

Translanguaging: Centralizing the Learner in Multilingual Classroom Transactions¹

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Abstract

In a multilingual classroom, students come from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. They bring various cultural experiences, knowledge, and linguistic resources with them, however, most of the time, these resources remain unutilized as the medium for discourse in the classroom is often the dominant language. As a result, minority languages remain ignored and the students from minority linguistic backgrounds might feel at a disadvantages if they cannot voice their views in the classroom (Mohanty, 2009). Most of the students leave their education for these linguistic reasons, and the dropout rates are quite high among minority students (MacKenzie, 2009). In this scenario, translanguaging can be an alternative strategy to provide space to minority learners in the mainstream classroom where they will be able to communicate more freely. This study was conducted in a school in the Paschim Medinipur district of West Bengal, India. The purpose of the study was to explore how translanguaging promotes learners' space inside the mainstream classroom and how it promotes language practice where learners can bring their creativity and imagination to the classroom. A qualitative approach to content analysis has been adopted to analyze the data. Findings show the active involvement of students in the translanguaging classroom and suggest that translanguaging encourages students' creativity and imagination in a multilingual classroom.

Resumen

En un aula multilingüe, los estudiantes provienen de diversos orígenes lingüísticos y culturales. Traen consigo diversas experiencias culturales, conocimientos y recursos lingüísticos. Sin embargo, la mayoría de las veces, estos recursos no se utilizan, ya que el medio para el discurso en el aula suele ser el idioma dominante. Como resultado, los idiomas minoritarios permanecen ignorados y los estudiantes de orígenes lingüísticos minoritarios se sienten en desventaja porque no pueden expresar sus opiniones en el aula (Mohanty, 2009). La mayoría de los estudiantes abandonan su educación por razones lingüísticas y las tasas de abandono son bastante altas entre los estudiantes tribales (MacKenzie, 2009). En este escenario, el translenguaje puede ser una estrategia alternativa para proporcionar un espacio a los estudiantes de minorías en el aula general donde podrán expresar sus puntos de vista. El estudio se llevó a cabo en una escuela del distrito de Paschim Medinipur en Bengala Occidental, India. El propósito del estudio fue explorar cómo el translenguaje promueve el espacio de los estudiantes dentro del aula general, cómo está promoviendo una práctica del lenguaje donde los estudiantes pueden llevar su creatividad e imaginación al aula. Se ha adoptado un enfoque cualitativo de análisis de contenido para analizar los datos. Los hallazgos muestran la participación activa de los estudiantes en el aula de translenguaje y también sugieren que el translenguaje fomenta la creatividad y la imaginación de los estudiantes en un aula multilingüe.

Introduction

India is a multilingual and multicultural country. If anyone wants to understand the true spirit of India, they must deeply dig into the multicultural and multilingual ethos of the country. Pattanayak (1984) rightly says, "In multilingual countries, many languages are the facts of life; any restriction in the choice of language use is a nuisance, and one language is not only uneconomic, it is absurd" (p. 82). According to the 2011 national census approximately 19,569 languages/dialects are spoken in India, out of which only 22 languages are documented in the Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution that give official encouragement to promote their culture and education in those languages (Government of India, 2008). However, what about the other languages? This issue has made Indian multilingualism complex. The other languages which are not documented in the Eighth Schedule are often neglected and are described as inferior by the dominant linguistic speakers (Mohanty, 2009). They are not even addressed appropriately in educational settings, and it bypasses the rights of minority language speakers (Pattanayak, 1990).

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Therefore, students who are native speakers of minority languages attend the mainstream classroom conducted in dominant languages and face several difficulties since they fail to understand the language of the teacher properly. Therefore learning becomes a burden, and they gradually start to retire from the education system as they cannot understand what is going on in the classroom (Jhingran, 2009). As the minority students cannot comprehend the language of the dominant groups, they feel frustrated, which leads to educational failure at a later stage, and they leave the education system (Mohanty, 2009). Groff (2017) posits that the literacy rate among linguistic and cultural minorities is quite low in India as they face several learning disadvantages due to linguistic differences. MacKenzie (2009) claims that the content of the textbook and curriculum often bear little relationship to the reality of the lives of minority students and that the teaching methods are alienated from indigenous epistemology. They are compelled to embrace an education system which ignores their identity, misunderstands their culture, and depicts them in negative terms. Hence, this kind of education promotes inequality and social injustice which certainly has a negative influence on the learners.

To overcome this scenario, an education system which promotes equality and social justice is needed. This kind of education system will make learners free from all kinds of biases and create a learning environment that gives the learners the opportunity to learn freely and independently in the classroom. It will make learning fun and joyful for them. Additionally, an education system which addresses the complex linguistic problems of the classroom in India is needed. This system might break the language hierarchy inside the classroom and will make the classroom a space where students can use the language of their choice. The National Education Policy (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2020) also documents the need to encourage a flexible language approach in the classroom. It has justified the need to mix one's cultural resources with another to bring creativity, imagination, and enjoyment to the classroom. In this scenario, translanguaging can be an alternative solution to deal with the complex challenges of multilingual classrooms, break the silence of minority students in multilingual classrooms, and promote freedom and autonomy in the classroom. This paper aims to explore the following research questions:

1. *How can translanguaging enhance the quality of learning by making the classroom a learner-centric place and by engaging the students from all sections of society in the classroom?*
2. *How can translanguaging bring creativity and imagination in a multilingual classroom?*

Theoretical Framework

Socio-egocentric model vs. latent group model

The theoretical framework of this study originates from the concept that functional communication has two characteristics – one at the individual level and the other at the group level (Bonito & Meyers, 2011). The socio-egocentric model (Hewes, 2009) proposes that individuals often behave independently. No group either influences the individual's outcome or influences it. This kind of communication always reflects individual interest rather than true dialogue. Whereas the latent group model (Gonzalez & Griffin, 2002) advocates that communicating in a group influence both individual competencies as well as group competencies. When the students communicate in a group, they put forward their original ideas, negotiate them, and engage in various problem-solving activities. This paper takes the stand that both egocentric and group-centric communications are important in facilitating a discussion.

Theory of cognitive linguistic interdependence

Jim Cummings (1981) has proposed the idea of cognitive linguistic interdependence which negates the idea of separate underlying proficiency and semi-lingualism. This model is known as Common Underlying Proficiency (CUP) which is different from Separate Underlying Proficiency (SUP). This model states that the knowledge in one language helps in acquiring other languages. Cummins described CUP like a central operating system with capabilities such as inferring, organizing, and planning which is available in all languages even though the surface features of all the languages seem to be separate.

While discussing linguistic proficiency, Cummins (1999) proposed the concept of BICS (Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills) and CULP (Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency). BICS encourages communication in social situation whereas CULP is specifically developed in academic situations. BICS provides the learners with contextual support and enough props (e.g., external clues, facial gestures) for language delivery, whereas CULP describes higher order thinking skills such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. Hence, both BICS and CULP are necessary for developing language proficiency.

Scaffolding and zone of proximal development

Scaffolding can be described as cognitive support to learners given by the teachers to help them solve various tasks which they might not be able to solve on their own (Bruner, 1978). It is a kind of mediated action which helps a teacher to facilitate learning or bridge a gap by providing support to the learner. The idea of scaffolding is closely related to Vygotsky's (1978) theory of "Zone of Proximal Development" (ZPD). Vygotsky argued that every individual has two levels of development – present level and what he can attain with the help of more knowledgeable peers/others. The distance between these two levels is called ZPD.

Literature Review

Translanguaging: A brief concept note

Cen Williams (2012) coined the term translanguaging in Welsh context in the 1980's to refer to the systematic and planned use of two languages in the same lesson. Later, Baker (2001) and García (2009a) popularized the term in English. García (2009b) described translanguaging as "an important educational practice – to construct understandings, to make sense of the world and of the academic material, to mediate with others, and to acquire other ways of languaging" (p. 135). In another paper, García (2014) defined translanguaging as "complex discursive practices that include all language practices of the students in order to develop new language practices and sustain the old one" (p. 3). Canagarajah (2011) described translanguaging as the "ability of multilingual speakers to shuttle between languages, treating the diverse languages that form their repertoire as an integral system" (p. 401) and Kubota (2014) defined it as an "integrated view of language which regards multilingual practices as products of language users' multiple repertoires that are employed in a contingent and flexible manner rather than an aggregate use of languages that are separated along structural boundaries" (p. 3).

Types of translanguaging

Jones (2017) classified translanguaging into two types: teacher-directed and pupil-directed. In teacher-directed translanguaging, a teacher attempts to organize various activities in the classroom by choosing appropriate reading materials, providing a writing framework, designing various activities and providing appropriate instructions. In pupil-directed translanguaging, students take the center as they undertake and organize various activities by themselves. Lewis et al. (2012) described two types of translanguaging: classroom translanguaging and universal translanguaging. Classroom translanguaging was seen as an organized and planned activity and universal includes several kinds of translanguaging (on playgrounds, on sport field) in a social space. Therefore, it includes classroom translanguaging too. Classroom translanguaging gave special emphasis to pedagogy and universal translanguaging contained the cultural aspects. Paulsrud (2014) also distinguished two types of translanguaging: pedagogic and non-pedagogic. Pedagogic translanguaging included both teaching-learning processes and non-pedagogic occurred both in social space as well as in classrooms. Cenoz and Gorter (2017) distinguished pedagogical and spontaneous translanguaging. Pedagogical was planned and intentional, taking place in the classroom and spontaneous was free and could occur both inside and outside the classroom. Finally, William (2012) differentiated official translanguaging from natural translanguaging. Official translanguaging was specifically designed and conducted by a teacher and natural translanguaging was independent and practiced by an individual.

Translanguaging and minority/indigenous languages

Regional minority languages are facing severe challenges compared to a few years ago (Cenoz & Gorter, 2017). Hickey (2001), in a study of Irish medium pre-school students, suggested that minority languages were facing severe threats since the minority children themselves were switching to the dominant language (English) and using it most of the time. Bisai and Singh (2020), in their study in Paschim Medinipur, West Bengal, India reported that many teachers had negative attitudes towards these languages in the classroom for three reasons: a) they could not understand them; b) most of the students did not understand them; c) and minority languages were less prestigious in the social context than the dominant languages. In this scenario, translanguaging could be an alternative option to promote and preserve minority languages.

Translanguaging can be beneficial for minority students since it provides an available way of protecting minority languages and creates a new environment for learning their languages (Bisai & Singh, 2019). This practice can create an opportunity for students to learn to value their languages and develop a space for mutual understanding. It can also provide a space for sustainable languaging in the classroom without harming other languages (Cenoz & Gorter, 2017; Otheguy et al., 2015).

McCracken (2017) in his study in an international school in Hague stated that translanguaging opened a teaching space where multiple languages could be learnt and taught. While using many languages in the classroom, minority students had an opportunity to maintain their L1, learn new lexicons, and maintain their culture and identity in the classroom. Therefore, students could become proficient in all the languages used in the classroom, which certainly would promote an additive ideology (dominant languages and other languages are learned in addition to the mother tongue) of language learning rather than the subtractive one (a dominant language is learned at the cost of the mother tongue).

In a study in the U.S. context, Yilmaz (2019) argued that this enhanced the academic achievement of minority students. When they had a chance to use their languages in the classroom, they felt valued and respected. They tried to do their best in the classroom. Gradually, social justice for language minority students in the classroom was established.

Cenoz and Gorter (2017) in their work on minority students who were the speakers of Basque language stated that use of a minority language in the classroom should be an opportunity rather than as a threat. They further added that schools should promote minority languages since languages could share same space in the classroom. The students could develop their proficiency in both languages. In this way, this kind of approach could create a sustainable environment of language learning among the students.

A similar kind of study of the Basque context by Leonet, et al. (2019) suggested that translanguaging could play a vital role in revitalizing minority languages since it addressed the wider social context of the schools and allowed space for minority languages. This pedagogy not only gave space to the minority languages, but also promoted their rights in the classroom.

Kleemann (2021) in her research in the Sami language context observed that students rarely use Sami in the classroom. The teachers in the classroom were encouraging students to use Sami and they introduced translanguaging pedagogy in the classroom so that the students could use both the Sami language and the dominant language interchangeably.

Nguyen (2019) in a study in the minority context in Vietnam observed that appropriate language policies were needed to deal with the translanguaging practices of the minority students since most of their languages were in danger. These students gradually embraced the majority language of the state to get social benefits, which often led to the extinction of the minority languages. Therefore, teachers should keep a balance between two languages during the translanguaging process.

García (2009b) argued that minority languages were given least attention in the educational context, and classes were often taught in a language which the students didn't understand. As a result, these minority students faced tremendous problems and this created linguistic inequalities. In this scenario, translanguaging is needed to solve this problem. Translanguaging is important for two reasons i.e., social justice and social practice. The social justice principal emphasizes creating a learning context where minority students' identity is not threatened, and it respects their rights. The social practice principal emphasizes creating a space for collaboration among students, where both majority and minority language speakers can collaborate each other and based on mutual understanding.

DeNicolò (2019) in her study on indigenous Latinx students reported that translanguaging helped the students to actively participate in the classroom, allowed them to enhance their knowledge, and develop their vocabulary, and to learn to solve problems in the classroom. The students acquired various learning strategies which helped them enhance their content knowledge. Teachers also engaged them to solve various problems collectively creating a healthy environment where the students had the opportunity to develop their language skills.

Duarte and Günther-van der Meji (2020) in their project on both the minority and migrant students in the Netherlands studied teachers' attitudes towards translanguaging practices in the multilingual classroom. They found that most of the teachers in their study showed a favorable attitude towards translanguaging, and many actively encouraged students to use various languages in the classroom. Such translanguaging

practices helped the students develop their knowledge of various languages and acquire a positive attitude towards multilingualism.

Tsokolidou and Skourtou (2020) discovered that translanguaging gave the minority students freedom to switch languages, developed their thinking skills, and enhanced their self-confidence and self-esteem in the classroom. They started valuing their linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Moreover, it gave them a comfortable environment to learn something easily in the classroom.

Translanguaging and the role of teachers

Teachers have a major role to play in a translanguaging classroom. Duarte and Günther-van der Meij (2020) in their study on multilingual immigrant and minority students in Netherlands reported that teachers used translanguaging for various purposes in the classroom. They used it to develop fluid language practices among the students, to develop communicative skills in several languages, and to implement various pedagogical skills. They also attempted to involve students in the classroom through various activities, which enhanced content and language knowledge of the students.

De los Reyes (2018) in his study in of a school in the Philippines observed that teachers used translanguaging to serve various purposes in the classroom –to present lessons, to conduct classroom discussion, to make complex concepts clear, to create a space for students where they could voice their views, to elicit responses, to manage the classroom, to develop proficiency in English, and to express their emotions.

In a study in U.S. context, Yilmaz (2019) reported that teachers used translanguaging as a transformative pedagogy to make a connection between academic texts and student's background knowledge, to make corrections of errors, and to enhance their comprehension and participation by creating a rich zone of learning. Teachers created a positive atmosphere of classroom discussion, helped students to enrich their creativity and criticality and encourage them to share their ideas.

Pacheco and Miller (2016) in their study of elementary teachers observed that teachers encouraged the students to use their full linguistic repertoire in the classroom to complete various tasks, to improve their multilingual skills, to clarify various concepts in a text, to deepen their understanding of the subject matter, and to enhance their cross-linguistic awareness.

In a work with migrant students, García (2017) identified four salient roles of teachers in a translanguaging classroom: they can work as a detective, the builder, the co-learner, and the transformer. As a detective, they keep information about students' learning experiences and their performance in the classroom. As a builder they try to build a space for students and the students to actively participate in various activities. As a co-learner they learn many new concepts from learners. When the students share their life stories, teachers get to know about their world and their life experiences. Finally, as transformers they pass over the traditional language boundaries and try to bring change to the students.

Schissel et al. (2018) in their study of teachers in Oaxaca, Mexico observed that when various strategies of translanguaging were included by the teachers in the classroom assessment, it helped the students to enhance their self-confidence and various language skills.

In a study of first-year medical students in South Africa, Hungwe (2019) noticed that teachers encouraged the students to use translanguaging in the classroom to help them to understand various text and to create a space where they could use various languages freely.

The previous references discuss various issues on translanguaging, benefits of translanguaging and how the teachers use translanguaging in a bilingual or multilingual classroom. Allard (2017) presented a nuanced analysis of teacher-directed translanguaging and how it could fall short of its proposed aims when a teacher works in isolation. But few articles from India delves deeply into the issues of how learners can be placed at the central locus of classroom transactions through translanguaging practices to make their learning process more effective and how translanguaging initiates creativity and imagination among students by engaging them positively in a multilingual classroom. Therefore, this paper aims to explore how learners can be placed at the center of a translanguaging classroom to make their learning process more effective and how students from all section from society, especially minority students are encouraged to bring their creativity and imagination in the classroom.

Methods

The research context

The research was conducted in a school of Paschim Medinipur district, West Bengal, India. Paschim Medinipur is one among twenty-three districts in West Bengal and it is a multilingual district where many languages such as Bengali, Santali, Kurmi, and Mundari are spoken. Bengali is the most common spoken language and English is taught as a foreign language in this district. Classroom transactions are mostly done in Bengali and English (Bisai & Singh, 2022) while minority languages are mostly ignored. Though Santali language has been included in the VIII Schedule⁴ of the Indian Constitution and official status has been given, it has not been used widely for classroom transaction though many Santali speaking students come to these schools.

Participants

The participants were the English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers and students of Class VIII from a state-run school of Paschim Medinipur district, West Bengal, India. The school was chosen randomly by the researchers. The data was collected from December 2019 to March 2020. The researchers visited the institution thrice in a week during the abovementioned period. Three teachers and sixty students from Section A and B participated in this study. The participation in this study was voluntary. Before collecting the data, written consent was acquired from both from the school administrators and teachers and oral consent was taken from students. The participants' personal information was kept secret by the researchers. The collected data has been used for the purpose of research only. The details of the participants has been represented in a tabular form (Table 1)

Section	Pseudonym of Each Student	Mother Tongue	Languages at School	Additional Language/s
A	Sujit, Rahul, Sanjay, Anita, Ranu, Monisha, Bulti, Sujata, Rinku, Anindita, Megh, Chaiya, Dipankar, Suniti, Subimal, Raj, Aditi, Somdev, Archana, Prosenjit, Rakibul, Arghya, Ariv	Bengali	Bengali, English	Hindi
	Raghu, Sukhlal, Balai, Taru, Kali,	Santali	Bengali, English	
	Samar, Hiru, Kanhu	Kurmi	Bengali, English	
B	Dikbijay, Aninda, Anish, Tathagata, Dilip, Koli, Phulkumari, Pritam, Parimal, Anup, Tanmoy, Abhishek, Rupali, Satyajit, Hemanta, Santanu, Ratan, Sourav, Aparna, Ritu, Riya, Indranil, Biswajit, Sanchari	Bengali	Bengali, English	Hindi
	Lakshmi, Sundari, Ranu, Kundri	Santali	Bengali, English	
	Subir	Mundari or Lodha	Bengali, English	

Table 1: Participants

Research instruments

Classroom observations and teachers' and students' interviews were chosen as appropriate research instruments for the study. The researchers did not prepare any specific questionnaire for the interview prior to the study. They just asked different sets of open-ended questions depending on the situation. These open-ended questions helped the researchers to understand different perspectives of classroom situation. Some questions are in the Appendix.

Research design

Qualitative case study methodology was adopted to analyze the collected data since it enables researchers to conduct an in-depth exploration of intricate phenomena within some specific context (Rashid et al., 2019). The purpose for choosing this research methodology was to explore the perspectives of teachers and students in a translingual classroom. Before, analyzing the data, the collected interview and observational data were coded through open and focussed coding to develop themes or find out the pattern (Esterberg, 2002) The coding was done manually and no software was used for analysis.

⁴ It lists the official languages of the republic of India. In India, there are twenty-two official languages. Santali is one of them.

Data collection procedures

In the first phase of the study, student and teacher demographic information was acquired. From this information it was evident that all the students were multilingual and 22% of them came from diverse linguistic backgrounds. In this phase, classroom observations (EFL classes only) were carried out for thirty hours (15 hours from Section A and 15 from Section B).

In the second phase of the study, semi-structured interviews were conducted individually with three teachers and 60 students to discover the engagement of the learners during class hours. The duration of total interview with teachers was three hours (one hour with each teacher) and with students thirty hours (half an hour with each student). The entire interview was recorded. Verbatim transcriptions of the interviews were created to show the authenticity of language used by teachers and students. Interviews with teachers were conducted by the researchers both in Bengali and English since they were comfortable in both the languages and interviews with students were conducted in Bengali only since students were comfortable only in Bengali.

Findings and Discussion

The demographic information exhibits that 22% of the students out of the sixty come from linguistic minorities (Lodha, Kurmi, and Santal) backgrounds. Most of the students present in the classroom can understand three languages (their respective mother tongues, Bengali and English), and most of them can read and write in two languages. There is no monolingual student in the classroom. Teachers are multilingual too. All of them (teachers) can understand Bengali, English, and Hindi. The teachers can read and write in two languages (Bengali and English); but they do not know the minority languages.

Classroom activities and teachers

Activity 1

From the interview and observational data, it was found that the students and teachers were moving between, across and between languages without much regard to language boundaries. They were mixing various languages in the classroom. Various activities were conducted by the researchers to discover the use of languages in the classroom by teachers and students. One activity has been chosen for transcription below to present evidence that they are moving without much regard to language boundaries:

Activity 1

Teacher: [Showing the picture from the char] *Where is the woman going?*

Sujit: *Matha* [In Bengali]

"Field"

Rahul: *The woman is going to the field.*

Teacher: *Excellent. Pritam you have to describe it in full sentence.*

Sujit: *Ok, sir!*

Teacher: *Why the woman is going to the field?*

Sanjay: *The woman is going to the field to cut paddy.*

Anitat: *Raghu! What shall we call paddy in Santali?*

Teacher: *Yes Raghu, You can use Santali word of paddy and repeat the whole sentence in the class.*

Raghu: [silent for a minute]

Teacher: *Raghu! You can do it. Try once.*

Raghu: *Kuri gidro horo irre sanno kana* [The woman is going to the field to cut paddy]

Teacher: *Tell it in English.*

Raghu: *The woman is going to the field ... [mumbling] to cut paddy.*

Teacher: *Excellent Raghu!*

Raghu represents those minority students who remain silent in the class due to linguistic problems but when encouraged and given the opportunity to speak in their mother tongue, they produce meaningful sentences. The teacher was trying to reinforce the student verbally and boosting his self-esteem in the classroom which is a primary reason to help learners become independent in the language classroom. He was also assisting students to produce meaningful sentences in their mother tongue as well as in Bengali

and English. Though it was often time consuming, the minimum help of More Knowledgeable Other (Vygotsky, 1978) was yielding positive results in the classroom. When Raghu was mumbling to speak in English, he was using the resource of first language to complete his sentence which reminded us Cummins' (1981) theory of CUP which stated that knowledge in one language helps in acquiring other languages. He was not only using the resources of first languages, but also trying to teach all the languages which were spoken in the classroom.

Activity 2

In the second activity, students were divided into seven groups of eight students each in first three groups and nine students in the last four groups. They were asked to put a story in order. There were three different stages.

Pre-learning Stage: In this stage, students were asked to sit in their groups and they were given necessary instructions. The teachers distributed a set of words to each group to create a story. They were also asked to present the story in a group when the writing is over.

While-learning stage: In this stage students were given 20 minutes to complete the story activity. Group leaders were instructed to involve all the students in their groups and maintain the discipline of the respective group. Their discussions were recorded by the researchers. One of these discussions is transcribed below and pseudonyms of the students have been used for the ethical purpose:

Ratan: *Oi tui Magic wand er mane Janis?* [Bengali]

[Do you know the meaning of magic wand?]

Ritu: *Are magic wand meaning Jadu chori.* [Bengali]

[The meaning of magic wand is the magic stick]

Aparna: *Ota toke chuiya dile, you will become a hen.* [Mixing Bengali and English]

[If it touches you, you will become a hen]

Tanmoy [the group leader]: *Bakwas bondho koro.* [Mixing Bengali with Hindi]

(Bakwas is a Hindi word) [Stop talking nonsense]

All the students together: *Let's start the lesson*

Researchers found that students were using various languages (Bengali, English and Hindi) to clarify their doubts, to ask their questions, and to improve their English vocabulary. Many students were using the resources of Bengali language to learn English. The students were enjoying the lesson and joking with their peers in the classroom while they were completing the task with responsibility.

Post-learning stage: The teacher instructed them to present the story in the classroom. While the students were presenting the story in a group, they exhibited their creativity and imagination. During this activity, they collaborated with each other too. They used new words like *Judiye Sisha* (Magic Mirror), *Daini* (Witch), and *Pokkhiraj* (Pegasus). *Pokkhiraj* is a popular term in Bengali literature and culture, and they have borrowed this term from Bengali literature while writing in English. The students combined both the English and Bengali languages during the presentation, which enriched the quality of their presentation in the classroom. Therefore, they were able to enrich their classroom discourse by borrowing resources from native as well as from other languages. They blended their creativity and imagination while writing story. It is also evident that the communication in a group was both influencing the individual competencies as well as group competencies of the students which support the idea of Gonzalez and Griffin's (2002) latent group model. While the students were communicating or performing activities in a group, they were not only negotiating ideas with their peers and engaging themselves in solving various problems, but also in enhancing their individual competencies like – knowledge of vocabulary, fluency in the target language, comprehension skills, and imagination.

While the students were conversing with their peers in the classroom, they were not only respecting the languages of all students, but also giving them space in the classroom discourse. While students were doing activities in the classroom, they were using one language to reinforce the other. It was found especially in the case of Raghu who was mumbling at the initial stage but when the teacher helped him and encouraged him to use his mother tongue, he completed the sentence. It reminds us of Cummins' (1981) theory which states that proficiency in one language helps in developing second language. While the students were doing group discussions and writing the story in a group, they were introducing many new lexical items which were making the sentence beautiful. These activities were polishing their

academic languages and igniting their higher order thinking skills which Cummins has described as CULP. Hence, in a translanguaging classroom, one language is used to reinforce the performance in other languages and students learn many new words from each other which enrich their vocabulary.

This act of translanguaging not only polishes their languages and thinking skills, but also creates an environment of fluid language practices where learners can exercise their freedom and creativity beyond limit. They also can create a story of their own by blending lexical items from various languages intuitively without knowing the rules and regulations of a particular language, but they are producing certain words which are contextually correct. This strategy not only removes the task difficulty but also adds several discussions, enhances problem solving skills, creativity, imagination, and critical thinking in the classroom. This kind of classroom not only creates an environment of interdependence but also promotes independence among students. So, in a translanguaging classroom, the students not use every language separately, but they use their whole linguistic repertoire acquired from different languages. It gives them a space to nurture their mother tongue along with their target language inside the classroom. Therefore, translanguaging promotes an additive view of language learning which gives equal importance both to the mother tongue and the target language and one is not learnt at the cost of other. It embraces the additive view of language learning where all the languages are given equal importance by rejecting the limiting views of language learning which specifically focus on learning the dominant language at the cost of mother tongue (Heugh & Skutnabb-Kangas, 2010). This act of translanguaging creates a healthy environment in the classroom for students. It also augments a space for self-initiated learning where learners from all sections of society (especially the minority students) actively engage themselves in the process of knowledge construction and making the classroom a learner centric place.

Role of teachers and students

The teacher plays a multi-tasking role to give learners freedom in a translanguaging classroom. In an interview with a teacher from a school, when a teacher was asked why and how he uses translanguaging in the classroom, he replied,

Excerpt 1

While explaining a lesson, I use the languages of the students along with English. It helps the students to learn the concept easily. While I conduct various activities in the classroom, I remain silent mostly because I want students to communicate among them in their languages. I often found that they are producing new and innovative ideas in the classroom.

From the interview, the researchers found that the teacher tried to use the mother tongue of the students in the second language classroom. He also worked as a facilitator, conducted various activities, initiated discussions, promoted critical thinking, creativity and imagination among students, and provided a positive direction to the classroom discourse. He also tried to elicit answers from the students who remained silent in the classroom, made an effort to bridge the gaps among languages, and tried to provide freedom to the learners in the classroom. The National Education Policy (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2020) in India suggested that teachers should incorporate the mother tongue resources in the curriculum whenever possible. Kayi-Aydar and Green-Eneix (2019) in their study of high school students in U.S. observed that teachers encourage the students to use their home language resources to make the class more interactive and collaborative. In this study, we found that the teachers endeavoured to include the recourses of various languages in the classroom and attempted to destroy the linguistic hierarchy which permeates our society by promoting multi-language practices with students. This helped the teachers to get insight into cross-linguistic and cross-cultural understanding among students. Moreover, the teacher did not work alone in the classroom but he promoted an environment of student-to -student and teacher-to -student collaboration which is a vital component to place learners at the centre of classroom discourse. Students also love this kind of classroom. In an interview with the researchers, one student replied,

Excerpt 2

Aniket sir er class korta ami khub valo basi. Sir onak activity koran class, are amra sob bondhu der songa kotha bolar sujog pai.

[I love the class of Aniket (Pseudonym), sir because learning is a fun in his class. He conducts various activities in the classroom and we can interact with our friends in the classroom.]

Students love the teacher's classes because he allowed them to take part in various tasks collaboratively in the classroom. These activities made the classroom livelier promoted learning. The National Education Policy (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2020) states that learning becomes easier to the students when they enjoy the entire learning process.

Conclusion

In pupil-directed translanguaging, students are actively involved in the classroom to initiate classroom discussions, negotiate ideas, and learn how to take charge of their own learning. This did not signify that teachers have no place in the classroom, but rather assigns them a more vital role to play. The teachers endeavour to involve all the learners deeply in the classroom discourse, accommodate all the languages by fulfilling communicative and academic needs, help the students to overcome their weakness, and to bring out their whole linguistic repertoire in the classroom. When the students start learning, the teacher withholds the support little-by-little and the learners gradually become independent. The teacher also attempts to create an autonomous environment of learning through managing the classroom, initiating the discussion among students, and creating an inclusive linguistic environment where students can use resources from various languages. It also improves students' creativity, imagination, higher order thinking skills. They also learn to respect the other languages while maintaining their own languages and the classroom becomes a more inclusive space where students become the centre of their learning environment.

This study has wider implications in Indian context. The National Education Policy (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2020) has suggested incorporating a strategy in the classroom to encourage the teachers to use the language of the students in the curriculum so that they can take an active role in promoting multilingualism in the classroom. This study was conducted in a classroom in India where teachers involved the students from all sectors of society including indigenous students to enhance various literacy skills. Therefore, translanguaging should become more popular in India in order to address the necessity of the heterogeneous Indian classrooms and to make education more palatable and inclusive to all section of society.

There are some limitations in this study. It was conducted in a school in Paschim Medinipur District, West Bengal, India. Therefore, the sample was collected from a small geographical location. Further studies could be carried out by incorporating various geographical locations in India to broaden the perspective of the study. This study also focuses on the perspectives of students, especially the students from minority linguistic backgrounds. Further studies could be done including the viewpoints of the teachers, especially those from minority linguistic backgrounds.

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Appendix

Questionnaire for Teachers

1. Do you use translanguaging in the classroom? If yes, Why and how do you use translanguaging in the classroom?
2. Do you think translanguaging strategies would be beneficial for students who are multilingual?
3. What languages do the students use during translanguaging?
4. Do understand all the languages spoken by the students in the classroom? If not, how do you manage the situation?
5. Does translanguaging foster a bond between teacher and students?
6. Does the use of translanguaging bring any change in your teaching practices?

Questionnaire for Students

1. Do your teachers allow you to use your mother tongue in the classroom?
2. How does the use of mother tongue help you in the classroom?
3. Did it help you to create something new (creative writing, bringing something innovative from community lives, learning new vocabularies from various languages etc.) in the classroom?