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TRANSLANGUAGING PRACTICES IN PRIMARY EDUCATION: A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW OF PEDAGOGICAL TRENDS

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Abstrak

Tinjauan literatur sistematis ini mengkaji tren penelitian dan implikasi pedagogis praktik translanguaging dalam pendidikan dasar. Berdasarkan analisis terhadap 147 publikasi terindeks Scopus yang diterbitkan pada periode 2015–2025, penelitian ini menelaah tren publikasi tahunan, distribusi geografis, desain penelitian, fokus partisipan, keterampilan yang dikembangkan, serta latar belakang linguistik peserta didik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan adanya peningkatan yang signifikan dalam penelitian translanguaging selama satu dekade terakhir, yang mencerminkan semakin besarnya pengakuan terhadap translanguaging sebagai respons pedagogis terhadap realitas kelas multilingual di pendidikan dasar. Publikasi penelitian masih terkonsentrasi pada sejumlah negara tertentu, khususnya Spanyol, Amerika Serikat, Tiongkok, dan Afrika Selatan, yang menunjukkan adanya ketimpangan dalam produksi pengetahuan global. Dari sisi metodologi, pendekatan kualitatif mendominasi, dengan siswa sebagai subjek penelitian utama, sehingga menegaskan orientasi translanguaging yang berpusat pada peserta didik. Studi-studi yang ditinjau melaporkan bahwa translanguaging mendukung perkembangan bahasa, komunikasi kelas, pemahaman konseptual, serta legitimasi penggunaan bahasa ibu siswa dalam praktik pembelajaran. Translanguaging paling banyak diterapkan pada pembelajar EFL, siswa imigran, komunitas adat, dan peserta didik dalam konteks multilingual yang kompleks. Secara keseluruhan, tinjauan ini menempatkan translanguaging sebagai pendekatan pedagogis yang tidak hanya berfokus pada hasil linguistik, tetapi juga memberikan implikasi penting bagi praktik pengajaran bahasa yang inklusif serta pemanfaatan sumber daya linguistik peserta didik secara berkelanjutan di kelas multilingual sekolah dasar

Kata Kunci: translanguaging, pendidikan bahasa sekolah dasar, praktik pengajaran bahasa, kelas multilingual, tinjauan literatur sistematis

Abstract

This systematic literature review examines research trends and pedagogical implications of translanguaging practices in primary education. Drawing on 147 Scopus-indexed publications published between 2015 and 2025, the study analyzes annual publication trends, geographical distribution, research designs, participant focus, developed skills, and students' linguistic backgrounds. The findings indicate a substantial increase in translanguaging research over the past decade, reflecting a growing recognition of translanguaging as a pedagogical response to multilingual classroom realities in primary education. Research output is predominantly concentrated in a limited number of countries, particularly Spain, the United States, China, and South Africa, revealing imbalances in global knowledge production. Methodologically, qualitative approaches dominate, with students identified as the primary research subjects, underscoring the learner-centered orientation of translanguaging pedagogy. The reviewed studies report that translanguaging supports language development, classroom communication, conceptual understanding, and the legitimization of students' mother tongues within instructional practices. Translanguaging is most frequently implemented among EFL learners, immigrant students, indigenous communities, and learners in complex multilingual

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contexts. Overall, this review positions translanguaging as a pedagogical approach that extends beyond linguistic outcomes, offering meaningful implications for inclusive language teaching practices and the sustained use of learners' linguistic resources in multilingual primary classrooms.

Keywords: translanguaging, primary language education, language teaching practices, multilingual classroom, systematic literature review

1. INTRODUCTION

In contemporary educational contexts, multilingualism has become an increasingly salient characteristic of primary classrooms worldwide. Global migration, social mobility, and the pervasive influence of digital communication have reshaped linguistic landscapes, resulting in classrooms where learners routinely draw on multiple languages in their everyday interactions. In primary education, these multilingual realities are particularly significant, as early schooling plays a crucial role in shaping learners' foundational literacy skills, language attitudes, and emerging linguistic identities. Despite this diversity, instructional practices in many education systems continue to privilege monolingual norms, often limiting the pedagogical use of learners' full linguistic repertoires.

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This tension between multilingual classroom realities and monolingual instructional traditions poses ongoing challenges for language teaching in primary education. Teachers are frequently required to adhere to curricula that prioritize a single language of instruction, while simultaneously responding to students who rely on their home languages to make sense of academic content (Kwon, 2022; Quehl, 2022). Research has shown that strict language separation policies may constrain learners' participation, reduce opportunities for meaning-making, and contribute to the marginalization of students' linguistic resources, particularly their mother tongues, within formal learning environments (Dekker et al., 2023; Pourbaix et al., 2023). As a result, there has been a growing call for pedagogical approaches that more

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accurately reflect how languages are used in authentic communicative practices.

Within this context, translanguaging has gained prominence as a pedagogical orientation that challenges traditional conceptions of language use in education. Initially introduced by Williams, (1994) in bilingual education settings and later theorized more comprehensively by García and Wei, (2013), translanguaging conceptualizes language practices as dynamic, integrated, and fluid rather than as discrete and compartmentalized systems. From this perspective, learners strategically mobilize their entire linguistic repertoires to support communication, cognition, and learning. In primary classrooms, translanguaging has been increasingly adopted in instructional practices such as literacy development, classroom interaction, collaborative learning, and content-based instruction, where it functions as a scaffold for comprehension and participation (Beatty et al., 2021; García & Sylvan, 2011).

Empirical research suggests that translanguaging practices in primary education offer a range of pedagogical and linguistic benefits. Studies have reported positive effects on language development, literacy learning, classroom engagement, and conceptual understanding, particularly for learners from linguistically minoritized backgrounds (Andleeb et al., 2024; Cenoz & Gorter, 2011; Silalahi & Guan, 2023). Beyond these instructional outcomes, translanguaging has been associated with the legitimization of learners' linguistic identities and the recognition of mother tongues as meaningful resources for learning rather than obstacles to academic success (Prosper &

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Nomlomo, 2016). These findings position translanguaging not merely as a classroom strategy, but as a pedagogical stance with broader implications for inclusive language teaching in multilingual primary education.

Despite the expanding body of research on translanguaging, existing reviews have tended to focus on secondary or higher education contexts, specific language learning domains, or applied linguistics perspectives more broadly (Özkaynak, 2023; Prilutskaya, 2021). Comparatively little attention has been given to how translanguaging is conceptualized and implemented as a pedagogical practice in primary education, where language learning intersects with early literacy development, socialization processes, and identity formation. Moreover, there is a lack of systematic synthesis that maps pedagogical trends, research methodologies, participant focus, and linguistic implications of translanguaging practices across diverse primary school contexts.

While previous systematic reviews have examined translanguaging in secondary and higher education (Özkaynak, 2023) or focused specifically on pedagogical implementation in general contexts (Prilutskaya, 2021), no comprehensive review has specifically mapped the pedagogical trends, linguistic backgrounds of learners, and cross-curricular skill development associated with translanguaging in primary education. Furthermore, prior reviews have not systematically analyzed the geographical imbalance of translanguaging research nor synthesized the specific challenges of implementing this approach in early childhood and foundational literacy contexts. This study addresses these underexplored areas by providing a comprehensive mapping of research trends, participant foci, methodological orientations, and pedagogical implications specific to primary school settings, thereby filling a critical gap in the literature.

To address these gaps, the present study conducts a Systematic Literature Review (SLR)

of Scopus-indexed publications examining translanguaging practices in primary education. By analyzing publication trends, geographical distribution, research designs, participant characteristics, and reported learning outcomes, this review aims to provide a comprehensive overview of pedagogical trends and linguistic implications associated with translanguaging in primary classrooms. In doing so, the study contributes to the field of language and language teaching by offering evidence-based insights into how translanguaging functions as a pedagogical approach that supports inclusive instruction and the sustained use of learners' linguistic resources, including their mother tongues, in multilingual primary education settings.

2. METHOD

This study employs a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach. A Systematic Literature Review is a structured method for identifying, analyzing, and synthesizing relevant studies in order to provide a comprehensive evaluation of existing knowledge on a particular topic (Petticrew & Roberts, 2006). A systematic literature review is particularly suitable for this study as it allows for a structured synthesis of pedagogical practices and linguistic implications of translanguaging across diverse primary education contexts. The SLR method offers clear benefits for researchers by identifying gaps and opportunities for future research, and for practitioners by presenting consolidated evidence to support decision-making in their respective fields (Al-Zubidy & Carver, 2019). In this study, the SLR method is used to obtain a clear understanding of the evolution and development of translanguaging implementation in primary school contexts.

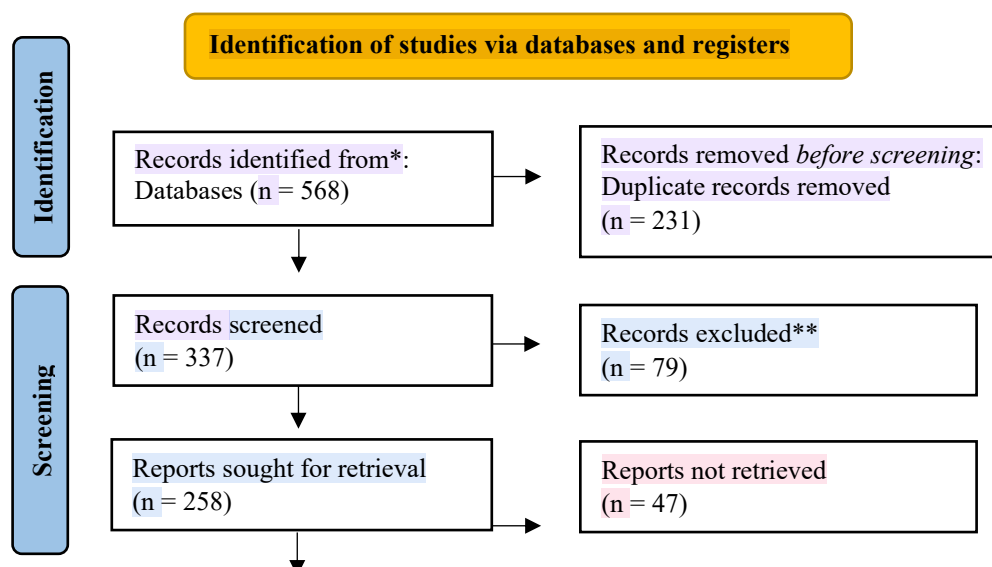
This study adopts a hybrid methodological approach that systematically integrates Systematic Literature Review (SLR) and bibliometric analysis. This hybrid design was chosen because the two methods are

complementary in addressing the ten research questions. Specifically, bibliometric analysis was employed to quantitatively map macro-level patterns, including annual publication trends, geographical distribution, productive journals, publication types, and keyword co-occurrence networks using VOSviewer software. In contrast, the SLR component was used to conduct an in-depth qualitative synthesis of article content, covering participant focus, research methodologies, developed skills, students' linguistic backgrounds, and citation impact. By combining these two approaches, this study not only identifies large-scale patterns in the research landscape but also critically explores substantive findings with direct pedagogical relevance for primary education (Donthu et al., 2021; Marzi et al., 2025; Paul et al., 2021). The study uses Scopus-indexed journal articles published within the last ten years as the primary data source. Relevant articles were identified through systematic searches based on predefined criteria. The screening process was conducted using the software Covidence to remove duplicates and filter articles that did not meet the inclusion criteria. Data were then processed and assessed using the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) framework to ensure transparency, consistency,

and replicability throughout the review process (Simamora et al., 2024).

Keyword searches were conducted using the terms "Translanguaging", "Primary School OR Primary Education", and "Elementary School OR Elementary Education". This initial search resulted in a total of 568 articles. Covidence was then used to remove duplicate entries, resulting in 231 articles identified as duplicates, leaving 337 articles for initial screening. A subsequent screening stage was conducted using the same tool to ensure relevance based on the focus of the study, which examines translanguaging implementation specifically in primary school settings and aligning with the research questions. This stage removed an additional 79 articles that were deemed irrelevant, leaving 258 reports for retrieval. A further exclusion stage removed 47 reports that could not be retrieved, resulting in 211 reports assessed for full-text eligibility. Subsequently, 30 articles that were no longer indexed in Scopus and 34 articles that were inaccessible were excluded. After these exclusions, a final total of 147 articles met the eligibility criteria and were included for analysis.

The complete flow of the article identification and selection process is presented using the PRISMA diagram, illustrating each phase from initial identification to final inclusion.



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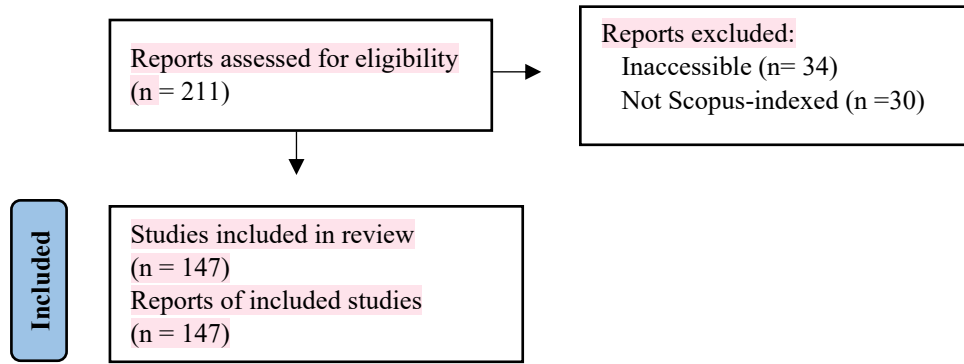


Figure 1. PRISMA Flow Diagram of the Study Identification and Selection Process

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Before Annual Publication Trends

Over the past decade, publications on translanguaging in primary education have experienced remarkable growth, increasing by more than 650% since 2015. From contributing only 3% of total publications in the initial period (2015-2016), research in this field surged to 19% during the peak period (2024-2025), reflecting a paradigm shift from a peripheral concept to a mainstream approach in multilingual education discourse. The highest spike occurred in 2024, accounting for 19% of all publications, followed by 18% in 2025, indicating the consolidation and maturation of this research domain. This consistent trend, showing an average annual growth of 13%, not only confirms the academic vitality of the topic but, more importantly, reflects an increasingly urgent global response to multilingual classroom realities and the need for culturally responsive, inclusive pedagogical approaches.

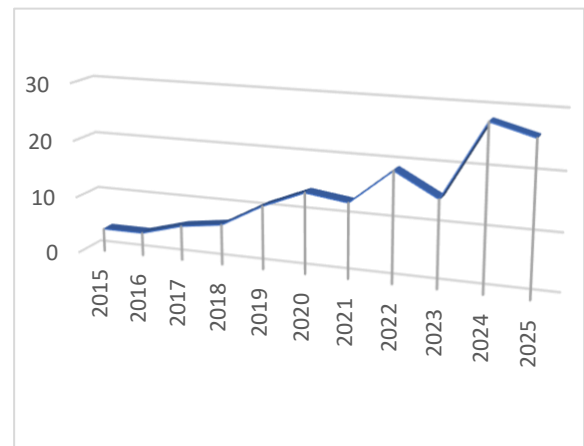


Figure. 2. Annual Publication Trends in Translanguaging Research for Primary Education (2015-2025)

Geographical Distribution of Research

The geographical distribution of translanguaging research in primary education reveals significant global patterns, with Spain emerging as the most productive contributor with 22 publications, followed by the United States with 21 publications, China with 17 publications, and South Africa with 15 publications. The dominance of these four nations, which represent vastly different linguistic contexts, educational policies, and sociocultural realities, demonstrates that translanguaging has evolved into an internationally recognized pedagogical paradigm that transcends specific linguistic and cultural

boundaries. This diversity of research contexts includes countries with official bilingual policies such as Spain with its linguistically autonomous regions, multilingual immigrant societies like the United States, nations with dominant national languages but growing multilingual awareness like China, and postcolonial societies with complex linguistic heritage such as South Africa.

A deeper analysis reveals an interesting polarization between the Global North and Global South in research output. While traditional Western nations like Spain, the United States, and the United Kingdom with 8 publications demonstrate high productivity, South Africa's significant contribution, ranking fourth globally,

is particularly noteworthy. The strong presence of South Africa in translanguaging academic discourse reflects both the country's complex multilingual realities and the academic response to apartheid's legacy of fragmented linguistic landscapes. At the intermediate level, a group of countries with moderate contributions of 3 to 8 publications includes Malaysia with 4 publications, Greece with 5, Sweden with 4, Indonesia with 2, Japan with 3, Philippines with 3, Germany with 3, Zimbabwe with 3, and India with 3 publications, representing the expansion of translanguaging discourse to various parts of the world with different linguistic challenges.

Table 1. Geographical Distribution of Translanguaging Research Publications in Primary Education

Country	Frequency	Country	Frequency
Spain	22	France	2
United States	21	Vietnam	2
China	17	Ireland	2
South Africa	15	Canada	2
United Kingdom	8	Italy	2
Greece	5	Kazakhstan	1
Malaysia	5	Saudi Arabia	1
Sweden	4	Turkey	1
Zimbabwe	3	Singapore	1
India	3	Poland	1
Japan	3	Cyprus	1
Philippines	3	Belgium	1
Germany	3	Switzerland	1
Indonesia	2	Portugal	1
Luxembourg	2	Thailand	1

Based on the analysis of the geographical distribution of translanguaging research publications in primary education, a clear pattern emerges showing the strong dominance of Europe with 51 publications or 38.0% of total studies, primarily driven by Spain's significant contribution as the most productive country globally. Asia occupies the second position with 39 publications (28.5%), supported by rapid research growth from China as the main contributor in this region. America contributes 23 publications (16.8%) with almost absolute

dominance from the United States, while Africa makes a significant though limited contribution of 21 publications (15.3%) mainly concentrated in South Africa. This distribution pattern reveals a striking geographical imbalance in knowledge production about translanguaging, with just four main countries (Spain, United States, China, and South Africa) alone contributing more than 55% of all publications. These findings reflect the influence of factors such as established research traditions, multilingual education policies, and institutional capacity in shaping the global

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research landscape of translanguaging, while simultaneously highlighting the urgent need to

diversify geographical representation and strengthen research capacity in underrepresented regions such as Latin America and most of Africa.

Table 2. Top Ten Most Productive Journals Publishing Translanguaging Research in Primary Educatio

Rank	Journal Title	Number of Publications	Percentage (%)	Quartile
1	Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development	7	4.7%	Q1
2	International Journal of Multilingualism	6	4.1%	Q1
3	Applied Linguistics Review	5	3.4%	Q1
4	International Multilingual Research Journal	5	3.4%	Q1
5	Southern African Linguistics and Applied Language Studies	4	2.7%	Q2
6	Jounal of Language Identity and Education	4	2.7%	Q1
7	Educational Linguistics	4	2.7%	Q1
8	Language Culture and Curriculum	3	2.0%	Q1
9	Cogent Education	3	2.0%	Q1
10	Education Sciences	3	2.0%	Q1

7 publications (4.7% of the total), followed by the International Journal of Multilingualism with 6 publications (4.1%), and Applied Linguistics Review and International Multilingual Research Journal each with 5 publications (3.4%). Southern African Linguistics and Applied Language Studies, Journal of Language Identity and Education, and Educational Linguistics each contributed 4 publications (2.7%), while Language Culture and Curriculum, Cogent Education, and Education Sciences each recorded 3 publications (2.0%).

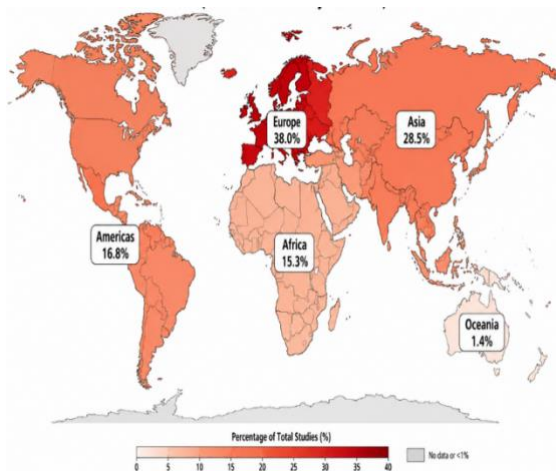


Figure. 3. Geographical Distribution Map of Contributing Continent in Translanguaging Research

Journal Publication Analysis

The ten most productive journals in publishing translanguaging research in primary education are dominated by the Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development with

The quartile distribution analysis reveals an absolute dominance of publications in high-reputation journals, with 78% (91 publications) concentrated in quartile 1 (Q1), followed by quartile 2 (Q2) at 14.5% (17 publications), quartile 3 (Q3) at 6.8% (8 publications), and quartile 4 (Q4) at only 0.9% (1 publication). This highly skewed distribution pattern not only confirms the academic quality of translanguaging research that consistently meets the rigorous standards of high-impact journals but also reflects the maturity of this research field that has become

well-established in the international publication hierarchy.

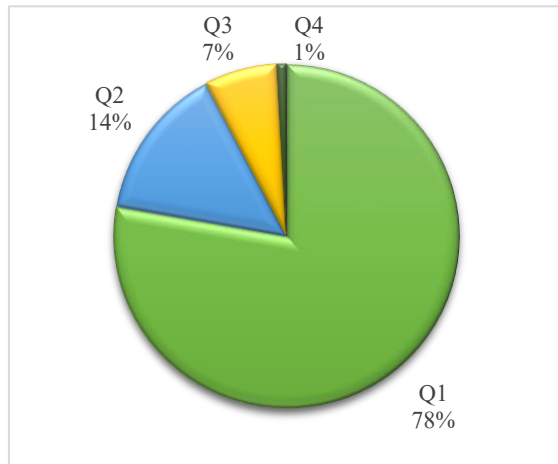


Figure. 4. Quartile Distribution in Translanguaging Primary Education Research

Publication Type Characteristics

Based on the analysis of publication type distribution in translanguaging research in primary education, journal articles absolutely dominate with 79.1% of total publications (117 out of 147), confirming this field's status as an established research domain that prioritizes disseminating empirical findings through peer-reviewed channels. Book chapters contribute 16.9% (25 publications), reflecting the collaborative nature and knowledge consolidation efforts in collective works. Meanwhile, book contributions account for only 2.0% (3 publications), indicating a field that remains dynamic and prioritizes rapid publication through journals. Other publications such as reviews (1.4%) and conference papers (0.7%) are very limited, suggesting the need for more research synthesis and a strong preference for high-reputation publications. This pattern reflects a mature field with a strong empirical foundation while maintaining active development characteristics.

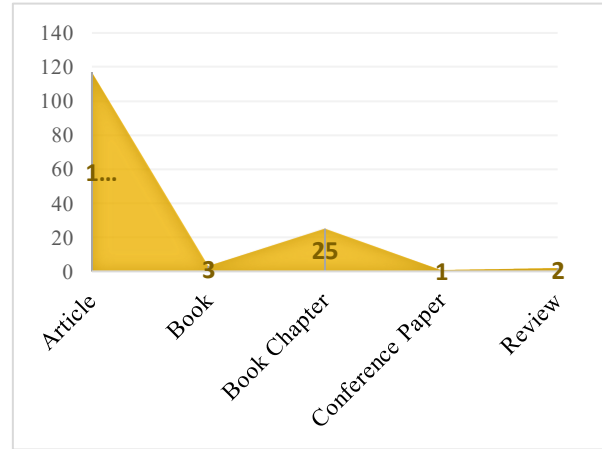


Figure. 5. Publication Type Characteristics in Translanguaging Research

Research Subject Focus

Analysis of research subject distribution in translanguaging studies in primary education reveals a clear pattern, with students dominating as the primary research focus in 91 studies (70.5%), followed by teachers with 23 studies (17.8%), and preservice teachers with 14 studies (10.9%), while parents were only subjects in 1 study (0.8%). This dominance of students as research subjects firmly confirms that translanguaging is fundamentally viewed as a learner-centered pedagogical approach, where its impact on student learning processes and language development is the main concern of researchers. The significant proportion of studies focusing on teachers and preservice teachers reflects growing awareness of educators' critical role as facilitators and implementers of translanguaging practices in classrooms, while the minimal research involving parents indicates an important gap in our understanding of families' role in supporting multilingual education.

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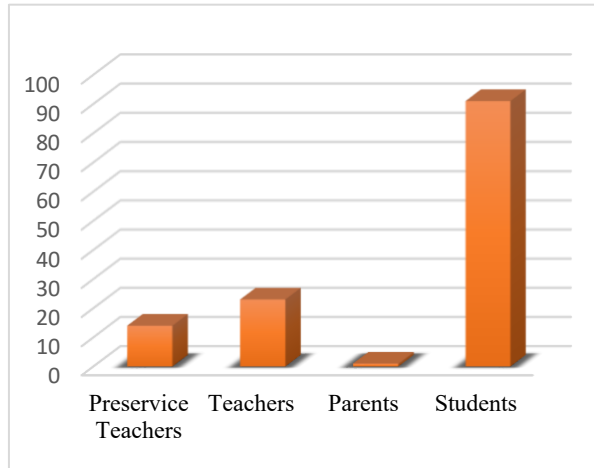


Figure. 6. Research Subject Focus in Translanguaging Studies

Research Methodological Approaches

Analysis of research method distribution in translanguaging studies reveals a clear dominance of qualitative approaches, which account for 84%, while quantitative approaches contribute 12%, mixed methods 1%, and literature reviews only 3%. This dominance of qualitative methods strongly reflects the inherently contextual and interpretive nature of translanguaging research, where deep understanding of classroom practices, learner perceptions, and linguistic interaction dynamics requires approaches capable of capturing the complexity and nuances of these phenomena. The significant proportion of quantitative and mixed methods research indicates development toward evidence-based practice that integrates measurable evidence with qualitative understanding, while the scarcity of literature reviews identifies an urgent need for more knowledge synthesis that can consolidate the increasingly accumulating findings in this field.

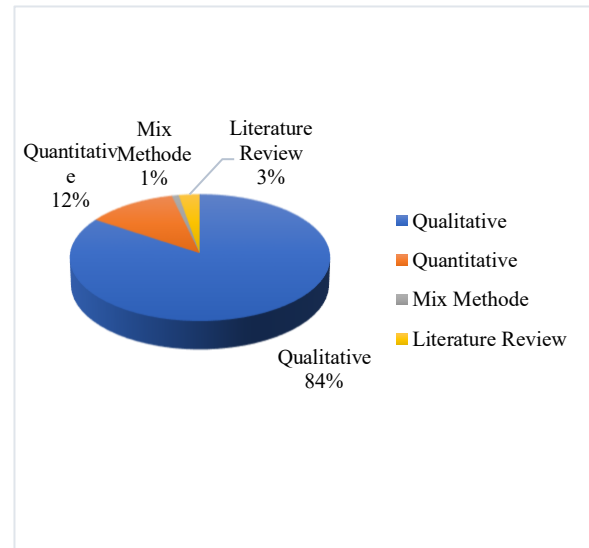


Figure. 7. Research Methodological Approaches in Translanguaging Studies

Skills Development through Translanguaging

Based on the data analysis, the findings reveal that translanguaging practices in primary education develop various skills, with Language Skills dominating (48.6%), affirming its primary role in developing linguistic competence in multilingual contexts. However, the significant proportions of Pedagogical Skills (15.3%), Communication (9.7%), and Comprehension (8.3%) demonstrate that translanguaging benefits extend beyond the linguistic domain alone, encompassing teacher capacity development, communicative competence, and conceptual understanding. Furthermore, the presence of Science (6.9%), Mathematics (4.2%), Cultural Identity (5.6%), and Creative and Critical Thinking Skills (5.6%) confirms the broad spectrum of benefits of this approach, positioning translanguaging as a comprehensive pedagogical strategy that not only advances academic competence but also shapes learners' cultural identity and higher-order cognitive abilities.

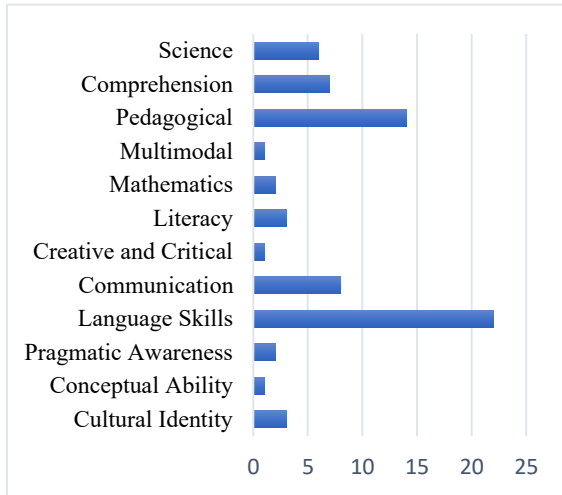


Figure. 8. Skills Development through Translanguaging Practices

Students' Linguistic Backgrounds

Based on the data analysis, students' linguistic backgrounds in translanguaging studies in primary schools show a diverse distribution. EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students dominate at 50%, where translanguaging serves as a bridge to access English without neglecting their mother tongue, while reducing foreign language anxiety and building confidence in learning. Immigrant students account for 24%, where this approach helps maintain cultural identity while facilitating linguistic integration into new societies, and functions as a tool to preserve emotional connections with their heritage language and culture. Indigenous communities at 16% utilize translanguaging for revitalizing local languages and preserving cultural heritage, while also serving as a strategy against linguistic erosion and strengthening ethnic identity. Meanwhile, multilingual complex (MC) groups at 10% require translanguaging to optimize their entire linguistic repertoire in learning, develop metalinguistic awareness, and build foundations for multiliteracies. Each of these groups requires different translanguaging approaches according to their specific linguistic characteristics and needs, emphasizing the

importance of segmented and contextual strategies in its implementation.

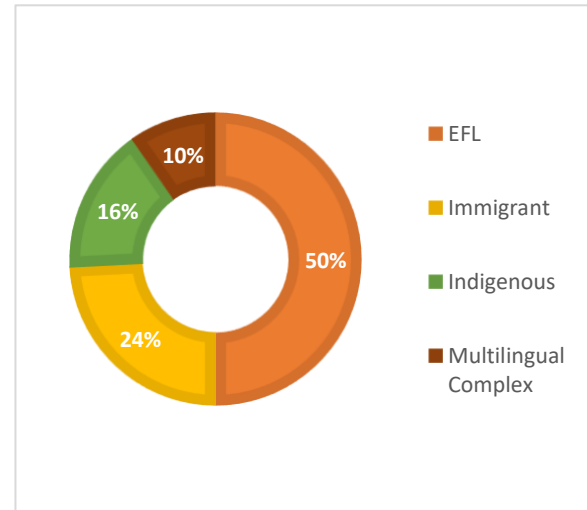


Figure. 9. Students' Linguistic Backgrounds in Translanguaging Studies

Citation Analysis and Impact

Based on the analysis of the 10 most cited articles in translanguaging research in primary education, an interesting pattern emerges regarding research focus and impact. The article by Martínez (2015) on linguistic purism ideologies in dual language teaching tops the list with 224 citations, indicating strong interest in sociolinguistic aspects and teacher beliefs in translanguaging implementation. This is followed by Flores' (2013) work on linguistic third spaces with 131 citations, reflecting the importance of theoretical frameworks in understanding translanguaging practices. Hamman's (2018) research on positioning in two-way bilingual classrooms received 130 citations, emphasizing the relevance of identity and power aspects in multilingual classroom dynamics.

Schreiber's (2015) article on multilingual identity and digital translanguaging gained 117 citations, indicating growing attention to digital literacy and identity construction. Cenoz's (2020) work on implementing pedagogical translanguaging in trilingual schools achieved

112 citations, demonstrating interest in complex multilingual educational contexts. Suárez's (2020) research on bilingual students learning electrical phenomena through translanguaging received 111 citations, proving the effective application of translanguaging in science education. Daniel's (2019) study on scaffolding to make translanguaging a classroom norm obtained 91 citations, highlighting the importance of pedagogical support in implementation.

Leonet's (2020) work on morphological awareness in third language acquisition gained 84 citations, underscoring the metalinguistic benefits of translanguaging. Karlsson's (2019)

research on multilingual students' use of translanguaging in science classrooms received 81 citations, reinforcing findings about translanguaging's effectiveness in academic content. Finally, García's (2020) article on Latinx bilingual readers obtained 77 citations, reaffirming García's foundational contributions to field development. This pattern reveals that the most influential research combines theoretical innovation with practical applications, addressing both pedagogical and sociolinguistic aspects of translanguaging in diverse educational contexts.

Table 3. Top Ten Most Cited Articles in Translanguaging Research in Primary Education

Rank	Authors	Title	Year	Citations	Journal
1	Martínez	Unpacking Ideologies of Linguistic Purism: How Dual Language Teachers Make Sense of Everyday Translanguaging	2015	224	International Multilingual Research Journal
2	Flores & García	Linguistic Third Spaces in Education: Teachers' Translanguaging across the Bilingual Continuum	2015	131	Managing Diversity in Education Languages Policies Pedagogies
3	Hamman	Translanguaging and positioning in two-way dual language classrooms: a case for criticality	2018	130	Language and Education
4	Schreiber	"I am what i am": Multilingual identity and digital translanguaging	2015	117	Language Learning and Technology
5	Cenoz	Implementing pedagogical translanguaging in trilingual schools	2020	112	System
6	Suárez	"Estoy Explorando Science": Emergent bilingual students problematizing electrical phenomena through translanguaging	2020	111	Science Education
7	Daniel	Scaffolding to make translanguaging a classroom norm	2019	91	Tesol Journal
8	Leonet	Developing morphological awareness across languages: translanguaging pedagogies in third language acquisition	2020	84	Language Awareness
9	Karlsson	Multilingual students' use of translanguaging in science classrooms	2019	81	International Journal of Science Education
10	García	Translanguaging and Latinx Bilingual Readers	2020	77	Reading Teacher

Keyword Analysis and Research Focus

Based on the analysis of the VOSviewer visualization, research on translanguaging in

primary schools is predominantly centered on the concepts of "translanguaging" and "pedagogical translanguaging" as the core of its inquiry, with

"primary school" and "student" serving as the primary context. Its application is most frequently observed in the domain of "literacy," operationalized through "instruction," "practice," and "strategy", such as developing "morphological awareness" and utilizing "orthographic demonstration" to support "emergent bilingual" students.

Beyond academic aspects, this field of research also strongly emphasizes socio-affective dimensions, as evidenced by the frequent co-occurrence of keywords like "classroom climate," "identity," and "attitude," reflecting efforts to create an inclusive learning environment that recognizes and empowers "minority language" speakers. Furthermore, supporting elements such as "resource" and "teacher-researcher

collaboration" are prominent, highlighting the importance of multilingual materials and collaborative efforts in implementing this approach, while the presence of "systematic review" indicates the maturity of the field, which has begun synthesizing findings comprehensively.

Overall, these findings affirm the position of translanguaging as a comprehensive, inclusive, and effective pedagogical approach that not only enhances academic outcomes but also serves as a catalyst for mother tongue preservation and strengthening of students' linguistic-cultural identities in increasingly multilingual primary education contexts.

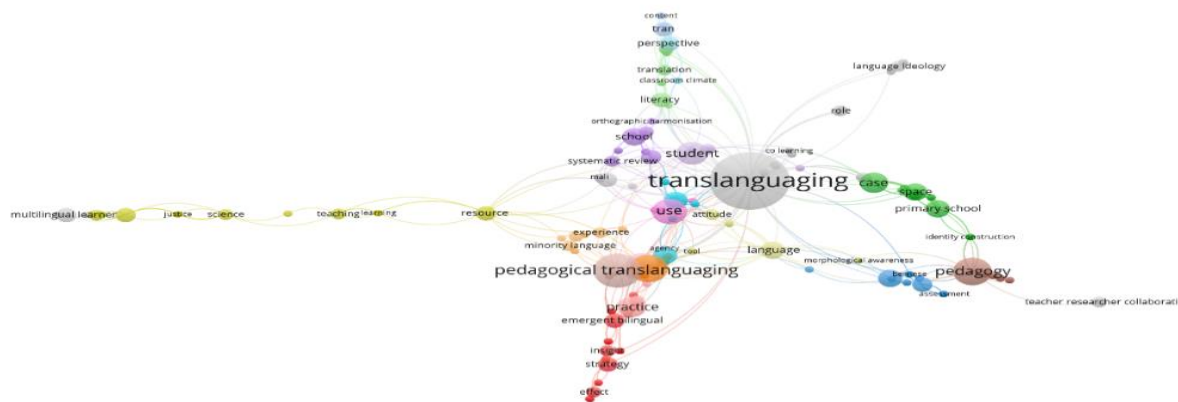


Figure. 11. Keyword Co-occurrence Network Visualization of Translanguaging Research in Primary Education (VOSviewer Analysis)

DISCUSSION

Drawing on the hybrid methodological framework that integrates bibliometric analysis and qualitative SLR, this section critically interprets the pedagogical meanings of the identified patterns rather than merely describing statistical findings. The findings of this systematic literature review demonstrate that translanguaging has become an increasingly prominent pedagogical orientation in primary

education over the past decade. The sharp rise in publication output reflects a broader paradigm shift in language teaching research, moving away from monolingual instructional ideologies toward more inclusive and multilingual pedagogical practices. This shift aligns with global educational realities in which primary classrooms are no longer linguistically homogeneous, but instead characterized by diverse linguistic repertoires that learners actively employ in meaning-making processes.

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The dominance of qualitative research approaches identified in this review underscores the inherently contextual and interactional nature of translanguaging practices in primary classrooms. Qualitative methodologies allow researchers to capture the complexity of classroom discourse, teacher–student interactions, and learners’ strategic use of multiple languages during instructional activities. This methodological preference suggests that translanguaging is primarily understood not as a fixed instructional technique, but as a situated pedagogical practice that emerges through classroom interaction. From a language teaching perspective, this highlights the importance of teacher awareness and pedagogical decision-making in shaping how translanguaging is enacted in everyday instruction.

The implications of these methodological and geographical findings for primary education are threefold. First, the overwhelming reliance on qualitative approaches (84%) suggests that while deep contextual understanding is invaluable, future research should integrate more quantitative and mixed-methods designs to provide measurable evidence of translanguaging's effectiveness on standardized literacy outcomes and academic achievement. Second, the concentration of research in only four countries (Spain, the United States, China, and South Africa) highlights the urgent need for localized studies in underrepresented regions, including Southeast Asia, Latin America, and most of Africa, to develop culturally relevant and context-sensitive pedagogical models. Third, the predominance of students as research subjects (70.5%) implies that teacher cognition, professional development, and parental involvement remain significantly underexplored, warranting further investigation into how teacher beliefs, training, and family engagement shape the success of translanguaging implementation in primary classrooms.

The predominance of students as the primary research subjects further reinforces the learner-centered orientation of translanguaging pedagogy. In primary education, where foundational literacy and language attitudes are formed, translanguaging enables learners to draw on familiar linguistic resources to support comprehension, participation, and confidence in classroom interaction. This finding supports previous research suggesting that allowing students to mobilize their full linguistic repertoires can reduce language-related anxiety and promote active engagement, particularly among learners from linguistically minoritized backgrounds. For language teachers, this implies a shift from viewing students’ home languages as barriers to learning toward recognizing them as pedagogical assets that can facilitate instructional goals.

Importantly, the analysis of developed skills reveals that while language skills remain the most frequently reported outcome of translanguaging practices, the pedagogical impact extends well beyond linguistic development. The emergence of outcomes related to classroom communication, conceptual understanding, and teacher pedagogical skills suggests that translanguaging functions as a mediating tool that supports broader learning processes. In content-based instruction, such as science and mathematics, translanguaging enables learners to negotiate meaning and access complex concepts through familiar linguistic resources. This finding reinforces the argument that translanguaging should be understood as a cross-curricular pedagogical approach rather than a strategy limited to language subjects alone.

The diversity of students’ linguistic backgrounds represented in the reviewed studies further illustrates the adaptability of translanguaging across educational contexts. The prominence of research involving EFL learners reflects the widespread use of translanguaging as a scaffold for foreign language learning in

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primary education. At the same time, studies focusing on immigrant and indigenous learners highlight the role of translanguaging in legitimizing learners' linguistic identities and sustaining the presence of home languages within formal schooling. Rather than replacing the language of instruction, translanguaging allows learners to maintain continuous access to their linguistic repertoires, supporting both academic learning and socio-affective development. From a linguistic perspective, this challenges deficit-oriented views of multilingual learners and emphasizes the pedagogical value of linguistic hybridity in early education.

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The geographical concentration of translanguaging research in a limited number of countries raises important questions regarding global knowledge production in language education. While contexts such as Spain, the United States, China, and South Africa provide rich insights into multilingual pedagogy, several intersecting factors explain the high research productivity in these four contexts. In Spain, the high publication output is largely driven by the country's officially recognized bilingual autonomous communities (e.g., Catalonia, Basque Country, Galicia), which have long-established policies promoting co-official languages alongside Spanish. These policies have created a fertile ground for research on multilingual education, supported by substantial European Union research funding and a strong tradition of sociolinguistic inquiry. In the United States, the surge in translanguaging research reflects the nation's rapidly diversifying student population, particularly the growth of emergent bilingual learners from immigrant backgrounds. Federal funding initiatives, such as those from the Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA), along with a robust academic infrastructure and the ideological push toward educational equity and social justice, have significantly stimulated scholarly interest. In China, the exponential increase in publications is closely tied to the

government's strategic emphasis on English language education within the broader context of national modernization and internationalization. Massive investments in educational research, coupled with policy directives from the Ministry of Education and the growing number of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners, have positioned translanguaging as a key pedagogical response to the challenges of English-medium instruction. In South Africa, the research prominence stems from the country's post-apartheid constitutional framework, which recognizes 11 official languages and actively promotes multilingualism as a cornerstone of national identity. This unique sociolinguistic landscape, combined with international donor funding and the establishment of local journals that prioritize multilingual education, has made South Africa a critical site for translanguaging scholarship. Collectively, these diverse drivers—ranging from ideological commitments to linguistic pluralism, targeted research funding, and specific sociocultural realities—underscore that translanguaging research is not merely an academic trend but a contextualized response to distinct national educational challenges and opportunities. The underrepresentation of many regions suggests that translanguaging practices in diverse primary education systems remain insufficiently documented. This imbalance has implications for the generalizability of existing findings and points to the need for more context-sensitive research in underrepresented regions. For the field of language teaching, expanding the geographical scope of translanguaging research is essential to developing pedagogical frameworks that are responsive to varied sociolinguistic realities.

Despite the documented benefits, it is equally important to acknowledge the challenges and tensions inherent in implementing translanguaging in primary classrooms. First, practitioners often face ideological resistance from school administrators, policymakers, and

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even parents who adhere to monolingual norms, viewing translanguaging as a threat to target language acquisition rather than a pedagogical asset. Second, teachers frequently report a lack of professional training and structured pedagogical frameworks to implement translanguaging strategically, leading to concerns that it may devolve into chaotic or unstructured code-switching without clear instructional purposes. Third, existing assessment systems, which typically measure proficiency in a single language, pose significant barriers, as they fail to capture the holistic linguistic competence developed through translanguaging practices. Fourth, in contexts where multiple home languages coexist, teachers struggle to balance the equitable use of all students' linguistic resources, potentially privileging dominant languages over minority ones. These challenges underscore the need for sustained professional development, clear policy guidance, and the development of assessment tools that recognize multilingual competence as a legitimate educational outcome.

Collectively, these findings position translanguaging as a pedagogical orientation with significant implications for language teaching in primary education. Rather than advocating unrestricted language use, translanguaging requires deliberate pedagogical planning, teacher professional knowledge, and sensitivity to classroom goals. The reviewed studies suggest that effective translanguaging practices are those that are strategically aligned with instructional objectives, literacy development, and learners' linguistic profiles. Consequently, translanguaging should be integrated into teacher education and professional development programs to support educators in making informed pedagogical choices in multilingual classroom.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on a systematic analysis of 147 Scopus-indexed publications, this review concludes that research on translanguaging in primary education has demonstrated significant growth and maturation as an academic field. The publication trend showing an increase of over 650% in the last decade indicates a paradigm shift from a peripheral concept to a main pedagogical approach in responding to global multilingual classroom realities. The geographical distribution of research reveals the dominance of four main countries (Spain, the United States, China, and South Africa) representing diverse linguistic contexts and educational policies, while also uncovering an imbalance in research representation between the Global North and South. The quality of this research is evidenced by the dominance of publications in high-reputation journals (78% in Q1), with primary focus on journal articles as the form of knowledge dissemination.

From methodological aspects, qualitative approaches dominate (84%), reflecting the contextual and interpretive nature of translanguaging research. These studies consistently position students as the main research subjects (70.5%), affirming the learner-centered philosophy of the approach. Impact analysis of translanguaging implementation reveals a broad spectrum of benefits, not limited to language skills development (48.6%) but also encompassing teacher pedagogical competencies (15.3%), conceptual understanding (8.3%), and strengthening of cultural identity (5.6%). Various student linguistic backgrounds, including EFL learners (50%), immigrants (24%), indigenous communities (16%), and complex multilingual groups (10%), gain differential benefits from contextualized translanguaging implementation. Keyword network visualization confirms the consolidation of core concepts around "translanguaging" and "pedagogical translanguaging" integrated with practical

elements such as "literacy," "practice," "strategy," as well as socio-affective dimensions like "classroom climate," "identity," and "attitude."

Through the application of a hybrid approach combining SLR and bibliometric analysis, this study has successfully mapped the research landscape of translanguaging in primary education while simultaneously identifying its deep pedagogical implications. Overall, these findings affirm the position of translanguaging as a comprehensive, inclusive, and effective pedagogical approach that not only enhances academic outcomes but also serves as a catalyst for mother tongue preservation and strengthening of students' linguistic-cultural identities in increasingly multilingual primary education contexts.

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