Translanguaging: Connecting Diverse Perspectives in Higher Education

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Abstract

This study examines the use of translanguaging techniques in the classroom from the perspectives of both teachers and students. This study investigates opinions regarding using several languages, especially Urdu and English, in educational settings, using surveys given to professors and students in an English department. Students have a positive attitude towards translanguaging because they think it improves understanding and makes learning more productive. They believe it is effective for their academic growth when teachers use their native language and English. Translanguaging connects diverse perspectives through multilingual repertoires; in higher education, it breaks down barriers based on language so that teachers and students can use their native tongues to communicate and comprehend difficult ideas. This promotes diverse perspectives in higher education by valuing people's multilingual abilities. It breaks down linguistic barriers so teachers and students can use their linguistic backgrounds to explain complicated ideas. This method deepens comprehension and expands perspectives in scholarly conversation. This inclusive approach promotes respect and belonging in academic communities by valuing linguistic diversity.

Keywords: Translanguaging, Higher Education, Diverse Perspectives, Multilingualism

Introduction

Translanguaging describes a person's linguistic behavior in a multilingual environment instead of focusing on a single language. *Translanguaging* is a language practice that involves individuals' or communities' flexible use of multiple languages and language varieties. It goes beyond traditional notions of language boundaries and encourages the fluid movement and blending of languages. In translanguaging, speakers may switch between languages, dialects, or registers within a single communication act, drawing on their entire linguistic range.

Recent studies have proven that utilizing languages in different contexts is a successful tool in higher education. Translanguaging is adopted and perceived in Pakistani higher education classrooms, filled with multilingual undergraduate students (Panezai et al., 2022). Despite rising scholarships on translanguaging and it is potential in different informative contexts around the world, Pakistani university teachers practice it, and the aspects of translanguaging remain unknown. To fill this gap in the literature, the study was directed to contribute by exploring how university students use translanguaging in Pakistan.

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Translanguaging is a teaching method that encourages students to speak multiple languages rather than the dominant language and to learn new concepts in the language. It has shown an effective way to break language barriers and connect students through diverse perspectives in higher education. Translanguaging is useful in multilingual classrooms, where students come from various linguistic backgrounds. Students' practices are observed if we need to acquire grade-level skills in L2. So far, research recommends that educators ignore their first language skills to receive a reasonable education (García et al., 2017).

Indeed, recent research demonstrates the aids of teenagers' EBs in drawing from their languages to learn as they are involved in translanguaging practices. Translanguaging discusses the meaning-making process using all individuals' linguistic resources. According to common underlying proficiency theory, bilingualism is not observed as several systems but rather as one unified system (García, 2014; Hornberger & Link, 2012). Even though researchers support integrating students' mother language into practice, How can teachers enable this practice? (Cummins, 2017).

This study resolves how monolingual English-speaking teachers endorse a translanguaging pedagogy (García et al., 2017) in classrooms where English language acquisition is the main concern for newcomer EBs. By allowing individuals to use their language skills, they can improve their ideas by understanding them and communicating better. This approach helps break language chains and promote a more comprehensive classroom learning environment. According to the theory of behaviorism, when students are in a multilingual environment, they learn a lot compared to a monolingual environment.

Translanguaging is not only about languages; it also conveys an image of an individual's culture and identity (Tatto, 2012). It identifies that language is not merely a tool for communication but also a subject that describes who we are by appreciating and considering all of the languages and cultures in the classroom. By doing so, students can feel more certified and involved in their learning. Translanguaging also leads to new and more advanced ways of intellectual thinking as students bring their exclusive perspectives and practices.

The present study aims to find out the (possible) benefits of translanguaging or the overlapping of many languages within a sentence or paragraph to enhance students' learning processes. Similarly, it will examine how it affects the learning environment positively or negatively, the teaching methodologies, and the linguistic theories that are linked.

It is not a new concept, but it is gaining more devotion in education. Translanguaging challenges traditional language strategies that may exclude or relegate students who do not speak the leading language. It also distinguishes that language is continually evolving and that students should be able to use their language skills effectively. Translanguaging is a stimulating and capable tool for teaching and learning in higher education.

Research Questions
1. What are the specific effects of translanguaging practices on communication and interaction among students from diverse backgrounds in higher education?
2. To what extent do translanguaging strategies influence students' academic engagement and shape their learning experiences in higher education?

Literature Review
This literature review focuses on translanguaging as a bridge connecting diverse perspectives in higher education. This article mainly focuses on translanguaging as a bridge allowing students to speak freely when they enter higher education.

Language change occurs throughout life and never stops. It occurs from the older generation to the younger generation, through which new vocabulary develops, new pronunciations occur, and the old meaning of a word switches to a new meaning. Language change also occurs due to immigration, acculturation, and forcefully by society to fulfill the needs for educational or professional opportunities. Language change is a requirement for people when new technologies, experiences, medicines, and products are made. They ultimately come with new words (Wardhaugh, R. et al. 2015)

While discussing the concept of translinguality, we argue that translanguaging is used as a pedagogical tool in multilingual education. Instead of following traditionally placed language boundaries, multiple languages should be applied to learning processes. Translanguaging should be implemented to enhance students' academic and linguistic development in the classroom. Applying translanguaging in classroom settings encourages students to use varied language repertoires. Translinguality encourages language development and equity in educational institutes (Seltzer et al., 2011).

In higher education, translanguaging has earned the main focus of promoting intercultural understanding between people from two different areas and academic success among a huge student population. Translanguaging helps students who think their language differs from others and do not participate in classroom activities. In these circumstances, translanguaging works as a bridge for such students. This review incorporates key research findings, theoretical frameworks, and practical implications for translanguaging at higher education levels. It highlights its potential to enhance learning outcomes and implement a more inclusive educational environment (Menken, 2013).

Scholars recognize many terms available for translingual practice, such as translingual practice, plurilingual, code-meshing, world English, translingual norm, and multilingual. In defining translinguality, some say it is a sensibility where a person uses another language in addition to their primary perceived language, and some say it prepares people for this globalized world. Developing different perspectives on language is important because of how language is changed, used, and contextualized and the relationship between them all. Translinguality goes against monolingualism, saying that language users are free to use different languages (Horner et al., 2019).

Translingual practices enhance the ultimate goal of text hybridization. Translingualism focuses more on social imperatives than writing practices in the reception and generation of the text. Text multimodality results in the blending and merging of codes in various multilingual communities. Christiane argued that translation is always there in all languages, so writing multilingualism is needed for teaching. Krall-Lanoue said translinguality can be used to treat errors in student writing. Further, rhetorical and linguistic dexterity is required for translinguality, which cannot be achieved by every student or teacher (Canagarajah et al., 2013).

In approaches related to translingual pedagogies, students' ethnic and cultural identities are preserved. It has become an intellectual movement that welcomes different ethnic identities and gives students a free hand to use metaphors from their particular mother tongue. The gap between pedagogical approaches and learners is reduced by practicing translinguality. Mutual intelligibility is a major focus of translinguality. Due to this approach, a debate between homogeneity and linguistic diversity is originated. It puts a focus on meta-awareness and meta-language. Translinguality favors a dynamic rather than a static process (Hossain et al., 2020).

Multilingualism's theorization and research collaborate with economic interests and neoliberal policies by applied linguists. According to applied linguists, distinctive ideological orientations

are encouraged by neoliberal agencies. Neoliberal agencies place languages hierarchically and separately and utilize them as an important instrument to make a profit. Collaboration between different languages to develop novel norms and meanings for ethical attentiveness and complete interactions. These neoliberal ideologies can also be dangerous because the dominant production practices and relationships at work are formed around them (Canagarajah, 2017).

Whatever language a person speaks, whether at the interpersonal or the societal level, represents his position in society. Pierre Bourdieu said that the linguistic repertoire of a person is a fount of symbolic power. In the linguistic marketplace, the idea of disposition talks about the relationships consciously or unconsciously built between people because of the same language they speak. More prestigious people of power have the skill of speaking many varieties of language, and they speak any particular variety while keeping the symbolic profit in their minds (Scotton, 2006, p.114).

Translinguality is widely used in multilingual communities in various forms, for instance, mixing dialects and languages, borrowing, and code-switching. It is used in virtual online interactions through various social media platforms, not just real-time communication. People have biases regarding using informal discourse to communicate and encourage a sense of solidarity among the community by expressing themselves completely and linking themselves with more cultural and linguistic boundaries (Ammar, 2023).

Teaching academic content in English has been highly recommended. This dissociation in language is troublesome because it restricts students from utilizing resources that they obtained from other languages previously. Pedagogical translanguaging is considered a conscious instructional strategy that amalgamates many languages to develop a multilingual repertoire so that the learner will be a multilingual speaker, not only an English speaker (Cenoz et al., 2020).

Translanguaging is a transformative pedagogy utilized to enhance equity among students in classrooms where they belong to minoritized languages. This pedagogical approach appears to restrict the stern separation of classroom policies that recommend that a productive pedagogy should reflect bilinguals' fluid practices of language (Yilmaz, 2021).

Methodology

Research Instrument

A questionnaire was designed using the Likert scale method and closed-ended questions to maximize the potentiality of correct findings. The questionnaire was not adopted or adapted; rather, it was developed. All statements were provided with additional details to facilitate the respondents' understanding of the questions and avoid any expected errors.

Research Technique and Design

A quantitative research design was developed to drive the survey or questionnaire and find the measures and trends to make specific and clear decisions when selecting the options.

Population

The population was university students; 40 people were selected, including students and teachers from the English faculty with different linguistic backgrounds. Out of the target population, students have been selected and divided based on their age, education level, gender, and native language.

Data Collection Procedure

The researchers shared a questionnaire with the university population of 40 bilingual and multilingual people. A random sampling procedure was adopted per the ease of researchers and available time and budget. Questions were easy to understand, and they carried necessary details, where required, about translinguality to facilitate the respondents. The respondents were required to answer the questions according to their knowledge, experience (in L2), and educational background.

Data Collection

The data collected data was administered through tables, direction to the specific findings. The researchers put all the information to compare it through their numerical representations. It is a more easy and convenient way to rationalize the data and give a clear-cut argument regarding the findings of the research.

Table 1: Students Surveys

Sr. no	Questions	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1.	You have been learning about translanguaging and using it in your classroom.	0%	15%	30%	15%	0%
2.	You like to use English more in classroom than Urdu.	0%	14%	14%	72%	0%
3.	Using both your first language and English at the same time during the lessons helps you improve your English.	0%	20%	47%	33%	0%
4.	You understand better when teacher uses Urdu words.	30%	45%	15%	10%	0%
5.	When the instructor switches from one language to another during the lesson, it wastes a lot of time.	0%	40%	33%	47%	0%
6.	When teacher uses Urdu words during English time, it helps you in better understanding.	0%	20%	27%	26%	7%
7.	When the instructor switches from English to Urdu (or vice versa) during the lesson, it makes you confused.	21%	58%	10%	11%	0%
8.	You use another language than English during your English lesson.	17%	39%	22%	22%	0%
9.	You feel the need to use your first language (Urdu) during your English lesson.	29%	12%	41%	18%	0%
10.	Using both first language and English (translanguaging) during the lesson leads your English to weaken.	31%	32%	31%	16%	0%
11.	You feel the need to express thoughts or questions in your first language during English lesson.	11%	22%	39%	28%	0%

12.	Using first language during English lessons is beneficial.	11%	22%	22%	45%	0%
13.	Your teacher encourages you to use your first language during your English lesson.	37%	16%	26%	21%	0%
14.	Your teacher encourages you to only speak English during your English lesson.	13%	20%	27%	40%	0%
15.	It benefits you when the instructor uses both your first language and English at the same time during the lesson.	12%	12%	23%	53%	0%
16.	Your teacher judges your competence in English if you use another language than English during English lessons.	23%	24%	35%	18%	0%
17.	It is inappropriate if the teacher uses native language in English classroom.	22%	50%	17%	11%	0%
18.	If teachers use only English in classroom, then you consider them more professional.	17%	47%	18%	18%	0%
19.	Lectures which are given using only English are confusing.	11%	39%	28%	22%	0%
20.	You talk to your partner in Urdu what teacher is talking in English to get better understanding of it.	5%	20%	30%	25%	20%

Table 2: Teachers Surveys

Sr. no	Questions	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1.	You have been learning about translanguaging and using it in your classroom.	0%	0%	20%	50%	30%
2.	Its use changed your practice and view on bilingual education.	0%	20%	30%	40%	10%
3.	You support the notion that it supports a student's overall English language development.	0%	20%	20%	60%	0%
4.	You use different translanguaging strategies in your classroom.	18%	18%	0%	64%	0%
5.	These strategies would be useful for students who are bilingual.	0%	56%	22%	22%	0%
6.	You encourage students to use their first language during English lesson.	0%	40%	10%	30%	20%
7.	You judge student's competence in English if they use another language than English during English lessons.	0%	40%	10%	30%	20%
8.	You feel that it is negative to speak another language than English during English lessons	12%	37%	13%	25%	13%

9.	You react when students speak first language in class.	40%	30%	20%	10%	0%
10.	I use my first language to explain a new concept to my students during the lesson.	10%	30%	20%	40%	0%
11.	It is helpful to provide feedback.	0%	0%	9%	27%	64%
12.	It is useful to describe new terms or vocabularies.	0%	0%	20%	30%	50%
13.	It is helpful to encourage students' participation.	0%	0%	0%	40%	60%
14.	It is helpful to brainstorm ideas.	0%	0%	20%	50%	30%
15.	It is helpful to maintain compatibility among students.	0%	0%	29%	71%	0%
16.	You encourage the use of first language in the classroom to discuss content or tasks in small group.	0%	8%	25%	50%	17%
17.	You encourage the use of first language in the classroom to promote assistance to peers during activity.	0%	45%	11%	44%	0%
18.	You encourage the use of first language in the classroom to answer student's questions	0%	40%	20%	30%	10%
19.	Students judge teachers' competence in English if teacher uses first language in English lesson.	0%	10%	30%	50%	10%
20.	You use only English Language in English lesson.	10%	10%	50%	20%	10%

Discussion

Students and teachers conducted the above survey. While elaborating on it, we first looked at students' responses. They highly encourage the use of translinguality in the classroom for better performance. They consider using Urdu beneficial for understanding lectures and learning English more efficiently. However, at the same time, they pay attention to the importance of the English language in the classroom. Students observe teachers switching from English to Urdu and vice versa; they do not confuse but enhance students' learning. Students do not cheer the use of Urdu alone for teaching purposes, but they encourage translinguality. Most students need to consider complete lectures in English more clearly and consider the use of translingual as needing clarification. Rather, most questions tilted towards multilingualism, which is favorable in educational settings.

In one of the questions, students consider it a waste of time when the instructor switches from one language to another. However, most questions support using two languages simultaneously during lectures. Students are neutral about using their native language to express their questions but agree with using Urdu during English lessons. They think using only one language in English lessons would contribute to weakening their English. According to the survey, students think teachers do not support using any other language than English in English lessons and consider it useful when the instructor uses both first language and English during lessons. Students do not consider it inappropriate or unprofessional for instructors to use language other than English during lessons.

So, students are in favor of utilizing translanguaging practices to improve communication and interaction among students as a strategy to influence students' academic engagement and shape their learning experiences in higher education.

Now let us discuss the survey done on teachers of the faculty of English. They knew the term translinguality and agreed to use it in classrooms. Most teachers agree that it supports students' overall English development and is positive to use other languages in English lessons, but a few disagree. Most agree that they react when students speak their first language, but some disagree. Many of them consider it useful to use native language to teach new concepts and strongly recommend it to describe new terms and vocabulary.

Teachers strongly disagree to consider this notion helpful in providing feedback. Most of them stay neutral about using only the English language in English lessons, and few agree and disagree. Hence, a mixed reaction emerges to this, but they strongly agree that it is helpful to encourage students' participation, brainstorm ideas, and help students maintain comparability.

Teachers support using the first language in the classroom to discuss group tasks. Then again, a mixed reaction appears where half agree and half disagree, using the first language to promote peer assistance during activities. They have differing views regarding using the first language to answer students' questions. They agree that students judge teachers' competence if they use their first language in English lessons, but they disagree with judging students' competence if they use their first language. Instructors agree to use different translanguaging techniques in the classroom but disagree that these strategies would always be useful for bilinguals.

So, it can be concluded that teachers do consider translinguality a useful tool in the classroom, but to an extent, they highly recommend it in a few aspects and discourage its use in influencing students' academic engagement and shaping their learning experiences in higher education.

Both teachers and students support the use of translinguality in educational settings to improve understanding of concepts, facilitate effective communication, and facilitate group discussions. This agrees with the concept of translinguality as a perspective for connecting diverse perspectives.

Conclusion

The present study highlights the intricate relationships involved in using translanguaging techniques in educational contexts. Instructors have a more nuanced viewpoint, even though students strongly support using many languages in the classroom, especially Urdu and English. While some educators acknowledge the advantages of translanguaging for improving student engagement and comprehension, others express concerns about possible negative effects, such as impeding the development of English language competency and eroding students' and teachers' perceived competence. Despite these differences, teachers and students understand the importance of maintaining a balanced approach to language use, ensuring that translanguaging strategies advance the learning process without endangering language learning objectives. However, they also stress how crucial it is to preserve a balance between the two languages and refrain from abruptly switching between them during lectures. Although they have different opinions, teachers, and students, agree that translanguaging can encourage student participation and facilitate group discussions.

Translanguaging brings together many linguistic viewpoints, enhancing scholarly conversation and encouraging a more in-depth comprehension of the topic. People can improve conversations and widen perspectives in the classroom by bringing their distinct cultural thoughts and experiences through translanguaging. It promotes the investigation of various linguistic avenues for acquiring knowledge and recognizes the flexibility of language use. It connects diverse

perspectives, fostering meaningful conversation and cross-linguistic collaborative learning to enhance each participant's educational experience.

In the future, teachers should keep investigating how translanguaging might enhance student engagement and comprehension while simultaneously addressing issues with language competency and the efficacy of their pedagogy. To fully comprehend the complex variables impacting attitudes toward translanguaging and its effects on students' learning outcomes, more study is required. Teachers can take advantage of translanguaging's potential to improve student engagement, comprehension, and overall learning experiences in a variety of educational contexts by developing a greater understanding of these approaches.

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