

TRANSLANGUAGING IN PRIMARY ENGLISH CLASSROOMS: SUPPORTING MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS IN UZBEKISTAN

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Abstract. *In recent years, translanguaging has become an important concept in the field of multilingual education and TESOL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language). This article examines the importance of translanguaging in the development of English language skills of primary school students in multilingual classrooms in Uzbekistan. The study analyzes how students use all their language resources, including Uzbek / Russian and English, to improve communication, comprehension, and active participation in the lesson. The article draws on MacSwan's multilingual approach to translanguaging and Kaiser's views on multimodal translanguaging and intersemiotic translation. It also discusses the importance of multimodal teaching strategies such as gestures, visual aids, storytelling, and collaborative classroom activities. The results show that translanguaging creates a more inclusive and supportive learning environment for young learners and helps them communicate effectively with learners from different linguistic backgrounds.*

Keywords: *Translanguaging, multilingual education, TESOL, primary school students, multilingual classrooms, language learning, multimodal education, sociolinguistics, English language teaching.*

Introduction

Nowadays, globalization and the expansion of multilingualism have significantly changed the modern educational environment. In many countries, including Uzbekistan, students use more than one language in their daily lives. Traditional language teaching methods usually promote teaching in a strict separation of languages. However, modern sociolinguistic research emphasizes that multilingual learners naturally combine all their linguistic resources when communicating. This process is called **translanguaging**.

Translanguaging allows learners to use languages as a single communicative system, rather than as separate systems. According to Jeff MacSwan (2017), translanguaging in terms of multilingualism, emphasizing the need to value all linguistic possibilities of learners. He argues that multilingual people use languages dynamically in the process of creating meaning and communicating.

Translanguaging is particularly important in early English language classrooms. Young learners rely on their native language to understand new vocabulary, tasks, and lesson content.

Allowing them to use their native language alongside English reduces stress. It increases engagement and supports language development.

Multimodal translanguaging has also become an important topic in TESOL research.

Diane Kaiser (2023) explains that learners communicate not only through spoken or written language, but also through gestures, visual aids, images, and actions. These multimodal strategies help learners to understand meaning more effectively and participate more actively in the lesson.

This article examines how translanguaging helps learners in early English language classrooms in Uzbekistan and the educational benefits of multimodal and multilingual approaches.

Literature Review

Translanguaging and Multilingualism

Translanguaging has become one of the central concepts in contemporary multilingual education research. Earlier language teaching methods recommended the use of only English in the English language classroom. However, modern researchers argue that multilingual learners can learn a foreign language more effectively when they have the opportunity to use their native language.

MacSwan (2017) criticizes the idea that bilingual learners have two separate language systems. He argues that multilingual people combine linguistic elements from different languages to create meaning and communicate.

Therefore, translanguaging is not seen as a language disadvantage, but as a communicative advantage.

This approach is currently very relevant for Uzbekistan. Because many students use Uzbek, Russian and English in different social situations. Students often switch freely between languages during group work, discussions and when completing assignments. Teachers can use this situation as an effective pedagogical tool.

Research also shows that translanguaging increases students' confidence and engagement in the classroom. Young students feel more free and comfortable when they have the opportunity to express themselves partly in their native language. As a result, a more supportive and inclusive learning environment is created.

Multimodal Translanguaging

Multilingual students create meaning not only through language, but also through various communicative means. Kaiser (2023) explains the concepts of multimodal translanguaging and intersemiotic translation in the context of the Reggio Emilia educational approach. According to him, children construct meaning through visual images, drawings, actions, and collaborative activities.

Multimodal translanguaging in primary grades promotes understanding and creativity.

For example, teachers can use pictures, videos, gestures, and stories to explain new English words. Students can express their understanding through drawing, role-playing, or mixed-language discussions.

These strategies are especially useful for younger students, as children often express their ideas more effectively through different semiotic means. Multimodal translanguaging encourages active participation and supports learner-centered learning.

Translanguaging Practices in Uzbek Primary Classrooms

In many schools in Uzbekistan, English teachers use translanguaging methods informally. Teachers may explain complex words in Uzbek, compare grammatical structures, or allow students to discuss tasks in two languages.

For example, in speaking classes, students may first formulate their ideas in Uzbek or Russian and then present them in English. In pair work and group work, the two languages are mixed to better understand the task. This reduces students' communication difficulties and focuses on meaning-making.

In addition, multimodal tools such as flashcards, visual presentations, songs, gestures and games are widely used in primary English lessons. These tools increase students' interest in learning a foreign language and motivate them to work harder. These methods are consistent with Kaiser's theory of multimodal translanguaging.

However, some teachers believe that only English should be used in the classroom. Such a monolingual approach can lead to stress and reduced participation in students who are just starting to learn English. This is because students' vocabulary is still limited at the beginning.

And they have difficulty expressing their thoughts and ideas fully in oral speech.

Therefore, training in translanguaging and multilingual pedagogy is very important for teachers.

Benefits of Translanguaging for Young Learners

These advantages demonstrate that multilingual practices are not obstacles, but valuable educational resources. When teachers allow translanguaging, it acts as a natural cognitive scaffold. Young learners can connect new instructions to their home language, which helps them understand complex concepts without feeling overwhelmed. This flexible approach also lowers their stress levels and reduces language anxiety. Instead of staying silent due to rigid monolingual rules, children gain the confidence to participate, share ideas, and collaborate with their peers. Furthermore, managing two or more languages actively stimulates the brain. It improves executive functions like working memory, creative thinking, and problem-solving skills. Ultimately, translanguaging treats a child's native language as a strength rather than a weakness. By validating their linguistic identity, this approach creates an inclusive classroom, protects cultural backgrounds, and promotes educational equity from the very start of schooling.

Conclusion

Translanguaging has become an important approach in modern multilingual education and TESOL. This article analyzes how translanguaging supports learners in primary English language classrooms in Uzbekistan. Drawing on the theoretical perspectives of MacSwan and Kaiser, the article demonstrates that flexible language practices increase comprehension, engagement, and student confidence.

The results suggest that teachers should move away from a monolingual approach and create learning environments that value all of their students' linguistic resources. Multimodal and multilingual strategies can help young learners develop English more quickly and effectively while preserving their native language and cultural identities.

Future research could further explore translanguaging practices in Uzbekistan and analyze ways to develop multilingual pedagogy in teacher education programs.

References

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