specialised training of educators to provide them with the required skill for applying translanguaging tactics in their educational practice. Professional development opportunities at the mentioned public university for teachers would allow them to overcome their worries and embrace translanguaging as an efficient instructional approach (Kirkpatrick, 2011). The employment of translanguaging assessment practices offers two individual conveniences: it generates improved competency assessments that ensnare the linguistic partialities that exist in conventional evaluation systems (Shohamy, 2006). The implementation of translanguaging methods in English Language Teaching classrooms also experiences peer and institutional challenges. Translanguaging practices can be restricted by English-only policies and deficiencies in teacher training and peer reproach, which may affect students’ interest in participating wholly in multilingual classroom exercises.

### **Research Gap and Research Questions**

Although translanguaging has been shown to advance language learning, engagement and confidence, its implementation in Bangladeshi university English classrooms remains overlooked. Particularly, the impacts of students' varying English skill and the limitations of English-only institutional policies have not been methodically evaluated. Addressing these gaps informs the aim of this study.

The study is guided by three research questions:

1. How do students perceive the role of translanguaging in supporting their English language learning?
2. How does translanguaging affect students' classroom involvement and interaction?
3. What are the observed advantages and obstacles of translanguaging in English language classrooms?

### **Methodology**

This study engaged a qualitative research approach to explore the outcomes of translanguaging in English and Bengali language classrooms at the selected public university. It aimed to understand how translanguaging is experienced by students in relation to English language learning, classroom engagement, and overall learning experiences. To apprehend deep understanding of perspectives from both instructors and students, qualitative techniques including classroom observations, focused group interviews and a semi-structured teacher interview were adopted (Creswell & Poth, 2018). At the mentioned public university, students have been coming from different linguistic backgrounds. As a result, they will be using their native languages (Bengali) and English together. This context enables students to draw on prior linguistic knowledge during classroom interaction (Lewis, Jones, & Baker, 2012). In Bangladesh, nearly all of the population uses more than one language in their daily lives (Hamid, 2010). The selected Bangladeshi public university can combat English language colonial myths by implementing translanguaging to establish a diverse student-friendly environment (Phillipson, 1992). García and Leiva (2014) state that translanguaging allows multilingual learners to create positive identity constructs.

### **Context and Participants**

The study was done through first-year classes of the English Department and the Bengali Department in the university. The English Department students were trained on the writing of paragraphs, while the Bengali Department students were trained on grammar, focusing closely on verb form. The classes comprised students from diverse linguistic backgrounds, which is the same for most universities in

Bangladesh. The observations were done on one English Department class ( $n = 36$ ) and one Bengali Department class ( $n = 98$ ). For the interview phase, a purposive subsample of ten students was selected to ensure gender representation across the two departments: two female students and three male students from the English Department, as well as three female students and two male students from the Bengali Department. Moreover, two teachers from the respective departments were selected to provide their teaching expertise that was used in the translanguaging practices in the classrooms. The purposive sampling technique helped to ensure that the study provides details from diverse teaching approaches, skills, attitudes, and translanguaging practices from the students from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

### Instruments

The data was collected using three distinct qualitative tools that were designed to capture complementary aspects of class translanguaging. Classroom observations were conducted using a structured observation checklist developed prior to data collection, and this facilitated the measurement of the occurrences of the translanguaging process in the classroom. The observation checklist had three components, including the strategies of the translanguaging, the participation levels of the students, and the interactions between the students and the teachers. The checklist was therefore invaluable in the measurement of the effects and implementations of the translanguaging process within the classroom.

Focus group interviews were conducted with students using a set of open-ended guiding questions closely linked to the research questions. The rationale behind conducting the focused group interviews was to gain insights from the students on their attitudes and experiences with the concept of translanguaging while learning. Guiding questions were used to encourage students to reflect on their learning experiences about the learning advantages and drawbacks of multiple languages in the classroom and the effect of translanguaging on their learning. Group interviews enabled the participants to interact amongst each other by building on each other's responses.

Two individual semi-structured interviews were conducted with teachers from the respective departments to complement the information gathered from the students. The teachers were asked direct questions concerning their perceptions of the instructive benefits and possible challenges associated with translanguaging. The teacher interview was conducted in a flexible semi-structured format that allowed the teachers to expand upon unexpected themes while keeping to the major research questions of this study. The major research questions of this study primarily concern translanguaging benefits and challenges. These three tools allowed for a qualitative triangulation approach, and by combining observation and respondent data, a rich and complete understanding of translanguaging practices and their impacts were constructed in the EFL classroom. To gather detailed data, a qualitative approach was undertaken. According to Creswell & Guetterman (2021) principles in Educational Research: Plan-

ning, Conducting and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research, the instruments were designed, ensuring the study's objectives are fulfilled. The observation checklist was informed by qualitative classroom observation frameworks suggested by Creswell and Poth (2018). The checklist captured: translanguaging episodes (teacher-initiated vs. student-initiated), Interaction patterns (teacher-student, peer-to-peer), Pedagogical strategies (e.g., bilingual glossaries, code-switching for clarification, translation tasks), and Student engagement indicators (verbal participation, group involvement, nonverbal responses). Then, with open-ended questions, A semi-structured interview session was arranged. Following that, a one-on-one semi-structured interview was conducted with the instructors, focusing on: intentional strategies, material adaptation and institutional constraints (policy, assessment, training). For recording the interviews, a Samsung smartphone voice recorder was used. Later, the researcher transcribed the audio files word-for-word in Google Docs.

### Procedures

Each class session lasted one hour and was examined once. Approval was received from the teacher before observations and students were notified at the beginning of the session. Focused group interviews with students and the semi-structured teacher interviews were organised on a set day following the classroom observations to permit respondents to reflect on their experiences. To secure systematic and ethical engagement with participants, the data collection process followed three sequential stages. To gain genuine classroom practices and real perspectives from both the students and teachers, each phase was undertaken prudently. First of all, classroom observations, where one English Department classroom and one Bengali Department classroom were observed, each lasted for a one hour session. The observer used the structured observation checklist and prioritised student performance and switching of language, notes were taken. Secondly, focus group interviews with students which took approximately thirty minutes. A quiet place within the campus was selected to take the interviews. With participants consent, interviews were audio-recorded. Participants were encouraged to express their lived experience. Subsequently, separate one-to-one interviews were conducted with each teacher. It took nearly thirty minutes as well. Instructors conveyed their perceived outcomes and academic obstacles regarding translanguaging. There was a flexible conversation environment. In this interview as well, audio-recording was allowed by the participants. All the data collection process followed the ethical guidelines properly. To confirm participants fulfil specific criteria related to the research objectives, they were selected by purposive sampling.

To represent different academic contexts, participants were selected from two distinct departments. Then, since first-year students are in the initial phase of academic language development and they possess familiarity to university-level English instruction, they were opted for. Moreover, to avoid gender discrimination, impartial representation of male and female was met, by which different perspectives

can be obtained as well. This approach prioritises rich information, which corresponds to qualitative research sampling strategies (Patton, 2015). On translanguaging, to investigate diverse language and disciplinary, related participant selection sampling has been used in studies (García & Kleyn, 2016)

### Data Analysis

With the purpose of determining patterns and themes in the textual data, thematic analysis was applied following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step framework. Transcripts from classroom observations, student interviews and the teacher interview were categorically organised to build meaningful themes linked to perceived English learning support, confidence, inclusion, peer assistance, and challenges. Codes were iteratively refined through repeated engagement with the data to ensure internal coherence and analytic credibility (Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2012). To enhance trustworthiness, triangulation was applied by comparing findings across observations, student interviews, and teacher interviews. Member checking was conducted by sharing thematic summaries with selected participants to confirm interpretive accuracy (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Denzin, 2017).

Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase approach is flexible and suitable to explore translanguaging practices. This approach included, first of all, familiarisation with data, and to familiarise, all audio recordings were transcribed word-for-word. Each transcript was read twice to ensure written accuracy. Observational notes were read twice as well, to get into all the data properly. Then, to generate initial codes, transcripts were coded in their original languages (English and Bengali) to preserve meaning prior to translation for reporting. Further, similar codes were grouped into potential themes. Then again, assuring each theme possessed a different aspect of the research questions, themes were refined in a recursive process. Additionally, to define and name themes, each theme was clearly defined included specified sub-themes. Finally, around the three research questions, final analysis was organised. Themes were presented and supported by direct quotes from participants (such as Table 1). By comparing observational data with interview responses, triangulation was implemented.

### Ethical Considerations

This study maintained ethical guidelines. As a prerequisite to data collection, from the relevant academic committee at the university, ethical approval was assured. Several ethical measures were undertaken which confirmed the rights and privacy of the participants, for instance, informed consent, while detailed information was given to the participants including the purpose, procedure, duration and potential pros and cons of the study. They were given the opportunity to ask questions about the study. From both the students and the instructors, voluntary agreement was obtained. No benefit, pressure or compulsion were given to engage them. Students were ensured that their decision to participate or

not, would have zero impact on their academic stance. Participants were assured as well that they could avoid questions according to their preference and withdraw at any stage without any academic and personal consequences. Furthermore, confidentiality and anonymity were maintained. All data was anonymised, to secure participants' identities. In lieu of real names, pseudonyms were used in all written reports, to maintain privacy. Audio recordings and transcripts were preserved securely. Beyond these, throughout monitoring, a courteous and non-judgmental atmosphere was created given the consideration to potential peer judgment. It was mentioned to the participants that there is no 'right' or 'wrong' answer, rather their genuine perception will be valued.

These ethical guidelines are similar to the standards outlined in key research ethics guidelines, the British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2018) and the American Psychological Association (APA, 2017).

## Results

This section presents the findings of the study, organised according to the three research questions. Data was collected through classroom observations, focus group interviews with students and a semi-structured teacher interview. The responses were coded thematically: the initial codes were generated from students' and teacher's responses, similar codes were grouped into sub-themes, and sub-themes were aggregated into major themes. The following table summarises the thematic analysis with all illustrative quotations.

**Table 1**

*Thematic Analysis of Translanguaging Practices*

No	Theme	Sub-theme	Illustrative Quotations	Source
01	Language Proficiency Development	Grammar Clarification	"এই বাক্যটা Wrong। কারণ বাক্যের first অংশ present Tense এ লেখা। কিন্তু পরের Part past tense এ লেখা। তাই বাক্যের মধ্যে Tense এর Balance নেই।" (The sentence is wrong. Because the first part of the sentence is in present tense. But the next part is written in past tense. So, there is no balance of tense in the sentence.)	Student, Bengali Dept
		Vocabulary Enhancement	"Effect মানে হল ফলাফল। আর affect মানে হল প্রভাব। One is a noun and another one is a verb."	Teacher, English Dept
		Idea Generation	"Brainstorming এর জন্য ideas গুলো বাংলায় ভেবে নিয়ে তারপর ইংরেজিতে লেখাটা আমার কাছে Easier মনে হয়।" (It feels easier for me to generate the	Sabia, English Dept

			ideas for brainstorming at first and then write those into English.)	
02	Student Engagement and Psychological Benefits	Peer Support Confidence Boost	“If anyone of us struggles with English, we help them and make them understand by using Bengali.” "আমার মাতৃভাষা যেহেতু বাংলা, ক্লাসে ইংরেজির পাশাপাশি বাংলা ব্যবহার করাটা আমার জন্য বেশ সুবিধাজনক। তাছাড়া এর ফলে আমার Confidence Level ও বাড়ে।" (As my mother tongue is Bengali, it is quite convenient for me to use Bengali along with English in class.)	Mahim, English Dept Mithun, Bengali Dept
		Reduced Anxiety	Students expressed that translanguaging made them less anxious and more confident in class.	Focus group, both Depts
03	Pedagogical Strategies and Teacher Practices	Fostering Inclusion Critical Thinking Support Metalinguistic Awareness	"Whenever I use both languages, I feel more connected to the students. They feel more comfortable when their mother tongue is spoken and this is a way to show them respect as well." "My personal experience is when a student gets involved in a group discussion using own language, they understand a topic better." Teacher suggested “inconsistency of the verb” instead of “balance” to describe the sentence.	Teacher, both Depts Teacher, English Dept Teacher, Bengali Dept
04	Institutional and Policy Challenges	Monolingual Policy Restriction Lack of Teacher Training Peer Judgment	"It is expected from the English teachers that they will conduct classes only speaking in English. So, they are restricted by English-only policies." Teachers have no formal training on translanguaging, making it challenging to balance Bengli and English in class. “Some of my classmates laughed because I used Bengali."	Teacher, English Dept Teacher interview Student, Bengali Dept
05		Memorization and Recall	Translanguaging helped students memorise new words and overcome fear.	Teacher, English Dept

06	Student Attitudes and Perceptual Tensions	Cognitive and Metacognitive Benefits	Prior Language Background Acknowledgement	“স্কুল কলেজে সবকিছু তো বাংলায় পড়েছি। এখন হঠাৎ করে শুধু ইংরেজিতে কথা বলাটা একটু কঠিন।” (I learnt everything in school and college in Bengali. Now all of a sudden, it's a little difficult to only speak English.)	Student, Bengali Dept
		Classroom Interaction Dynamics	Language Preference Divide	Students alternated Bengali and English to discuss topics and overcome obstacles.	Focus Group, both Depts
		Over-reliance Concern	Cultural Bridging	“I would rather use only English as it increases my practice frequency. Actually, I would like to avoid Bengali in an English class.”	Mishu, English Dept
		“It's no problem to use a little bit of Bengali in the class. But the problem is, if we depend too much on it. Then our improvement of English will stumble.”	Student, English Dept		
				“My personal experience is when a student gets involved in a group discussion using own language, they understand a topic better”	Teacher, English Dept

These findings suggest that translanguaging at the selected university is perceived to support English language learning, boost confidence, increase classroom participation and critical thinking, while also highlighting challenges related to institutional policy, peer pressure and over-reliance on the first language.

## Discussion

### English Proficiency

The findings show that at the university, translanguaging is a supportive strategy which helps to improve students' English language competency. In the Department of Bengali, students used Bengali and English to answer questions asked by the teacher. The teacher wrote a sentence on the whiteboard and asked the students whether the following sentence was correct or incorrect: “When the teacher enters the room, students were gossiping.”

One of the students stood up and answered, "এই বাক্যটা Wrong। কারণ বাক্যের first অংশ present Tense এ লেখা। কিন্তু পরের Part past tense এ লেখা। তাই বাক্যের মধ্যে Tense এর Balance নেই।" (The sentence is wrong. Because the first part of the sentence is in present tense. But the next part is written in past tense. So, there is no balance of tense in the sentence.)

Then the teacher provided a better replacement of the word "balance" which is "inconsistency of the verb". Next, the students were asked to correct the sentence and this time another student provided the answer and used only English to explain the correctness of the sentence. This approach not only improved their knowledge of the subject but also promoted active participation. It supports the claim made by García and Wei (2014) that translanguaging supports language identities of students and enhances involvement.

In the class of the English Department's class, the teacher conducted a class on paragraph writing where students used Bengali to brainstorm. Sabia, a student of the English Department, commented, "Brainstorming এর জন্য ideas গুলো বাংলায় ভেবে নিয়ে তারপর ইংরেজিতে লেখাটা আমার কাছে Easier মনে হয়।" (It feels easier for me to generate the ideas for brainstorming at first and then write those into English.) This corresponds to the 2017 thesis of Mazak and Carroll, which claims that translanguaging offers a framework for increasing English competency without undermining educational results. The instructor also underlined how translanguaging helps to improve understanding. The teacher included Bengali equivalents to teach vocabulary. For instance, Teacher used Bengali equivalents to differentiate between "effect vs affect". In his lecture, he said to his students, "effect মানে হল ফলাফল। আর affect মানে হল প্রভাব।" One is a noun and another one is a verb." This technique helped the students to memorise new words and overcome fear, which is an advantage mentioned by Creese & Blackledge (2010).

The results also show that the effect of translanguaging on English competency differs depending on the students' current language ability. Translanguaging helped students with intermediate English competency far more than advanced-level students. One English-medium background student, Mishu, saw it as pointless. According to Mishu, "I would rather use only English as it increases my practice frequency. Actually, I would like to avoid Bengali in an English class." This aligns with Canagarajah's (2011) point that translanguaging may be more effective for students still improving their English abilities. When students used Bengali to process their ideas, eight out of ten of them felt more confident and relaxed which is similar to Creese and Blackledge's results of 2010 which presented that translanguaging minimises learner tension and helps them to express themselves properly as well. However, over dependency on Bengali could be a hindrance for the improvement of English, this concern increases among English-medium backgrounds students which supports Hamid, Jahan and Islam (2013), who found that students usually choose English-only learning when they really want a high English skill level. Here, comes the demand for a balanced translanguaging technique since this opposite point of view exists.

### **Engagement and Participation**

Students used both Bengali and English at the time of pair work and group discussion. A student named Mahim from the Department of English claimed, "If any one of us struggles with English, we help them and make them understand by using Bengali." This is similar to García and Li's (2014) discoveries that translanguaging gives students a chance to use their entire language knowledge.

Students possess positive perspectives about translanguaging according to the interviews. Mithun, a student from the Bengali Department, said, "আমার মাতৃভাষা যেহেতু বাংলা, ক্লাসে ইংরেজির পাশাপাশি বাংলা ব্যবহার করাটা আমার জন্য বেশ সুবিধাজনক। তাছাড়া এর ফলে আমার Confidence Level ও বাড়ে।" (As my mother tongue is Bengali, it is quite convenient for me to use Bengali along with English in class), and his opinion echoes García and Wei's (2014) argument that translanguaging preserves linguistic identities and it boosts confidence.

On the other hand, the other two of the ten students group expressed some concern about overuse of Bengali. "It's no problem to use a little bit of Bengali in the class, but the problem is, if we depend too much on it. Then our improvement of English will stumble," according to one English-version background students. This supports Hamid, Jahan and Islam (2013) who discovered that students aiming for high English proficiency are prudent about dependency on their first language.

According to student Mishu, "The time we are inside classrooms, our teachers prefer us to use English only. So now, it is not okay to use Bengali along with English in classes." However, Hornberger and Link (2012) claimed that since translanguaging is important to avoid misunderstandings, institutions should allow it. Pacheco and Miller (2016) found that conscious use of translanguaging enhances analytical thinking ability which is supported by a teacher, "Translanguaging will help students when they know the techniques to use it."

### **Benefits and Challenges**

Translanguaging has both benefits and barriers. It possesses the ability to form a supportive classroom. Canagarajah (2011) claimed that esteeming students' language and background is necessary to have inclusivity, which is very clear in the speech of the instructor, "Whenever I use both languages, I feel more connected to the students. They feel more comfortable when their mother tongue is spoken and this is a way to show them respect as well." Hasan and Chowdhury (2022) highlighted that translanguaging helps better comprehension of texts. This idea is supported by a teacher, "My personal experience is when a student gets involved in a group discussion using own language, they understand a topic better." In contrast, challenges are there as well. According to the English teacher, "It is expected from the English teachers that they will conduct classes speaking only in English. So, they are restricted by English-only policies." Hamid and Baldauf (2008) also critiqued this monolingual technique. Moreover, since Bangladeshi teachers have no formal training on translanguaging, it is challenging for them

to keep balance between Bengali and English (Rahman, Kabir and Hamid, 2021). Peer pressure is another issue that students face. Some were ridiculed for using Bengali: "Some of my classmates laughed because I used Bengali" (Creese and Blackledge, 2010). Hornberger and Link (2012) argue that cultural change is necessary to normalise translanguaging and reduce stigma. Therefore, translanguaging can transform English instruction at the university by enhancing inclusion, competency and engagement. Its success depends on institutional support, teacher preparation, and a cultural shift that embraces multilingual practices. Addressing these challenges will enable translanguaging to provide a more student-centred and effective classroom environment.

### Conclusion

This research investigated how translanguaging practices impact student English competence levels and classroom participation along with their total learning experience within the university English language courses. Students' perception is that translanguaging benefits them enhancing their language competence and participation through purposeful use of Bengali and English together. The Bengali Department students employed Bengali language to explain complex grammatical information and the students in the English Department started their thought processes in Bengali then wrote in English. The implemented techniques helped students gain deeper insight and developed an environment that supported inclusivity and learning support according to García and Wei's (2014) findings about translanguaging as an affirmation of linguistic identities. Most students reported that expressing themselves through Bengali improved their confidence while diminishing their anxiety levels according to Creese and Blackledge's (2010) findings about language anxiety reduction. Advanced students, particularly from English-speaking backgrounds, expressed concern about using too much Bengali language despite showing comfort using it for speaking in classroom activities.

Despite positive outcomes the study addressed additional problems including institutional responses against translanguaging together with insufficient training for teachers and peer evaluation methods. There exists a need for cultural transformation to normalise translanguaging activities because students experienced mocking when they used Bengali in their English classes. Teachers' effective translanguaging application in institutional environments will be possible when they are provided with training. Since this study focuses on specific institutions along with a restricted participant group, the findings are not applicable for all institutions or for everyone. It is proposed to study greater subject samples throughout different types of educational institutions. The research study is important since it has an impact on how Bangladeshi English teachers are instructed. To create successful integrated learning hubs, translanguaging based educational practices could help which will form proper learning environments. Multilingual education creates a supportive condition for students to prosper academically;

hence, the pedagogical value can be considered by institutional stakeholders and flexible language guidelines can be explored.

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## Conflict of interest

The researcher confirms that there is no conflict of interest associated with this study.

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