

A Shift from a Monoglossic to a Heteroglossic View: Metalinguistic Stego-Translanguaging Lens Approach

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Abstract

This research study aims at replacing monoglossic approaches with a stego-translanguaging pedagogy (i.e., the indirect use of the mother tongue to enhance the target language perception and acquisition). To solve the problematic constant decline in the learners' reading and writing IELTS scores in Port Said Language Center and to check the influence of the stego-translanguaging approach, two groups of participants were randomly chosen, an experimental group with 33 English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners from different colleges in Port Said University in Egypt and a control group with 30 EFL learners. The participants in the experimental group followed a heteroglossic pedagogy, whereas the control group followed a strictly non-plurilingual monolingual approach. The results of Kruskal-Wallis test showed that the stego-translanguaging approach was much more influential in teaching IELTS reading than the monoglossic conventional approach with 1.483 as a mean difference between the two groups as ($\mu_1=7$) in the experimental group and ($\mu_2= 5.517$) in the control group. Another crucial result was displayed by a parametric test conducted to examine the significant differences between the IELTS writing posttest scores in the experimental and the control groups. The test showed that $\mu_1 > \mu_2$ with an estimation difference of 1.535, where $\mu_1= 6.818$ and $\mu_2 = 5.28$

Keywords: stego-translanguaging, heteroglossic approach, monoglossic pedagogy, IELTS

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1. Introduction

This study is regarded as a contribution to a comparatively modern advance in second language learning and acquisition, defined by Taylor and Snoddon (2013) and Lin (2013) as a paradigm alternation that unlocks unprecedented approaches to perceiving teaching in addition to learning and which is marked by the rising recognition of the need to set an account for plurilingual repertoires that become the zeitgeist nowadays. This variation has been referred to in various ways, encompassing a bilingual pedagogy embracing translanguaging approaches that remove the limits and boundaries between languages. These approaches are based on recognizing the plurilingual tincture of classroom activities and communicative repertoires of the learners and teachers in multilingual environments, and the confirmation of plurilingualism as a prospective resource rather than an obstacle to content learning (Cummins, 2009; Creese & Blackledge, 2010).

In principle, what the researcher finds in common among all these theorists and authors is an utter objection to the monolingual principle (Lin, 2013; Cummins, 2009) or language separation policy (Palmer et al., 2014), according to which language teaching should occur singularly via that language because the intervention of other languages leads to a decrease of the students' exposure to chances to employ the target language. Therefore, the researcher suggests an indirect use of the target language (i.e., stego-translanguaging) rather than the direct employment of the mother tongue (i.e., translanguaging)

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 The expanded scope of translanguaging terminology

Often employed in association with the modern trends in bilingualism and multilingualism, the concept 'translanguaging' has been recently applied to pedagogy and multimodal communication. (Wei, 2017). Canagarajah (2011) defines translanguaging as the dynamic process by which multilingual and bilingual learners directly use their mother language as an integrated communicative system to shuttle between languages. Nowadays, translanguaging is an umbrella terminology that encompasses a wide variety of theoretical as well as practical proposals that break the conventional ideologies of language detachment. Never the less, such extended employment of translanguaging can be vague simply because it is a multifaceted terminology (Baker, 2012; Leung & Valdes, 2019; Khair, Rosmayanti, & Firman, 2020; Inayati, 2015)

The challenges that encountered translanguaging begin in its theorization and how it can be put into practice. The theory of translanguaging has been under swift advance, and immense reconceptualization has been suggested (Baker, 2012; Wei, 2017; MacSwan, 2017), impacting pedagogical practices and taking many forms. Recent theorizations imply that translanguaging goes against monolingual ideologies of language use and the detachment of the languages in the learner's repertoire (Otheguy, García, & Reid, 2018). Further, it portrays how bilinguals and multilinguals employ their linguistic repertoire, whether they use one or two languages to make sense of the world or a mixture of languages to convey their messages. Therefore, translanguaging is a naturalistic episode among both bilinguals and multilinguals that is usually involuntary and unplanned, and often unconscious; hence translanguaging as a theory is concerned with the unprompted usage of languages, a phenomenon that is also known as unplanned translanguaging (Otheguy et al., 2018; Cenoz & Gorter, 2015)

Kachru and Nelson (2006) pointed out when referencing to world Englishes that acquiring a language involves functional differentiation and overlapping, sometimes manifested by code-switching or code-mixing. Translanguaging is thus considered considerably distinct from code-switching and code-mixing simply because it is not merely a shift between two or three languages, but the language users use their first language (L1) in discursive practices.

According to Lewis, Jones, and Baker (2012), the radix of translanguaging, as is well known, can be traced in Welsh bilingual pedagogy where it was employed in 1990. It is a pedagogical practice placed by the teachers who use a sturdier language to ameliorate a weaker one, and in such a way, it suggests a profound understanding of the meaning and can lead to a growing proficiency in the two languages. In its modern sense, translanguaging is utilized in a context where both the L1 and second language (L2) are employed as languages of teaching and where the target is to improve proficiency in the two languages.

However, translanguaging is a commonly employed terminology that has expanded beyond the intended teaching strategy utilized in Welsh classrooms. Garcia (2009a&b) defines translanguaging as “multiple discursive practices in which bilinguals engage to make sense of their bilingual worlds” (p.45). Garcia’s concept refers to natural activities that have not been planned as a teaching strategy and that could occur inside and outside the classroom. For Makoni and Pennycook (2007), the notion of translanguaging is intended to soften the limits between languages and to oppose the widely common premise of deconstructing named languages.

2.2. Neoteric studies on translanguaging

While a group of studies deals with translanguaging activities and the outcomes of these practices, fewer concentrate on the enforcement of translanguaging pedagogies. Several studies have investigated the translanguaging activities of instructors in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC). While the terminologies ‘stance’ and ‘shift’ are recent and have not been employed in many articles yet, the notions themselves are not that modern and have been exemplified. Some researchers in France and Luxembourg have depicted the affirmative stance of instructors who adopted bilingualism and multilingualism. These instructors acted as bilingual and multilingual models, raised the clarity of languages, and enhanced the usage of multiple languages (Kirsch, 2017; 2020; Duarte & Günther-Van der Meij, 2018). Translanguaging has proved to contribute to learners’ knowledge construction (García & Sylvan, 2011) and sociocultural as well as socio-emotional development (Gort & Sembiante, 2015). Further, it has been shown to contribute to learners’ identity development (Garrity et al., 2015; Velasco & Fialais, 2018).

Some neoteric research studies concentrating on translanguaging practices and their enforcement come from the Netherlands, Malaysia, and South Africa. Some researchers stressed favorable learners’ outcomes as metalinguistic awareness (Kirsch, 2017; Leonet, Cenoz, & Gorter, 2017; Vaish, 2019a&b; Makalela, 2015) and ameliorated reading apprehension. Seltzer and García (2019) depicted newly developed pedagogies; the report issued by the CUNY-NYSIEB project, which included principals and teachers from 67 educational institutions in New York, gives promising examples of three intermediate school teachers, one of whom worked with multilingual students speaking Arabic, English, and Polish. Guzula, McKinney, and Tyler (2016) depicted the

ways how school teachers and students collected linguistic, paralinguistic, and extra-linguistic sources to construct meaning in both literacy and mathematics.

Bin-Tahir et al. (2018) measured the effect of translanguaging approach in teaching Arabic reading comprehension to a group of Indonesian students; 64 students have been randomly chosen and 32 students took part in each of the experimental (E) and control (C) group. Bin-Tahir et al. (2018) employed a reading test to get some information about the students' achievement in reading, and it was distributed to the participants after the final translanguaging-based treatment had been given. To calculate the mean score, standard deviation, and the t-test value between the pretest and the posttest, the researchers employed Minitab 17.1 program and discovered that the use of translanguaging approach in learning Arabic reading comprehension ameliorates the participants' ability of Arabic reading comprehension much better than the monoglossic traditional method.

Vaish (2019a) provided valuable insights into the instructors' translanguaging pedagogies in some educational institutions in Singapore. First, the instructors translated, then explained, and finally, modeled. Few research studies investigated the obstacles posed by the application of translanguaging practices (or heteroglossic pedagogies). Vaish (2019b) reported three basic obstacles that encountered instructors who endeavored to employ English and Malay alternatively: (1) the diversity of the students, (2) the super-negative attitudes toward the mother language, (3) and the overwhelming teacher-oriented pedagogy. Duarte and Günther (2018), who implemented the translanguaging activities in 12 educational institutions in the Netherlands, reported that instructors needed much time to be able to use the proposed holistic model of translanguaging multilingual instruction that depends on Dutch in addition to English and the students' home languages.

3. Research problem

The constant decline of the EFL learners' scores in ELTS reading and writing sections is one of the basic obstacles that encounter instructors at Port Said Language Center. For the past five years, the learners' highest scores have been obtained in speaking and listening, and what was easily noticed was that the learners got low scores in reading and writing sections. That is why this research study raises the following question: Can a stego-translanguaging approach be used instead of a monoglossic one to ameliorate the learners' scores in IELTS reading and writing sections?

4. Research questions

Based on the research problem illustrated above, this research study attempts to answer the following research questions:

1. Which approach is more influential in teaching IELTS reading: stego-translanguaging or monoglossic?
2. Are there any significant differences between the scores of IELTS writing posttest in the experimental group and in the control group?

5. Hypotheses

1. There are significant differences between the scores of the experimental group and those of the control group in IELTS reading posttest.

2. There are significant differences between the scores of the experimental group and those of the control group in IELTS writing posttest.

6. Study significance

The importance of this research study lies in its pioneering introduction of the stego-translanguaging approach as a replacement for translanguaging and for the conventional monoglossic one to develop the learners' scores in ELTS reading and writing sections. This study poses a serious query concerning the rational and moderate but indirect use of the mother tongue to develop and brush up the target language. The Arabic language can lend a hand to EFL learners as they consciously will conduct a contrastive analysis to see the similarities and differences between the source and the target languages. Furthermore, reading or writing about a topic in Arabic before doing the same in English will facilitate the counterpart processes in English in terms of comprehension and study time.

7. Methods

7.1 Participants

Steven K. Thompson's equation is employed to calculate the sample size (see 1 below). In an attempt to attain external validity and representativeness, the researcher randomly selected the research participants out of 75 EFL learners. The study sample consists of two groups: experimental and control. The experimental group consists of 33 EFL learners (20 females and 13 males) from different colleges in Port Said University: 12 engineering senior students, five nursing postgraduate students, six pharmacy graduate students, four Law graduates, and six graduates from the Faculty of Education. The control group consists of 30 EFL learners (19 females and 11 males) from different faculties in Port Said University: nine senior engineering students, four nursing postgraduate students, seven pharmacy graduate students, six Law graduates, and four graduates from the Faculty of Education. The participants aged from 19 to 24.

(1)

$$n = \frac{N p(1 - p)}{(N - 1)(d^2/z^2) + p(1 - p)}$$

Where n = sample size (82); N= Population size (105); z = confidence level at 0.95% (1.96); d = error proportion (0.05); p= probability (50%)

Regarding the internal validity of the research instruments employed in this study, the researcher administered a placement test to ensure that the participants are qualified for the IELTS course. This placement test was submitted to some experts who are Ph.D. holders and in the Departments of English at the Faculties of Arts in Port Said, Suez Canal, Suez, and Sattam Bin Abdul-Aziz Universities. After consulting these juries and taking their comments and recommendations, some modifications were conducted on the placement test to make it suitable and valid to be administered.

7.2. Research procedures

1. The participants in the experimental and control groups were given a reading and writing pre-test and were asked to answer the test in 120 minutes (reading: three texts, 40 questions, 60 minutes; writing: two descriptive tasks, 60 minutes).

2. To check the reliability of the pre-test, the participants were retested after three days and the co-efficient correlation was calculated ($r = 0.734$). To avoid the participant error, the pre-tests were conducted on an open – schedule day chosen by the participants. To evade the subject bias, the examiner asked the participants not to write their names on the test paper.
3. The participants underwent a comprehensive stego-translanguaging-based reading and writing course. The researcher gave the learners some reading passages and writing activities to carry out, but the participants were asked to read first in Arabic about some of the topics involved in the reading and writing activities before starting to answer them. These Arabic passages were intended to enhance the participants' knowledgeable background. The treatment has lasted for four successive weeks (three-classes per week).
4. The participants in experimental group underwent 120-minute reading and writing posttest (reading: three texts, 40 questions, 60 minutes; writing: two descriptive tasks, 60 minutes) to check the impact of the stego-translanguaging treatment given. To check the reliability of the posttest, the researcher retested the participants again after eight days and the co-efficient correlation was calculated ($r = 0.675$)
5. The control group, a sample of 30 EFL learners belonging to different educational institutions in Port Said University and with approximately the same age as the experimental group. The control group was selected with the experimental group out of 75 learners. This group was taught in a monoglossic way; no intervention of Arabic support. The participants in the control group conducted a posttest after completing their monoglossic-course. To check the reliability of the posttest, the researcher retested the subject again after seven days and the co-efficient correlation was calculated ($r = 0.791$)

8. Results

To check the impact of the stego-translanguaging and monoglossic approaches on the IELTS reading scores in the experimental group (EG) and control group (CG); first, the normal distribution of the scores of the reading posttest in the two groups was conducted (See table 1 below and figures 1&2). The basic three tests – Shapiro-Wilk, Kolmogorov, and Anderson and Darling – show that $p < .05$. It means that the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected and the alternative one (H_1) stating that the scores of the participants are not normally distributed is accepted.

Table 1: *Tests of normality for reading posttest in EG and CG*

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	Df	Sig.	Statistic	Df	Sig.
Reading Post-test (EG)	.260	30	.000	.913	30	.018
Reading Post-test (CG)	.186	30	.009	.880	30	.003

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

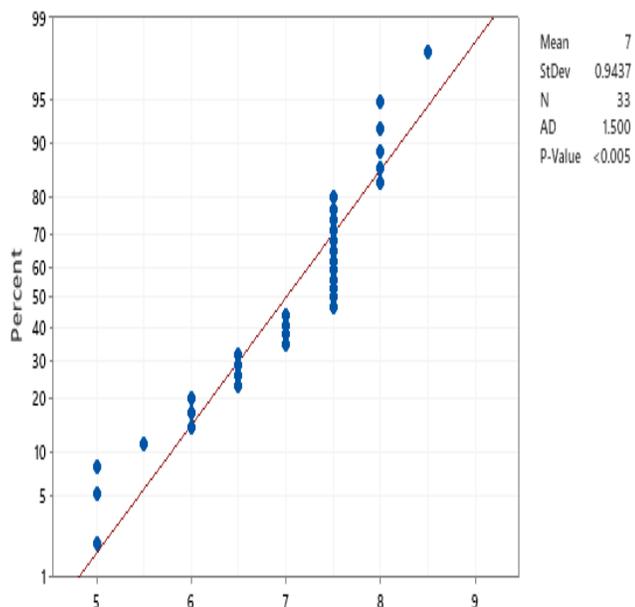


Figure 1: Probability plot of reading posttest (EG)

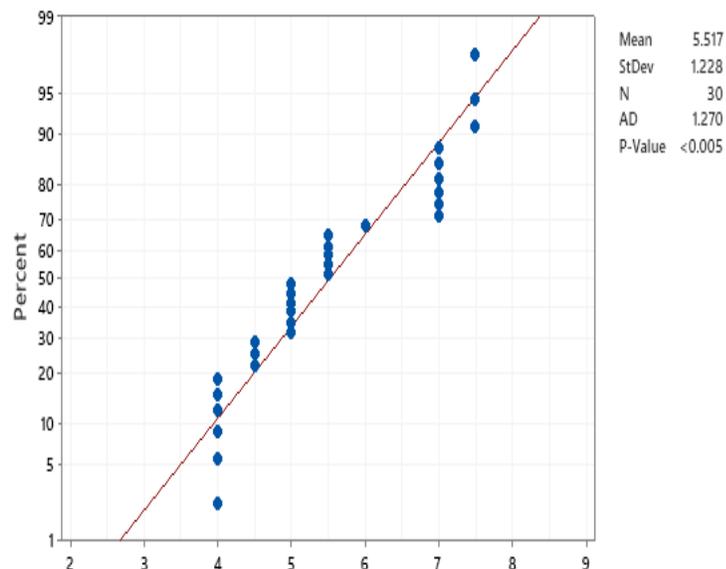


Figure 2: Probability plot of reading posttest (EG)

Therefore, a non-parametric test – Kruskal-Wallis test – was administered as a second step to check the influence of the approach used on the IELTS reading scores. The test showed that the influence of the stego-translanguaging considerably transcended that of the monoglossic approach; the mean rank of the reading test submitted to EG equals 41.5, approximately double that of the reading test submitted to the CG (21.5). The mean difference between the two groups is 1.483 for the experimental group ($\mu=7$) over the control group ($\mu= 5.517$) (see table [2] and figure [3]).

Table 2: *Kruskal-Wallis Test: Reading Posttest EG & CG*

Descriptive Statistics

Codes	N	Median	Mean Rank	Z-Value
1	33	8.0	41.5	4.34
2	30	5.5	21.5	-4.34
Overall	63		32.0	

Test

Null hypothesis H_0 : All medians are equal
 Alternative hypothesis H_1 : At least one median is different

Method	DF	H-Value	P-Value
Not adjusted for ties	1	18.79	0.000
Adjusted for ties	1	19.88	0.000

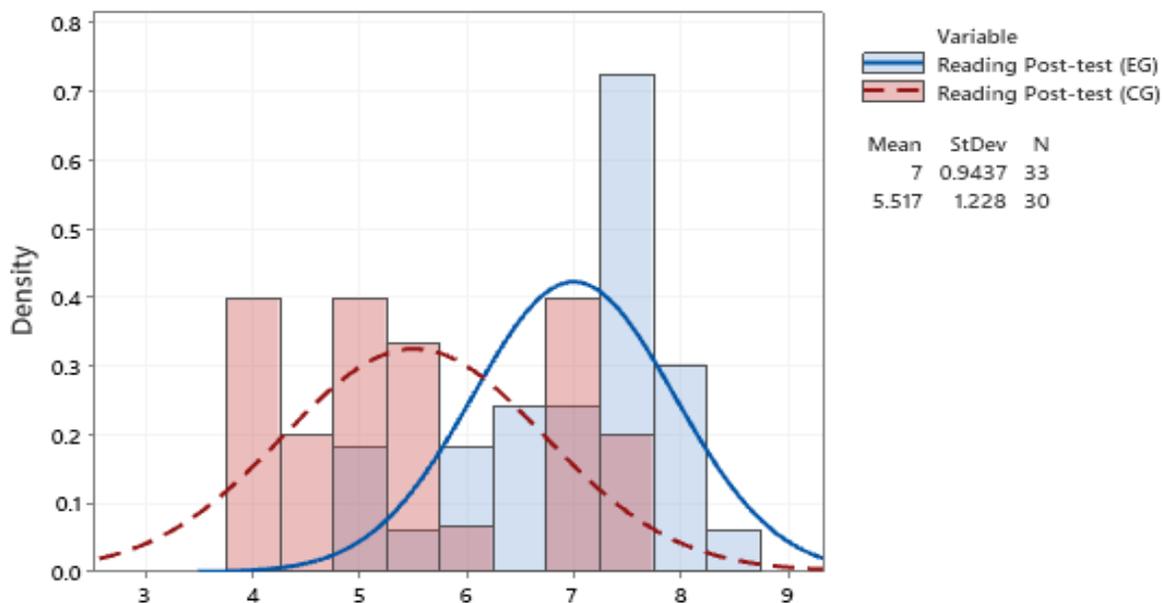


Figure 3: Histogram of IELTS reading posttest in EG and CG

To validate the second hypothesis investigating the impact of the stego-translanguaging and monoglossic approaches on the IELTS writing scores in the experimental group (EG) and control group (CG), first, the normal distribution of the scores of the writing posttest in the two groups was conducted (See table 3 below). Shapiro-Wilk and Kolmogorov show that $p > .05$ (61.9 % and 52.1%); it means that the null hypothesis (H_0) is accepted and the alternative one (H_1) stating that the scores of the participants are normally distributed is rejected. Therefore, a parametric test – two - sample t-test – was conducted to test the significant differences between the scores in the two groups. The test displayed that $\mu_1 > \mu_2$ with an estimation difference of 1.535, where μ_1 (equals 6.818) is the mean of the scores of the IELTS writing posttest in EG and μ_2 (equals 5.28) is the mean of the scores of the IELTS writing posttest in CG. Both the individual value plot and the boxplot of the writing posttest showed influential effect of the stego-translanguaging in EG over the monoglossic approach in the CG.

Table 3: Tests of Normality in IELTS writing posttest in EG and CG

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	Df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Writing Post-test (EG)	.202	30	.003	.902	30	.619
Writing Post-test (CG)	.118	30	.200*	.969	30	.521

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

the monoglossic approach in developing the participants' IELTS reading scores with 1.483 as a mean difference between the two groups as ($\mu=7$) in the experimental group and ($\mu= 5.517$) in the control group. This finding is in alignment with Aka (2020) who pointed out that English reading skills can be promoted by indirect help from the Japanese language (i.e., the mother tongue of the participants). After giving his experimental group ($n = 74$) the planned intervention, Aka noticed that the English reading performance of the Japanese learners witnessed much more development in the posttest, whereas the control group ($n=83$) achieved the normal performance. It indicates that stego-translanguaging can be regarded as one of the influential factors that enhance reading performance. Nonetheless, this finding does not go with Saraka (2020), who claimed that teaching English entrepreneurship to Indonesian students should be done via a monoglossic rather than heteroglossic approach regarding the later pedagogy as a mental distraction. Saraka (2020) reached this conclusion by analyzing a questionnaire submitted to a random sample of 35 students and five teachers, 78% of which preferred the use of English only with an Indonesian intervention to study and teach English entrepreneurship.

A parametric two-sample t-test was conducted to examine the significant differences between the IELTS writing posttest scores in the experimental and the control groups. The test showed that $\mu_1 > \mu_2$ with an estimation difference of 1.535, where $\mu_1(6.818)$ is the mean of the scores of the experimental group IELTS writing posttest and $\mu_2 (5.28)$ is the mean of the scores of the IELTS writing posttest in CG. This finding is in alignment with Somblingo and Alieto (2019), who examined the English language attitudes among Filipino EFL teachers and concluded that the Filipino EFL teachers prefer to use Filipino language while teaching English writing skills. However, it does not go with Francisco and Madrazo (2019), who believed that the monoglossic approach should be strictly followed in teaching writing and reading to Philippine Grade V and no other enhancement should be obtained from other languages, especially the mother tongue. However, the research results are in alignment with Al-Awaid (2020), who asserted that teachers' classroom practices in EFL undergraduate programs at Jazan University were guided by their so heteroglossic beliefs that the instructors should make use of any possible language means to pave the way for target language learning.

The researcher attributed the influential impact of the stego-translanguaging approach over the monoglossic one to the fact that the human mind always works well in the absence of pressures and stresses. For example, when the EFL learners were asked to read some articles in Arabic on traffic congestion in the USA, they were totally stress-free as they did not know that they would be asked to write a four-paragraph essay in the coming class. Had the learners known that they did this activity for testing purposes, they would have been very stressed and read little that did the purpose. But being stress-free, they have read a lot and when they were asked to write an essay on this subject, they wrote with much verbosity, and of course, they asked their instructor for some translation assistance. The difference between translanguaging and stego-translanguaging is that in the former approach the students know that they do an activity for testing purposes. Therefore, stego-translanguaging approach makes indirect use of some metalinguistic aspects to enhance target language learning.

10. Conclusion

One of the problematic conventions of teaching ELTS reading and writing in Port Said Language Center is the association of the teaching pedagogy with a monolingual bias and exclusive use of English language; this traditional insistence leads to the rapid decline of the learners' scores in the last five years. Monoglossic approach was highly promoted and recommended in many countries worldwide including Egypt, but it seems that the stego-translanguaging pedagogy can amend what has been spoiled and destroyed by monoglossic approach. The learners are indirectly given the target language by covering it under the learners' mother tongue, which is used to accelerate the process of target language absorption.

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