

THE USE OF TRANSLANGUAGING METHOD IN INTERDISCIPLINARY INTEGRATION

Davlatova Mukhsina Yendir kizi

Uzbekistan State World Languages University

2nd year student of Master’s degree

Email: mukhsinadavlatova@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This article explores the application of the translanguaging method within the framework of interdisciplinary integration in primary and secondary education. Translanguaging, as a pedagogical approach that enables learners to flexibly utilize their full linguistic repertoires, has proven effective in enhancing comprehension, critical thinking, and communicative competence. In the context of interdisciplinary learning—where subjects such as science, mathematics, history, and language arts intersect—translanguaging provides students with unique opportunities to transfer knowledge across disciplines, connect concepts in meaningful ways, and strengthen cognitive flexibility.

The study emphasizes that integrating translanguaging into interdisciplinary teaching fosters deeper subject understanding, promotes collaborative learning, and bridges gaps between students’ home and school languages. Furthermore, it empowers learners from multilingual backgrounds by legitimizing their linguistic resources, thereby reducing psychological barriers to learning and increasing engagement. At the same time, the article highlights existing challenges, such as insufficient teacher training, lack of methodological guidelines, and limited curricular resources, which hinder the systematic implementation of translanguaging in interdisciplinary contexts.

Based on theoretical insights and practical examples, the article argues that translanguaging can become a powerful tool for improving the quality of interdisciplinary education in multilingual societies such as Uzbekistan. Recommendations are made for curriculum design, teacher professional development, and policy support to ensure effective integration of translanguaging strategies in interdisciplinary teaching practices.

Keywords: *translanguaging, interdisciplinary integration, multilingual education, teaching strategies, cognitive flexibility, subject comprehension, communicative competence, collaborative learning, pedagogical innovation, educational policy*

INTRODUCTION

In today’s globalized world, the demand for innovative pedagogical approaches that address the complexities of multilingual and multicultural classrooms has become increasingly urgent. Traditional methods of teaching, which often separate languages and academic disciplines, are no longer sufficient to meet the cognitive and communicative needs of 21st-century learners. As a response, educators and researchers have turned to translanguaging—a dynamic pedagogical practice that allows students to flexibly and strategically use all of their linguistic resources to facilitate learning and communication.

The concept of translanguaging, originally introduced by Cen Williams in the context of bilingual education, has grown into a widely recognized framework that challenges the dominance of monolingual ideologies in education. It promotes a view of language as a unified repertoire rather than a collection of separate systems, thus providing learners with the freedom to integrate linguistic resources in ways that enhance comprehension and cognitive development. In recent years, this approach has been increasingly applied to interdisciplinary education, where multiple subject areas intersect to provide students with a holistic learning experience.

Interdisciplinary integration requires learners to connect knowledge across fields such as mathematics, science, history, and language arts. However, students—particularly in multilingual contexts—often encounter difficulties in transferring concepts from one subject area to another due to linguistic barriers. Translanguaging offers a promising solution by enabling learners to draw upon their home language(s) alongside the language of instruction to explain, compare, and critically analyze subject matter. For example, a student might use their first language to discuss a scientific concept before articulating it in the school’s language of instruction, thereby reinforcing both subject knowledge and language skills.

In the context of Uzbekistan and other multilingual societies, the integration of translanguaging into interdisciplinary teaching practices holds particular significance. With the coexistence of Uzbek, Russian, English, and other regional languages, students naturally rely on their linguistic repertoires to make sense of complex ideas. By legitimizing and systematically incorporating translanguaging into interdisciplinary teaching, educators can not only enhance academic achievement but also foster inclusivity, cultural identity, and student motivation.

Thus, this article examines the role of translanguaging in interdisciplinary integration, highlighting its potential to transform the learning process while addressing the challenges of multilingual education. The discussion focuses on theoretical foundations, practical applications, and implications for future curriculum design and teacher professional development.

MAIN PART

The intersection of translanguaging and interdisciplinary education has become an area of increasing scholarly interest as educators seek to improve comprehension, collaboration, and engagement in multilingual contexts. Translanguaging enables learners to mobilize their full linguistic repertoires across different subject areas, facilitating knowledge transfer, concept integration, and deeper learning experiences [1]. This approach is particularly useful where disciplines overlap—such as when understanding scientific concepts requires strong literacy and language skills or when mathematics problems benefit from contextual discussion.

1. Theoretical Underpinnings

The theoretical framework for translanguaging in interdisciplinary contexts relies on believing that languages are not separate, rigid codes but part of an integrated communicative system that learners naturally draw upon [2]. This theoretical position connects directly with sociolinguistic and cognitive theories: translanguaging promotes metalinguistic awareness, helping students compare how concepts in History or Science are described in different languages, thus improving both subject mastery and language proficiency.

2. Practical Applications Across Disciplines

Real-world studies show translanguaging’s effectiveness in disciplinary integration. In Nepal, for instance, using translanguaging to teach basic science and mathematics allowed students to first discuss in their mother tongue and then translate or apply those ideas in English, enhancing understanding and retention [3]. Similarly, in Kazakhstani STEM classrooms, teachers reported that translanguaging, combined with technology, improved student ability to grasp complex scientific and mathematical concepts that otherwise remained abstract when taught purely in English or another non-native medium [4].

In science-mathematics courses taught in English-medium instruction, translanguaging practices — such as bilingual glossaries, peer discussions in home language, and use of multimodal resources — fostered inclusive learning environments, especially for students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds [5].

3. Key Benefits in Interdisciplinary Integration

- **Enhanced comprehension:** Students more easily understand subject matter when they can relate it to prior knowledge in their home language [6].
- **Cognitive flexibility:** Moving between languages and disciplines encourages higher-order thinking — comparing, analyzing, synthesizing across contexts [7].

- **Collaboration:** Group work across disciplines becomes more meaningful when students explain ideas in their stronger language first, then formulate/exchange in instructional language [8].

- **Cultural and linguistic validation:** Students feel recognized and included, which boosts motivation, reduces affective filter (anxiety), and supports identity

4. Challenges and Limitations

- **Teacher preparation:** Many teachers report lack of training and clear guidelines for translanguaging in interdisciplinary settings. Designing lessons that integrate language across disciplines demands pedagogical skill not always covered in teacher education.

- **Resource limitations:** Few curricula/instructional materials are available that support translanguaging across subjects; development of such materials requires time, expertise, and often institutional support.

- **Policy constraints:** In many educational systems, policies still favor monolingual instruction or have strict requirements that limit switching between languages during lessons.

- **Parental or societal attitudes:** Some parents and stakeholders worry translanguaging may hinder mastery of globally dominant languages (e.g. English), or dilute rigor, especially in subjects where precision is important.

Methodology

This study employed a qualitative research design with elements of mixed methods to examine the role of translanguaging in interdisciplinary integration at the primary and lower-secondary levels. The purpose of the methodology was to identify how translanguaging practices are implemented across different subjects, the perceptions of teachers, and the effects on student learning outcomes.

1. Research Design

A case study approach was chosen to allow for in-depth exploration of classroom practices in natural settings [9]. In addition, survey and interview methods were applied to collect teachers' and students' perspectives, ensuring triangulation of data and increasing validity [10].

2. Participants

The study involved:

- **Teachers (n=25)** from primary and secondary schools across Uzbekistan and neighboring regions, selected based on their experience in teaching interdisciplinary subjects (science, mathematics, social studies) through bilingual or multilingual contexts.

- **Students (n=120)** aged 9–13 years, from diverse linguistic backgrounds, representing Uzbek, Russian, Tajik, and Kazakh language communities.

Participants were recruited using purposive sampling to ensure representation of multilingual classrooms [11].

3. Data Collection Tools

- **Classroom Observations:** Lessons in science, mathematics, and social studies were observed to identify translanguaging practices (e.g., code-switching, bilingual scaffolding, multilingual group work).

- **Semi-Structured Interviews:** Conducted with teachers to explore their pedagogical beliefs, challenges, and strategies related to translanguaging.

- **Student Focus Groups:** Gathered insights into learners' experiences, attitudes, and perceived benefits of translanguaging in interdisciplinary subjects.

- **Document Analysis:** Reviewed curricula, lesson plans, and teaching materials to identify formal or informal translanguaging strategies.

4. Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using thematic coding with NVivo software. Codes were generated inductively to identify patterns in teachers' and students' responses, and deductively to test against existing frameworks of translanguaging pedagogy [12]. Observational data were cross-checked with interviews to ensure consistency. Quantitative data from surveys were analyzed descriptively to identify trends in perceptions.

5. Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was obtained from the relevant academic committee. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was secured from teachers and parents of students. All data were anonymized to maintain confidentiality.

Conclusion

The findings of this study suggest that translanguaging, when applied within the framework of interdisciplinary integration, holds significant potential for improving the quality of teaching and learning in multilingual classrooms. By allowing students to draw on their full linguistic repertoire, translanguaging not only enhances comprehension of subject matter but also fosters critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills across disciplines. For instance, in science and mathematics classes, the use of multiple languages provided learners with opportunities to negotiate meaning and clarify complex concepts, while in social studies, translanguaging enriched discussions with cultural and linguistic diversity.

However, the research also highlights certain challenges. Many teachers lack formal training in translanguaging pedagogy and tend to rely on traditional monolingual approaches. In addition, the absence of adequate teaching materials and limited institutional support for multilingual education restricts the consistent

application of translanguaging strategies. Despite these constraints, teachers and students generally showed positive attitudes towards the practice, recognizing its ability to bridge language gaps and strengthen interdisciplinary connections.

In light of these findings, translanguaging should be recognized as an innovative pedagogical tool that can contribute to the development of more inclusive and effective education systems. Its integration into interdisciplinary teaching can not only promote academic achievement but also validate the linguistic identities of students, creating a more equitable learning environment. Future efforts should focus on teacher training, curriculum development, and the creation of digital resources that support translanguaging across different subjects. Such initiatives will ensure that translanguaging becomes not just an occasional classroom strategy, but a sustainable and transformative element of educational practice in multilingual contexts.

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