

Call to Action: Translingual Writing Pedagogy and Students' Perceptions in Nepali Multicultural Classrooms

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ABSTRACT

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In Nepal, an English-only policy is dominant in most EFL classrooms of public schools. Moreover, English is taught as a subject rather than a language. Therefore, there is a strong need to conduct research on how this policy has impacted students' cognitive and linguistic skills in public schools. Studies on students' perceptions and experiences have been inadequate in Nepal because qualitative research on translingual pedagogy has not been a priority. Therefore, this study investigates the improvements and impacts of translingual writing (code-meshing) at Nepal's community schools. To address this gap, a qualitative research method was adopted, particularly through observations and focus group discussions with students. The data was collected from eight tenth graders and one EFL teacher. The research site was a public, basic school (grades 1-8) in Dhankuta. The study demonstrates that students completed their English assignments and participated in conversations when they were permitted to code-mesh between Nepali and English whenever permitted. This practice implies that a translingual approach provides EFL students with a conducive environment in which to write and speak more confidently, drawing on multiple linguistic sources.

Introduction

Nepal is a multiethnic, multilinguistic, and multi-religious country. Nepal is a small South Asian country where 142 different mother tongues are officially recognized (CBS, 2021). Nepali is the national language. While the majority of people (44%) speak Nepali (the official language) as their mother tongue, 11.6% speak Maithili as their first language. 5.98% speak Bhojpuri, 55.88% speak Tharu, and 4.88% speak Tamang, respectively. The languages with fewer than 5% of the speakers are Bajika and Newar, which have 2.96% of the population. Only 1.02% speak Baitadeli, and 1.22% speak Gurung (CBS, 2021). Specifically, English is spoken by 0.01% of the population, placing it in 76th place nationwide (CBS, 2021). The linguistic, ethnic, and other characteristics are evident in the corpus.

Although private schools offer classes in English and the number of English speakers is increasing, Nepal does not recognize English as an official language. In this sense, English is still regarded as a foreign language in Nepal. The cultural diversity of Nepalese society is reflected in educational institutions, where classrooms are becoming increasingly culturally and linguistically diverse.

In multicultural classrooms, imposing only one language policy tends to privilege certain students and discomfort students from low-income families. Students who come from different cultural backgrounds tend to learn in different ways. Forcing students to master the four skills of English through rigid, rule-based exercises maximizes the risk of distorting students' language-acquisition instincts in the long term. English itself is not static. Different versions of English exist, such as Singaporean English, Indian English, South African English, and Indonesian English. Therefore, these classrooms with a variety of languages and cultures require pedagogical care or inclusive approaches. English teachers have a significant responsibility to design activities that support learners by building on their linguistic and cultural resources. There is a need for a translanguaging pedagogy that can accommodate students' home languages and backgrounds alongside the target language, such as English, so that students not only maintain linguistic identities but also enhance their English language proficiency.

When it comes to language learning in Nepal, the most common languages are English and Nepali, which are utilized in all private schools and in some public schools as the primary language of instruction for pupils from a wide range of backgrounds. English is still spoken as a foreign language in Nepal. The school where I teach English is almost full of students who speak Rai, Limbu, and Nepali as their mother tongue. "Code-meshing arises because of a sense of comfort in the way a speaker expresses it" (Sianipar & Tambunsaribu, 2022, p. 7). Code-meshing allows students to think more freely and use languages as they please. This practice fosters communication flow. However, code-meshing has not been used as a teaching tool or as a whole in the classroom in Nepal's context. The resources in the students' native languages are therefore not incorporated into classroom content. In other words, mother tongues are limited in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) classrooms rather than being deployed. Code-meshing is not adopted in the process of creating meaning for them. This shows that students in Nepalese schools are forced to speak English at all costs. Nepal's education system is influenced by the monolithic ideology of the "English-only" policy to create a hostile environment for some learners. English-only policy perpetuates the use of dominant languages as the medium of instruction in classrooms. Moreover, instruction in EFL contexts is biased both linguistically and culturally. English dominates the linguistic and cultural diversity of multilingual classrooms. Among academics, language instruction has been a contentious issue in academic organizations in Nepal. English language proficiency is required as a subject.

The Ministry of Education (MoE) in Nepal mandated English as a compulsory subject in grade 1 in 2003. Indeed, this ministry has adopted English as the language for studying English course materials and engaging in classroom interactions. Dearden (2014) asserts that enhancing English language proficiency is facilitated by instruction starting in the early grades. The earlier students begin learning English, the more proficient they will become. However, teaching English at a very young age is not the only method to achieve proficiency. Rather, language acquisition is the most important part of early childhood. A strong foundation in the mother tongue can help students acquire additional languages. As a multilingual country, it is common for students in each class to speak different mother tongues.

Educators should recognize the use of such linguistically and culturally diverse classrooms. The primary source of instruction in the classroom is the student's past knowledge. Inadequate qualitative research has been conducted on translanguaging pedagogies in the Nepalese context. Therefore, this issue has many implications and significant potential. The study investigates the perceptions of both teachers and students regarding diversity. This study examines students' perceptions of code-meshing and its effects on their participation in class through writing and verbal communication. This examination is important because most of these students speak different mother tongues and lack a strong foundation in English. Most people in this area are farmers, and they do not speak English. When students do not have opportunities to speak English outside the classroom, their English language proficiency is severely affected. The following two questions will guide this small-scale research:

- i. What perceptions do students have of translanguaging writing pedagogy in Nepali multilingual public-school classrooms?
- ii. How do students incorporate code-meshing and code-switching into their English writing exercises to improve their English?

Literature review

Translanguaging and translingualism are the same concept, but they exist in different genres—composition and teaching, respectively. However, in ESL or EFL contexts, these two notions overlap. Translanguaging and translingualism complement each other. Translanguaging is a process of creating meaning through hybrid and functionally grounded language. Ayash (2019) views translingualism as the fluid and mobile nature of language. She suggests that English teachers strive to understand the concrete practices in which language users engage and the possibilities that translingual approaches offer. Each language comprises components borrowed from other languages. No language is inherently pure. Translingualism relies on the flexible language use of bilingual and multilingual students to generate new insights and new language practices, such as those considered standard in academia (García & Wei, 2015). Canagarajah (2013) argues that when multilinguals blend their linguistic sources into English, they synthesize various forms of content and create new meaning. This is different from code-switching, where students use two or more languages as a form of translation, but in this process, they do not use different languages as fluid components to help them improve their cognitive skills and rhetorical awareness. The best method for teaching English linguistically is a translanguaging pedagogy in diverse classroom settings. Translanguaging in English language courses is more than just that, involving the use of L1 while acknowledging the student's overall language proficiency (Creese & Blackledge, 2010; Pham & Nguyen, 2024). Translanguaging tends to assist students in thinking critically, in making meaning from language sources, and in using languages fluidly.

Furthermore, translanguaging is a tool for learning a minority language. It improves students' proficiency in their second language and helps them to be proficient in the classroom (Beres, 2015). By using language and cultural allusions that a minority of speakers are accustomed to, students can break down barriers and break the silence, according to García and Wei (2015). Young (2014) speaks on behalf of African American Vernacular English (AAVE) and demands that African American English (AAE) speakers be allowed to mix AAE and Standard English in both academic and professional contexts to ensure effective communication and the articulation of ideas. In Nepal's context, students are encouraged to leave their home languages behind and focus on English to become proficient in it. This means most Nepali students are

not monolithic. Most of them are bilingual and multilingual students. Their brains are trained to process different linguistic components simultaneously and make sense of what they read, see, and hear. These students can perform better when allowed to think freely through code-meshing (Sharma, 2025). Code-meshing may not improve students' target language overnight, yet it allows their brains to negotiate with other languages and construct meaning.

Using translanguaging pedagogy in EFL classes benefits students who are reluctant to speak by giving them a chance to participate and improve their English fluency (Garcia & Wei, 2015). They learn through classroom participation and improve their academic achievement. For effective participation, students must be allowed to use what they are confident with. Realizing the need for the use of mother tongues, in 1974, the executive committee of the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) in the United States adopted the position that students had a right to live in their linguistic world and write in their mother tongues to maintain their linguistic identity (Perryman-Clark, 2015). Most countries, including Nepal, have multilingual and bilingual speakers. This resolution has given bilinguals and multilinguals some relief in words. Unfortunately, this resolution has not been implemented institutionally in most countries, including Nepal. In Nepal, students are under pressure to memorize English words, verb forms, sentence structures, and more. This is painful and unfair to them (Ranjit, 2024; Rai & Pokharel, 2025). English teachers must keep their students' challenges in mind. According to Seltzer et al. (2017), there are four reasons to use translanguaging strategically. In education, translanguaging means: a) helping students interact with linguistic sources, b) giving students the chance to understand difficult texts and content and cultivate academic language usage, c) creating room for students' bilingual identities and methods of knowing, and d) encouraging students to be bilingual. Ranjit (2024) argues that merging the L1 and the target language (English) is advantageous because bilingual components operate simultaneously, facilitating communicative efficacy. In Nepal, some students go to prominent schools. They speak standard English. Sharma (2025) points out that even when students speak a standardized language, they do not understand how local linguistic features and cultural references blend. Only speaking English perfectly does not guarantee a speaker's understanding of linguistic sources.

Ghimire et al. (2024) suggest that teachers can use bilingual textbooks and students' mother tongues in class discussions and facilitate students' understanding during exams, thereby achieving two goals simultaneously meeting the needs of multilingual students and complying with the English Medium Instruction (EMI) policy in Nepal. Likewise, Wei (2018) highlights the efficacy of EMI in situations where the language of instruction at school differs from students' native tongues. All of these studies highlight the importance of incorporating translanguaging techniques for Nepali EFL teachers. This study adopts Garcia and Weis's (2015) model of translanguaging pedagogy: idea generation, concept arrangement, revision and refinement, and final drafting. In addition, this study employs transformative pedagogy (Mezirow, 2000) to thematize data for clear understanding (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Transformative pedagogy places learners at the center and fosters collaboration and reflection for effective learning.

Methods

Design of Research

In order to investigate how translanguaging writing pedagogy can empower students in a linguistically diverse Nepali classroom, this study used a qualitative critical research design.

Because it challenges the monolingual ideologies that predominate in English Language Teaching (ELT) and aims to advance equity and agency among multilingual learners, a critical paradigm was selected (Canagarajah, 2013; Pennycook, 2010). Within this framework of translanguaging, the study examined teachers' and students' perceptions of code-meshing practices and their positive impact on writing confidence, fluency, and classroom participation, using an ethnographic observational approach conducted in the classroom. The study was conducted at a community-based basic school in the linguistically diverse Dhankuta District of Nepal. At this school, teaching English is required at the lower secondary level. The location was chosen because it exemplifies the type of multilingual learning setting that characterizes Nepali public education, where students predominantly speak Rai, Limbu, and Nepali (CBS, 2021).

Participants

Participants included 10 grade 8 students aged 14 to 16 and one English language teacher (the researcher) (Table 1). It was convenience sampling. Since this research site is in a remote area, the student population is insufficient. In remote areas of Nepal, population density does not vary proportionately. Moreover, the researcher encountered a shortage of research materials due to the remoteness. The majority of students were from multilingual households where the primary language was either Limbu, Rai, or Nepali. Informed consent was acquired from the school principal, participating students, and their parents, and participation was entirely voluntary. To preserve anonymity and moral integrity, pseudonyms were used in place of the students' real names (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Table 1:

Students' and a teacher's demographic information

S. N.	Students (Pseudonyms)	Mother tongue	Age	Interest in Translanguaging
1	Rakshya	Nepali	13	Yes
2	Bina	Nepali	13	Yes
3	Harka	Rai	14	Yes
4	Numa	Rai	13	Yes
5	Gita	Limbu	12	Yes
6	Kabita	Nepali	14	Yes
7	Prem	Nepali	13	Yes
8	Bal	Limbu	14	Yes
9	Hangma	Limbu	14	Yes
10	Lakpa	Limbu	14	Yes
1	Samar (English Teacher)	Nepali	36	Yes

Tools and Processes for Data Collection

Four primary tools were used to gather data during a six-week classroom observation. The researcher used both Nepali and English to collect data. Nepali was used more dominantly to elicit students' responses.

a. Participant Observation:

The teacher-researcher recorded student participation in translingual writing assignments and classroom interactions in diaries during and after class.

b. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs):

Two FGDs, each lasting roughly 45 minutes, were held to gather students' opinions on how they write and how comfortable they are using multiple languages during recess.

c. Brief casual discussions:

During class breaks, participants' thoughts were observed to document impromptu student responses and changing perspectives. They were asked whether they benefited from translingualism or translanguaging.

d. Journal keeping:

The researcher kept weekly reflections and analytical field notes while the students kept journals documenting their progress in translingual writing. For the "My Community writing assignment," students were free to use any language they wanted for brainstorming, drafting, and revision. Peer review, translation, and code-meshing were all specifically adopted to promote linguistic flexibility and individual expression. To follow García and Weis's (2014) model of translanguaging pedagogy, the activity was developed in four stages: idea generation, concept arrangement, revision and refinement, and final drafting.

Analysis of data

Using the critical lens of transformative pedagogy (Mezirow, 2000), the data were examined using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Recurring themes regarding linguistic identity, classroom participation, and writing confidence were identified by carefully reviewing field notes, student journals, and focus group transcripts. Based on Grounded Theory, the coding process involved three steps. Open coding involves highlighting student narratives related to language use and emotion, as well as recurrent words and phrases. Axial coding is the process of organizing starter codes into more general groups: code-meshing for confidence-building, students' prior knowledge, and translation and code-meshing in writing assignments. Selective coding allows for integrating important research to demonstrate how translingual education includes students' need for multiple languages or linguistic sources for meaning-making. Validity and credibility were increased through the triangulation of several data sources, including journals, FGDs and observations (Denzin, 2012). To recognize positionality as both a participant observer and an insider teacher, the researcher maintained reflexivity through consistent journaling and note-taking. The researcher read the notes repeatedly when developing the manuscript.

Results/Findings

- i. What perceptions do students have of translingual writing pedagogy in Nepali multilingual public-school classrooms?
- ii. How do students incorporate code-meshing and code-switching into their English writing exercises

The researcher employed Garcia and Wei's model of translanguaging pedagogy: idea generation, concept arrangement, revision and refinement, and final drafting during the study. Participants were allowed to use both Nepali and English and participate in translanguaging.

Practice of Translingual Writing

1. Idea Generation (My Community as the Theme): Students were asked to use prompts, like names, occupations of community people, likes and dislikes, natural beauty, social concerns, and future goals, to write about their communities during the first six days. They were urged to speak in any language, emphasizing concepts over precision. They felt more at ease when they spoke about their surroundings in their mother tongues. They shared a positive attitude towards the translingual practice.

2. Arranging Concepts: After presenting and debating their writing, the students rearranged their thoughts by recognizing terms from different languages. Peers, teachers, and dictionaries all assisted in refining and translating concepts into English. Topic sentences that support details and maintain coherence were emphasized. They found it more comfortable and convenient.

3. Revision and refinement: Students worked together to revise the content, grammar, and vocabulary during this phase. To improve their drafts, they turned to peer assistance and multilingual dictionaries (Nepali to English). They had a sense of control over their own learning and of co-producing texts.

4. Creating the finished draft: Peers praised the students as authors after they finished their My Community booklets. The way translingual pedagogy promotes transformation in multilingual classrooms is evident in the confidence and identity shifts that resulted from this realization. Based on their final draft, other findings are thematized as follows.

i. Code-meshing for confidence building

Traditional methods of teaching English frequently resemble the banking model proposed by Freire (2000) in which teachers impart knowledge to passive students. Such pedagogy imposes linguistic hierarchies while ignoring students' lived knowledge. According to the participants of the focus group, writing assignments in only one language left them feeling uneasy and uninspired. One student (Kabita) revealed, for instance, that she used to become very nervous when faced with English assignments, but that her confidence significantly increased once she was able to come up with ideas in her mother tongue and then switch to English:

Malai pahile English class man pardena thyo because English ma bolna aaudena thyo ani laaaz lagthyo. Tesaile math maa vanda English ko exam dar lagthyo. Class ma kahili kahi assignment nabujera chupa lagera basthe. Paxi new sir le English ra Nepali misayera lekha vannu vayo ani alia li confidence badyo.

[As we were supposed to speak English in class, I used to hate this lesson. I preferred math classes to English ones. I had to look down as I had no idea of some English assignments. Realizing our difficulties, our new sir (teacher) allowed us to mix both English and Nepali at our convenience, resulting in better confidence.]

Still, many English teachers may enforce strict English-speaking environments in class, which does not improve students' English but discourages them from developing their creative and critical thinking skills due to the barrier of English. Nguyen (2022) did a study and found that most students were interested in translanguaging, but institutional policies did not allow them to practice it. A language does not reflect someone's talent or creativity. English should be taught as a language, not as content in multilingual classrooms. Some teachers tend to focus on grammatical rules, formatting, and quantity rather than on students' engagement in learning processes, creativity, and expression. Students' linguistic proficiency is judged by products, not processes. This idea is in line with Mezirow's (2000) concept of transformative pedagogy, which is education that challenges unfair practices to foster critical awareness.

ii. Students' previous knowledge

All the participating students frequently reported that using plurilingual strategies allowed them to express their thoughts and feelings more freely. Gita, another participant, said that she enjoyed learning English when her peers actively engaged in the code-meshing instruction:

Jaba hamro new sir le copy ma garo English word tipera rakhnu ani timile pohor saal gareko five interesting activities ko barema Nepali ra English use garera bola vannu vayo ani hamile sajilo sanga bolna sakyoo. Tespachi sangai bench maa basne sathi sanga interact gardai sabai kura lekha vannu hunthyo. Yo idea dherai ramro lagyo.

[As our new teacher instructed us to note down potential difficult words on a piece of paper and share any five interesting activities that we did the previous year, using English and Nepali, back and forth. As a result, we could share it in English easily. After that, he would tell us to write everything we shared through interactions with bench partners. All of us appreciated this technique.]

When students are not exposed to many English-speaking activities, English teachers should allow them to speak about something they can easily remember. English teachers could ask them to share something from their past. English teachers must specify the number of things, such as any five, any two, about your brother or best friend. These results support Andrade's (2009) claim that assessing students' prior knowledge fosters productive teamwork in which bilinguals and multilinguals engage in meaning-making and co-produce meaning. This shifts pedagogy from teacher-centered to learner-driven. Furthermore, this exercise echoes Sherma's (2024) emphasis on writing through interactions to keep the writing momentum.

iii. Translation and code-meshing in writing assignments

The process demystified learning English, according to the participants. Previously, Harka, thought he would never learn English. Nevertheless, he gradually became interested in translanguaging writing, learned how to draft in his mother tongue and even created a journal about his everyday life as a village boy:

Pahile ta English book bata sarnu matra garthe. Kati kura bujeko hunna thyo. English homework gardina thiye. Ani naya sir le English improve garne tarika dinu vayo. Maile Nepali ra English mix garera euta journal copy ma daily one paragraph lekhna thale. School gayeko, kheleko, daura liyeko, gol kheleko barema. Maile euta journal ready gareko chu. Aba euta photo tasna baki xa.

[I used to copy answers from the textbook. I would hardly understand anything. I would not do any English homework. Our new teacher shared some strategies for improving English. I started writing a paragraph in one of my notebooks each day, mixing both Nepali and English. I would write about my trip to school, break time, collecting firewood, football matches, etc. My journal is almost ready. I need to stick a photo to it.]

Another student Bal added:

Ma sanga Nepali-English dictionary cha. Jaba lekhne kaam dinu huncha, ma Nepali words ra English meanings khojchu. Dherai time lagxa. Kaile kahi I mix all words but no Nepali word. Esari lekhda mero work complete huncha ani no punishment.

[I have a Nepali-English dictionary. When I do writing tasks, I look up Nepali words and their English meanings. It is time consuming. And sometimes, I mix both Nepali

and English words. But I do not use Nepali letters. Mixing these two languages helps me complete my writing assignments and avoid punishment.]

Overall, the participants shared positive perceptions of the translingual practice. Students code-meshed and code-switched between English and their home languages by using dictionaries and thinking in their home languages. Also, they felt more empowered and confident when they had the opportunity to discuss familiar topics in both Nepali and English. Translingual exercises created a fearless environment. Working with peers helped them open up. For them, translingualism was effective and necessary.

Dictionaries are helpful for multilinguals and bilinguals when they cannot write in a single language. When students use two languages simultaneously, they can guess meanings and improve long-term memories. They do not count the number of Nepali words or how many of English words. Their goal is to use words randomly and make meaning. This is where code-meshing enters. Looking up Nepali words in a dictionary regularly can help them memorize their meanings and improve their memory. More importantly, students can engage in academic work, such as doing projects, writing essays, or stories.

Speaking and writing should be practiced simultaneously. These two skills are productive skills. When students speak and write or write and speak, they are likely to enhance their language proficiency. Translingualism supports the idea that writing and speaking can master any linguistic feature. Speaking and writing skills should not be learned in isolation. It also improves students' memory power. Writing something on a piece of paper can consolidate what is acquired by cognitive power. According to these arguments, students develop self-reliance, inventiveness, and long-term motivation when pedagogy values linguistic repertoires (Council of Europe, 2007; Piccardo, 2013). Students tend to learn faster when they read and write in a foreign language. To master a foreign language, such as English, translingual pedagogies stress both writing and speaking. These skills complement each other.

Discussion

The data (Table 1) indicate that all Nepali students want translingual practices to facilitate their acquisition of English. Nepali multilingual classrooms, where English-only instruction has long predominated, is reflected by the results of this study. Translingual practice addresses students' needs and empowers them by providing more feasible options and materials. Therefore, it can be argued that translingual writing pedagogy can be a transformative approach. The findings both support and expand upon earlier studies that highlighted the inclusive and liberating potential of translanguaging in English language learning (Canagarajah, 2013; García & Wei, 2015). Unlike in English medium schools, public school students often fail Math, Science, and English exams in Nepal. Bilinguals and multilinguals have been victimized by such a rigid practice of restricting students' mother tongues. In Nepali-medium schools (mostly public schools in Nepal's context), students learn every subject in Nepali and English. It is unwise and unfair to expect students to write everything perfectly in English exams. Linguistic flexibility is required for them. Pedagogies and evaluation should be more inclusive and liberatory. Allowing students to use more than one linguistic source can allow students to retain their cultural and linguistic identity. Students participate more critically in class discussions.

Translingualism leads to high confidence

In line with Freire's (1997, 2000) banking model of education, in which students passively absorb information rather than actively create knowledge, the research participants reported

that monolingual classroom practices hampered their capacity to express ideas confidently. After being allowed to speak their mother tongue alongside English, students, like Kabita, who had previously feared English classes, became more confident. Students' self-esteem was high and impacted positively their learning outcomes. This research supports the claim made by García and Wei (2015) that translanguaging frees multilingual learners from strict linguistic boundaries and enables them to draw on their full linguistic repertoire to create meaning. Teachers' evaluations should be based on how students reflect their understanding and meaning in exams. If students are offered linguistic options, they can articulate their thoughts, participate in discussions, and find a safer classroom to learn. But a language barrier disempowers students, leading to negative perceptions of them. Students' words alone cannot represent what is in their brains. This outcome also supports Ayash's (2019) theory that translanguaging reflects the fluid and mobile character of language. Students' transition from nervousness to confidence shows how linguistic fluidity can break down hierarchies between dominant and minority languages, supporting Canagarajah's (2013) assertion that multilingual writers generate richer meanings and hybrid identities by combining a variety of linguistic options. Several scholars also argue that translanguaging empowers lower-proficiency students to grasp difficult content. At the same time, higher-proficiency students can also benefit from it. They can also experience how languages interact with each other to form meaning.

This study found that students bring their home cultures and linguistic elements into the classroom, and when they have permission from their authority (English teachers), they feel empowered to challenge the monolithic domination of the English-only policy. Code-meshing gave them a sense of strong confidence and achievement. In the context of code-meshing and sometimes code-switching, students emerge as victorious and independent. They control their own learning and take greater responsibility for it.

Translingualism leads to active engagement and collaboration

Creese and Blackledge's (2010) concept of flexible bilingualism, in which classroom interaction becomes a space for knowledge negotiation and co-construction, is strongly reflected in participants' participation and cooperation during translingual writing tasks. As an example of how translanguaging promotes collaborative learning environments, students such as Gita explained how bilingual notetaking and peer discussion enhanced their proficiency in speaking and writing in English. Nepali students (bilinguals) sometimes code-mesh and code-switch to produce their answers. They mix languages and create meaning. Multiple languages facilitate their quick understanding. This is becoming common in everyday life, too. If we watch celebrity interviews, they often code-mesh and code-switch. The notion of mixing languages bolsters Andrade's (2009) argument that leveraging students' existing knowledge improves collaboration and engagement. Students are not empty vessels but need a linguistic medium to express themselves. Translingualism is one practice they blend formal and informal linguistic features. Seltzer et al.'s (2017) framework, which highlights translanguaging as a way to help students access complex academic content, strengthen bilingual identities, and cultivate agency, is also echoed by the observed classroom transformation from teacher-centered to learner-driven. Allowing students to switch and code-mesh between Nepali, Rai, Limbu, and English in classroom activities helped to achieve these exact objectives. Students' active participation clearly indicates that they needed their background knowledge (home culture and language). When they did not have something to talk about or use in conversations, they felt reluctant. In other words, they had no content to share.

Translingualism helps students engage in the meaning-making process through writing.

Translingual pedagogy has the potential to promote long-term independence, as evidenced by students' growing independence in journaling and creative writing. For instance, Harka's experience keeping a bilingual journal every day demonstrates how code-switching and code-meshing techniques promote consistent language use outside of the classroom. Nepali students in rural areas may not have access to computers or other digital devices to record ideas or notes. So, content in different languages is recorded in diaries for future use. Students cannot memorize everything that they learn in class. They must take notes, re-read them, and engage in meaning-making outside the classroom.

In the same way, Bal's use of a Nepali-English dictionary allows him to translate, memorize vocabulary, and code-mesh between these two languages to complete writing assignments. When students use two or more languages at random, their brains interact with different languages, creating new meaning in harmony. Unknowingly, these students play with linguistic features and improve their metacognitive and metalinguistic skills.

Mezirow's (2000) theory of transformative learning, which holds that education should question limiting presumptions and enable students to critically reinterpret their experiences, is supported by this result. The Conference on College Composition and Communication's 1974 stance is also supported by findings (cited in Perryman-Clark, 2015) that pupils are entitled to use their native tongues for self-expression. Instead of being the passive recipients of instruction in English, students became active participants in meaning-making by incorporating their local linguistic sources into the writing process. Moreover, when students lack access to the internet, child-friendly books, and educated family members, their learning becomes more difficult. However, translingual practices allow students to note down and mix L1 and L2 words, combine them fluidly, interact with them, and make meaning. They first try to understand through their connections and put their understanding into words. The use of multiple linguistic elements does not confuse students but helps them derive meaning from the synthesis of multiple sources. Note-taking and journaling keep students engaged in meaning-making processes outside the classroom as well.

It is evident that this study supports and extends the theoretical claims made by Mezirow (2000), Canagarajah (2013), and García and Wei (2015). Translingual pedagogy facilitates inclusive, participatory, and transformative learning in Nepali community classrooms. By dismantling linguistic hierarchies, promoting cooperation, and confirming multilingual identities, it reframes English instruction as a means of empowerment rather than exclusion. Government schools in remote areas of Nepal face several challenges. Flexible pedagogies can prove to be useful and fair to such students.

Conclusion

This study shows Nepali students are interested in translingual practices and how translingual writing can be a game-changer in Nepal's multilingual classrooms. It provides educators with a pedagogy that is both adaptable and resource-rich. In addition to affirming their identities, it helps students become more involved, confident, and capable of producing meaningful English texts. In multilingual countries like Nepal, where policies of dominant language continue to exist (Liddicoat, 2007; Phillipson, 1992; Tollefson et al., 1991), translanguaging challenges linguistic hegemony and reframes classrooms as places of empowerment. The number of EFL and ESL students is outnumbering that of native English speakers. EFL and ESL speakers interact with multiple languages every day. Different linguistic interactions, such as music,

songs, semiotics, advertisements, and posters, shape their learning. If translanguaging is adopted in EFL and ESL contexts, students can feel empowered to demonstrate their creativity and critical thinking. Translingual approaches are not only ideological but pragmatic. Translingualism helps students become more interactive, confident, and creative. Depending on the socio-economic context, teachers can start with a small initiative. For example, teachers can choose specific chapters and allow students to use code-meshing to break their silence and engage in English-speaking and writing, in the absence of any institutional policies. Even if a school or college has not implemented a translingual policy, teachers can still be proactive and assign low-stakes translingual assignments. Thus, incorporating translingual and plurilingual approaches into regular practice can improve sociocultural inclusion and English learning.

Furthermore, the research shows that implementing translingual pedagogy in Nepali classrooms requires only a shift in teachers' perspectives on linguistic diversity, rather than a total revision of the current curriculum. Policymakers can internalize the concept of translanguaging and empower students to shape their own learning. More teacher training and empirical data can accelerate this process in Nepal. When students face such problems, their abilities and mastery cannot be assessed with a single, monolithic rubric. Different banks and government bodies should allow citizens to code-switch languages when filling out forms. Students should be encouraged to use multiple linguistic sources when giving presentations or preparing collages.

Research limitation

This study has some limitations. This was conducted in a small community-based basic school located in a hilly region of Nepal, where multilingual students are abundant. Students' major profession is farming and wage-based jobs. The parents of the participants were minimally literate. Therefore, the outcome cannot be generalized across Nepal. However, the findings are worth considering and comparing for future research. Future research can focus more on larger random samples, including participants from both cities and villages, educated and illiterate parents, teachers, and policymakers, to gain a broader understanding of a translingual approach in middle school, high school, college, and university contexts.

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Consent

The study sought consent from the headteacher and the students' parents.

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GenAI Declaration

The author used the free version of ChatGPT-3.5 to refine some language and create the reference list.

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Biodata

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