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## Translanguaging: an Emerging Pedagogy in the Selected Universities of Hazara Region

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### **Abstract**

*Translanguaging is an emerging phenomenon in language classrooms of the world. It is emerging as a pedagogical technique with the use of other languages to learn a new language. This research is conducted to find out the use of translanguaging by teachers and students in English language classrooms of Hazara. The study also deals with a concise overview of multilingualism in relation to Islamic history. This qualitative study is conducted in Hazara division and the samples of the study were English language teachers and students of undergraduate level in three selected universities of the region. Interviews were conducted to collect the data from the participants and the collected data was analyzed through content analysis procedures. Thematic analysis was conducted and themes were extracted to reach the results and conclusion of the study. The results reveal that the teachers and students are multilingual and they use more than one language in classrooms. The study concluded that translanguaging is practiced in language learning classrooms and (more than one language) teachers and students used existing repertoire of languages to teach and learn another language.*

**Key words:** Translanguaging, pedagogy, multilingualism, language classroom.

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## **1. Introduction**

Translanguaging is an emerging phenomenon in language teaching classrooms. It is established as a new pedagogical technique in language teaching and learning. Translanguaging is the use of two or more languages for learning another language. This technique is highly important from the perspective of Hazara region as the students and teachers of the region are from different cultural backgrounds and speak more than one language. These languages have already entered in the language learning classrooms and students use their existing repertoire of languages. The present article analyzes the use of other languages by English language teachers and students while teaching and learning English in Hazara region at university level.

“Everyday language practices of multilingual speakers are their use of different languages, these practices come under the umbrella term of translanguaging, which is the practical theory of language use” (Wei, 2018). Pakistani society is a multilingual society, teachers and students in a language classroom can speak two or more languages. This environment of multilingualism is formed because different languages are spoken in different geographical areas and people have different mother tongues.

The impacts of multilingualism include the use of other languages inside an English language learning classroom. At university level, while learning a new language such as English, mostly direct method is used and the students are allowed to use only the target language inside the classroom. Upon close observation, we can see that other languages are also being used informally in an English language learning classroom in order to create new linguistic knowledge. This use of multiple languages is under study in this article and it is to find out the presence of translanguaging in our language classrooms.

Translanguaging is “a practice that involves dynamic and functionally integrated use of different languages and language varieties but more importantly a process of knowledge construction that goes beyond languages” (Wei, 2018). In this research, we analyze this use of other languages for construction of new linguistic repertoire. For this research, teachers and students of Hazara region were interviewed.

On the other hand, the paper discusses the technique of translanguaging, its importance and significance. It is a new emerging methodology introduced by European Union for language learning. This technique is a result of multilingual society and the ever changing linguistic landscape.

### **Research objectives**

To investigate the use of translanguaging by teachers and students in English language classrooms

### **Research question**

Do teachers and students use translanguaging to teach and learn new language?

## **2. Literature Review**

Language learning has undergone immense changes with the passage of time. The concept of integration of L1 in a language classroom has been changing in various language teaching methodologies and there have been three different positions on it (Macaro, 2001, p. 535). In very beginning, L1 was used to translate target language in order to make the learners understand meaning and at the same time used as a reference system in the acquisition of second language (Stern, 1983, p. 455). Methods following GTM restricted the use of L1 in second language learning classroom but the vitality of use of L1 as a resource for learning L2 never withered away. Among various language teaching methodologies, the concept of translanguaging developed which restored integration of L1 in language learning classroom. It used L1 as an effective resource for learning additional languages and gained the attention of the linguists.

### **2.1 Translanguaging: an emerging pedagogy**

Translanguaging is a concept in which more than one language is used at a time in a language classroom. Martin (2005) defines translanguaging as “the use of local languages alongside the ‘official language’ of the lesson”. Williams (1996) coined the term “Translanguaging” and stated it as an important pedagogical practice in bilingual education. Since its inception, this concept has developed considerably. It is now used to represent multilingual practices and pedagogical approaches containing such practices (Flores & Schissel, 2014). Canagarajah (2011) considers translanguaging as a method of shifting between languages which appear as a systematic integration. It is established as a bilingual pedagogy in which learning of a language is supported by another (Creese & Blackledge, 2010). This learning is systematic and the practices are designed in a way that existing repertoire of languages is pertinently used and bilingualism is considerably sustained.

Translanguaging, on pedagogical level is not a very old concept. It is lately adopted as a pedagogical practice. Previously, code-switching was a technique generally used, but now, it is replaced with Translanguaging in context of bilingual education. Jacobson (1990) used strategic inter-sentential code-switching in his concurrent approach. Such code-switching used pragmatically or for instance a pedagogical technique, does not intend to sustain bilingualism as such, but just teaching an additional language. In this respect, translanguaging is totally a different concept from code-switching.

### **2.2 Bilingual Education**

Bilingual Education underlines learning additional languages through the use of existing linguistic competences possessed by learners. According to Macaro (2005, pp. 71-72) the solely use of L2 is not sufficient to fulfil the requirements of multilingual students. In the world of today, majority of the people may know more than one language. If teachers and students share knowledge of a language, and the teachers use the language that students already know to teach them an additional language, the learning of students may improve. The European Union accentuated

and upheld the idea of additional language learning. The practical implications of the concept promoted the development of plurallingual environment and it further promoted the concept of translanguaging.

### **2.3 Multilingualism and Translanguaging**

Multilingualism is defined by The Council of Europe (2001) as “the knowledge of a number of languages or the co-existence of different languages in a given society” (p. 4). It is the ability of people to use more than one language at a time. In multilingual classroom students come from diverse cultural backgrounds, therefore, speak multi languages. A teacher in multilingual classroom has to deal with such diversity. The existence of multilingual students in a classroom leads to the use of more than one language in the formal setting therefore there is ample chance that more than one language is used in the classroom as well. This multilingualism leads to translanguaging where these repertoire of learned languages is strategically used to learn another language.

Translingualism was firstly used as a practice in pedagogy towards the end of 20th century. Many teachers adopted translingual practices to enhance understanding of their students. These practices continue to develop in 21st century. Canagarajah (2011) considers that multilingual speaker has expertise of switching between languages while handling different languages as linguistic repertoire in an integrated linguistic system. All the languages in the repertoire of multilingual speaker act as all-time available linguistic resource which can be used any way and any time in accordance with the need. The translanguaging practices do not require the multilingual users to maintain a balance between the languages (Garcia, 2009a).

The study of García (2009) shows use of translanguaging in kindergarten dual language class in New York. There the students learn through English and Spanish at a time. The research shows that translanguaging is a strong method to develop understandings among cross language groups and benefit understanding.

Lewis, Jones and Baker (2012) presented the use of translanguaging in educational context of Wales. In welsh context, English was used as a dominant language and Welsh as a local language. Both languages were considered beneficial in promoting bilingual education. Translanguaging was gradually introduced in which both languages English and Welsh were adopted as additive, beneficial and complementary.

In Namibian context, Shifidi (2014) investigated Translanguaging practices and found that translanguaging is certainly happening in Namibian schools. The inquiry of translanguaging practices in a primary classroom of bi-dialectal South Eastern Cyprus by Sotiroula (2015) demonstrates that teachers and children use their local Cypriot Dialect as a learning resource and the learners use all their existing language resources to comprehend and create knowledge through dialogue and translanguaging practices. Sotiroula (2015) explored that such learning which take place through translanguaging can be cognitive and more lasting.

## **Methodology**

For this research, interviews were taken from the teachers and students of three universities of Hazara division namely; Hazara University, Abbottabad University of Science and Technology and the University of Haripur. These interviews were taken from teachers and students of the Department of English. Two teachers and two students of English departments were taken as a sample from each university. In total, there were 12 participants in this study.

Interviews were designed to collect information regarding the phenomenon of translanguaging being used by the participants of this study. The collected data provided themes and these themes in turn answer the research question. The data collected from teachers and students of different universities was analyzed through the process of thematic analysis. It is a method for identifying, analyzing, organizing, describing, and reporting themes found within a data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). These themes answered the research questions of the study.

## **Analysis**

The three main themes extracted from the dataset are multilingual environment, use of more than one language by teachers and use of more than one language by students inside English language learning classroom.

### **Multilingual Environment**

The theme of multilingual environment establishes the ground that Pakistan is a multilingual society. When the teachers were asked that how many languages they can speak, all of them answers that they can speak two or more languages including Urdu, Pashto, English, Hindko, Saraiki, Punjabi and Gilgiti Language. When the students were asked that how many languages can they speak, all of them could also speak two or more languages including Urdu, Pashto, English, Hindko, Saraiki, Punjabi and Gilgiti Language. This proves the point that this region is multilingual, where teachers and students of English language can speak two or more languages.

#### **Teacher's use more than one language**

The theme of use of more than one language by teachers clarifies the fact that only target language is not being used inside the classroom. When the teachers were asked that do they use more than one language inside the classroom they all unanimously agreed that they use local languages or our national language to help the students understand in a better way. The teachers take assistance from other languages which teaching English language.

#### **Student's use of more than one language**

The theme of use of more than one language explains the linguistic repertoire of students. When the students were asked about the use of other languages, all of them also agreed that they use other languages inside the class room to ask questions or when they might be facing some difficulty in the content being taught.

## **Discussion**

Through the examination of the responses given by the teachers and students, we can understand that other languages are used for teaching the target language, while these languages are not mentioned in the lesson planning. So the teachers and students are using translanguaging in an unplanned manner. As it is a supportive tool, it must be included in the lesson planning.

This use of translanguaging dissolves the traditional approach of using only the target language while learning a new language. This paper reveals that the use of other language is helpful for the students as well as for the teachers. Thus the importance of translanguaging cannot be denied.

The results reveal that the use of translanguaging is present in our English language classrooms. The teachers and the students are using more than one language for learning a new language. This use of other language reveals that other languages act as a tool for learning. The traditional approach of using only the target language is demolished through this research.

From this usage we can analyze that the multilingualism is a becoming a part of our educational system. The linguistics repertoire that the students possess cannot be ignored. If the students can speak two or more languages that indicate that he has linguistic background which can be utilized to teach students a new language.

The theory of constructivism elaborates this process of learning that if the students learn in association with what they have previously learnt then the learning process can be more effective. So previously learnt linguistic background can be used in learning a new linguistic system indicating the utility of translanguaging.

### **Significance of multilingualism in Islamic History**

Multilingualism is a wide source of acquisition of knowledge and a fruitful way of interaction for people belonging to multiple cultures. Where multilingualism has prominent role in all other walks of life, it has also distinguished place in relation to Islamic history. The Holy Prophet (saw) being a universal prophet emphasized on the learning of multilingualism in order to be more articulated among different cultures regarding the preaching of religion. One of the companions of Holy Prophet (saw) Uzair bin Sabit narrated that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) ordered me (to learn the writing of the Jews), so I learned for him the writing of the Jews.

He said "I swear by Allah, I do not trust Jews in respect of writing for me". So I learned it, and only a fortnight passed before I mastered it. I would write for him when he wrote (to them), and read to him when something was written to him. The cited saying of prophet clearly indicates the significance of multilingualism. Similarly, there are many examples indicating that a number of companions of prophet were multilingual. Moreover, the ambassadors of Islamic countries are highly required to speak multiple languages in order to communicate effectively. Islamic history has very enriched cultural legacy exhibited through languages such as Arabic, Persian and Tigrinya.

### **Conclusion**

This article brings forth the presence of Translanguaging pedagogy in language learning classrooms in Hazara region at university level. It exhibits the use of other language as a linguistic resource for the constructing new knowledge. The selected area of research shows the presence and usage of translanguaging as a linguistic tool of language learning. The response of teachers and students make it clear that other languages are considered important, while learning a new language. Above all, this article confirms the use of translanguaging in Hazara region. The teachers and students feel comfortable in using other languages inside the classroom. Moreover, the study also concisely reveals the significance of multilingualism in Islamic history.

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