1-1-2021

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Published online: 17 Dec 2021.

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Translanguaging and reading comprehension in a second language

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ABSTRACT

The current study examined the impact of translanguaging on second language reading comprehension. The study involved an experimental and a control group. The participants in the experimental group ($n = 38$) were offered four opportunities to engage Arabic – their first language – in comprehending a text in English. These occasions for translanguaging included: (a) receiving Arabic glosses (i.e., only meaning) for key terms in the text, (b) employing their first language for summarizing four paragraphs from the passage, (c) using their first language in discussion for comparing summaries with peers, and (d) consulting the Arabic meanings (provided) while attempting the vocabulary items. After the aforesaid steps, the participants in this group were required to answer 22 comprehension questions of three types: (a) the main idea, (b) cloze reading, and (c) word/synonyms. The control group ($n = 29$) completed all the same stages as the experimental group but using their second language, without recourse to the first language. The findings revealed no significant difference between the two groups, $t(63) = -1.84$, $p = .85$. Also, no significant group difference was observed on any of the three types of comprehension questions. Theoretical and pedagogical implications are discussed.

Introduction

Historically, languages were considered separate entities; hence, any use of first language (L1) in a second language classroom was frowned upon and considered as an interference in the second language (L2) development. This approach to the linguistic quarantine of L1 in an L2 classroom was considered as standard, and any mixing of the two languages was attributed to "careless language habits" of students (Shin, 2005, p. 18), or "lack of English language competence" of teachers (Martin, 2005, p. 88). Language programs that were developed in the backdrop of this linguistic attitude, even when imparted bilingual education, offered separate instructions in two languages, keeping both languages apart. However, considering the current ecological reality of multilingual societies, where it is a norm to find multiple languages being used (Hopkyns, Zoghbor, & Hassall, 2021) even in the classroom settings (Escobar, 2019), the tides have shifted in favor of integrating speakers' preexisting linguistic resources – a process termed as translanguaging – for developing their second language. Support for this trend – translanguaging pedagogy – is immense, and propagators claim several benefits of its application in L2 classroom, including its use for identity affirmation, as a tool for scaffolding, and as a resource for additional language learning.

However, with the popularity of translanguaging and recommendations for its pedagogical use, questions about its very nature have started to emerge. The "unitary view" – the underlying premises of translanguaging, as proposed by Otheguy, García, and Reid (2018) has been called into question (for details, see Cenoz & Gorter, 2017; MacSwan, 2017). According to the unitary view of

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translanguaging, there is no such thing as "a second language" but only language, "a single linguistic system, a single lexicon and a single grammar" (García & Otheguy, 2020, p. 25). This view does not appear in concert with the multilingual perspective on language acquisition, which while accepting the concept of linguistic repertoire as proposed by translinguists, insists that this repertoire should be considered as "multilingual/multimodel" as opposed to "single repertoire" (c.f., Cenoz & Gorter, 2019; MacSwan, 2017) for several reasons. First, the linguistic repertoire in language learners does not only share the features of various languages, but it also shows multidirectionality, indicating "internal language-specific differentiation" (for details, see MacSwan, 2017, p. 181). Second, and probably an important aspect of language rights concerns the maintenance of minority languages. Research indicates that when learners are allowed to freely use their entire linguistics repertoire, they predominantly depend on the majority language, putting the survival of a minority language at risk (Hickey, 2001; Musk, 2010). Accepting the theory of "a single linguistic repertoire" might be detrimental to the efforts for maintaining minority languages. The third dimension that the unitary view seems to overshadow concerns the language learners' identity. The emotional attachment to various languages varies greatly; the love of learning a heritage language as opposed to a foreign language is altogether different (Cenoz & Gorter, 2019), and this may not be well-served by the notion of "a single linguistic system, a single lexicon and a single grammar" (García & Otheguy, 2020, p. 25). Last, reservations about a universal application of translanguaging pedagogy, ignoring contextual factors and the ultimate aim – identity affirmation or L2 development – have been raised (e.g., Lyster, 2019; Lyster & Sato, 2013). Considering the aforesaid limitations of the unitary view of translanguaging, this paper adopts a "multilingual perspective" and uses L1 and L2 to connote learners' language resources.

This paper first describes how the term traslanguaging has been defined. Then it discusses the pedagogical application of translanguaging and its contributions to second language reading development in particular. Finally, the paper presents a carefully designed study examining the impact of translanguaging pedagogy on L2 reading comprehension, followed by a summary of research findings and their contribution to the existing literature on translanguaging and L2 reading comprehension.

Literature review

What translanguaging is and how it has been defined

The term "translanguaging" was first used by the Welsh scholar Cen Williams (1994) to emphasize the role of one language in the development of another. He was against the norm of separating named languages and believed that learners' one language can be beneficially utilized in learning another language. He argued for "using [learner's] one language to reinforce the other to increase understanding and to augment the pupils' ability in both languages" (Williams, 2002, p. 40). This translinguistic approach was a reaction to the dominance of named languages that were considered as separate entities (Jaspers & Madsen, 2016). Translanguaging opposed dividing a user's linguistic resources into separate linguistic entities and argued for a unified linguistic mechanism, termed as "repertoire" (García, 2012; Otheguy et al., 2018).

In the current language and educational investigations, translanguaging has become a buzz word. As such, it is recurrently focused in various academic journals, heard echoing in a myriad of conferences, and juxtaposed with other similar terms. Polylanguaging (Jørgensen, 2008), plurilingualism (Garcia & Otheguy, 2020), metrolingualism (Otsuji & Pennycook, 2010), code-meshing (Muñoz. & Singleton., 2011) are a few, among other terms, that have been both, alternatively used as well as compared and contrasted with translanguaging (García & Wei, 2014; Jaspers & Madsen, 2016). Not only has its use become ubiquitous, but also it has been defined in a variety of ways. Some definitions are general and suggest translanguaging as an umbrella "multifaceted and multilayer polysemic term" (Leung & Valdés, 2019, p. 359), or a "process of making meaning, shaping

experiences, gaining understanding and knowledge through the use of two languages" (Baker, 2011, p. 288). Others are more specific and present translanguaging as a process that involves the use of a learner's entire linguistic repertoire in understanding a text, in developing their linguistics proficiencies needed for academic contexts (García, Johnson, & Seltzer, 2017), and in affirming learner's bilingual identities, and the role these play in making meaning and sense of the world for learners (García & Otheguy, 2020).

The epistemological debate about what constitutes translanguaging can be long and important, but this is not the focus of the current study. Instead, the current study aims to understand the implications a translanguaging pedagogy might have for second language learners' reading comprehension. Therefore, circumventing a long debate, the current study takes a simplified approach and accepts translanguaging as the use of one language in developing another (Lewis, Jones, & Baker, Lewis, et al., 2012). Considering this definition, it can be summed that a translanguaging pedagogy involves the use of all prior linguistic resources that a learner can apply in learning a second language. For reading comprehension, translanguaging can be used as a scaffold in L1 to clarify or solidify a concept covered or confronted in class (Dahlberg, 2017). This might be done in several ways, for example, as L1 glosses in the text (Martin-Beltrán, 2014), through collaboration and peer-discussions in learners' prior languages (Kwon & Schallert, 2016), by implementing simultaneous or alternate bilingual instructions (Palmer, Martínez, Mateus, & Henderson, 2014), and by explaining grammatical and lexical items in a text in L1 (Vaish, 2019), among various other ways.

The pedagogical applications of translanguaging

Support for translanguaging pedagogy is overwhelming. Researchers like Cummins (2000) maintain that knowledge is not language bound; therefore, learners should be allowed to use the language they feel comfortable with. Cook (1992) argues that L2 learners never discard their L1; instead, they regularly make use of it, and Cohen (1995) posits that L2 learners persistently shift between their various language resources. Hence, L2 learners should be encouraged to use any of their semiotic resources for academic purposes (García & Otheguy, 2020). However, opposition to universal acceptance of translanguaging pedagogy across learning contexts and learners has met with emerging reservations. For example, Lyster (2019) argues against the use of L1 in contexts where it is not a minority language (e.g., English L1 in the US & Canada). Moreover, the second language learners report the use of L1 resources as a 'disempowering aspect of their school experience" (Allard, 2017, p. 7) and a cause of "insufficient exposure" to the target language (Allard, 2017, p. 8). MacSwan (2017), while agreeing with García (2012) and Otheguy, Otheguy, Garcı´a, and Reid (2015) notion of a "single linguistic repertoire," argues that in multilinguals, these repertoires contain linguistic systems that are internally different. He elaborates that multilinguals do not only make socially appropriate use of these systems, but they also adhere to the grammatical distinctiveness of each system, which indicates that while there could be a single central repertoire hosting multiple languages, but at the same time, these various systems are not indistinctive. If MacSwan's argument of "the various linguistic systems" is valid, using translanguaging for L2 development may not be inconsequential. Although how mixing two languages might impact L2 development is an empirical question, researchers posit that such mixing might decrease opportunities for L2 practice and production, which may in turn compromise L2 development (Lyster, 2019). It has been argued that a repetitive retrieval and practice of first language might strengthen it (Lyster & Sato, 2013), which may be at the cost of the target language. Hence, the extent to which a translanguaging pedagogy might help in second language development is controversial.

The specific findings of translanguaging pedagogy on reading development

For the role of translanguaging in second language reading development, the findings of the previous research, at best, are inconclusive. Broadly speaking, previous research exploring this relationship

can be categorized into two clusters: (a) the studies that support the impact of translanguaging in second language reading proficiency but have methodological weaknesses, and (b) the studies that reject or offer mixed findings about the impact of translanguaging on second language reading development. Details for these studies follow.

Studies in the first group encourage the use of translanguaging for L2 development (Lewis et al., Lewis, et al., 2012). These studies argue that translanguaging offers learners "additional cognitive support" (Storch & Wigglesworth, 2003); hence, it improves their second language proficiency (Hussein, 2013; Otheguy et al., 2018). These studies point out that learners and teachers frequently resort to translanguaging (c.f. Seng & Hashim, 2006; Vaish, 2019) while involved in L2 reading activities, and this helps them in the generation and conversation of ideas (Hawras, 1996; Kern, 1994). This use of translanguaging might be depicted in several forms: for example, by using mental translations (Hawras, 1996; Kern, 1994), by offering comprehension questions in learners' L1 (Chu, 2017), by using L1 for group discussions, or by the teachers' use of L1 for explaining syntactic and lexical items in a text (Vaish, 2019). Moreover, this dependence on translanguaging is reported as beneficial for second language reading comprehension for students attending secondary school (i.e., 6th grade; Chu, 2017) or college programs (Hawras, 1996; Hungwe, 2019; Kern, 1994; Seng & Hashim, 2006). However, some of these studies needed more methodological rigor. For example, some of these studies did not report inter-rater reliability for coding themes (e.g., Hungwe, 2019; Kern, 1994; Vaish, 2019), and others reported partial results (e.g., Hungwe, 2019).

In the second group of studies, previous research offers a range of conclusions about the impact of translanguaging for second language reading development. For young simultaneous L2 learners (i.e., kindergarten & first grade) in immersion contexts, these studies support no advantage of translanguaging for L2 reading comprehension (Cohen, 1974). Instead, a greater use of L2 by younger learners is reported in non-translingual conditions (Legarreta, 1977). Besides, in experiments involving concurrent and alternate bilingual instructions, results reveal a predominant use of English, the target L2, by teachers and teacher-aids, while the students appear to depend on the use of Spanish, their L1 (Legarreta, 1977) predominantly. This L1 preference by young learners in the simultaneous instruction condition seems to dissipate when adult advanced biliterate learners are allowed to engage their two languages while reading a text. Kwon and Schallert (2016) report a random preference for the choice of L1 and L2 resources for processing L2 texts by Korean/ English biliterate readers. Although it is hard to determine with certainty what leads students to choose one language over the other, previous research reports a move in learners' dependence from L1 and L2 resources with an increase in learners' proficiency in their second language. These studies show the positive contributions of translanguaging for adult sequential L2 learners with advanced proficiency in L2; however, the same group appears to depend least on it (Upton & Lee-Thompson, 2001). In contrast, those with low proficiency in L2 appear to depend more on it but drive the least benefits (Carroll & Morales, 2016; Upton, 1997). Nonetheless, as far as the question about the use of the target language is concerned, previous research posits a greater use of L2 in the target-language-only conditions (Hopewell, 2013). This finding indicates a need for keeping the target language separate from the prior languages if a greater use or practice in the target language is desired.

The literature discussed above indicates a need to further explore the potential effects of translanguaging on second language reading development. Such research should adopt more transparent measures in data reporting and analysis. Moreover, the literature reviewed seems to lack research on the effects of translanguaging on Arabic L1 speakers' L2 reading development; hence, this should be examined. To account for these limitations, the current study explored the following research questions in a carefully designed study:

(1) Are there significant differences in reading outcomes in the translanguaging pedagogy group vs. the control group?
(2) Are there significant group differences for each question type (i.e., the main idea, cloze reading, & vocabulary)?

Methods

Participants

Overall, 65 learners – 36 participants in the translanguaging and 29 in the English-only groups – took part in the study. The participants' numbers in each group were consistent with the results of a priori power analysis which had suggested a sample size of 66 participants, with 33 members in each. The GPower program by Faul, Erdfelder, Lang, and Buchner (2007) was used for running the power analysis. The participants in the study were male undergraduate students enrolled in Business and IT majors in a university in the United Arab Emirates. All the students were enrolled in an advanced Arabic writing course and had completed the three sequences of English writing courses. Their proficiency in English and Arabic languages was similar, as reflected through their course projections in English and Arabic, as well as through their average English proficiency scores at the time of admission to the university.

Instruments

Background questionnaire

The participants were administered a simple questionnaire to collect background information. The questionnaire inquired about participants' major, their year in the college, their English language proficiency score at the time of admission, and their projections in Arabic and English writing courses. The background information is reported in Table 3.

Reading comprehension task

As the main aim of this paper was to assess students' reading comprehension as moderated by the translanguaging and non-translanguaging conditions, it was pertinent to ensure that the content of the reading passage used for data collection does not offer an edge to one group over the other. Hence, Jonathan Kozol's (1991) *"Savage inequalities: Children in America's Schools"* was used for data collection. This text was non-related to students' majors (i.e., business & IT), yet it contained content interesting enough to involve students in reading the passage. The text was 608 words long and comprised seven paragraphs. Based on the lexile measure analysis, the reading difficulty of the text was at the 8th grade level (1100 L-1200 L). The passage contained 22 items overall that belonged to three different types of questions: five items for the main idea, six for cloze reading, and 11 items for determining the meaning of words in the text.

The passage was adapted, and two versions of the task were prepared to be used for the translanguaging and the English-only groups. For the English-only group, the entire text, including the title of the passage, keywords, and questions were presented in English. For the translanguaging group, meanings in Arabic were inserted for the key-terminology at 14 places in the text. The English title of the passage also accompanied a title in Arabic. For the third set of questions that required participants to fill in the 11 blanks with appropriate synonyms of the words given in parentheses, Arabic translations were provided for the vocabulary items. The two versions of the reading comprehension task are included in appendices A and B. The comprehension task obtained Cronbach reliability coefficient of .98..

Procedures

The reading task involved three stages: first, learners read the passage individually and summarized four suggested paragraphs; second, they discussed and compared their summaries with a peer; and last, they attempted the reading comprehension questions. While doing the first and the second stages, participants in the translanguaging group were allowed to use any language (i.e., Arabic or

Table 1. Procedural details about the translingual and the english-only groups.

	Translanguaging group	English-only group
Title	English & Arabic	English
Keywords in-text (14)	X	X
Summary (4 paragraphs)	English or Arabic	X
Compare/discuss summaries	X	X
Fill blanks with synonym (11)	Arabic translation provided	X
Fill in the blanks	Accompanied Arabic translation	English
Used Arabic for summary (n)	25/36	0/29
Used Arabic for discussion	36	0

English) that they liked. It is important to note that the students were not restrained from using their L2 so that they could benefit from their entire linguistic repertoire. However, as the study aimed at exploring the impact of translanguaging, they were encouraged to prefer Arabic for the summary and discussion stages of the treatment. As a result of this reinforcement, 25 out of the total 36 students used Arabic for writing summaries. All the learners in this group used Arabic during the discussion. Participants in this group were also allowed to use google-translation, and some students were observed doing it as well. While attempting the actual assessment, for the translanguaging group, the title, keywords in the text (14 items), and fill in the blanks with synonym task (11 items) accompanied Arabic translation. This is explained in Table 1.

The English-only group followed the same stages but used English only. A comparative description of the procedures the two groups followed is presented in Table 1.

Procedural details about the translingual and the English-only groups

After both groups had completed their comparison, they were directed to answer the comprehension questions individually, without consulting other students in the class. Both groups completed the background questionnaire at the end.

Analyses

As the study involved comparing two reading conditions, an independent sample *t-test* was considered an appropriate option. Before running the test, assumptions of independence, the normalcy of distribution, and homogeneity of variance were checked using International Business Machines: Statistical Package for Social Sciences (IBM- Corp, 2016) version 24. The obtained skewness and kurtosis values of −.53 (SE = .29), −1.38 (SE = .57), which were less than the standard accepted Z value of ± 3.29 ($p < .001$, two-tailed test; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Hence, the data were considered normally distributed. The *Levene's* test of equality of variance was not significant either ($F = .09$, $p = .75$).

To examine if the types of questions will moderate the effects of translanguaging on reading comprehension, again individual independent sample *t-tests* were run. Before running the independent sample *t-tests*, assumptions were checked, and these are reported in Table 2.

Assumptions of normalcy of distribution and equality of variance for *t-test*

In all cases, data did not violate the assumptions of normalcy and variance; hence, further analyses were carried on. The results are provided in the following section.

Table 2. Assumptions of normalcy of distribution and equality of variance for *t-test*.

	Normalcy of distribution		Equality of variance
	Skewness (standard error)	*Kurtosis (standard error)*	*Levene's test (Sig.)*
The main idea	−.96 *(.29)*	−.61 *(.57)*	.58 *(.44)*
Cloze reading	−.94 *(.29)*	−.76 *(.57)*	.00 *(.96)*
Vocabulary/synonyms	−.17 *(.29)*	−1.7 *(.57)*	.83 *(.36)*

Table 3. Background information for the translingual and the english-only groups.

	Translingual group	English-only group
N	36	29
Year in college		
Second	9	4
Third	22	19
Fourth	5	6
[1]IELST/EmSAT *M (SD)*	6 *(.73)*	6 *(.90)*

Table 4. Comparison of the translingual and non-translingual conditions on the reading task (n = 65).

	n	Mean	SD	t	df	p	d
Translingual	36	14.21	08.39	−1.84	63	.85	.04
Non-translingual	29	13.83	08.47				

Note: Total possible maximum points = 22

Table 5. Comparison of the translingual and non-translingual conditions on the three type of questions.

Types of Questions	Translanguaging group (*n* =36) M (SD)	English-only (*n* =29) M (SD)	t	p	d
Main idea (out of 5)	3.84 *(1.77)*	3.41 *(1.91)*	−.94	.34	.23
Cloze reading (out of 6)	4.39 *(2.24)*	4.41 *(2.16)*	−.03	.97	.00
Vocabulary (out of 11)	5.97 *(4.81)*	6.00 *(4.55)*	.02	.98	.00

Results

Before proceeding to the findings of the study, it is important to understand participants' educational and language background as these might have a bearing on the outcome of the study. Table 3 displays participants' educational and L2 language context.

Background information for the translingual and the English-only groups

At the time of data collection, all the participants were enrolled in undergraduate courses, with a majority being in the third year college program. In terms of their proficiency in English, they had an identical IELTS/EmSAT score at the time of the data collection. These similarities indicate that the participants background variables were similar; hence, these may not influence the results. The overall findings of the group comparison are displayed in Table 4.

Comparison of the translingual and non-translingual conditions on the reading task (n = 65).
Note: Total possible maximum points = 22

The results of the group comparison showed no significant difference between the translingual and non-translingual conditions on the reading task ($t = −1.84$, $p = .85$, $d = .04$). To explore between group differences on the three types of reading questions, an independent sample *t-test* was run for each of the three question types. The results are presented in Table 5.

Comparison of the translingual and English-only conditions on the three type of questions

Again, the results of the comparison revealed no significant difference between the translingual and non-translingual conditions on any of the three types of questions. These results do not support any specific advantage of translanguaging for L2 reading comprehension over the non- translanguaging situations.[1]

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[1]Some students had taken the Emirates Standardized Test (EmSAT) of English. These students' scores are normed out of 9 to match the IELTS results.

Discussion

The results of this study do not support more beneficial effects of the translingual pedagogy as compared to the non-translingual environments for second language reading comprehension. The differences between the translingual and non-translingual groups were not significant overall, nor were any notable variations observed for any of the three types of comprehension questions (i.e., the main idea, cloze reading, & vocabulary) contained in the text. These findings are in agreement with studies conducted with young learners in immersion contexts. For example, Cohen (1974) reported no significant difference between the bilingual-immersion and English-only groups' reading proficiency for students at two intervals – the kindergarten and the first grades. Moreover, later studies in this context indicate greater use of the target language (L2) in non-trasnlanguaging condition (Hopewell, 2013; Legarreta, 1977), the desired outcome for developing proficiency in a second language.

The findings of this study do not dispute the outcomes of the previous research in non-immersion contexts that show that adult L2 learners do resort to their L1s while engaged with a text in their second language (Hawras, 1996; Kern, 1994; Upton & Lee-Thompson, 2001). However, the results here clearly demonstrate that this dependence on L1 may not offer any significant advantage to the translingual learners over those exposed to the L2-only condition in reading comprehension. In contrast, recourse to L1 may not help improve the target L2, which may gradually decline, or at least, may not further develop (Lyster, 2019). This has been expressed in Allard (2017), where a group of learners reported the use of translanguaging by teachers as a disempowering aspect of their learning process, which they believed, led to poor proficiency in L2 and low grades in the assessments. Hence, if the main objective of any pedagogical intervention is L2 development, translanguaging pedagogy does not seem to significantly contribute to it. In the current study, a no-difference outcome was valid despite four planned occasions of translanguaging for the experimental group. These instances included: L1 glosses for the key vocabulary in the text; opportunity to summarize four paragraphs in L1; discuss and compare summaries with a peer using L1; consult L1 meanings while filling in the blanks for a missing word in the context. In contrast, the control group that completed all of these steps using their L2 performed equally well.

Considering the findings of the current study, the claims about mixing L1 for L2 development merit reconsideration. Several studies report that L2 learners show more preference for using their L1 when allowed to translanguage (e.g., Carroll & Morales, 2016; Legarreta, 1977), which may not be ideal for L2 practice, production, and its ultimate development. Dependence on L1 resources may improve learners' engagement and motivation (Lyster, 2019), but this may not necessarily profit their L2 development. The previous research reports that the learners make increased use of the target language in L2-only conditions (Hopewell, 2013), which is both desired and beneficial for developing the target language. Greater use of the target language in the L2-only paradigm is in-concert with the skill acquisition theory (DeKeyser, 1998) that supports the frequent retrieval of the target language as a vital aspect of building stronger memory connections, leading to more fluent and automatic access to the target language. The skill acquisition theory and greater use of the target language in L2-only condition suggest a particular focus on the target language for practice and production, which may not happen as effectively as desired in the translanguaging condition.

For the pedagogical contributions of translanguaging, universal support for its implementation should be critically reexamined. Jaspers (2018) stresses the need to consider local circumstances while making decisions about the use of translanguaging for teaching. When Cen Williams (1994) proposed translanguaging, the main objective was to revitalize the minority language, which may not be the same as practicing a majority L1 (e.g., Arabic in Saudi Arabia) simultaneously with a target second language. In most instructed FL contexts, where the target L2 is mostly – and in some cases exclusively – available in only schools, the use of translanguaging, which in most cases is switching to students' L1, might deprive them of the limited opportunity they have for practicing their target L2.

Previous research exploring second language learning posits positive contributions of immersion in L2 on second language development (Lee, 2019; Muñoz. & Singleton., 2011; Qureshi, 2018). Moreover, Swain's (1993) output hypothesis also emphasizes the need for producing the target language in learning a second language, which seems to align better with L2-only scenarios as opposed to translanguaging where learners might frequently and randomly rely on their L1.

Limitations and future directions

In the current study, learners were exposed to translanguaging only for a single class-session, which might be inadequate for affecting any significant change. Canagarajah (2011) stresses the centrality of practice for the development of proficiency to meaningfully benefit from translanguaging. Future studies might consider having multiple translanguaging sessions before the final round of data collection. In such a case, a decision about the amount/length of practice may still be arbitrary, but it may shed more light on the contributions of translanguaging to reading comprehension. Another avenue for future research is to explore the longitudinal effects of translanguaging on L2 development. Although previous longitudinal studies conducted with elementary school students do not report significant advantages for bilingual immersion students (Cohen, 1974), there is a lack of research validating this outcome for adult learners. Hence, a longitudinal or perhaps a cross-sectional approach might better position us to ascertain whether the length of translanguaging would impact the reading outcomes. Future studies can also experiment with some methodological innovations. For example, in addition to glosses and discussion as the translanguaging procedures, future studies might also provide comprehension questions in students' L1 or examine comprehension by comparing students' summaries in their L1 and L2.

Conclusion

The results of this study do not support a translingual advantage for reading comprehension over the target language-only scenarios. These findings contest the pedagogical contributions of translanguaging and argue that universal support for its implementation should be reconsidered. However, these results should not be seen as questioning the sociolinguistic or psycholinguistic claims made about the putative benefits of translanguaging, because this was not the aim of the current study. Instead, findings of this study should be taken as a call to further explore the effects of translanguaging pedagogy with ecologically relevant, empirically sound, scientifically objective, and verifiable evidence.

Disclosure statement

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