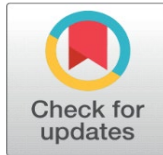
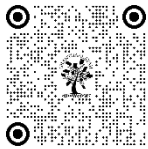


TRANSLANGUAGING IN ACTION: REIMAGINING LANGUAGE CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the use of translanguaging in multilingual classrooms, focusing on its integration into assessment practices to enhance narrative writing skills. It outlines a translanguaging-based assessment approach that allows students to utilise their entire linguistic repertoire during the learning process. Key phases of this approach include planning, data collection, feedback, and reflection, emphasising a dynamic, personalised evaluation method. The paper also introduces a rubric tailored to assess content, linguistic resources, and grammar within a translanguaging framework. Drawing on theoretical insights from scholars like Canagarajah and García, the proposed methodology supports a fluid use of languages, fostering a more inclusive, effective learning environment. Implications include reducing language anxiety, leveraging native languages for better comprehension, and challenging monolingual biases.

Keywords: Translanguaging, Classroom Assessment, Translanguaging-based Assessment

1. INTRODUCTION

Understanding what translanguaging entails is crucial before discussing its role in assessment, as it provides the foundation for recognising how multilingual practices can enhance learning. It ensures that assessment strategies can effectively leverage students' full linguistic resources. Here are a few definitions of translanguaging. The Translanguaging Definitions table provides insights into the concept of translanguaging, emphasising its fluid use of languages as a unified system. Canagarajah (2011) describes it as the ability of multilingual speakers to seamlessly switch between languages, using them as an integrated whole. Ofelia Garcia highlights the importance of using a speaker's entire linguistic repertoire without distinguishing between languages. Baker (2011) notes that translanguaging involves processing information across languages, such as discussing a topic in one language and expressing it in another, fostering deeper understanding.

Table 1

Definitions of translanguaging

Author	Definition
Canagarajah (2011)	"The ability of multilingual speakers to shuttle between languages, treating their repertoire as an integrated system."
Ofelia García (2014)	"The use of students' full linguistic repertoire to make meaning without distinguishing between languages."
Baker (2011)	"To read and discuss a topic in one language, then write about it in another, processing the subject matter across languages."

Note Adapted from definitions by Canagarajah (2011), García (2014), and Baker (2011).

This table (see Table 1) synthesizes definitions of translanguaging by prominent scholars such as Canagarajah (2011), García (2014), and Baker (2011). Now that we understand what translanguaging is, assessment in a language classroom comes in. In multilingual classrooms, traditional assessment practices often fail to recognise the linguistic diversity and strengths that students bring into the learning environment. Translanguaging, defined as the use of a multilingual speaker's full linguistic repertoire without separating languages into distinct entities, offers a way to bridge this gap (Canagarajah, 2011; García & Wei, 2014). It allows students to draw on all their linguistic resources to make meaning, facilitating deeper understanding and more authentic language use. Let us explore the role of translanguaging in classroom assessment, focusing on how it can be integrated into the assessment process to support multilingual students' learning. Drawing on theoretical frameworks and practical examples, this study discusses a proposed methodology for assessing students in a way that acknowledges their complete linguistic capabilities.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Translanguaging is grounded in several key theoretical frameworks. The Linguistic Interdependence Hypothesis by Cummins (1978) suggests that skills developed in a first language (L1) can support the acquisition of a second language (L2). This perspective challenges the traditional view that treats languages as separate and instead encourages viewing multilingual speakers as "languagers" who fluidly shift between languages (García & Wei, 2014). Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory (1978) further emphasises the role of social interaction in cognitive development, supporting the idea that using a familiar language can aid students in understanding complex content before transitioning to an additional language. Herdina and Jessner's (2002) Dynamic Systems Theory offers a complementary perspective, advocating for flexibility in language use and suggesting that multilingual competence involves the interplay between different linguistic systems rather than rigid boundaries between languages.

3. TRANSLANGUAGING IN ASSESSMENT

The concept of translanguaging as an approach to assessment is based on the idea that multilingual students should be able to use their full linguistic repertoire to demonstrate their understanding. Traditional assessment methods often prioritise a single language, typically English, which can disadvantage students whose strengths lie in other languages (Cummins, 2007). However, Gorter and Cenoz (2016) argue that multilingualism should be treated as a resource in the assessment process. This shift involves assessing students' knowledge through their most comfortable language while encouraging them to express complex ideas using all their available linguistic tools. By doing so, the assessment becomes more inclusive, reflecting the reality of students' linguistic abilities.

Translanguaging in assessment encourages practices like allowing students to read a text in one language and write about it in another, fostering deeper cognitive engagement (Baker, 2011). This approach recognises that using a student's more enabled language (MEL) is not "contamination" of English but rather a natural strategy for processing and demonstrating understanding. Canagarajah (2011) suggests that translanguaging in assessments allows students to

evaluate their own work or peer assessments with minimal teacher intervention, promoting autonomy and deeper reflection. Here is an example assessment rubric that can be adapted by teachers to suit their specific classroom needs. It provides a flexible framework that can be adjusted to assess students' use of multiple languages and narrative skills.

4. WHY TRANSLANGUAGING-BASED ASSESSMENT?

Incorporating translanguaging into assessments is important because it recognises the full linguistic capabilities of multilingual learners, allowing them to express their knowledge more authentically. This approach reduces language anxiety by letting students use their native language alongside the target language, fostering a more inclusive environment. It also bridges the gap between home and school languages, making learning more meaningful. By validating students' linguistic diversity, translanguaging-based assessments promote deeper understanding and improve overall language proficiency. Here is the table explaining the rationale for the integration of translanguaging into classroom assessment.

Table 2

Rationale for Translanguaging-Based Assessment

Rationale	Explanation
Enhances Understanding and Expression	Using multiple languages helps students express complex ideas more clearly, leading to better comprehension.
Challenges Monolingual Assessment Norms	Moves away from traditional assessments that favour only one language, recognising the benefits of multilingualism.
Reduces Language Anxiety	Students feel more comfortable and less anxious when allowed to use their native language, improving their performance.
Bridges Home and School Languages	Integrates students' home languages into the assessment process, making learning more relevant to their experiences.
Validates Students' Home Languages	Acknowledges the value of students' native languages, fostering a more inclusive and respectful learning environment.

Note Adapted to reflect the pedagogical advantages of translanguaging in educational settings.

5. ASSESSMENT RUBRIC

This is an example assessment rubric that can be adapted by teachers to suit their specific classroom needs. It provides a flexible framework that can be adjusted to assess students' use of multiple languages and narrative skills.

Table 3

Example Rubric for Translanguaging-Based Assessment

Criteria	Sub-Criteria	Weightage
Content	a) Demonstrates a clear and coherent general idea b) Includes meaningful and relevant events c) Produces a comprehensible and logically organized text d) Constructs the text with at least 15–20 sentences	40%

Linguistic Resources	a) Uses ideas or words in two or more languages to enhance coherence b) Incorporates scaffolding or collaborative input from others	30%
Grammar	a) Employs correct usage of simple past tense	30%

Note: Table 3 presents a rubric designed for assessing narrative writing in a translanguaging-based context. The criteria emphasise content, linguistic resources, and grammar.

6. EXPLANATION OF THE EXAMPLE RUBRIC FOR TRANSLANGUAGING-BASED ASSESSMENT

Example Rubric for Translanguaging-Based Assessment is a comprehensive evaluation framework designed to assess students' narrative writing skills in a translanguaging context. It is structured into three primary criteria Content, Linguistic Resources, and Grammar each weighted to reflect its relative importance in the assessment process. This rubric supports an inclusive approach by recognising the students' ability to leverage their entire linguistic repertoire.

1) Content (40%)

This criterion focuses on the quality and coherence of the narrative. Sub-criteria under content evaluate:

- **General Idea:** Assesses whether the narrative conveys a clear and coherent central idea that aligns with the given prompt.
- **Meaningful Events:** Ensures that the story includes relevant and logically sequenced events contributing to the overall plot.
- **Comprehensible Text:** Evaluates the clarity and readability of the narrative, ensuring logical flow and structure.
- **Sentence Length:** Sets expectations for narrative length by requiring at least 10-15 sentences, promoting adequate development of ideas and detail.

This component emphasises students' ability to construct a meaningful and engaging narrative that meets the assignment's structural and conceptual demands.

2) Linguistic Resources (30%)

This criterion evaluates how students utilise their linguistic repertoire, particularly in a translanguaging context:

- **Use of Multiple Languages:** Assesses how students integrate words, phrases, or ideas from two or more languages to enhance narrative coherence and richness.
- **Scaffolding from Peers:** Recognises collaborative efforts where students incorporate suggestions or assistance from peers, teachers, or resources, reflecting real-world multilingual practices.

This component highlights the role of translanguaging as a tool for creativity, problem-solving, and effective communication.

3) Grammar (30%)

This criterion assesses technical accuracy in language use, focusing on:

- **Tense Usage:** Evaluates the correct use of simple past tense, which is fundamental in most narrative writing.
- **Punctuation and Capitalisation:** Ensures proper use of punctuation marks and capitalisation, contributing to the narrative's readability and professionalism.
- **Spelling:** Identifies and minimises spelling errors, promoting linguistic accuracy and fluency.

The grammar section ensures that while students are encouraged to explore their linguistic creativity, basic language conventions are adhered to, supporting clarity and formal accuracy.

7. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RUBRIC

This rubric provides a structured and holistic approach to assessing narratives in a translinguaging framework. By weighting content, linguistic resources, and grammar, it balances creativity and linguistic accuracy, recognising both multilingual strengths and areas for improvement. The rubric promotes inclusivity by valuing the use of native languages alongside English, validating students' cultural and linguistic identities while fostering academic growth.

Assessment Phases

The phases table outlines the key steps in a translinguaging-based assessment process, providing a structured approach for evaluating multilingual learners. Teachers can adapt each phase of planning, data collection, feedback, evaluation, and reflection to align with their specific teaching contexts and goals. This flexible framework ensures that assessments are tailored to the diverse linguistic backgrounds of students, supporting a more inclusive learning environment.

Table 4

Phases of Translinguaging-Based Assessment

Phase	Description
Planning Assessment	Allowing multiple languages during the planning phase.
Collecting and Assessing Data	Gathering data from the planning stage and assessing it.
Providing Feedback	Offering feedback to students in multiple languages.
Evaluating and Awarding Grades	Evaluating the work and assigning grades based on performance.
Reflecting and Revising Goals	Reflecting on assessment outcomes and adjusting learning goals.

Note: This table outlines key phases of translinguaging-based assessment, emphasising multilingual practices in planning, feedback, and evaluation to support student learning.

The table (see Table 4) highlights the sequential phases of implementing translinguaging-based assessment, focusing on multilingual inclusivity at each stage.

- 1) Planning Phase:** During this phase, students are allowed to use multiple languages when planning their work. For example, they can brainstorm ideas in their mother tongue (L1) before drafting in English. This approach aligns with the practice suggested by Cen Williams, where input in one language is processed and output is produced in another, fostering a deeper understanding of the content.
- 2) Assessment Phase:** The assessment is conducted in a way that recognises the use of students' complete linguistic repertoire. Tools such as activity descriptors, cue cards, and response sheets are used to collect data on how students use their languages to understand and produce content. During this phase, peer evaluation is encouraged, allowing students to learn from each other while the teacher provides minimal guidance. The rubric used in this phase includes components like content (40%), linguistic resources (30%), and grammar (30%), emphasising the integration of ideas from multiple languages (García & Kley, 2016).
- 3) Feedback Phase:** Feedback is given in both the students' mother tongue and English, helping them understand where they excel and where they can improve. This bilingual feedback ensures that students fully grasp the teacher's comments and suggestions, making the assessment process more effective. As García (2014) notes, this approach respects students' natural use of language and aids in knowledge construction.
- 4) Reflection Phase:** In the final phase, students use self-reflection sheets to evaluate their experiences with the assessment. They reflect on how using their L1 helped them understand the task and express their ideas in

English. This reflection helps them recognise the value of their multilingual abilities and encourages them to apply these strategies in future learning.

8. PROPOSED METHODOLOGY

The proposed methodology focuses on integrating translanguaging practices into the assessment process, aiming to leverage students' multilingual abilities to enhance their learning and writing skills. It emphasises a dynamic approach that allows flexibility in how linguistic resources are used, ensuring that the assessment is both inclusive and tailored to the diverse needs of students.

Table 5

Key Aspects of Translanguaging-Based Learning Activities

Aspect	Details
Learner Profile	Collect profiles to understand purposes for language use and sociocultural settings.
Data Collection Tools	Activity Descriptors, Cue Cards, Response Sheets, Self-reflection Sheets, Classroom Observations.
Assessment	Peer evaluation with minimal teacher assistance, focusing on the use of available linguistic resources.
Activity Design	Learners use all linguistic resources in groups, transforming knowledge from one language into another.
Self-Reflection	Administer self-reflection sheets to capture participants' experiences with the activity.

Note: This table outlines the essential aspects of designing and implementing translanguaging-based learning activities, focusing on learner profiles, tools, assessment methods, and reflective practices.

Table 5 summarises the foundational elements of translanguaging-based activities, highlighting how linguistic resources and sociocultural settings inform teaching and assessment practices.

The proposed methodology for implementing translanguaging in assessment involves several phases: planning, assessment, feedback, and reflection. This approach is designed to be dynamic and adaptable, taking into account students' varied linguistic backgrounds and needs. The focus is on creating a supportive environment where students can express themselves using all their linguistic resources.

Important Considerations for Translanguaging-based Assessment

The implementation of a translanguaging approach in assessment requires several considerations. One of the primary challenges is redefining what counts as language proficiency. In many educational systems, language for learning (such as English) is often given a higher status than other languages that students may be more proficient in (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1981). This bias needs to be addressed by acknowledging that proficiency in a student's L1 can enhance their learning in L2.

Another key consideration is the development of dynamic assessment tools that cater to the unique needs of each student. Unlike standardised assessments, translanguaging assessments need to be adaptable, allowing teachers to adjust their methods based on their understanding of their students' linguistic strengths and learning goals (Cook, 1991). Tailoring assessments in this way ensures that they are more accurate and meaningful for students.

9. CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS

Despite its potential benefits, there are challenges associated with implementing translanguaging in assessment. A significant barrier is the lack of multilingual competence among teachers, which can make it difficult for them to effectively support students in using their L1 during assessment tasks (Gorter & Cenoz, 2016). Furthermore, the resources required to develop, administer, and score dynamic assessments can be more demanding compared to traditional methods.

Resistance from the prevailing monolingual ideology is another challenge. Many educational institutions and policymakers still prioritise English, often viewing the use of other languages as a hindrance rather than a resource. Overcoming these attitudes requires a shift in how language education is perceived, moving towards a more inclusive and realistic understanding of multilingualism in the classroom.

9.1. IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING

Adopting a translanguaging approach to assessment has several implications for teaching and learning. First, it allows for a more inclusive learning environment where students feel that their linguistic identities are respected. This respect can reduce language anxiety and increase student engagement, as they are encouraged to use their strongest language skills to access content (García & Kleyn, 2016).

Second, using students' L1 as a resource helps bridge the gap between home and school languages, making learning more relevant to students' everyday experiences (Cummins, 2007). This approach also helps integrate fluent speakers with emerging learners, fostering a classroom culture where all linguistic contributions are valued.

Finally, translanguaging can lead to a more comprehensive understanding of subject matter. When students use their full linguistic repertoire to process and communicate information, they can achieve a deeper understanding of the content. This aligns with the metaphor of the "water lily" proposed by Skutnabb-Kangas (1981), where a strong foundation in L1 supports the growth of L2.

10. CONCLUSION

Translanguaging offers a powerful alternative to traditional monolingual assessments in multilingual classrooms. By allowing students to use their full linguistic repertoire, it recognises their strengths and provides a more accurate representation of their knowledge and abilities. Although challenges remain, particularly in terms of teacher training and institutional resistance, the potential benefits of this approach make it a valuable addition to language education. Translanguaging assessments not only foster a more inclusive classroom environment but also help students develop the confidence and skills needed to succeed in both their native and additional languages.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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