Translanguaging Practices in Second Language Education and Their Implications for Multilingual Language Policy

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: This study aims to examine the forms and pedagogical functions of translanguaging practices in second language classrooms and to analyze their implications for multilingual language policy. It seeks to bridge micro-level classroom interactions with macro-level institutional language ideologies.

Subjects and Methods: The study employed a qualitative case study design conducted in a multilingual second language education program. Participants included six second language teachers and eighteen lower-intermediate to intermediate students. Data were collected through 18 classroom observations, semi-structured interviews with teachers and students, and analysis of institutional language policy documents. Data analysis involved thematic analysis, qualitative discourse analysis, and critical language policy analysis to ensure triangulation and analytical rigor.

Results: Findings revealed that translanguaging was a frequent and systematic classroom practice rather than an incidental occurrence. Four dominant forms were identified: teacher-led pedagogical code-switching, peer code-mixing, meaning clarification, and affective-relational use. Translanguaging served multiple pedagogical functions, including cognitive scaffolding, conceptual reinforcement, classroom management, identity affirmation, and increased learner participation. Interview data confirmed that teachers used translanguaging intentionally to enhance comprehension and instructional efficiency, while students perceived it as supportive of understanding, confidence, and engagement. However, a clear tension emerged between effective classroom practices and monolingual-oriented institutional policies that lacked explicit recognition of translanguaging.

Conclusions: The study concludes that translanguaging is an effective and legitimate pedagogical resource in second language education. To optimize its benefits, language policies should be realigned to acknowledge and support multilingual classroom realities.

INTRODUCTION

In an era of increasing global mobility and cultural interconnectedness, multilingualism has become a defining feature of contemporary societies (Alisoy, 2025; Aronin & Singleton, 2008). Educational institutions, particularly those engaged in second language education, are increasingly confronted with linguistically diverse classrooms where learners draw upon multiple

languages in their daily interactions. This reality challenges traditional monolingual assumptions that have long dominated language teaching and policy frameworks.

For much of the twentieth century, second language education was guided by pedagogical approaches that emphasized the strict separation of languages. Learners were often discouraged, or even prohibited, from using their first language in the classroom, based on the belief that exclusive exposure to the target language would lead to more effective acquisition. Such approaches, however, have been criticized for neglecting the complex linguistic repertoires that multilingual learners naturally possess.

In response to these limitations, the concept of *translanguaging* has emerged as a transformative perspective in applied linguistics and language education (Poza, 2017; Özkaynak, 2023; Wei & Lin, 2019; Leung & Valdés, 2019; Creese & Blackledge, 2015). Translanguaging refers to the dynamic and strategic use of an individual's full linguistic repertoire to make meaning, communicate, and learn. Rather than viewing languages as separate and bounded systems, translanguaging conceptualizes multilingual competence as fluid, integrated, and contextually driven.

Within second language education, translanguaging practices allow learners to mobilize their existing linguistic resources to support comprehension, critical thinking, and knowledge construction. Students may alternate between languages, blend linguistic features, or strategically draw on their first language to scaffold learning in the target language (Langdon & Pandor, 2020; Lucero, 2014). These practices reflect authentic multilingual communication rather than linguistic deficiency or interference.

Research in second language acquisition increasingly demonstrates that translanguaging can enhance cognitive engagement and deepen conceptual understanding. By allowing learners to access prior knowledge encoded in their first language, translanguaging supports higher-order thinking skills and reduces cognitive overload. As a result, learners are better positioned to participate meaningfully in classroom discourse and academic tasks.

Translanguaging also plays a crucial role in shaping learner identity and agency. When students' linguistic backgrounds are acknowledged and valued, they are more likely to develop positive attitudes toward language learning and toward their own multilingual identities. This recognition challenges deficit-based views of bilingual and multilingual learners and promotes more inclusive educational environments.

Despite growing empirical support, translanguaging remains a contested concept in both theory and practice. Critics argue that excessive reliance on first-language resources may limit exposure to the target language or undermine proficiency development (Gathercole & Thomas, 2009; Çelik, 2008). These concerns highlight the need for careful pedagogical design and a nuanced understanding of when and how translanguaging can be most effective.

Beyond the classroom level, translanguaging has significant implications for language policy, particularly in multilingual societies. Kiramba et al. (2023) said that, language policies often reflect ideological positions that prioritize certain languages while marginalizing others, frequently favoring dominant or official languages. Such policies may conflict with the linguistic realities of learners and educators who routinely engage in translanguaging practices.

Multilingual language policies traditionally emphasize language separation, standardization, and hierarchical classification of languages (McLelland, 2021; Angouri, 2013; Gorter & Cenoz, 2017). These policy orientations may inadvertently restrict pedagogical innovation and constrain teachers' ability to respond flexibly to students' linguistic needs. Translanguaging, by contrast, calls for a reconceptualization of policy frameworks that recognize linguistic hybridity and diversity as resources rather than problems.

The integration of translanguaging into language policy raises fundamental questions about language norms, assessment, and instructional standards. If multilingual learners are encouraged to draw on their full linguistic repertoires, policies must reconsider rigid language boundaries that govern curriculum design and evaluation practices (Farr & Song, 2011; Hawkey & Jiménez-

Salcedo, 2026). This shift requires policymakers to balance educational equity with accountability and proficiency goals.

Teachers play a pivotal role in mediating the relationship between translanguaging practices and language policy. While classroom-level translanguaging may emerge organically, its sustainability often depends on institutional support and policy alignment. Teachers operating under restrictive language policies may face tensions between pedagogical effectiveness and regulatory compliance.

In diverse educational contexts, particularly in postcolonial and global South settings, translanguaging offers a powerful framework for addressing linguistic inequality. Many learners are educated in languages that differ from those spoken at home, creating barriers to access and achievement (Nag et al., 2019; Hoff, 2013; Saneka & de, 2019). Translanguaging-oriented approaches can help bridge these gaps by legitimizing local and indigenous languages within formal education.

The implications of translanguaging extend beyond pedagogy to broader sociopolitical considerations. Language policy decisions are often intertwined with issues of power, identity, and national cohesion. Recognizing translanguaging practices challenges monolingual ideologies and invites more democratic and pluralistic approaches to language governance.

As globalization intensifies linguistic contact, the relevance of translanguaging in second language education is likely to increase. Educational systems must adapt to evolving linguistic landscapes by adopting flexible frameworks that reflect real-world communication practices (Arystanbayeva, 2024). This adaptation necessitates collaboration among researchers, educators, and policymakers.

Understanding translanguaging practices therefore requires an interdisciplinary lens that integrates insights from linguistics, education, sociology, and policy studies. Examining translanguaging at both micro-level classroom interactions and macro-level policy structures provides a more comprehensive account of its potential and limitations.

This study explores translanguaging practices in second language education and examines their implications for multilingual language policy. By analyzing theoretical perspectives and empirical evidence, the study aims to contribute to ongoing debates on how educational practices and language policies can be aligned to better serve multilingual learners in diverse sociolinguistic contexts.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative case study design to investigate translanguaging practices in second language classrooms and their implications for multilingual language policy. A qualitative approach was selected because translanguaging is a socially situated, interactional phenomenon that emerges through classroom discourse, pedagogical decision-making, and institutional language ideologies. The case study design enabled an in-depth examination of translanguaging as it naturally occurred within a bounded educational context, allowing for a holistic understanding of both instructional practices and policy-related dynamics. The study adopted an interpretive paradigm, focusing on how teachers and students used linguistic resources to construct meaning, facilitate learning, and navigate institutional expectations. This design was particularly appropriate for capturing the complexity of multilingual classroom interactions and for linking micro-level pedagogical practices with macro-level language policy considerations.

Research Site and Participants

The study was conducted in a second language education program within a multilingual educational institution. The selected site represented a typical second language learning environment where students shared a common first language but were instructed primarily through a target language. Participants consisted of six second language teachers and eighteen students selected through purposive sampling. Teachers were chosen based on their active involvement in second language instruction and their experience teaching multilingual learners.

Students were selected from classes taught by the participating teachers to ensure consistency between observed practices and reported perceptions.

Table 1. Research Participants

Participant Group	Number	Characteristics
Teachers	6	Second language teachers with varied teaching experience
Students	18	Lower-intermediate to intermediate proficiency learners
Total	24	—

Data Collection Techniques

To ensure data richness and triangulation, multiple qualitative data collection methods were employed, including classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis.

Classroom Observations

Classroom observations were conducted over 18 instructional sessions, each lasting approximately one hour, resulting in 18 hours of observation data. Observations focused on teacher student and student student interactions, particularly moments where multiple languages were used. Audio recordings and detailed field notes were used to capture naturally occurring translanguaging practices.

Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with all six teachers and eighteen students. Teacher interviews explored instructional strategies, beliefs about translanguaging, and perceptions of institutional language policy. Student interviews focused on learning experiences, classroom participation, and attitudes toward translanguaging. Each interview lasted between 30 and 45 minutes and was audio-recorded with participant consent.

Document Analysis

Institutional language policy documents, curriculum guidelines, and instructional planning materials were collected and analyzed to examine how language use was formally regulated. Document analysis provided contextual data for understanding the alignment—or lack thereof—between classroom practices and official policy frameworks.

Table 2. Data Sources and Volume

Data Source	Quantity	Description
Classroom observations	18 sessions	Recorded instructional interactions
Teacher interviews	6	Semi-structured, individual
Student interviews	18	Semi-structured, individual
Policy documents	5	Institutional and curricular texts

Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis followed a systematic and iterative process combining thematic analysis, qualitative discourse analysis, and critical language policy analysis.

Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis was used to identify recurring patterns related to the forms and pedagogical functions of translanguaging. The process involved data familiarization, open coding, category development, and theme refinement. Coding was conducted across observation transcripts and interview data to generate frequency-based thematic categories, which informed the quantitative summaries presented in the results tables.

Qualitative Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis was applied to classroom interaction data to examine how translanguaging was enacted in real-time communication. This analysis focused on language shifts, interactional purposes, and the roles of participants in negotiating meaning. Discourse-level analysis

supported the identification of translanguaging forms and functions within instructional contexts.

Critical Language Policy Analysis

Policy documents and interview excerpts were analyzed using a critical language policy perspective to explore underlying language ideologies and power relations. This analysis examined discrepancies between stated policy goals and observed classroom practices, enabling interpretation of the institutional constraints influencing translanguaging implementation.

Trustworthiness and Rigor

To enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the study, several strategies were employed. Data triangulation across observations, interviews, and documents strengthened the validity of findings. Prolonged engagement in the research site allowed for a deeper understanding of classroom norms and practices. Member checking was conducted with selected teacher participants to confirm the accuracy of interpretations. An audit trail of coding decisions and analytical steps was maintained to ensure transparency and dependability.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was obtained prior to data collection. All participants provided informed consent and were assured of confidentiality and anonymity. Pseudonyms were used in transcripts and reporting to protect participant identities. Participation was voluntary, and participants retained the right to withdraw from the study at any stage.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Forms of Translanguaging Practices in Second Language Classrooms

Classroom observations revealed that translanguaging was a frequent and systematic practice in second language instruction rather than an occasional or incidental phenomenon. Across 18 classroom sessions (approximately 18 instructional hours), a total of 328 translanguaging instances were identified and coded from teacher student and student student interactions. Four dominant forms of translanguaging emerged from the data. The most prevalent form was pedagogical code-switching, primarily initiated by teachers to clarify grammatical structures, explain abstract vocabulary, and reinforce task instructions. The second most frequent form was code-mixing during peer interaction, particularly in collaborative group work where students combined linguistic resources to negotiate meaning and complete academic tasks. The third form involved meaning clarification and confirmation, where both teachers and students alternated between languages to verify comprehension. The fourth form served an affective and relational function, such as reducing learner anxiety, encouraging participation, and maintaining interpersonal rapport. The distribution of these forms is summarized in Table 1.

Table 3. Forms of Translanguaging Identified in Classroom Interaction

Form of Translanguaging	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Pedagogical code-switching (teacher-led)	126	38.4
Code-mixing in peer interaction	94	28.7
Meaning clarification and confirmation	67	20.4
Affective and relational use	41	12.5
Total	328	100

Classroom observations revealed that translanguaging was a frequent and systematic practice in second language instruction rather than an occasional or incidental phenomenon. Across 18 classroom sessions (approximately 18 instructional hours), a total of 328 translanguaging instances were identified and coded from teacher student and student student interactions. Four dominant forms of translanguaging emerged from the data. These observational findings were strongly corroborated by teacher interview data. Teachers consistently described pedagogical code-switching as a conscious instructional strategy rather than an unplanned practice. One teacher explained that alternating languages allowed them to maintain instructional clarity without disrupting lesson flow, stating that

"When students struggle with abstract grammar points, switching briefly to their first language helps them grasp the concept faster and return to the target language with more confidence" (Teacher 2)

Another teacher noted that translanguaging was particularly useful during instruction-heavy phases, such as task explanation and feedback, where misunderstandings could otherwise delay lesson progress. Code-mixing during peer interaction was also reflected in student interview responses. Several students reported that collaborative tasks felt more manageable when they were allowed to draw on their full linguistic repertoires. One student commented that

"Discussing ideas in both languages helps us understand each other better before presenting in the target language" (Student 7)

This perception aligns with observational data showing frequent student-initiated translanguaging during group work and problem-solving activities. Meaning clarification and confirmation emerged as a shared practice between teachers and students. Interview data indicated that students actively used translanguaging to verify understanding rather than passively relying on teachers. A student explained that

"Sometimes I repeat the explanation in my first language to make sure I really understand it" (Student 12),

suggesting that translanguaging functioned as a metacognitive strategy to support comprehension. The affective and relational use of translanguaging observed in classroom interaction was echoed in interview narratives. Teachers reported that brief use of students' first language helped reduce anxiety and create a more approachable classroom atmosphere. One teacher stated that

"using the students' language occasionally makes them feel more relaxed and willing to participate" (Teacher 5)

These interview insights reinforce the interpretation that translanguaging served not only instructional but also interpersonal purposes.

Pedagogical Functions of Translanguaging

Further thematic coding revealed that translanguaging served multiple distinct pedagogical functions within second language learning processes. A total of 286 coded instances were classified according to their primary instructional function. The most dominant function was cognitive scaffolding, whereby teachers strategically employed students' first language to bridge complex concepts in the target language. This was followed by conceptual reinforcement, particularly in tasks involving academic texts, abstract ideas, and higher-order thinking. Translanguaging was also used for classroom management, including giving instructions, managing transitions, and maintaining discipline. Additionally, translanguaging functioned as a means of affirming multilingual identity, allowing students to draw on their linguistic backgrounds as legitimate learning resources. A smaller but significant number of instances reflected increased learner participation and confidence, as students were more willing to contribute orally when translanguaging was permitted.

Table 4. Pedagogical Functions of Translanguaging Practices

Pedagogical Function	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Cognitive scaffolding	89	31.1
Conceptual reinforcement	76	26.6
Classroom management	52	18.2
Multilingual identity affirmation	41	14.3
Increased learner participation	28	9.8
Total	286	100

The distribution of pedagogical functions presented in Table 2 indicates that translanguaging was strategically embedded within instructional practices to support multiple dimensions of learning. Rather than being limited to facilitating comprehension, translanguaging operated as a

structured instructional tool that supported lesson progression, task completion, and the management of classroom interaction. Its use across different instructional phases suggests that teachers intentionally integrated translanguaging into their teaching repertoire to respond to students' linguistic and cognitive needs. The range of functions observed highlights the broader educational value of translanguaging beyond immediate language learning outcomes. By legitimizing students' multilingual resources, translanguaging contributed to a more inclusive learning environment in which learners felt recognized and empowered. This pedagogical orientation fostered greater engagement and active participation, reinforcing the role of translanguaging as a purposeful and systematic component of effective second language instruction.

Further thematic coding revealed that translanguaging served multiple pedagogical functions within second language learning processes. A total of 286 coded instances were classified according to their primary instructional function, with cognitive scaffolding emerging as the most dominant. Teacher interviews provided clear evidence of intentional cognitive scaffolding through translanguaging. Several teachers emphasized that using students' first language allowed them to bridge complex or abstract concepts more effectively. One teacher explained that

> *"Students can understand higher-level ideas better when I briefly relate them to their first language, especially when the topic is unfamiliar"* (Teacher 1).

This confirms that translanguaging was strategically employed to support conceptual access rather than to replace target language exposure. Conceptual reinforcement was similarly supported by student interview data. Students reported that hearing explanations in both languages helped consolidate understanding and reduce confusion. One student noted that

> *"When the teacher explains again in our language, it helps connect the idea, not just memorize words"* (Student 4).

This suggests that translanguaging facilitated deeper cognitive processing rather than surface-level comprehension. In terms of classroom management, teachers reported that translanguaging enabled them to give clearer instructions and manage transitions efficiently. One teacher stated that

> *"Using the first language for instructions saves time and avoids repeated explanations"* (Teacher 3).

This aligns with observational findings indicating frequent translanguaging during organizational moments. The function of multilingual identity affirmation was particularly evident in student interviews. Students expressed appreciation for being allowed to use their linguistic backgrounds as learning resources. A student reflected that

> *"It feels respectful when our language is accepted in class, not treated as a problem"* (Student 15).

This perception highlights how translanguaging contributed to a more inclusive and affirming learning environment.

Teachers' Perspectives on Translanguaging Practices

Semi-structured interviews with six second language teachers revealed largely consistent perspectives regarding the role of translanguaging in classroom instruction. All teachers reported using translanguaging deliberately to support student comprehension, particularly in lower-intermediate proficiency levels. Five out of six teachers indicated that translanguaging reduced instructional time by minimizing repeated explanations in the target language. However, teachers also expressed varying degrees of uncertainty regarding the institutional legitimacy of translanguaging. Four teachers reported that they used translanguaging "informally" or "implicitly," despite recognizing its effectiveness, due to the absence of explicit institutional or policy-level guidance. These responses were coded into three dominant perception categories, as shown in Table 3.

Table 5. Teachers' Perceptions of Translanguaging

Perception Category	Number of Teachers
Pedagogically effective	6
Necessary for learner comprehension	5
Inconsistent with official language policy	4

The data in Table 3 reflect a strong professional consensus among teachers regarding the instructional value of translanguaging in second language classrooms. Teachers' views indicate that translanguaging was not employed as a spontaneous or accidental practice, but rather as a conscious pedagogical choice informed by classroom experience and learners' needs. This suggests that teachers possess a practical understanding of how multilingual resources can enhance instructional effectiveness, particularly in supporting comprehension and lesson flow. At the same time, the findings reveal a clear tension between teachers' pedagogical beliefs and the institutional context in which they operate. While teachers recognized the benefits of translanguaging, the lack of explicit policy recognition led many to position the practice as unofficial or provisional.

This uncertainty constrained teachers' willingness to adopt translanguaging more openly and systematically, indicating that institutional norms play a significant role in shaping classroom language practices. These perspectives highlight the complex role of teachers as mediators between pedagogical realities and policy expectations. Teachers navigated this space by balancing instructional effectiveness with perceived policy compliance, resulting in cautious but persistent use of translanguaging. This-dynamic underscores the need for clearer policy frameworks that acknowledge and support pedagogically grounded multilingual practices in second language education. Semi-structured interviews with six second language teachers revealed largely consistent perspectives regarding the role of translanguaging in classroom instruction. Teachers emphasized that their use of translanguaging was deliberate and pedagogically motivated. One teacher explicitly stated that

> "I don't switch languages randomly; I do it when I see students are losing the meaning" (Teacher 6)

Underscoring instructional intentionality. Despite acknowledging its effectiveness, teachers also articulated concerns related to institutional legitimacy. Interview data revealed that teachers perceived translanguaging as beneficial but professionally risky in the absence of policy support. One teacher noted that

> "There is no clear rule allowing it, so I use it quietly even though I know it works" (Teacher 4).

This illustrates the tension between pedagogical practice and institutional expectations.

Students' Perceptions and Learning Experiences

Interviews with eighteen students revealed overwhelmingly positive perceptions of translanguaging practices. Most students reported that the ability to use their first language strategically enabled them to understand lesson content more quickly and express complex ideas more accurately. Quantified coding of interview responses showed that 88.9% of students perceived translanguaging as helpful for understanding instructional materials, while 83.3% reported increased confidence in classroom participation. Notably, only 22.2% of students believed that translanguaging hindered their acquisition of the target language, whereas the majority viewed it as supportive rather than obstructive.

Table 6. Students' Perceptions of Translanguaging in Language Learning

Perception Statement	Agreement (%)	Disagreement (%)
Helps understand lesson content	88.9	11.1
Increases confidence in speaking	83.3	16.7
Interferes with target language acquisition	22.2	77.8
Should be allowed in second language classrooms	85.0	15.0

Student interviews further reinforced the positive role of translanguaging in learning experiences. Students consistently described translanguaging as a tool that enhanced understanding, confidence, and participation. One student explained that

> *"I feel more confident speaking when I know I can use my first language if I get stuck" (Student 9)*

indicating reduced anxiety and increased willingness to engage. Importantly, students distinguished between strategic use and overreliance on the first language. Interview responses showed awareness that translanguaging should support, not replace, target language learning. A student remarked that *"we still try to use the target language, but translanguaging helps when the idea is difficult"* (Student 18). This confirms that students viewed translanguaging as a complementary learning strategy. The pattern of student responses indicates that translanguaging contributed positively to learners' overall classroom experience and engagement. Students' accounts suggest that access to multiple linguistic resources allowed them to participate more actively in learning activities and to process instructional content with greater ease.

This supportive learning environment appeared to reduce anxiety commonly associated with second language use, enabling students to focus more on meaning construction and task completion rather than on linguistic accuracy alone. The findings reflect students' capacity to distinguish between strategic language use and dependence on the first language. Rather than viewing translanguaging as an obstacle, students perceived it as a facilitative tool that complemented their development in the target language. This perception underscores learners' awareness of translanguaging as a purposeful learning strategy, reinforcing its role in promoting confidence, engagement, and meaningful participation in second language classrooms.

Alignment Between Classroom Practices and Language Policy

Document analysis of institutional language policies revealed a lack of explicit reference to translanguaging practices. Policy documents predominantly emphasized the use of the target language as the primary medium of instruction, with limited acknowledgment of multilingual classroom realities. This absence of explicit guidance resulted in a discrepancy between observed classroom practices and formal policy expectations. Across the analyzed documents, no policy clause explicitly addressed the pedagogical use of students' first languages, despite consistent evidence of translanguaging in instructional practice. This finding underscores a structural gap between micro-level classroom practices and macro-level language policy frameworks.

Discussion

Translanguaging as a Normative Pedagogical Practice in Second Language Classrooms

The findings of this study demonstrate that translanguaging should be understood as a normative feature of second language classroom interaction rather than an exception to monolingual instruction. The consistent presence of translanguaging across instructional phases indicates that multilingual language use reflects the authentic communicative realities of learners and teachers (Jiang et al., 2024). This challenges traditional assumptions that effective second language learning requires strict language separation and instead supports contemporary views that multilingual practices are a natural outcome of linguistically diverse learning environments. From a sociolinguistic perspective, the findings align with translanguaging theory, which conceptualizes language use as fluid and repertoire-based rather than compartmentalized. The observed practices suggest that classrooms function as multilingual spaces where meaning-making transcends rigid language boundaries. This reinforces arguments in previous studies that translanguaging is not a compensatory mechanism for linguistic deficiency, but a strategic and context-sensitive approach to learning and communication.

Instructional Intentionality and Pedagogical Effectiveness

The results indicate that translanguaging was closely aligned with instructional goals and pedagogical decision-making. Rather than emerging randomly, translanguaging practices

reflected deliberate instructional choices aimed at supporting comprehension, maintaining lesson coherence, and facilitating student engagement. This finding underscores the role of teachers as reflective practitioners who adapt language use to meet learners' cognitive and linguistic needs. Importantly, the multifunctional nature of translanguaging highlights its pedagogical versatility. By operating across cognitive, organizational, and affective domains, translanguaging enabled teachers to address complex instructional demands simultaneously. This supports prior research suggesting that translanguaging enhances pedagogical efficiency by reducing communicative barriers and allowing instructional focus to remain on conceptual understanding rather than linguistic form alone.

Learner Agency, Identity, and Participation

The findings also reveal that translanguaging played a significant role in shaping learner agency and classroom participation (Mirabadi, 2024). Students' positive perceptions indicate that the opportunity to draw on their full linguistic repertoires fostered greater confidence and willingness to engage in classroom discourse. This suggests that translanguaging contributes to a learning environment where students are positioned as competent multilingual users rather than deficient second language learners. From an identity-oriented perspective, translanguaging validates learners' linguistic backgrounds and affirms multilingualism as an asset. This affirmation is particularly important in second language education contexts where learners' first languages are often marginalized. By legitimizing multilingual language use, translanguaging supports inclusive pedagogies that promote equity and active participation, echoing findings from previous studies on language, identity, and empowerment in multilingual education.

Teacher Mediation and Institutional Constraints

While teachers demonstrated strong pedagogical awareness of the benefits of translanguaging, the findings also reveal tensions between classroom practices and institutional expectations. Teachers' cautious positioning of translanguaging as an informal or implicit strategy reflects broader structural constraints imposed by policy frameworks that prioritize monolingual norms. This tension highlights the complex role of teachers as mediators between pedagogical effectiveness and policy compliance. Such constraints may limit the systematic integration of translanguaging into instructional planning and professional development. Previous research has shown that when translanguaging lacks institutional recognition, its implementation depends largely on individual teacher initiative. The findings of this study reinforce the need for institutional support that aligns policy discourse with classroom realities, enabling teachers to implement multilingual practices with greater confidence and consistency (Bernstein et al., 2023; Gunawan et al., 2025; Orduna-Nocito & Sánchez-García, 2022).

Implications for Multilingual Language Policy

The documented gap between classroom practices and formal language policy underscores the need for policy frameworks that are responsive to multilingual educational realities. The absence of explicit policy guidance on translanguaging suggests that current language policies may not fully reflect how teaching and learning actually occur in multilingual classrooms. This-disconnect risks perpetuating monolingual ideologies that constrain pedagogical innovation. The findings support calls for multilingual language policies that recognize translanguaging as a legitimate pedagogical resource. Such policies would not only legitimize existing classroom practices but also promote more equitable and context-sensitive approaches to second language education. Aligning policy with practice has the potential to enhance instructional effectiveness, support teacher agency, and better serve multilingual learners in diverse educational contexts.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that translanguaging is a systematic, deliberate, and integrated pedagogical practice in second language learning, not simply an incidental strategy. Findings from observations, teacher interviews, and student interviews indicate that translanguaging functions multifacetedly, encompassing cognitive understanding, conceptual understanding, classroom management, affirmation of multilingual identity, and increased student participation and confidence. Teachers use translanguaging reflectively to bridge

understanding and maintain learning flow, while students utilize it as a metacognitive strategy to construct meaning and participate more actively. Although pedagogically considered effective by both teachers and students, the practice of translanguaging remains ambiguous due to the lack of explicit institutional policy legitimacy. This tension between classroom realities and policy norms suggests the need for a language policy framework that is more responsive to multilingual contexts, so that translanguaging can be recognized as a legitimate, inclusive, and relevant pedagogical resource in second language education.

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