The Potential of Translanguaging Pedagogy for Promoting Iranian Bilingual Students' English Development[1]

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Abstract

This explanatory mixed-methods study investigated the use of bilingual students' linguistic repertoire for teaching and clarifying grammar. A repeated-measures design was used in which the quantitative data were complemented with follow-up qualitative data. Data were collected in six treatment sessions and from twenty-five all-male twelfth-grade state-school students from Bandar Turkman, Golestan, Iran. A three-phase experiment was carried out involving teaching six grammar lessons to one group: 1) in English only, 2) in the students' local language, and 3) their official language, which was followed by a semi-structured interview. The results of the quantitative data analysis indicated that translanguaging through incorporating students' linguistic assets proved to be an effective strategy which allowed students to have a deeper understanding of grammar. The analysis of the qualitative data showed that language learners had a positive attitude towards this pedagogy and believed that it promoted their language learning, motivation and self-confidence. Implications of the study for language teachers and researchers are discussed.

Resumen

Este estudio explicativo de métodos mixtos investigó el uso del repertorio lingüístico de estudiantes bilingües para enseñar y aclarar la gramática. Se utilizó un diseño de medidas repetidas en el que los datos cuantitativos se complementaron con datos cualitativos de seguimiento. Los datos se recolectaron en seis sesiones de tratamiento y de veinticinco estudiantes de escuelas públicas de grado doce, todos varones, de Bandar Turkman, Golestán, Irán. Se llevó a cabo un experimento de tres fases que implicó la enseñanza de seis lecciones de gramática a un grupo: 1) solo en inglés, 2) en el idioma local de los estudiantes y 3) su idioma oficial, seguido de una entrevista semiestructurada. Los resultados del análisis de datos cuantitativos indicaron que el translenguaje a través de la incorporación de los recursos lingüísticos de los estudiantes resultó ser una estrategia efectiva que permitió a los estudiantes tener una comprensión más profunda de la gramática. El análisis de los datos cualitativos mostró que los estudiantes de idiomas tenían una actitud positiva hacia esta pedagogía y creían que promovía su aprendizaje de idiomas, motivación y confianza en sí mismos. Se discuten las implicaciones del estudio para profesores de idiomas e investigadores.

Introduction

There is a growing consensus that translanguaging pedagogies offer students and teachers opportunities to use all their linguistic repertoires to construct their own meaning (García & Kleifgen, 2010). In fact, translanguaging theory is based on the premise that bilingual and multilingual individuals do not have separate language systems, but rather they draw on different linguistic resources simultaneously to create messages. With the emergence of this theory, there seems to be a shift of view in bilingualism and multilingualism. While in the past, the languages of multilinguals were seen as isolated from each other, the new theory regards all languages of a learner as part of one linguistic system (Wei, 2018).

Research has also indicated that a kind of systematic and deliberate use of two languages helps to promote students' use of a wider range of resources to strategically communicate in a variety of contexts (García & Wei, 2014).) It also helps to employ the students' linguistic repertoire to maximize their understanding and achievement (Lewis et al., 2012). In sum, research on translanguaging has shown support for including this pedagogy where there are linguistic and cultural diversities, and has indicated that both teachers and students can benefit from their bilingual or multilingual resources to enhance students' learning (Sayer, 2013; Creese & Blacklege, 2010).

However, although this area has been studied widely by several scholars on language learning in the past few years, others (Chen et al., 2019; García & Wei 2014; Lin & He, 2017) contend that school contexts have not been adequately explored in terms of translanguaging as a legitimate pedagogical practice. In many educational contexts, ignoring learners' languages is still the dominant form of teaching, either as a

requirement of the school or as the teacher's preference. Furthermore, traditionally second language acquisition (SLA) studies have reported a monolingual language policy which emphasizes only the target language as the legitimate medium of instruction and of student interaction within the classroom (García & Sylvan, 2011).

In reality, one of the challenges faced in bilingual/multilingual school settings Iran is teachers' and learners' lack of proficiency in English (Dolati & Mikaili, 2011; Noughabi, 2017). Bilingual students are more competent in their mother tongue than they are in the official language of the country (L2), which is the language of instruction in most cases. Therefore, including the home language (L1) and providing support to learners in bi/multilingual classrooms through translanguaging might be effective in promoting students' language learning experiences. Even though studies abound in this area, there are few studies examining students' engagement in translanguaging as compared to the monolingual approach. Such an undertaking is significant since it illustrates the extent to which teachers' promotion of each of these approaches can influence students' learning and motivation to participate.

Thus, since this theory has gained recognition as a pedagogical approach in bilingual/multilingual contexts, and since research is scarce on translanguaging in EFL bi- and multilingual contexts (Nagy, 2018), this study addresses that gap by exploring a high school teacher's translanguaging practice along with two others (L1-only and Official-language-only) in a bilingual context. It also aims to see how students view the monolingual and translanguaging practices. The Golestan Province is multilingual, where the official language of the country, Persian (Farsi), is the dominant language of instruction, and many people speak Turkmen as their L1. It is therefore an ideal venue for studies in translanguaging.

Literature Review

Current research has indicated the importance of L1 as a resource for learning and as a useful solution for the linguistic challenges experienced by multilingual learners (Cummins, 2005; De La Campa & Nassaji, 2009; Khonamri & Khonamri, 2017). In translanguaging literature, too, the use of L1 is seen to be part of the integral language practices in which language learners and their teacher engage, especially in bilingual/multilingual contexts. Such developments have reconceptualized the beliefs and practices of teachers in bi/multilingual contexts (Rabbidge ,2019). Translanguaging has also proven to be effective in other areas of L2 learning, including writing (Velasco and García, 2014) as well as the four language skills (Yuzlu and Dikilitas, 2022). Moreover, research has attempted to shed light on attitudes towards the implementation of the pedagogy in foreign-language classrooms and found positive perceptions towards such practices in various ELT contexts. This has led to an emphasis on re-examining the pedagogy by challenging the monolingual English-only language policy and recognizing students' first language as a linguistic resource to facilitate language learning in both the English language and the content (Liu & Fang ,2020).

In an attempt to investigate the applicability of translanguaging practices, Galante (2020) investigated the effects of translanguaging on academic vocabulary by comparing it to a traditional monolingual approach. Seven English teachers used two different approaches in their classes (n = 129): translanguaging in the experimental group and English-only in the control group. Data from vocabulary tests, classroom observations, and learner diaries indicated that students in the translanguaging group outperformed those in the monolingual group. The findings of this study showed that when translanguaging was used, students learned vocabulary items more effectively and gained a better understanding of the concepts through engaging in meaning-making and taking an active role in their language learning.

Moreover, there is a growing body of knowledge on several reasons that teachers use this pedagogy in the classroom, and highlight its benefits for learners. Some of such studies are Hassan and Ahmad (2015); Greggio and Gil (2007) and McMillan and Rivers (2011) that explored the use of translanguaging when introducing new information for the purpose of ensuring that students have grasped the material. They found that it helped them to decide if they could move on to the next part of the lesson and motivated them to feel less overwhelmed by the new lesson. Another reason for the use of translanguaging in the classroom is for explaining complicated and complex concepts, grammatical features or structures of the language, and vocabulary (Hassan & Ahmad, 2015; Greggio & Gil, 2007; McMillan & Rivers, 2011). These studies have found it helpful to use the students' L1 in teaching new vocabulary items as well as grammatical features and structures.

Using class observation and one-on-one interviews with students and their teacher, Hassan and Ahmad (2015) investigated the shifting of languages used for each part of the lesson in addition to the students'

understanding of the subject content. He has argued that learning the grammatical structures of the target language is very important for language learners, and explaining it in their first language can be very useful. He further explains that discussing and explaining grammar to L2 learners requires a great deal of metalanguage that can make it confusing for them. Therefore, using their L1 could be very helpful for the learners. In Hassan and Ahmad's (2015) study, students found their instructor's use of translanguaging very effective. These studies indicate that this pedagogy can create the opportunity for bilingual students to use their full linguistic and semiotic repertoire to make meaning. It can also be considered a legitimate pedagogical practice to access both content and language in bilingual education (García & Wei, 2015; Mgijima and Makalela, 2016; Gort & Sembiante, 2015).

In general, the body of knowledge on translanguaging indicates a positive contribution to the promotion of literacy skills among bilingual students (Aoyama, 2020; Champlin, 2016; Jiménez et al., 2015; Williams, 2002) and their metalinguistic awareness, a socioemotional relationship in the class, students' enlightenment about linguistic inequalities and hierarchies (García & Kano, 2014; García et al., 2017; Martin-Beltrán, 2014; Vogel & García , 2017). However, most of these studies have simply described the use and benefits of the pedagogy, and have paid little attention to possible distinctions there might be between the separate use of the students' L1, the official language, and translanguaging in a multilingual setting. As noted, a learner may go through different experiences in each of these conditions. These differences were neglected in the previous studies. Furthermore, the studies failed to analyze bilingual students' views and attitudes towards the possible distinctions under these three conditions . Thus, further investigation is deemed worthwhile to understand how students' use of L1, their official language or their various linguistic repertoire can affect their language development. Additionally, it is worth documenting the details of student experiences in these three situations comparatively and the possible improvement in students' language development.

Based on the above, the following research questions were posited:

1. *Does translanguaging play a different role in developing Iranian bilingual students' grammatical knowledge as compared to using the official language and students' L1?*

2. *What are the students' views about the use of translanguaging pedagogy in teaching English as compared to the other two conditions?*

Method

Design

A mixed-method research design was employed to explore the role of translanguaging between Turkmen and Persian (Farsi) in learning English. This method was used because using a mixture of both quantitative and qualitative designs can lead to more subtle findings. Quantitative data was collected first and then the study concentrated on the qualitative data with detailed information from the participants to better explain the quantitative analysis (Creswell, 2018). Moreover, this study followed a repeated-measures design in which the same subjects were used in more than one treatment and students' performance was assessed in more than one time interval and condition, i.e., in six consecutive sessions.

Participants

The participants of the study were twelfth-grade male state-school students from Bandar Turkman, Iran. Bandar Turkman is a city located in Golestan province, in northern Iran. There were twenty-five students in this class and the class meetings were four hours per week. Their English proficiency level was intermediate based on the results of the OPT (Oxford Placement Test) given to the students before the study. The students' first language (L1) was Turkmen and Persian (the national language) was regarded as their second language (L2). Therefore, they were learning English as a foreign language (FL), or third language (L3). Before the study, the students granted their consent to participate in the research.

Instruments

For the first phase of the study, six tests of grammar chosen from the grammatical points of the students' book were used. These grammatical features were selected mainly because they posed the same level of difficulty for the students. Expert advice was sought from experienced twelfth-grade teachers to select the grammatical features that were considered to be of the same level of difficulty and were confusing for students. The order of the grammatical structures was based on the sequence taken by the textbooks. Each of the tests had twenty items with several types of questions, including filling in the blank, multiple choice,

open-ended questions, and matching. In order to assure the reliability and validity of the tests, great caution was exercised to balance the difficulty level of the tests, the structure of the test items, and the arrangement of the items and responses.

To ensure reliability, two sets of tests were given for each teaching strategy (see the procedure section for further details). This was done because the replicable results in each category could mean that the test items are internally consistent. In addition, other measures were taken to maximize the reliability of the assessment, e.g., providing clear guidelines for each section, generating questions about the covered material, and receiving feedback from students and fellow teachers with respect to the completeness and comprehensibility of the assessment. Content validity was also maximized by including a representative content from the textbook.

For the second phase of the study, students were interviewed and a voice recorder was used to record students' individual and group comments with respect to the teacher's use of translanguaging and to get insights from the students' comments. The information collected through interviews and observations was analyzed by compiling details in tables that allowed for a comprehensive view, and also by developing a codification system to record relevant comments in the transcriptions of the group interviews about students' opinions regarding this way of teaching.

Procedures

The data in this study were gathered from two main sources. The source of quantitative data was the language tests taken by the students after every two consecutive sessions of teaching grammar in the students' first language, official language, and translanguaging. As for the qualitative data, the sources were the group and individual semi-structured interviews and, to a lesser degree, observations of classroom activities. First, six tests of grammar were constructed from the grammatical structures which were presented in the students' book including: passive voice, tag questions, compound sentences, relative clauses, conditional sentences (type 2), and past perfect tense. Second, observation of students and semi-structured interviews were employed in order to get students' opinions and comments on the languages which were used for teaching these grammatical structures. Students' course book has three chapters. Each chapter is made up of the following sections: Get ready, Conversation, New words and Expressions, Reading, Vocabulary development, Grammar, Listening and Speaking, Writing, and What you Learned. From these sections, grammar and writing sections were chosen as the focal points for this study. The selected grammatical points were taught according to their appearance in the respective sessions during the school year. For two sessions on grammar or writing sections, the teacher used the students' L1 (Turkmen) as the medium of instruction. Then in the following two sessions, the students' L2 (Persian) was used for presentation and clarification. For the last two sessions, translanguaging strategy was exploited between the L1, the official language and English languages. It is worth mentioning that the most problematic and confusing structures were taught in the translanguaging session. This was done to control for the possible effect of ongoing instruction and development (though quite improbable based on teacher's experience) that might have occurred in student's knowledge.

At the end of the teaching and testing sessions, students were interviewed about the use of their L1 and L2 for explaining grammar. They were also asked to enunciate their feelings and opinions regarding the language of the instruction. The commonly asked questions in the interviews inquired the pros and cons of using students' L1, L2 or both as the medium of instruction. The interviews were conducted in the learners' L1 in order for them to feel less pressured and disclose the responses more easily and confidently. Then their responses were translated into English and reported in this study.

Session	Language of instruction	Grammatical points	Test
1	Persian (L2)	Passive voice	Test 1
2	Persian (L2)	Tag questions	Test 2
3	Turkman (L1)	Compound sentences	Test 3
4	Turkman (L1)	Relative clauses	Test 4
5	Translanguaging (Turkman and Persian)	Conditional sentences type 2	Test 5
6	Translanguaging (Turkman and Persian)	Past perfect tense	Test 6

Table 1: Sketch of the process of teaching

Data analysis

The sum of the scores, the mean, and the percentage of the test results for each pair of teachings were calculated. Moreover, changes and differences among these three ways of presenting grammatical points that were examined by several tests were analyzed, using within subjects repeated measures ANOVA and via SPSS 24. In addition, students' opinions and comments which were collected through semi-structured interviews, were scrutinized by means of content analysis in which words, themes, and concepts were coded and categorized within the texts and then the results were analyzed. To this end, grounded theory was used in which it attempted to discover or construct theory from data, which was systematically obtained and analyzed through comparative analysis.

Comparative analysis was used for coding and category development. This process started with the first data collected in which incidents were identified and coded. Then the initial codes were compared to other codes which eventually collapsed into categories. At the same time, memo writing as an analytic process was used to ensure quality and were mostly based on those ideas generated and documented through interacting with data.

Results

Results of the first research question

The first question in this study sought to determine whether translanguaging strategy can improve Iranian bilingual students' grammatical knowledge better than the other two approaches. The results of this study indicated that the use of students' first language (L1) led to a better performance in grammar tests in comparison to those sessions in which the students' L1 was not used in the classroom. The most striking result was noticed when translanguaging was exploited and students performed their best in the grammar tests. Table 2 summarizes the results obtained from each pair of the tests.

	Persian		Turkman		Translanguaging (Turkman and Persian)	
Tests	Test 1	Test 2	Test 3	Test 4	Test 5	Test 6
Total score	278	324.5	390	378	416	402
Mean	11.12	12.98	15.60	15.12	16.64	16.08

Table 2: Students' performances in grammar tests (Teaching through translanguaging)

As can be seen from Table 2, students' test scores on the first two tests were noticeably low when their L1 was overlooked within the process of clarifying the grammatical points. The mean score for Test 1 and Test 2 was 12.05. It is likely that the removal of students' L1 from the teaching process resulted in their poor functioning in these two grammar tests. Interestingly, the results of the next pair of the tests were improved when Turkman (students' L1) was used for teaching grammar. In other words, acknowledging students' L1 (Turkman) as one of their linguistic resources may contribute to better marks, i.e., mean score of 15.36. The comparison of the test results demonstrated that using translanguaging yielded the best results and the highest scores, i.e. mean score of 16.36. The results, as shown in Table 2, indicated that using this strategy can be fruitful in developing these students' English language proficiency, especially in learning grammar.

Comparison of the means

In order to see if the observed differences are statistically significant, a within subject repeated measures ANOVA was conducted to compare the means of the scores obtained from the six tests of grammar. Before running the analysis, two assumptions of repeated measures ANOVA (within-subjects) were checked. For the first assumption, Shapiro-Wilk test and Kolmogorov-Smirnov test were conducted in order to check the normal distribution of the data. The results of Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, as shown in Table 3, indicated that data were normally distributed in all of the three test types since the p values were greater than .05 ($p > .05$)

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	DF	Sig.	Statistic	DF	Sig.
Persian	.15	25	.11	.94	25	.16
Turkman	.18	25	.02	.93	25	.18
[Translanguaging]		25	.14	.94	25	.21

Table 3: Tests of normality for the assumption of normal distribution of three test scores

The means and standard deviations are presented in Table 4.

Languages	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Official language	12	1.2	25
Language	15.3	1.7	25
Translanguaging	16.3	1.1	25

Table 4. Descriptive statistics for the three tests

As shown in Table 4, the results of the descriptive statistics indicated that the differences among mean of the three methods of teaching grammar, i.e., teaching with the aid of students' L1, L2 and/or translanguaging were noticeable (15.3, 12, 16.3). To ensure whether the difference was significant, one-way ANOVA was conducted.

Within Subjects Effect	Mauchly's W	Approx. Chi-Square	Df	Sig	Greenhouse-Geisser	Huynh-Feldt
Language	.77	6.00	2.00	.05	.81	.86

Table 5. Muachy's test of Sphericity for Assessing differences between three tests

Table 5 indicates whether the assumption of sphericity has been met. This is a bit like the assumption of homogeneity of variance for independent tests, but in this case, it tests the assumption that the relationship between the different pairs of conditions is similar (Sig. .05).

Source	Value	F	Df	Mean square	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Sphericity Assumed	.80	60.79	2.00	12.2	.000	.60
	.19	60.79	1.62	15.4	.000	.60
Greenhouse-Geisser	4.08	60.79	1.72	14.2	.000	.60

Table 6. One-Way ANOVA Test of Repeated Measures

Table 6, in which F (2, 25) = 60.79, p< .000, shows that students gained significant results when this strategy was used for teaching and clarifying grammatical points. In other words, the strategy was the most effective approach to the students' English language development. As the main ANOVA is significant, this means that there is a difference between at least two time points. In order to see where exactly the differences were, pairwise comparisons were used. The following table shows the results.

	Tests	Mean Square	Old Error	Sig.	95% confidence interval for difference	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	2	3.47	.036	.009	.445	.663
	3	4.32	.042	.00	.524	.761
2	1	2.16	.015	.005	.563	.458
	3	4.32	.036	.00	.619	.107
3	1	2.16	.042	.06	.761	.518
	2	3.47	.105	.06	.197	.019

Table 7. Pairwise comparisons

Pairwise comparisons were run to see where exactly the differences lay. Three paired samples t-tests were used to make post hoc comparisons between conditions. A first paired samples t-test indicated that there was a significant difference in the scores for translanguaging (M=16.3, SD=1.1) and L1 (M=15.3, SD=1.7) conditions; t(4)=-5.66, p = .005. A second paired samples t-test indicated that there was a significant difference in the scores for translanguaging (M=16.3, SD=1.1) and official language (M=12, SD=1.2) conditions; t (4)=-4.881, p = .009. A third paired samples t-test indicated that there was no significant difference in the scores for L1(M=15.3, SD=1.7) and Official language (M=12.7, SD=1.2) conditions; t (4)=-3.773, p = .06.. These results suggest that teaching approach really does have an effect on grammatical achievement. Specifically, our results suggest that when translanguaging is used, they gain significantly better results than when they engage in L1-only or official-language -only approaches.

Results of the second research question

After analyzing the transcripts of the interviews and coding them, the recurrent theme in the interviews was a sense among interviewees that the use of translanguaging has a beneficial impact on their understanding

of the structures of English. During the semi-structured interview, the students reported that they were more engaged in the lessons because translanguaging between three languages guided their understanding. Some of the students felt that the incorporation of their L1 along with the official language resulted in an increased grasp of grammar and consequently an increased motivation to learn English. To illustrate the importance of student receptiveness to translanguaging, some of the most pertinent emerged categories are presented and described below.

Translanguaging as a more motivating technique

Arguably, more than anything else, it was evident from students' responses that translanguaging was viewed as a tool for enhancing learners' motivation. One of the purposes of this pedagogy in the classroom is to promote greater student engagement and learning; it seems that this technique appeals to the learners and motivates them to have more engagement. Interestingly, most of the students generally held favorable views towards the use of translanguaging as an effective motivating tool.

The following excerpts from students' responses show that translanguaging strategy is very likely to act as an effective method in creating eagerness to learn English .

S2 expressed his attitude towards teacher's use of translanguaging as:

I really enjoy learning English when you [teacher] utilize the Turkmanin conjunction with the national language. This way of teaching has expanded my understanding of grammar. I am so satisfied with this teaching method.

Likewise S6 stated:

Learning English has a fundamental importance. I have got really interested in learning English since the inclusion of my L1 [Turkman] for the purpose of elucidating complex grammatical structures. I think I can understand it better and this gives me an additional motive to learn English. I used to get frustrated with the complexities in the structure of English.

In general, regarding this theme, the analysis indicated that students were positive towards the use of translanguaging as a motivating factor. However, a careful analysis of the data indicated some other categories that are worthy of attention. Interestingly, some students preferred their mother tongue as the dominant language, others counted the official language to be crucial in their education, while a good number of them emphasized the importance of both. These comments truly demonstrated the extent to which translanguaging could be a potential means of improvement. Each of these categories are presented below along with some excerpts from students.

Students' preference for the use of both languages (translanguaging)

In their accounts of the pros and cons of the translanguaging strategy in teaching and learning grammar, S2 said:

I acknowledge the use of both Turkman and Persian because both of these languages have some unique features that can be utilized when students have difficulty with a grammatical point. In addition, this approach of clarifying grammar increases the chance of a prolonged and a deeper learning which can be quite helpful in the exam sessions.

S8 also referred to this preference:

As we speak Persian in the school setting and Turkman at home, I prefer a mixed mode of teaching in which both languages are included for a better presentation of the grammatical rules. I personally believe that teaching in this way helps us with a better grasp of grammatical points.

Students' preference for their L1

The next category found was related to some of students' inclination towards the use of their mother tongue. The following sample extracts clearly show this tendency.

S5, when asked about the role of translanguaging in learning grammatical points of their books, said: As far as I am concerned with leaning English, it is really important for me to have a deeper discernment of its structures. But I prefer my L1 to be the medium of instruction. In this way, even those students who have problems with basic grammar can benefit enormously from their L1.

Surprisingly, when it came to choosing between their L1 and Official language, a great number of students preferred their mother tongue (L1). This is mainly due to students' lack of mastery of Persian mostly because they do not use it as the language of communication outside of school. This has been mentioned by two more students, too, as shown in the following extracts:

In my opinion, the use of Turkman is of great importance. It is due to the fact that some of my classmates are not proficient enough in understanding and speaking Persia".

The same preference was stated with a different reason mentioned below:

I have found more similarities between Turkman and English rather than between Persian and English. For example, the order of adjective + noun is identical in both Turkman and English while the order in Persian is vice versa i.e. noun + adjective.

Overall, as the extracts show, some students for different reasons prefer to receive instruction in their mother tongue.

<u>Students' preference for the official language</u>

Whilst most of the interviewees agreed that the employment of students' linguistic repertoire is likely to pave the way of learning English, a minority mentioned that Persian, as the national and formal language should be used in the educational contexts. The justification of this small number of interviewees was that there is no difference between these versatile modes of presenting and clarifying grammar. They maintained that we should only prioritize the dominant language (Persian) as it plays the role of a survival language for speakers of other languages in our country.

This sample extract indicates S9's inclination towards the dominance of the official language of the country:

I prefer Persian because it is the national language of Iran and we all have to speak Persian in the school setting. If teachers keep on using Turkman in the educational settings, we will definitely face difficulties with our Persian language proficiency in our academic affairs.

Translanguaging as a useful preparation technique:

Another category was recognized as well that was neutral in nature with regard to students' preference for one or both of the languages and viewed translanguaging as an opportunity for faster retrieval of information which would result in improving students' test-preparation skills.

A common view among interviewees was that the inclusion of translanguaging strategy will lead to the improvement of their results in their University Entrance Examination through providing them some useful techniques to answer grammar tests. In other words, they believed that this way of teaching would trigger faster information retrieval in the exam session. Some of them commented that in University Entrance Examination, time management plays the key role. They added that with respect to the allocated time in the entrance exam session, acting as quickly as possible is crucial.

To sum up, students were, for the most part, positive in their attitude towards translanguaging. Their overall impression was that it was an appropriate, useful and motivating way of learning English.

Discussion

The analysis of data, interviews and classroom observations seem to indicate that overall, bilingual learners benefitted from and showed enthusiasm towards the practice. The analysis of the data demonstrated that using multiple languages rather than just the mother tongue or the official language in teaching the grammatical lessons was effective. The use of translanguaging contributed positively in enhancing their grammatical knowledge and this was consistent with Champlin (2016), Galante (2020), Hassan and Ahmad (2015), and Vogel and García (2017). The use of translanguaging was a very different experience for the students and the opinions they disclosed during semi-structured interviews showed how enthusiastic they were about this new experience which was in line with Wei's (2011) observation. Many students stated that engaging in translanguaging during small group work in the classroom was a new and useful experience. One of the things that learners mentioned was that they felt included when they were told that they were allowed to use all the three languages whenever they needed it. They thought they were more engaged during the lesson, and were able to understand the structures much better than before. They also stated that they felt more comfortable and safer. This was consistent with García et al. (2017) who contended that translanguaging enabled learners to feel part of the classroom community which triggered the use of all their resources. This was also observed in the works of Mgijima and Makalela (2016) and Gort and Sembiante (2015) which demonstrated that translanguaging created a safe environment for learners in which they used their L1 and L2 languages in a nonthreatening way. Additionally, just like the present study, students collaborated with each other and the teacher more effectively.

The participants interviewed seem to assume that use of only their L1 or official language was not bad but could not compare to when they were allowed to switch to any of the three languages when working in small

groups and freely ask the teacher to explain a certain point through the use of either or all of these languages. Thus, similar to García and Kano (2014), the pedagogy created an atmosphere for students and teachers to engage in "complex discursive practices" that enabled them to make use of all their linguistic resources to understand the lesson (p. 261).

The results are consistent with the findings that through including students' linguistic assets, translanguaging fosters the process of language development (Martin-Beltrán, 2014; Jiménez et al., 2015). Likewise, Williams (2002), indicated that teachers can promote students' linguistic abilities by means of exercising translanguaging practices in their classes. The results are also in line with García and Wei (2014) who believed that translanguaging provides students with a wider range of linguistic resources which can assist them with the development of their English proficiency. Martin-Beltrán (2014), also contend that the aim of incorporating translanguaging strategy in educational systems is to deepen students' understating.

Most of the participants expressed the belief that drawing on their L1 in addition to the national language obviously supported their learning. Moreover, students' positive attitudes and feedback in the interviews seems to be indicative of translanguaging strategy's relative success in motivating students to learn English. Students' responses to the questions of the interview seems to be convincing to signal the opinion that teacher's use of translanguaging made them more inclined to learn grammar. The results of the present study generally support the idea that translanguaging is a useful practice for bilingual English language learners which is in line with Allard (2017). Since research was scarce on comparing the pedagogy with L1-only instruction, not much can be discussed regarding how other students in other contexts might believe or indicate in terms of achievement.

In conclusion, according to García et al. (2017) "translanguaging classrooms are aligned with the global and local realities of the 21st century" and this is especially true in the bilingual and multilingual regions where there is a dire need to "rethink " the instructional practices of the local teachers (p. ix). It is important for researchers, educators, and educational policy makers to rethink the instructional assumptions that dominate most of the educational settings of the country. One possible suggestion could be creating a reform in the curriculum development to include translanguaging in bilingual and multilingual schools. Classrooms designed this way have the potential to train multilingual students who can use their linguistic resources to achieve greater results.

Conclusion

Although translanguaging pedagogy has gained recognition over the past years, there is little research on examining translanguaging comparatively with other monolingual approaches especially those that use learners' L1-only in the classroom. This study addressed this gap in an EFL context and the findings indicated that students outperformed on those tests in which the content was taught through translanguaging. Learners' interview scripts also indicated how largely they had benefited from the practice.

The findings of this study have some implications for future practices, and specially for bilingual or multilingual teachers who share similar languages with their students. The evidence from this study suggests that teachers can benefit from exploiting translanguaging strategy to support students in their learning. The results of this study support the idea that drawing upon students' linguistic repertoire is very likely to assist both learners and teachers. It was also indicated that in order for a deeper learning to take place in learning grammar, bilingual or multilingual teachers should create dual-language processing opportunities and benefit from students' L1 in combination with other resources that they have to create a more enduring and effective learning experience.

Limitations and Delimitations

The findings in this study are subject to some limitations. The most important limitation lies in the fact that we did not have the opportunity to select the participants randomly as they were 25 state school students i.e. an intact group available to us. Furthermore, the current study only examined male students because it was conducted in a segregated state-school setting. On the other hand, a number of important delimitations need to be considered for this study. First, among the four strands of meaning-focused input, meaning-focused output, fluency development, and language-focused learning, we have only focused on language-focused or form-focused activities and among form-focused activities, we have only investigated the grammar section. Second, the scope of this study was limited to only teacher-directed or teacher-led translanguaging rather than pupil-directed or pupil-led translanguaging.

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