

# Translanguaging Pedagogies And The Making Of Literate Multilinguals: A Cognitive And Sociocultural Inquiry

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## Abstract

Translanguaging has emerged as a powerful pedagogical strategy in multilingual classrooms, offering students the opportunity to leverage all their linguistic resources for learning. This paper investigates how translanguaging practices shape learners' metalinguistic awareness and literacy development across both dominant and marginalized languages. Drawing on sociocultural and cognitive-linguistic frameworks, the study examines classroom interactions, literacy assessments, and student reflections in multilingual African contexts. Findings are expected to reveal that translanguaging enhances students' ability to reflect on language structures, fosters literacy skills across multiple languages, and strengthens learners' linguistic and cultural identities. By situating these insights within broader debates on multilingual education and language equity, the research highlights how inclusive pedagogical approaches can address literacy disparities and promote cognitive and socio-emotional growth. The study contributes to ongoing discussions in applied linguistics, education, and sociolinguistics by providing empirical evidence on the efficacy and transformative potential of translanguaging in contemporary classrooms.

**Keywords:** *Translanguaging; Multilingual classrooms; Metalinguistic awareness; Literacy development; Sociocultural pedagogy; Language identity; Cognitive linguistics; African languages*

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## I. Introduction

### Voices in the Classroom:

Multilingual classrooms are increasingly common across Africa and other regions of the Global South, where students navigate multiple languages simultaneously in daily communication and formal education. In such contexts, the challenge of developing literacy is compounded by curricula that often privilege colonial or global languages, such as English or French, at the expense of students' indigenous tongues. This imbalance can lead to cognitive, cultural, and identity-related consequences, where learners struggle to see their full linguistic repertoire as a resource for learning and self-expression.

In many African countries and across much of the Global South classrooms are made up of learners who use several languages every day. They speak one language at home, another in the community, and often a different one in school. Developing literacy in such settings can be difficult, especially when the school curriculum gives more importance to languages like English or French and pays little attention to learners' own local languages. When this happens, students may struggle not only academically but also in terms of identity, confidence, and cultural connection. Their full linguistic abilities are rarely treated as strengths they can draw on in learning.

Translanguaging, which involves using all of a learner's languages flexibly and purposefully, has become an important approach for addressing this challenge. Instead of insisting that languages be kept separate, translanguaging encourages the use of students' home languages together with the school language to support understanding, deepen awareness of how language works, and build literacy in more than one language. Researchers such as García and Wei (2014) and Bialystok (2017) note that this approach not only boosts cognitive and linguistic growth but also helps affirm students' cultural and linguistic identities.

Even with increasing interest in translanguaging, there is still limited research on how it actually improves learners' metalinguistic awareness and literacy in multilingual African classrooms where languages like Kiswahili, EkeGusii, and other indigenous languages are used. We still need clearer evidence on which strategies work best, how they help students understand language structure, and how literacy outcomes differ across languages. There is also little research on the broader social and cultural effects of translanguaging particularly its role in promoting fairness, respect for learners' languages, and cultural inclusion in education.

This paper aims to contribute to filling these gaps by examining how translanguaging practices influence learners' metalinguistic awareness and literacy development in multilingual classrooms. The study focuses on three key areas:

1. How translanguaging helps students think about and understand how language works.
2. Which classroom practices most effectively build literacy in both dominant and indigenous languages.
3. How translanguaging supports learners' sense of linguistic and cultural identity, creating more inclusive and equitable learning spaces.

By centering students' experiences and real classroom practices, this paper highlights the cognitive, instructional, and sociocultural value of translanguaging and offers insights that teachers can use in diverse, multilingual learning environments.

## **II. Literature Review**

### **Conceptualizing Translanguaging**

Translanguaging describes the flexible and fluid way multilingual people use all their languages when communicating. Instead of treating languages as separate boxes, translanguaging shows how speakers draw on their full linguistic abilities as one connected system. García and Li Wei (2014) describe it as a process where multilingual users bring together all their languages to make meaning.

In many African classrooms, translanguaging is a powerful tool for promoting fairness in education. It allows learners to use the languages they know best, which strengthens understanding, supports participation, and affirms their cultural identities. By valuing students' home languages, teachers create more inclusive classrooms and offer multilingual learners a more equal learning experience (Canagarajah, 2011).

### **Translanguaging and Metalinguistic Awareness**

Metalinguistic awareness—the ability to think about and reflect on how language works—is essential for building strong literacy skills. Translanguaging helps develop this awareness because it encourages students to compare features of the different languages they use. As they switch between languages, learners naturally examine differences in grammar, word formation, and sound patterns (García & Kleifgen, 2020).

This process strengthens key skills such as phonological awareness, morphological awareness, and knowledge of spelling patterns, all of which support reading and writing. Tighe and Fernandes (2019) note that such skills are central to learning how to read words successfully. By creating opportunities for students to talk about how languages are structured, translanguaging helps them become more reflective and confident language users.

### **Translanguaging and Literacy Performance**

Research consistently shows that translanguaging can improve literacy outcomes. When students are allowed to use both their home languages and the language of instruction, they often perform better in reading comprehension, writing tasks, and overall learning. Mbirimi-Hungwe (2023), for example, found that South African learners became more engaged and showed stronger understanding of classroom content when translanguaging practices were used.

Translanguaging also promotes critical literacy. It helps students look at texts through multiple cultural and linguistic perspectives, encouraging deeper analysis and interpretation. This richer engagement with texts is especially valuable in diverse classrooms where students bring different experiences and language backgrounds.

### **Cognitive, Social, and Pedagogical Dimensions**

Translanguaging does more than support reading and writing; it also contributes to cognitive and social development. Cognitively, it strengthens skills linked to executive function, such as memory, attention, and the ability to shift between tasks (Bialystok, 2011). Socially, translanguaging creates supportive learning spaces where students can express complex ideas in the language they feel most comfortable using. This reduces anxiety, boosts confidence, and encourages active participation (Hornberger & Link, 2012).

### **Translanguaging and Metalinguistic Awareness**

#### **Contextual Relevance: Africa and Multilingual Classrooms**

In Africa, multilingualism is the norm rather than the exception. Many students navigate several indigenous languages alongside colonial or official languages of instruction. Research in Kenya, South Africa, and Ghana highlights the challenges learners face when instruction is conducted solely in a high-prestige language, which often limits comprehension and reduces engagement (Heugh, 2011). Translanguaging strategies provide a mechanism to leverage students' linguistic repertoires for learning while fostering equity and inclusion.

Furthermore, translanguaging in African classrooms is closely tied to language policy debates. National curricula often recognize multiple languages in theory but enforce monolingual instruction in practice, reflecting

lingering colonial legacies. By foregrounding translanguaging, educators can reconcile policy mandates with students' linguistic realities, promoting both cognitive development and socio-cultural affirmation.

### **Challenges and Considerations**

Despite its potential, translanguaging is not without challenges. Teachers often lack sufficient preparation to implement it effectively, resulting in inconsistent practices or misconceptions about its purpose. Curriculum constraints and high-stakes testing environments may limit opportunities for multilingual instruction. Additionally, entrenched language hierarchies and parental attitudes that favor dominant languages can create resistance to the inclusion of home languages in formal education (Baker, 2011). Addressing these challenges requires teacher training, policy alignment, and community engagement to ensure that translanguaging practices are sustainable and contextually appropriate.

The literature underscores that translanguaging is a powerful pedagogical strategy with significant potential to enhance metalinguistic awareness and literacy development among multilingual learners. At the same time, its effective implementation depends on teacher preparedness, supportive policies, and broader sociocultural recognition of students' linguistic resources. The current study builds on these findings by examining how translanguaging practices specifically influence literacy outcomes and cognitive reflection in multilingual classrooms, situating the analysis within the African educational context.

## **III. Research Methodology**

### **Research Design**

This study uses a qualitative case study approach. This design is suitable because it allows the researcher to explore a complex issue in this case, translanguaging within its natural classroom setting. By focusing closely on real classroom interactions, the study is able to provide detailed insights into how translanguaging shapes students' metalinguistic awareness and literacy outcomes.

### **Research Questions**

The study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. How do translanguaging practices in multilingual classrooms affect students' metalinguistic awareness?
2. How do these practices influence students' literacy performance in different languages?
3. How do teachers and students perceive the use of translanguaging as a classroom strategy?

### **Participants**

The research was carried out in two multilingual classrooms in Nairobi, Kenya. Each class had about 25 learners aged between 10 and 12. These classrooms were chosen because the students come from diverse linguistic backgrounds and the teachers regularly use translanguaging during lessons. The learners speak Kiswahili, English, and several indigenous Kenyan languages.

Two teachers, each with between five and ten years of experience in multilingual settings, also took part in the study. Both teachers actively integrate translanguaging strategies into their teaching.

### **Data Collection Methods**

To build a well-rounded understanding of how translanguaging works in these classrooms, the study used several methods:

1. **Classroom Observations:** Over six weeks, non-participant observations were carried out to record when and how translanguaging occurred. Field notes captured the context, frequency, and nature of these practices.
2. **Interviews:** Semi-structured interviews with teachers and students provided personal perspectives on their experiences with translanguaging.
3. **Document Analysis:** Samples of learners' work—such as written assignments and projects—were examined to understand their literacy development and how they used their languages in writing.
4. **Audio-Visual Recordings:** Selected classroom sessions were audio-recorded to analyze how both teachers and students made linguistic choices during translanguaging moments.

### **Data Analysis**

The study followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis process. This involved:

1. Getting familiar with the data by transcribing recordings and reviewing notes and documents.
2. Identifying key ideas that relate to the research questions.
3. Grouping these ideas into preliminary themes.
4. Refining the themes to ensure they accurately represent the data.
5. Clearly defining and naming the final themes.
6. Writing a coherent report that explains the findings and connects them back to the research questions.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Ethical approval was obtained from the appropriate educational authorities. All participants gave informed consent, and confidentiality was ensured by removing identifying information. Participants were also informed that they could withdraw from the study at any stage without any consequences.

### **Limitations**

Although the case study design allows for rich, detailed insights, the findings may not apply to all multilingual classrooms. Additionally, because the study is based in Nairobi, its conclusions may reflect linguistic and educational characteristics specific to this context.

## **IV. Data Presentation And Analysis**

### **Overview**

This section summarizes what was discovered from classroom observations, interviews with teachers and students, document reviews, and audio-visual recordings. The information is organized into key themes that help answer the main research questions, particularly how translanguaging affects students' metalinguistic awareness and their overall literacy development.

### **Translanguaging Practices in Multilingual Classrooms**

Classroom observations revealed that students frequently engaged in translanguaging to negotiate meaning, clarify instructions, and express complex ideas. Key practices included:

#### **Code-Meshing in Writing: Educational Implications and Practical Considerations**

In multilingual classrooms, students often use code-meshing blending elements of different languages such as Kiswahili, English, and local languages within the same piece of writing. This practice allows learners to first express complex ideas in the language they know best before translating them into the target language for final submission. Doing so deepens understanding and reflects the idea from the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis (in its weaker form) that language influences thought. As students move between languages, they begin to notice structures, meanings, and patterns, which strengthens their metalinguistic awareness and supports literacy development.

However, code-meshing can be challenging, especially when teachers do not speak the students' home languages. Without a shared linguistic background, teachers may struggle to interpret early drafts, provide feedback, or support students through the translation process. This gap can reduce the potential benefits of code-meshing and lead to misunderstandings or missed learning opportunities.

To overcome these challenges, several strategies can help. Creating a classroom environment that values multilingualism encourages students to collaborate and support each other. Peers who understand both languages can assist their classmates. Teachers can also design structured translanguaging activities, guiding students on when and how to use their full linguistic repertoire. Professional development on multilingual teaching approaches can further equip teachers to support code-meshing effectively.

In summary, despite its practical challenges, code-meshing offers significant cognitive and literacy benefits. With supportive teaching strategies and an inclusive learning environment, educators can use code-meshing to promote deeper learning and celebrate linguistic diversity.

#### **Oral Language Switching:**

In multilingual classrooms, the ability for students to express ideas in their home language greatly supports understanding and participation. Sometimes, even when a teacher knows what a student is trying to say, the student may still struggle to express the idea in the language of instruction. During discussions, students often switch between languages for example, explaining a concept in Kiswahili before summarizing it in English. This helps them make sense of ideas and work together effectively.

This practice is consistent with the weak form of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, which argues that language influences thought rather than determining it. When a student first thinks through an idea in their strongest language, they use familiar cognitive tools to understand it. Translating the idea into English requires them to think about differences in grammar, meaning, and expression, which builds metalinguistic awareness.

Educationally, such switching is valuable because it supports comprehension, encourages flexible thinking, and helps students transfer knowledge across languages. However, it also presents challenges: if students cannot express ideas in the language of instruction, they may struggle with assessments or classroom participation. This highlights the need for strategies such as peer support, scaffolding, and guided translation to help students bridge the gap between languages while still benefiting from their home language.

### **Peer Scaffolding:**

Translanguaging also plays a key role in peer learning. In many multilingual classrooms, students who are more proficient in several languages help their classmates by translating instructions, explaining concepts, or clarifying terms. This peer scaffolding supports comprehension, encourages collaboration, and helps everyone engage more deeply with the material. For example, a student who struggles with a concept in English may first discuss it in Kiswahili with a peer, then present it in English to the class.

Cognitively, this process fits with the Sapir-Whorf idea that language influences thought. When learners use a familiar language to understand new concepts, they can think more clearly, compare linguistic structures, and then transfer this understanding into the language of instruction. This builds both metalinguistic awareness and cross-linguistic flexibility.

Educationally, peer translanguaging reduces anxiety, increases participation, and strengthens classroom community. However, its success depends on the skills of the assisting student and the teacher's guidance to ensure accuracy and alignment with learning goals.

Well-implemented peer scaffolding leads to better comprehension, higher engagement, and more equitable participation, especially where students' home languages differ from the language of instruction. It shows that multilingualism is a strength not a barrier.

### **Influence on Metalinguistic Awareness**

Analysis of classroom interactions, student work, and interviews shows that translanguaging significantly boosts students' metalinguistic awareness their ability to reflect on and understand language structure. This awareness is essential for literacy development because it helps learners understand how language works and compare different linguistic systems.

Students frequently used code-meshing, switched languages during discussions, and relied on peer support. These practices pushed them to explain ideas in their home language and then reformulate them in English. In doing so, they became more aware of differences in grammar, vocabulary, and discourse rules. Peer discussions also helped them question and clarify linguistic choices.

These findings reinforce the idea that translanguaging enhances problem-solving, strengthens understanding of language structure, and supports the transfer of skills across languages. Consistent with the weak Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, translanguaging helps learners use all their linguistic resources to think, understand, and communicate effectively.

Overall, translanguaging is a purposeful pedagogical approach that supports cognitive development, reflective language use, and multilingual literacy.

### **Cross-Linguistic Comparisons:**

Engaging students in comparing languages such as analyzing verb patterns in Kiswahili and English has strong cognitive and educational benefits. These comparisons encourage learners to reflect on language rules and structures, strengthening metalinguistic awareness. This helps them identify patterns, transfer skills across languages, and develop stronger literacy and problem-solving abilities.

Over time, such comparisons help students internalize grammar and syntax more effectively, improving both comprehension and writing in the language of instruction. While students may at first rely on their home languages to make sense of concepts, these comparisons eventually lead to a deeper understanding of English or any other target language.

However, teachers must still provide guidance to ensure students meet academic language standards. Translanguaging alone does not guarantee mastery of formal grammar, vocabulary, or writing conventions. Without structured support, students may unintentionally transfer non-standard features into their academic work.

When implemented with proper scaffolding, cross-linguistic comparison allows students to use their linguistic strengths while gradually meeting the expectations of the language of instruction. This supports both cognitive development and long-term academic success.

### **Reflective Language Use:**

Interviews with students revealed that translanguaging fosters reflective language use, whereby learners consciously monitor and evaluate their linguistic choices. Students reported noticing subtle differences in vocabulary, syntax, and discourse structures when switching between languages, and they were able to adapt their expressions to suit the context or audience. This reflective practice enhances metalinguistic awareness, enabling learners to think critically about how language operates and how meaning is negotiated across languages (García & Li Wei, 2014).

However, the extent to which students gain this benefit differs from one learner to another and depends heavily on the learning environment. A student's language proficiency, the level of support they receive in class, their exposure to multiple languages, and the guidance provided by the teacher all shape how well they can reflect

on language use. For example, students who are strong readers and writers in both their home language and the language used in school are more likely to engage in deeper metalinguistic thinking. In contrast, learners who struggle in one of their languages often focus more on simply understanding the content rather than analyzing how language works.

Classroom conditions also matter. In schools where translanguaging is discouraged or where teachers have little training in multilingual teaching methods, students have fewer chances to use language reflectively.

In short, while translanguaging can help students think more deeply about language and strengthen their cognitive skills, its success depends on the context. Students benefit most when teachers intentionally structure activities, offer consistent support, and expose learners to a wide range of linguistic experiences.

**Problem-Solving Strategies:** The data indicate that translanguaging functions as an effective problem-solving strategy, enabling students to navigate comprehension challenges by leveraging their home languages. When learners encounter complex concepts in the language of instruction, they often revert to their more dominant or familiar languages to clarify meaning, reorganize ideas, or identify gaps in understanding. This process demonstrates heightened metalinguistic skills, as students are required to reflect consciously on linguistic structures and meaning across languages, analyzing similarities and differences to resolve ambiguities.

For instance, one teacher observed:

*"When students explain an English concept in Kiswahili, they actually understand the rules better, they see the connections and differences between the two languages."*

This observation aligns with earlier findings on cross-linguistic comparisons and reflective language use. By first conceptualizing a concept in their home language, students engage in deliberate reflection on vocabulary, syntax, and discourse, which reinforces their understanding of the target language. Similarly, peer scaffolding complements this process, as students often collaborate to negotiate meaning, discuss linguistic choices, and resolve misunderstandings collectively.

From a cognitive perspective, these problem-solving strategies exemplify the benefits of translanguaging for executive functioning and cognitive flexibility. Drawing on multiple languages allows learners to process information through different linguistic and conceptual frameworks, enhancing critical thinking and analytical skills (Bialystok, 2011). It also strengthens metalinguistic awareness by encouraging students to identify structural patterns, infer rules, and make cross-linguistic connections skills that are essential for literacy development and academic achievement.

Educationally, the strategic use of home languages as a scaffolding tool demonstrates that translanguaging is not merely compensatory; rather, it is a purposeful pedagogical practice that deepens comprehension, supports problem-solving, and fosters meaningful engagement with content. When integrated with structured classroom support and guided reflection, it reinforces the learning outcomes highlighted in previous sections, including improved metalinguistic awareness, reflective language use, and the ability to compare grammatical and syntactic structures across languages.

### **Impact on Literacy Performance**

Findings from classroom observations and document analysis show that translanguaging has a clear and positive effect on students' literacy skills. These benefits were seen in how well students understood texts, how they wrote, and how actively they participated in lessons. Overall, the results highlight the value of using students' full language abilities as part of teaching and learning.

### **Improved Comprehension**

Students who used translanguaging strategies showed better understanding of reading texts, especially those written in English. When learners used their home languages to explain difficult words or make sense of complex ideas, they were able to grasp the content more easily. This supports García and Li Wei's (2014) argument that translanguaging is a flexible thinking tool that helps learners build meaning using all the languages they know. In this way, translanguaging creates a bridge between what students already understand in their home language and the new information presented in the language of instruction. As a result, learners develop deeper comprehension and remember academic content more effectively.

**Enhanced Writing Skills:** Analysis of student drafts revealed that multilingual writing often exhibited richer vocabulary, more coherent ideas, and improved organization. Translanguaging enabled students to initially express thoughts in the language in which they were most competent, allowing for more precise articulation of ideas. Subsequent translation or reformulation into the target language encouraged reflective editing, cross-linguistic comparison, and attention to grammar and syntax. This process not only strengthened writing skills but

also reinforced metalinguistic awareness, as students became conscious of structural differences and semantic nuances across languages (Bialystok, 2011).

#### **Engagement and Motivation:**

The study found a strong connection between translanguaging and students' overall engagement. When learners were allowed to use all the languages they know, they became more motivated to take part in class discussions, reading tasks, and writing activities. This freedom helped them participate more actively and work better with their peers, as they no longer felt limited by language barriers. Over time, this increased motivation led to better performance in both spoken and written assessments, showing that building students' confidence in their languages can boost their academic success.

Overall, these findings demonstrate that translanguaging is not merely a compensatory mechanism for struggling learners; it is a strategic pedagogical practice that enhances comprehension, supports the development of advanced writing skills, and promotes sustained engagement. By allowing students to navigate between languages, educators can foster an inclusive learning environment that respects linguistic diversity while simultaneously cultivating literacy and cognitive growth in the language of instruction.

#### **Teachers' Perspectives**

Teachers in the study agreed that translanguaging is a very useful teaching approach. They noted that when students are allowed to use their home languages alongside the language of instruction, they understand lessons better, participate more actively, and develop stronger awareness of how language works. Teachers also observed that this flexibility helps students think more clearly, express their ideas more fully, and work together more effectively.

However, the teachers also pointed out that there are challenges that make it difficult to use translanguaging consistently. These include classroom constraints, differences in student language abilities, and limited support or training on how to apply translanguaging effectively in multilingual settings.

#### **Balancing Language Use:**

Teachers highlighted the importance of guiding students to use translanguaging purposefully rather than as a compensatory crutch. While home languages can scaffold understanding, excessive reliance on them may impede proficiency in the target language. For example, students might default to their strongest language during tasks, limiting their practice and mastery of English or Kiswahili the primary languages of instruction. Teachers therefore emphasized the need for structured translanguaging strategies, where the home language is used to support comprehension, reflection, and planning, but the final product or oral presentation aligns with the language of instruction.

#### **Curriculum Constraints:**

Standardized assessments and formal curriculum requirements often prioritize monolingual proficiency, creating tension between translanguaging practices and academic expectations. Teachers reported difficulties integrating translanguaging in graded tasks, as students are evaluated based on adherence to target-language norms. This highlights a structural challenge: while translanguaging can enhance learning and literacy development, prevailing assessment frameworks may inadvertently discourage its use. Teachers stressed the importance of curricular flexibility and policy recognition of multilingual competencies to allow students to benefit fully from translanguaging practices.

#### **Professional Development Needs:**

Many teachers said they want more training and support to use translanguaging effectively. Although they understand its benefits, they often don't have formal strategies for including multiple languages in lesson plans, classroom activities, or assessments. Training could help them learn how to scaffold learning, create tasks that encourage using different languages, and assess students' multilingual work while still meeting curriculum standards. This kind of professional support is important to make sure translanguaging actually improves learning without conflicting with the required language of instruction.

**Additional Considerations:** Teachers also noted contextual factors affecting translanguaging implementation. Large class sizes, heterogeneous linguistic backgrounds, and limited classroom resources sometimes constrained their ability to provide individualized support. Moreover, societal and institutional attitudes toward home languages influenced both teacher practices and student willingness to use translanguaging openly. Teachers emphasized that creating an inclusive classroom culture that values multilingualism and legitimizes home languages is essential for translanguaging to reach its full pedagogical potential.

While teachers perceive translanguaging as a valuable strategy for fostering comprehension, literacy, and engagement, its effectiveness depends on careful guidance, alignment with curricular standards, teacher training, and supportive classroom environments. Addressing these challenges is crucial for ensuring that translanguaging serves as a bridge to linguistic and cognitive development rather than a barrier to formal academic achievement.

### **Emerging Themes**

The analysis of classroom observations, student interviews, document review, and teacher perspectives revealed three overarching themes that encapsulate the role and impact of translanguaging in multilingual classrooms. These themes highlight both the cognitive benefits for students and the practical considerations for educators and institutions.

### **Linguistic Resourcefulness**

A key finding is that students are able to use all the languages they know Kiswahili, English, and their home languages to make sense of ideas, explain concepts, and work together in learning activities. By switching between languages strategically, they can express complex thoughts, clarify misunderstandings with peers, and fill gaps in comprehension. This shows that students see languages not as separate, rigid systems but as flexible tools that can work together to create meaning. Activities like alternating languages in discussions, writing drafts that mix languages, and supporting each other through peer learning illustrate how students adapt their language use to meet both thinking and communication needs, while also taking ownership of their learning.

### **Cognitive and Metalinguistic Gains**

Using multiple languages also boosts students' thinking and language awareness. They become more aware of how languages work, including vocabulary, grammar, and sentence structures, by comparing and reflecting across languages. Strategies such as first explaining an idea in a home language and then translating it into English help students think more critically and understand concepts more deeply. This supports the idea that language influences thought, as suggested by the weak form of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis. Additionally, students' ability to reflect on and adjust their language choices shows how translanguaging develops important metalinguistic skills, which are essential for literacy, academic success, and lifelong learning. Overall, using multiple languages in this way promotes thoughtful engagement rather than just surface-level language use.

### **Pedagogical and Institutional Tensions**

Despite its benefits, the study identified several challenges related to the pedagogical and institutional context. Teachers highlighted difficulties in balancing home language use with the requirement to meet target-language standards, noting that excessive reliance on home languages could potentially hinder the development of formal proficiency. Standardized assessments, curriculum constraints, and institutional emphasis on monolingual benchmarks often limit opportunities for translanguaging in graded tasks. Additionally, teachers expressed a need for professional development to effectively implement structured translanguaging strategies while maintaining alignment with curriculum objectives (Creese & Blackledge, 2010). Contextual factors, including class size, heterogeneous linguistic backgrounds, and limited resources, further complicated classroom implementation. These tensions underscore that translanguaging, while pedagogically valuable, requires careful planning, teacher training, and institutional support to maximize its benefits and minimize potential drawbacks.

Together, these themes illuminate a complex picture of translanguaging in multilingual classrooms. Linguistic resourcefulness highlights the strategic agency of students; cognitive and metalinguistic gains demonstrate the intellectual and academic benefits; and pedagogical and institutional tensions reveal the practical realities that teachers and schools must navigate. Recognizing and addressing these interconnected factors is essential for creating classroom environments where translanguaging not only enhances literacy and cognitive development but also aligns with formal educational standards and policy frameworks.

## **V. Conclusion**

The study shows that using translanguaging in multilingual classrooms significantly supports students' thinking and literacy skills. By drawing on all the languages they know, students are better able to understand difficult concepts, make sense of reading materials, and express themselves clearly in both writing and speech. They develop stronger awareness of how language works, reflect on their language choices, and solve problems across different languages. Techniques like blending languages in writing (code-meshing), switching languages during discussions, helping one another, and comparing languages help students clarify ideas and organize their thoughts effectively.

Teachers see translanguaging as a powerful way to boost understanding, participation, and literacy. However, they also face challenges, such as managing how multiple languages are used, aligning activities with

curriculum goals and assessments, and needing more training on how to use translanguaging effectively. This shows that while translanguaging has great benefits, it works best when classrooms are well-planned, teachers are supported, and schools formally recognize multilingual practices.

Overall, the study highlights that translanguaging is not just a way to “fill gaps” in learning it is a purposeful teaching approach that encourages thinking, flexibility with language, and improved literacy. To make the most of it, supportive policies and proper teacher preparation are essential.

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