

Exploring the Availability and Feasibility of Translanguaging Pedagogy in Kurdish EFL Classrooms: A Descriptive Study

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to explore whether translanguaging pedagogy is available and possible to be practiced in the Kurdish EFL classrooms at the English Department at the University of Sulaimani. The research's objective is to obtain insight into teachers' awareness and understanding of translanguaging, and the extent to which it is currently practised in their classrooms. The viewpoints of important stakeholders: teachers, students, and administrators, on translanguaging, are investigated. In addition, the aspects that help or stand as obstacles in implementing translanguaging pedagogy are highlighted. This study uses a mixed-methods approach. The data were collected through semi-structured interviews with teachers and the head of the English Department. In addition, student questionnaires and classroom observations are obtained to analyse the alignment between reported practices and actual classroom behaviour. The study's findings endeavour to clarify the perspectives and attitudes of all stakeholders toward translanguaging and its practices. The study highlights the need for a rethink of language education policy in Kurdistan. It emphasizes that translanguaging is a possible pedagogical technique that is consistent with the Kurdistan Region's multilingual reality.

KEY WORDS: Kurdish EFL classrooms, Translanguaging pedagogy, Mixed-methods approach, Semi-structured interview, Language Attitudes.

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, in multilingual education, translanguaging has gained attention as a significant teaching methodology, specifically in EFL contexts. From its genesis in bilingual education in Wales, where it involved navigating the concept of bilingualism (Williams, 1994), it has now come to be understood in fairly broad terms as the flexible use of languages by multilinguals from their entire linguistic repertoire in meaning-making, learning, and communication activities (García, 2009). Instead of treating languages separately, translanguaging sees them as interrelated resources that learners

use quite naturally and productively throughout their activities inside and outside of the classroom (García & Wei, 2014). In other words, according to Vogel and García, the linguistic knowledge of bilinguals and multilinguals is regarded as a unified, holistic resource that amalgamates distinct lexical, morphological, and grammatical aspects alongside social behaviours (Vogel & Garcia, 2017). García stated that translanguaging as pedagogy is “the ways in which bilingual students and teachers engage in complex and fluid discursive practices that include, at times, the home language practices of students to ‘make sense’ of teaching and learning, to communicate and appropriate

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subject knowledge, and to develop academic language practices” (García, 2014, p. 112).

This approach is becoming more and more popular for pedagogical purposes in multilingual classrooms, mainly for the creation of inclusive, culturally responsive, and cognitively engaging learning environments (Canagarajah, 2011; Cenoz & Gorter, 2015). When students are given the freedom to use their home languages strategically with English, it is considered that translanguaging boosts comprehension, promotes higher-level thinking, and acknowledges the identity of students as language users. In ELT settings, learners find it difficult to comprehend English-only instructions. In such contexts, translanguaging acts as a mediator between comprehension and active participation (García, Johnson, Seltzer, & Valdés, 2017).

The sociolinguistic situation of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq provides an excellent context for translanguaging practices. Kurdish is dominated by the Sorani and Kermami varieties as the languages of instruction and daily use. English is taught as a foreign language from the early years of primary school all the way up to university, but learners usually face barriers due to limited exposure, resources, and confidence. Arabic is taught as a subject, but in most Kurdish-speaking communities, it is not the primary medium of communication and instruction.

Many EFL classrooms in the region tend toward monolingual approaches to teaching in English, largely as a product of imported curricula and global language ideologies. Accordingly, classrooms may end up using students' prior linguistic knowledge—that of Kurdish, in particular—very minimally, or worse, discouraging it. Nonetheless, some teachers and students have reportedly engaged in informal or ad hoc translanguaging when dealing with difficult material or discussing abstract content. Are these practices frequent, are they intentional, and are they considered legitimate pedagogically by schools and

policymakers? Very little research has so far begun to address these questions.

Within those lines, the aim of the present research is to investigate whether there is a translanguaging pedagogy available for Kurdish EFL classrooms and the feasibility of implementing it. Through investigation of classroom activities, teachers' and students' perceptions, and their institutional readiness toward translanguaging, this research aims to uncover information on how translanguaging can be integrated into EFL education, in an organized and sustainable manner, in the region.

Hence, this gap gave rise to the present study to explore the availability and feasibility of translanguaging practices and pedagogy in Kurdish EFL classrooms. Rather than taking it for granted that it would be integrated, the study instead questioned whether the conditions, such as teacher awareness, openness at the institutions, and attitudes of learners, are supportive of this approach. By observing the kinds of languages used in the classrooms and the views of stakeholders, this research lays a foundation for establishing an understanding of the potential role that translanguaging might play in Kurdish EFL education.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1.1 Translanguaging Pedagogy: Global Application

The practical applications of translanguaging have been thoroughly recorded in many educational settings. Although extensive research has concentrated on K-12 environments (García & Kleyn, 2016), there is a paucity of studies that investigate adult education contexts.

Significant exceptions encompass Beiler and Dewilde's (2023) ethnographic investigation of Norway's adult basic education initiatives, which depicted educators as linguistic detectives who

systematically analysed students' multilingual repertoires to improve understanding. According to their findings, Kurdish-speaking migrants benefited from deliberate code-switching among Norwegian, English, and their native language. In the studies of Translanguaging, code-switching is sometimes used interchangeably with translanguaging. Code switching, according to Cadden et al. (2024), is the unplanned integration of two or more languages in the discourse within the speakers of multilingual communities. Therefore, these two terms should not be confused, as Translanguaging is a deliberate process and mostly occurs in classroom discourse. In past decades, applications of translanguaging appeared in higher education. For instance, Alasdair et al. (2002) stated that Saudi EFL teachers practiced Arabic-English translanguaging in virtual office hours. They reported that the usage of this casual method reduced students' anxiety concerning L1 usage.

1.1 In the Basque Country, another remarkable case study is noticed. The researchers explored English-medium instruction (EMI) classrooms where Basque is actively practiced by the students for oral presentations, written tasks, etc, yet using English for delivering the lectures. Moreover, Wang's (2019) study of Chinese university classrooms highlighted that planned usage of L1 improved content mastery in STEM departments where lectures are delivered in English.

1.2 Problem Statement

On a global scale, translanguaging is adopted as a revolutionary pedagogical approach (García, 2009; Canagarajah, 2011), yet there is a gap in empirical Kurdish EFL literature concerning its application. There are informal practices of translanguaging in the classrooms at the English Department; however, this occurrence is not officially recorded or recognized. This study identifies two notable gaps. First, the lack of systematic translanguaging research

in Kurdish higher education, particularly at the University of Sulaimani. Second, the scarcity of research on the ongoing conflict between rigid English language policies and students' multilingual experiences.

1.3 Alasmari *et al.* (2002), reported that some international universities do not have clear-cut policies regarding the language of instruction. They give the lecturers reasonable flexibility to implement micro-level policies for practicing translanguaging. However, the University of Sulaimani's EMI method in the scientific and humanities colleges is in contrast with the university and the region's multilingual nature. This challenge raises the importance of conducting research-based translanguaging pedagogies, taking into account a revolution in institutional perspectives and governmental constraints. Because of the scarcity of empirical data, the current study explores the present practices and possible avenues for pedagogical upgrading in Kurdish EFL classrooms.

1.4 Research Objectives

Examining the availability and feasibility of translanguaging pedagogy within the English Department is the major aim of this study. The specific objectives include the following:

1. This research aims to examine the availability of translanguaging practice in the literature, linguistic, and ELT (English Language Teaching) classes.
2. This research aims to explore students' and administrators' attitudes toward implementing translanguaging in the classroom.
3. This research aims to assess the feasibility of implementing translanguaging pedagogy in teaching at the department

1.5 Research Questions

1. To what extent is translanguaging currently practiced in EFL classrooms at the Department of

English?

2. What are the perceptions of teachers, students, and administrators about translanguaging?

3. What factors facilitate or hinder the implementation of translanguaging pedagogy?

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Participants

This study examined both students and instructors. Fourteen lecturers, comprising both males and females, from two distinct disciplines—literature and linguistics—participated in the interview. One of the instructors teaches English language skills. All the professors, with the exception of two, were native Kurdish speakers, while the remaining two were Arabs. The lecturers engaged in the interview and permitted the observation of their classes. Ninety-four students from all four stages of the English department participated in this research. They completed an online questionnaire. Certain students have the ability to communicate in Arabic. All four stages include linguistics and literature courses.

2.1 Research Design

The study is a descriptive qualitative study with certain elements of a quantitative nature to explore whether translanguaging pedagogy has been applied or can be applied in the Department of English, College of Languages. This approach describes current language use and stakeholder perceptions in an actual world context-located education setting. In descriptive design, a phenomenon or situation is observed or described in its own state and is never manipulated in any way aimed at alteration. This very nature of descriptive design can be adopted when one intends to look into new pedagogical trends like translanguaging being offered in a localized context (Creswell, 2014).

In order to attain a complete understanding of the research problem, several data collection tools were

employed. A structured questionnaire was used to elicit student views, while semi-structured interviews were held to gather perspectives from teachers and administrators. Additionally, classroom observations were conducted to document the teaching practices used. Combining the data collection tools permitted a more comprehensive analysis, thus providing greater reliability for the results (Dörnyei, 2007)

3.2 Data Collection Tools

3.2.1 Semi-Structured Interviews

The researchers conducted semi-structured interviews with the head of the department and lecturers. These interviews provide data of a completely qualitative nature regarding how language is taught, the concept of translanguaging, and institutional attitudes toward multilingual pedagogical approaches. Participants were asked to recount their experiences teaching in multilingual classrooms, their understanding of the concept of translanguaging, and their views on its potential advantages and disadvantages.

The semi-structured format proved to be helpful in terms of flexibility while ensuring a clear thematic focus aligned with the research objectives. This type of interview is widely recommended, with strong emphasis, to support studies that aim to examine personal beliefs and institutional dynamics in depth (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Mackey & Gass, 2015).

3.2.2 Classroom observations

were conducted to assess instructional practices in real-time, as well as to examine the extent to which translanguaging was implemented or resisted in English language classes. The presence of such an observation rubric-based tool was helpful in systematically analyzing language use, engagement, instructional strategy, and the environment in the English language classroom, and meetings could be called on to draw out patterns of interaction between teacher and students or in the use of languages during instruction.

The observational data were crucial in corroborating the self-reported attitudes by showing how language was really utilized in classroom settings. In the words of Wragg (Wragg, 2011), being able to do a structured observation really provides an assessment of the validity of practicing pedagogy in applied settings.

3.2.3 Questionnaire

A structured questionnaire was conducted through Google Forms and sent to students to investigate their opinions on the use of several languages in education, together with their experiences with and impressions of translanguaging. The questionnaire included scaled questions covering degrees of agreement on several subjects, including the use of languages in the classroom, how successful it is to mix Kurdish and English, and the opinions about bilingual approaches to teaching.

Perceptions and attitudes can be better measured using Likert-scale tools across a larger sample, ensuring consistent data for quantitative analysis (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2009). Questionnaire responses represented an important layer in the process of data structuring to detect the general opinions of students that could be compared with qualitative answers.

4. Results

4.1 Interview Results

The interview results from the lecturers reveal some significant perceptions concerning the usage of multiple languages in EFL classrooms. The majority of the lecturers (10 out of 14) were either unfamiliar with the term "translanguaging" or could not provide its definition, highlighting a disconnect between theory and practice. Only a small number heard about or had awareness of it (4 out of 14).

In terms of language incorporation patterns, most of the teachers used Kurdish to a certain extent,

mainly for explanations and participating objectives. Only two lecturers obeyed the English-only classrooms ideology, reflecting differing viewpoints on the usage of the first language in EFL instruction. Within the multilingual framework of Kurdistan, Arabic was integrated into the curriculum for certain Arab students in several departments, but it was referenced far less than Kurdish. Only a limited number of lecturers in mixed classes used Arabic for comparisons or translations. Only one Arab lecturer avoided native languages entirely, declaring that English-only classes are central for skill improvement.

Regarding language balance, opinions varied considerably. Only two lecturers explicitly called for a balanced use of Kurdish and English, while the majority ignored the idea of balance altogether or maintained a limited use of Kurdish only. Furthermore, most of the lecturers considered their use of Kurdish as spontaneous and contextual, including phrases such as "casual", "in the moment", or "only when needed". The interview data indicate that eight teachers used Kurdish unintentionally without pedagogical context, but five teachers integrated it purposefully with specific educational aims, including scaffolding, pre-planned examples, or comparative grammar guidance. The methods ranged from well-thought-out teaching tools to response strategies used when students encountered difficulties.

A noteworthy finding concerns the misperception between different language practices. Six lecturers combined Kurdish expressly for translation reasons, including clarification, comparative analysis, or student engagement. Only two lecturers connected their code-switching techniques with translanguaging, representing some misapprehension of these concepts.

It was noted that lecturers acknowledged the advantages and disadvantages of multilingual classes, as well as some potential obstacles. Although many teachers, in the interview, approved the usage of Kurdish in helping students understand

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complicated materials and involve them more emphatically (particularly beginners), they stated important concerns. These included less exposure to English, a decline in enthusiasm for language learning, inadequate knowledge of the L1, and a scarcity of resources. The main potential barriers identified by the teachers were that the administration supports English and does not allow the use of Kurdish. For this reason, the challenges that are commonly mentioned relate to fundamental matters such as improving language balance, managing differences in pronunciation, and meeting the various requirements of the classroom.

Regarding future expectations, thirteen lecturers designated that training courses, seminars, and workshops are important for the proper implementation of translanguaging solutions. Institutional barriers such as a lack of training, vague policies, and limited administrative support were recognised as major challenges to continuous implementation. Many lecturers called for systematic guidance through workshops, curricular revisions, and collaboration between the English and Kurdish departments.

For the long run section, twelve lecturers unexpectedly predicted that the correct integration of translanguaging, accompanied by guidance, may have useful effects; conversely, they expected that excessive use would negatively affect long-term English ability. Nonetheless, merely two lecturers expected a negative impact.

Teacher	Use of L1 and English	Familiarity and intentional usage of TL	Balanced use of L1 and English	Advantage and disadvantage	Future implementation	Long-term impact
T1	Sometimes uses Kurdish; switching is challenging	unfamiliar TL; casual use	English-dominant; Kurdish aids engagement	-Students lose passion in English; -limited admin support +engaging	Advocates training and policy for wise usage of TL	Enhances E if used wisely; overuse risks disengagement
T2	Uses Kurdish/Arabic for vocabulary explanation	unfamiliar; unplanned use	Unclear balance; Kurdish aids understanding	+explain vocabulary +maintain comprehension TL - unsure about admin	Minor TL in analysis; unclear on training	Helps understanding; long-term benefit expected
T3	Frequent code-switching/translation	unfamiliar; intentional use	Prefers English; notes social challenges	+maintain comprehension -cause language erosion -lack of support	Suggests policies, minor TL usage for motivation	Benefits if limited; overuse discouraged
T4	English only/rarely L1/ multiple Ls only for translation department	Unfamiliar; uses few Kurdish words	Dismisses balance; minimal use	-TL has no value -no admin support	supports training; minor TL usage	No benefit expected; sees drawbacks
T5	Using Kurdish for Juniors; English-only classes for seniors	A little bit familiar; casual use	Mixed student reactions; prefers more English	+maintain comprehension; +partial admin support -less exposed to English	Recommends training; use TL in non-departmental lessons for 1 st year students.	Helps comprehension; but limits immersion in English
T6	Uses Kurdish and Arabic for clarifying concepts; but prefers English	unfamiliar; unintentional	Kurdish used sparingly; students feel positive about this usage	-Advises against TL -limited support +little bit for understanding	Seminars needed to be familiar with TL; not promoting implementing it	Drawbacks if overused; no gain in proficiency
T7	Minimal Kurdish use; prefers not to translate texts/but practices translation occasionally	unfamiliar; sees benefit as scaffolding	Scaffolding only; TL is a challenge in literature	-Barriers include lack of policy and resources +scaffolding	Workshop needed; unsure how to promote and implement TL	Improves communication and analysis skills
T8	Uses Kurdish if students confused; reluctant	unfamiliar; avoids frequent use	Kurdish doesn't improve skills; feels guilty using it	-Admin shouldn't support TL -sees TL as harmful	Small-scale use allowed; TL knowledge needed through training courses	May widen perspective; risk of proficiency loss
T9	Kurdish with 1st-years; for translation	Had limited knowledge; uses for clarity; planned use	TL helps low levels; no issues reported	+No major barriers +admin supportive +student engagement +understanding	Translation of difficult words only; training needed to be familiar with TL	Supports academic improvement

4.2 Class Observation Result

Table 2 provides a summary of classroom observation results (n = 13).

Table 2: Classroom Observation Results

Category	Score 1	Score 2	Score 3	Score 4	Score 5
Language Use	11 (84.6%)	2 (15.4%)	0 (0%)	1 (7.7%)	0 (0%)
Student Engagement	11 (84.6%)	2 (15.4%)	0 (0%)	1 (7.7%)	0 (0%)
Instructional Strategies	9 (69.2%)	3 (23.1%)	1 (7.7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Classroom Environment	-	-	13 (100%)	-	-
Teacher-Student Interaction	10 (76.9%)	0 (0%)	1 (7.7%)	2 (15.4%)	0 (0%)

*Note: Scoring for each category follows a 5-point Likert-style scale where Score 1 = Minimal/No evidence of translanguageing, and Score 5 = Highly effective and inclusive translanguageing practices. something.

Across the observed classes of the English Language department, classroom observations revealed limited translanguageing practice implementation. As in Table 2, in key areas of Language Use (84.6%), Student Engagement (84.6%), Instructional Strategies (69.2%), and Teacher-Student Interaction (76.9%), most teachers occupied the lowest level of rating score (Score 1), meaning that almost no use of the students' L1 (Kurdish or Arabic) was recorded in classroom instruction or interaction.

The only exception was found for the Classroom Environment, where all observed teachers (100%) scored a Score 3, suggesting that the classroom environment was somewhat supportive of multilingual expression but without structured translanguageing strategies. A few teachers demonstrated emerging practices (Scores 2-4), but none reached the highest level of effective and inclusive use of translanguageing (Score 5).

Overall, observational data indicated that monolingual English instruction continues to dominate classroom practices, with only occasional and unplanned instances of translanguageing, chiefly to clarify

4.3 Questionnaire Result

Table 3 presents a descriptive statistic for the student questionnaire on translanguaging pedagogy for (N = 94).

Table 3: Descriptive statistics for student questionnaire on translanguaging pedagogy

Item	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)	Mean	SD
1. I feel comfortable using multiple languages in an academic setting.	4 (4.3%)	9 (9.6%)	19 (20.2%)	38 (40.4%)	24 (25.5%)	3.57	1.10
2. It is beneficial to include multiple languages in university courses.	4 (4.3%)	1 (1.1%)	15 (16.0%)	49 (52.1%)	25 (26.6%)	4.22	0.84
3. My courses mainly use English as the medium of instruction.	3 (3.2%)	2 (2.1%)	16 (17.0%)	41 (43.6%)	32 (34.0%)	4.23	0.84
4. Using Kurdish alongside English in courses would enhance my learning experience.	0 (0.0%)	12 (12.8%)	29 (30.9%)	33 (35.1%)	20 (21.3%)	3.75	1.00
5. Using both Kurdish and English can help me understand complex subjects better.	1 (1.1%)	10 (10.8%)	16 (17.2%)	30 (32.3%)	36 (38.7%)	3.72	1.05
6. I have experienced lessons where teachers combined Kurdish and English.	2 (2.1%)	4 (4.3%)	11 (11.7%)	47 (50.0%)	30 (31.9%)	4.13	0.88
7. Combining Kurdish and English in discussions would engage me more.	3 (3.2%)	15 (16.0%)	29 (30.9%)	31 (33.0%)	16 (17.0%)	3.38	1.14
8. Using multiple languages makes academic content more accessible.	1 (1.1%)	4 (4.3%)	22 (23.4%)	53 (56.4%)	14 (14.9%)	3.83	0.89
9. I would prefer both Kurdish and English in assessments and exams.	25 (26.6%)	25 (26.6%)	21 (22.3%)	7 (7.4%)	16 (17.0%)	2.57	1.62
10. Using multiple languages could confuse students.	7 (7.4%)	27 (28.7%)	37 (39.4%)	19 (20.2%)	4 (4.3%)	2.75	1.22
11. Being educated in Kurdish and English improves job opportunities.	1 (1.1%)	15 (16.1%)	17 (18.3%)	35 (37.6%)	25 (26.9%)	3.57	1.16
12. University should encourage multiple languages in teaching.	2 (2.1%)	7 (7.4%)	23 (24.5%)	43 (45.7%)	19 (20.2%)	3.77	1.07

The descriptive analysis of the student questionnaire on translanguaging pedagogy indicates that students typically support the use of multiple languages in university education. Cronbach's Alpha calculated the instrument's overall reliability to be 0.84, suggesting strong internal consistency.

Students expressed strong agreement on topics relating to the perceived benefits of including Kurdish alongside English in their academic courses. For example, the statements "It is beneficial to include multiple languages in university courses" ($M = 4.22$, $SD = 0.84$) and "My courses mainly use English as the medium of instruction" ($M = 4.23$, $SD = 0.84$) obtained high marks. Students also indicated that "using Kurdish alongside English in courses would improve my learning experience" ($M = 3.75$, $SD = 1.00$) and "joining Kurdish and English in classroom debates would engage me more" ($M = 3.38$, $SD = 1.14$).

Moreover, a notable number of students specified prior familiarity with translanguaging techniques, with many having taken lessons in both Kurdish and English ($M = 4.13$, $SD = 0.88$). Responses also showed that translanguaging may

increase career chances ($M = 3.57$, $SD = 1.16$), as well as make academic content more accessible ($M = 3.83$, $SD = 0.89$).

However, some concerns were raised. The item "I am concerned that using multiple languages in the classroom could confuse some students" had a lower mean score ($M = 2.75$, $SD = 1.22$), representing that, while some students were careful, the majority did not see translanguaging as a source of confusion. Notably, student favourites for using both languages in assessments were more divided ($M = 2.57$, $SD = 1.62$), denoting possible concerns about increasing translanguaging methods beyond instructional contexts into formal evaluation.

In general, the data show that students support the use of translanguaging as an educational method, specifically in areas that improve comprehension, engagement, and participation. However, some issues, such as assessments and concerns about potential confusion, underscore the importance of careful implementation and further research in future studies.

5. Discussion

This study wanted to find out if there was, or could actually exist, a translanguaging pedagogy in

Kurdish EFL classrooms. By compiling data obtained from teacher interviews, classroom observation, student questionnaires, and input from higher administration, the study offers a multifaceted insight into the occurrence of translanguaging and its policies within the university context. These results have revealed the problematic nature of the contradictions and complexities between beliefs and actions, as well as educational openness versus institutional rigidity.

5.1 Conflicting Practice: Teachers' Assistance vs. Sparse Application

Teacher interviews revealed acceptance of a fairly widespread use of students' complete linguistic repertoire, especially for the lower-level of students. Some teachers stated that Kurdish was used, and could be used, to explain difficult content, build student confidence, or increase classroom engagement. Teacher 5, for example, saw translanguaging as a form of support for low-proficiency students, and Teacher 7 observed it as a scaffold for critical thinking.

Classroom observation data, however, notably countered these views. Most teachers observed were

rated at the lowest end of the translanguaging implementation spectrum. For instance, 84.6% showed little to no evidence of providing translanguaging chances for student learning. This clearly indicates a substantial divide between what the teachers admit and what they actually practice, perhaps reflecting their own conflicted feelings or institutional pressure towards English-only norms.

This rigidity is consistent with García and Kleyn's (2016) comment that translanguaging pedagogy needs more than informal code-switching; that is, translanguaging pedagogy systematically recognizes multilingualism as a resource. While many Kurdish EFL teachers may switch into Kurdish out of necessity, these practices are infrequently seen as pedagogical strategies. This indicates the absence of a coherent philosophy of translanguaging guiding classroom activity.

5.2 Students Value Multilingual Support, But Set Boundaries

The student questionnaires display an even more confusing picture. Most students have conveyed favourable attitudes toward the integration of Kurdish in the classroom, especially in terms of comprehension and convenience. For example, more

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than 70% of the students agreed that the bilingual use of Kurdish and English expands their learning experience and their presence in the process. That said, the students have set their own limits. Less than a quarter of them favoured using Kurdish in tests, and more than 50% were against it. This means that they prefer to use Kurdish in learning per se, but they do not want its presence to challenge the perceived legitimacy and rigor of English-medium instruction, especially in majority language contexts.

Such uncertainty supports García and Wei's (2014) argument that translanguaging is to be taught not only as a practical tool but also as a legitimate epistemological position. In Kurdish EFL classes, where English carries a heavy weight in academic prestige and future opportunities, students often internalize monolingual ideologies that run counter to their own experience.

5.3 Institutional Perceptions: Supportive Yet Symbolically Restrictive

The administrative viewpoint partly fills this gap. While acknowledging that there are no official policies authorising translanguaging, the head of the department recognised that many teachers do it

casually not naming it as translanguaging. He would support it anyway for younger or beginner students because their English proficiency could be a burden to learning. However, the official position is still moving toward English-only, and the idea of moving toward a formal model that openly incorporates Kurdish in instruction is seen as unlikely in the next five years.

This administrative ambiguity reflects Alasdair *et al.*'s (2002) argument about micro-level translanguaging in which teachers must navigate between informal practices and rigid language policies. The department's acceptance of translanguaging "under conditions" means that the practice still operates in a gray area-never completely discouraged, but never institutionally encouraged either.

This goes back to García and Kleifgen's (2018) argument that translanguaging pedagogy entails scaffolded support and a political commitment to affirming multilingual identities. If no structural support comes into place (workshops, curricular frameworks, policy mandates, etc.), then the teachers remain stranded, unable to move beyond mere flexible practice towards change in the wider system.

5.4 A Fragile Consensus on Feasibility

Across all the tools, there seems to be a very fragile consensus about the feasibility of translanguaging. Most teachers feel, however, that given good training and careful use of Kurdish, it could be a method whereby the CIF can build strategies for comprehension and engagement. Students felt comfortable with translanguaging at the classroom level, especially during its early stages, whereas the school administration does not necessarily reject the practice outright.

There are, however, inevitably-much larger caveats raised from all sides. Teachers fear that Kurdish would be overused and thus hamper deeper immersion in English; the students draw the line at assessment; the administration wants an identity institutionally based so firmly in English-medium instruction that it is unlikely to change radically anytime soon. Such views therefore echo CA Nagarajah's (2011) warning against monolingual ideologies that impede innovative pedagogies in multilingual settings.

Indeed, this fragility is not so much grounded in the opposition to translanguaging per se, but rather

in the absence of clarity, policy, and professional development on how to implement it in practice. This is in tune with research elsewhere in multilingual settings (see e.g., (Cenoz & Gorter, 2015; Beiler & Dewilde, 2023)), which emphasizes that translanguaging can work only if there are structural mechanisms to support it beyond individual belief.

6 Conclusions and Reframing

6.1 Conclusions

This research explores the availability and feasibility of translanguaging pedagogy in the Kurdish EFL classrooms of the English Department. The subsequent conclusions are derived from the semi-structured interview and questionnaire, designed to elicit perspectives from both teachers and students:

Translanguaging is currently practiced in a limited and unstructured manner in Kurdish EFL classrooms within the English Department. Instruction is primarily monolingual, with English as the main medium of communication. Teachers use Kurdish irregularly for casual explanations and clarifications, but these practices lack a clear pedagogical basis.

Furthermore, there is a notable gap between teachers' generally positive attitudes toward translanguaging and their actual classroom practices. Teachers recognise the benefits of using Kurdish to simplify understanding, boost students' confidence, and support beginners. However, most are unacquainted with the concept of translanguaging and hold the belief that its use may hinder English language learning. In contrast, students express positive attitudes toward the strategic use of Kurdish alongside English, but preserve the view that formal assessments should remain in English to uphold academic rigor and legitimacy. In addition, the study uncovers that the administration's viewpoint is one of conditional support, favouring the integration of translanguaging for low-proficiency students. However, there are no plans for its formal adoption in the future.

6.2 It is concluded that teachers observe institutional policy as the main obstacle to implementing translanguaging. However, the head of the department clarified that there is neither a policy banning the use of Kurdish nor one supporting translanguaging. Furthermore, an

entrenched English-only ideology among teachers further hinders the adoption of translanguaging practices. The lack of teacher training is also a significant contributing factor. Eventually, the study concludes that, in the absence of clear institutional policies, targeted training, and curricular reforms, translanguaging will continue to be a casual practice rather than an established, integrated pedagogical approach.

6.3 Reframing Translanguaging for Kurdish EFL

In the future, higher education in the Kurdish regions must be convinced that translanguaging is not a linguistic shortcoming but a valuable pedagogical instrument. It is, after all, as García (2014) would argue, "a way of making meaning," meaning it should not be corrected. To implement such a significant change, EFL classes in the region may need to focus on:

Professional development: Teachers need training that goes beyond code-switching to develop applicable pedagogic translanguaging.

Curriculum design: Course structures should legitimize the planned use of Kurdish alongside

English, especially in the beginning years.

Policy clarity: Departments must establish clear strategies supporting linguistic inclusivity without compromising standards.

In the sociolinguistic context of the Kurdistan Region, where multilingualism is the norm, translanguaging helps bring classroom practices in line with students' real-world identities and resources

To achieve this, however, these practices must move from being subliminal, invisible, and taken for granted to becoming an obvious and valued pedagogical approach.

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