

**The Experiences of Teachers in Implementing Translanguaging**

by

Nicole Rae Varela

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Supervised by

Dr. Mahmoud Altalouli

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### **Abstract**

Research indicates that teachers of English Language Learners face many obstacles and challenges when implementing translanguaging strategies. Some teachers hesitate to employ translanguaging due to language barrier, political views, and ideologies. Research has highlighted teachers' struggle with integrating both the home language and the target language in the classroom due to a lack of adequate training and professional development. The literature suggests addressing these issues by enhancing training and professional development to equip teachers with the necessary knowledge and resources for effective translanguaging implementation. In response, a professional development is designed for teachers from grades 1-4 at Riverhead Central School District. This program aims to deepen teachers' understanding of translanguaging concepts and offer them extensive training and strategies to implement translanguaging in the classroom. Recommendations for future research on translanguaging as a practice in the classroom would be to provide teachers with more professional development sessions, invite district superintendents to the professional development sessions, and allot more time for teachers to meet with the ENL team.

*Keywords:* English language learners, fear, hesitation, home language, language barrier, professional development, second language acquisition, translanguaging

## Chapter 1: Introduction

Translanguaging when implemented by teachers as a pedagogical practical approach plays a vital role for English Language Learners (ELLs or ELs) during second language acquisition (Prilutskaya, 2021). Translanguaging in the classroom has been viewed as an obstacle and challenge, leading to research on the significant challenges and obstacles both monolingual and bilingual teachers face when implementing translanguaging as a support and scaffold in their classrooms. Many teachers face obstacles and challenges such as language barriers (Mari & Hayden, 2023), lack of resources (Nyimbili & Mwanza, 2021), and a monolingual mindset that teachers adopt (Parbra & Fernandez-Dalona, 2024; Safont, 2022; Tran, 2022). There needs to be more extensive training and professional development by school districts and universities for teachers to take on translanguaging as a practical approach (Burton et al., 2024; Prilutskaya, 2021; Yuvayapan, 2019).

Translanguaging is defined as “encouraging students to use their home language to learn academic English; enabling them to think in multiple languages simultaneously; promotes language learning; requires educators to create flexible and supportive classroom environments that value home language” (Najarro, 2023, p. 1). The purpose of translanguaging is to allow students to use what they know in their home language as a resource to help aid in learning the second language. Translanguaging has many positive effects on English Language Learners: increased participation, motivation, and confidence, deeper meaning-making occurs, connections and transfers across languages, and students view their cultural background as an asset and a valuable resource that they bring to the classroom (Garcia, 2014).

Additionally, ELLs entering public schools is on the upswing and information collected shows that the ELL population in U.S. public-school increased between fall 2011 (9.4%, or 4.6

million students) and fall 2021 (10.6%, or 5.3 million students) (National Center for Education Statistics, 2024). With the increase of ELLs on the rise, many teachers face many obstacles and challenges when implementing translanguaging as a practical approach to meet the needs of the diversity of their students.

I work in a large school district in the suburbs of Long Island, New York, as an ENL leave replacement this current school year (2023-2024), where enrollment of the ELL population is 30.7% (NYSED Data Site, 2023). I have witnessed the challenges and obstacles teachers face in implementing translanguaging as a pedagogical approach in the classroom, among the different schools within the school district. The obstacles that teachers face involving translanguaging are language barriers, lack of resources, policies and ideologies adopted by teachers and the district, and the limited knowledge of the positive effects translanguaging has on students' second language acquisition.

The obstacles and challenges listed above cause lower participation and engagement with the ELL population, teachers take on a monolingual mindset where they either indirectly or directly discourage the usage of translanguaging (Safont, 2022; Yuvayapan, 2019), and limits students' ability to make connections and transfer knowledge between the L1 and the L2 (Garcia, 2014). I have firsthand witnessed that when students' linguistic repertoires are suppressed in the classroom motivation, participation, and confidence decrease. I have also seen the ENL teachers implementing translanguaging in the classroom, and I have witnessed students' engagement and participation increase dramatically. Students who did not talk in the mainstream classroom became active participants in the ENL classroom when translanguaging was used as a practice.

Providing teachers with constructive training and professional development surrounding translanguaging as a pedagogical practical approach to help omit the challenges and obstacles

both monolingual and bilingual teachers face, I posit a professional development for teachers grades 1-4 as described in Chapter 3. During the professional development (2 sessions), the ENL teacher will educate teachers on the positive benefits translanguaging has on students' success during second language acquisition, discuss strategies they could use interchangeably across content areas/lessons/activities, define and discuss the translanguaging theory (Garcia, 2014), educating teachers of the monolingual mindset and how to adopt a translanguaging pedagogical approach, and for teachers to reflect on their translanguaging practices.

When teachers and school districts can see translanguaging as a powerful resource and support to implement in the classroom the increase of second language success will increase at a rapid pace. Next, I will provide an analysis of the obstacles and challenges many teachers face both monolingual and bilingual and how the lack of training and professional development leads to limited usage of translanguaging as a support, scaffold, and resource in the classroom and why professional developments on translanguaging are crucial.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

This Chapter entails the array of challenges many teachers face, both monolingual and multilingual teachers when implementing translanguaging as a support and scaffold in their multilingual classrooms. As detailed in Chapter 1, translanguaging increases students' engagement/participation in the classroom (e.g., Cross and Slaughter, 2021), promotes language learning (e.g., Ticheloven et al., 2021), and ensures that students' language/cultural background is welcomed and valued in the classroom (e.g., Tran, 2022). However, many pre-service and in-service teachers lack the fundamental knowledge behind translanguaging on how to successfully implement it in the classroom (e.g., Mari & Hayden, 2023, Nikula & Moore, 2019, Yuvayapan, 2019). These studies showed that many teachers lack resources and feel fear and hesitation when putting translanguaging into practice.

In this Chapter, before I explore these issues and how teachers can overcome them, I will first explain the theoretical lens of translanguaging (Garcia, 2014) and the interaction hypothesis (Long, 1981). The translanguaging theory is a pedagogy that can be utilized by teachers as a practice that allows bilingual and multilingual students to use their home language as a resource to help aid in learning the second language. Long's (1981) interaction hypothesis is a theory that describes the benefits during language acquisition detailing that learners learn best with face-to-face communication.

### **Theoretical Understanding of Translanguaging**

Both the translanguaging theory (Garcia, 2014) and the interaction hypothesis (Long, 1981) both support the usage of translanguaging in the classroom to increase second language acquisition.

Long's (1981) interaction hypothesis posits that learners can enhance their language skills when interacting with peers through communication, which aligns with, Garcia's (2014) translanguaging theory emphasizing leveraging students' full linguistic repertoires for effective learning. Long's interaction hypothesis primarily focuses on language through conversation and interaction by facilitating language output through translanguaging practices. When teachers retain the knowledge and reflect on the importance of these two concepts, translanguaging can be used as a useful support and scaffold during second language acquisition.

### **Translanguaging Theory**

Garcia's (2014) translanguaging theory describes the usage of the L1 should be used as a resource and tool to acquire a second language. Vogel and Garcia's (2017) stance on "translanguaging as a pedagogical practice, leverages the fluid language of learners in ways that deepen their engagement and comprehension of complex content and texts" (p. 2). Whether that be encouraging the use of the home language during writing or speaking or allowing time for peer discussion in the L1 to help transfer the knowledge of the L1 to make a connection to the L2, brings language knowledge together as a whole to create comprehensible input.

Marrero-Colón (2021) suggests that when teachers know their students' language abilities in both the L1 and L2 they can use the L1 as a support and resource to help aid in learning the second language. Teachers can build on their students' proficiency in the L1, to help make connections in the L2. Additionally, this theory argues that "languages are not separated in the mind of the bilingual person; rather, the bilingual mind is seen as a holistic system that contains diverse linguistic resources, employed as needed for different communicative purposes" (Hamman et al., 2018, p.1). When teachers take this pedagogical view, they will reflect on the ways that students are taking output in the L2 and using their L1 to comprehend it. To put that

statement into context, a bilingual learner who has a native language other than English thinks and dreams in their L1, where translanguaging is vital because they take information in, in the L2 where they are then translating that information in their L1. Allowing them to respond in the L1 will help teachers assess if they comprehended the information in the L2. In a sense, employing translanguaging as a resource and tool in the classroom, yields many positive results in achieving second language acquisition.

### **Interaction Hypothesis Theory**

Long's (1981) interaction hypothesis theory details the importance of face-to-face interaction and communication during language acquisition where they are interacting with a level of language that is comprehensible. Ortega-Auquilla et al. (2019) uses Long's (1981) interaction hypothesis to connect it to second language acquisition by arguing that "communication and interaction both have facilitative roles for second language (L2) development. Communication has a central role in L2 learning. When students engage in conversations in the target language, for instance, syntactic structures are potentially developed" (p. 4). This is where Garcia's (2014) translanguaging theory can be put into practice to support both Long and Ortega-Auquilla et al.'s (2019) arguments to support the development of second language acquisition by employing the usage of translanguaging during interactions and communications to help facilitate learning in the target language.

Furthermore, "ELLs learn language when they realize there is a gap in their language skill" and when they can use social interaction and communication with peers to fill that gap through translanguaging, the transfer of knowledge from the L1 to the L2 will generate both comprehensible input and output (Garcia O'Neill, 2018). Building upon a student's language background knowledge in the L1 through social interactions and communication can be used as a

scaffold to support second language acquisition. However, translanguaging has to be executed as a practical approach in the classrooms rather than merely as a theory.

### **Inservice Teacher Knowledge on Translanguaging**

Constructive training to gain knowledge on the usage of translanguaging amongst in-service teachers is crucial for them to effectively implement translanguaging in the classroom. However, many in-service teachers often lack the background knowledge to weave translanguaging into their instruction to support students in second language acquisition as shown by research findings by Parbra and Fernandez-Dalona (2024) and Safont (2022), which leads to a deficit of knowledge on translanguaging. In Parbra and Fernandez-Dalona's (2024) study in the Philippines across 83 in-service and pre-service teachers, found through teacher surveys that when teachers adopted an English-only policy it caused a lack of knowledge on the benefits of translanguaging and how the policy restricted the ability to use translanguaging in the classroom. From this study, 26% of teachers felt that it depended on what level students are and the context to use translanguaging and the same percentage of teachers felt it was not necessary to encourage students to use their home language and said they should be using English. Below, I detail the challenges in-service teachers face regarding obstacles and ideologies they adopt surrounding translanguaging.

### **Inservice Teachers Perspectives on Translanguaging Usage**

In-service teachers' perspectives on translanguaging reflect the monolingual approach that influences their teaching methods. Many teachers employ a target language approach where they do not see the benefits translanguaging has in the classroom. For example, Safont's (2022) study of 12 different teachers teaching 268 emergent trilingual students in Spain, where the target language being taught was English, showed the teachers attitudes they adopted toward the

usage of the L1 and L2 to help aid in learning the L3 (English). Safont observed each teacher and how they reacted when students used the L1 or the L2 to help in learning the L3. The data showed that teachers' reactions to the usage of the L1 or L2 were that there was a "monolingual bias" and almost all teachers gave a direct response to answer in the target language. All of the requests were given directly to stop using the L1 or L2 and answer in the L3. Many in-service teachers adopt a monolingual approach which omits translanguaging as a scaffold in the classroom to support language learning.

When teachers have a deep understanding of translanguaging not as an ideology but as a natural bilingual discourse, teachers and students will know when and how to properly employ translanguaging (Nikula & Moore, 2019). However, the limited knowledge and perspectives teachers hold about translanguaging can affect its implementation in the classroom. Yuvayapan's (2019) analysis, of 50 in-service teachers in Turkey showed how often they encouraged students to use Turkish (their home language) across a variety of school districts in Turkey during target language activities, such as small group activities, assisting peers, brainstorming, participation, and teachers' responses. The findings showed across grades K-12 that 70% of teachers don't encourage students to use Turkish in small group activities, and about 65% never encourage Turkish during peer activities, during brainstorming, responses to teacher's questions, and to help explain problems (p. 684). This lack of encouragement for translanguaging in classrooms is supported by Prilutskaya (2021) who argues that "there should be more research on the effect of translanguaging on learning outcomes, including the relationship between learners' proficiency level and the effects of translanguaging on language learning" (p.13). The perspective and limited knowledge teachers adopt on translanguaging can affect the implementation of it in the classroom.

### **How Much is Too Much**

Some teachers are unfamiliar with the term translanguaging and its complexities due to the lack of training in this specific support. In Thongwichit and Ulla's (2024) study, the researchers conducted interviews with 5 in-service teachers in Thailand in an English classroom, where the teachers reflected on their perception of translanguaging in the classroom in their language-diverse classrooms. The data collected from the responses had a similar pattern regarding the encouragement for students to use their native language during group activities. However, a reoccurring response in this study and across studies such as Mari and Hayden (2023) showed that teachers struggled with how much usage in the home language is too much.

Numerous teachers struggle with the concern of students overusing their home/native language, where more training and professional development are vital to successfully implement translanguaging in the classroom. Tran's (2022) study analyzed answers conducted in an interview format from 304 EFL in-service teachers ranging from all different grade levels in Turkey, Poland, China, Thailand, and Vietnam. Tran (2022) found reoccurring responses from teachers that the usage of translanguaging in the classroom was that there were institutional and contextual restrictions when aligning with practice and pedagogy. The data collected showed that most teachers only used translanguaging when it came up during discussion and translanguaging was not a practice that they incorporated or planned for in their lessons. They lacked the training to use translanguaging as a support and most responses stressed the need for more training to effectively employ translanguaging.

Furthermore, the study conducted by Mari and Hayden (2023) involving questionnaires of 305 teachers in education programs involving TESOL and bilingual programs in a university in the Southwestern United States, revealed that they do not have the language background to

implement translanguaging nor the training to do so. A common theme amongst teachers' answers to the interviews was that since they did not have the background knowledge of the language of their students it created a language barrier, where they then expressed, that they did not have adequate training to scaffold instruction to help support ELLs, where they avoided using translanguaging in the classroom (p. 6). Likewise, both Kucukali and Kocbas (2022) and Mari and Hayden (2023) found that a common concern among teachers is that they struggle with how to balance the right amount of home language with the target language and the over usage of the home language. Translanguaging can seem quite complex but with the right training, it can be easily implemented into everyday activities.

### **Positive Effects of PD on Using Translanguaging for Teachers**

Effective training in translanguaging amongst pre-service teachers is vital with the rise of the ELL population. Preparing pre-service and in-service teachers on the positive benefits of translanguaging has been proven through research is a crucial support for ELLs to achieve second language acquisition. Teacher preparation is important for teachers to employ translanguaging as a scaffold and support as researched in Burton et al.'s (2024) study. When educational programs can prepare preservice teachers for the diversity that they are going to see in the classroom, educating them on the positive benefits of translanguaging, the monolingual view will slowly dissipate, and the multilingual view will be at the forefront of education.

Indeed, training on translanguaging can significantly enhance teachers' understanding of translanguaging. In Gorter and Arocena's (2020) study of pre-service teachers in the Basque Country focused on beliefs monolingual preservice teachers had about translanguaging in the classroom before professional training and after professional development in this specific field. They conducted this research through questionnaires as well as giving teacher candidates pre-

tests and post-tests to see if their professional development training changed their knowledge and views on translanguaging. The results show that teachers' views increased positively regarding teachers' beliefs on the separation of languages scale, teachers' beliefs on mixing the languages changed to support the translanguaging scale and teachers' beliefs on languages supporting each other was beneficial to student's scale changed drastically. From the pre-test to the post-test the mean dropped by .20 from teachers' responses involving each question with each scale (p. 6-8).

Moreover, comprehensive training in translanguaging is often lacking in ESOL undergraduate programs. Torress et al.'s (2023) study of 90 preservice teachers in their ESOL undergraduate studies showed that they lacked the knowledge and skills before this course to effectively implement translanguaging in the classroom. Preservice teachers in the ESOL program lacked the correct terminology and knowledge surrounding the usage of translanguaging. Focusing on the native language support in this study 79 of the participants said they would use Spanish to accommodate ELLs and rely on their limited Spanish-speaking ability to support students, whereas they did not list any other strategies or supports to implement translanguaging. Furthermore, the study also detailed how only 5 undergraduate students would turn to their mentor teachers for support. Giving preservice teachers the tools and training needed to effectively implement translanguaging in the classroom is lacking due to the curriculum being implemented in undergraduate courses.

### **The Push for More Professional Development**

There are many reasons teachers omit the usage of translanguaging in the classroom, as I have listed above. Many researchers and educators advocate for more research into more professional development involving translanguaging and how professional development could help teachers comprehend and exercise the usage of translanguaging in the classroom properly.

For example, Yuvayapan's (2019) research of 50 EFL teachers in different schools and cities in Turkey found many teachers lacked knowledge of the usefulness of translanguaging in the classroom. Likewise, through observations of 4 teachers in a Teacher Education Program in Ontario Canada geared towards training teachers to work with ELLs, Burton et al. (2024) revealed that most teachers felt that they were confident in employing strategies involving the usage of translanguaging. It is important to note the program included hands-on activities, lesson planning, and reflections on their language backgrounds and experiences, which increased the teachers' knowledge and provided them with the training needed to implement translanguaging in the classroom.

### **The Need for Resources**

Many teachers struggle to implement translanguaging effectively due to a lack of adequate resources. Nyimbili and Friday's (2021) study of 42 teachers teaching a 1<sup>st</sup>-grade multilingual classroom across districts in Zambia showed through interviews and observations that the teachers felt they did not have adequate resources needed in the target language, which led to the omission of teachers encouraging and implementing the use of translanguaging during literacy instruction. Furthermore, the study also detailed, that since the teachers did not have the proper resources to support the target language, they lacked adequate resources to support any type of learning strategies and support for English Language Learners especially translanguaging. These challenges arise because there is a lack of resources and funding for teachers to properly use the practice of translanguaging in the classroom.

ENL teachers are in high demand to help support monolingual teachers using translanguaging in the classroom. When monolingual teachers have ENL support they can successfully implement translanguaging in the classroom. As discussed above, Mari and Hayden

(2023) showed across many of the teachers' responses regarding that a challenge teachers face, is that they do not have Spanish-speaking teachers or ENL support. That is, monolingual teachers heavily rely on their bilingual-speaking students to translate and for clarification. In fact, Kucukali and Kocbas (2022) revealed that many teachers felt they lacked guidance when putting translanguaging into practice relating to a lack of resources.

### **Language Barrier Causing Disengagement**

Teachers of ELLs both bilingual and monolingual face obstacles when implementing translanguaging in the classroom. These obstacles occur because there are thousands of different languages in our world ending up in classrooms, which creates a language barrier for both monolingual and bilingual teachers. The lack of language knowledge causes some teachers to omit translanguaging, which leads to disengagement amongs students. Some teachers fear that the usage of translanguaging creates a language barrier between teachers and students.

### **Fears and Uneasiness with Translanguaging**

Teachers tend to omit the usage of translanguaging due to fears and uneasiness when trying to employ the practice of it in the classroom. In Ticheloven et al.'s (2021) study across four schools in the Netherlands, the researchers conducted observations and interviews among 25 teachers and the findings showed a common fear among teachers is that when monolingual teachers broke students up into groups and encouraged translanguaging, many teachers had similar responses: one being that they were unsure what students were discussing and this made them feel uneasy and unsure what students were saying.

Another common theme of negative connotations surrounding translanguaging in the classroom, across studies was the recurring response from teachers that they could never keep track of what students were doing. In Kucukali and Kocbas's (2022) study, teachers felt that

translanguaging was a distraction in class. In fact, many teachers struggle to implement translanguaging effectively due to not knowing the benefits translanguaging has in the classroom. Overall, teachers are concerned that students' home language would take over learning the academic language at school, which can cause confusion between language, teachers struggled with gauging students' comprehension (Ticheloven et al. (2021). Some teachers in Kucukali and Kocbas (2022) felt that students were avoiding using the target language. In addition, teachers often grapple with how to implement translanguaging with the diversity of languages that reside in their classrooms. In Nyimbili and Friday's (2021) study, a common obstacle that teachers felt was that translanguaging was time-consuming and the range of different languages being used in the discussion extended the time of the lesson. Taking time to translate what students were saying and giving explanations caused the teacher to devote more class time to translating rather than checking for comprehension.

### **Obstacles Facing Translanguaging**

Many teachers face a variety of obstacles when implementing the practice of translanguaging in the classroom. As discussed above, most monolingual teachers hesitate to promote translanguaging in the classroom because of the language barrier. These studies (Mari & Hayden, 2023; Nyimbili & Friday 2021; Tran 2022) have concluded that teachers feel the language barrier creates an obstacle and that as teachers they are not meeting the needs of their students. By not implementing any type of translanguaging in the classroom there becomes an instructional barrier, where teachers face obstacles when trying to capture students' attention when trying to teach more complex concepts. This is where the language barrier between teacher to student creates a snowball effect, students and teachers do not understand each other, decrease in expectations, and lower engagement occurs.

The increase of ELLs entering the classroom is on the upswing, and without the background knowledge of the languages that reside in the classroom, at times this will create a language barrier and a fear of implementing translanguaging in the classroom (Tran, 2022). This obstacle causes teachers to struggle with how to use students' first language backgrounds or even omit them, which is a necessary support to help students engage in class discussion and make references and connections between the home language and the language they are acquiring. In the absence of training and professional development, teachers grapple with how to effectively use translanguaging as a support in the classroom (Mari & Hayden, 2023), which is critical support in language acquisition for students to reach academic success in the second/third language.

### **Monolingual Pedagogies Restricting Translanguaging in the Classroom**

Adopting a positive translanguaging pedagogy is vital to providing proper scaffolds and support to ELLs. Many teachers take on a monolingual pedagogy due to the lack of knowledge of how beneficial translanguaging is to help support students in language acquisition. The monolingual mindset can affect the ways teachers implement translanguaging as a practice in the classroom. Safont's (2022) study as previously detailed above, found that many monolingual teachers' responses regarding the usage of translanguaging in the classroom had a negative connotation. The findings from this study showed that there is a direct correlation between monolingual partisanship regarding the target language and how teachers do not want any type of translanguaging usage to go on in the classroom. During the observations, the monolingual teachers used a direct request form which alluded to teachers' negative attitude towards students' home language and the omittance of the usage of it in the classroom.

Some teachers either directly or indirectly discourage translanguaging without being conscious of it. Even though teachers in one case directly discouraged translanguaging, others do not necessarily directly discourage the use of translanguaging (Yuvayapan, 2019). However, these teachers feel the need to use translanguaging during clarification or in discussion that was not necessary. When teachers become conscious of the benefits translanguaging brings to the classroom, it will help omit teachers' negative perspectives on translanguaging. Safont (2022) showed that 50% of the time teachers asked students directly to respond in English, 14.58% of the response from teachers when students answered in their home language was ignored and a direct request to respond in English was made from the teacher, and only 10% of the data collected showed teachers using Spanish to direct the request to English. The observations conducted throughout this study provided evidence that teachers' monolingual attitudes and actions "explicitly show the teacher's interest in maintaining the monolingual norm in the classroom" (Safont, 2022, p. 325).

The monolingual mindset can take hold and omit the usage of translanguaging in the classroom. As noted by Nyimbili and Mwanza (2021) throughout their observations in a 1<sup>st</sup>-grade multilingual classroom in Zambia, the usage of translanguaging was suppressed because of the monolingual policies that were observed throughout the study. The policy in this Zambia multilingual classroom took on a monolingual approach, meaning that the approach being used in the classroom was not using any type of scaffold or support from the learners' native languages but rather only literacy support in the official language of instruction which is geared towards a monolingual approach. Furthermore, the study conveyed that "monolingual policy still pulls back the teacher and classroom practices to point back to a monolingual instruction which derails learning" (Nyimbili & Mwanza, 2021, p. 8). Garcia and Lin (2017) argued that when

school districts do not have multilingual policies that are explicit and shed light on the positive benefits of multilingualism, teachers lack the support and direction from school policies, they take on a monolingual attitude, which hinders ELLs to use their linguistic toolbox to help acquire the second or third language.

Some teachers grapple with the translanguaging pedagogy that they believe they have adopted but unintentionally omit it as a practice. Yuvayapan's (2019) aimed to view teachers' pedagogies on translanguaging. When observing teachers in an English classroom with Turkish speakers showed how often they use the students' home language for specific situations based on their pedagogies surrounding translanguaging. The collected and observed data reflected on whether teachers use Turkish to help low-proficiency students, check for clarification, build relationships with students, teacher to student feedback, classroom management, directions, and explain concepts and vocabulary. The data showed that 60%-80% of the time teachers felt using students' home language, in this case, Turkish was never/not often used in these situations. Without the background knowledge and training on the benefits of translanguaging, teachers will adopt a monolingual view, which hinders students' ability to use their language repertoire to help progress in the learning of the new language.

### **Adhering to Political Change**

With diversity in the classroom on the upswing, adopting and modifying policies surrounding translanguaging involving education reform is vital for teachers to adopt translanguaging and to stay up to date. Teachers tend to teach to the test and follow the district curriculum where they lack the ability and are constrained by institutional policies to implement translanguaging in the classroom, which leads to discouraging translanguaging in the classroom.

Districts that don't adopt multilingual policies could contribute to hindering bilingual/multilingual students from achieving academic success.

### **Stay up to Date**

It is key that teachers are aware, understand, and stay up to date with legislation around bilingual and multilingual education, both in-service and preservice teachers. Mari and Hayden's (2023) study laid the foundation as to why it is important to keep up to date with policies to enhance and maintain the status quo. This also leads to the importance of supporting in-service and pre-service teachers to pay attention to bilingual education from a political view because views differ from teacher to teacher. When teachers keep up with policies and legislation they can seek professional development, request adequate resources, and put pedagogy into practice. According to Nyimbili and Mwanza (2021), their school district instructed them to only teach in the target language and that the language policy in the Lundazi District did not allow for teachers to teach in students' home language at all, which suppressed the use of translanguaging. Similarly, Safont's (2022) study revealed that the language program affected teachers' attitudes toward translanguaging. Many teachers saw the use of translanguaging as a negative scaffold and that it was limiting what students could do in the L2/L3.

### **How to Overcome Challenges**

Translanguaging in classrooms not only shows students that the languages they bring to the class are welcomed and viewed as a resource but Oliver et al, (2021) states "children can be supported to draw on the wide range of linguistic resources they bring with them to school" (p.1). In Oliver et al.'s (2021) study of 15 students and three teachers in a 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup>-grade classroom setting in Australia, the researchers observed the benefits, scaffolds/supports, and how teachers employed translanguaging. In this region of Australia, translanguaging is a policy

schools implement. The observations from the study showed that once teachers can overcome and step away from the monolingual approach in the classroom, students can use their linguistic toolbox to help aid in second/third language acquisition.

When teachers have the adequate resources and training to effectively implement translanguaging in the classroom it can yield positive results during second language acquisition. Similarly, in Slaughter and Cross's (2021) study in an English Language School in the State of Victoria Australia focusing on the population of newcomers into their districts the study conducted through interviews and observations found that when the school took on a translanguaging approach teachers were properly trained to employ translanguaging in the classroom and they encouraged the usage of it. Teachers also felt confident when doing so. Some teachers even allowed students to work through what they were trying to say in the L2 in their L1 even when they knew what the student was trying to say. Through the observation, it proved that students were making meaning of what they were trying to say and students self-corrected themselves. Talking through the language learning with the help of students' background knowledge in the L1 is one way to increase participation.

Mapping activities seem to be a common theme across teacher preparation involving translanguaging. According to Cross and Slaughter (2021) and Burton et al. (2024), many teachers lack the knowledge surrounding translanguaging to successfully implement translanguaging in the classroom and to do so it is vital to ensure translanguaging pedagogies are also adopted as a practice. Burton et al.'s (2024) findings suggest that intense "coursework and practicum placements play a key role in connecting teacher candidates theoretical understanding of translanguaging to practice and fostering the development of their translanguaging stance" (p.

215). Rigorous training for preservice teachers provides the teacher candidates with an extensive background in translanguaging before even entering the classroom.

Next, Chapter 3 outlines different strategies to employ translanguaging as a practical approach in the classroom. Particularly, I discuss the monolingual mindset and how to adopt a translanguaging mindset, as well as the translanguaging theory, and how translanguaging fosters and increases motivation, participation, and confidence in the classroom.

### **Chapter 3: Description of Product and Tools**

The findings from the literature review in Chapter 2 show experiences of teachers in translanguaging including language barriers, policies, monolingual bias, and knowledge of translanguaging (e.g., Burton et al., 2024; Mari & Hayden, 2023; Parbra & Fernandez-Dalona, 2024). Therefore, there needs to be steps taken by school districts and universities to educate both in-service and preservice teachers on the background knowledge and training needed to implement translanguaging to see the positive benefits of translanguaging for students to use their language repertoire to achieve second language acquisition.

In this Chapter, due to the collection of data and research presented in Chapter 2 that highlighted the need for more PD on translanguaging (e.g., Prilutskaya, 2021; Yuvayapan, 2019), I present a professional development training where research calls for more PDs where teachers are encouraged to attend to learn about the benefits of translanguaging, training and strategies to implement translanguaging in the classroom, to receive the background knowledge on translanguaging, and for teachers to employ translanguaging theory as a practice during all lessons. With the rise of ELLs in public schools, it is vital teachers have the proper training to implement translanguaging in the classroom. The goal of this lesson is to give teachers the proper training, resources, tools and knowledge to implement translanguaging in the classroom. The professional development sessions are designed for classroom teachers grades 1-4 In the Riverhead Central School District, consisting of two sessions, each 1.5 hours long.

#### **Agenda of the Events**

The professional development sessions will be broken up into two sessions at Riley Avenue Elementary School during the second week of school on September 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024. The reason the first professional development will occur during the first week of school is because

this is when teachers get to know their students. The professional development sessions will provide teachers with different activities for teachers to use and to learn about their students' cultural/language background, so they can bring this information to the next professional development which will occur on October 21<sup>st</sup>. Each professional development will take place in the cafeteria, where each table will have a mix of teachers from grades 1-4. The cafeteria was strategically picked because it has enough tables, and the tables are round for collaboration to occur. The cafeteria also has a smart board and microphone to ensure all teachers can hear and see the presentation. Each teacher must bring their Chromebooks or cell phones to engage in the professional development.

I, Nicole Varela the ENL teacher at Riley Avenue Elementary School, will be directing both professional development sessions. During the presentation I will be using a PowerPoint presentation (see Appendix A) as well as reflective journals/writing prompts (see Appendix B), Word Cloud (See Appendix C), small group discussion, whole group discussion, videos (see Appendices D & E), and activities (see Appendices F & G). Each session will have a 20-minute introduction/sharing, 20 minutes discussing the benefits of translanguaging 30 minutes showing activities and ways to employ translanguaging, and 20 minutes to wrap up the professional development.

During the first session, the last portion of the session during the wrap up the teacher will go over strategies for teachers (See appendix H) to use translanguaging, so teachers can use the resources and strategies in their classrooms to then reflect on it and bring that information to share at the beginning of the second session. The goals of the professional development are to give teachers background knowledge on the positive benefits translanguaging has in the classroom and to show teachers the different strategies to use it in the classroom. The need and

the benefits of PDs have been thoroughly researched (e.g., Prilutskaya, 2021; Yuvayapan, 2019). I also hope that teachers will view me as a resource and use me as a resource after the professional development sessions are over to see they have a support system to help students achieve their highest potential in second language acquisition with the usage of translanguaging.

### **Session 1**

#### **Reflections on Translanguaging**

The introduction part of the first professional development will take about 20 minutes. To start the professional development, I will distribute a journal to all teachers. The first thing I will do is turn all the teacher's attention to the writing prompts (see Appendix B) on the board and hand out a reflective journal. The writing prompts entail for teachers to reflect on the ways they put translanguaging into practice in their classroom (if they do), their views on translanguaging, and the obstacles/challenges the teachers face when trying to implement translanguaging in the classroom if they have done so. This specific activity being employed at the beginning of the professional development, was used by Gorter and Arocena (2020). The reflection on translanguaging at the beginning of the session and the end showed the increased knowledge/outlook teachers had on translanguaging at the end of the session and I would like the teachers to reflect on the benefits this training had.

The teachers will have about 10 minutes to write their writing prompts (see appendix B) and once teachers are done, they will discuss their reflections with teachers at their table ranging from different grade levels. After teachers have shared, the group will focus their attention on the board in the front of the room. I will ask each group of teachers to share their views on translanguaging and share ways they implement it in the classroom. I will also encourage teachers to share why they don't promote translanguaging in the classroom. Once we have gone

over those two writing prompts, I will then engage the teachers in a word cloud (see Appendix C). I will then ask the teachers to click on the word cloud link and have them type in each obstacle/challenge they have faced if/when they have implemented translanguaging.

I will point out that the words that show up larger than all are common fears and obstacles the teachers face when implementing translanguaging. I will pick five words on the word cloud and explain to teachers that I would like them to stand up if one of the challenges/fears/obstacles I say is something that they have a concern about when they try and implement translanguaging in the classroom. As stated in Chapter 2, a common fear most teachers found in the research was a language barrier, balancing the home language and the target language, resources, and training (Kucukali & Kocbas, 2022; Nyimbili & Friday, 2021; Ticheloven et al., 2021). Hopefully, most teachers will be standing, and I will explain that the goal of this professional development is to give them the resources and tools needed to execute translanguaging successfully in the classroom.

### **The Importance of Translanguaging as a Pedagogy**

After the introduction activity has taken place, we will turn our attention to how translanguaging is defined and the importance/benefits translanguaging has in the classroom, and the theory of translanguaging. First, teachers will view the video (see Appendix D) and think of ways how teachers can use it in the classroom as backed by research (Burton et al., 2024; Cross & Slaughter, 2021; Oliver et al., 2021). After teachers have viewed the video, teachers will engage in a group discussion in their groups on what they found most interesting about translanguaging and what translanguaging fosters in the classroom. Once teachers discuss their findings, I will create an anchor chart on the positive effects it has on students when they are encouraged to use their L1. Then we will discuss Garcia's (2014) translanguaging theory.

### **Strategy Implementation**

In the third part of this session, we will watch a video (see Appendix E) on the importance of translanguaging, the strategies that can be used interchangeably during the usage of translanguaging, and how teachers can effectively implement translanguaging in the classroom. Research by Kucukali and Kocbas (2022) and Mari and Hayden (2023) revealed common hesitation of how to balance the right amount of home language with the target language and the over usage of the home language. The purpose of this part of the session is to help guide teachers on how to manage translanguaging by allowing students to use the L1 when they are struggling with it in the L2. Burton et al.'s (2024) findings suggest that once you know a couple of translanguaging strategies they can be interchangeable across content areas increasing students' engagement and participation. During this professional development session, we will discuss the following strategies: multilingual labels, word walls, translation across languages, reading/writing in students' home language, creating objectives that can be interchangeable across languages, pair students up with the same language but different proficiency levels, resources in different languages, activities that promote the usage of different languages, and allow students to control their learning by using their language background (Institute of Education Sciences, 2021) (Appendix H).

### **Closing Activity of Session 1**

In the closing portion of this session, we will recap the positive benefits during a group discussion. Then teachers will answer the writing prompts (see Appendix F) in their reflective journals recapping what we went over in session 1. Then I will provide teachers with a physical copy of their "homework" (see Appendix G) where teachers will employ each one of the strategies (see Appendix H) during their lessons from now till our next session on October 21<sup>st</sup>,

2024, where they will collect their data on how it went employing translanguaging into their lessons and we will discuss how it went during our next session.

## **Session 2**

### **Reflection on the Implementation of Translanguaging Activities**

The introduction part of the second session of the professional development will take about 20 minutes. To start the second session of the professional development I ask all teachers to write in their reflective journals their thoughts on the writing prompts (see Appendix I). Then I will ask teachers to discuss with their groups ranging from teachers in grades 1-4 what strategies they used, what went well, what didn't go well, did they have some hesitation, and how it increased student engagement and participation. After teachers have taken about ten minutes to discuss, I will ask teachers to open their Chromebooks/cell phones and participate in a word cloud (see Appendix J) and add three words on how their translanguaging strategies went. After reviewing the bigger words which are a common theme amongst teachers, I will address them accordingly.

### **Promoting Translanguaging Practices**

Many teachers through policies and ideologies adopt a monolingual approach as detailed in these studies (Nyimbili & Mwanza 2021; Safont, 2022; Yuvayapan, 2019) either directly or indirectly suppress the usage of translanguaging. I will discuss why the monolingual approach by looking at data (see Appendices K, L, M, & N) that shows that even though teachers feel they adopt translanguaging as a practice when they discourage the usage of translanguaging either directly or indirectly they adopt a monolingual approach without being conscious of it (Yuvayapan, 2019). I will show a video on translanguaging as a practice and its importance (Appendix O). Once teachers have viewed the video, teachers will discuss with their groups first

the ways the teacher in the video adopted a pedagogical translanguaging approach and then we will discuss it as a whole.

### **Closing Activity of Session 2**

Teachers will reflect on the same questions in their reflective journals (see Appendix B) that they answered during the first professional development session to reflect on the two sessions of this professional development. Gorter and Arocena (2020) did this same activity before and at the end of professional development training on translanguaging and the research found that the knowledge teachers gained surrounding professional development involving translanguaging gave them the resources, confidence, and tools needed to employ it more often. Then I will ask teachers to engage in an open-ended question response: Do you feel confident employing translanguaging in the classroom why or why not? Were the PDs beneficial and useful for you? Any lingering questions? (see Appendix P). These responses will allow me to enhance my next PD on this topic.

### **Outcome**

The intended outcome of these two professional development sessions is for teachers to reflect on their translanguaging pedagogy and put it into practice. My goal for the two professional development sessions were for teachers to view translanguaging as a tool and resource to help aid in learning the target language. I hope that teachers were able to gain the background knowledge that languages can be used simultaneously to learn the target language. Translanguaging practice can seem quite complex but in reality, it is quite simple. I hope teachers will use the strategies and knowledge I have provided them to employ translanguaging in their daily lessons.

### **Chapter 4: Conclusion**

The purpose of this research was to analyze the experiences of teachers when implementing translanguaging in the classroom. The research highlighted the challenges and obstacles both monolingual and bilingual teachers face when implementing translanguaging as a support and scaffold in their classrooms and finding solutions in which teachers can overcome the challenges and obstacles. When teachers have been provided the proper training and receive professional development on translanguaging, translanguaging has been proven to: “(1) support students as they engage with and comprehend complex content and texts, (2) provide opportunities for students to develop linguistic practices for academic contexts, (3) makes space for students’ bilingualism and ways of knowing, and (4) supports students’ bilingual identities and socioemotional development” (Garcia & Vogel, 2017) which leads to increased motivation, engagement, participation, and self-confidence in the classroom.

Proper training and effective strategies in translanguaging can enhance teachers’ confidence and knowledge of its benefits, allowing them to use translanguaging strategies across content areas. Research has shown that when teachers do not have the constructive training and resources needed to implement translanguaging in the classroom, there becomes a plethora of challenges and obstacles teachers face, where they often at times omit the usage of the home language in the classroom either directly or indirectly.

This project provides insights into these key questions: (1) What challenges and obstacles do teachers face when implementing translanguaging in the classroom? (2) How can teachers use translanguaging as a support and scaffold in the classroom? (3) Are both in-service and preservice teachers provided training and professional development on translanguaging? (4) Do districts and policies play a role if translanguaging is used as a support in the classroom? (5)

What can be done to overcome challenges that teachers face when implementing translanguaging in the classroom? and (6) How does translanguaging benefit students' academic success during second language acquisition?

### **Overview of Previous Research**

Research has revealed an abundance of reasons that translanguaging is not used as a support and scaffold in the classroom. Many districts and teachers consciously or unconsciously take on a monolingual mindset, where translanguaging is not seen as a valuable resource in the classroom (e.g., Yuvayapan, 2019). Teachers often take on a translanguaging pedagogy, but they do not use it as a pedagogical practice (Parbra & Fernandez-Dalona, 2024). Teachers either directly or indirectly suppress the usage of student's home language to help clarify and comprehend content because they are not educated on the positive benefits translanguaging has on students' academic success in the classroom (e.g., Safont, 2022).

Teachers face several key barriers when attempting to employ translanguaging strategies: (1) language barrier, (2) a balance between home language usage and target language usage, and (3) resources (Garcia & Lin, 2017; Kucukali & Kocbas, 2022; Mari & Hayden, 2023; Nyimbili & Friday, 2021; Ticheloven et al., 2021; Tran, 2022). Thus, teachers need to be educated on translanguaging as a practical approach and have a deep understanding of the practice of translanguaging, and districts and teachers need to use translanguaging as a necessary support and scaffold in the classroom for students to use their language repertoires to help acquire the second language.

Therefore, Chapter 3 entailed the recommendation of a two-session professional development on translanguaging. The goals of the professional development are to give teachers background knowledge on the positive benefits translanguaging has in the classroom and to

show teachers the different strategies to use it in the classroom. The professional development training will give teachers the necessary tools and resources to effectively implement translanguaging in the classroom and decrease the fear and hesitation when using it as a scaffold and resource in the classroom.

### **Implications for Student Learning**

Giving teachers extensive training on translanguaging has a direct correlation and impact on students' learning. Translanguaging is the usage of students using their funds of knowledge in the L1 to help make connections and transfer that knowledge to the L2. Thus, when students' linguistic backgrounds are welcomed and viewed as a valuable asset in the classroom, motivation, participation, engagement, and self-confidence increase. Students can take what they know in the L1 and use that to make input and output comprehensible. By allowing translanguaging to take place in the classroom, students maintain their cultural identity, engage with peers of the same home language for additional guidance and clarification, and thrive in student-centered learning environments, where students take hold of their learning.

### **Implications for Teaching**

The key to implementing translanguaging in the classroom is to provide teachers with constructive training and professional development. Therefore, providing ENL, bilingual, and non-ENL teachers with professional development and training is vital for teachers to use translanguaging in the classroom. The professional development as detailed in Chapter 3, provides teachers useful strategies to use across content areas interchangeably. Once teachers have a solid understanding of these strategies, employing translanguaging will become second nature. Teachers will also realize that you do not have to be bilingual to use students' native languages as a support in the classroom and that you do not have to reconstruct lessons to weave

translanguaging in. Additionally, educating teachers on the translanguaging theory gives teachers insight into how to adopt it as a practical approach that will have a direct impact on students' success when acquiring a second language. Once teachers view languages not as two separate entities but rather as a whole means of learning, they can use students' language repertoires to build upon students' background knowledge.

### **Recommendations for Translanguaging as a Resource**

Professional developments are vital for in-service teachers to refresh and stay up to date with new strategies and new research on this topic, but extensive curriculum and coursework in undergraduate programs will prepare teachers to take on translanguaging as a pedagogical approach and omit the monolingual mindset. There should be more research to understand how schools view translanguaging and why it is often underutilized in the classroom. I also believe there should be more research into the amount of ENL teachers that are in each district and compare that to the number of English Language Learners in the district. ENL teachers are trained professionals in this field, and there could be more push-in ENL programs to help mainstream teachers effectively implement translanguaging in the classroom.

### **Final Reflection**

Translanguaging in the classroom is beneficial for bilingual students in a variety of ways to help achieve students' highest potential in second language acquisition. Teachers face many obstacles and challenges when trying to employ translanguaging as a scaffold and tool in the classroom. Teachers find themselves struggling to balance students' home language and the target language, which creates a language barrier, there is a monolingual mindset instilled in teachers and districts, and teachers are unaware of the positive benefits it has on students' second language acquisition. Additionally, teachers do not have the background knowledge of

translanguaging, they take on a translanguaging pedagogy but not as a practical approach.

Furthermore, many teachers do not have the proper training when employing translanguaging in the classroom, and many teachers lack the resources. Professional developments are necessary to ensure that teachers are staying up to date with policies and new strategies regarding translanguaging and to show the impacts it has on students' academic achievements in second language acquisition.

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**Appendix A**

**PowerPoint Presentation**

<https://youtu.be/sNIK6sq5nuE?si=333HUOG9j7D7fvub>

## **Appendix B**

### **Writing Prompts**

- Do you implement translanguaging in the classroom?
- Do you think translanguaging is a valuable tool/resource to use in the classroom? Why or why not?
- How do you implement translanguaging in the classroom? (strategies/activities)
- If you have implemented translanguaging in the classroom or have tried to, what obstacles/challenges have you faced?
- What are your views on translanguaging?

**Appendix C**

**Word Cloud Obstacles/Challenges**



**Appendix D**

**What is Translanguaging and Why is it Important?**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iNOtmn2UTzI>

**Appendix E**

**Strategies for Employing Translanguaging the Classroom**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=USRW-NXJVFc&t=425s>

## **Appendix F**

### **Writing Prompts Recap**

1. Name 3 things you learned about translanguaging?
2. Why employ translanguaging in the classroom?
3. List two strategies you learned today and how could you implement them into an activity or lesson.
4. Any Questions?

## **Appendix G**

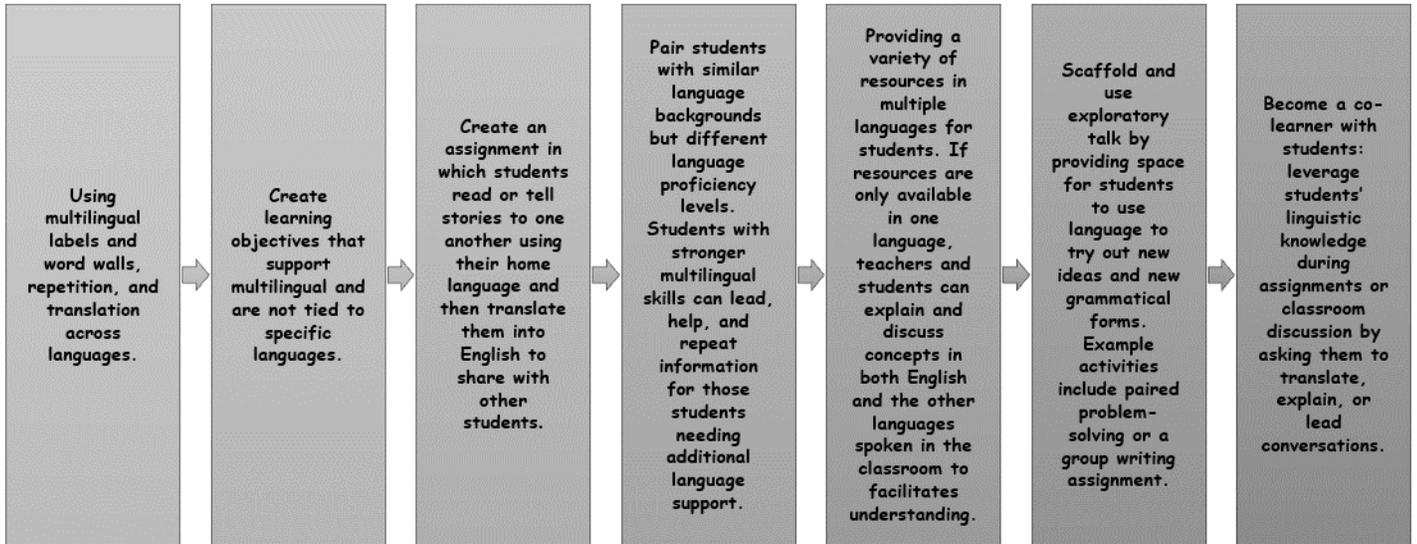
### **Homework**

For the upcoming session:

Use each one of the strategies during your lessons and then after the lessons write in your reflective journals what went well, what didn't go well, did it enhance the lesson, did students engagement increase, were students dependent on the home language more or less, did you feel confident in your language abilities when translanguaging was occurring, etc.

Please include a brief description of what the lessons was about and how you weaved it into your lesson.

**Appendix H**  
**Strategy Chart**



**Appendix I****Writing Prompts Reflection**

1. How did you use the strategies across different content areas?
2. What went well?
3. What didn't go well?
4. Did students' engagement increase?
5. Did you face any obstacle/challenges?
6. Do you have any questions?

**Appendix J**

**Word Cloud on How Strategies Went**



**Appendix K**

**Video Link:**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O6DBPbDT\\_GE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O6DBPbDT_GE)

**Appendix L**

**Open Ended Response**

