

Translanguaging As A Pedagogical Tool in Sla: Investigating Its Effects on Language Proficiency and Cognitive Flexibility

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Abstract

Translanguaging as a pedagogical tool in second language acquisition states the presentation of diverse planned approaches on triggering students' resources from their entire linguistics repertoire. It holds various practices but they all share the characteristics of being intended by the educator with a pedagogical purpose and applying resources from the students' entire linguistics range. Pedagogical translanguaging assumed as deliberate instructional approaches that incorporate two or more languages and target at the growth of the multilingual repertoire as well as metalinguistic and language mindfulness. The study investigates the perceptions and practices of English language teachers towards translanguaging as a pedagogical tool in second language acquisition and the effects of translanguaging on language proficiency and cognitive flexibility and the opportunities translanguaging provide in SLA and the challenges regarding the use of it in SLA. A qualitative approach was used to conduct the research. The participants of this study were 5 teachers of Higher Secondary Level. Data was collected through open-ended questions. Data was analyzed through thematic analysis. The findings of the study support the growing body of literature that highlights the benefits of translanguaging as a pedagogical tool for teaching English as a second language. However, challenges related to institutional policies, cultural expectations, and resource availability need to be addressed for translanguaging to be fully integrated into teaching practices.

Keywords: Translanguaging as a pedagogical tool, second language acquisition, language proficiency and cognitive flexibility, teachers' perceptions

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Introduction

The background of teaching and learning English as a foreign language (EFL) has undergone substantial conversion since the 1970s, as demonstrated by the developing terminologies related with the field. What was once completely considered as "foreign" is now considered using numerous terms such as "additional," "second," "international," "global," or "lingua franca." Each of these diverse competitors communicates vital implications, and many of them are the matter of disagreement. For example, the notion of English as a "global" language is not usually accepted, as it is perceived by some to suggest a colonialist triumph (Phillipson, 1999). Actually, some observe the term "international" as a system to cover the "imperial(ist)" legacy (Phillipson, 1992, 2013). The apparently neutral phrase "teaching English to speakers of other languages" has also been criticized for its "othering" influence (Palfreyman, 2005; Sembiente & Tian, 2020). There are several reasons for the developing grave sociolinguistic consciousness regarding the role of the English language worldwide, with its association to British colonialism, imperialism, and U.S. domination since the late 20th century being indisputably one of them. In this context, the restrictions between languages and other forms of communication, as well as the link between language and the nation-state, are recurrently being revisited, dismantled, or adapted (Li, 2018a). Learning is enhanced when stiff boundaries that discrete languages are replaced with elastic and open ones, letting students to draw on their existing knowledge while learning a second or additional language.

This is a moment for us to differentiate that the 'trans-era' calls for customary second language acquisition to go beyond the limited 'native standards' in English learning, and instead, emphasis on the applied use of language to encounter the emerging requirements and goals of language learners. From the perspective of multilingualism or Global Englishes language teaching (Rose and Galloway, 2019), translanguaging has kept attention in practice and pedagogy as it recognizes the linguistic resources and cultural investment of both teachers and learners (Bourdieu, 1991; García and Li, 2014).

In Pakistani multilingual setting, over sixty-seven languages are spoken, with the principal ones being Urdu, Punjabi, Pashto, Balochi, Brahuvi, and Sindhi (Rehman, 2006). In the multilingual situation of the country, swapping among languages is an inevitable exercise, both outside the classroom and within academic institutes. In societal backgrounds, most people substitute between their native or regional

languages and the target language, and vice versa (Mushtaq & Rabbani, 2016). The many cultures, civilizations, migration arrangements, and regions add to the country's multilingual nature (Syed, 2022). Most of the students are multilingual and come from numerous regions of the country, bringing multicultural characteristics into the classroom. Hence, translanguaging can be a valuable pedagogical tool for gaining a deeper understanding of the subject matter in second language acquisition particularly at Higher Secondary Level in Pakistan. The study may be significant for teachers, curriculum designers, and policy makers in shifting the traditional second language teaching techniques to recent translanguaging as a pedagogical tool in second language acquisition.

The present study, however; aims to examine the perceptions and practices of English language teachers towards translanguaging as a pedagogical tool in second language acquisition and to identify the effects of translanguaging on language proficiency and cognitive flexibility and to analyze the extent to which translanguaging provide opportunities in SLA and what are the challenges regarding the use of translanguaging in second language acquisition.

Review of the Literature

❖ Monolingual-oriented teaching styles

In second language learning classroom, teaching methods have always sustained the emphasis of argument among language researchers and teachers. In past, particularly in 20th century, monolingual methodologies were strengthened in language learning classrooms. Grammar translation method was prevailing till the mid-twentieth century. The main emphasis of GTM was on grammatical rules, memorization of text, translation of text and written drills, targeting at grammatical competency (Richards and Rodgers 2014). However, GTM is criticized for not permitting the accomplishment of fluency and developing communicative language usage (Newson 1998). The beginning of communicative language teaching established a reaction against GTM and has been the prevalent theoretical approach in English language teaching since the 1970s (Thompson 1996). The attention of CLT remains on expansion of communicative competence (Hymes, 1972) and augmenting language skills with the application of functional communicative activities (Littlewood 1981). The chief aim of CLT is development of communicative competence and it is censured because of the linguistics content base of CLT and

the pedagogical usage of linguistic forms in communicative language teaching (Celce-Murcia, Dornyei, and Thurrell 1997).

❖ What is translanguaging?

Translanguaging is a term that syndicates three morphemes; the prefix 'trans' to suggest exceeding that is moving beyond; 'language' to denote a tool of communication; 'ing' to indicate that the word is a vibrant act instead of a stagnant system (Li Wei, 2011). Translanguaging is a notion that is often applied in connotation with new tendencies in the study of multilingualism. Currently, it is reflected as an umbrella term that holds an extensive diversity of theoretical and practical applications. The applications disrupt the outdated beliefs of language separation. On the other hand, this comprehensive practice of translanguaging can be vague because it is 'a multidimensional and multilayer polysemic term' (Leung & Valdes, 2019: 359). Language denotes to the broadly disseminated human capability to transmit to others and to communicate ideas through a semiotic (meaning-making) repertoire that includes linguistic features (words, sounds, structures, etc.) and multimodal features (such as gestures, images, sounds etc.) (Garcia & Wei 2018). This symbiotic relationship among languages and the linguistic and multimodal features that comprise them are emphasized through the concept of translanguaging.

Translanguaging is the exercise of bilingual entities retrieving different linguistic features or utilizing several styles of separate independent languages to maximize their communicative potential (Garcia, 2009). Baker (2011) defines translanguaging as the act of applying two languages to generate meaning, obtain understanding and knowledge and form experiences. According to Lewis et al, (2012), there are three main divisions of translanguaging: classroom translanguaging which takes a pedagogic stress, emphasizing what happens in the classroom. Universal translanguaging which deals the context outside the classroom and pertinent cultural features such as the frequency and context when bilingual use more than one language. Neurolinguistics translanguaging which deals the study of brain activity when people use more than one language.

❖ **Translanguaging or code-switching**

Translanguaging has primarily been invented with code-switching. (Garcia, 2009). Conversely, afterward, the two ideas were distinguished in the theory and practice. Theoretically, translanguaging assumes a hetroglossic viewpoint, where bilinguals activate their whole linguistic range to make meaning. Code-switching, on the other hand, states a monoglossic viewpoint, with the bilinguals interchanging between two linguistic structures (Garcia & Li Wei, 2014). In practice, translanguaging has been recognized as a pedagogical approach in language teaching. Code-switching instead hints the switching backward and forward among languages in all kinds of situational settings (Nagy, 2017), hardly institutionally validated or pedagogically supported (Greese & Blackledge, 2010). Translanguaging is observed to enhance elasticity in pedagogic classroom methods, where concepts are more straightforwardly carried, understood and transmitted (Lewis et al, 2012). It is the systematic, thoughtful and planned practice of language alteration in classroom.

❖ **Pedagogical translanguaging in Second Language Acquisition**

Translanguaging suggests that languages should not be imparted as distinct objects but in interrelationship with the learners' current language features and practices (Cenoz & Gorter, 2011, 2015; May, 2014; Moore & Gajo, 2009). According to this interpretation although languages are distinct objects but that their restrictions are soft. Pedagogical translanguaging denotes to the strategies bilingual or multilingual individual use to assimilate their linguistics skills and develop their metalinguistic mindfulness (Cenoz & Gorter,2020). Garcia et al., (2017) stated three main constituents of pedagogical translanguaging: stance, design and shifts.

The administrative acceptance of translanguaging as a pedagogical approach that has the same value as the academic language used in formal education is the main challenge of implementing translanguaging (Garcia & Wei 2014b). According to Parra and Proctor (2021) using translanguaging as a pedagogical approach is difficult because of the absence of clear-cut restrictions between the two languages and the newly produced linguistic repertoire. Another challenge lies in shifting the mind-set of teachers. Their preference of traditional approach which limit the use of L1 in the classroom toward embracing translanguaging pedagogy.

❖ Translanguaging modes and strategies

Translanguaging comprises two separate modes: one-way translanguaging which contains bilinguals using L₁ as scaffolding to learn L₂. Two-way translanguaging denotes to bilinguals positively using their linguistic repertoire in the two languages grounded on the learning condition. Garcia and Wei (2014b) distinguished between teachers-led and pupil-led translanguaging. In teacher-led translanguaging, the teacher facilitates classroom project-based tasks and inspires students to cooperate using translanguaging to meet their social and linguistic needs. On the other hand, “student-led translanguaging” contains activities that inspire student to work collaboratively and individually to expand their bilingual language skills. Many strategies for content and language learning such as multilingual texts, collaborative dialogue, translation, research, multimedia resources, comparing cognates and syntaxes in different languages, writing frames and creating thematic units were recommended by Garcia & Wei (2014b).

❖ Translanguaging and language skills

Incorporation of pedagogical translanguaging can develop reading and vocabulary learning. Howaed (2015) studied the effect of translanguaging in cultivating the vocabulary and reading comprehension of a group of middle school student in the U.S. Makalela (2015) used translanguaging with an experimental group in South Africa to advance vocabulary. Researchers have discovered that language skills such as listening, reading, writing and speaking can be improved with the use of translanguaging. In some study findings, substantial progress in lexical and grammatical knowledge, writing cohesion, and coherence were found (Karabulut & Dollar, 2022).

Methodology

❖ Research design

A qualitative approach was adopted to conduct the present study. It examined the open-ended questions from English language teachers who were teaching at Higher Secondary level.

❖ **Theoretical framework**

The concept of translanguaging offered by Wei (2018) has been used as the theoretical framework in the current study. Translanguaging was first experienced in Welsh classroom, where English was practiced as second language. The instructor communicated in English whereas the learners responded in Welsh. It was concluded that translanguaging is a useful approach to facilitate teachers and students to increase their understanding of the language and to solve their language problems (Vogel & Garcia, 2017). Translanguaging is a shared communication system when multilingual speakers use their language (Wei, 2018). The practice of incorporated languages in classrooms by the teachers and students for the purpose of understanding the intricate content and text and for assisting cerebral development of learning. It is reflected as the innovative form fluctuating among languages (Vogel & Garcia, 2017).

❖ **Data Collection**

Data were composed through open-ended survey. The questionnaire was circulated among the higher secondary level teachers through Google forms. The questionnaire was based on 10 open-ended questions with the emphasis on the perceptions and practices of English language teachers towards translanguaging as a pedagogical tool in second language acquisition, the effects of translanguaging on language proficiency and cognitive flexibility and the opportunities translanguaging provide in SLA and what are the challenges regarding the use of it in SLA.

❖ **Sample and Demographics**

Purposive sampling strategy was adopted to explore and categorize different perceptions of English language teachers about translanguaging as a pedagogical tool in SLA and investigating its effects on language proficiency and cognitive flexibility. 5 English language teachers were conveniently selected to administer the questionnaire.

❖ **Nature of the Data**

The data was based on questionnaire consisting of 10 open-ended questions relating to the perceptions and practices of English language teachers towards

translanguaging as a pedagogical tool in second language acquisition, the effects of translanguaging on language proficiency and cognitive flexibility and the opportunities translanguaging provide in SLA and what are the challenges regarding the use of it in SLA.

❖ Ethical Considerations

Participants consent was obtained by clearly outlining the purpose, procedure, and possible benefits and limitations of the study. Participants and particular institute information was anonymized to protect their identities. It was ensured that participants felt comfortable and could express their views genuinely about their perception about translanguaging as a pedagogical tool in SLA and investigating its effects on language proficiency and cognitive flexibility.

❖ Data Analysis

Data were analyzed through thematic analysis following five steps. In first step data was organized and prepared for analysis, second step was based on data familiarization, third was based on coding and categories, fourth was based on generating themes and fifth was based on representing themes.

Results

❖ The perceptions of English language teachers towards translanguaging a pedagogical tool in second language acquisition

The responses highlight the positive impact of translanguaging as a pedagogical tool for teaching English as a second language (ESL).

Code	Category	Theme
Learners' ease of switching languages	Learner Comfort	Translanguaging reduces pressure and facilitates learning

Support for diverse backgrounds	Learner Background	Facilitates learning for students with limited exposure to English
Full linguistic repertoire	Language Support	Allows students to use their entire language system
Confidence and reduced anxiety	Emotional Benefits	Builds confidence and reduces anxiety in learners
Strategic teaching method	Teaching Strategy	Teachers can strategically use translanguaging to bridge comprehension gaps
Benefits of translanguaging	Language Acquisition	Enhances language acquisition, comprehension, and vocabulary development
Influence of institutional policies	Institutional Constraints	Institutional policies influencing the use of translanguaging
Cultural beliefs about language	Cultural Expectations	Cultural attitudes influencing language use in teaching
Personal reservations	Personal Beliefs	Teacher's concerns about over-reliance on translanguaging
Teacher's reflection and adaptation	Teacher Adaptation	Teachers adapt their use of translanguaging over time based on reflection and experience

Learners' Comfort and Ease

The use of translanguaging is seen as beneficial in creating a less stressful environment for learners, particularly those from backgrounds with limited exposure to English. Learners find it easier to switch between languages, which facilitates smoother communication and learning. This flexibility helps reduce the pressure that often comes with trying to use only one language in the classroom. A teacher reported that, “It is the most effective pedagogical tool as it does not put too much pressure upon the learners to use only one language during class. Usually our students come from humble backgrounds where they are not exposed to English language to a great extent; therefore, they find it much easier to switch from one language to other”.

Effectiveness for Diverse Backgrounds

Teachers acknowledged that students from humble backgrounds—where English may not be widely spoken—benefit greatly from this approach. Translanguaging helps bridge the gap, enabling them to better understand the English language by drawing on their native language.

Linguistics, Cognitive and Emotional Benefits

Translanguaging is described as an effective tool that enhances comprehension, helping students understand complex concepts in English. Teachers note that it builds confidence and reduces anxiety, as it allows students to express themselves more comfortably and naturally. By using their first language to aid understanding, students feel more supported in their learning process. In my view, translanguaging is a powerful pedagogical tool for teaching English as a second language. A teacher mentioned that, “it allows students to use their full linguistic repertoire, making learning more accessible and meaningful”.

Strategic Teaching Tool

The tool is not seen as a one-size-fits-all method, but rather as something that needs to be applied strategically. Teachers can use translanguaging to bridge comprehension gaps and ensure that students fully grasp English concepts. The

ability to draw from their linguistic repertoire allows learners to approach difficult topics with more clarity.

Student-Centered and Inclusive Approach

Translanguaging encourages an inclusive and student-centered approach, wherein students' native languages are validated, leading to greater participation in the classroom. By acknowledging and incorporating students' home languages, translanguaging provides an atmosphere where diverse learners feel more engaged and valued.

Institutional Policies

Some educational institutions emphasize the English-only method, encouraging teachers to avoid using students' native languages in the classroom. This institutional pressure can create reluctance among teachers to use translanguaging freely. In some cases, institutions fail to consider the ground realities of students, who may not have sufficient exposure to English outside the classroom. Teachers, however, feel that translanguaging can be an important tool for bridging the gap and helping students understand English more effectively.

Cultural Expectations

Teachers also face cultural expectations that place value on English fluency and may see the use of students' first languages as a hindrance to language development. There can be a perception that relying too much on translanguaging might slow down students' English development or undermine their progress in acquiring English fluency.

Personal Reservations

Some teachers expressed personal reservations about over-relying on translanguaging, fearing that it might make students dependent on their native languages. However, these concerns tend to diminish as teachers gain experience and see the benefits of strategically using translanguaging to support their students' learning.

Balancing Constraints with Pedagogical Effectiveness

Teachers reported that they sometimes have to navigate institutional constraints and cultural expectations carefully. While they may personally support translanguaging, they must balance its use with institutional rules and cultural values that prioritize English-only instruction. Over time, many teachers learn how to incorporate translanguaging strategically to meet students' needs without violating institutional policies or cultural expectations.

❖ The effects of translanguaging on language proficiency and cognitive flexibility

Code	Category	Theme
Positive impact on proficiency	Language Proficiency	Enhancement of Language Proficiency
Confidence and communication	Language Proficiency	Enhancement of Language Proficiency
Improvement in cognitive flexibility	Cognitive Flexibility	Cognitive Flexibility Development
Long-term effects (positive)	Long-term Effects	Positive Long-Term Effects
Challenges (initial hindrance)	Challenges	Challenges in Communication

Impact of Translanguaging on Language Proficiency in English

Translanguaging plays a significant role in supporting language proficiency for second language learners. Many educators have observed positive effects, such as enhanced learning outcomes and improved language skills. However, the process of becoming proficient in English can take a little longer, as students' home languages (L1) can sometimes interfere with their use of English. Despite this, translanguaging is generally considered beneficial for learning, particularly when students are allowed to process and think in their first language. This allows them to understand complex concepts more quickly and deeply. Over time, the use of translanguaging builds students' confidence, encouraging them to participate more in class, take

risks in using English, and gradually improve their vocabulary and fluency. Ultimately, when used purposefully, translanguaging supports students' development of English proficiency in a meaningful and sustained manner. This helps students develop a more profound understanding, which translates to better communication skills and a stronger command of English over time. As one of respondent reported, that "translanguaging positively impacts students' English proficiency. [...] Over time, this strengthens both their vocabulary and fluency."

Effects on Cognitive Flexibility

Translanguaging has a positive impact on students' cognitive flexibility, which is their ability to adapt their thinking and problem-solving strategies. By switching between their home language and English, students become more adept at solving problems from different perspectives and thinking creatively. Many teachers have observed that students are more comfortable navigating between languages, and this flexibility helps them approach tasks from multiple angles. This linguistic flexibility enables students to use both languages to explain complex ideas when one language alone is not sufficient. As a result, students develop more creative strategies for understanding and expressing their thoughts. By utilizing their full linguistic resources, students are able to complete tasks more effectively and show greater cognitive competency. A teacher stated that, "it helps them to be more creative as they can easily switch to home language for a better understanding of some idea and later translate their thoughts."

Impact on Communication

While translanguaging is mostly viewed as helpful for communication, some educators have noted that it can occasionally hinder students' ability to communicate effectively, particularly in the early stages of language learning. In the beginning, students may rely too heavily on their first language (L₁), which can lead to delays in their English language development and fluency. However, as students' progress in their learning, translanguaging becomes less of a barrier and increasingly facilitates communication.

Translanguaging supports students in building confidence, as they are allowed to express their ideas even if they are not yet fully proficient in English. Over time, they gradually transition to using more English, which helps to improve their

communication skills. Teachers observe that when used appropriately, translanguaging enhances students' ability to communicate in English by fostering self-expression, strengthening language skills, and increasing participation in class. According to a teacher, "I believe translanguaging helps students communicate more effectively in English."

Long-Term Effects of Translanguaging

The long-term effects of translanguaging on students' language development are predominantly positive. Many educators believe that translanguaging leads to deeper comprehension, more steady progress in English, and increased fluency and confidence over time. Students develop a greater metalinguistic awareness, meaning they become more aware of the structures and nuances of both their home language and English. This deeper understanding of both languages helps students become more proficient overall. However, there are some negative effects to consider. The use of a first language (L₁) can sometimes create barriers to fluency in English. Despite this, educators generally observe that the benefits of translanguaging outweigh these challenges. Over time, students are able to integrate the linguistic features of multiple languages, and this allows them to navigate between languages more easily. As stated, "I've observed mainly positive long-term effects of translanguaging on my students' language development. It helps deepen their comprehension and supports steady progress in English."

❖ Opportunities and Challenges of Translanguaging in SLA

Code	Category	Theme
New knowledge domains	Opportunities for SLA	Broadening Learning Perspectives
Language Nuances	Opportunities for SLA	Cognitive Flexibility & Language Skills
Connecting prior knowledge	Opportunities for SLA	Bridging Knowledge and Confidence
Reducing Anxiety, Encouraging Participation	Opportunities for SLA	Building Confidence and Engagement

Cultural Knowledge	Acceptance,	Challenges in Implementing Translanguaging	Cultural Barriers
Home language preference, Convenience		Challenges in Implementing Translanguaging	Resistance to Change
Institutional Language Policy	Policies,	Challenges in Implementing Translanguaging	Institutional Resistance
Training, Objectives	Clear Policy	Support and Resources	Need for Clear Guidelines & Training
Training, Language Proficiency		Support and Resources	Teacher Preparedness

Opportunities for Second Language Acquisition (SLA) through Translanguaging

Translanguaging provides a significant opportunity for enhancing second language acquisition by creating a bridge between students' existing knowledge and new concepts. It allows students to engage with a broader array of knowledge domains, including culture, language, technology, and civilization. This broader scope not only makes learning more comprehensive but also provides students with a deeper connection to the content. Translanguaging supports ease in transferring content and facilitates quicker comprehension, making it easier for students to grasp complex ideas.

One of the most notable benefits of translanguaging is the incorporation of nuances from multiple languages, which helps students understand and express themselves in a richer, more meaningful way. By connecting new knowledge with what they already know in their first language (L1), students are better able to relate to the material, thereby reducing language anxiety and increasing confidence. This reduced anxiety fosters more participation in class, creating a more inclusive learning environment where students feel safe to take risks with their language use. Translanguaging also supports critical thinking and encourages deeper engagement with the language. Overall, translanguaging promotes an inclusive and effective learning experience, helping students engage more fully with the learning process. As stated by teachers, "it provides a new insight of new knowledge domains such as culture, language, people, technology, civilization...". "Translanguaging offers great

opportunities for second language acquisition. It allows students to connect new knowledge with what they already know...". "The greatest benefit I think is the incorporation of nuances of more than one language."

Challenges and Barriers in Implementing Translanguaging

While translanguaging offers many benefits, several challenges arise when attempting to implement it effectively in teaching. One significant challenge is the acceptance of new knowledge domains and cultural practices that may conflict with those of the native culture. This cultural tension can present barriers to adopting translanguaging strategies in classrooms, especially in settings where traditional monolingual approaches dominate.

Students may also face difficulties in transitioning between their L₁ and the second language (L₂). They sometimes find it easier and more convenient to use their home language, even when English should be the primary mode of communication. Despite these challenges, many students find that using both their first language and English enhances their understanding of the content. As colleagues increasingly recognize the benefits of blending languages for cognitive development and language learning, there is growing support for translanguaging practices, particularly in contexts where students feel more comfortable engaging with both languages. As respondent mentioned that, "the challenges might occur in the form of acceptance of new domains of knowledge, cultural practices...". "Some challenges include institutional policies that favor English-only instruction and lack of support for multilingual approaches."

Support and Resources Needed for Effective Translanguaging

To use translanguaging effectively in second language acquisition, teachers need a combination of training, clear guidelines, and appropriate resources. Proper training is essential to help educators understand when and how to use translanguaging in a way that supports SLA.

Clear policy guidelines are also important for providing a framework for how translanguaging can be incorporated into the curriculum. Teachers need policies that support flexible language use in the classroom, and institutional changes that endorse multilingualism would help encourage the practice. Additionally, access to

bilingual materials and other multilingual resources is crucial for teachers to implement translanguaging effectively.

Training should go hand in hand with access to examples of best practices and clear guidelines to ensure that educators are equipped with the strategies needed for successful implementation. Teachers also need ongoing support and opportunities to share resources and strategies with colleagues to ensure a consistent, effective approach to translanguaging in their classrooms. According to teachers, "training and clear policy objectives will help out to achieve translanguaging effectively in SLA.". "To use translanguaging effectively in second language acquisition, teachers need proper training and clear guidelines.". "Training should be provided along with a very good command on the other language which is being used in the learning process."

Discussion

The use of translanguaging as a pedagogical tool in teaching English as a second language (ESL) has gained increasing attention in the field of language education. This chapter discusses the perceptions, experiences, and factors that influence the implementation of translanguaging in the ESL classroom and the influence of translanguaging on learners' language proficiency in English and cognitive flexibility, drawing on both theoretical frameworks and empirical observations from educators' experiences. Additionally, it examines the long-term effects of translanguaging on students' language development, with a particular focus on its potential benefits and challenges and the opportunities and challenges that translanguaging presents in SLA, drawing on the experiences of teachers and comparing these with theoretical frameworks.

The perceptions of English language teachers towards translanguaging as a pedagogical tool in second language acquisition

The data indicates that translanguaging is perceived as an effective pedagogical tool for teaching English as a second language by most educators. Several respondents highlighted that translanguaging facilitates language learning by allowing students to use their full linguistic repertoire, making complex concepts more comprehensible. García and Wei (2014), argued that translanguaging allows

students to fluidly switch between languages, creating a more inclusive and accessible learning environment.

Teachers noted that translanguaging reduces the pressure on students to exclusively use English, which is particularly beneficial for learners from disadvantaged backgrounds who may not have significant exposure to English outside the classroom. This approach supports with the notion that translanguaging bridges the gap between students' native language and the target language, providing a supportive and scaffolded learning experience (García, 2009). By leveraging students' first languages (L₁), educators can help students grasp content more easily, increase their confidence, and reduce language anxiety.

One respondent described translanguaging as a "powerful pedagogical tool" because it enables students to engage more deeply with the material and encourages participation. Canagarajah (2011), emphasized that translanguaging validates students' linguistic and cultural identities, fostering a more inclusive and participatory classroom environment.

The findings also revealed that institutional policies, cultural expectations, and personal reservations play a significant role in the use of translanguaging. Several respondents indicated that institutional policies favoring English-only instruction created tensions in the classroom, particularly when students' L₁ could enhance their understanding. These findings reflect the ongoing debate in the field of language education about the tension between institutional expectations for English-only instruction and the growing recognition of the benefits of multilingualism in the classroom (Cummins, 2001).

In some educational contexts, there is a cultural expectation that success is tied to English fluency alone, which can make teachers hesitant to incorporate translanguaging. This is particularly true in environments where there is a strong emphasis on standardized testing and measurable English proficiency. However, as shown by the data, teachers are increasingly recognizing that translanguaging can support students' language development and help bridge gaps in comprehension. García's (2009) asserted that translanguaging challenges traditional monolingual educational norms and provides a more holistic approach to language learning.

The personal reservations expressed by some teachers, especially in the early stages of their careers, highlight the uncertainty that can surround the use of translanguaging. However, as their understanding of its pedagogical benefits deepens, they become more willing to incorporate it into their teaching practices. Lin (2013), suggested that teachers' initial reservations about translanguaging often diminish as they gain more experience and see its positive impact on student engagement and language acquisition.

The effects of translanguaging on language proficiency and cognitive flexibility

The data reveals a largely positive impact of translanguaging on students' English language proficiency. Educators consistently reported that allowing students to use their first language (L₁) facilitated quicker and deeper comprehension of complex English concepts. García (2009) stated that translanguaging provides learners the cognitive flexibility to use their entire linguistic repertoire. When students can think in their L₁ and then express those thoughts in English, they better grasp and retain new knowledge.

Educators noted that, initially, the use of L₁ in the classroom could create a temporary hindrance to English fluency, as students might rely too heavily on their home language. However, over time, translanguaging was observed to support language development rather than slow it down. According to García and Wei (2014), translanguaging, when used strategically, can enhance English proficiency by reducing language anxiety and increasing student confidence. As students engage in this process, they develop both vocabulary and fluency. An educator's observation that translanguaging helped students gradually shift towards greater use of English reflects the notion that translanguaging promotes gradual bilingualism (García, 2009).

The data also highlights a significant positive impact of translanguaging on students' cognitive flexibility. Educators observed that students became more adept at switching between languages, which enhanced their ability to solve problems and think creatively. When students encountered difficulties expressing an idea in English, they could switch to their home language to clarify their thoughts before translating them back into English. Cummins' (2001) theory of "cognitive academic language proficiency," which posits that bilinguals' ability to think and problem-

solve in multiple languages enhances their cognitive development. Thus, translanguaging appears to enhance students' cognitive flexibility by allowing them to leverage their first language to scaffold their English learning.

Opportunities and Challenges of Translanguaging in SLA

The data suggests that translanguaging offers several significant opportunities for second language acquisition, particularly in supporting comprehension, reducing language anxiety, and promoting engagement. The ability to integrate multiple languages into the learning process allows students to access new knowledge more efficiently. For instance, as one teacher noted, translanguaging “provides new insight into new knowledge domains” and facilitates “quick comprehension.” This aligns with the conceptualization of translanguaging as a cognitive resource that bridges the gap between the learner’s first language (L1) and the target language (L2), thereby enhancing understanding and reducing the cognitive load associated with learning a new language (García & Wei, 2014).

Additionally, there is resistance from some colleagues and parents who view the use of L1 as a hindrance rather than a resource for learning. As one teacher noted, “Some challenges include institutional policies that favor English-only instruction and lack of support for multilingual approaches.” This perspective is common in contexts where the dominance of English is emphasized in educational systems. Moreover, limited resources in students’ native languages also hinder the full implementation of translanguaging strategies in classrooms. This reflects the “lack of resources” concern discussed by García and Wei (2014), who emphasized that access to bilingual materials and resources is crucial for the successful integration of translanguaging in the classroom.

Teachers also face the challenge of balancing the use of L1 and L2 in a way that does not impede English language goals. As noted in the data, the use of home languages can sometimes be more convenient, and students may rely on their L1 even when English is necessary. Teachers must carefully plan how and when to integrate translanguaging to ensure that it supports, rather than detracts from, the goal of improving English proficiency. This challenge highlights the importance of clear guidelines and strategic planning, as well as teacher training to navigate these complexities (Canagarajah, 2011).

To effectively implement translanguaging in second language acquisition, teachers need comprehensive support in the form of training, clearer guidelines, and policy changes. The data revealed that teachers believe “training and clear policy objectives” are essential for maximizing the benefits of translanguaging. As one teacher put it, “Training should be provided along with a very good command of the other language,” emphasizing the importance of not just understanding the theory behind translanguaging, but also the practical strategies for using it in the classroom.

Implications

The findings suggest that translanguaging has significant potential as a pedagogical tool in ESL classrooms, mainly in settings where learners have restricted exposure to English outside the classroom. By permitting students to use their home language as a resource, teachers can make learning more accessible and inclusive. Translanguaging can reduce language anxiety, boost confidence, and encourage active participation, which are crucial elements for second language acquisition. However, institutional and cultural factors remain significant barriers to the widespread use of translanguaging. In many educational settings, there is still a strong emphasis on English-only instruction, which can limit teachers’ ability to implement translanguaging effectively. As the data shows, this creates a tension between the pedagogical benefits of translanguaging and institutional policies that prioritize English fluency. To overcome this, there is a need for policy changes that recognize the value of multilingualism in language education and support flexible language use in the classroom.

Conclusion

The findings from the data support the growing body of literature that highlights the benefits of translanguaging as a pedagogical tool for teaching English as a second language. By drawing on students’ full linguistic repertoire, translanguaging enhances comprehension, fosters confidence, and creates a more inclusive and engaging learning environment. Translanguaging plays a vital role in enhancing students’ English language proficiency, cognitive flexibility, and long-term language development. By allowing students to use their full linguistic repertoire, translanguaging not only supports the acquisition of English but also promotes greater cognitive and metalinguistic skills. However, challenges related to

institutional policies, cultural expectations, and resource availability need to be addressed for translanguaging to be fully integrated into teaching practices. Teachers require proper training, clear guidelines, and access to bilingual resources to implement translanguaging effectively. The successful implementation of translanguaging requires careful navigation of institutional policies, cultural expectations, and teacher perceptions.

The study has some limitations that should be considered in future research. First, it is a small-scale qualitative study with small sample size and duration. Therefore, this sample of 5 teachers is not enormous enough to completely reflect teachers' perceptions. Second, the data was collected from teachers who taught at higher secondary level and questionnaire items were limited. Therefore, future studies could be conducted with a large number of participants along with more multiple questionnaire items and diverse levels, and having varied learning environments and cultures.

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