

TRANSLANGUAGING IN EDUCATION: THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS AND APPLICATIONS IN THE POLISH CONTEXT

Translanguaging has emerged as a pivotal construct in contemporary language education, reflecting a paradigmatic shift from monolingual norms toward a more inclusive, multilingual pedagogical model. Rooted in sociolinguistic and cognitive theory, translanguaging enables multilingual individuals to draw flexibly on their entire linguistic repertoire for meaning-making, identity construction, and academic engagement. This framework has proven especially salient in educational systems facing increased linguistic diversity, such as Poland's, where internationalization, bilingual education, and English Medium Instruction (EMI) are reshaping classroom dynamics [1; 2].

This paper offers a critical review of the theoretical foundations of translanguaging. It examines its implementation in Polish educational contexts, with a specific focus on International Baccalaureate (IB) and English-Medium Instruction (EMI) programs. Drawing on recent empirical studies, the discussion highlights both the pedagogical affordances and the systemic limitations associated with translanguaging in Poland, arguing for its integration into national language-in-education policy and teacher education frameworks.

The conceptualization of translanguaging has evolved substantially over the past two decades. Ofelia García defines translanguaging as “multiple discursive practices in which bilinguals engage to make sense of their bilingual worlds” [1]. Far from being a mere synonym for code-switching, translanguaging denotes an epistemological and pedagogical orientation that regards the language practices of multilingual speakers as holistic and dynamic, rather than compartmentalized [2].

Suresh Canagarajah emphasizes translanguaging as a process of negotiating voice and identity, particularly in the context of academic literacy development. His concept of code-meshing illustrates how multilingual writers strategically deploy linguistic resources to achieve rhetorical and disciplinary goals [3]. From a pedagogical standpoint, Cenoz and Gorter argue for “pedagogical translanguaging” as a scaffolded instructional strategy that supports language development and content learning, particularly in multilingual classrooms [4].

The relevance of translanguaging in Poland has increased in recent years due to demographic changes, the expansion of bilingual and international curricula, and the growing presence of linguistically diverse learners. However, translanguaging remains underexplored and underutilized within mainstream educational practice.

Romanowski's investigation of translanguaging in IB classrooms in Poland demonstrates that students naturally integrate Polish and English to deepen their understanding of complex content, often with implicit teacher support [5]. His findings suggest that translanguaging enhances cognitive processing and fosters learner autonomy in content-based instruction.

Similarly, Pawliszko's ethnographic study in Polish-English preschools finds that translanguaging facilitates social inclusion and language comprehension among bilingual children. She notes that children fluidly shift between languages in ways that support meaning negotiation and emotional connection [6].

In contrast, Sobkowiak's research in secondary English as a Foreign Language (EFL) settings identifies limited and largely unstructured use of translanguaging. Teachers reportedly recognize its potential but lack the training or institutional support to implement it systematically [7]. These findings point to a broader issue of monolingual ideology in Polish education, which continues to valorize "native-like" proficiency and linguistic compartmentalization.

Evidence from Polish classrooms suggests that translanguaging can provide tangible pedagogical benefits, including *improved comprehension and content engagement among multilingual learners* [5]; *the creation of inclusive learning environments that validate and leverage students' linguistic repertoires* [6]; and *the facilitation of intercultural and interlingual bridges in international educational settings* [4].

However, these benefits are often tempered by structural and attitudinal barriers. These include the absence of teacher training in translanguaging pedagogy [7], institutional inertia and policy silence regarding multilingual practices, and persistent misconceptions equating translanguaging with linguistic disorder or a threat to language standards [3].

As a result, translanguaging remains marginal within official curricula, and its implementation is typically ad hoc and dependent on individual teachers.

Translanguaging represents a transformative approach to language education, one that aligns with the lived realities of multilingual learners and challenges deficit-based models of bilingualism. In the Polish educational context, emerging research underscores the pedagogical potential of translanguaging, particularly in bilingual and international programs. Nonetheless, its broader implementation is constrained by monolingual ideologies, a lack of policy recognition, and insufficient professional development.

To fully realize the benefits of translanguaging, systemic change is required. This includes the integration of translanguaging into national language education policy, the development of teacher training modules, and the cultivation of positive attitudes toward linguistic diversity. In doing so, Polish education can move toward more equitable, inclusive, and linguistically responsive pedagogies.

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