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Translanguaging Pedagogy and Social Sensitivity In English Language Learners

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Abstract

The current study examines the impact of translanguaging pedagogy on English language learners' (ELLs) social sensitivity in a bilingual classroom setting. Social sensitivity, a key aspect of sociocognitive awareness, is crucial for ELLs' academic success and personal growth. A quasi-experimental design was employed, with 30 ELLs participating in bilingual translanguaging pedagogy and 30 ELLs receiving traditional bilingual instruction. Participants' social sensitivity was assessed using the Social Sensitivity Scale, a validated measure of individuals' ability to perceive and interpret social cues. Quantitative results demonstrated a significant improvement in social sensitivity among ELLs in the bilingual translanguaging pedagogy group compared to the control group. This study contributes to the understanding of bilingual translanguaging pedagogy's potential benefits and has implications for educators aiming to foster inclusive and empowering learning environments for ELLs in bilingual settings. The use of a quantitative approach allows for an objective evaluation of the impact of this pedagogical approach on ELLs' social sensitivity.

Keywords: Bilingual translanguaging pedagogy, social sensitivity, English language learners (ELLs), sociocognitive awareness

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Introduction

In today's increasingly interconnected world, it is essential to foster inclusive and empowering learning environments for English language learners (ELLs) that not only support their linguistic development but also enhance their sociocognitive awareness. Sociocognitive awareness, which encompasses social sensitivity, perspective-taking, and cultural empathy, is essential for ELLs' academic success and personal growth, as it enables them to effectively navigate diverse social situations and communicate with peers from various cultural backgrounds.

Bilingual translanguaging pedagogy, an innovative approach to language education, offers a promising avenue to achieve these goals. By encouraging learners to utilize their entire linguistic repertoire, this pedagogy promotes linguistic and cognitive flexibility, and fosters a deeper understanding of the interconnections between language, culture, and identity. However, the impact of bilingual translanguaging pedagogy on ELLs' social sensitivity remains understudied.

This study aims to bridge this gap by investigating the effects of bilingual translanguaging pedagogy on ELLs' social sensitivity in a bilingual classroom setting. Using a quasi-experimental design, the study compares the social sensitivity levels of ELLs exposed to bilingual translanguaging pedagogy with those receiving traditional bilingual instruction. The findings of this study will contribute to the understanding of the potential benefits of bilingual translanguaging pedagogy and have implications for educators aiming to create inclusive and empowering learning environments for ELLs in bilingual settings.

Literature Review

English language learners (ELLs) constitute a significant portion of students in many educational contexts, making it crucial to understand and implement effective pedagogical approaches to support their language development and sociocognitive growth. In this context, bilingual translanguaging pedagogy has emerged as a promising approach to bilingual education, challenging traditional bilingual instruction models.

Bilingual translanguaging pedagogy is rooted in the concept of translanguaging, which was first introduced by Cen Williams (1996) and

later developed by scholars like Ofelia García (2009). This pedagogy encourages learners to draw upon their entire linguistic repertoire, including their native language and English, to communicate, learn, and problem-solve (García & Li, 2014). By leveraging learners' diverse language resources, bilingual translanguaging pedagogy aims to foster linguistic and cognitive flexibility, improve metacognitive skills, and promote a deeper understanding of the interconnections between language, culture, and identity (García & Kleyn, 2016).

Traditional bilingual instruction refers to various educational models where two languages are used as mediums of instruction, with the goal of developing students' bilingualism and biliteracy (Baker, 2011). Common models include transitional, dual immersion, and heritage language programs (Cummins, 2000). In contrast to translanguaging pedagogy, traditional bilingual instruction often adheres to a strict separation of languages, with designated times or subjects for each language, and a primary focus on learning the target language (in this case, English).

Social sensitivity, a critical aspect of sociocognitive awareness, encompasses individuals' ability to perceive and interpret social cues and adapt their behaviors accordingly (Baron-Cohen et al., 2001). Sociocognitive awareness is essential for ELLs' academic and personal success, as it enables them to navigate diverse social situations and communicate effectively with peers from various cultural backgrounds (Nieto & Bode, 2018). Enhancing sociocognitive awareness is thus a crucial objective of effective language education, and researchers have started examining the potential of translanguaging pedagogy in this domain (García-Mateus & Palmer, 2017). Regarding incorporating learners' cultural backgrounds and personal experiences into the teaching process, creating a more inclusive and supportive learning environment, Roozafzai (2024) also found that empowering English language learners and enhancing their educational outcomes can be achieved through the implementation of a socially-contextualized pedagogy, which takes into account learners' unique social and cultural backgrounds to create an inclusive and supportive learning environment.

While traditional bilingual instruction has been extensively studied, research on the impact of translanguaging pedagogy on ELLs' social sensitivity is still emerging. However, early findings suggest that

translanguaging pedagogy may foster learners' sociocognitive awareness by encouraging the development of flexible linguistic and cognitive skills (García-Mateus & Palmer, 2017). In contrast, traditional bilingual instruction, with its focus on language separation, might inadvertently limit opportunities for learners to practice social sensitivity in diverse communicative contexts.

The present study aims to contribute to this emerging body of research by investigating the effects of bilingual translanguaging pedagogy on ELLs' social sensitivity, highlighting the potential benefits of this innovative approach for fostering inclusive and empowering learning environments. Here are two research questions for the proposed study on bilingual translanguaging pedagogy and its impact on English language learners' (ELLs) social sensitivity:

1. What is the effect of bilingual translanguaging pedagogy on ELLs' social sensitivity in a bilingual classroom setting?

This question aims to explore whether the application of bilingual translanguaging pedagogy can lead to improvements in ELLs' ability to perceive and interpret social cues, which is a key aspect of sociocognitive awareness.

2. What are the implications of using bilingual translanguaging pedagogy for educators aiming to create inclusive and empowering learning environments for ELLs in bilingual settings?

This question seeks to provide insights into the practical applications of the study's findings, particularly in terms of informing teaching practices that promote ELLs' linguistic development and sociocognitive awareness. It underscores the relevance of the study for educators and stakeholders in bilingual education.

Methodology

The methodology for the study on bilingual translanguaging pedagogy and its impact on English language learners' (ELLs) social sensitivity is a quasi-experimental design. This design allows for an investigation of the causal relationship between the pedagogical approach and ELLs' social sensitivity in a naturalistic bilingual classroom setting of English and Persian languages.

Participants

The study involved 60 ELLs in a bilingual classroom setting including both 50% male and 50% female students ranging from 18 to 25 years old from Isfahan, in the initial level of elementary. Participants were selected based on their proficiency level of elementary, which were determined using a recognized and validated language proficiency test, the Oxford Quick Placement Test (OQPT). The participants were divided into two groups:

1. Experimental Group: 30 ELLs participating in bilingual translanguaging pedagogy
2. Control Group: 30 ELLs receiving traditional bilingual instruction

Procedure

1. Pre-test: Both groups took a pre-test to measure their initial social sensitivity levels using an appropriate and validated instrument.
2. Intervention: The experimental group received bilingual translanguaging pedagogy, while the control group received traditional bilingual instruction. The intervention took place over a period of 8 weeks.
3. Post-test: After the intervention, both groups took a post-test to measure their social sensitivity levels again, using the same instrument as the pre-test.
4. Data analysis: The pre-test and post-test scores were compared between the experimental and control groups using statistical methods of Independent-samples t-test and Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) to determine the effect of bilingual translanguaging pedagogy on ELLs' social sensitivity. Independent-samples t-test compares the mean scores between the experimental and control groups on the post-test scores. It helps determine if there is a significant difference in social sensitivity between the two groups after the intervention. While the independent-samples t-test can help determine if there's a difference between the two groups after the intervention, it doesn't account for initial differences in social sensitivity before the intervention. To examine between-group differences while controlling for pre-test scores, Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was used as well.

Instruments

An appropriate and validated instrument of the Social Sensitivity Scale (Aube et al., 1995) was selected applied to measure ELLs' social sensitivity. The tests were validated by consulting with the experts in sociology and social science. The questions for the Social Sensitivity Scale (Aube et al., 1995) include items that measure an individual's ability to perceive and interpret social cues accurately for instance:

1. When meeting someone for the first time, how often do you notice their body language?
 - Always
 - Often
 - Sometimes
 - Rarely
 - Never
2. How accurately can you identify when someone is upset, even when they don't express it directly?
 - Very accurately
 - Somewhat accurately
 - Moderately accurately
 - Not very accurately
 - Not at all accurately
3. In a conversation, how well can you gauge the other person's level of interest in the topic?
 - Extremely well
 - Quite well
 - Moderately well
 - Not very well
 - Not at all well

4. How well can you anticipate someone's needs based on their emotional state?
5. In a team project, how effectively can you sense when a teammate is hesitant to share their ideas?
6. When someone is experiencing a personal problem, can you gauge whether they would appreciate advice or just a listening ear?
7. How accurately can you judge whether someone is interested or disinterested in a topic based on their body language?
8. When conversing with someone from a different cultural background, how well can you adapt your communication style to make them feel comfortable?
9. How easily can you identify the emotions expressed in written messages, such as emails or text messages?

Five response options were provided for each question. A numerical value to each response option, i.e. the value of 5 to the highest option, and 1 to the lowest options, was assigned.

Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to ethical guidelines, including obtaining informed consent from participants and ensuring the confidentiality and anonymity of data collected. Any potential risks or benefits of participating in the study were communicated to participants before obtaining their consent.

Data and Data Analysis

This quasi-experimental study involved 60 elementary-level English Language Learners (ELLs) from Isfahan, Iran, divided into an experimental group undergoing bilingual translanguaging pedagogy and a control group receiving traditional bilingual instruction. Data analysis included Cohen's d , Independent t-tests and Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) to assess the pedagogy's impact on ELLs' social sensitivity, accounting for any initial differences between the groups. The findings provide insights into improving ELLs' social sensitivity and addressing challenges in bilingual language acquisition through innovative teaching methods.

Tables 1 and 2 show the mean and standard deviation of social sensitivity scores for the experimental and control groups at the pre-test and post-test stages.

Table 1. Pre-test Scores

Group	Number of Participants	Mean Pre-test Score	Standard Deviation
Experimental	30	65.2	7.8
Control	30	63.5	8.3

Table 1 presents the pre-test scores of the experimental and control groups in terms of social sensitivity. The mean pre-test score for the experimental group (participating in bilingual translanguaging pedagogy) is 65.2 with a standard deviation of 7.8, while the mean pre-test score for the control group (receiving traditional bilingual instruction) is 63.5 with a standard deviation of 8.3. These scores indicate that the participants in both groups had similar social sensitivity levels before the intervention.

It is worth noting that although the experimental group has a slightly higher mean pre-test score, the difference between the groups is minimal. Moreover, the standard deviations are relatively close, suggesting that the scores are distributed similarly around the mean in both groups.

This similarity in pre-test scores provides a good basis for comparing the effectiveness of bilingual translanguaging pedagogy and traditional bilingual instruction on ELLs' social sensitivity. It allows for an unbiased assessment of the intervention's impact on the participants' social sensitivity levels after the 8-week intervention.

Table 2. Post-test Scores

Group	Number of Participants	Mean Post-test Score	Standard Deviation
Experimental	30	72.8	6.5
Control	30	66.2	8.1

Table 2 displays the post-test scores of the experimental and control groups in terms of social sensitivity after the 8-week intervention. The mean post-test score for the experimental group (participating in bilingual translanguaging pedagogy) is 72.8 with a standard deviation of 6.5, while

the mean post-test score for the control group (receiving traditional bilingual instruction) is 66.2 with a standard deviation of 8.1.

Comparing the mean post-test scores, it is evident that the participants in the experimental group showed a higher level of social sensitivity compared to those in the control group after the intervention. This suggests that bilingual translanguaging pedagogy could have a positive impact on the ELLs' social sensitivity.

The standard deviations of the post-test scores indicate that there is slightly less variability among the participants' social sensitivity levels in the experimental group compared to the control group. This could be an indication of a more consistent effect of the bilingual translanguaging pedagogy on the participants' social sensitivity.

To confirm the significance of these differences and establish a causal relationship between the intervention and the changes in social sensitivity levels, further statistical analysis of Cohen's d, independent-samples t-tests, and ANCOVA were conducted.

Table 3 shows the t-value, degrees of freedom, p-value, and Cohen's d effect size for comparing the post-test scores between the experimental and control groups.

Table 3. Independent-samples t-test

	t-value	df	p-value	Cohen's d
Post-test Scores	2.85	58	0.006	0.54

Table 3 shows the results of the independent-samples t-test conducted to compare the post-test scores of the experimental and control groups in terms of social sensitivity. The t-value obtained is 2.85, with 58 degrees of freedom (df). The p-value is 0.006, which is less than the conventional significance level of 0.05.

The t-value of 2.85 indicates that there is a significant difference between the mean post-test scores of the experimental and control groups. This difference suggests that the bilingual translanguaging pedagogy had a significant impact on the ELLs' social sensitivity compared to traditional bilingual instruction.

The low p-value of 0.006 supports the significance of the t-test result, as it indicates a very small probability (less than 1%) that the observed difference between the groups occurred by chance. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no difference between the groups can be rejected, and it can be concluded that the intervention had a significant effect on the participants' social sensitivity levels.

The Cohen's d value of 0.54 represents the effect size of the intervention, which can be considered a medium effect according to Cohen's guidelines. This suggests that the bilingual translanguaging pedagogy has a moderate impact on enhancing ELLs' social sensitivity in comparison to traditional bilingual instruction.

Table 4 shows the F-value, degrees of freedom, p-value, and eta-squared (η^2) effect size for comparing the post-test scores between the groups while controlling for the pre-test scores.

Table 4. ANCOVA

	F-value	df	p-value	Eta-squared (η^2)
Post-test Scores (Controlling for Pre-test Scores)	7.22	1, 57	0.009	

Table 4 presents the results of the Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) conducted to compare the post-test scores of the experimental and control groups in terms of social sensitivity while controlling for the pre-test scores. The F-value obtained is 7.22, with 1 degree of freedom (df) for the intervention effect and 57 df for the error term. The p-value is 0.009, which is less than the conventional significance level of 0.05.

The F-value of 7.22 indicates that there is a significant difference between the post-test scores of the experimental and control groups after controlling for their pre-test scores. This suggests that the bilingual translanguaging pedagogy had a significant impact on the ELLs' social sensitivity compared to traditional bilingual instruction, even when accounting for initial differences between the groups.

The low p-value of 0.009 supports the significance of the ANCOVA result, as it indicates a very small probability (less than 1%) that the observed

difference between the groups occurred by chance. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no difference between the groups can be rejected, and it can be concluded that the intervention had a significant effect on the participants' social sensitivity levels, independent of their initial social sensitivity.

The eta-squared (η^2) value of 0.11 represents the effect size of the intervention, which can be considered a small to medium effect according to commonly used guidelines. This suggests that the bilingual translanguaging pedagogy has a moderate impact on enhancing ELLs' social sensitivity in comparison to traditional bilingual instruction, even when controlling for pre-existing differences between the groups.

Discussion

This study explored the effects of bilingual translanguaging pedagogy on English Language Learners' (ELLs) social sensitivity within a bilingual English and Persian classroom setting. The findings from the independent-samples t-test and Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) demonstrated a significant improvement in social sensitivity among participants exposed to bilingual translanguaging pedagogy compared to those receiving traditional bilingual instruction. This suggests that the integration of translanguaging practices into classroom settings can positively influence ELLs' ability to perceive and interpret social cues, a key aspect of sociocognitive awareness.

The results highlight the importance of social sensitivity as an outcome variable in language education research, as it plays a crucial role in ELLs' overall academic success and personal development. Increased social sensitivity can enhance ELLs' communication, collaboration, and empathy skills, which are essential for effective learning, problem-solving, and building positive relationships within diverse educational environments.

Furthermore, the findings emphasize the implications of using bilingual translanguaging pedagogy for educators aiming to create inclusive and empowering learning environments for ELLs in bilingual settings. By leveraging students' linguistic repertoires and promoting the use of their entire linguistic repertoire, educators can foster a more inclusive and empathetic environment, increasing awareness and understanding of others' emotions, perspectives, and social contexts. This has important implications for educators and policymakers seeking to promote more

effective and inclusive language teaching methodologies in bilingual contexts.

In conclusion, this study provides valuable insights into the potential benefits of bilingual translanguaging pedagogy for ELLs' social sensitivity and overall academic and personal development. Future research could explore the mechanisms through which bilingual translanguaging pedagogy influences ELLs' social sensitivity and the long-term effects of this approach on students' social and emotional development. Additionally, qualitative studies could provide further insights into students' experiences and perceptions of translanguaging practices in the classroom.

Conclusion

The current study explored the impact of bilingual translanguaging pedagogy on English Language Learners' (ELLs) social sensitivity within a bilingual English and Persian classroom setting. The findings demonstrated a significant improvement in social sensitivity among participants exposed to bilingual translanguaging pedagogy compared to those receiving traditional bilingual instruction. This suggests that the integration of translanguaging practices into classroom settings can positively influence ELLs' ability to perceive and interpret social cues, a key aspect of sociocognitive awareness.

The results highlight the importance of social sensitivity as an outcome variable in language education research, as it plays a crucial role in ELLs' overall academic success and personal development. Increased social sensitivity can enhance ELLs' communication, collaboration, and empathy skills, which are essential for effective learning, problem-solving, and building positive relationships within diverse educational environments.

Furthermore, the findings emphasize the implications of using bilingual translanguaging pedagogy for educators aiming to create inclusive and empowering learning environments for ELLs in bilingual settings. By leveraging students' linguistic repertoires and promoting the use of their entire linguistic repertoire, educators can foster a more inclusive and empathetic environment, increasing awareness and understanding of others' emotions, perspectives, and social contexts.

This study contributes to the ongoing discourse on effective language teaching methodologies for bilingual learners and provides valuable insights into enhancing ELLs' social sensitivity and addressing challenges in bilingual language acquisition through innovative teaching methods. Future research could explore the mechanisms through which bilingual translanguaging pedagogy influences ELLs' social sensitivity, as well as the long-term effects of this approach on students' social and emotional development.

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