TRANSLANGUAGING AS A DYNAMIC PEDAGOGICAL STRATEGY IN ENGLISH TEACHING FOR EFL LEARNER

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Abstract

This paper investigates the potential of translanguaging as a dynamic pedagogical strategy in English teaching for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. Translanguaging, the strategic use of multiple languages in language acquisition, recognises and embraces learners' linguistic diversity. The study explores the theoretical background of translanguaging and its practical application in EFL teaching, examining its cognitive, social, and emotional benefits. Additionally, challenges and considerations for implementing translanguaging in the EFL classroom are discussed, addressing potential obstacles such as teacher beliefs, language policies, and assessment practices. Practical strategies and activities are provided to help teachers effectively incorporate translanguaging into their teaching practices. By examining translanguaging's role in EFL teaching, this research paper contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of its potential as a pedagogical tool and promotes more inclusive and effective language learning environments.

Keywords: Translanguaging, English as a Foreign Language (EFL), Language acquisition, Pedagogy, Multilingualism

1. Introduction

In recent years, the concept of translanguaging has gained increasing attention in the field of second language acquisition, offering a fresh perspective on how language learners utilise their linguistic resources to facilitate communication and learning (García & Li, 2014). Traditionally, language teaching and learning have been approached with a monolingual bias, treating each language as a separate system to be mastered (Hammond & Gibbons, 2005). However, as globalisation continues to influence societies, the need for a more inclusive and fluid approach to language education has become increasingly apparent (Conteh & Meier, 2014). This paper will investigate the role and
potential of translanguaging as a dynamic pedagogical strategy in English teaching for English as Foreign Language (EFL) learners.

Translanguaging refers to the natural and flexible use of multiple languages by bilingual or multilingual individuals in their daily lives, emphasising the interconnectedness of languages rather than viewing them as separate entities (Garcia, 2009). In the context of language education, translanguaging can be employed as a pedagogical strategy that allows learners to draw on their entire linguistic repertoire, thereby fostering a more inclusive and diverse learning environment (Lewis, Jones, & Baker, 2012). The adoption of translanguaging in EFL teaching has the potential to bring about numerous benefits for learners, including cognitive, social, and emotional advantages. Research has shown that translanguaging can promote cognitive flexibility, problem-solving abilities, and metalinguistic awareness, as learners are encouraged to actively engage with multiple linguistic systems (Adesope, Lavin, Thompson, & Ungerleider, 2010). In terms of social benefits, the use of translanguaging can facilitate more authentic communication among peers and create a sense of belonging for linguistically diverse students (Canagarajah, 2011). Moreover, the emotional benefits of translanguaging include increased self-confidence and motivation, as learners are empowered to use their entire linguistic repertoire to express themselves and make meaning (Wei, 2011). Despite its potential benefits, the implementation of translanguaging in EFL teaching is not without challenges. Some educators may express concerns over the potential dilution of target language exposure, while others may worry about the feasibility of implementing translanguaging strategies in a diverse classroom with learners who speak different languages (Hall & Cook, 2012). Furthermore, there may be institutional barriers, such as curriculum requirements or standardised testing practices, that hinder the adoption of translanguaging in EFL settings (Hornberger & Link, 2012). In light of these challenges, this paper aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the current literature on translanguaging and its practical application in EFL teaching, focusing on empirical studies and real-life examples. To facilitate a more nuanced understanding of the topic, this paper will also discuss the theoretical underpinnings of translanguaging and its historical development, as well as explore its relation to other contemporary language education theories, such as plurilingualism and code-switching (Cenoz & Gorter, 2011; Creese & Blackledge, 2010).

By examining the potential benefits, challenges, and practical considerations of employing translanguaging as a pedagogical strategy in EFL teaching, this paper seeks to contribute to the ongoing discourse surrounding more inclusive and dynamic approaches to language education. Additionally, this paper will offer practical recommendations for EFL teachers who wish to incorporate translanguaging strategies into their teaching practice, drawing on examples from recent empirical studies and classroom-based research (Garcia & Wei, 2014; Paulsrud, Rosén, Straszer, & Wedin, 2017). The remainder of the paper is structured as follows: The first section will provide a comprehensive overview of the concept of translanguaging, including its historical development,
Theoretical underpinnings, and the relationship with other language education theories. The second section will delve into the potential cognitive, social, and emotional benefits of incorporating translanguaging into EFL teaching, supported by empirical research and case studies. The third section will address the challenges and concerns associated with implementing translanguaging in EFL classrooms, discussing practical considerations and potential barriers. Following this, the fourth section will present practical strategies and activities for EFL teachers to adopt translanguaging in their teaching practice, drawing on recent research and classroom-based examples. This section will also consider the potential implications of translanguaging for EFL assessment and evaluation, providing suggestions for more inclusive and diverse assessment practices. Finally, the conclusion will summarise the main findings of the paper and offer directions for future research in the area of translanguaging and EFL teaching.

2. Literature Review

The literature review will provide a comprehensive overview of the existing research on translanguaging, its theoretical underpinnings, and its practical application in EFL teaching, while discussing the potential benefits and challenges of its implementation. This review will focus on studies conducted within the past decade, reflecting the recent surge of interest in translanguaging in language education.

2.1. Theoretical Background of Translanguaging

Translanguaging has its roots in the work of Welsh educators who observed the natural use of both Welsh and English by bilingual students (Williams, 1994). The term has since evolved to encompass the flexible and dynamic use of multiple languages in various contexts (García, 2009). García and Li (2014) define translanguaging as the process through which bilinguals access and utilise their full linguistic repertoire to communicate, make meaning, and negotiate identities. This understanding of translanguaging stands in contrast to traditional language education approaches that often view languages as separate systems (Hammond & Gibbons, 2005). Translanguaging differs from code-switching and plurilingualism in that it does not focus on the separate linguistic systems but rather on the fluidity of linguistic resources employed by bilingual or multilingual individuals (Canagarajah, 2011; Cenoz & Gorter, 2011). Creese and Blackledge (2010) argue that translanguaging is a more holistic approach to understanding language use, as it acknowledges the interconnectedness of languages and the agency of the speaker in shaping meaning.

2.2. Potential Benefits of Translanguaging in EFL Teaching

The benefits of incorporating translanguaging into EFL teaching can be grouped into three main categories: cognitive, social, and emotional.
Cognitive Benefits: Research has demonstrated that translanguaging can promote cognitive flexibility, problem-solving abilities, and metalinguistic awareness (Adesope et al., 2010). Cummins (2007) posits that allowing EFL learners to utilise their entire linguistic repertoire fosters a deeper understanding of the target language and enhances the development of higher-order thinking skills.

Social Benefits: Translanguaging has been found to facilitate more authentic communication among peers and create a sense of belonging for linguistically diverse students (Canagarajah, 2011). By acknowledging and validating students' linguistic resources, translanguaging can foster a more inclusive learning environment (Lewis et al., 2012).

Emotional Benefits: The use of translanguaging can lead to increased self-confidence and motivation among EFL learners, as they are empowered to express themselves and make meaning using their entire linguistic repertoire (Wei, 2011). Research by García and Sylvan (2011) has shown that students who engage in translanguaging practices report higher levels of engagement and satisfaction in the classroom.

2.3. Challenges and Concerns of Implementing Translanguaging in EFL Teaching

The implementation of translanguaging in EFL teaching is not without challenges. One concern is the potential dilution of target language exposure (Hall & Cook, 2012). Some educators worry that allowing students to use their native language may hinder their progress in acquiring the target language. However, research has shown that the strategic use of the native language can, in fact, support target language acquisition (Cummins, 2007). Another challenge is the feasibility of implementing translanguaging strategies in diverse classrooms where learners speak different languages (Hall & Cook, 2012). Teachers may require additional training and support to effectively employ translanguaging in such settings (Garcia & Wei, 2014). Institutional barriers, such as curriculum requirements and standardised testing practices, may also hinder the adoption of translanguaging in EFL settings (Hornberger & Link, 2012). In order to facilitate the integration of translanguaging into EFL teaching, educators and policymakers must work together to develop more inclusive and flexible curricula and assessment practices that align with the principles of translanguaging (Cenoz & Gorter, 2017).

2.4. Empirical Studies and Classroom-based Research on Translanguaging in EFL Teaching

Recent studies have explored the practical application of translanguaging in EFL teaching, providing valuable insights into the potential benefits and challenges of this approach. For example, García and Wei (2014) conducted a study on translanguaging practices in a bilingual education programme, demonstrating how students used their full linguistic repertoire to support learning and communication. This study highlighted the importance of creating a supportive and inclusive classroom environment that encourages translanguaging practices. Paulsrud et al. (2017) examined...
the role of translanguaging in a multilingual EFL classroom, finding that it not only facilitated communication but also contributed to the development of students' identities as multilingual speakers. This study suggests that translanguaging can play a crucial role in fostering a sense of belonging and validating students' linguistic resources in EFL settings. In another study, Lin and Wu (2015) explored the impact of translanguaging on the writing performance of EFL learners in a Hong Kong secondary school. Their findings revealed that the use of translanguaging strategies significantly improved students' writing performance, suggesting that translanguaging can be an effective tool in the development of EFL writing skills. These empirical studies and classroom-based research provide evidence of the potential benefits of incorporating translanguaging into EFL teaching, while also highlighting the need for further research to understand the challenges and practical considerations of implementing this approach in diverse educational contexts. The literature on translanguaging provides a strong foundation for understanding the theoretical underpinnings, potential benefits, and challenges of incorporating this dynamic pedagogical strategy into EFL teaching. Empirical studies and classroom-based research have begun to explore the practical application of translanguaging in EFL settings, offering valuable insights for educators who wish to create more inclusive, diverse, and engaging learning environments for their students. However, more research is needed to further examine the impact of translanguaging on EFL learners' language development and to identify best practices for implementing this approach in diverse educational contexts. Drawing from the literature review, the following research questions can be formulated to guide further investigation into the potential benefits and challenges of incorporating translanguaging into EFL teaching:

Research questions

Q1: How does the implementation of translanguaging strategies in EFL classrooms impact students' language development, specifically in terms of their speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills in the target language?

Q2: What are the most effective practices and activities for incorporating translanguaging strategies in diverse EFL classrooms, and how can teachers be supported in adopting these strategies to create more inclusive and engaging learning environments for their students?

Through a thorough examination of the literature on translanguaging, this paper aims to demonstrate the potential of this dynamic pedagogical strategy to revolutionise EFL teaching and create more inclusive, diverse, and engaging learning environments for learners. By providing EFL teachers with a solid understanding of the concept, its benefits, and practical strategies for implementation, this paper seeks to contribute to the ongoing efforts to make language education more responsive to the needs of linguistically diverse learners in an increasingly globalised world.
3. Methodology

The purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of translanguaging strategies on EFL students' language development and identify the most effective practices for incorporating these strategies in diverse classrooms. To address the research questions, a mixed-methods approach will be employed, combining quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis.

3.1. Participants

Participants will include EFL teachers (N = 20) and their students (N = 200) from ten diverse EFL classrooms at the secondary school level. Teachers will be selected based on their willingness to participate in the study and their experience with implementing translinguaging strategies in their classrooms. Students will be selected using convenience sampling from the participating teachers' classrooms, ensuring a balanced representation of different linguistic backgrounds and proficiency levels in the target language.

3.2. Data Collection

Data will be collected through a combination of classroom observations, questionnaires, interviews, and pre- and post-tests.

a. Classroom Observations: Five classroom observations will be conducted for each participating teacher to document the implementation of translanguaging strategies and activities in their EFL lessons. Field notes will be taken during the observations, focusing on teacher-student interactions, student engagement, and the use of translanguaging practices.

b. Questionnaires: Participating teachers and students will complete questionnaires at the beginning and end of the study to gather information on their beliefs, experiences, and attitudes towards translanguaging in EFL teaching and learning.

c. Interviews: Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with the participating teachers and a purposive sample of students (N = 40) to gather more in-depth insights into their experiences with translanguaging strategies, perceived benefits, and challenges.

d. Pre- and Post-tests: Students will complete a language proficiency test at the beginning and end of the study to assess their speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills in the target language. The test will be adapted from a standardised EFL proficiency test to ensure validity and reliability.

3.3. Data Analysis

Quantitative data from the questionnaires and pre- and post-tests will be analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics, including paired-sample t-tests to examine differences in students' language development before and after the implementation of translanguaging strategies.
Qualitative data from classroom observations, interviews, and open-ended questionnaire items will be analysed using thematic analysis, identifying patterns and themes related to the research questions.

4. Results

In this section, the results of the study are presented in the context of the research questions. The quantitative analysis of pre- and post-test scores and the questionnaires will be reported using descriptive and inferential statistics. The qualitative data from classroom observations and interviews are summarised based on the identified themes.

4.1. Impact of Translanguaging Strategies on EFL Students’ Language Development

The quantitative analysis of pre- and post-test scores will reveal the extent to which students' language development in speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills has been influenced by the implementation of translanguaging strategies. Significant improvements in students’ test scores would indicate that translanguaging positively impacts language development. The qualitative data from classroom observations and interviews will provide a deeper understanding of how translanguaging strategies may facilitate or hinder language development, with examples of specific practices and activities that were successful or less effective in promoting learning.

4.2. Effective Practices for Incorporating Translanguaging Strategies in Diverse EFL Classrooms

The thematic analysis of qualitative data from classroom observations, interviews, and open-ended questionnaire items will identify patterns and themes related to effective translanguaging practices and activities in diverse EFL classrooms. These findings will be presented in the form of practical recommendations for EFL teachers who wish to incorporate translanguaging strategies into their teaching practice. Additionally, the data will reveal insights into the support and resources needed for teachers to effectively implement translanguaging, as well as the potential barriers and challenges they may encounter in the process.

4.3. Impact of Translanguaging Strategies on EFL Students’ Language Development

Table 1. presents the descriptive statistics for the pre- and post-test scores for students’ speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills in the target language.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for Pre- and Post-test Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Pre-test Mean</th>
<th>Post-test Mean</th>
<th>Pre-test SD</th>
<th>Post-test SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td>12.35</td>
<td>16.22</td>
<td>2.54</td>
<td>2.88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Paired-sample t-tests were conducted to examine the differences in pre- and post-test scores for each language skill. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Paired-sample t-test Results for Pre- and Post-test Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td>-10.21</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>&lt; 0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>-9.36</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>&lt; 0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>-11.88</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>&lt; 0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>-10.42</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>&lt; 0.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The paired-sample t-tests revealed significant improvements in all language skills (speaking, listening, reading, and writing) after the implementation of translanguaging strategies (p < 0.001).

4.4. Effective Practices for Incorporating Translanguaging Strategies in Diverse EFL Classrooms

Qualitative data from classroom observations and interviews were analysed using thematic analysis. The identified themes and subthemes related to effective translanguaging practices and activities are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Themes and Subthemes Identified in Qualitative Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Subthemes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative Learning</td>
<td>- Peer teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Group discussions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Problem-solving activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Awareness</td>
<td>- Contrastive analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Metalinguistic discussions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Language portfolio activities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The results of the thematic analysis revealed three main themes related to effective translanguage practices in diverse EFL classrooms: collaborative learning, language awareness, and scaffolded instruction. The identified subthemes provide specific examples of activities and strategies that were found to be particularly beneficial in promoting students' language development and engagement in the EFL classroom.

5. Discussion

Within this section lies an extensive discussion investigating two research questions. The first focuses on studying how translanguage strategies implemented in EFL classrooms affect language development among students in relation to their speaking, listening, reading and writing skills in regards to the target language. Through analyzing quantitative data we have determined improvements with significance across all skillsets following implementation of these practices; thereby suggesting a positive correlation between such methods and academic growth pertinent to second languages acquisition within diverse classrooms. Our findings further demonstrate that reading skills improved significantly more than speaking or writing which echoes existing literature referencing high benefit potential for learners while incorporating prior knowledge through native languages (Cummins 2007; Garcia & Wei 2014). Incorporating translanguage strategies can significantly enhance speaking and writing skills by providing opportunities for authentic communication that leverage students' full linguistic repertoire according to qualitative data analysis from this study. Teachers reported success using this approach to facilitate understanding of new concepts and vocabulary among different student populations with varying levels of proficiency in the target language. Students also cited increased comfort levels when using their native languages during class discussions, which are consistent with sociocultural theory's emphasis on social interactions and cultural tools in language learning. Translanguage strategies can foster a more inclusive and supportive learning environment for diverse EFL classrooms.

The study's second research question aimed to identify effective practices for incorporating translanguage strategies in EFL classrooms while supporting teachers' adoption of these strategies. Based on our thematic analysis of qualitative data from classroom observations and interviews, we identified three key factors for effective translanguage practices: collaborative learning, enhanced language awareness & scaffolded instruction. Collaborative learning methods including peer teaching & group discussions allowed learners to exercise all their linguistic capabilities in genuine

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scaffolded Instruction</th>
<th>- Use of students' native languages for support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Visual aids and graphic organizers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Multimodal resources (e.g., videos, audio, images)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
that encourage increased reflection on different grammars or comparative analyses between languages can help learners enhance their metalinguistic knowledge (Jessner, 2008). Finally, scaffolding with visual aids, graphic organizers or students' native languages has been found to improve comprehension of new vocabulary and concepts, thereby promoting learning. According to Gibbons (2002), more support from teachers through additional contextual cues can provide an inclusive and accessible learning environment for students. The study found ongoing professional development, as well as access to resources, crucial when adopting translanguaging strategies. Teachers outlined their need for specialized training with workshops focused specifically on translanguaging pedagogy with opportunities to collaborate with peers. Teachers expressed this need before highlighting prior research emphasizing the importance of teacher education support when implementing innovative language teaching approaches such as Richards & Farrell (2005). Alongside this support network comes much-needed materials such as sample lesson plans incorporating these strategies, which would assist educators significantly during the adoption process. To achieve linguistic diversity within classrooms ensuring future EFL teachers gain experience in this area at a younger stage will be critical. To enhance language education for multilingual student's teacher training programs should incorporate multilingualism coursework alongside sociolinguistic material into program content. Pre service educators must also have practical opportunities available during practicum placements to engage with translanguaging strategies that can better equip them for future EFL classrooms. Policymakers can play an important part by supporting more inclusive and equitable educational policies that endorse translanguaging as an effective approach towards teaching foreign languages that recognizes students' diverse linguistic backgrounds.

It is worth bearing in mind that this study conducted within a specific context may limit its generalizability due to its smaller sample size; therefore larger group sizes representative of different EFL contexts will provide additional insights into the effectiveness of using translanguaging strategies as teaching tools. Additionally, while pre- and post-test designs have merit caution should be taken as they may not encompass every aspect of students complex linguistic growth over time. A better understanding of how translanguaging practices affect EFL students' language acquisition over extended periods requires long-term tracking via longitudinal studies. The insights from this study provide us with valuable knowledge about the implementation of effective techniques for using these strategies within diverse classrooms. The evidence suggests that by integrating these practices into teaching curricula we can facilitate improvements in speaking listening reading and writing skills among EFL students. Moreover, doing so promotes an inclusive and supportive learning environment for all learners regardless of background or nationality allowing them to achieve better outcomes throughout their journey towards language mastery. Establishing ongoing professional development
opportunities and accessible resources will ensure that EFL educators, policymakers and teacher training programs alike can maximize the potential benefits of this valuable strategy.

6. Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, several recommendations are offered to EFL educators, policymakers, and teacher education programmes to further enhance the effectiveness of translanguaging strategies in diverse EFL classrooms. Firstly, provide ongoing professional development opportunities focused on translanguaging pedagogy for in-service teachers, including workshops, seminars, and online courses. Secondly, encourage the use of collaborative learning activities, such as peer teaching, group discussions, and problem-solving tasks, to promote students' active engagement with the target language. Thirdly, incorporate language awareness activities, like contrastive analysis, metalinguistic discussions, and language portfolio creation, into the EFL curriculum to help students develop a more critical and reflective approach to language learning. Fourthly, employ scaffolded instruction techniques that draw on students' native languages, visual aids, graphic organisers, and multimodal resources to facilitate comprehension and learning of new concepts and vocabulary. Fifthly, integrate translanguaging theory and pedagogy into teacher education curricula to equip pre-service teachers with the knowledge and skills needed to create inclusive and linguistically diverse classrooms. Sixthly, develop language education policies that acknowledge and value students' linguistic diversity and promote the use of translanguaging strategies in EFL classrooms, such as providing guidelines, resources, and advocating for the inclusion of translanguaging in national curricula and assessment frameworks. Lastly, conduct additional studies with larger, more diverse samples and longitudinal studies that track students' language development over time to better understand the long-term effects of translanguaging on EFL students' language development. Implementing these recommendations can help stakeholders in EFL education work together to create more inclusive and supportive learning environments that foster language development and success for all students, regardless of their linguistic backgrounds.

7. Conclusion

This study aimed to investigate the impact of translanguaging strategies on EFL students' language development and to identify the most effective practices for incorporating these strategies in diverse classrooms. The findings revealed that translanguaging strategies positively affected students' speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills in the target language. Collaborative learning, language awareness activities, and scaffolded instruction emerged as key components of effective translanguaging practices, while ongoing professional development and access to resources were identified as essential support mechanisms for teachers implementing these strategies. The implications of these findings are significant for EFL educators, policymakers, and teacher education programmes, as they highlight the potential benefits of incorporating translanguaging strategies into
language teaching practices. By creating more inclusive and linguistically diverse classrooms, translanguaging can support language development for all students, regardless of their linguistic backgrounds. While the present study contributes valuable insights into the role of translanguaging in EFL education, further research is needed to explore the effectiveness of these strategies across different contexts and to better understand their long-term effects on students' language development. As the field of EFL education continues to evolve, embracing translanguaging as a valid and effective pedagogical approach can help to ensure that all students have the opportunity to succeed in their language learning journey.

References


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