



Beyond Translation Pedagogy: The Rise of Translanguaging as a Theory of Mind and Language and its implications for Algerian EFL Context

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Abstract

The primary aim of this study is to develop a clear theoretical understanding of translanguaging and to propose a contextually sensitive pedagogical framework for the possible integration of translanguaging practices into Algerian English language classrooms. A comprehensive review of the literature reveals, first, that translanguaging is reshaping the field of linguistics; second, the pedagogical evolution of translanguaging indicates a gradual move from a narrow focus on micro-linguistics toward more meaningful shifts between two languages. The analysis of these practical insights, alongside the synthesis of empirical studies conducted within the Algerian context, has developed a practical framework for integrating translanguaging into Algerian English language teaching classrooms. Translanguaging practices in the Algerian context can effectively support a set of teaching objectives outlined in this framework.

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1. *Introduction*

Algeria is a naturally multilingual society, which is home to Arabic, Berber, French, and English. These languages are typically taught as separate and independent systems along their ideological, historical, and cultural meanings. Current teaching frameworks do not integrate the features of these languages and do attempt to exploit learners' existing linguistic competence to facilitate the acquisition of additional languages. Instead, they present existing languages as autonomous entities that learners learn in separation, usually through rote memorisation and pattern practice. This approach not only disregards the multilingual reality of the Algerian society but also suppresses the ability to use these languages as scaffolding mechanisms for learning each other effectively.

Since the 1970s, the dominance of the monolingual approach in Algerian education has deprived learners of the opportunity to capitalise on their existing linguistic resources to learn and practise other target languages. While learners may spontaneously employ their prior linguistic skills to assist in learning additional languages, the absence of a principled pedagogical framework limits their chances of transferring linguistic knowledge and skills from one language into another. Furthermore, the lack of an official multilingual approach may prevent learners from comparing linguistic features across languages, practising cross-linguistic transfer, and practising cognitive skills. As a result, students may fail to develop the flexible multilingual

competence inherent in multilingual communities. It follows, then, to look for a pedagogically- informed framework that might transform the truncated learning of the existing languages into a more integrated and rich experience.

The investigation of translanguaging in the Algerian context is not new and has received a reasonable amount of scholarly attention. Previous studies have mainly focused on teachers' attitudes toward translanguaging (Stihi, 2021; Boukhentache, 2024a) and on the description of classroom translanguaging practices (Azza, 2022). Interestingly, some researchers (Mehiri, 2021) have proposed translanguaging as a pedagogical framework to address multilingual classroom needs. However, these studies have not presented translanguaging as a linguistic theory capable of informing pedagogical practices, nor have they discussed translanguaging as a well-grounded pedagogical teaching technique, particularly in relation to the Algerian multilingual and relatively disadvantaged English-as-a-foreign-language (EFL) context. More critically, they have overlooked the fundamentally cognitive and ecological nature of translanguaging.

Hence, despite the existence of key innovative studies worldwide, such as Li (2018, 2022) and García & Li (2014), which explain translanguaging as both a pedagogical technique and as transformative theory of language, these insights are not adequately discussed, as translanguaging is presented as a series of disconnected translation/L1 instructional strategies that could at best promote

communicative competence. The power of translanguaging to go beyond the linguistic and communicative objectives of English-language-teaching (ELT) has not yet been systematically explored within Algerian EFL settings.

It makes sense, then, that this study aims to investigate translanguaging as a linguistic theory and a pedagogical framework with the potential to inform EFL teaching practices and objectives in the Algerian multilingual context. This major argument draws on Richards and Rodgers' (2014) approach–design–procedure model, which assumes that any teaching practices are grounded in a theory of language and a theory of learning. Changes in pedagogical practices, therefore, reflect reconceptualisation in theory and practice.

This study is significant for several reasons. First, it elucidates the place of translanguaging not only as a teaching strategy but also as a linguistic theory that can broaden the scope of linguistics and inform classroom practices. Second, by examining its theoretical underpinnings, the study identifies corresponding classroom translanguaging practices that can be applied in the Algerian, predominantly monolingual, educational context. Third, it provides insights for curriculum designers and policymakers to reconsider existing monolingual approaches in light of this emerging linguistic paradigm shift. Finally, the study seeks to bridge the gap between recent developments in linguistic theory and pedagogy and their application within the Algerian context, suggesting going beyond

the mere teaching of linguistic and communicative competence.

The article aims to investigate translanguaging as a linguistic theory and explore its potential for EFL teaching in Algeria. Specifically, it seeks to examine the theoretical foundations of translanguaging and their implications for language instruction, identify corresponding translanguaging-informed teaching strategies, and propose ways to integrate these practices into curriculum design and language policy in the Algerian context.

The review first introduces the history of translanguaging as a teaching technique, traditionally referred to as 'translation' or 'L1 use'. It then examines the theoretical development of translanguaging as an epistemological theory. Next, it traces its evolution as a pedagogical approach. Finally, it discusses the Algerian EFL multilingual context and explores the relevance of these insights within the Algerian education system.

2. Historical Background of Translanguaging

Translation was used as a principle and indisputable foreign language teaching technique, initially in the teaching of classical languages (i.e., Latin and Greek). Subsequently, it was transposed to the teaching of modern languages (such as French, English, and German) within the framework of the Grammar-Translation Method (GTM). However, with the decline of the GTM, translation was largely marginalised in English Language Teaching (ELT) (Cook, 2010; Howatt &

Widdowson, 2004; Richards & Rodgers, 2014; Weschler, 1997).

The demise of GTM was accelerated by the 19th-century reform movement and its resulting Direct (or Natural) Method, which focused on direct association of meaning with language forms. The Direct Method was exclusively based on the exclusion of the mother tongue and any form of translation activities, although the reform movement that shaped it did not completely reject translation (Howatt & Widdowson, 2004; Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

The strong rejection of translation has had a long-lasting effect on the pedagogical validity of this instructional technique (Boukhentache, 2024b). Even after the decline of the Direct Method in the 1920s, translation did not regain its respectability and legitimacy in subsequent waves of language teaching methods. Methods such as the structural and oral methods likewise put forward theoretical justifications, such as language interference, to further discredit translation.

A limited re-emergence of L1 use appeared with the advent of the 1970s humanistic language teaching methods, such as Community Language Learning and Suggestopedia. These methods adopt a more flexible stance toward translation (Richards & Rodgers, 2014; Thornbury, 2017), employing it as a medium to create an anxiety-free environment and mediate communication in the target language. The takeaway from this stage of historical evolution, as Bouhentache (2024a) puts it, is that translation became restricted to

occasional use of the L1 rather than a formalised, planned translation activity.

Furthermore, the advent of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) diminished the prospects of reintegrating translation pedagogy as a respectable and legitimate practice within ELT. As Skopečková (2010) aptly argues, CLT pushed L1 use into “the grey zone of language teaching—neither completely banned nor openly accepted” (p. 23). Similarly, Cook (2010) notes that references to L1 use within CLT are generally directed toward discouraging or minimising its use. At this stage, translation pedagogy is reduced to occasional L1 use (Anderson, 2022; Boukhentache, 2025a). Anderson (2022) further questions the extent to which the current ELT epistemology can accommodate translation, given that CLT primarily focuses on maximising target language practice. Overall, the developmental trajectory within ELT can be summarized as translation → L1 use → translanguaging (Boukhentache, 2025a). Translanguaging represents the final stage in this developmental narrative, to which we now turn.

Translanguaging seems to be the most promising route for reintegrating translation into ELT. Since the 1980s, many trends have developed separately but have contributed to a renewed interest in translation. New terms have emerged, such as pedagogical translation (Cook, 2010), functional translation (Cook, 2010; Widdowson, 1978), plurilingualism (Council of Europe, 2001), mediation through translation (Council of Europe,

2018), bilingualism (Cummins, 2001; Cook, 2001; García, 2009), and translanguaging (Williams, 1994; Baker, 2001; García & Wei, 2014). Collectively, these developments in applied linguistics have had a substantial impact on foreign language teaching, contributing to the concrete integration of translation into ELT courses and textbooks.

Unlike the above-cited translation-based movements, which treated languages as separate systems that are narrowly interconnected (see García & Otheguy, 2020, for a discussion of the differences between plurilingualism and translanguaging), translanguaging represents a radical shift in the conceptualisation of both language and learning. Rather than viewing additional language learning as the acquisition of a new system of knowledge to be juxtaposed with an existing one, it conceptualises learned languages as situated within a unified repertoire, allowing learners richer understanding. As formalised by García and Li (2014), translanguaging goes beyond the simple learning of an additional language to encompass broader objectives such as cognition, mediation, and identity building. This new conceptualisation may be significant in the Algerian EFL context, particularly in examining how translanguaging can be operationalised within the Algerian EFL bilingual context as a contextually sensitive framework that could challenge the monolingual approach and promote a more ecological perspective.

2. Translanguaging as Theory: Origins and Theoretical Foundations

Translanguaging originated in Wales. It is a term used to describe an innovative bilingual pedagogy used by Cen Williams (1994) within the frame of his PhD research study. It consists of using input in one language and output in another language; for example, asking questions in Welsh and answering in English. This formalized practice of bilingual input–output was called in Welsh ‘Trawsieithu’, a term, which literally means "across language".

Baker (2011) formalised and popularised this new concept of "across language"; nevertheless, he did not simply translate the term but also rendered it as a verb, "languaging", or "to language", to emphasise the act of strategically integrating two languages, rather than merely code-switching between them. The term 'languaging' is borrowed from Becker (1991), who argues that languages are not static, fixed entities. Accordingly, language use involves mobilising various factors, such as memory, attention, and paralinguistic cues, to construct meaning. This verbal form signals that language is no longer considered as an autonomous static object but as an active, dynamic, and continuous process of meaning-making and generation.

The *languaging* conceptualisation is applied across languages by Baker (2011), referring to it as 'translanguaging', which he defines as 'the process of making meaning, shaping experiences, and gaining understanding and knowledge through the use of two languages' (p. 288). This definition suggests that translanguaging is

the use of a learner's linguistic repertoire to think, understand, and learn.

García and Li (2014) extends translanguaging from a pedagogical technique to a theory of linguistics and cognition. García (2009) considers translanguaging as a theoretical lens that explains the linguistic behavior of bilinguals. Hence, she uses this construct to account for how bilinguals use their available linguistic resources as a unified, rather than separate, system to understand, learn, and communicate. Li (2022), on the other hand, focuses on how languages are used fluidly and creatively to learn and develop cognition. The basic difference between Li (2018) and García (2009) conceptions is that García considers translanguaging as a tool to express oneself and assert one's true identity using all the language resources we have, while Li considers translanguaging as a means to generate language and develop cognition. At the bottom line, language is not seen as a set of fixed, autonomous codes to be acquired, but as a dynamic resource to be played with, adapted, and transformed.

To better understand translanguaging, it is useful to compare it to code-switching, which is also considered erroneously as a pedagogical technique. Code-switching assumes that languages exist independently of each other, views bilinguals as two monolinguals in one person, and considers the use of another language as a deviation from the norm. Translanguaging, on the other hand, assumes that languages exist within a unified repertoire, views the use of languages as a choice of the most

appropriate linguistic resources, and considers fluidity as the norm (García and Li, 2014).

In this regard, according to Li (2018), translanguaging is the identifying feature of bilinguals and multilinguals; that is, we identify bilinguals when they use different language codes or named languages. Contrarily, translanguaging is the active act of using different language codes to think, communicate, and generate more language. Similarly, García, Johnson, and Seltzer (2017) consider code-switching as the external and surface manifestation of the use of different language varieties, while translanguaging is the internal interplay between various language features/codes. Hence, code switching is associated with the traditional sociolinguistic analysis of the language, making the external manifestation of named language varieties the unit of analysis and object of study (Gumperz, 1982).

In consideration of these insights, the use of Tamazight, Arabic, and French in the English language course should be seen as an enabling skill and a route toward achieving multilingual competence, rather than as a defective sociolinguistic behaviour. Code-switching is often described in Algerian classes as a compensatory strategy to address language deficiency (Messaoudi, 2023; Benghalem & Kamińska, 2024). These studies testify to the continuation of the monolingual principle despite the growing acceptance of translanguaging.

3. Key Principles of Translanguaging

This section discusses the key principles of the translanguaging theory.

3.1. Creativity

Creativity has long been recognised as a fundamental feature of natural languages. Traditional structural approaches consider creativity an individual feature (de Saussure, 1916). Likewise, Chomsky (1957) views creativity as the innate capacity of an ideal language user to generate an infinite number of language structures. These traditional structural and cognitive perspectives limit creativity to individual and monolingual linguistic production. By contrast, translanguaging theory challenges this belief of monolingual creativity by extending it through translanguaging, arguing that the mere multiple integration of language resources across varied sociocultural contexts permits the generation of new linguistic forms, novel ideas, and new understandings that cannot be otherwise produced in a monolingual context.

3.2. Unitary of the Linguistic Repertoire

Traditional linguistics views language as separate, identifiable, and objectifiable systems existing in the mind (Lambert & Tucker, 1972). This view is also traceable to de Saussure's (1916) structuralism, which views language as a separate, static, and scientific entity. However, linguists such as Becker (1991), who borrowed the term "languageing" from biology and neuroscience, argue that there is no one thing called language,

asserting that language is a continuous, dynamic phenomenon shaped by social and cognitive factors.

Accordingly, language use – languaging – is the active interaction of varied social, cognitive, linguistic, and paralinguistic elements for communication and meaning-making. In other words, languaging is the process of negotiating, processing, understanding, and comprehending input (Li, 2018). This process is inherently creative; that is, learners do not simply retrieve pre-existing forms but actively construct meaning by drawing upon the full range of their cognitive and linguistic resources.

3.3. Cognitive Feature

According to Li (2018), one of the developmental roots of translanguaging is the theory of cognition. Firstly, Becker (1991) posits that language production is an active and fluid act that mobilises a set of factors and clues, resulting in intense mental activity. Next, bilingual scholars like Cummins (1981), Cook (2010), as well as the Council of Europe (2001, 2018), contend that bilinguals do not completely store the language systems of two languages in separate repertoires. Rather, linguistic repertoires are interrelated and have a shared underlying base that allows the transfer of language proficiency. Thus, bilingualism permits the transfer of skills from one language to another and empowers cognitive functions. Another cognitive advantage of bilingual practices is noted by Bialystok (2007), who strongly argues that bilinguals develop enhanced executive functions, such as attentional control and conflict resolution, and further

notes with his colleagues that lifelong bilingualism can delay cognitive decline and contributes to the development of cognitive reserve (Bialystok, Craik, & Freedman, 2007).

Building on this cognitive perspective of translanguaging, research in bilingualism has shown that the learning of another language is not a linear construction of another monolingual repertoire. Grosjean (1989) firmly argues that there are no two monolinguals in one mind, adding that languages are not sequentially activated, with one being active and the other silent. Instead, available languages are simultaneously activated in the mind. In his strong criticism of monolingualism pedagogy, Grosjean maintains that the monolingual approach forcibly suppresses one language while activating the other. The fact of the matter is that in both the monolingual and bilingual frameworks, the speaker constantly activates the existing knowledge and language resources. The cognitive interconnectedness is never zero since the mind is constantly mobilising the existing linguistic resources in a creative and productive manner.

Ultimately, translanguaging moves the practice of cognitive skills beyond language transfer, cognitive flexibility, and metalinguistic awareness (Bialystok, 2007). Li & García (2014) consider the bilingual repertoire not only as sharing a common underlying cognitive base, but as being stored in one cognitive reservoir. This unitary perspective of language proficiency entails more cognitive gains such as integration, creativity, and meaning

making (Li & García, 2014). Although both Li and García support the role of cognition in translanguaging theory, Li seems to develop a more elaborate approach to cognitive mediation. Cognition, in this framework, is not the retrieval of fixed forms from separate boxes (Ricardo Otheguy, García, & Reid, 2015); it is the creative production of new language forms, meanings, and understandings, and it is distributed across social and interactional contexts (Gee, 2011).

In his later works, Li (2011, 2018) argues that bilinguals operate with a fluid, hybrid, and mobile linguistic repertoire. Fluidity refers to constant shifts across linguistic resources. Hybridity refers to the use of multimodal and multisemiotic modes of communication. Mobility refers to the active adaptation of speech to different contexts. Together, these three dimensions can develop flexibility, inferencing, and processing (fluidity); creativity, integration, and reasoning (hybridity); and transfer, awareness, and problem solving (mobility) (Li, 2011, pp. 1223–1224; García & Li, 2014, pp. 42–44; Li, 2018, pp. 15–16).

3.4. Sociocultural feature

Translanguaging equally encompasses the sociolinguistic dimension of language. The learners' linguistic repertoire includes the social resources exploited to select appropriate language forms or features in communicative situations. In line with Vygotsky's (1978) view of the effect of sociocultural resources and tools in mediating meaning making, Li (2018) posits that not only a given named language serves as a mediation tool to learn

and make meaning, but the whole students' linguistic repertoire. Hence, the multilingual repertoire of the student, which is naturally socio-culturally laden, is used to build new knowledge and understandings.

Another sociocultural advantage of translanguaging is identity construction. García (2009) firmly holds that translanguaging displays the real identity of multilinguals. Bilingual and multilingual children build their identity by using all their language codes, and she adds that using one single named language hinders and limits both the expression and the construction of the student's social identity. Thus, translanguaging should be used in everyday life and in the classroom as a transformative tool to build the full rather than the partial identity of the learner. A student who uses only Anglo-Saxon cultural tools to interpret the world is limited in his or her vision of the world and will only build an incomplete interpretation of reality (Canagarajah, 2011).

Li's (2022) concept of hybridity matches the principles of sociocultural theory. This premise refers to the use of the bilingual speaker's entire series of resources, from linguistic to cultural to social. These shaped components of the person's identity mediate the construction of knowledge.

Based on the above discussion of the theoretical principles of translanguaging, a series of pedagogical implications are suggested for the Algerian EFL context. First, the unitary view of language proficiency (Garcia & Li, 2014) legitimises the use of the learner's full linguistic

repertoire (Tamazight, Arabic, Darja, French, and English), rather than a strict focus on the English language system. Second, the adoption of a translanguaging pedagogy might enhance the development of cognitive skills (such as problem solving) outlined in the Algerian syllabuses and highlighted by Bialystok and Li, (2022). Third, in line with García's perspectives (2009), translanguaging may assist learners in developing their full identity as true multilinguals. Finally, learning EFL in a social context, using all available sociocultural tools (Li, 2022), may enhance foreign language learning and the acquisition of complex content, mediated through technological means, as it can achieve the intercultural competence outlined in the Algerian EFL school syllabuses

4. Translanguaging and Language Teaching

This section presents the historical and theoretical foundation of translanguaging. It is organised in a form of pedagogical labels deduced from the historical review of translanguaging from its early days to the current state.

4.1. Linguistic-Focused Translation

Despite the relative unpopularity of translation in ELT, it continues to be employed in various forms, and certain of its practices are still retained today. Literal translation of texts and the extensive use of the first language (L1) as a medium of instruction are widely regarded as counterproductive (Howatt & Widdowson, 2014; Richards & Rodgers, 2014; Weschler, 1997). However, other

translation-related activities and materials remain in use. For instance, bilingual word lists and glossaries, textbook instructions, grammar and vocabulary explanations, and contrastive analysis continue to be widely incorporated even in contemporary ELT materials. Additionally, guided translation activities and cross-linguistic comparison can foster analytical skills and enhance language accuracy. Overall, micro-level translation activities occupy a limited but still relevant place within modern communicative and transformative approaches to language teaching.

4.2. Input–Output Pedagogy

Cen Williams (1994) investigates bilingual practices, labels them, and formalises them. The input–output strategy is the first pedagogical technique that spurs the development of translanguaging. Williams invites students to read two texts, one in Welsh and the other in English, and complete a task that requires the use of the data contained in the bilingual passages. This technique resembles the functional translation activities proposed by Weschler (1997), who suggests information-gap activities to promote communication.

Cen Williams's (1994) input–output hypothesis and Weschler's functional bilingualism can be adapted to rethink the monolingual practices applied in multilingual EFL contexts such as Algeria. For example, students may be given a text in English and a complementary one in Arabic, and they discuss the content of the passages in discussion tasks. In this way, translanguaging can support communication, participation, linguistic awareness, and problem-solving. What

makes this approach creative is its departure from the linear, input-output model of traditional language teaching toward a dynamic interplay between languages that mirror real-world multilingual communication.

4.3. Flexible Mixing of Language Codes

Baker (2001) popularises and broadens the term translanguaging in English by mainly expanding the input–output pedagogical strategy. Instead of a strict input–output pattern, Baker proposes more flexible mixing, that is, moving freely between languages. For example, students can be led to compare language forms across different languages or use the languages at their disposal to produce the target language. As can be seen, translanguaging integrates learners' L1 resources into foreign language teaching in a principled way and as a legitimate pedagogy.

This flexible translanguaging approach aligns well with the Algerian EFL context. For example, cross-linguistic comparison activities can be applied, including French and English cognates (Otwinowska, 2016). Similarly, morphological awareness activities can be implemented (Lyster, Quiroga & Ballinger, 2013; Cenoz & Gorter, 2020). These bilingual tasks can be applied systematically to raise students' awareness of the morphological features of English and French, and such comparative work invites learners to adopt a creative, analytical stance toward language, treating linguistic forms not as immutable rules but as patterns to be explored, compared, and understood across systems.

Beyond this strategic use of translanguaging, Li (2022) argues for the use of multimodal and multisemiotic learning modes. Translanguaging, accordingly, transcends named languages, as well as linguistic codes to include various learning modes and semiotic systems that work harmoniously to make meaning. Li suggests the use of various language codes and learning modes, such as interaction, hands-on tasks, digital platforms, visual aids, and cultural artefacts, to orchestrate language learning. This multimodal expansion transforms translanguaging into a creative pedagogy that recognises meaning-making as inherently multisensory and multidimensional.

Consequently, language learning should involve the use of audio materials, pictures, digital platforms, gestures, contexts, and multiple language codes to ensure a rich and meaningful learning experience. Unlike previous pedagogical models, this model embraces an ecological approach to language use and learning (Creese & Blackledge, 2010; Li, 2018; García & Li, 2014; Cook, 2010). It aligns with the integrated resources needed to process, access, and produce English.

5. Translanguaging in Algerian Context

Algeria is a multilingual context. The everyday languages are Berber dialects and Arabic darja. Besides these national languages, French occupies the status of the first foreign language because of its colonial history, and English has the status of the second foreign language. Nevertheless, recent ministry decrees are gradually displacing the status of French in

favour of English (Khaled Saad Allah, July, 2023).

Despite its rich linguistic diversity, the Algerian education system has adopted a monolingual approach to English language teaching since the post-colonial period. The departure from GMT practices in the late 1970s led to the adoption of the monolingual approach in compliance with dominant ELT orthodoxy (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). Even the large school reform of 2002 and the later reform of 2016 have not fully integrated translanguaging into Algerian EFL courses. Still, the growing recognition of multilingual pedagogies (Boukhentache, 2024b) and the continuous resort to L1 by the teachers and students alike (Khelalfa & Kellil, 2023) do not seem convincing enough for the Algerian policymakers to reconsider the role of translanguaging.

The 2022 school reform has introduced very limited translanguaging practices into Algerian EFL textbooks (Boukhentache, 2024a). These syllabus specifications include only bilingual glossaries, bilingual activities, and bilingual instructions, with no clear implementation of functional or communicative translanguaging tasks. These limited inclusions suggest an emerging awareness of multilingual realities, but there is still hesitation regarding full adoption of this innovative pedagogy. Additionally, the limited presence of translanguaging-orientated activities in ELT textbooks seems to slow down the wider adoption of this approach in EFL contexts.

Despite long-standing calls for integrating learners' L1 as a pedagogical resource, at least as a scaffolding strategy (Cook, 2010; Widdowson, 2003), ELT has often remained resistant to such practices. As Weschler (1997) argues, the rejection of translation in EFL may be linked to ideological and commercial factors. Arguably, the use of translation may pose serious professional challenges to Anglo-Saxon teachers and textbook designers. Overall, translanguaging is still often perceived as a compensatory or deficient strategy rather than a legitimate pedagogical resource (Anderson, 2024).

However, Algerian classroom realities clearly show that L1 use is inevitable across all levels of the educational system (Boukhentache, 2024a; Khelalfa and Kellil, 2023). The common practice of incidental and judicious translation is frequently used to support comprehension, especially given learners' relatively low proficiency levels in English. Rather than viewing such uses as undermining the immersion in the target language practice, they should be expanded to comply with what Baker (2001) labels as the natural and flexible deployment of the learner's full linguistic repertoire in meaning-making. Therefore, the existing gap between official policy and actual classroom practice may result in counterproductive and unstructured use of transanguaging.

6. Potential Applications of Translanguaging in the Algerian Context

Drawing on the theoretical foundations and pedagogical insights discussed above, this section proposes a set

of translanguaging-informed practices tailored to the Algerian EFL context. These classroom applications are presented as a tentative framework that teachers and curriculum designers can adapt, test, and adjust.

6.1. Development of Bilingual/Multilingual Competence

In the modern world, bilingualism has become the norm. Besides, bilingual competence has become widely required in the workplace, such as in call centres and telecommunication companies. Therefore, it is advisable for Algerian policymakers to develop students' bilingual competence. Plenty of research supports the promotion of this competence (García & Li, 2014; Cook, 2010; Council of Europe, 2001, 2018; Wechsler, 1997; Cummins, 2001). A creative translanguaging pedagogy trains learners to strategically and appropriately use named languages both in the classroom and in everyday life, and therefore it does not mean the lack of competency or an ad hoc mix of codes (Grosjean, 2008).

6.2. Enhancement of Cognitive Skills

To promote the objectives of the Algerian second-generation syllabus of 2016, which focus on core competencies (Ministère de l'Éducation nationale (Algérie), 2016, March 23), translanguaging may effectively contribute to the development of higher-order cognitive skills such as problem-solving, analysis, and executive control. The deliberate, fluid, strategic, and appropriate switching from one language to another trains mental agility. As Li (2022) aptly demonstrates, translanguaging promotes

creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving. Consequently, translanguaging might partially address the problem raised in 2016 by Farid Adel, the president of Algeria's National Commission for Curricula, namely the dominance of rote memorisation at the expense of cognitive skills and analytical thinking (Ministère de l'Éducation nationale (Algérie), 2016, March 23)).

6.3. Integration of Technological Aids and Applications

Drawing on the multimodal and multisemiotic aspects of translanguaging, Algerian EFL practices need to integrate more technological applications and aids to facilitate EFL learning. For example, Google Classroom or Moodle, mobile-assisted learning (Lahmer, 2021; Minh and Belouabem, 2025), multimedia resources (Touami & Mostari, 2022; Bourouina & Mostari, 2022), and AI language tools can promote deep learning. In line with Li's (2022) translanguaging principles of fluidity, hybridity, and mobility, these technological aids can engage learners in multimodal and multisemiotic meaning-making, transcending uniliterate language use and allowing learners to draw on their entire repertoire—linguistic, cognitive, and semiotic. Lankshear and Knobel (2011) assert that technological facilities create more spaces for meaning-making. More specifically, technological integration allows a richer orchestration of the act of translanguaging and thereby a deeper understanding and meaning-making.

6.4. Development of Student Identity

As García (2009) insists, leveraging the student's linguistic repertoire will allow them to grow as fully accomplished individuals. This premise complies with the objectives of the Algerian syllabuses (SE1, Syllabus, 2006), which promote citizenship, cultural belonging, and intercultural competence. To reinforce more vigorously the attainment of these objectives and further develop Algerian students' full identity, it is imperative to leverage the learner's entire linguistic repertoire to build a critical, dynamic, and multifaceted identity, rather than what García and Li (2014) and Kress (2009) label truncated and competing identity representations. Furthermore, translanguaging can contribute, in line with the intercultural objectives of the EFL syllabus, to active and integrated identity building as outlined by García (2009) and Li (2022), and this endeavour can aptly address the problem of fragmented identity building raised by Tobbi (2021).

6.5. Development of Metalinguistic Knowledge.

The Algerian EFL syllabuses integrate linguistic awareness through an inductive approach to grammar instruction (SE2, Syllabus, 2006). In accordance with this cognitive objective, translanguaging facilitates metalinguistic awareness by allowing learners to mesh and alternate languages (Baker, 2001). The use of comparative tasks and activities, for example, can draw learners' attention to the major differences between languages and develop their metalinguistic knowledge, which could, in turn, enhance self-confidence (Willis, 1996).

The existing Algerian EFL courses integrate some microlinguistic translanguing activities to enhance language awareness, such as translating English words into their languages (Lahiouel, 2013) and translating the meanings of certain expressions (Boukhentache, 2024b). Nevertheless, such activities, which are basically linguistically driven and operate at a low level of cognition, need to be developed into macro-cognitive meaning-construction activities. For example, explaining why Arabic and English idioms do not translate literally might develop higher-order language awareness.

6.6. *Development of Communicative Competence*

Unlike traditional translation activities, which were predominantly form-focused, translanguing activities comply with ELT orthodoxy in developing communication skills. Weschler (1997) espouses this principle and proposes the use of information-gap activities to promote communicative competence. For example, a text in L1 can be employed as a springboard to trigger rich discussions in English. Hence, rather than using translanguing peripherally in Algerian competency-based tasks (Boukhentache, 2024b) this study argues for integrating translanguing strategies as a core pedagogical premise of communicative tasks.

In other words, instead of using translanguing in the pre-and post-task stages to explain grammar and vocabulary, structured tasks can occasionally employ translanguing in the task proper. This

aligns with Boukhentache's (2024b) insistence on the use of translanguing communicative acts and the recommendations of the Council of Europe (2001, 2018), as well as Anderson (2024), which suggest the integration of translanguing as an integral and core competency of EFL and bilingual teaching.

This section proposes a tentative translanguing-informed pedagogical framework for the Algerian EFL context. It is based on a combination of expert theoretical insights from translanguing theory and concrete Algerian EFL classroom practices documented in empirical studies, suggesting a contextually sensitive approach to reinforce and extend EFL teaching objectives in Algerian schools and universities. It advocates the principled integration of translanguing to address its ad hoc misuses, as well as appeals to policymakers to legitimise its use.

Fundamentally, this instructional technique can be used to develop learners' bilingual/multilingual competence, higher-order cognitive skills, technological and multimodal literacy for meaning-making, identity construction, metalinguistic awareness, and communicative competence. Overall, it presents translanguing not as a peripheral strategy but as a central pedagogical principle that aligns with national curriculum objectives and responds to current educational challenges.

7. *Limitations and Critiques of Translanguing*

Despite the pedagogical advantages of translanguing, it has its drawbacks

without limitations. First, critics argue that the strong form of translanguaging promoted by García and Li (2014) is difficult to achieve in EFL classrooms because it does not set clear boundaries for the use of community languages. Therefore, it would be challenging for EFL teachers and students to apply this pedagogy. Second, Swain and Lapkin (2013) argue that open translanguaging may lead to overreliance on L1. Anderson (2024), likewise, notes that there is little space in the current ELT framework for the integration of translanguaging. To this criticism, García and Vogel (2025) retort, saying that translanguaging does not dismiss ELT methodologies such as comprehensible input and output. Rather, it allows a strategic use of named languages during the instructional process.

Third, teachers in foreign language contexts are not prepared for implementing such a challenging pedagogy. These educational agents have been trained in the monolingual approach (Copland & Neokleous, 2021). In the same vein, Boukhentache (2024b) asserts that Algerian EFL teachers are still unfamiliar with communicative and functional translanguaging.

Four, the Algerian examination is still exclusively monolingual. Worse than that, it is linguistically oriented. Boukhentache (2019) indicates that the large bulk of the baccalaureate content assesses knowledge restitution, and he adds that this standardized assessment is seriously affecting the content and teaching methodology.

Last, translanguaging practices have grown in bilingual Western contexts where there are heterogeneous communities; therefore, their extrapolation to the Algerian context would be difficult and seriously challenging (Li, 2022). Additionally, the use of translanguaging pedagogies seems more useful in communitarised societies, in which the use of the student's full linguistic repertoire values their identity and increases their self-worth.

Nevertheless, these criticisms do not disqualify the use of this teaching pedagogy. First, translanguaging should be introduced in its weakest form, as conceptualised by Cook (2010), Baker (2001), and Weschler (1997). Their proposals consist of the use of pedagogical translation tasks to enhance foreign language learning. Second, the structured framework of the Council of Europe (2018) can be used to gradually introduce the competency of translation as a mediation tool for communication enhancement. Third, as Anderson (2024) affirms, ELT teaching should be gradually extended to teach bilingual competence, which has become a crucial skill in the modern world. Last but not least, textbooks can be used as agents of change (Apple, 2004) to gradually and systematically introduce translanguaging, and naturally its use in its strongest sense will require generations of reform and preparation, rather than a wholesale application.

8. Recommendations for Further Research

This study proposes a set of potential applications of translanguaging in Algerian EFL classrooms, which are primarily derived from the analysis of the pedagogical and linguistic theories of translanguaging. They are also based on an empirical review of current practices in Algerian EFL classrooms. However, these contextually relevant proposals have not yet been empirically validated, and it is beyond the scope of this study to evaluate their effectiveness. Consequently, future EFL researchers could undertake the evaluation of these translanguaging practices and objectives. Experimental and action research designs can be implemented to test the effectiveness of these theoretically grounded practices.

The first evaluation of these proposals appears to be positive, with expectations that further studies will follow to provide additional validation and refinements. An action research study on the potential impact of translanguaging on Algerian university EFL students' learning has already been conducted by Chabbi and Boukhentache (forthcoming, 2026). This mixed-methods study shows an increase in students' motivation and communicative production. Further studies can be carried out not only to test whether such translanguaging practices work but also to examine how they can be adapted creatively to suit the unique linguistic, cultural, and institutional realities of Algerian EFL education. Action research studies, as well as experimental studies, are recommended to both collect empirical

evidence and support contextual adaptation of the proposals. As a final recommendation, it is strongly advised to examine the effect of translanguaging on the development of communicative competence as a first step within the ELT scope and orthodoxy, in order to collect substantial empirical evidence and move forward in challenging ELT frontiers, which translanguaging aims to expand by incorporating broader core values.

9. General Conclusion

The findings of this linguistic review indicate that translanguaging has profoundly moved the theory of language from an entrenched, monolingual, and linguistically based object of study to a dynamic, continuous process of meaning-making that integrates cognitive, social, and cultural resources within an ecological framework. Consequently, language learning is redefined as an integrated, fluid, and context-sensitive process of meaning-making rather than an additive process of acquiring a separate and autonomous linguistic system.

Likewise, the theoretical evolution of translanguaging indicates a gradual move from form-focused language exercises toward fluid shifts between languages and, ultimately, toward an ecological perspective involving various language features and resources. This unitary perspective of translanguaging has become structured and principled, though mobilising a rich repertoire of linguistic and semiotic resources that not only facilitate language learning but also enhance creative and critical meaning-making.

On the basis of these multi-faceted insights, this study advocates rethinking the dominance of the monolingual premise underpinning EFL pedagogy, particularly in Algeria, which has continued to privilege English-only practices since the demise of GTM. Despite substantial educational reforms orchestrated to keep up with contemporary pedagogical trends, translanguaging remains marginally represented in official textbooks, although classroom practices are still largely multilingual. Consequently, this paper advocates the systematic and principled integration of translanguaging into Algerian EFL curricula to promote higher-order cognitive skills, metalinguistic awareness, identity construction, communicative competence, technological and multimodal literacy, and the development of bilingual and multilingual competence.

However, although the tentative proposal outlined above is supported by international and local empirical evidence, it requires rigorous empirical validation. Future research should therefore seek to test, refine, and adapt its practices to the specificities and demands of the Algerian EFL context, particularly with regard to their effectiveness in enhancing communicative language teaching.

Ultimately, embracing translanguaging may mean not only the effective attainment of the 2002 school reform's traditional language-focused and communicative objectives but also the realisation of the core competencies integrated in the 2016 reform amendments. More importantly, it creates spaces for

learners to operate as whole linguistic, cognitive, and cultural beings who can actively, passionately, and strategically build and generate knowledge. In so doing, it fosters the development of sophisticated 21st-century competences such as bi/multilingual competence and active agency, thereby moving beyond the limitations and ideological constraints of monolingual paradigms in English language teaching. Translanguaging, therefore, is neither an ideology nor a compensatory pedagogical strategy but a comprehensive and inclusive theory of language and pedagogy that accommodates the contemporary needs of both bilingual and EFL learners.

10. References

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