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# Inclusion in Action: Pedagogical Translanguaging Strategies to Support Emergent Multilingual Writers

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## ABSTRACT

Since writing abilities in both Persian and English are still underdeveloped among emergent multilinguals, it is essential to provide a pedagogy that addresses this need. Hence, this study aimed to investigate how language teachers develop a pedagogical translanguaging space within the Iranian multilingual context of writing classrooms. Participants in this study were eight language teachers from various provinces of Iran, where at least one indigenous language is spoken. The participants were asked to participate in a narrative inquiry session, where they shared their experiences of implementing translanguaging strategies for teaching writing. Transcendental phenomenology was used as the method, and thematic analysis was used to analyze the data. The findings suggested strategies, such as artefact scaffolding where teachers ask students to use Google Translate application to complete a composition and then edit it with peers and multilingual brainstorming to activate prior knowledge and also tasks such as bilingual writing in which students need to write a local story in Persian and a foreigner story in English, designed to enhance students' writing abilities in both Persian and English. This study offered a pedagogy leveraging students' linguistic repertoire through translanguaging strategies to enhance writing ability across multiple languages, fostering an inclusive educational environment that values diverse linguistic backgrounds. Teachers and teacher trainers can implement the recommended strategies and tasks in their classes and workshops.

**KEYWORDS:** Emergent multilingual; Multilingualism; Pedagogical translanguaging; Writing

## 1. Introduction

Traditional monolingual ideologies believed in language separation and welcomed only the target language in the classroom, advocating for native-speaker norms. This approach has a negative cognitive and affective impact on the learning process, as it disregards students' prior knowledge and leaves them in an unknown world; consequently, students may find these norms unreachable and feel a sense of failure as language learners (Cenoz et al., 2022). In contrast, translanguaging welcomes all students' or emergent multilinguals' (EMs) prior knowledge in the process of meaning-making. An emergent multilingual is a future multilingual who is proficient in two languages and learns an additional language. In a pedagogical sense, translanguaging can be beneficial in improving the weaker language (Lewis et al., 2012); however, in Iranian multilingual contexts, more than one language may be weak, Persian and English. Khonamri et al. (2023) mentioned that most students are not proficient in Persian,

their second language, as their home language, which is an indigenous language. This weakness may be related to the ability to write, as many researchers reported that students have problems with this ability worldwide (Gagalang, 2020; Kashi et al., 2024; Kaylaap et al., 2020, etc.).

Additionally, Iran has a diverse multilingual linguistic landscape, with more than 40 indigenous languages along with Persian, the official language (Windfuhr, 2009). In this diverse multilingual landscape, students from different ethnics speak languages other than the official language, and they learn Persian in schools. Monolingualism disregards not only the potential of prior knowledge of EMs' first language but also their experiences in learning Persian (Cenoz & Gorter, 2021). The unrealistic goal of achieving native-speaker norms and ignoring prior knowledge lead to cognitive and affective problems among Iranian students, like other students around the world (Cenoz & Gorter, 2017, 2021). Specifically, it is reported that the absence of this prior knowledge for Iranian students leads to academic failure (Hoominfar, 2014) in that they do not understand the concepts declared in Persian or English (Khonamri et al., 2023). This monolingual policy also is unable to provide a condition to develop the Persian language along with the English language. However, translanguaging may enhance students' proficiency, specifically writing ability, in both their second and additional languages (Velasco & García, 2014). Despite some offered translanguaging pedagogies (Celic & Seltzer, 2013; Espinosa et al., 2016; García et al., 2017), no research conducted to find a pedagogy in Iran's multilingual context, a pedagogy that covers Iranian students' need of enhancing their weak languages simultaneously. This study aims to provide insight into how teachers can better support EMs in developing their writing ability. Given that many students struggle with writing in both Persian and English, exploring translanguaging strategies can offer solutions for enhancing writing proficiency. Also, according to Iran's linguistic landscape status and the pressing need for educational frameworks that embrace multilingualism rather than enforce monolingual norms in Iran, this research will contribute to the development of pedagogical practices that recognize and utilize students' linguistic diversity, thereby promoting inclusivity and equity in education.

Therefore, this study aims to find how teachers create a pedagogical translanguaging (PT) space in writing classrooms based on Cenoz and Gorter's (2021) framework. The guiding question is: How do language teachers create a PT space in writing classrooms?

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Monolingualism vs. multilingualism

Traditionally, language schools and institutions have adhered to monolingual ideology toward teaching and learning English (Garcia & Sylvan, 2011). The goal of language teaching was to develop communicative competence of the target language. Language learners should strive to progress toward the native speaker model; however, this goal can be challenging and may lead to various difficulties (Cenoz & Gorter, 2020). According to Llorida (2014), highly proficient English speakers sometimes feel uncomfortable and experience a loss of self-esteem because they believe they cannot be as good as the native speakers. In addition to the cognitive and affective problems of monolingualism, it fails to meet the students' needs in multilingual contexts like Iran, where more than one language needs to be developed (Khonamri et al., 2023). In the literature, it has been justified that translanguaging can be a solution to these problems. For example, Yuzlu and Dikilitas (2022) reported that translanguaging significantly enhances students' cognitive and socio-affective development by allowing them to utilize their entire linguistic repertoire, which in turn fosters a comfortable learning environment and increases their motivation to learn English. In another study, Kiramba (2016) found that to meet the multilingual needs of often illiterate students in Kenya, teachers employed translanguaging in writing classrooms through bilingual tasks, such as summary writing. Although mixing languages in writing tasks conflicted with the language policy, students creatively utilized translanguaging in their compositions. In another paper, Velasco and Garcia (2014) proposed translanguaging as a self-regulating strategy that bilinguals can utilize in their writing. However, they do not present translanguaging as a pedagogy for teaching writing.

In Iran, students often experience English-only policy in schools and institutions (Naghdi-pour, 2016). Writing skill is obviously considered a monolingual practice in Iran, primarily assessed through tests that are mostly in English (Naghdi-pour, 2016). Following a global trend moving from monolingual to multilingual approaches and the emergence of translanguaging pedagogies (Garcia & Li, 2014), a multilingual shift occurred in recent years (see Khonamri et al., 2023; Nazari & Karimpour, 2023; Salimi et al., 2024;). In recent years, some studies have been conducted in Iran regarding the implementation of translanguaging. In one study, Khonamri et al. (2023) investigated the contribution of bilinguals' linguistic repertoire to teaching English grammar and reported that translanguaging was an effective tool for clarifying grammatical terms. In a recent study, Salimi et al. (2024) examined the beliefs and practices surrounding translanguaging among teachers in Iran. Their findings revealed a duality in teachers' perceptions of translanguaging; while some educators regarded their translanguaging practices as relevant and beneficial, others expressed a preference for monolingual policies. This sentiment aligns with the conclusions drawn by Nazari and Karimpour (2023), who cautioned that translanguaging should be approached with caution due to the prevailing negative attitudes among teachers. They argued that the educational context in Iran is not adequately prepared to implement such pedagogical strategies effectively.

These previous studies predominantly focused on translanguaging as a singular strategy which was inferred as spontaneous translanguaging (Cenoz & Gorter, 2017). One potential reason for the feelings of discomfort, anxiety, and reluctance toward translanguaging (Wang, 2019) may be the absence of the planned pedagogical strategies that teachers can employ in writing instruction. Consequently, a notable gap in the literature is the lack of clearly defined translanguaging strategies and tasks that empower teachers with inclusive pedagogical approaches.

Another gap in the literature is that previous studies primarily focus on improving English language skills while disregarding other languages that may still be underdeveloped. This study aims to offer a pedagogy that creates a space for the enhancement of both languages. Previous research often viewed translanguaging as a mechanism through which prior language knowledge assists in learning an additional language. However, translanguaging can also provide an environment where both languages can improve simultaneously. This study seeks to address this gap by proposing a translanguaging pedagogy that incorporates the entire linguistic repertoire into tasks and teaching strategies, thereby fostering improvement in both Persian and English writing.

## 2.2. Pedagogical translanguaging

Translanguaging is defined as “the capability of multilingual speakers to shuttle between languages, treating the diverse languages that form their repertoire as an integrated system” (Canagarajah, 2011, p. 401). In other words, it involves utilizing full linguistic repertoire to construct meaning. Translanguaging has two distinct sides: pedagogical and spontaneous. Spontaneous translanguaging refers to the natural use of multiple languages in everyday situations, where the boundaries between languages are fluid and constantly evolving (Cenoz & Gorter, 2017). In contrast, PT involves the use of intentional strategies and activities that draw on the entire linguistic resources of EMs within a classroom setting (Cenoz et al., 2022). Here, “full” encompasses all aspects of a speaker’s knowledge, including languages, semiotics, background knowledge, functional knowledge, strategic knowledge, and more. Essentially, PT addresses any potential communication barriers that may arise between different languages or modalities (Tian, 2022). Thus, using words or phrases from a language other than the target language serves not just a compensatory purpose (Cenoz & Gorter, 2021), but can also facilitate more effective communication for EMs.

Furthermore, Cenoz and Gorter (2021) describe PT as an approach rooted in theoretical frameworks and learning theories aimed at promoting multilingualism. As portrayed in Figure 1, the current study will be based on these theoretical concepts (see Cenoz & Gorter, 2021, p. 19), which will be elaborated upon in the following.

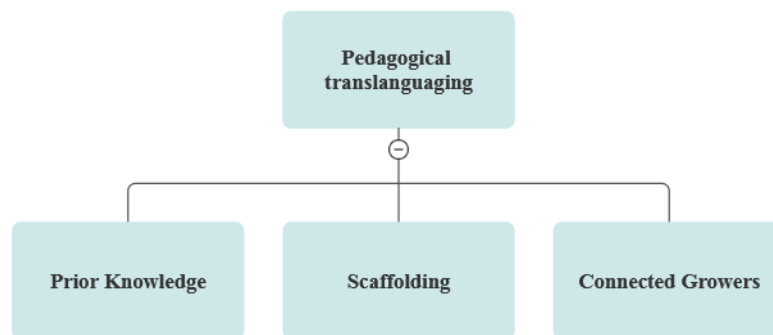


Figure 1. Aspects of pedagogical translanguaging

The first concept is prior knowledge. By emphasizing multilingualism, educators can help students link new information to what they already know, thereby facilitating the learning process (Schumacher & Stern, 2023). This existing knowledge may stem from either their home language or second language (L2), along with pragmatic and discourse skills (Cenoz & Gorter, 2021). PT enables learners to draw on all their linguistic and non-linguistic resources, including their prior experiences, without the stress of needing to attain native-like proficiency (Garcia & Otheguy, 2020).

The second key element is scaffolding. In multilingual settings, scaffolding is not merely a means to support the dominant language; instead, it aims to enhance the entire linguistic repertoire (Cenoz and Gorter, 2021). Cenoz and Gorter (2021) explain that it involves strategies and techniques designed to enable students to leverage their resources as multilingual speakers. A primary focus in PT is that educators need to thoughtfully plan and devise various methods to assist EMs. Scaffolding strategies that

leverage all languages in a student's repertoire can be employed to enhance the writing process in the classroom (Mbirimi-Hungwe, 2016).

The third concept, based on dynamic systems theory and applied to multilingualism, is known as connected growers. This term describes the interconnection between the development of two or more areas of knowledge. As De Bot et al. (2007) noted, the relationship between listening comprehension and vocabulary growth can be viewed as a connected grower. These two areas mutually reinforce one another; improvements in listening comprehension can enhance vocabulary acquisition, while a more extensive vocabulary can improve listening skills (Cenoz & Gorter, 2021). Multilingual tasks that incorporate all languages can be integrated into lessons to enrich the linguistic repertoire of students (Cenoz & Gorter, 2011, 2017; Leonet & Saragueta, 2023). The goal of PT is to identify and nurture these connected growers (Cenoz & Gorter, 2021).

This framework can address the complexities of Iran's diverse linguistic landscape. It emphasizes the importance of leveraging students' prior knowledge from multiple languages, which aligns with the needs of EMs who navigate various linguistic resources in their learning processes. The framework outlines key components that are essential for developing effective translanguaging strategies. By focusing on these elements, this study aimed to investigate how teachers can utilize all available linguistic resources to enhance writing proficiency in both Persian and English. In this study, the researchers analyzed how teachers incorporated components of the framework into their teaching practices. For example, if researchers identified instances in participants' narratives where improvements in students' writing skills in one language positively influenced their abilities in another, they would assume that these instances relate to the connected growers emphasized by the framework.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1. Participants

The participants included two males and six females, selected through purposive sampling. The rationale for choosing participants was twofold: first, it ensured that the selected teachers had substantial experience (a minimum of five years) with translanguaging strategies, which was essential for providing rich, context-specific insights into their practices. Participants should have demonstrated their understanding of translanguaging concepts in initial interviews. Second, participants from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, such as Khorramabad, where Luri is spoken mainly; Rasht, where Gilaki is the primary language; Kermanshah, a city where Kurdish is predominantly spoken; Qouchan, where Kurdish is also one of the languages mostly spoken; Tabriz, where Azeri Turkish is the primary language, were included. This diversity not only enriched the data collected but also allowed for a comprehensive package of translanguaging strategies that can be used in multicultural classes. These criteria assisted researchers during the phases of phenomenological reduction and synthesis. By identifying similarities in phenomena, they could uncover more reliable instances that enhanced their understanding of translanguaging space.

As the data collection and analysis took place simultaneously, the researchers determined that data saturation was reached with eight participants. The analysis of data gathered from the eighth participant indicated that no new insights or themes were identified during this interview. To ensure the saturation, the researchers interviewed two more participants; however, no new insights were identified. Consequently, the decision was made to keep the participant count at eight, confirming that saturation had been reached. Although the sample size for this study was limited, it allowed for a thorough examination of translanguaging practices among experienced teachers in varied linguistic contexts, providing valuable and context-specific insights. Table 1 presents the demographic information of the participants.

Table 1. Participants' demographic information

Participants	Gender	Age	Field of study	Academic degree	Teaching experience	Workplace
T1	Male	37	Linguistics	Ph.D.	17	ELI <sup>1</sup> & University
T2	Female	23	Applied Linguistics	B.A.	5	Schools & ELI
T3	Female	22	Applied Linguistics	B.A.	5	Schools & ELI
T4	Female	30	English Translation	B.A.	11	Schools & ELI
T5	Female	28	Business Management	M.A.	10	ELI
T6	Female	22	Russian Literature	B.A.	5	ELI
T7	Female	25	Applied Linguistics	M.A.	7	ELI & Schools
T8	Male	45	Applied Linguistics	M.A.	25	Schools & ELI

T1 and T4 are multilingual speakers from Khorramabad, fluent in Luri, Persian, and English, teaching English to EMs speaking Luri and Persian. T2, from Kermanshah, and T3, from Qouchan, are bilinguals in Persian and English, teaching

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English to EMs speaking Kurdish and Persian. T5 and T7 are from Tabriz. The former is a bilingual speaker of Persian and English, the latter is a multilingual speaker of Azeri, Persian, and English. T6 and T8 are both bilinguals in Persian and English who teach English to EMs speaking Gilaki and Persian in Rasht. This diversity provided an in-depth insight into how teachers from various provinces implement translanguaging in their classrooms, recognizing and valuing students' linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

In line with ethical standards, participants were provided with a consent form detailing the research's objectives, its potential effects on learning writing and society, as well as information on data storage and usage, ensuring confidentiality and voluntary participation.

### 3.2. Design

Transcendental phenomenology was used to address the aim of the study. This method is used to focus specifically on the teachers' lived experiences rather than researchers' (Usher & Jackson, 2014). Using this method, researchers were able to inform the participants about their pedagogical translanguaging practices which are deeply embedded in their consciousness (Alhazmi & Kaufmann, 2022) and more accurate information was obtained regarding the structure and dimensions of translanguaging tasks and strategies. Firstly, the researchers focused on activating the participants' knowledge regarding their PT practices. In this stage, the researchers attempted to assist the participants by presenting examples, thereby encouraging them to engage more deeply with the topic in interviewing session. Secondly, researchers employed the phenomenological epoché (Vagle, 2018). Researchers consciously set aside their preconceived notions and biases regarding pedagogical practices by engaging in reflective practices prior to data collection. Researchers acknowledged their assumptions about translanguaging and multilingual education and documented these reflections. This process allowed them to approach the narrative interviews with an open mind, focusing solely on the participants' experiences. Thirdly, the researchers created a mental model of all existing conditions that could give rise to the phenomenon. Fourth, the researchers aimed to identify similarities among the participants through phenomenological reduction (Vagle, 2018). After conducting narrative interviews, researchers systematically analyzed the transcripts by identifying significant tasks and strategies implemented in the PT spaces. By doing so, researchers aimed to reveal commonalities and variations in their experiences while respecting the uniqueness of each participant's narrative. Also, Researchers compared and contrasted the themes identified across different participants, looking for patterns that indicated shared experiences or divergent practices. This synthesis was guided by the researchers' aim to derive general conclusions about the phenomenon while remaining faithful to the individual narratives. Finally, researchers synthesized their findings into broader conclusions about pedagogical practices that enhance EMs' writing proficiency. By triangulating data from multiple participants and contextualizing their experiences within the existing literature on translanguaging and multilingual education, researchers articulated a nuanced understanding of how teachers can utilize their students' linguistic resources in the writing classes.

### 3.3. Instrument

The researchers used narrative interviewing to gather participants' experiences related to the phenomenon. The interviewer guided participants in sharing their stories through semi-structured questions informed by relevant literature and expert insights, focusing on various aspects of a writing class following Cenoz and Gorter's (2021) framework. To ensure inter-rater reliability and content validity, the interview questions were reviewed by five field experts.

Despite the advantages of narrative interviewing, such as being structured, reflecting relevant experiences, and providing plausible details (Jovchelovitch & Bauer, 2000), one of their potential limitations is that participants might find it challenging to express their stories if they are not familiar with this format. To mitigate this issue, follow-up questions were used to clarify their responses. For instance, if a participant mentioned using brainstorming in the pre-writing, the interviewer would ask for more details. The interviews lasted between 40 to 60 minutes, were conducted in Persian, and were recorded for transcription purposes. The transcriptions were then translated into English, with reliability confirmed through member checks involving a language interpreter and the lead researcher.

### 3.4. Data analysis

The researchers employed thematic analysis (see Seyri & Ghiasvand, 2024) to organize and interpret the data. They also employed a bottom-up strategy to thoroughly analyze the interview data, with the goal of uncovering themes related to the development of a PT space in writing classes. Following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step framework, the researchers completed several stages: (1) becoming familiar with the data, (2) generating initial codes, (3) identifying themes, (4) reviewing and enhancing these themes, (5) defining and labeling the themes, and (6) finalizing the report. Also, researchers organized and categorized the codes via MAXQDA software (version 2020.1). After creating a comprehensive list of codes, they aimed to group them into categories and then analyzed patterns within these categories to identify themes pertinent to the research question. For example, the theme of scaffolding emerged from several initial codes, including "peer support," "teacher support,"



and "artefact support." Through iterative coding and categorization, it became evident that these elements collectively contributed to EMs' mastery of writing. For instance, participants frequently described instances where peer support strategy led to enhanced clarity in their writing, demonstrating how collaborative interactions served as scaffolds for their learning process. By connecting this theme to the PT framework, the researchers highlight how scaffolding enhances writing and fosters a community of practice within the multilingual classroom, ultimately contributing to the development of a PT space.

## 4. Results

Three broad themes with regard to participants' creation of the PT space have emerged from the data analysis. In the following, researchers will outline each theme and include relevant excerpts from interviews to offer a more detailed insight into the experiences of participants.

### 4.1. Implementing translanguaging techniques in pre-writing stage

According to Figure 2, the current theme includes three sub-themes that are presented in detail hereunder.

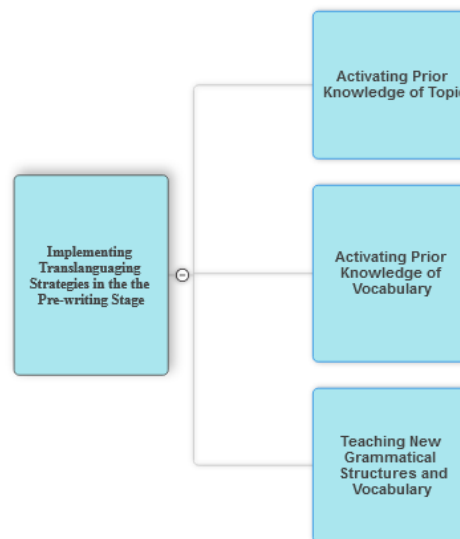


Figure 2. Sub-themes relating to implementing translanguaging strategies in the pre-writing stage.

#### 4.1.1. *Activating prior knowledge of the topic*

Language teachers attempted to activate EMs' prior knowledge of the topic in the pre-writing stage to facilitate the writing process in later stages. In doing so, they used different forms of brainstorming. For instance, T7 used visuals to brainstorm ideas.

*"I displayed a picture on the wall and posed questions about it. Each student contributed their thoughts. During the discussion, I noted down helpful words on the board that would be beneficial in the process of their writing."*

This participant posed questions regarding a visual and encouraged students to express their thoughts in any language they preferred. Furthermore, she introduced new vocabulary or related terms that would be beneficial for their writing process.

Another teacher used videos. T1 stated:

*"I presented an animation based on a traditional story that I had previously asked them to read in its Persian version. After viewing the animation, I encouraged them to share their thoughts about the story and to write down their reflections."*

Two teachers used audios. They played bilingual or monolingual audios related to the topic and then asked related questions to extract ideas.

*"I played Turkish audio about health & diet. The audio shared some information and posed some questions."*

This participant used the information the audio shared about aspects of health and diet to extract their ideas.

Some participants asked questions about EMs' personal stories and allowed them to express their stories in L1. For instance, T8 stated:

*"I created a relevant setting for the brainstorming task to encourage participants to share their personal stories. For those subjects where I sensed hesitation, I shared my own experiences to make the process more relatable, allowing them to express their stories in whatever language they felt comfortable."*

This participant asked EMs to share stories of their personal experiences. He allowed them to use Persian, Turkish, or English to tell their narratives. He prepared EMs to write about the subject using story-telling as a brainstorming strategy. In addition, T1 used a traditional story that was familiar to most students in the storytelling strategy. She used Rostam v-a Sohrab<sup>2</sup> and Kuroghlu<sup>3</sup> which are popular stories in the local district of Gilan. Sometimes, she played a video that is related to these stories to soften the difficulties students feel when listening to or reading such stories. Afterward, she asked them to tell these stories for the class in Persian and English; then, she asked them to choose a story to write in English.

#### **4.1.2. Activating prior knowledge of vocabulary**

Some teachers engage students' prior vocabulary knowledge during the pre-writing phase. Some share visuals related to words, while others utilize videos. Additionally, some educators employ multilingual or bilingual word lists to review words. For example, T7 said:

*"We reviewed vocabulary that we encountered in our readings. At times, I incorporated visuals to enhance understanding. I created a file containing images of these vocabulary words, which I shared with the group to facilitate discussions about their meanings."*

T7 used pictures as a translanguaging technique, possibly because her students have a better spatial intelligence, she attempted to review words using visuals.

#### **4.1.3. Teaching new vocabularies and grammatical structures**

According to the data, one of the teachers favored introducing new vocabulary associated with the topic, allowing students to incorporate these words into their writing. She compiled a list of bilingual terms that were featured in a video she displayed. During and after the video, she taught these new words. To enhance understanding, this teacher utilized Persian and Gilaki to clarify the meanings. Moreover, one of the teachers taught new and related structures. She uplifted students to use these structures in their writing. T8 explained:

*"... when introducing concepts like "there is/there are" or countable versus uncountable nouns, I would utilize pictures or gestures to illustrate the meanings of these phrases. After demonstrating these concepts, I would write the sentences generated by the students on the board. Following this activity, I would encourage them to describe what they see in their homes or along their route for the next session."*

This participant employed grammatical structure frames to enhance writing production among students. She utilized the structures "there is/are" to prompt students to write a sentence. To support comprehension, she incorporated various translanguaging tools, including pictures, body language, and realia. The decision to introduce new vocabulary and structures likely stems from the perception that the lesson's subject matter was too straightforward, leading to a belief that generating ideas was unnecessary.

## **4.2. Employing PT as scaffolding support in the while-writing phase**

As portrayed in Figure 3, this theme included two general parts presented in detail hereunder.

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<sup>2</sup> The tale of a great warrior and his fleet-footed horse, Rakhsh.

<sup>3</sup> The blind man.

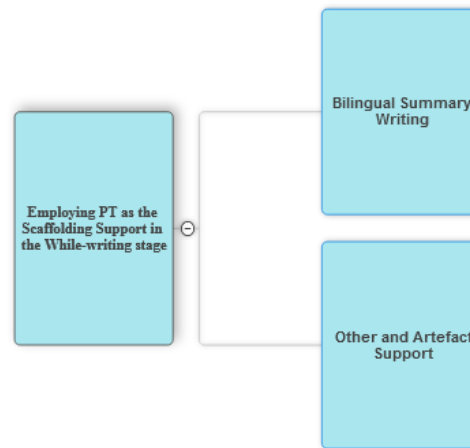


Figure 3. Sub-themes relating to employing pt as scaffolding support in the while-writing phase

#### 4.2.1. Bilingual summary writing

In the bilingual summary writing strategy, teachers encourage EMs to compose summaries of reading texts in English, allowing the integration of Persian whenever necessary. This practice exemplifies a translanguaging strategy, enabling students to leverage their entire linguistic repertoire to articulate their understanding of the text. Participants reported that this task not only fostered a sense of confidence among students but also significantly increased their motivation to engage with the writing task. For example, T6 reported:

*“... I taught a twelfth-grade class, anxious about their low proficiency levels. To prepare them for the final exam, I encouraged them to write about their understanding of the texts we read in Persian, hoping to boost their confidence for our next session. After a few classes, I prompted them to share the words they had learned. Gradually, they progressed to forming sentences in English.”*

This participant employed composing summaries in Persian based on their understanding of the texts. Initially, she used Persian to motivate them and create a safe environment, as they felt frustrated when comparing themselves to more proficient English learners. She noted that after a few sessions, they were able to communicate to the teacher the vocabulary acquired through this process. Subsequently, the teacher encouraged the inclusion of English sentences in their summaries, indicating that the participant had progressed to a level where they could write two to three sentences in English.

#### 4.2.2. Other (peer or teacher) artefact support

The other, including peer and teacher, and artefacts support, including technology and the internet, were used to support EMs' writing. Two participants gave EMs hints and prompts or corrective feedback to consider in the revising stage. T7 reported:

*“During the free writing phase, some students inevitably encounter challenges. I monitor their writing during the first draft and provide individual feedback. If I notice errors in their use of specific structures, I encourage them to study those particular rules. Additionally, I address their errors indirectly by offering hints and prompts. However, if I see that they are struggling to correct their mistakes, I will directly guide them to address those specific errors.”*

During the first draft, this participant provided EMs with hints and prompts, as well as negative metalinguistic feedback, in both their L1 and L2 whenever they made mistakes. Instead of correcting them directly, she encouraged them to search the specific structures in question, allowing them to recognize and understand their errors more effectively.

Another teacher integrated listening and writing. She allowed students to include Persian in the note-taking process.

*“Sometimes, I played an audio recording and asked the students to take notes. I didn't require them to use only English for this task; instead, I encouraged them to write in Persian if it helped them capture their thoughts more*



*quickly. While they took notes in Persian, the final assignment had to be completed in English. I also allowed using smartphones during the writing process."*

This participant used translanguaging in the note-taking phase to scaffold EMS to write effectively. This teacher allowed them to use all their linguistic repertoire to take notes for later English writing. This strategy enabled them to create better English content, as their Persian notes served as a helpful reference. Ultimately, the final product was presented in English.

Furthermore, two teachers mentioned that they allowed EMs to use Google Translate application to change their Persian thoughts to English. They allowed using this as artefact scaffolding. This excerpt highlights their explanation:

*"I asked the students to write down one of their funniest memories. During this time, I allowed them to use Google Translate. Once they finished, I asked them to summarize their memories briefly in English. I encouraged them to collaborate and correct each other's mistakes. I believe that the less I interfere, the better the outcome will be."*

This teacher allows students to use Google Translate as a translanguaging strategy, enabling them to express their thoughts in English freely. However, it is evident that Google Translate can produce numerous errors. During the revision phase, the teacher actively monitors the groups and provides hints to correct mistakes. In contrast, other teachers implement peer scaffolding in larger classes, which helps them save time and energy while facilitating collaborative learning among students. This excerpt mentions their notes:

*"I asked the students to read their writings in groups and correct errors. Afterward, I requested that they send me one piece for selective review. Given the size of the class, I implemented peer scaffolding, assigning each student a proofreader. This approach also served as a valuable reading task."*

They asked a peer to proofread their group mate's writing. They suggested that this could serve as both a reading and a writing task. By implementing peer proofreading as a translanguaging strategy, they created a space for knowledge construction, allowing the use of either L1 or L2 for giving feedback.

One teacher implemented a multilingual research technique as a translanguaging task to enhance vocabulary acquisition. She encouraged students to investigate various topics, after which they wrote their findings in English and presented them to the class. During these presentations, the teacher and students engaged in discussions about the vocabulary students discovered. Furthermore, they explored the similarities and differences among the grammatical structures of all students' languages to provide additional scaffolding support, helping students become more aware of the grammar they would use in their writing. The following excerpt highlights the example she provided.

*"I help my students to understand the subject/object concept in Persian, as many of them are not proficient enough in Persian. Once I confirm their understanding, I explain in Persian where the object position is in English, indicating whether it is here or there."*

This teacher used previous knowledge of EMs toward grammatical structures in their L2 to teach grammatical structures in English. She relied on the EMs' L2 because their L1, Gilaki, is unwritten, and they were not taught its grammar.

### **4.3. Developing EMs' connected growers (listening, reading, grammar, and writing) through PT strategies**

According to Figure 4, the third theme includes four parts presented in detail hereunder.

#### **4.3.1. Bilingual writing**

One of the teachers noted that learning to write in English could enhance EMs' writing skills in Persian.

*"Practicing Persian writing can negatively impact English writing skills. This is because Persian writing often lacks a clear topic sentence, leading to a more arbitrary structure. Unlike English writing, where each paragraph is organized around a specific topic, Persian writing may appear disorganized, with multiple ideas presented within a single paragraph..."*

He explained that writing in Persian tends to be less organized than writing in English. In this sense, he believed relying on practices in Persian writing could be detrimental to English writing. Conversely, by practicing English writing, EMs would be better equipped to write effectively in both languages. He emphasized that, in this context, the strategies used in the additional language writing can significantly improve L2 writing skills. He provides arguments for his claim as follows:

“Several years ago, a scholar investigated the differences between the poetry and proses of Hafez Shirazi<sup>4</sup> with those of English poets. He found that Hafez Shirazi’s poems contain multiple topic sentences within each sonnet. In addition, Hafez Shirazi tended to present his poetry in prose form, which can be seen as redundant in English writing, where redundancy is generally avoided. This contrasts with Persian literature, which frequently employs redundancy and utilizes numerous synonyms. Students often apply the Persian writing system in their English compositions, which can lead to further stylistic discrepancies.”

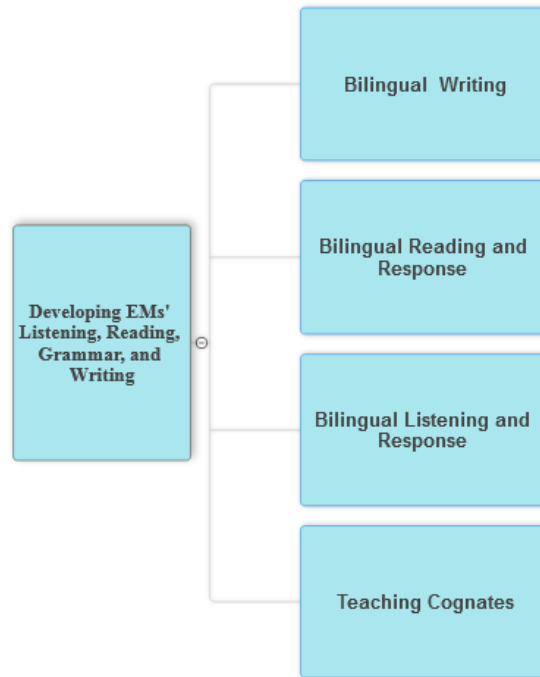


Figure 4. Sub-themes relating to developing EMs’ listening, reading, grammar, and writing

He referred to a scholar who investigated the Persian literary texts full of redundancy and believed that the Persian writing system is disincentive when applied to English writing. Also, he explained that learning English writing can enhance Persian writing.

*“By learning the English writing framework, students can enhance their writing skills in Persian ... Many of these learners have already engaged with English texts, which means they are familiar with the specific framework used in English writing, including a topic sentence, supporting body paragraphs, and a conclusion. This familiarity allows them to apply the same structure when composing in Persian.”*

He believed that once EMs learn the conventions and frameworks of English writing, they will be able to write more structurally in Persian. Based on the dynamic system theory and complete interconnectedness (De Bot et al., 2007), the interconnectedness of writing in two languages shows that change in English writing will have an impact on Persian and other languages that are parts of the linguistic repertoire.

Another teacher reported that she used a task in which EMs write bilingually and cross-culturally. She stated that:

*“... I instructed them to discuss cultural issues specific to Iran in Persian and those of the target country in English. For instance, the student highlighted the significance of salah-e-rahem<sup>5</sup> in Iran, noting that while there are multiple occasions for salah-e-rahem throughout the year, in the U.S., people tend to have less frequent interactions with their relatives ... Additionally, the student mentioned ta'arof<sup>6</sup>, which has no direct equivalent in American culture.*

<sup>4</sup> A Persian lyric poet whose collected works are regarded by many Iranians as one of the highest pinnacles of Persian literature (“Hafez,” 2024).

<sup>5</sup> It is to have affection and love with relatives and friends. “Salah” in the word means benevolence and friendship, and it means the “kindness” of relatives.

<sup>6</sup> It is a Persian word that refers to a kind of civility or art of etiquette that emphasizes both deference and social rank.

*Unfortunately, some texts have misinterpreted ta'arof as merely a form of compliment, which overlooks its deeper social implications and nuances."*

She asked her students to write about an Iranian cultural issue in Persian and a target cultural issue in English. Her examples highlighted two native cultural concepts, ta'arof and salah-e-rahem, in Persian, which has no counterpart in American culture. Additionally, writing about local culture in Persian not only preserves the nuances of the language but also helps prevent misinterpretations that may arise from cultural differences. The students also addressed target cultural issues in English, resulting in a bilingual text. The teacher believed that this approach would enhance their writing skills in both languages. Actually, she utilized multicultural aspects in the linguistic repertoire as a dynamic system to enhance EMs' cultural identity and writing in both languages. It has been reported that EMs felt empowered by expressing their cultural identity in Persian, particularly through cultural practices such as ta'arof, while also addressing the target culture in English.

### 4.3.2. Bilingual reading and response

Some teachers used bilingual reading and response to improve reading and writing in second and additional languages as connected growers. T2 reported that:

*"... Focusing on bilingual readings significantly enhances writing skills in an additional language. Gaining knowledge about various topics in L2 can also be advantageous when writing in L3. I provided students with bilingual texts to help them grasp the meaning more effectively. After reading, I asked them to write about the same topic in English. I observed that their topical knowledge improved through bilingual reading, which in turn allowed them to write more effectively in L3 ..."*

This participant provided EMs with bilingual texts and then asked them to write about the topic in English. This strategy helps EMS deepen their understanding of the text's meaning while enhancing their content knowledge, which is a crucial factor in effective writing. By utilizing bilingual texts alongside a writing response task, she aimed to improve both reading and writing skills simultaneously in both languages.

### 4.3.3. Bilingual listening and response

One participant used bilingual listening and writing task to improve EMs' listening and writing of both languages as connected growers. She reported:

*"I played a Persian listening audio and asked the students to follow the written text in their books. Afterward, I asked them questions to encourage discussion. Next, I played the English version of the same audio and asked the students to write a summary or response in English. This strategy not only improves their pronunciation but also enhances their understanding of the subject matter and their summary writing skills."*

This participant provided EMs with bilingual listening audio and instructed them to follow the written text simultaneously. Afterward, they were asked to write a summary of the text in English. The teacher reported that this task led to simultaneous improvements in the EMs' pronunciation, content knowledge, and writing skills, as elements of linguistic repertoire as a dynamic system, in the additional language.

### 4.3.4. Teaching cognates

Some teachers used translanguaging tasks to improve grammar and vocabulary knowledge as connected growers to writing production. For example, T6 stated:

*"For twelfth-grade students, the content of the final exam is indeed based on Vision 3<sup>7</sup>. However, it is essential for them to have a strong foundation in English. So, I taught vocabulary from word walls for review and introduced some new terms. I encouraged them to explore and compare the usage and meanings of these words in both their L2 and L3."*

This participant teaches vocabulary of both languages as connected growers to writing English in her writing classes. First, she introduced some new vocabulary and asked them to compare their L2 and L3 counterparts in terms of usage and meaning. She added that Understanding vocabulary and its applications is crucial for writing fluent sentences in their written assignments.

Another participant mentioned that she tried to improve grammar as a connected grower to writing. She reported that:

<sup>7</sup> The English book of twelve-grade high school students in Iran.

*"As the students concentrated on the grammatical structures in the text before moving into the writing phase, I encouraged them to discuss the structure of specific sentences, including tense and time. They demonstrated a greater understanding when I taught structures they had encountered in previous phases of my instruction."*

This teacher focused on grammar structures that students had encountered in reading texts. After teaching these grammar concepts, she compared them with their equivalents in the students' L2. This strategy aimed to enhance grammar and writing skills by fostering a deeper connection between the two languages.

Also, another participant mentioned that she asked her students to focus on word order structure whenever they read a text.

*"... In my language classes, I emphasize the importance of sentence structure, particularly recognizing the subject and object. This foundational knowledge greatly benefits students. For example, they learn that adjectives convey specific meanings and typically precede nouns in sentences, as evidenced in their reading materials. They also grasp the placement of adverbs related to time, place, and repetition. This understanding has significantly improved their writing skills."*

This teacher drew on her personal experience when preparing for the Iranian B.A. university entrance exam to enhance her teaching of word order. She recalled that while studying Arabic, she focused on identifying the part of speech in every sentence she encountered. By applying this method into her classroom, she observed significant improvements in her students' writing. They began to construct sentences that were more appropriate, correct, and effective, demonstrating a better grasp of grammatical structure. To facilitate this learning process, she provided texts in their second and additional languages and tasked her students with identifying the part of speech for each word.

## 5. Discussion

This study reveals how Iranian students' diverse linguistic backgrounds, such as Kurdish, Azeri, Luri, and Gilaki, contribute to teachers' practices. By investigating how teachers create pedagogical translanguaging spaces that leverage these indigenous languages, this research contributes to a more nuanced understanding of multilingual education in Iran. Furthermore, the findings facilitate the integration of indigenous languages to not only support students' writing proficiency in Persian and English but also validate their cultural identities. This approach diverges from traditional monolingual educational policies that often marginalize indigenous languages, thereby providing a framework for inclusive educational practices that honor the linguistic diversity present in Iranian classrooms. In fact, this study not only aligns with but also expands upon Cenoz and Gorter's (2021) frameworks by situating them within the unique sociolinguistic context of Iran, offering valuable insights for educators and policymakers aiming to enhance multilingual education in similarly diverse settings.

As an integral part of any language classroom to prevent cognitive problems (Cenoz & Gorter, 2021), various strategies and tasks are assigned to activate prior knowledge in this study. It has been revealed that teachers implement multimodal brainstorming in the pre-writing stage. Although Espinosa et al. (2016) emphasize the value of interviews or multilingual research to gather information about the topic, in the current study, this activity is used to promote connected growers outside of the classroom. This activity serves dual purposes: it can be utilized as a homework assignment while also fostering collaborative growth among students. Given that it occurs outside of regular class hours, it effectively integrates into students' homework, allowing for meaningful engagement with the material in both contexts.

Moreover, the results indicated that teachers review vocabulary and grammatical structures and teach new vocabulary and grammatical structures in pre-writing sessions, using non-linguistic semiotics, such as body language, visuals, realia, and videos, which is in line with previous studies. For example, Pablo-Wrzosek (2017) reported that teachers used Spanish to teach similar English grammatical structures such as adjectives and transitional phrases and vocabulary in pre-writing. By implementing these strategies, EMs can benefit almost fully from all the resources available to generate ideas. Based on the purpose of writing, teachers can choose each of these translanguaging techniques to implement in pre-writing.

Furthermore, Cenoz and Gorter (2020, 2021) emphasized that translanguaging pedagogy must integrate strategies that leverage students' prior knowledge of pragmatics and discourse. This study partially supports their assertion, as teachers assigned tasks related to local and target cultures, such as shekast-e nafsi and ta'arof. However, the understanding of pragmatics, pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics, among teachers in multilingual contexts is limited, which impedes effective instruction. Therefore, enhanced professional development is essential to improve teachers' awareness of the pragmatic dimensions of writing skills.

The findings revealed that teachers employed bilingual summary writing to help amotivated and demotivated students to participate in writing sessions. They reported that even those students who were unable to write an English sentence wrote three or more sentences after some sessions. It is a kind of affective scaffolding (Tajeddin & Kamali, 2020), which makes EMs more confident and provides a comfortable situation. It can also be used as a reading assessment technique (Mbirimi-Hungwe, 2016).

Further, teacher scaffolding seems to appear when teachers and students speak the same L1 or L2. Instead, peer scaffolding, which is a form of interactional scaffolding, appeared to be a valuable technique whenever the languages spoken by students and teachers differ. In addition, peer scaffolding can be used by bilingual and multilingual teachers speaking EMs to enhance their engagement, affirm their cultural identity, and improve collaborative learning in the process of writing (Motlhaka, 2021).

Furthermore, the findings revealed that teachers asked students to use Google Translate application to write their first draft, as artefact scaffolding. Chen and Tsou (2023) and Rowe (2022) claim that using the Google Translate in writing sessions is an effective translanguaging tool. Also, Rowe (2022) elaborated on the deficiency of using this application, through which so many errors happened, and teachers should spend much more time correcting those errors. However, in the current study, teachers mentioned that to overcome this deficiency, they provide corrective feedback to EMs to revise their writing.

Furthermore, the findings revealed that the tasks assigned by teachers aimed to enhance the listening, reading, writing, and grammar skills of EMs across all their linguistic resources. For example, one specific task involves having EMs write about local cultural norms in Persian alongside target cultural norms in English. These skills in L2 and L3 can be classified as connected growers as described by De Bot et al. (2007). This claim is supported by Serai's (2022) research in the Algeria context, which demonstrates that bilingual and bicultural writing can significantly improve EMs' writing abilities across all their languages.

Nevertheless, the results indicated that students use similar strategies in the organization of content and in the structure of compositions written in Persian and English. Other studies support this argument even if languages do not share the same writing system (Cenoz & Gorter, 2011). However, it is claimed that the Persian writing style is detrimental to English writing. Practicing and learning English writing frameworks can enhance Persian writing skills. Therefore, they are not growers in a reciprocating motion but in a one-way motion from the third language to the second language only. Further empirical research is needed to provide evidence to approve or reject this claim. Also, teachers did not mention anything about the relationship between speaking and writing abilities as connected growers. This may be because of the limited English-speaking ability of EMs (Alemi & Khatoony, 2020). As Cenoz and Gorter (2011) and Leonet and Saragueta (2023) argued there are a few boundaries among Basque, Spanish, and English speaking and writing abilities that one can consider all as connected growers, further research is needed to indicate whether Persian or other Iranian indigenous languages and English speaking and writing abilities are connected growers or not.

### 5.1. Practical applications for teacher training programs

Results suggest that teacher training programs should incorporate translanguaging tasks, such as bilingual summary writing, listening in L3 and taking notes in L2, bilingual writing, bilingual reading and response, bilingual listening and response, and writing composition using cognates and false cognates, and strategies, such as brainstorming, bilingual story-telling, providing hints and prompts in L2, encouraging peer and artefact scaffolding, and cross-linguistically teaching cognates and false cognates, which have been shown to improve writing and engagement among EMs. For instance, it is recommended to conduct workshops that encourage bilingual or multilingual story-telling, as a translanguaging strategy, a teacher plays a video of a popular story. After viewing, the teacher encouraged EMs to retell the story in either Persian or English. Subsequently, the students were asked to write their retelling in English. Teacher training programs may offer workshops centered on this teaching approach, allowing educators to develop bilingual and multilingual activities (e.g., David et al., 2021) while also exploring the theoretical foundations of PT (Cenoz & Gorter, 2021). These strategies enhance not only English writing skills but also Persian writing, as teachers have noted that EMs encounter significant challenges.

## 6. Conclusion

In conclusion, teachers can create a PT space by leveraging students' unified linguistic repertoire through multilingual tasks and strategies to enhance the writing skills of all languages in the repertoire. Promoting inclusion and valuing diverse linguistic backgrounds can be accomplished by integrating translanguaging into educational policies. Institutional support plays a vital role in the successful implementation of translanguaging practices, which involves shifting policies to acknowledge and utilize students' complete linguistic abilities. Additionally, it is essential to prioritize professional development for educators, equipping them with the skills needed to incorporate this teaching approach into their methods. Such support can empower teachers to cultivate more dynamic learning environments that reflect Iran's rich linguistic diversity. Further, policymakers can establish incentives for schools that implement bilingual education programs. This could include allocating dedicated funds for teachers who are proficient in multiple languages or for schools that prioritize multilingual curricula. Further experimental research is necessary to demonstrate the effectiveness of translanguaging practices. Lastly, like any research endeavor, this study has its limitations, particularly the lack of observational data. We anticipate that future studies will address this gap.

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