TEACHERS' AND STUDENTS' BELIEFS ABOUT TRANSLANGUAGING IN HIGHER EDUCATION: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Background and Purpose: In recent years, there has been increased attention to translanguaging in educational research, particularly in higher education. The successful implementation of translanguaging practices depends on various factors, including the attitudes and beliefs of both teachers and students. However, there has been limited systematic review on this issue. This study aims to examine and synthesize existing literature on teachers' and students' beliefs regarding translanguaging practices in higher education contexts.

Methodology: A systematic review was conducted, following PRISMA guideline. Research databases including Web of Science, Scopus, and ERIC were searched with specific search terms 'perception OR belief AND translanguaging', resulting in the retrieval of 469 articles. Based on inclusion and exclusion criteria, 28 articles were selected for ultimate thematic analysis.

Findings: The analysis revealed that teachers' and students' beliefs regarding translanguaging were significantly shaped by their pre-existing values and knowledge, institutions' policies, as well as the nature of courses or curricula. Despite the evident benefits of translanguaging pedagogy highlighted in the reviewed studies, teachers encountered challenges in its implementation. The study identified four

primary areas of support needed for the implementation of translanguaging, encompassing teacher training, adjusting curriculum and assessment, fostering collaboration, and developing language policy. **Contributions:** This systematic review provides a comprehensive overview of the attitudes, perceptions, and experiences of both teachers and students in implementing translanguaging practices in higher education. The study contributes to advancing knowledge and understanding of translanguaging in higher education, with implications for both theory and practice in this area.

Keywords: Higher education*,* students' beliefs, systematic review, teachers' beliefs, translanguaging.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Despite the multilingual reality of the world, state schools around the world continue to insist on the practice of monolingual academic standard (García & Li, 2014). According to Cummins (2007), the monolingual principle dictates that teachers should exclusively give instructions in the target language, prohibiting any translation or code-switching between students' native language and the second language. As a result of this restriction, learners encounter difficulty integrating their existing linguistic knowledge with new language features, making them passive and disengaged during the learning process (Li, 2011).

Now, such rigid language separation has been challenged by the term translanguaging. Originally referring to multiple discursive practices that bilinguals use to make themselves understood, translanguaging has been further developed as a effective pedagogical approach in various educational contexts where language of instruction is different from learners' mother tongue (Li, 2018). Translanguaging enables teachers and learners to deliberately break the artificial and ideological divides between languages and focus on the knowledge construction by making meaning in the process of teaching and learning. Plenty of empirical studies have proved that translanguaging is beneficial for enhancing students' learning outcome, increasing their engagement and participation, and promoting their collaboration in universities and colleges, where diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds intersect (Fang & Liu, 2020; Ambele, 2022). Within this context, understanding the beliefs and perspectives of both educators and students regarding translanguaging practices is crucial for effective implementation and meaningful engagement in higher education settings.

Given the increasing popularity of the translanguaging pedagogy, there is still a lack of comprehensive research on the beliefs of translanguaging in the field of higher education. Therefore, this systematic review endeavors to provide a comprehensive examination of teachers' and students' beliefs about translanguaging in higher education by synthesizing the most recent literature on this topic. Through a rigorous analysis of empirical studies, this review study seeks to uncover the underlying factors influencing stakeholders' perceptions of translanguaging and its implications for teaching and learning. The study aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of translanguaging and its potential to foster more inclusive and equitable educational experiences in the diverse landscapes of higher education. Specifically, the study is guided by the following research questions.

1.   How did existing research characterize teachers' and students' beliefs regarding translanguaging in higher education?
2.   What supports did teacher and student need to use translanguaging in classrooms?

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

The term translanguaging was first used by Cen Williams (1994) to describe instructional practices implemented in Wales in which students read and listen in one language while speaking and writing in another. Williams originally coined the Welsh term *trawsieithu*, which was later translated into English as *translanguaging* by Baker (2003). According to Baker (2003), translanguaging helped bilingual learners to better understand the language and their identity. Since then, many scholars have adopted the term translanguaging to refer to both multilingual's language practices and pedagogical approaches that allow teachers and students to integrate all their linguistic resources, including different languages and dialects, in the teaching and learning process (García & Li, 2014).

Translanguaging pedagogy can be categorized into two main types: spontaneous translanguaging pedagogies and planned translanguaging pedagogies (Lin, 2020). Spontaneous translanguaging pedagogies involve teachers' spontaneous act of translanguaging to scaffold students' learning in classrooms settings. On the other hand, planned or design translanguaging pedagogies refer to the planned act of translanguaging on the part of the teachers into their instruction to explain concepts and engage in discussions with students. The majority of research on translanguaging has primarily concentrated on the spontaneous use of translanguaging in pedagogical practices.

To date, previous studies have shown the advantages of integrating translanguaging into students' learning experiences. For instance, grounded in sociocultural theory, Martin-Beltrán et al. (2017) proved that teachers could employ various forms of discourses to scaffold students' Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and utilize translanguaging to acknowledge students' diverse multilingual knowledge. Similarly, Kiramba and Harris (2018) conducted a comparative analysis of translanguaging pedagogical methods employed by two teachers and examined the resulting impacts on students' learning outcomes. The findings illustrated that incorporating multilingual practices in the classroom led to more engagement and better learning outcomes for students. Furthermore, Parra and Proctor (2021) affirmed that through the utilization of translanguaging, students were able to compare English and Spanish morphemes, leading to a more comprehensive mastery of the English language.

In language classrooms, teachers' practices are shaped by various factors, among which teachers' cognition stand out as a significant determinant (Borg, 2003). Teacher cognition examines what teachers think, know, or believe in relation to their work in language education contexts (Borg, 2006). These beliefs and attitudes, alongside their interpretations and instructional methods in classrooms, profoundly shape teachers' interactions with students and the way curriculum decisions are made. Hence, delving into teachers' beliefs offers valuable insights into issues of language education, potentially enhancing teaching efficacy and educational outcomes.

Teachers' beliefs are influenced by a variety of factors, including their early professional experience, the context of their work environment, the curriculum they follow, and language policies (Alisaari et al., 2019). Consequently, teachers' beliefs play a pivotal role in shaping the implementation of translanguaging. The attitudes and beliefs of both teachers and students constitute an important strand of research on translanguaging. For instance, previous studies proved that teachers' beliefs regarding translanguaging are often influenced by their language ideologies (Wang, 2016; Al-Bataineh & Gallagher, 2018; Alisaari et al., 2019), as well as by the type of course or curriculum they are teaching (Palfreyman & Al-Bataineh, 2018; Mendoza & Parba, 2018; Zhang & Hadjioannou, 2020). Additionally, research has also identified various challenges that hinder the effective implementation of translanguaging pedagogy, including monolingual curricula and assessments, teachers' doubts about their ability to use translanguaging strategies in the classroom, institutional language policies, and concerns about potential overuse by students (Fang & Liu, 2020). By systematically examining and analyzing existing studies, this review aims to provide a

comprehensive overview of the beliefs and perceptions held by both teachers and students regarding translanguaging in higher education.

3.0 RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1 Search Process

The systematic review process followed the PRISMA flow diagram (Moher et al., 2009). As shown in Figure 1, the initial step involved conducting a systematic search across the Web of Science (WOS), Scopus and ERIC databases. These three databases were selected because of their international recognition and high-quality studies. The search terms used in this study included 'perception OR belief AND translanguaging' with Boolean expression (Booth, 2008). Subsequently, this search yielded a total of 469 articles.

3.2 Selection Criteria

To select the final articles, the following inclusion criteria were applied at the title, abstract and full texts levels:

(1) The article was published between 2019 to 2023.

(2) The article was an empirical study published in a peer-reviewed journal.

(3) The study was conducted in higher education.

(4) The study focused on the teachers' or students' beliefs.

(5) The researcher has full access to the articles.

Among the total of 469 articles, studies that did not meet the criteria were excluded. In the end, a total of 28 articles were finalized for the review. Considering in-depth analysis of high-quality studies was the aim of this study, the number was appropriate for the research.
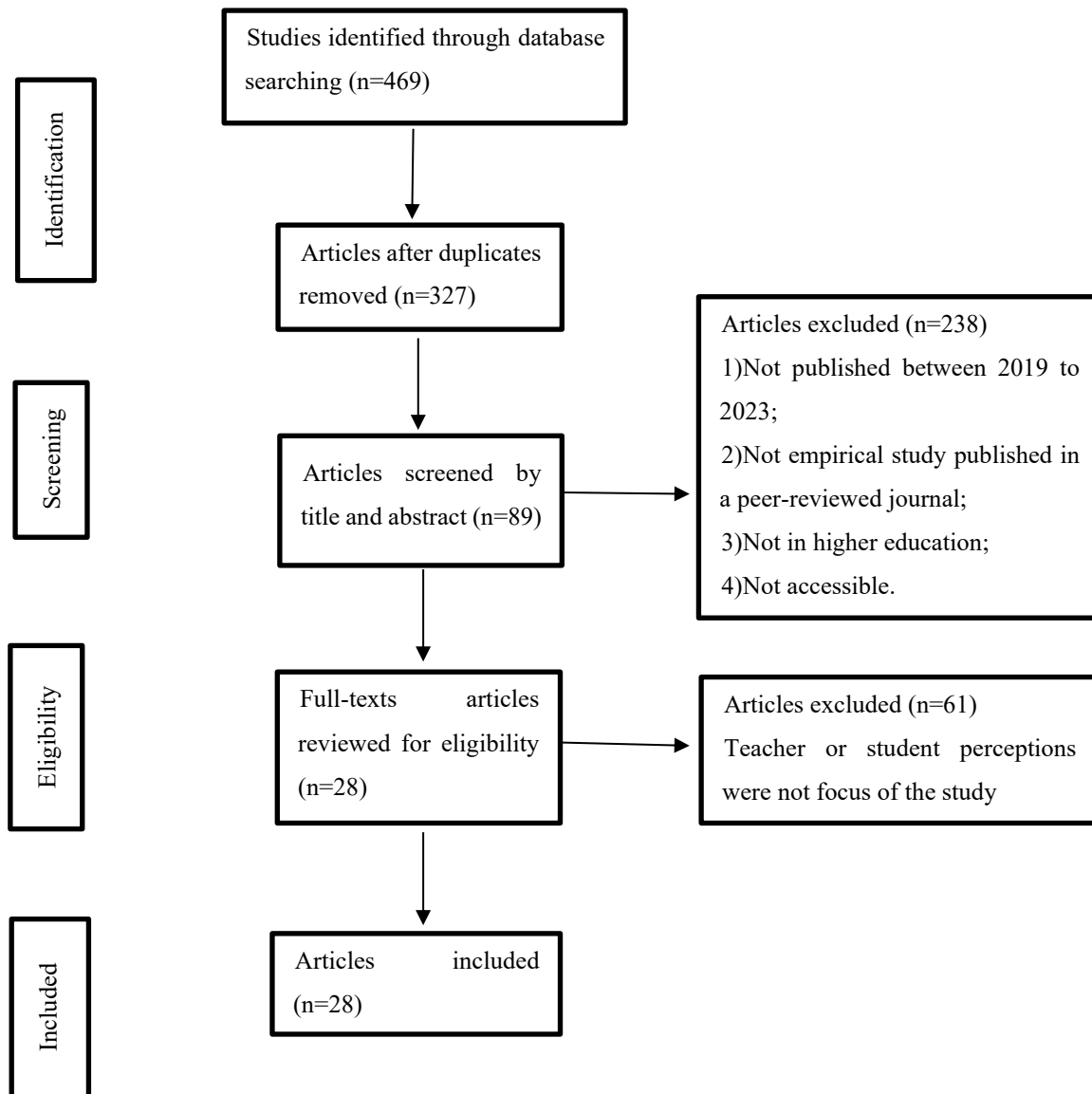
Figure 1: Flow diagram of inclusion and exclusion of the articles

3.3 Abstraction and Synthesis

A systematic literature review of studies on beliefs regarding translanguaging was conducted based on Garrard's (2011) Matrix Method. This Method is a versatile strategy for reviewing literature, which is both a structure and a process for systematic review. With a review matrix, a structured abstract of all source documents from the literature review was created. Following Garrard's approach, each of the 28 empirical studies was reviewed in chronological order with a form containing eight columns: authors, year of publication, study type, theoretical framework, participants, study design, data analysis, and findings.

3.4 Data Analysis

The data underwent analysis in light of Braun and Clarke (2006) coding manual, which was subjected to thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a method for 'identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns (themes) within data' (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79). Therefore, the purpose of thematic analysis is to search across the datasets to identify repeated patterns of meaning. The thematic analysis encompassed six phases. Phase 1 involved familiarizing with the data, followed by the generation of initial codes in Phase 2, a task achieved during the abstraction and synthesis in this study. Phase 3 and Phase 4 entailed the exploration and review of emerging themes. Subsequently, in Phase 5, each theme was defined and named. The final phase, Phase 6, involved generating the report based on the identified themes.

4.0 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The 28 reviewed articles were published in 20 different peer-reviewed journals from 2019 to 2023 (see Figures 2). These researches were conducted in 13 countries, including China, the United States, South Africa, Sweden, Spain, Iraq, Rwanda, Scotland, Thailand, Kuwait, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Kazakhstan.
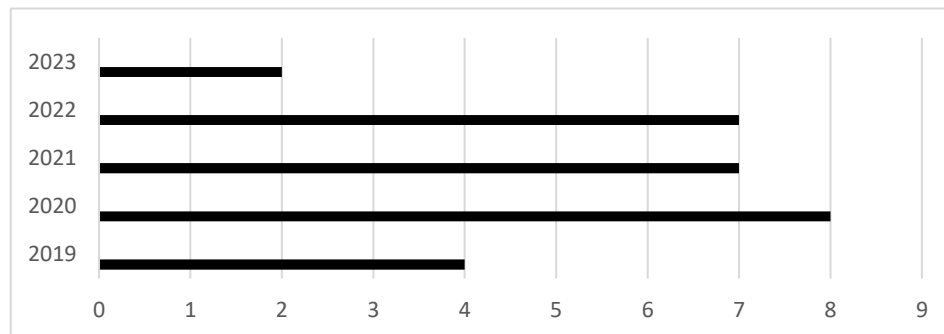

Figure 2: Year of publication of the selected articles

Seventeen of the studies involved common features of qualitative approaches, such as classroom observation, interviews, group discussions, reflections, and note-taking. These 17 studies comprised nearly 60.7% of the total 28 studies. The rest of the studies were categorized as quantitative studies (4 out of 28), which employed questionnaires as their research method, and mixed-methods studies (7 out of 28), which integrated both qualitative and quantitative approaches (See Figure 3).
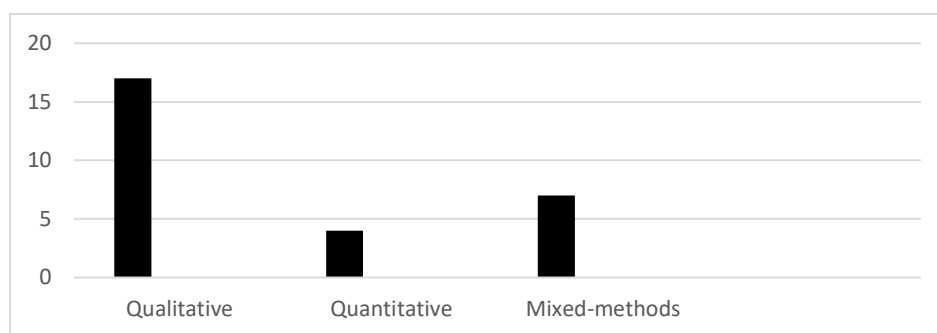
Figure 3: Research methods used in the reviewed studies

The majority of qualitative studies employed qualitative analysis, thematic analysis, content analysis or grounded theory for data interpretation. In contrast, quantitative studies were subjected to statistical tests, including frequency description, standard deviation calculation, Cronbach's alpha evaluation, t-tests, and Kruskal-Wallis tests. Of the 28 studies, approximately 46% (13 out of 28) centered on exploring the beliefs and attitudes of teachers, while the remaining 54% focused on those of students.

4.1 Teachers' and Students' Beliefs Regarding Translanguaging in Higher Education

4.2.1 Teachers' beliefs

The analysis shows that teachers in higher education exhibit diverse attitudes towards use of translanguaging in classrooms. Some teachers, such as those from the universities of Thailand and Iraq, viewed translanguaging positively, considering it as an effective tool for promoting multilingualism, facilitating social interaction, and enhancing students' language acquisition and content learning (Ambele, 2022; Alhasnawi, 2021). Additionally, for teachers whose first language differs from their students', translanguaging is seen as particularly beneficial. For example, non-native English-speaking teachers in the universities of Japan saw translanguaging as a means to enhance students' motivation and establish rapport, especially when there was no linguistic equivalence between teachers and students (Kim, 2022). These perspectives suggest that translanguaging can serve as an effective pedagogical tool in diverse educational contexts.

However, the analysis also reveals contrasting viewpoints among teachers. Teachers from a university in South Africa held conservative attitudes towards translanguaging, insisting on English as the dominant language in classrooms, particularly for proficient English speakers (Mbirimi-Hungwe, 2019). Concerns about assessment requirements further reinforced their preference for English as the medium of instruction. Similarly, teachers in Chinese universities

expressed concerns about students' overuse of their first language and suggested that the use of translanguaging should depend on course types and students' language proficiency levels (Fang & Liu, 2020).

Moreover, the analysis highlights the ambiguity and controversy surrounding teachers' understanding and implementation of translanguaging. Some teachers lack a clear understanding of translanguaging and struggle to employ specific teaching strategies to make it applicable in different contexts (Karabassova & Isidro, 2020). Additionally, individual experiences and institutional contexts play a significant role in shaping teachers' attitudes towards translanguaging, as illustrated by the case of Kenny, whose language practices differed depending on the teaching contexts. While Kenny employed translanguaging in mainland China, he predominantly used English as the academic lingua franca in Hong Kong, reflecting the impact of established English Medium Instruction (EMI) policies (Yuan & Yang, 2020). Overall, the analysis underscores the complex and multifaceted nature of teachers' perspectives on translanguaging in higher education. While some embrace its potential benefits for language learning and communication, others remain cautious or resistant, reflecting the complexity of linguistic diversity and institutional contexts in higher education settings.

4.2.2 Students' beliefs

The analysis demonstrates that students' beliefs regarding translanguaging are significantly influenced by the type of course or curriculum they are engaged in. In English Medium Instruction (EMI) or Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) courses, students tend to exhibit more favorable views towards translanguaging practices. This may be attributed to the necessity for students to acquire both language and subject content simultaneously, promoting them to leverage all linguistic and multimodal resources to facilitate effective learning.

For instance, EMI students in a Chinese university perceived translanguaging as beneficial for enhancing their confidence and language learning, particularly through scaffolding strategies like explaining difficult terms and supporting students whose language proficiency was relatively low (Fang & Liu, 2020). This is consistent with the study of Akbar and Taqi (2020) which indicated that students reflected more confidence in their comprehension of topics when using translanguaging. In the same vein, for Chinese and international students attending EMI classrooms at a transnational university in China, translanguaging underscored the multimodal and multilingual nature of English as lingua franca, fostering their development of multilingual abilities during spontaneous interactions

(Ou et al., 2023). Zhou and Mann's (2021) comparative analysis of CLIL students' feedback further demonstrated students' satisfaction with translanguaging, because they anticipated improvements not only in English proficiency but also in subject-specific knowledge.

In writing classes, students' attitudes towards translanguaging varied across different contexts. For example, Kaufhold (2023) examined the perceptions of translanguaging among three transnational students in European higher education and discovered their preference for using official university languages in writing, displaying reservation towards utilizing their native languages. Similarly, Zhang and Hadjioannou (2022) noted that while graduate students employed their native language to aid in content learning, drafting, and ultimately improving the quality of their writing, they held ambivalent views towards translanguaging practices. Conversely, students in the studies conducted by Alzahrani (2019) and Karabulut and Kesli Dollar (2022) asserted that translanguaging helped them improve writing skills in various ways, such as generating writing ideas, having more knowledge of advanced words and grammatical knowledge.

Moreover, incorporating translanguaging fosters a sense of relaxation among students in classroom settings. The findings of Yasar Yuzlu and Dikilitas (2022) demonstrated that students who received instruction incorporating translanguaging performed better than those who did not, particularly in language skills. Translanguaging facilitated students' comprehension and collaborative meaning-making, creating a more positive classroom atmosphere where students felt safer and more motivated. Similarly, in the study of Wang (2020), students requested for a designated translanguaging space, as they found it conducive to taking breaks and alleviating anxiety when speaking in front of peers or managing multiple tasks simultaneously.

Furthermore, it was found that some students perceive translanguaging as essential for affirming their identity and maintaining connections between family members. When teachers utilize translanguaging to foster inclusivity, students may have a higher sense of belonging. For instance, Nguyen (2019) observed that ethnic minority students' bilingual proficiency allowed them to embrace multiple cultures, linguistic worlds, and communities simultaneously. Their linguistic blend of Vietnamese and their native language showcased their identity as multi-ethnic elites, creating a neutral language space to express their dual identity.

However, students from certain cultural and linguistic backgrounds express controversial or negative views towards translanguaging practices. For example, students at a college in Rwanda exhibited conflicting attitudes towards translanguaging in classroom settings (Kwihangana, 2021). Despite expressing concerns that translanguaging might hinder

their efforts to attain fluency in English, they still switched between languages both inside and outside the classroom. Similarly, students at a Swedish university felt excluded due to their lack of proficiency in the local language, preventing their participation in the translanguaging community (Kuteeva, 2020). Female students at King Khalid University held a negative viewpoint, arguing that translanguaging could indicate a deficiency in the professor's mastery of either the first or second language (Alhaj & Alwadai, 2022).

In summary, students' attitudes towards translanguaging are multifaceted, influenced by educational contexts, cultural backgrounds, and personal experiences. While many perceive it positively for enhancing language learning and fostering inclusivity, others hold reservations or express concerns, highlighting the complex nature of translanguaging in educational settings.

4.2 Support Needed for the Implementation of Translanguaging

The reviewed studies have identified some challenges encountered by teachers and students when employing translanguaging in classrooms, such as the impact of institutions' monolingual ideology, limited access to specific resources, and lack of support from school administration and colleagues. Therefore, this reviewed research outlines four main areas aimed at addressing these challenges, focusing on teacher training, adjusting curriculum and assessment, fostering collaboration, and developing language policies.

4.2.1 Teacher training

Implementation of translanguaging requires the reconstitution of teachers' knowledge about language instruction and the adoption of practical models in contextualized classrooms, rather than leaving teachers and students to trial and error. Despite this need, many educators remain skeptical about breaking the boundaries of named languages to normalize the approach, viewing themselves as unprepared to act as agents of translanguaging (Barros et al., 2020). Hence, Yasar Yuzlu and Dikilitas (2022) and Karabulut and Kesli Dollar (2022) both advocate that teachers should be informed or trained about the advantages of translanguaging so that they could be able to promote comprehensive use of languages. Exposure to translanguaging forums, activities, and online resources is recommended to enhance teachers' proficiency.

Evidence from studies such as Cavazos and Musanti (2022) and Barro et al. (2021) underscores the transformative impact of teacher training. Participation in teaching training programs could encourage educators to adopt learner-centered translanguaging pedagogies and engage in critical self-reflection. These programs serve as valuable platforms for educators to share insights and challenge entrenched language ideologies, and therefore revise their

instructional practices. For example, despite initial reservations, when teachers completed courses like the 'ESL (English as a Second Language) Endorsement Practicum', they gradually recognized the benefits of translanguaging in student comfort and identity development (Barro et al., 2021). Similarly, Gorter and Arocena (2020) demonstrated that professional development interventions led to a shift in teachers' attitudes towards language separation. After the training, the teachers gradually embraced the concept of leveraging multiple languages.

The reviewed studies also present various pedagogical approaches for incorporating translanguaging into teaching practices. For example, Zhou and Mann (2021) outlined instructional methods including explanatory, managerial, attention-raising, and rapport-building strategies. These strategies enable teachers to utilize translanguaging for cognitive scaffolding during comprehension tasks, delivering clear instructions, re-engaging students' focus, and increasing students' participation. Additionally, Zhang and Hadjioannou (2022) proposed subject-specific translanguaging strategies. They advocated for students to utilize relevant writing materials in their first language for brainstorming and drafting, and incorporate diverse literacy practices into academic writing.

Teacher training serves as a catalyst for promoting the successful adoption and integration of translanguaging practices in educational contexts. It can challenge and reshape teachers' existing attitudes and beliefs about language teaching and learning. By exposing educators to the benefits of translanguaging and providing evidence of its efficacy, teacher training fosters a positive shift in their perspectives, encouraging greater openness to embracing multilingual approaches.

4.2.2 Adjusting curriculum and assessment

During the implementation of translanguaging pedagogy, it is crucial to tailor pedagogical translanguaging to fit within existing school curricula while considering the specific education context (Gorter & Arocena, 2020; Ou et al., 2023). Adjusting the curriculum ensures that instructional materials and activities align with the goal of translanguaging by incorporating opportunities for students to use and develop proficiency in multiple languages and optimize their learning outcomes.

In addition to curriculum design, assessment methods need to be adjusted to better actualize translanguaging in educational contexts. Traditional assessment methods may not accurately measure students' knowledge and skills if they are limited to a single language. As suggested by teachers in Mbirimi-Hungwe (2019), lecturers should allow students to be assessed in two languages, enabling students to respond to questions in their preferred

language. This approach empowers students to showcase their understanding and skills using a translanguaging approach, even if their proficiency in the target language is not fully developed.

Regular review and adjustment of the curriculum and assessment practices allow teachers to identify areas for improvement and make necessary changes to better support translanguaging implementation. This iterative process helps ensure that teachers' instructional practices remain responsive to the evolving needs of students and diverse educational contexts.

4.2.3 Fostering collaboration

Research findings underscore the necessity of engaging all stakeholders in discussions on multilingual education. Collaboration among teachers, students, administrators, and other stakeholders fosters a shared understanding of translanguaging goals, strategies, and expectations. Establishing a culture of collaboration between different parties involved in the learning process would increase the viability of translanguaging implementation. For example, the studies of Fang and Liu (2020) and Wang (2020) both propose that teachers and students should establish agreements regarding the proportion of native language usage at the beginning of the course.

Furthermore, the collaboration of educators is indispensable for fostering synergies in translanguaging that facilitate the integration of language and content. Collaboration allows teachers to leverage their expertise and insights and enables administrators to provide support and resources to facilitate translanguaging initiatives. By pooling their expertise, stakeholders can develop more effective strategies for integrating multiple languages into the learning environment. Collaborative relationships would create a supportive environment and teachers may be more willing to try translanguaging strategies when they have the support of colleagues and administrators.

4.2.4 Developing language policy

Teachers often rely on language policies to inform their instructional practices. Teachers' beliefs are intricately shaped by language policies, highlighting the importance of aligning these policies with the actual needs, experiences, and challenges encountered in their professional environments (Alhasnawi, 2021). Fang and Liu (2020), Yasar Yuzlu and Dikilitas (2022), and Ou et al. (2023) underscore the significant challenges posed by monolingual policies to the effective implementation of translanguaging in practice. Despite evolving perspectives, many policies and language educators continue to prioritize full immersion in an

English-only environment for language learning. Hence, language policies that embrace translanguaging and promote inclusivity by valuing and validating students' linguistic diversity should be developed. Moreover, language policies could ensure consistency and coherence across educational institutions or systems. They help maintain uniformity in translanguaging practices and prevents confusion or discrepancies among teachers, students, and other stakeholders.

5.0 CONCLUSION

In this systematic review study, 28 articles retrieved from WOS, Scopus and ERIC were analyzed in terms of their main findings. The analysis indicated a rapid increase in the field of translanguaging, especially stakeholders' beliefs regarding translanguaging in higher education in the last five years. The review shed light on the complex attitudes towards translanguaging within academic settings. Teachers' perspectives vary widely, with some embracing translanguaging as a means to enhance multilingualism and foster rapport, while others exhibit resistance, preferring English as the dominant language. Students' beliefs vary based on educational context and cultural background. Some students view translanguaging positively for its benefits in language learning and classroom atmosphere, while others express reservations or concerns.

The study offers insights for educators implementing or considering translanguaging pedagogy. Prior to implementation, teachers should undergo professional development to grasp the concept and potential challenges involved. Curriculum and assessment adjustment are essential to ensure that instructional materials and evaluation methods align with the goals of translanguaging. Fostering collaboration among stakeholders and developing language policies that embrace translanguaging are crucial for creating a supportive environment and promoting consistency in translanguaging practices. Overall, the review study underscores the importance of addressing the challenges and providing necessary supports to effectively implement translanguaging in higher education settings. By doing so, educators can leverage the linguistic diversity of their students to enhance learning outcomes and create more inclusive classroom environments.

This study holds significance as the first review on translanguaging beliefs in higher education. Future research should validate these findings across varied contexts and populations. There is also a call for longitudinal study that could explain how teachers' and students' beliefs of translanguaging change over different courses. Moreover, experimental studies on the relationship between teachers' beliefs of translanguaging and students' academic

performance across different fields were comparatively few. Accordingly, more studies on this area appear to be needed.

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