

TRANSLANGUAGING AS A PEDAGOGICAL RESOURCE IN THE ESP CLASSROOM**Azizova Makharam Rashitovna**Senior Lecturer, Department of Languages and Humanities
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Abstract. The article examines translanguaging as a pedagogical resource in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) instruction in multilingual technical education. The persistence of the monolingual, English-only norm is questioned in the light of the theory of translanguaging, which reconceptualizes the learner's first language not as interference but as part of a single integrated linguistic repertoire. The distinction between spontaneous and planned (pedagogical) translanguaging is analyzed, and empirical evidence is reviewed showing that the purposeful use of the first language supports comprehension of specialized terminology and complex concepts, develops cross-linguistic awareness, and enriches written production. It is argued that translanguaging strengthens ESP learning only when it is strategically designed rather than used as an unplanned retreat into the first language, and criteria for its principled classroom use are formulated.

Keywords: translanguaging, English for Specific Purposes, multilingualism, monolingual norm, first language, cross-linguistic awareness, technical vocabulary.

Introduction

For much of its history, the teaching of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has been organized around a monolingual norm. Under the so-called English-only principle, the learner's first language has been treated as a source of interference to be excluded from the classroom, and exposure to the target language has been maximized at the expense of the learners' other linguistic resources. This assumption sits uneasily with the actual conditions of technical education in multilingual settings, where students and teachers frequently share one or more languages other than English and where specialized subject matter is cognitively demanding in any language.

The theory of translanguaging offers an alternative starting point. Developing the Welsh notion of trawsieithu, O. García and L. Wei reconceptualize the bilingual's languages not as two separate systems but as a single, integrated linguistic repertoire from which the speaker selects features to make meaning [1]. Applied to pedagogy, this view reframes the first language as a resource rather than a deficit [3; 4]. The monolingual instructional norm is thereby called into question as a default rather than a self-evident principle [7].

The aim of the present study is to analyze how translanguaging functions in the ESP classroom, what evidence supports its use for the acquisition of specialized terminology and the comprehension of complex concepts, and under what conditions its use is methodologically justified rather than counterproductive.

Materials and Methods

The theoretical base of the study comprises the foundational account of translanguaging by García and Wei [1] and the framework of pedagogical translanguaging elaborated by J. Cenoz and D. Gorter, which distinguishes the spontaneous, naturally occurring use of multiple languages from the planned, intentional design of translanguaging activities by the teacher [2]. The work of S. Canagarajah on translingual practice and code-meshing provides the conceptual link between translanguaging and academic writing [3; 5].

The empirical support is drawn from the classroom study of A. Creese and A. Blackledge on translanguaging as a pedagogy for learning and teaching in bilingual classrooms [4] and from the experimental study of F. Chen, S.-C. Tsai, and W. Tsou on the application of translanguaging

in an ESP writing course, in which learners moved through a translanguaging process from drafting in the first language to drafting in English, online translation, and revision [6].

The research method combines conceptual analysis of the theoretical apparatus of translanguaging with systematic comparison of empirical findings on its effect on comprehension, terminology, and written production in ESP contexts.

Results

The reviewed studies converge on the conclusion that the purposeful use of the first language supports the learning of specialized content. When learners are allowed to process challenging material in a familiar language before producing it in English, comprehension of complex concepts and specialized terminology improves, and learners participate more actively in discussion, written tasks, and collaborative work [4]. The first language thus functions as a bridge to the target form rather than as a substitute for it.

The study of Chen, Tsai, and Tsou is particularly informative for ESP writing [6]. Learners who passed through an explicit translanguaging writing process produced texts that conveyed more information and ideas and that showed a wider use of general, academic, and topic-specific words; they also engaged in a greater number of writing steps, from pre-writing and reproducing to translation, editing, and revising. Translanguaging here did not bypass the writing process but expanded it.

A further result concerns cross-linguistic awareness. Pedagogical translanguaging that directs attention to morphological structure and cognates allows learners to exploit the systematic correspondences between languages [2]. This is of direct relevance to technical vocabulary, a large part of which consists of internationalisms with shared Greek and Latin roots, so that the learner's other languages become an asset for recognizing and retaining specialized terms.

Discussion

The decisive distinction is not between using and not using the first language, but between planned and unplanned use. Cenoz and Gorter's notion of pedagogical translanguaging emphasizes that the value of the approach lies in its strategic design: translanguaging is most productive when the teacher deliberately structures activities that move learners from their full repertoire toward the target form, and least productive when the first language is allowed to displace target-language production as an unplanned default [2].

For technical education specifically, this distinction has practical force. Specialized vocabulary is cognitively dense, and the temptation to retreat entirely into the first language is correspondingly strong. Yet the very feature that makes the first language useful here – its capacity to anchor abstract concepts – also makes uncontrolled reliance on it a risk, since reduced exposure to authentic English usage can limit the development of productive command of the specialized register.

Two further tensions deserve attention. First, institutional assessment in technical education is frequently monolingual, which can place classroom translanguaging in conflict with examination norms; reconciling the two is a task for the teacher and the curriculum designer rather than for the learner alone. Second, the monolingual ideology is deeply established, and both teachers and learners may initially resist a multilingual pedagogy [4]. In this light, the role of the teacher shifts from policing the exclusive use of English toward designing principled opportunities for learners to draw on their whole repertoire in the service of specialized learning.

Conclusion

Translanguaging is neither a threat to ESP nor a guarantee of success; it is a resource whose value depends on the manner of its use. It strengthens the learning of specialized content and terminology when it is strategically designed and oriented toward the target form, and it weakens learning when it becomes an unplanned substitute for target-language production. The teacher designing an ESP lesson with translanguaging should test the techniques applied against three criteria. Does the use of the first language build a bridge to the target concept or term, or does it

replace target-language production altogether? Does it develop cross-linguistic awareness, or does it amount to mere translation? Is it strategically designed by the teacher, or is it an unplanned retreat into the first language? Only when all three questions are answered in favour of principled, planned use does translanguaging become a methodologically justified resource in the multilingual ESP classroom.

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