

# Translanguaging: A Pedagogical Approach

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**Abstract:** India, renowned for its plethora of languages and civilizations, serves as a monument to the vast array of human experiences. In this linguistically diverse country, language serves not only as a medium of communication, but also as a manifestation of one's identity, history, and cultural legacy. Recently, educators in India have started investigating novel techniques to improve language acquisition and writing proficiency, with one strategy that has gained popularity being translanguaging. This article examines the concept of translanguaging as a teaching strategy, providing insight into its principles, advantages, and practical implementations.

**Keywords:** translanguaging, pedagogy, bi-lingual, multilingual, linguistic diversity.

## Introduction

Within the context of globalisation in education, classrooms are seeing a growing level of diversity, as pupils from various language and cultural backgrounds are present. Conventional instructional approaches often encounter difficulties in meeting the requirements of these individuals who speak several languages. Translanguaging, an innovative instructional technique, has developed as a potent tool to use the multilingual capabilities of pupils. This article examines the notion of translanguaging as a teaching strategy, providing insight into its principles, advantages, and practical implementations.

## Understanding Translanguaging:

Within bilingual education, a new word known as “translanguaging” has evolved, giving expression to heteroglossic language philosophy. It was known in different terms such as code-switching, code-mixing, multilingualism and so on. Cen Williams used the word ‘translanguaging’ in the 1980s to describe the systematic and planned use of two languages for teaching and learning in the same session (Baker, 2011). Li Wei defines translanguaging as: “Translanguaging is both going between different linguistic structures and systems, including different modalities (speaking, writing, signing, listening, reading, remembering) and going beyond them. It includes the full range of linguistic performances of multilingual language users for purposes that transcend the combination of structures, the alternation between systems, the transmission of information and the representation of values, identities

and relationships” (Wei, 2011). According to Cenoz and Gorter, the methodical blending of two or more languages within a single learning activity is known as translanguaging (Cenoz & Gorter, 2011). Baker observes in *Foundations of Bilingual Education*, “Translanguaging is the practise of using two languages to create meaning, shape experiences, and acquire comprehension and knowledge” (Baker, 2011). The conventional divisions between languages in education are called into question by translanguaging. It encourages pupils to use all of their linguistic resources, using a variety of languages fluently to improve comprehension and expressiveness. The method acknowledges the flexibility with which multilingual people use language, enabling them to take use of their varied linguistic abilities to enhance learning results (Garcia 2009).

Translanguaging involves more than just blending languages; it entails using the unique qualities of each language to improve overall language skills. Indian students will have a more profound comprehension of their cultural, historical, traditional legacy and a more expansive outlook on the world. **Translanguaging in Education**

1. **Multilingual Competence:** Ofelia Garcia in *Translanguaging: Language, Bilingualism and Education* emphasises the multilingual competency as the key factor in promoting language learning among students. “Translanguaging emphasises the value of multilingualism, considering students’ diverse linguistic backgrounds as assets rather than obstacles” (Garcia, 2014). Translanguaging encompasses several forms of communication that bilingual individuals use to understand and navigate their multilingual environments. Translanguaging, used as a pedagogical approach, mitigates the adverse emotional encounters of multilingual students and enhances their involvement in classroom tasks.
2. **Cultural Sensitivity:** Li Wei observes that translanguaging promotes cultural awareness by encouraging students to investigate and value the cultural subtleties inherent in many languages (Wei, 2018). In the words of P. Singh, translanguaging fosters an appreciation of diverse cultures associated with different languages (Singh, 2020). Translanguaging facilitates the utilisation of students’ diverse knowledge and experiences, creating a collaborative environment where students may actively engage with their multicultural resources and identities. This approach promotes student-centred learning. Thus, learners have an enhanced understanding of cultural subtleties, which empowers them to produce literary works that are more contextually relevant and sensitive to cultural differences.
3. **Language Fluidity:** According to Gorter, “Translanguaging promotes the idea that languages are fluid and interconnected, allowing for a seamless flow of ideas between different linguistic systems” (Gorter, 2015). Translanguaging encourages learners to use all of their language skills and to switch between languages and dialects with ease in order to communicate successfully. This method enables smooth language integration and communication as it acknowledges that language is not firmly divided into discrete compartments but rather occurs along a continuum. By recognising the natural way that multilingual people navigate and utilise their languages in a variety of circumstances, translanguaging encourages linguistic fluidity. It aids in the development of a more thorough comprehension of linguistic patterns and structures in addition to the capacity to transition between languages as required, which enhances language competency and improves communication abilities in multilingual settings.

## Benefits of Translanguaging in Education

“Translanguaging nurtures a deeper understanding of language structures and vocabulary, leading to **improved proficiency** in multiple languages” (Baker, 2011). Teachers foster a more welcoming and encouraging learning atmosphere by letting students utilise their whole linguistic repertoire, including their native tongues. Translanguaging improves language proficiency, language skills, better understanding, and helps students' cognitive growth by way of analytical reasoning and mental plasticity, improves communication skills. Students can make use of their mother tongue to comprehend and pick up new vocabulary in the target language.

**Cognitive flexibility** refers to the ability to switch between different tasks or mental processes, adapt to new situations, and think about multiple concepts simultaneously. Translanguaging not only facilitates the growth of language skills but also plays a vital part in augmenting cognitive adaptability in those who are proficient in many languages. This cognitive ability is not only beneficial in the acquisition of language but also in other domains of life, including academic accomplishments and interpersonal engagements. Creese & Blackledge say, “Multilingual learners engaging in translanguaging develop cognitive flexibility, allowing them to switch between languages based on context and audience” (Creese & Blackledge, 2010).

Through the practice of translanguaging, persons who are proficient in many languages have the ability to tackle difficulties by drawing from diverse linguistic and cultural viewpoints. The capacity to examine issues from many perspectives amplifies their problem-solving aptitude and fosters innovative cognition. “By acknowledging and validating students’ multilingual abilities, translanguaging boosts their confidence, promoting active participation in the learning process” (García & Sylvan, 2011).

Teachers everywhere have embraced translanguaging in a variety of settings. Teachers in bilingual classrooms use translanguaging strategies to promote efficient communication, allowing students to interact with intricate ideas in their mother tongues. Furthermore, content-based language training has effectively included translanguaging, which enables learners to comprehend material in a language they are familiar with while easing into the target language (Garcia & Wei, 2014). Promoting the appreciation of diversity and cultural identity in the classroom creates a secure environment for intercultural dialogues. This provides learners with the chance to express their unique perspectives in an inquisitive and courteous manner.

## Conclusions

Translanguaging, as a teaching method, provides a powerful means to empower students who speak many languages, promoting an inclusive and supportive atmosphere for learning. Through acknowledging and embracing the many language backgrounds of children, educators may unleash their whole potential, empowering them to excel both academically and culturally. Translanguaging serves as a promising approach in the ever-changing landscape of education, promoting inclusivity and enhancing the quality of learning by overcoming language barriers.

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