

Translanguaging Pedagogy: Challenging Linguistic Imperialism in Indian ESL Classrooms

Mohd Tauseef^{1*}, Mohd Faizan Raza², Dr. Shakira Khatoon³, Pratiksha Prajapati⁴

¹Research Scholar, Department of English, Aligarh Muslim University

²Research Scholar, Department of English, Aligarh Muslim University

³Assistant Prof., Department of English, Aligarh Muslim University

⁴M.Ed. Student, Department of Education, Allahabad University

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*Corresponding author: Mohd Tauseef

Research Scholar, Department of English, Aligarh Muslim University

Abstract

Translanguaging is an emerging pedagogical strategy that is relevant for English as second language Classrooms. Initially this term is originated to revitalise the Welse language along with English. This term was explained by Garcia as a discursive practice in general. Later this is extended by him as a pedagogical practice for ESL learners. The paper does not study the linguistic imperialism in general but focusing on the Philipson's idea of linguisticism in which he developed fallacies of why English language should be used in higher education and why the medium of instruction should be used as English one. The idea of linguistic imperialism in the multilingual context of India, English is often treated as the dominant language of education, social mobility, and academic success, while students' mother tongues and regional languages are frequently marginalized. Such classroom practices reflect linguistic imperialism or linguistic dominance where English gains superiority over local languages and creates unequal linguistic hierarchies. The emphasis on English-only instruction and native-like competence often limits learners' participation and suppresses their multilingual identities. The study argues that translanguaging pedagogy offers a more inclusive and democratic approach to English language teaching by allowing learners to utilize their complete linguistic repertoire for communication, interaction, and meaning-making. The methodology of this paper is quantitative in nature. Data were collected from an M.A and PhD students from Aligarh Muslim University. It concludes that translanguaging can promote linguistic harmony, classroom participation, and inclusive education in the Indian context.

Keywords: Translanguaging Pedagogy, Linguistic Imperialism, Inclusive Classroom environment, and Mother tongue instruction.

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1. INTRODUCTION

India is the second most linguistically and culturally diverse country in this world. The citizen of the country speak 22 officially recognised languages as mentioned in 8 scheduled langue of the country. The rich linguistic diversity of this nation reflects on the multicultural identity and create a unique educational context. English got a central position in school when East India company colonised the Indian state. It replaced Persian language gradually as the language of administration and governance. Following India's independence, while English ceased to be the sole official language, it remained an associate official language alongside Hindi. Despite this shift, the importance of English has continued to grow in the fields of education, administration, technology, business, and international communication. Today, English serves as a

"lingua franca" and is closely linked to higher education, better employment opportunities, social mobility, and access to global knowledge.

India's multifaceted linguistic landscape is also reflected in its education system; schools operate under diverse administrative structures, including government, state-aided, private, and semi-private institutions. These schools follow varying language policies and employ diverse mediums of instruction—such as English, Hindi, or regional languages. Students enter the classroom with diverse linguistic backgrounds and widely varying levels of English proficiency. For many students, English is not merely an additional language but the primary medium for academic instruction. This diversity presents both opportunities and challenges for English language teaching in Indian classrooms.

Before discussing the central position of English language, how it dominated the medium of instruction or captured higher education? If we historically seek the answer of these questions then found that America became super power after second world war. America after the war did not only dominate on economics but also control the educational institutions. They realised the importance of expansion of English language to non- native speaker of English language. Similarly, Philipson argues that many widely accepted assumptions about English language teaching originated in British neo-colonial policies rather than in empirical educational research. According to Philipson, the professional development of English Language Teaching (ELT) was closely linked to political and economic interests that promoted the global spread of English. From this perspective, English-only teaching represents not merely a pedagogical preference but also an ideological position that reinforces the dominance of English while marginalizing learners' multilingual resources. People from different places migrated to there for better survival, opportunities and higher education. The children of migrate communities raises question to design bilingual approach for teaching English language to them. Before bilingual approach of teaching, English was used only as medium of instruction. This was the time when school, colleges and university started the using English as only medium of instruction for teaching and learning English and other major subjects of education. Educationist and expert started diminishing the value and importance of mother tongue language incorporation in learning journey.

For many decades, instruction conducted exclusively in English was viewed as the most effective approach to language education. This perspective was based on the assumption that intensive exposure to English would naturally lead to a higher level of language proficiency. Consequently, the use of students' native language (L1) in the classroom was often discouraged, viewed as a hindrance or a source of negative interference rather than an educational resource. Such assumptions have influenced language policies, teacher training programs, and classroom practices in many multilingual contexts, including India.

However, recent years have seen growing scepticism regarding these traditional assumptions; research on multilingual education indicates that students naturally draw upon their full linguistic repertoire while acquiring additional languages. Far from being a barrier to language learning, students' native languages (home languages) can facilitate comprehension, enhance engagement, reduce cognitive load, and support the development of new linguistic knowledge. Experts advocating for multilingual teaching methods emphasize that excluding students' native languages can create obstacles to meaningful learning and active classroom participation, particularly in linguistically diverse environments. These developments

have sparked increasing interest in alternative approaches, such as "translanguaging," which views multilingualism as a valuable educational resource rather than a problem to be overcome.

The emergence of translanguaging as a theoretical and pedagogical perspective needs to be situated within the broader historical development of bilingualism, multilingual education, and language pedagogy. For much of the twentieth century, language education was predominantly influenced by monolingual assumptions, according to which languages were conceptualised as separate and bounded systems. Within second- and foreign-language education, the target language was frequently privileged as the appropriate medium of classroom interaction.

2. Bilingualism to Multilingual Education

Bilingualism is the only way to educate students in the twenty first century. The recognition of bilingualism as a legitimate linguistic and educational phenomenon constituted an important departure from earlier monolingual orientations. What is bilingualism and how it is related with the bilingual classrooms? Bilingualism means someone who has good competence on two languages: using of two languages in education is bilingual education. Colin Baker (1993) one of the most competent writers in the field suggests that "sometimes the term bilingual education is used to refer to the education of students who are already speakers of two languages, and at other times to the education of those who are studying additional languages". (Baker, 1993) However, Bilingual education refers to education in more than one language, often encompassing more than two languages (as cited By Garcia in Bilingual education in the 21st century, Baker, 2001). Rather than considering bilingualism merely as the possession of two separate linguistic codes. Scholars increasingly began to examine how bilingual individuals acquire, use, and negotiate their linguistic resources across different social and communicative contexts. Grosjean (1989), for example, challenged the notion that bilinguals should be understood simply as "two monolinguals in one person," emphasising instead the distinctive linguistic practices and communicative needs of bilingual speakers. Similarly, Cummins (1979) demonstrated the interrelationship between learners' linguistic and cognitive development, providing an important basis for recognising the educational value of learners' existing linguistic resources.

The development of bilingual and multilingual education was also supported by international educational policy. UNESCO's *The Use of Vernacular Languages in Education* (1953) represented an important institutional recognition of the value of learners' familiar languages in education. UNESCO has subsequently continued to advocate multilingual education and has emphasised the educational advantages of mother-tongue-based instruction, particularly in facilitating

comprehension, participation, and access to education (UNESCO, 1953, 2003). Importantly, this position did not imply that learners should be restricted to their mother tongue. Rather, UNESCO's position increasingly supported a balanced multilingual model in which local or mother languages could coexist with national and international languages.

This development is significant for the subsequent emergence of translanguaging because it challenged the assumption that learning a new language requires the exclusion of languages that learners already know. The educational question gradually shifted from whether learners should use their first language to how their existing linguistic resources could be used to facilitate additional-language learning.

3. English-Only Pedagogy and Linguistic Imperialism

Language is closely associated with power, and the dominance of one language over others can reproduce wider social, cultural, and educational inequalities. Phillipson (1992) conceptualises linguistic imperialism as the establishment and continual reproduction of structural and cultural inequalities between English and other languages. He further argues that linguistic dominance is maintained through institutions and policies in areas including education, culture, science, and the media (Phillipson, 2009). In educational contexts, such dominance may be reflected in practices that privilege English while restricting the use or recognition of learners' other languages. Yamada (2023), drawing on Phillipson's framework, similarly highlights how the dominance of English can affect local languages, cultures, and linguistic identities, particularly through educational policies that prioritise English.

In ESL classrooms, linguistic imperialism can therefore be examined through its pedagogical manifestations, particularly English-only orientations that position English as the legitimate language of classroom interaction and academic learning. Such practices may contribute to linguistic hierarchisation by limiting learners' opportunities to draw upon their existing linguistic resources. This does not suggest that English itself is inherently oppressive; rather, the concern is with the unequal privileging of English over learners' other languages. Yamada's (2023) study also indicates that linguistic dominance has both potential benefits and negative consequences, while highlighting multilingualism and plurilingualism as possible ways of fostering greater respect for linguistic diversity.

Within this framework, translanguaging pedagogy can be viewed as a potential challenge to classroom-level linguistic dominance. By legitimising and strategically mobilising learners' multilingual linguistic resources, translanguaging can challenge the assumption that English must be the exclusive medium of learning while continuing to support English-language

development. Thus, linguistic imperialism provides the broader theoretical framework, whereas English-only practices represent a possible classroom-level manifestation of linguistic dominance that translanguaging pedagogy seeks to challenge.

4. The Emergence of Translanguaging in the Welsh Context

The concept of translanguaging emerged within this broader movement towards recognising bilingual linguistic resources. The term is generally associated with the Welsh educator Cen Williams, who used the Welsh term "*trawsieithu*" in the context of Welsh-English bilingual education. Williams's work involved a pedagogical arrangement in which learners were required to receive information through one language and produce or communicate their understanding through another. The practice demonstrated that the strategic use of both languages could support learning rather than hinder it.

The Welsh context is particularly important because translanguaging did not originate initially as an abstract theory of multilingualism. It emerged from an educational practice designed for a bilingual classroom. The original formulation therefore had a clear pedagogical orientation: learners could be encouraged to use their two languages in complementary ways for receptive and productive purposes. This represented a departure from approaches that required bilingual education to maintain a rigid separation between languages.

The concept was subsequently introduced to a wider English-speaking scholarly audience through Baker's work. Baker (2001) used the English term "*translanguaging*" to describe pedagogical practices involving the systematic use of two languages for different classroom functions. In this early formulation, translanguaging remained closely connected to bilingual education and classroom pedagogy. It demonstrated that using more than one language could enhance learners' understanding, facilitate the processing of academic content, and provide opportunities for learners to express knowledge through their stronger linguistic resources.

Although early formulations of translanguaging challenged monolingual pedagogy, they continued to operate, to some extent, within a conceptual framework in which languages could be identified as separate entities. The subsequent development of translanguaging theory represented a more substantial departure from this perspective. García (2009) reconceptualised bilingual education by focusing on the dynamic linguistic practices of bilingual speakers rather than treating languages as completely autonomous systems.

García (2009) conceptualised translanguaging as a set of multiple discursive practices through which bilingual individuals make sense of and communicate

within their bilingual worlds. This perspective shifted attention away from the simple alternation between two named languages and towards the ways in which bilingual speakers mobilise their entire linguistic repertoire for meaning-making. In this sense, translanguaging represents more than conventional code-switching. While code-switching is generally concerned with movement between identifiable linguistic codes, translanguaging emphasises the flexible and integrated use of linguistic resources by multilingual speakers.

This reconceptualization was further developed by García and Li Wei (2014), who situated translanguaging within a broader understanding of language, bilingualism, and education. They argued for an understanding of multilingual speakers as drawing upon an integrated repertoire rather than operating with completely independent linguistic systems. Translanguaging therefore challenges the assumption that multilingual speakers necessarily experience their languages as discrete and bounded entities. Instead, it foregrounds the dynamic ways in which speakers combine and deploy their linguistic resources in response to particular communicative, social, and cognitive demands.

This theoretical shift is particularly relevant to multilingual educational environments. If learners possess several languages or language varieties, their existing linguistic resources need not be treated as separate compartments that must be activated independently. Rather, they may constitute a repertoire from which learners draw strategically in order to understand concepts, negotiate meaning, construct knowledge, and communicate with others.

5. Translanguaging as Pedagogical Practice

The reconceptualization of translanguaging consequently expanded its significance from a bilingual classroom technique to a broader '*discursive practice and pedagogical perspective*'. García and Li Wei (2014) emphasised that translanguaging involves the dynamic use of linguistic resources for meaning-making, while García and Sylvan (2011) demonstrated how multilingual pedagogies can draw upon students' diverse linguistic resources in classroom learning.

From a pedagogical perspective, translanguaging challenges the assumption that effective English-language teaching requires the systematic exclusion of learners' familiar languages. Instead, teachers can strategically mobilise learners' linguistic repertoires to support comprehension, participation, interaction, and knowledge construction. For example, a teacher may explain a difficult concept through a familiar language, allow learners to discuss the concept using their existing linguistic resources, compare linguistic forms across languages, and subsequently guide learners towards expressing their understanding in

English. Such practices do not replace English instruction; rather, they create a bridge between learners' existing knowledge and the target language.

This distinction is important because translanguaging pedagogy should not be equated simply with the use of the mother tongue in an English classroom. The pedagogical significance lies in the purposeful and strategic use of multilingual resources in ways that contribute to learning. García and Kano (2014) accordingly conceptualise translanguaging as both process and pedagogy, demonstrating how multilingual resources can be deliberately incorporated into educational practices. Similarly, García, Johnson, and Seltzer (2017) argue for classroom practices that leverage students' bilingualism as a resource for learning rather than treating bilingualism as a deficiency.

(Cenoz & Gorter, 2020). further situates pedagogical translanguaging within the broader shift from monolingual ideologies towards multilingual approaches to language education. In this perspective, learners are recognised as multilingual speakers possessing valuable linguistic resources rather than as deficient users who must approximate an idealised monolingual English speaker. Thus, translanguaging pedagogy represents a movement from language separation towards linguistic integration, from linguistic deficit towards linguistic resource, and from English-only instruction towards strategic multilingual pedagogy.

The pedagogical significance of translanguaging is also connected with questions of inclusion, identity, and linguistic equity. When learners' familiar languages are excluded from classroom interaction, students may experience a disconnect between their existing knowledge and the language through which new knowledge is presented. Translanguaging can potentially reduce this distance by allowing learners to mobilise familiar linguistic resources while simultaneously developing competence in the target language.

García and Li Wei (2014) consequently position translanguaging within broader questions of power and social justice. In multilingual educational contexts, allowing students to draw upon their complete linguistic repertoires can challenge monolingual ideologies that privilege one language while marginalising others. Translanguaging therefore has implications beyond classroom comprehension: it can contribute to the recognition of multilingual identities and to more inclusive educational practices.

Nevertheless, translanguaging should not be romanticised as an automatic solution to all problems associated with multilingual education. Its effectiveness depends upon how, when, and why teachers employ multilingual resources. Strategic translanguaging

requires pedagogical planning and should remain connected to clearly defined learning objectives. The central issue is therefore not simply whether multiple languages are present in the classroom but whether teachers and learners can use those resources purposefully to facilitate learning.

6. Translanguaging in the Indian ESL Context

Translanguaging pedagogy has particular relevance to Indian ESL classrooms, where learners commonly possess multilingual repertoires and use different languages across home, community, and educational contexts. Rather than maintaining a rigid separation between English and learners' familiar languages, translanguaging allows teachers and learners to strategically draw upon their available linguistic resources to facilitate comprehension, participation, interaction, and English-language development. Research on bilingual classrooms demonstrates that translanguaging may involve practices such as translation, repetition, explanation, bilingual discussion, text annotation, and the use of different languages for different stages of a learning activity (Creese & Blackledge, 2010).

In the Indian ESL context, these practices can be adapted to different regional linguistic contexts. For example, in a *Hindi-English classroom*, a teacher introducing the word “*perseverance*” may explain it in Hindi as “*कठिन परिस्थितियों में भी लगातार प्रयास करते रहना*” and subsequently ask learners to construct an English sentence using the target word. Similarly, while teaching a difficult English passage, students may first discuss its meaning in Hindi and then present the main ideas in English. In a *Urdu-English classroom*, the teacher may explain “*perseverance*” through “*مشکل*”

“*حالات میں مسلسل کوشش جاری رکھنا*” or relate the concept to the Urdu word “*استقامت*”, before asking students to use “*perseverance*” in an English sentence. Such practices enable learners to access meaning through familiar linguistic resources while progressively developing English-language expression.

Translanguaging can also support collaborative learning and productive skills. Before an English presentation on “*The Importance of Education*,” for instance, students may discuss and organise their ideas in Hindi or Urdu, identify relevant English vocabulary, and subsequently deliver the presentation in English. Likewise, learners reading an English text may annotate difficult words in their familiar language—for example, “*struggle—संघर्ष*” in Hindi or “*struggle—جنگ*” in Urdu—and then use the English terms in a written summary. Such practices reflect the use of bilingual resources for accessing curricular content and maintaining participation in classroom tasks.

Translanguaging may further be employed for strategic teacher explanation. A teacher can introduce a grammatical structure in English, clarify a difficult point in Hindi or Urdu, and then return to English for practice. For example, the sentence “*If you study regularly, you will improve your English*” may be clarified as “*अगर आप नियमित रूप से पढ़ेंगे, तो आपकी English बेहतर होगी*” in Hindi or “*اگر آپ باقاعدگی سے پڑھیں گے تو آپ کی انگریزی بہتر ہوگی*” in Urdu. The teacher can then ask students to produce additional examples in English. In this way, the familiar language functions as temporary scaffolding rather than replacing the target language.

These examples demonstrate that translanguaging should not be reduced to simple translation or unrestricted use of the mother tongue. Its pedagogical value lies in the purposeful movement between languages according to the learning objective. A teacher may use Hindi or Urdu to activate prior knowledge, clarify concepts, facilitate discussion, or overcome temporary comprehension difficulties, while English may be foregrounded for target-language practice, academic writing, presentations, and assessment. Such flexible bilingual practices challenge the assumption that effective English teaching necessarily requires the exclusion of learners' other languages. Consequently, translanguaging can be viewed as a pedagogical bridge between learners' existing multilingual resources and English-language development, while also providing a classroom-level alternative to rigid English-only practices.

7. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This present paper explores the two objectives and research questions:

7.1 Research Objectives

1. To examine the role of translanguaging pedagogy in challenging English-only practices and linguistic imperialism in Indian ESL classrooms.
2. To explore how translanguaging pedagogy can promote inclusive classroom interaction, learner participation, and effective English language learning in multilingual Indian ESL contexts.

7.2 Research Questions

1. How can translanguaging pedagogy challenge English-only practices and linguistic imperialism in Indian ESL classrooms?
2. How does translanguaging pedagogy contribute to inclusive classroom interaction, learner participation, and English language learning in multilingual Indian ESL contexts?

Answering the questions of these objectives, it adopted a quantitative survey research design to

investigate learners' perceptions of translanguaging pedagogy in English as a Second Language (ESL) classrooms. The study examines whether the strategic use of learners' home languages alongside English can challenge the English-only approach associated with linguistic imperialism and promote more inclusive language learning.

7.3 Participants

The participants consisted of 31 second-language learners and education professionals from Aligarh Muslim University (AMU), Aligarh, India. The sample included postgraduate students, research scholars, Ph.D. scholars, and teachers who were either learning or teaching English in a multilingual academic environment. Participants were selected through convenience sampling, as they were readily accessible to the researcher and represented individuals with direct experience of English language learning and teaching in multilingual settings.

7.4 Research Instrument

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire prepared through Google Forms. The questionnaire consisted of two sections. The first section gathered demographic information, including gender and participants' educational role. The second section contained eight statements measuring participants' perceptions of translanguaging pedagogy and English language teaching.

The Paper focused on the following themes:

- the use of English and home languages for classroom learning;
- the role of translanguaging in improving conversational competence;
- learners' confidence and classroom participation;
- teachers' encouragement of flexible language use;
- the limitations of English-only instruction;
- the value of students' home languages in learning English;
- teachers' use of home languages to explain difficult concepts; and
- perceptions regarding the use of Hindi/Urdu in supporting English language learning.

Responses were recorded using a five-point Likert scale consisting of Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. This scale enabled participants to express the degree of their agreement with each statement.

7.5 Data Collection Procedure

The questionnaire was distributed online using Google Forms among students and teachers associated with Aligarh Muslim University. Participation in the study was voluntary, and respondents completed the

questionnaire after providing informed consent. The responses were automatically recorded in Microsoft Excel for subsequent analysis.

7.6 Data Analysis

The collected data were analysed using descriptive statistics. Frequencies and percentages were calculated to summarize participants' responses to each questionnaire item. Tables and graphical representations were prepared to identify overall trends in participants' attitudes towards translanguaging pedagogy, English-only instruction, and the educational role of learners' home languages. The findings were interpreted in light of the theoretical perspectives of language and power, linguistic imperialism, and translanguaging discussed in the literature review.

7.7 Ethical Considerations

Ethical standards were maintained throughout the study. Participation was entirely voluntary, and respondents were informed about the purpose of the research before completing the questionnaire. No personally identifying information was disclosed in the analysis, and all responses were treated confidentially. The data were used solely for academic and research purposes.

7.8 Results

The present study investigated translanguaging pedagogy as a means of challenging linguistic imperialism in Indian ESL classrooms by examining the perceptions of second-language learners and education professionals at Aligarh Muslim University. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale. A total of 31 valid responses were analysed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentages.

The first question examined whether students understand English lessons better when they are allowed to use both English and their home language in the classroom. The findings reveal that 74.2% of the respondents agreed and 19.4% strongly agreed with the statement, indicating that 93.6% of the participants held positive views towards the use of translanguaging for improving comprehension. Only 3.2% disagreed, while 3.2% remained neutral. These findings suggest that learners perceive multilingual classroom interaction as beneficial for understanding English.

The second question explored whether translanguaging strategies enhance students' conversational competence in ESL classrooms. The results indicate that 80.6% of the respondents agreed and 6.5% strongly agreed, demonstrating that 87.1% believed translanguaging contributes positively to communication skills. Only 3.2% strongly disagreed, whereas 9.7% remained neutral.

The third question focused on learners' confidence in classroom participation. The findings show that 77.4% agreed and 9.7% strongly agreed that using students' complete linguistic repertoire increases their confidence to participate in classroom activities. Only 3.2% disagreed, while 9.7% expressed a neutral opinion. These findings indicate that translanguaging encourages greater learner confidence and classroom engagement.

The four explored whether teachers should encourage the flexible use of English and students' home languages to support learning. The results reveal that 54.8% agreed and 22.6% strongly agreed with this statement, indicating that 77.4% of the respondents favoured multilingual teaching practices. A small proportion remained neutral (6.5%) or disagreed (3.2%), while 9.7% strongly disagreed.

The fifth question examined participants' perceptions of English-only instruction. The findings show that 58.1% agreed and 6.5% strongly agreed that using only English in ESL classrooms limits students' ability to understand lessons and participate effectively. In contrast, 12.9% disagreed and 3.2% strongly disagreed, while 19.4% remained neutral. These findings suggest that many learners perceive limitations in rigid English-only teaching.

The sixth question investigated whether students' home languages should be treated as valuable resources for learning English. The responses demonstrate the strongest level of support among all questionnaire items. 35.5% of the respondents agreed and 38.7% strongly agreed, meaning that 74.2% supported recognising learners' home languages as educational resources. Only 9.7% disagreed, 3.2% strongly disagreed, and 12.9% remained neutral.

The seventh question examined teachers' use of students' home languages to explain difficult English concepts. The findings indicate that 51.6% agreed and 22.6% strongly agreed with this practice, representing 74.2% positive responses. Only 12.9% disagreed, 6.5% strongly disagreed, and 6.5% remained neutral.

The final question explored whether using only Hindi or Urdu as the medium of instruction could improve English language skills. Unlike the previous items, the responses revealed a different pattern. 45.2% disagreed and 19.4% strongly disagreed with this statement, indicating that 64.6% of the respondents rejected replacing English entirely with Hindi or Urdu. Only 19.4% agreed and 9.7% strongly agreed, while 3.2% remained neutral. These findings suggest that participants support translanguaging, which integrates English with learners' home languages, rather than replacing one monolingual approach with another.

Overall, the findings demonstrate strong support for translanguaging pedagogy among multilingual learners in Indian ESL classrooms. The majority of participants believed that strategic use of learners' home languages alongside English improves comprehension, strengthens classroom participation, enhances learner confidence, and facilitates effective communication. At the same time, participants rejected both English-only and home-language-only approaches, favouring instead a balanced multilingual pedagogy. These findings support the central argument of this study that translanguaging pedagogy can challenge the English-only ideology associated with linguistic imperialism while promoting more inclusive, equitable, and effective English language teaching in Indian ESL classrooms.

8. DISCUSSION

The findings of the present study indicate that the majority of participants hold positive attitudes towards translanguaging pedagogy in English language classrooms. Most respondents agreed that the strategic use of learners' home languages alongside English facilitates understanding, enhances classroom participation, and improves confidence in learning English. These findings challenge the traditional English-only approach, which has long dominated English language teaching in India and many other multilingual contexts.

One of the significant findings of the study is that participants generally believed that the use of the mother tongue does not hinder English language learning; rather, it supports comprehension and effective communication. This finding is consistent with Hopkins (1989), who argued that the first language serves as a valuable pedagogical resource by helping learners understand new concepts and reducing learning anxiety. Similarly, Cummins (1979, 1981, 2000) proposed that knowledge acquired in the first language transfers to the second language through a common underlying proficiency. The responses collected in the present study reinforce these theoretical arguments, suggesting that multilingual learners benefit from drawing upon their existing linguistic knowledge while learning English.

The participants also expressed favourable opinions regarding teachers' use of learners' home languages to explain difficult concepts. This finding supports Auerbach's (1993) argument that English-only instruction lacks sufficient pedagogical justification and often ignores the linguistic realities of multilingual learners. Auerbach maintained that allowing learners to use their first language promotes confidence, active participation, and meaningful classroom interaction. The responses in this study similarly suggest that flexible language use creates a more supportive learning environment than rigid English-only instruction.

Another important finding relates to classroom participation and learner confidence. Most respondents believed that translanguaging enables students to express themselves more comfortably during classroom discussions. This observation aligns with García's (2009) understanding of bilingualism as a dynamic process in which multilingual speakers naturally employ their complete linguistic repertoire to construct meaning. García and Li Wei (2014) further argue that multilingual learners do not possess separate language systems but rather an integrated linguistic repertoire that they strategically utilize according to communicative needs. The positive attitudes observed among the participants provide additional support for this theoretical perspective.

The findings also have important implications when viewed through the lens of linguistic imperialism. Phillipson (1992) argues that the global dominance of English has been maintained through structural and cultural inequalities that privilege English over other languages. His concept of the monolingual fallacy assumes that English is best taught exclusively through English. However, the responses in the present study challenge this assumption. Participants largely rejected the idea that only English should be used in English language classrooms and instead favoured the inclusion of Hindi, Urdu, or other home languages whenever they facilitate understanding. These findings suggest that multilingual learners value linguistic flexibility over rigid monolingual practices.

Similarly, Fairclough's (1989) theory of language and power provides a useful framework for interpreting these findings. Fairclough argues that educational institutions often reproduce dominant ideologies by presenting particular language practices as natural or superior. English-only instruction may therefore be understood not merely as a teaching method but also as an ideological practice that reinforces the privileged status of English. The participants' positive attitudes towards translanguaging indicate growing awareness that effective language learning does not require excluding learners' home languages. Instead, multilingual classroom practices can challenge unequal linguistic hierarchies and create more democratic learning environments.

The findings are also relevant to the multilingual vision of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. The policy encourages the use of learners' home languages during the educational process and recognises multilingualism as an educational asset. Although NEP 2020 does not explicitly employ the term translanguaging, its emphasis on multilingual learning closely corresponds with the principles of translanguaging pedagogy. The present study suggests that learners themselves support instructional practices that align with these policy objectives, indicating the

practical relevance of translanguaging within Indian ESL classrooms.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that translanguaging is perceived not only as a useful instructional strategy but also as a means of promoting linguistic inclusion, learner participation, and educational equity. The responses support the argument that multilingual learners should be encouraged to utilize their complete linguistic repertoire rather than being restricted to English alone. Consequently, translanguaging pedagogy offers a practical and theoretically grounded alternative to English-only instruction in multilingual Indian classrooms.

9. CONCLUSION

The present study examined translanguaging pedagogy as an inclusive alternative to rigid English-only practices in Indian ESL classrooms. Drawing on the perspectives of language and power, linguistic imperialism, bilingual and multilingual education, and translanguaging theory, the study explored whether the strategic use of learners' home languages alongside English could contribute to more equitable and effective English language learning. The theoretical discussion demonstrates that language education has gradually moved from monolingual assumptions towards bilingual and multilingual perspectives, with translanguaging representing a further shift from viewing languages as separate systems to recognising learners' complete linguistic repertoires as resources for meaning-making and learning.

The empirical findings provide substantial support for this perspective. The majority of participants believed that the strategic use of English together with their home languages improves comprehension, conversational competence, classroom participation, and learner confidence. A considerable proportion also supported teachers' use of Hindi, Urdu, and other familiar languages for explaining difficult concepts. At the same time, participants did not support replacing English with Hindi or Urdu as the sole medium of instruction. This finding is particularly significant because it demonstrates that translanguaging should not be understood as a movement from one monolingual ideology to another. Rather, participants favoured a flexible multilingual approach in which English and learners' familiar languages complement one another according to pedagogical needs.

The findings therefore challenge the assumption that English-only instruction is necessarily the most effective or appropriate model for multilingual ESL classrooms. From the perspective of linguistic imperialism, the exclusive privileging of English may contribute to linguistic hierarchies by restricting learners' access to their existing linguistic and cultural resources. Translanguaging provides a practical means of questioning such hierarchies by legitimising

multilingual practices while continuing to develop English proficiency. In this sense, translanguaging is not simply a technique of translation or code-switching; it represents a broader pedagogical orientation that recognises multilingualism as a resource rather than a deficiency.

However, translanguaging should not be treated as an automatic solution to every challenge in multilingual education. Its effectiveness depends on teachers' pedagogical awareness, appropriate planning, clearly defined learning objectives, and the purposeful selection of languages for particular classroom activities. The present study is also limited by its relatively small sample and its focus on participants from a single university. Future studies should therefore examine translanguaging across larger and more diverse samples and incorporate classroom observations, interviews, and other qualitative methods to investigate how translanguaging is actually practised in different Indian educational contexts.

Overall, the study suggests that the central question in multilingual ESL education should not be whether English or learners' home languages should be used, but how their linguistic resources can be strategically integrated to enhance learning. Translanguaging consequently offers a promising pedagogical framework for moving beyond rigid English-only practices, challenging linguistic inequalities, and creating more inclusive English language classrooms in India. It can therefore be understood not merely as a classroom strategy but as a broader educational approach that recognises linguistic diversity, supports learner agency, and contributes to a more equitable model of English language education.

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