Translanguaging as a Theoretical Lens in Language Learning and Its Pedagogical Functions in Multilingual Classrooms

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Abstract. The theory of translanguaging has been prevalently used in exploring multilingualism and multiculturalism. Currently, with the expansion of human communication and the migration, the mastery of multiple languages has become essential. This article focuses firstly on the development of translanguaging and its theoretical expansion to determine whether it can serve as a theoretical lens in language acquisition. The article then examines pedagogical translanguaging, a newly coined concept derived from translanguaging, and its functions in multilingual classrooms. This newly concept is designed to modify the previously teaching objectives, which is known as 'language separation'. Pedagogical translanguaging signifies that teacher can develop planned strategies to assist students in exploring their linguistic repertoire and promoting multilingualism by allowing them to use prior language knowledge. Therefore, language learners can be immersed in a classroom environment beneficial to a more profound and comprehensive improvement in linguistic competence. Lastly, the article investigates pedagogical translanguaging among multilingual classrooms in three functional perspectives, and the results show that: 1) pedagogical translanguaging can assist multilingual students in enhancing their participation in the classroom by allowing them to utilize their existing language knowledge; 2) pedagogical translanguaging can alleviate students' anxiety by increasing their metalinguistic awareness; 3) it also helps students learn of academic literature better by offering them access to a greater range of knowledge.

Keywords: Translanguaging · Pedagogical translanguaging · Multilingualism

1 Introduction

With the expansion of global economic and cultural exchanges, the world population flow has reached its peak in the last few decades, and immigration has become a common phenomenon. This trend has resulted in a rise in the population's multilingualism, which has piqued the interest of numerous linguists, particularly in language education. When students from diverse linguistic backgrounds are seated in the same classroom, teachers may interweave multiple languages during instruction in order to achieve a more effective learning objective.

This new occurrence, however, conflicts with the traditional idea of language education, which is known as "language separation" [1]. Support for the concept is divided between those who support using only L2 in the classroom and those who support using only L1 in the classroom. Although they have different preferences for classroom language use, they are all practitioners of the concept of language separation. The advocates of only using L2 in classrooms demonstrate that the emphasis on L2 is to prevent the influence of previously acquired languages by avoiding the use of non-target languages. This can increase the probability of students learning L2 by enhancing vocabulary acquisition [2–4]. The opponents of using L2 believe that excluding L2 from the classroom is progressive for students and that the L1-only policy effectively reduces the number of L2 errors [2, 4]. In fact, the traditional monolingual approach and ideology have been questioned, as well as the necessity of certain language boundaries [5, 6]. If language is employed in isolation, the inability to benefit from prior knowledge and the failure to integrate linguistic features that learners can dynamically shuttle may cause cognitive difficulties during language acquisition [7, 8]. Moreover, separation in language may compel multilingual students to establish an entirely new linguistic ideology that may differ from their existing social constructs, which disregard learners' L1 identities playing a crucial role in language acquisition [4, 9]. The aforementioned negative effects are not conducive to adapting to the current situation of multiculturalism; that is, they are hostile to multilingualism.

In the current context of linguistic diversity, it is essential to reconsider how to develop new language teaching methods in order to ensure effective language learning and communication among multilinguists. With the rise of translanguaging, it has proven to be an effective theoretical lens for using multilingual language resources to make sense, clarify meanings, and gain comprehension [1, 6, 10]. Particularly, it has been justified in a variety of educational settings (e.g., primary school, dual bilingual education, and transitional bilingual education) for the purpose of celebrating students' and teachers' multilingualism and fostering their multicompetence [1, 9]. By implementing diverse language practices and emphasizing the significance of utilizing learners' linguistic repertoires, the theory of translanguaging enables educators to create a limitless and equitable teaching environment [11–13]. Consequently, learners could draw on their prior language knowledge to perform multiple language resources in a more dynamic, fluid, and functional way to integrate new language knowledge, convey precise meaning, achieve unexpected results, and boost self-esteem [8, 13]. Canagarajah [14] demonstrates that translanguaging is a natural process occurring among multilinguists without any constrains. It is recognized as the most impressive indicator to investigate a bilingual/multilingual speaker when using multiple languages intentionally and spontaneously in social interaction to fit their communicative needs [15, 19]. There is ample evidence indicating that learners have already engaged in translanguaging practices. According to a study conducted by Kwihangana in 2012 [4], the process of translanguaging in a pre-sessional English class was observed in a variety of situations, including starting in one language and ending in another, or using one language to supplement their partners and another to respond to questions. Even some students who may be encouraged by their peers or be voluntary could attempt to create their own space for translanguaging during each group discussion activity in an English-only classroom

[13]. Despite certain clear trails and benefits of translanguaging, some scholars doubt its scope and effectiveness in multilingual classrooms, as well as whether switching back and forth between target language and native language is harmful [4, 16]. Opponents of employing translanguaging in educational settings argue that the monolingual native speakers provide a natural environment that exposes students to abundant language experiences [4]. Besides, translanguaging is a cognitive and social process that is closely linked to parenting, school policy and regional politics [1, 8]. As a result, its research and potential implementation should be made according to concrete situations because learning cannot be viewed in isolation from the one's cultural context.

The aim of this article is to determine whether translanguaging may act as a theoretical lens in language acquisition by examining the development of translanguaging and the functions of pedagogical translanguaging. The article then explores the novel notion of "pedagogical translanguaging" to determine what it is and how it has been applied. The article concludes by investigating the functions of pedagogical translanguaging in multilingual classrooms and determining if translanguaging is an effective technique of enhancing their classroom participation, decreasing their anxiety, and gaining a deeper comprehension of academic literature. This article focuses on the following perspectives:

1) The development of translanguaging
2) Pedagogical translanguaging: a new extended concept
3) Pedagogical Translanguaging's functions in multilingual classrooms

2   The Development of Translanguaging

Initial research with translanguaging was conducted in a Welsh classroom to determine if one language could reinforce the other so as to enhance classroom participation and academic comprehension [17]. Students were allowed to deliberately alternate two languages, Welsh and English, for input and output throughout the entire class period. It was believed that students could increase their comprehension of two languages and build confidence.

Over the years, translanguaging has been used to indicate the purposely controlled conversion of language input and output in L2 classrooms [18]. García [19] states that multilingual speakers could boost comprehension, making meaning, and sharing experience by using multiple languages. Consequently, translanguaging serves as a practical theory to mediate functionally multilingual speakers mental process of learning and behaving. Language users of translanguaging are in its creativity and criticality [11]. They are required to choose between obeying or challenging rules of the use of language, pushing new ideas and breaking old norms. It is also important to provide information for current linguistic, cultural, and social phenomena through the systematic and in-depth use of existing evidence, as well as to challenge commonly held beliefs and allow individuals to express their views in their entirety through reasonable responses. Li [18] explains that creativity and criticality are essentially related. One cannot bring forth the new without creativity, and one's criticality is reflected in whether she/he is creative or not. Translanguaging, however, not only encourages more critical and creative language learners, but also helps redefine the functions of languages. According to Cook and Li

[20], translanguaging transforms the technique of prior languages, i.e., code-switching, into innovative and unique interaction, highlighting the 'creativity' and 'criticality' of multilinguals in dissolving boundaries between their native language and target language. Similarly, Baker [21] agrees that translanguaging is not exclusively linked with coding because it involves a more complex procedure for generating knowledge links that transcends languages [6]. The trans prefix basically implies its transcendental potential [18]. It seems plausible to separate language from certain aspects of the human mind, but the brain areas responsible for language processing are also related to other areas. There is no such area for supporting only one language work. Language, therefore, is regarded as a 'multisensory and multimodal semiotic system interconnected with other identifiable but inseparable cognitive systems' [18]. Multilingual speakers' linguistic experience and cognitive ability are also connected. They have a natural instinct, referred to as translanguaging instinct, for utilizing abundant cognitive and semiotic resources to guide their actions and push them to cross so-called cultural and political language boundaries. Hence, translanguaging provides language learners with a more flexible and functional access to a variety of linguistic resources, as opposed to focusing solely on the language itself.

Li [11] extends translanguaging by introducing the concept of "translanguaging space" to describe how multilingual speakers draw on their life experience, ideology, culture, and history to interact with the physical world. By establishing customized linguistic patterns, this space is perceived as widening the conventional language border and highlighting the fact that there is no fixed boundary between languages. Cenoz and Goter explain [8] language boundary by stating that when strict boundaries separating languages are replaced with soft and flexible boundaries, learning can be boosted since students can employ existing knowledge when learning a second or third language. Thus, translanguaging challenges the traditional constraints imposed by a particular culture and political system, while highlighting the cognitive construction of knowledge.

3   Pedagogical Translanguaging: A New Extended Concept

The pedagogical translanguaging is a fresh theory and practice related to varying educational settings. While this term is derived from the notion of translanguaging, it has a broader meaning and application. According to Cenoz [22], pedagogical translanguaging is the integration of teachers' planned language teaching strategies that can be used inside and outside the classroom into students' entire linguistic repertoire. It is 'a pedagogic theory and practice that refers to instructional strategies which integrate two or more languages' [23]. This concept implies that students require more cognitive stimulation because the process of translanguaging is quite demanding and strict, involving choices regarding how to implement and what to include when switching languages.

The pedagogical translanguaging is characterized by Cenoz and Goter [23] as a practice that requires the entire linguistic repertoire of multilingual students, which aids in obtaining a deeper understanding of textbooks, the development of metalinguistic awareness, enhancing classroom cooperation as well as the consolation of knowledge [1, 8]. In addition, it can be utilized in multiple languages, not just between two, including students' home languages that are not part of the school curriculum. Also, its application

does not limit the degree of multilingual proficiency of students or the level of educational programmes. Translanguaging enables multilingual students to utilize resources from their prior knowledge and their entire linguistic repertoire, making it a viable strategy for those who are proficient in their native language but less so in a second language, or for those who are proficient in both languages. Moreover, it is applicable to a wider range of school programs and educational settings, including elementary school, secondary school, and higher education.

This concept is designed to promote multilingualism and activate multilingual speakers' capacity of reviewing their prior knowledge for different languages. When multilingual speakers communicate with others, they have more linguistic resources and richer trajectories than monolingual speakers [7, 8]. It is believed that the capacity of integrating knowledge can help multilingual speakers increase metalinguistic awareness, thereby enhancing their efficiency of acquiring an additional language. Inheriting from translanguaging, the concept of breaking strict boundaries, pedagogical translanguaging is similarly in favour of constructing smooth, flexible language boundaries [7]. With these advantages, multilingual speakers are better able to accept flexible translanguaging practices and achieve their teachers' instructional goals.

The pedagogical translanguaging incorporates a wide range of practices with multiple potential educational benefits for fostering a healthy classroom climate. It is believed that students can gain a deeper and fuller understanding of academic items by helping them maximizing cognitive capacity. Especially for the development of weaker language learners, their linguistic competence (e.g., literacy or spoken grammar) can be enhanced by avoiding engaging in complex tasks with stronger languages while using weaker languages with simpler tasks. In addition, the application of translanguaging may reduce the intensity of the family relationship. When a child is taught a foreign language that her or his parents do not understand, translanguaging can assist the child in expressing, explaining, and expanding her or his learning with parents through discussion in another language [21]. Consequently, cooperation between families will be strengthened, and the process of communication between children and their parents will reinforce and improve foreign language learning among children. The pedagogical translanguaging therefore attempts to provides multilingual speakers with an opportunity to not only develop target language but enhance non-target language, thereby promoting their multilingualism [24]. As a result, pedagogical tanslanguaging as a rich resource allows multilingual speakers to maximize their own advantageous language resources and guide them to use what they already have.

4   Pedagogical Translanguaging's Functions in Multilingual Classroom

Pedagogical translanguaging is a broader concept that encompasses both the strategies devised by teachers and the rich linguistic repertoires of multilingual learners. It seeks to activate the prior language knowledge of multilingual students in order to enhance their multilingual competence. In multilingual classrooms, pedagogical translanguaging emphasizes several language components, such as phonetics, lexicon, morphology, syntax, and pragmatics, as well as the four fundamental skills of reading, listening,

speaking, and writing [8]. These features are recognized as evaluative tools that can be used in language classes to measure the degrees of students' language proficiency. This section investigates the potential functions of pedagogical translanguaging in multilingual classrooms by analysing previous research. It is justifiable to assist students in enhancing their classroom participation, reducing their anxiety, and gaining a deeper comprehension of academic literature.

The pedagogical translanguaging enables multilingual students to utilize their existing language knowledge; consequently, they build confidence while learning and interacting with teachers and classmates. It is thought that this previously overlooked benefit will increase classroom participation and a sense of belonging among students. Kwihangana [4] examined a cohort of students at a college of technology in Rwanda to determine the effectiveness of translanguaging in classrooms by observing group activities and conducting focus group interviews. He adapted collaborative materials on reading, writing, listening, and speaking for use in group activities, which have a strong potential for stimulating group discussions. Observed students participating in group activities acknowledged that they could use the easiest language to speak with friends while translanguaging, which was highly helpful when translation was required because they could understand each other. Translanguaging was viewed as particularly beneficial for non-proficient students in terms of task comprehension. As for students in focus groups, they reported that translanguaging increased collaboration and enabled weaker students to express themselves more, which contributed to greater purposeful self-expression [3, 7]. Incorporating pedagogical translanguaging into multilingual classrooms can thereby foster a more equitable atmosphere for active expression and involvement, especially for those who have learning difficulties [7]. Moreover, pedagogical translanguaging can act as a bridge to connect students with varying degrees of fluency during teamwork. They can feel comfortable participating in discussions, so enhancing their motivation to learn the other languages.

Furthermore, the enhanced participation in classrooms may closely associated with reduction of expressing anxiety [25]. Translanguaging can therefore not only increase classroom participation, but also reduce language anxiety among students. Cenoz et al. [7] performed a study to see whether pedagogical translanguaging helped alleviate language classroom anxiety in the Basque autonomous community, where Basque, Spanish, and English are official languages and English is a foreign language. The data indicated that when students realize they can use prior knowledge to solve new problems in familiar languages, their anxiety is significantly reduced, and their confidence is greatly boosted. Oxford [26] acknowledges that anxious students are more concerned with what they cannot do than what they can. Even though weaker students are aware of their inability to express themselves in a foreign language, they are still able to participate in classroom discussions by using another language. This phenomenon explained how their multilingual abilities help present the positive aspects of translanguaging theory and establish a positive classroom atmosphere. Implementing pedagogical translanguaging provides anxious students with enhanced metalinguistic awareness, resulting in improved performance.

In addition to helping students improve classroom participation and reduce language anxiety, pedagogical translanguaging entails a greater understanding of academic information compared to the use of a single language. Students may listen to tape or read textbooks in one language, but report or paraphrase in another [1]. This idea illustrates that pedagogical translanguaging offers access to a broader range of information and activates multiple cognitive skills when switching between input and output languages. Cenoz and Santos [27] investigated the application of pedagogical translanguaging in a Basque secondary school. The findings revealed that when students were required to analyse the structure of news articles and explain them to their peers in different languages, they gained a deeper understanding of the collected information by assimilating new vocabulary or expressions in those languages. This is because the translanguaging process requires a significant amount of cognitive effort [8]. When students are permitted to transform language while working on a single problem, they can better comprehend it by integrating their previously acquired language skills, so boosting their ability to overcome academic difficulties.

As a result of the aforementioned three favourable functions of the pedagogical translanguaging, students have become increasingly accepting of translanguaging and more tolerant of translanguaging practices in the classroom. Moody and her colleagues [28] conducted a quantitative study on the attitudes of 182 university postgraduates regarding teachers' translanguaging via an online survey. Participants were deemed to have a positive attitude toward the question if the overall mean score was more than 3.5. When participants were asked about their opinions regarding translanguaging practices in L2 learning, the mean score was 4.13. It indicated that the majority of participants were supportive of implementing translanguaging in bilingual or multilingual classrooms. In a 2016 study, Rivera and Mazak [29] evaluated the perceptions of 29 undergraduate students regarding whether pedagogical translanguaging appeared to be a common or unusual phenomena in the classroom. The percentage of students who responded "very common" was 51%, whilst 33% of participants viewed the phenomenon as "common". Only one participant thought translanguaging in the classroom was weird. The above responses have demonstrated that students' tolerance for translanguaging use is growing. They are willing to accept the concept and benefit from this new language phenomena in the classroom.

5   Conclusion

Translanguaging has become a central concept in educational and non-educational fields across the globe. This article discusses the theoretical guiding role of translanguaging in language learning by examining its historical development. In addition, its expansion into the field of education, known as pedagogical translanguaging, has yielded new insights into whether it is advantageous for students' language learning through the evaluation of its functions. After reviewing the practices of translanguaging in multilingual classrooms, it is valid to use this concept as a theoretical lens for education-related research projects. Thus, the pedagogical tanslanguaging has been coined to adapt the current educational environment and implemented in classrooms in various ways pertaining to the acquisition of two or more languages. It is believed that pedagogical translanguaging can

serve as a catalyst to stimulate classroom participation. This is because translanguaging can facilitate the development of new cognitive skills by activating students' prior language knowledge. As a result, students can enhance greater self-assurance when presenting ideas, as opposed to developing a fear of making mistakes. As students become more engaged in the classroom, their language anxiety will decrease correspondingly. Pedagogical translanguaging addresses the issue that students fear expressing what they do not know; however, students can now use other languages to supplement their ideas and no longer have to worry about cognitive and psychological issues resulting from language barriers. Moreover, if learning occurs between two or more languages, the process of switching enhances students' understanding of academic knowledge because they need be exposed to the same material through different languages, which increases their exposure to knowledge. They also need to complete the cognitive transformation of knowledge during the input and output process. Translanguaging provides students with more space for learning and thinking. Although it has demonstrated several benefits in the field of education, its implementation should take into account the prevalent belief of monolingualism. Many teachers continue to insist on implementing monolingual policies in the classroom because they believe monolinguals can serve as models for language learning. Therefore, translanguaging implementation still faces some obstacles. It is vital to do further study in diverse circumstances in order to produce more convincing evidence that can aid in the reform of language separation ideology. A better understanding of the practice of translanguaging not only stimulates students' language-learning potential but also contributes to the implementation of modern language-teaching methods. This article, however, only discusses a small portion of the available research; future reviews should include more extensive research. In addition, teachers' attitudes toward monolingualism remain prevalent; therefore, it is recommended that future research investigate significant advantages of using translanguaging to embrace multilingualism.

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