

Translanguaging as a Pedagogical Strategy in Bilingual Primary Classrooms in Nigeria

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Abstract

This study explored translanguaging in bilingual classrooms, focusing on its impact on student engagement, language proficiency, and academic performance while examining teachers' perceptions and their implementation challenges. Using a mixed-methods approach, the study gathered qualitative data through semi-structured interviews and classroom observations and quantitative data through surveys and standardized tests involving 50 teachers and 250 students across five bilingual primary schools. The findings revealed that translanguaging practices fostered improved student engagement, comprehension, and academic performance, with significant gains in language proficiency. Teachers held positive perceptions of translanguaging, noting its potential to facilitate better learning, although they also pointed out challenges such as limited teacher training, rigid curricula, and resistance to change. The study revealed that translanguaging had a transformative impact on academic outcomes, especially in language subjects, but faced barriers to consistent implementation. The study concluded that translanguaging practices significantly enhance student engagement, comprehension, and academic performance but face challenges such as limited teacher training and curriculum rigidity, necessitating policy reforms and professional development for effective implementation. This study contributes valuable insights into the effectiveness of translanguaging in Nigerian bilingual classrooms, revealing its positive impact on academic outcomes and the need for curriculum reform, teacher training, and policy adaptation to support its implementation.

Keywords: *bilingual education; educational policy; language proficiency; nigerian classrooms; translanguaging*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi penggunaan translanguaging di kelas bilingual, dengan fokus pada dampaknya terhadap keterlibatan siswa, kemahiran bahasa, dan prestasi akademik sambil memeriksa persepsi guru dan tantangan implementasinya. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan metode campuran untuk mengumpulkan data kualitatif melalui wawancara semi-terstruktur dan observasi kelas serta data kuantitatif melalui survei dan tes standar, dengan melibatkan 50 guru dan 250 siswa di lima sekolah dasar dwibahasa. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa praktik translanguaging dapat meningkatkan keterlibatan, pemahaman, dan prestasi akademik siswa, terutama dengan peningkatan signifikan dalam kemampuan berbahasa. Guru menunjukkan pandangan positif terhadap translanguaging, mengakui potensinya untuk mendukung pembelajaran yang lebih efektif, meskipun menghadapi kendala seperti minimnya pelatihan guru, kurikulum yang kurang fleksibel, dan resistensi terhadap perubahan. Penelitian ini menyoroti dampak positif translanguaging terhadap hasil akademik, terutama pada mata pelajaran bahasa, meskipun penerapan yang konsisten masih terkendala. Kesimpulan dari studi ini menegaskan bahwa translanguaging secara substansial meningkatkan keterlibatan dan performa siswa, tetapi hambatan seperti kurangnya pelatihan

guru dan kurikulum yang kaku memerlukan perhatian melalui reformasi kebijakan dan pengembangan profesional. Studi ini menawarkan wawasan penting tentang efektivitas translanguaging di kelas bilingual Nigeria, menyoroti dampak positifnya terhadap hasil pembelajaran sekaligus menyerukan reformasi kurikulum, peningkatan pelatihan guru, dan adaptasi kebijakan untuk mendukung implementasi yang lebih baik.

Kata kunci: pendidikan dwibahasa; kebijakan pendidikan; kemahiran bahasa; ruang kelas Nigeria; penerjemahan

Introduction

Nigeria, with its rich linguistic diversity, is home to over 500 languages, making the educational context uniquely complex (Jegede, 2024). The primary education sector in Nigeria is characterized by bilingual classrooms where students often learn in both English and their indigenous languages. Jegede (2024) notes that English, as the official language, is typically used for instruction, while indigenous languages play a crucial role in cultural identity and early cognitive development. This bilingual setting presents opportunities and challenges for educators, as students often switch between languages, impacting their learning experiences. Translanguaging, defined as using multiple languages cohesively and strategically, offers a promising pedagogical approach to bilingual education (García & Wei, 2014). This strategy allows teachers and students to draw on their linguistic repertoire to facilitate learning, fostering comprehension and communication. The relevance of translanguaging to Nigeria's National Policy on Education, which supports the use of indigenous languages in the early stages of schooling, is significant as it aligns with the policy's aim to promote effective learning and cultural preservation (García, 2011).

Translanguaging in bilingual classrooms helps bridge the gap between students' home languages and the academic language they are required to learn, enhancing comprehension and engagement. This pedagogical approach is particularly relevant in a country like Nigeria, where students often face the dual challenge of mastering English while maintaining proficiency in their indigenous languages (Adesina & Jegede, 2020; Canagarajah, 2011a). Despite the potential benefits, current teaching practices in many Nigerian classrooms still rely heavily on English as the primary medium of instruction, often sidelining students' linguistic strengths (Creese & Blackledge, 2010). While traditional pedagogical methods have their merits, they may not be fully effective in meeting the needs of bilingual learners. Translanguaging, therefore, provides an opportunity to better align teaching strategies with the linguistic realities of Nigerian classrooms, potentially leading to improved educational outcomes (García & Kleyn, 2017).

Bilingual primary classrooms in Nigeria face significant challenges due to the linguistic diversity of students. These challenges include varying proficiency levels in English and indigenous languages, affecting students' ability to grasp academic content fully (Cenoz & Gorter, 2015). Teachers may lack the skills or understanding to effectively integrate students' home languages into the learning process, resulting in a teaching approach that does not fully leverage students' linguistic resources. This gap in applying

translanguaging strategies can lead to disengagement, lower academic achievement, and feelings of inadequacy among students (García et al., 2016). The limited understanding of translanguaging among educators in Nigeria further exacerbates the issue, creating a need for professional development programs that equip teachers with the tools to implement this strategy effectively (Canagarajah, 2011b).

Furthermore, empirical research on the effectiveness of translanguaging as a pedagogical strategy in the Nigerian context is scarce. While global studies have demonstrated that translanguaging can improve student outcomes in bilingual and multilingual settings (Adetuyi & Jegede, 2016; García & Wei, 2014; Garrity et al., 2018), there is insufficient evidence on how this strategy is perceived and utilized in Nigerian classrooms. This gap in research limits the ability of policymakers and educators to make informed decisions about adopting translanguaging practices in educational settings. The challenges of implementing translanguaging also extend to issues such as the availability of educational resources in Indigenous languages and the need for teacher training programs that foster positive attitudes toward multilingual teaching approaches (Creese & Blackledge, 2010). Thus, this study examines the impact of translanguaging as a pedagogical strategy on learning outcomes in bilingual primary classrooms in Nigeria. To achieve this, the study seeks to explore current practices of translanguaging in these classrooms, analyze teachers' perceptions and attitudes toward its use as a teaching strategy, assess the effects of translanguaging on students' academic performance and language proficiency, and identify the challenges and opportunities associated with implementing translanguaging strategies in Nigerian primary education.

The implications of this study are significant for the advancement of bilingual education in Nigeria. Investigating the effectiveness of translanguaging as a pedagogical strategy allows this research to contribute valuable insights into optimizing this approach to improve learning outcomes. If translanguaging is found to enhance academic performance and language proficiency, it can inform curriculum development and teaching practices, aligning them with the linguistic realities of Nigerian students (García et al., 2016). The study can also provide evidence to support policy changes that promote the integration of Indigenous languages in the classroom, thus fostering an educational environment that respects cultural heritage while promoting academic success (García & Wei, 2014). Moreover, the findings could guide teacher training programs, ensuring that educators have the skills to implement translanguaging strategies effectively. These programs would emphasize the value of students' full linguistic repertoire, thus encouraging teachers to view bilingualism as an asset rather than a challenge. For policymakers, this study could reveal the need for more inclusive educational practices that recognize the linguistic diversity of Nigerian students. Practical recommendations from this study could inspire the development of teacher workshops, instructional materials in Indigenous languages, and curriculum reforms that foster translanguaging in classrooms (Canagarajah, 2011b; García & Kleyn, 2017). Thus, this research aims to contribute to a more inclusive, effective, and culturally relevant educational framework that supports bilingual learners in Nigeria.

Conceptual Framework of Translanguaging

Translanguaging, a pedagogical strategy and linguistic practice, involves using multiple languages in a fluid and integrated way to facilitate learning, communication, and identity construction in bilingual and multilingual environments. Defined by García & Wei (2014), translanguaging is more than simple code-switching; it is the process through which speakers use their full linguistic repertoire to make meaning, engage in learning, and express themselves fully. This practice has roots in linguistic and sociolinguistic theories that emphasize the interconnectedness of languages and the need to recognize and leverage students' linguistic resources to support academic development (Wei, 2011). The theoretical underpinnings of translanguaging draw on poststructuralist perspectives that challenge the notion of strict language boundaries, promoting the view that language practices are dynamic and contextually dependent (Hornberger & Link, 2012). Such perspectives align with the ecological frameworks in bilingual education, emphasizing context and identity's importance in language learning (Hornberger, 2003).

The historical evolution of translanguaging as an educational tool is rooted in recognizing linguistic hybridity in global education settings. Initially, much of bilingual education focused on maintaining separation between languages, an approach rooted in the belief that each language should be taught independently to ensure linguistic purity. However, research over the past few decades has shown that this separation fails to address the needs of bilingual students who naturally draw on their linguistic repertoire to make sense of academic content (Lewis et al., 2012a). Translanguaging emerged as a more inclusive and effective approach, emphasizing that language boundaries are often artificial and not reflective of real-world language use. Studies in bilingual education have demonstrated that translanguaging can transform learning spaces, making them more responsive to the linguistic needs of students and fostering deeper engagement with academic content (Lewis et al., 2013).

Bilingual Education and Translanguaging in Nigeria

In Nigeria, bilingual education is a significant aspect of the educational system, given the country's linguistic diversity, encompassing over 500 languages (Hornberger, 2005; O. Jegede, 2011). The National Policy on Education promotes using indigenous languages in the early stages of primary education to preserve cultural identity and promote cognitive development (García, 2011). However, the reality in many Nigerian classrooms often contradicts this policy, with English predominating as the medium of instruction, sometimes to the detriment of students' learning experiences (Gort, 2015). The challenges faced in bilingual education in Nigeria include limited resources in indigenous languages, inadequate teacher training in multilingual teaching strategies, and the pressure to conform to a monolingual curriculum that favors English over local languages (García & Wei, 2014). These challenges can hinder students' ability to perform academically, particularly if they lack sufficient proficiency in English or if teachers are not trained to use students' home languages effectively as learning tools.

Existing studies on translanguaging in Nigerian classrooms reveal the potential benefits of integrating indigenous languages into teaching. Research has shown that when teachers employ translanguaging strategies, students often exhibit higher levels of engagement and comprehension (Bamgbose, 2014; Creese & Blackledge, 2010; O. O. Jegede, 2012). However, despite these potential advantages, the widespread application of translanguaging in Nigerian classrooms remains limited due to factors such as teacher attitudes, curriculum constraints, and the dominant role of English in education (Hornberger & Link, 2012). For translanguaging to be effectively implemented, it is essential to address these constraints and equip teachers with the skills to utilize students' full linguistic repertoire to enhance learning (García et al., 2016).

Impact of Translanguaging on Learning Outcomes

Global research has revealed the significant benefits of translanguaging for cognitive and academic development in multilingual settings. Studies by García (2011) and Cenoz & Gorter (2015) indicate that translanguaging supports cognitive flexibility, language development, and academic achievement by allowing students to engage with content in ways that align with their linguistic strengths. Translanguaging enables students to draw upon their entire language system, facilitating better comprehension and retention of information (García & Kleyn, 2017). This approach also aids in developing metalinguistic awareness, allowing students to see the connections between their languages and apply their knowledge in different contexts (Hornberger & Link, 2012). Translanguaging can thus contribute to a more inclusive learning environment that values students' linguistic diversity and promotes academic growth.

The relationship between translanguaging practices and literacy development is another area where significant benefits are observed. Bilingual students who engage in translanguaging can better develop their reading and writing skills in both languages, as translanguaging encourages the transfer of skills and knowledge between languages (García & Wei, 2014). This practice can improve literacy outcomes by supporting students as they learn to read and write in their home languages and the academic language of instruction (Gort & Sembiante, 2015; O. O. Jegede, 2012). In addition, translanguaging helps students develop content knowledge by making academic discourse more accessible. For example, when a teacher explains complex scientific concepts incorporating both English and the students' native languages, students are better equipped to grasp and retain the content (Lewis et al., 2013).

Teachers' Attitudes and Practices Toward Translanguaging

Teachers' attitudes and practices are crucial in successfully integrating translanguaging as a pedagogical strategy. Research has shown that educators' perspectives on translanguaging are influenced by their beliefs about language learning, training, and experiences in multilingual settings (Creese & Blackledge, 2010). Teachers who view translanguaging as beneficial are more likely to incorporate it into their teaching practices and create classroom environments that support multilingual learning (García et al., 2016). However, many teachers in Nigeria and other multilingual contexts face challenges in adopting translanguaging due to a lack of training and

resources and concerns about reinforcing linguistic diversity in a way that might impact students' proficiency in English (Hornberger, 2005).

Factors influencing the acceptance and integration of translanguaging include teacher training programs, access to teaching resources in Indigenous languages, and the broader educational policy environment (Wei & García, 2016). Teachers who receive training emphasizing the pedagogical benefits of translanguaging are more likely to view it as a valuable tool for supporting students' learning. Professional development initiatives that provide teachers with practical strategies for implementing translanguaging can help bridge the gap between teachers' knowledge and practice (García & Kleyn, 2017). Additionally, the availability of resources, such as bilingual books and instructional materials, can play a significant role in enabling teachers to use translanguaging in their classrooms effectively (Lewis et al., 2012b).

Research Method

The study employed a mixed-method approach, combining qualitative and quantitative research designs to provide comprehensive insights into the use of translanguaging in bilingual primary classrooms in Nigeria. The target population included primary school teachers and students from bilingual classrooms across selected regions in the country. The sample consisted of 50 teachers and 250 students from five bilingual primary schools. Stratified random sampling was used to ensure representation from different regions and linguistic groups. Data collection involved qualitative methods such as semi-structured interviews with teachers and classroom observations to understand teaching practices and attitudes toward translanguaging. For the quantitative aspect, surveys and questionnaires were distributed to teachers, while standardized tests were conducted to assess students' academic performance and language proficiency. The procedure for data collection involved conducting teacher interviews and observations over a period of several weeks, ensuring ethical considerations such as obtaining informed consent and maintaining participant confidentiality. The qualitative data were analyzed through thematic analysis to identify patterns and themes from the teacher interviews and classroom observations. The quantitative data were subjected to statistical analysis using SPSS, which allowed for examining relationships between variables and testing research hypotheses. This mixed-method approach ensured a robust understanding of translanguaging as a pedagogical strategy, its impact on learning outcomes, and educators' challenges in implementing this approach in Nigerian bilingual classrooms.

Results

The analysis of data collected from 50 teachers and 250 students in bilingual primary schools across selected regions in Nigeria revealed significant findings regarding the impact of translanguaging on students' academic performance and language proficiency. The results were drawn from qualitative data, which included teacher interviews and classroom observations, as well as quantitative data from surveys and standardized tests.

The impact of translanguaging on students' academic performance and language proficiency

Impact on Academic Performance

Quantitative findings indicated that students exposed to translanguaging practices demonstrated higher academic performance than those in classrooms where such practices were minimal or absent. Table 1 below shows the average scores of students who engaged in translanguaging activities versus those who did not. The analysis revealed a consistent trend: Students in classrooms where translanguaging was employed scored higher on standardized tests in subjects such as Mathematics and Science.

Table 1 Comparison of Academic Performance Between Translanguaging and Non-Translanguaging Classrooms

Subject	Average Score (Translanguaging Class)	Average Score (Non-Translanguaging Class)
Mathematics	78.5	70.3
Science	81.2	74.5
English Language	75.9	68.7
Social Studies	77.4	72.1

The data in Table 1 suggested that translanguaging facilitated better comprehension of complex concepts, as students could connect new knowledge to their existing linguistic and cultural knowledge base. This resulted in improved academic performance, particularly in subjects that required higher levels of critical thinking and understanding. Using students' home languages allowed them to contextualize information in a way that made sense to them, leading to more meaningful learning experiences. This is further illustrated in the following Figure 1.

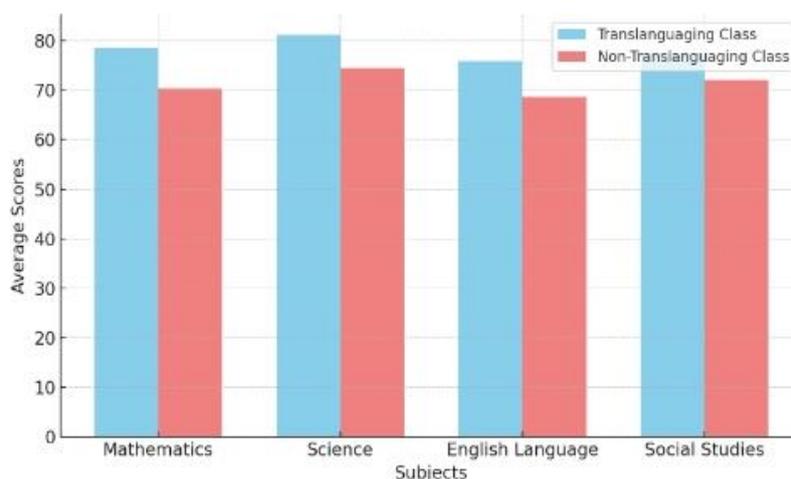


Figure 1 Comparison of Academic Performance Between Translanguaging and Non-Translanguaging Classrooms

Impact on Language Proficiency

The study's qualitative findings provided further insights into how translanguaging influenced language development. Classroom observations revealed that teachers who adopted translanguaging strategies often incorporated activities

encouraging students to switch between English and their Indigenous languages when discussing topics, solving problems, and explaining ideas. Interviews with teachers confirmed that translanguaging practices supported students' language proficiency by strengthening their understanding and use of English and their home languages. One teacher noted, "When I use their native language to explain difficult concepts in English, they seem more confident and eager to participate in class discussions."

Table 2 below reveals the results of the standardized language proficiency tests administered to students. The students who engaged in translanguaging practices outperformed those who did not, particularly in tasks requiring bilingual comprehension and expression.

Table 2 Comparison of Language Proficiency Test Scores

Language Proficiency Task	Average Score (Translanguaging Class)	Average Score (Non-Translanguaging Class)
Reading Comprehension	80.1	72.4
Writing Skills	77.6	70.8
Oral Communication	85.3	78.5

The results in Table 2 indicated that students in classrooms where translanguaging was practiced had higher scores in reading comprehension, writing, and oral communication tasks. This outcome suggested that translanguaging enhanced their understanding of English and reinforced their native language skills. The interconnectedness of these language skills created a more holistic approach to learning, fostering bilingual proficiency that was advantageous for both academic and social contexts.

Teachers' Perceptions and Attitudes Toward Translanguaging

The study revealed a range of perceptions and attitudes among teachers regarding the use of translanguaging as a pedagogical strategy in bilingual primary classrooms in Nigeria. The interviews and classroom observations indicated that while many teachers recognized the potential benefits of translanguaging, there were varying levels of acceptance and application across different regions and schools. Teachers' perceptions were shaped by professional training, experience, and personal beliefs about language teaching and learning.

Positive Perceptions and Acceptance

Many teachers familiar with the concept of translanguaging expressed positive attitudes toward its use in the classroom. They believed that translanguaging could bridge the gap between students' home languages and the official language of instruction, which is often English. For instance, teachers noted that when students could use their native language to explain complex ideas, they understood the subject matter. One teacher stated, "When I use the students' home language to introduce new concepts, I see their faces light up, and they become more confident in answering questions and participating in discussions." Table 3 summarizes teachers' responses who actively used translanguaging and reported positive outcomes.

Table 3 Teachers' Perceptions of Translanguaging in the Classroom

Perception Category	Number of Teachers (Out of 50)	Percentage (%)
Strongly Positive	20	40
Positive	18	36
Neutral	8	16
Negative	4	8

The data in Table 3 indicated that 76% of the teachers surveyed held a positive or strongly positive perception of translanguaging, seeing it as an effective strategy for promoting language proficiency and enhancing learning. Teachers in this group revealed increased student engagement, a better understanding of instructional content, and the ability to foster a more inclusive learning environment.

Challenges and Concerns

Despite the generally favorable attitudes, some teachers expressed concerns about implementing translanguaging effectively. A common issue was the lack of formal training and guidelines for teachers to use translanguaging strategies systematically. Teachers admitted that while they were aware of the benefits, they were unsure how to balance the use of students' home languages with the curriculum's emphasis on English. One teacher commented, "We want to use translanguaging, but we need training on how to do it in a way that still meets the national curriculum standards and prepares students for standardized tests." Table 4 presents teachers' main challenges when integrating translanguaging into their teaching practices.

Table 4 Challenges in Implementing Translanguaging

Challenge Category	Number of Teachers (Out of 50)	Percentage (%)
Lack of Training	30	60
Curriculum Constraints	15	30
Inconsistent Practice	20	40
Limited Resources	18	36

Table 4 reveals that the most significant challenges identified included the lack of professional development opportunities (60%), curriculum constraints (30%), and inconsistent application due to varying levels of teacher confidence (40%). These barriers revealed the need for targeted support to help teachers overcome obstacles and use translanguaging more effectively.

Factors Influencing Teachers' Attitudes

Teachers' attitudes toward translanguaging also influenced their personal beliefs about language learning. Teachers with positive prior experiences with bilingual education tended to be more open to translanguaging, viewing it as a valuable tool that could support student comprehension and engagement. Conversely, those who prioritized traditional, English-only teaching methods often viewed translanguaging with skepticism, associating it with potential confusion or a dilution of language skills. Additionally, teachers' attitudes were significantly shaped by their linguistic backgrounds and proficiency in official and local languages. Teachers who were

bilingual and comfortable switching between languages found translanguaging more natural and effective, often using it intuitively to bridge communication gaps. One teacher stated, "I grew up speaking both languages, so I see no problem switching between them to help my students learn better." This belief reflected an understanding that translanguaging could enhance learning, making it easier for students to process complex concepts and express themselves freely, ultimately fostering a more inclusive and supportive classroom environment.

Observational Insights

Classroom observations corroborated the teachers' responses, showing that translanguaging practices were often more prevalent in schools with teachers with a higher bilingual proficiency level. Teachers who were comfortable switching between languages tended to use translanguaging more frequently and effectively, creating a learning environment that supported students' linguistic and cognitive needs. These observations revealed that students in classrooms where translanguaging was actively used demonstrated an increased willingness to express themselves and engage with the material. They felt more confident articulating their ideas and participating in discussions when they could draw on their home language alongside English. This approach allowed them to connect deeper to the content, facilitating better understanding and retention. In contrast, in classrooms where translanguaging was not used, students appeared less confident, particularly when they struggled with English-language instruction. They were more hesitant to participate, often showing signs of frustration and disengagement when faced with language barriers that impeded their learning progress.

Challenges and Opportunities Associated with the Implementation of Translanguaging Strategies

Implementing translanguaging strategies in bilingual primary classrooms in Nigeria presents significant challenges and promising opportunities. While the practice has the potential to transform educational outcomes, especially in multilingual settings, it requires careful planning, support, and adaptation to Nigeria's unique educational context. This section outlines the primary challenges educators and students face, as well as the opportunities that translanguaging can create for enhanced learning and academic success.

Challenges in Implementing Translanguaging Strategies

One of the most significant challenges teachers face when implementing translanguaging strategies is the lack of formal training and professional development. Many educators lack the pedagogical knowledge or practical skills to effectively incorporate translanguaging into their teaching practices. Without targeted training, teachers may struggle to create a balanced learning environment that meets the needs of all students while adhering to curriculum standards. A teacher expressed, "While I understand the importance of using students' home languages, I am unsure how to integrate it with the required English instruction and the curriculum's demands."

Another major challenge is teachers and educational institutions' resistance to change. Traditional teaching approaches in Nigeria often prioritize English as the sole medium of instruction, reflecting the national emphasis on English proficiency for academic and professional success. This resistance can make it difficult for teachers to feel confident in adopting translanguaging strategies, as they may fear deviating from what is considered the norm or expected practice. The perception that translanguaging could compromise students' English proficiency adds to this hesitation.

The curriculum itself poses a challenge, as it is designed with a focus on English, leaving limited room for integrating other languages. Teachers may be constrained by lesson plans and standardized tests prioritizing English language learning. This narrow focus can restrict the use of translanguaging and undermine its effectiveness. Additionally, schools often lack the necessary resources to facilitate a translanguaging approach, such as bilingual teaching materials, books, and language support tools.

Opportunities Created by Translanguaging Strategies

Despite these challenges, translanguaging strategies present several opportunities to enhance bilingual classroom teaching and learning significantly. One of the most compelling opportunities is improving student engagement and comprehension. Allowing students to use their home languages alongside English enables teachers to create a learning environment where students feel more comfortable expressing themselves and better understand new information. This approach has improved students' confidence and participation, fostering a positive attitude toward learning.

Translanguaging also helps bridge the gap between a student's existing linguistic and cognitive abilities and the new language skills they are expected to acquire. This practice can facilitate a better understanding of complex concepts and the retention of academic knowledge. For example, a study participant noted, "When students are allowed to discuss topics in their home language before expressing themselves in English, they show an understanding and are better at applying what they have learned." This dual-language approach can potentially strengthen students' academic performance, particularly in subjects that require analytical thinking and comprehension, such as Science, Mathematics, and Social Studies.

Furthermore, translanguaging can contribute to developing bilingual and bi-literate students, enhancing their language proficiency in English and their native languages. This bilingual competence is invaluable, preparing students for various opportunities in higher education and future careers. Research indicates that students proficient in two languages often exhibit better cognitive flexibility, problem-solving, and critical thinking abilities. These skills are crucial for exploring the dynamics of a multilingual society and are highly valued in an increasingly globalized world.

Addressing the Challenges

Addressing the challenges that hinder translanguaging's effective implementation is essential to fully leverage the opportunities it presents. Policymakers and educational authorities must prioritize professional development programs focusing on translanguaging strategies. These programs should provide teachers with practical

examples and tools for incorporating students' home languages in ways that complement English instruction and support curriculum goals. One suggestion is to create workshops and teacher training courses that integrate linguistic theory with classroom practices, enabling teachers to use translanguaging while remaining confidently aligned with educational standards.

Curriculum reform may also be necessary to create space for translanguaging. This can involve revising the national curriculum to embrace a more flexible approach that acknowledges the value of home languages in academic settings. Schools can be encouraged to adopt bilingual teaching materials and resources that facilitate translanguaging. Collaboration with educational publishers and local communities to produce relevant resources could support this shift.

Leveraging Community Support and Policy Change

Community involvement and policy change are critical to the success of translanguaging in Nigerian classrooms. Educators, parents, and local language experts can work together to ensure students' linguistic backgrounds are respected and leveraged for educational success. Policies supporting Indigenous languages alongside English could provide a more inclusive and culturally responsive educational framework. Such policies would help align classroom practices with the linguistic diversity of the student population, leading to more effective learning outcomes.

In summary, while implementing translanguaging strategies in bilingual primary classrooms in Nigeria comes with challenges, such as insufficient teacher training, curriculum constraints, and resistance to change, its opportunities are substantial. Translanguaging can boost student engagement, comprehension, and academic achievement while fostering bilingualism and cognitive development. Addressing these challenges through targeted training, curriculum reform, and supportive policies can pave the way for a more inclusive and effective educational environment that harnesses the full potential of multilingual classrooms.

Discussion

The findings from this study reveal the transformative potential of translanguaging in bilingual primary classrooms in Nigeria, emphasizing its benefits for academic performance and language proficiency. These outcomes align with previous research, such as Bamgbose (2014), which emphasized the role of linguistic resources in achieving development goals, and Canagarajah (2011), which explored translanguaging as a bridge between students' linguistic repertoires and academic success. Integrating students' home languages with English fosters deeper understanding and critical thinking, particularly in mathematics, science, and English language subjects. This confirms Gort's assertion that translanguaging transforms literacy learning and teaching by leveraging bilingual students' linguistic assets.

A particularly compelling finding was the positive impact of translanguaging on academic performance in subjects requiring analytical thinking, such as mathematics and science. Students exposed to translanguaging practices performed better on standardized tests in these areas, echoing Jegede's (2011, 2012) research on the role of

code-switching in teaching mathematics in Ile-Ife, Nigeria. Jegede's studies demonstrated that allowing students to utilize their full linguistic repertoire makes abstract and complex concepts more accessible. Similarly, this study found that translanguaging enabled students to connect new academic content with their existing knowledge, making learning more meaningful and effective. The cognitive advantages of engaging multiple languages in learning processes reveal the importance of using translanguaging to enhance bilingual education.

The language proficiency results further validate translanguaging's role in fostering bilingualism. Students in translanguaging classrooms outperformed their peers in language proficiency tests, demonstrating higher skills in reading comprehension, writing, and oral communication. These findings align with Lewis et al. (2012a) work, which conceptualized translanguaging as a pedagogical approach that simultaneously develops proficiency in multiple languages. Furthermore, Garrity et al. (2018) found that using multiple languages in infant classrooms supported language development and meaning-making, reinforcing that translanguaging is beneficial early on. Translanguaging fosters bilingual fluency and literacy by blending students' home languages with English, providing them with crucial academic and social success skills.

The study also revealed the critical role of teacher perceptions in effectively implementing translanguaging. Teachers who viewed translanguaging positively were more likely to adopt it successfully in their classrooms, consistent with Jegede (2024), who emphasized that language ideologies and attitudes significantly influence the implementation of language policies in Nigeria. However, this study also revealed challenges, including a lack of professional development and curriculum constraints, which limited teachers' ability to integrate translanguaging effectively. These challenges mirror the findings (Bamgbose, 2014 Canagarajah 2011b), who noted institutional resistance to multilingual practices due to entrenched language ideologies favoring English-only instruction. Addressing these barriers requires systemic changes, such as revising curricula and providing targeted teacher training to empower educators with practical strategies for using translanguaging in their teaching.

The challenges and opportunities identified in this study align with findings from related research. Many teachers expressed enthusiasm for translanguaging but faced institutional barriers, including rigid curricula and insufficient training. This echoes the conclusions of Jegede (2024), who identified policy and attitudinal challenges as significant obstacles to implementing bilingual education in Nigeria. Moreover, the study's findings support the conceptual framework provided by Lewis et al. (2012a), who advocated for contextualizing translanguaging within educational policies to maximize its benefits. Overcoming these challenges requires a concerted effort from policymakers, educators, and institutions to create an inclusive environment that supports bilingual education.

Despite these challenges, the opportunities created by translanguaging are considerable. The practice allows students to draw on their full linguistic repertoire, fostering greater academic engagement and confidence. This finding aligns with Garrity et al. (2018) and Gort's (2015) conclusions that translanguaging enhances student

participation and comprehension. Translanguaging facilitates deeper learning and retention by making academic content more cognitively accessible to students. Furthermore, the dual-language proficiency it promotes offers long-term advantages, supporting students' academic, social, and professional aspirations.

Thus, this study contributes to the growing body of research affirming the transformative potential of translanguaging in bilingual education. The findings reveal its impact on academic performance and language proficiency, aligning with research by Bamgbose (2014), Canagarajah (2011), and others. However, the study also reveals the need for systemic reforms to address barriers such as inadequate teacher training and curriculum constraints. Drawing on insights from Jegede (2024) and (Lewis et al., 2012a), this study advocates for professional development programs and curriculum revisions to support translanguaging practices. In summary, embracing translanguaging allows educational systems in Nigeria to cultivate a more inclusive and effective learning environment, promoting bilingualism, academic success, and cognitive development.

Conclusion

The successful integration of translanguaging in Nigerian classrooms holds significant implications for global educational policies in multilingual contexts. This study's positive impact of translanguaging on academic performance and language proficiency suggests that such practices could offer valuable insights for enhancing learning outcomes in similar multilingual environments worldwide. However, it is important to acknowledge the study's limitations, such as the relatively small sample size and focus on specific regions, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Future research could explore the broader applicability of translanguaging across diverse educational settings and with larger, more varied populations. To implement these findings, concrete steps should include establishing partnerships with teacher training institutions to provide professional development focused on translanguaging strategies and advocating for the creation of curricula that embrace students' linguistic diversity. Equipping teachers with the necessary skills and resources enables educational systems to create more inclusive learning environments that reflect students' multilingual realities. Leveraging Nigeria's rich linguistic diversity through translanguaging has the potential to not only improve educational outcomes within the country but also to serve as a model for similar multilingual contexts globally. This approach could be a powerful tool for fostering academic success and multilingual proficiency, paving the way for a more inclusive and effective global educational setting.

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