ISSN:2828-6235
Impact factor:13.77

International Journal of Literature and Language Studies(IJLLS)

TRANSLANGUAGING IN UZBEK–RUSSIAN–ENGLISH CLASSROOMS: TOWARDS PRINCIPLED OWN-LANGUAGE USE IN UNIVERSITY EFL TEACHING

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doi:https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.24145089

Abstract. University English classes in Uzbekistan take place in a multilingual setting: students speak Uzbek, Russian, and sometimes Karakalpak, Tajik or Kazakh, and they move between these languages all the time. Official methodology, however, often treats any language other than English as a sign of weak teaching. This article reviews research on own-language use and translanguaging and argues that the question is not whether learners' other languages appear in class, but whether they are used for purposes that support English learning. Drawing on García and Li Wei's concept of translanguaging, on Cook's and Hall and Cook's work on own-language use, and on studies of first-language use in collaborative tasks, the article proposes a "purpose–phase–product" framework for university EFL classes. The framework specifies when Uzbek or Russian can support learning (planning, clarifying complex instructions, comparing structures, reflecting on language) and when English must be the medium (task performance, reporting, assessed output). Practical classroom procedures are described, along with safeguards against excessive own-language use.

Keywords: translanguaging, own-language use, code-switching, multilingual classroom, plurilingualism, EFL, Uzbekistan

O‘ZBEK–RUS–INGLIZ TILLI AUDITORIYALARDA TRANSLINGVIZM: UNIVERSITETDA INGLIZ TILINI O‘QITISHDA ONA TILIDAN ASOSLI FOYDALANISH SARI

Annotatsiya. Maqolada O‘zbekiston oliy ta’lim muassasalaridagi ingliz tili mashg‘ulotlarida o‘zbek va rus tillaridan foydalanish masalasi translingvizm (translanguaging) nazariyasi asosida ko‘rib chiqiladi. Muallif ona tili va boshqa tillardan maqsadli foydalanish uchun “maqsad – bosqich – natija” modelini taklif etadi: rejalashtirish, murakkab topshiriqlarni tushuntirish, tillarni qiyoslash va til haqida mulohaza yuritishda o‘zbek yoki rus tiliga ruxsat beriladi, topshiriqni bajarish va baholanadigan natija esa ingliz tilida bo‘lishi shart.

Kalit so‘zlar: translingvizm, ona tilidan foydalanish, kod almashinuvi, ko‘ptilli sinf, ingliz tili

ТРАНСЛИНГВИЗМ В УЗБЕКСКО-РУССКО-АНГЛИЙСКОЙ АУДИТОРИИ: К ОБОСНОВАННОМУ ИСПОЛЬЗОВАНИЮ РОДНОГО ЯЗЫКА В ВУЗОВСКОМ ОБУЧЕНИИ АНГЛИЙСКОМУ ЯЗЫКУ

Аннотация. В статье рассматривается использование узбекского и русского языков на занятиях английского языка в вузах Узбекистана с позиции теории транслингвизма. Предлагается модель «цель – этап – результат», определяющая, когда родной язык поддерживает обучение, а когда английский язык должен быть единственным средством, а также практические приёмы и ограничения.

Ключевые слова: транслингвизм, родной язык, переключение кодов, многоязычная аудитория, английский язык

INTRODUCTION

In a typical first-year English group at an Uzbek university, some students attended Uzbek-medium schools, others Russian-medium schools, and some grew up speaking Karakalpak, Tajik or Kazakh at home. During pair work, students ask each other in Uzbek what a word means, check the instructions in Russian, and then perform the task in English. Teachers react to this in very different ways: some prohibit any language but English, some ignore it, and many feel guilty when they themselves explain a grammar point in Uzbek.

The uncertainty is not new; it reflects a long-standing debate. For much of the twentieth century, communicative and direct methods recommended maximum, ideally exclusive, use of the target language. Since the 2000s, however, a growing body of research has questioned this "monolingual principle" [1, 2] and proposed that learners' other languages can be a resource. The concept of translanguaging [3, 4] has made this argument more explicit by treating bilinguals' languages as one integrated repertoire.

In Uzbekistan the question carries particular weight. The classroom is not bilingual but trilingual or more, and Russian plays a double role: for some students it is a first language, for others a second. Yet publications on English teaching in Uzbekistan seldom address own-language use directly, and when they do, it is usually as a problem to be minimised. This article offers a principled alternative: a framework that helps teachers decide when other languages can support English learning and when English has to be used.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Against the monolingual principle

Cook [1] argued that the exclusion of the first language from the classroom has no solid basis in research and that L1 can be used deliberately, for example to convey meaning efficiently, explain grammar, organise tasks and maintain discipline. Hall and Cook [2] reviewed decades of research and policy and concluded that own-language use is widespread, that teachers often use it despite official policy, and that it can support learning when used for clear purposes. Macaro [5], studying student teachers, found that the amount of teachers' L1 use did not by itself predict the amount of L2 learners produced, and he called for a theory of "optimal" rather than minimal L1 use.

L1 in collaborative tasks

Swain and Lapkin [6] analysed how Grade 8 French immersion learners used their L1 (English) during collaborative writing tasks. They found that L1 was used mainly to move the task along, to focus attention on vocabulary and grammar, and to manage interaction. The authors

suggested that, without it, many learners might not have managed such cognitively demanding tasks, or would have produced poorer target-language output.

Translanguaging

The term translanguaging was coined by Cen Williams in Welsh bilingual education in the 1990s, for lessons in which input was given in one language and output expected in another [4]. García and Li Wei [4] developed it into a broader theory: bilinguals do not switch between two separate systems but draw selectively on a single repertoire. As a pedagogy, translanguaging means planning activities in which students use their full repertoire to understand and produce meaning. Creese and Blackledge [3] observed such practices in complementary schools and described them as a flexible bilingual pedagogy. Canagarajah [7] analysed a multilingual student's academic writing and showed how strategic use of several languages can serve rhetorical purposes.

Concerns

The usual objection is that in foreign language contexts, where exposure outside class is limited, every minute of English in class counts. Excessive L1 use may reduce input and output and reinforce students' reluctance to speak. The concern is a fair one, and any framework for own-language use needs built-in limits.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study is conceptual. Research on own-language use and translanguaging was reviewed with a focus on functions of L1 in L2 learning. The functions identified in the literature were grouped and matched to the stages of a typical university EFL lesson in Uzbekistan. For each stage, the analysis asked: does the use of Uzbek or Russian at this point increase or decrease the amount and quality of English processing? Answers were organised into a framework with three dimensions (purpose, phase and product) and illustrated with classroom procedures.

RESULTS: THE PURPOSE–PHASE–PRODUCT FRAMEWORK

Three questions

Before switching to a language other than English, teachers and students ask three questions.

1. **Purpose.** Does using Uzbek or Russian here help us understand, plan or think about English? Legitimate purposes include clarifying complex task instructions, explaining an abstract grammar concept, comparing structures across languages, negotiating meaning of a difficult text, and reflecting on learning. Using another language because English is uncomfortable is not a legitimate purpose.

2. **Phase.** Is this a phase where English practice is the goal? During planning, analysis and reflection, other languages may help. During task performance, reporting and assessment, English is required.

3. **Product.** Will the final product be in English? Translanguaging is justified when it leads to better English output.

Application by lesson phase

Table 1 applies the framework to the phases of a lesson.

Table 1. Language use by lesson phase

Phase	Uzbek / Russian may be used for	English is required for	Example
Instructions	Quick check of complex	The teacher's	A student summarises the

Phase	Uzbek / Russian may be used for	English is required for	Example
	instructions by a student	instructions	task in Uzbek; the teacher confirms
Input (reading/listening)	Discussing difficult passages in pairs	Answers to comprehension tasks	Pairs discuss a dense paragraph in Uzbek, then answer in English
Planning	Brainstorming ideas	Notes and key phrases	Groups brainstorm freely, then write their plan in English
Task performance	—	All communication	Discussion, role play, problem-solving
Language focus	Cross-linguistic comparison	Examples and practice	Comparing English articles with Uzbek bir and -ni
Reflection	Expressing complex thoughts about learning	Summary of the main point	"What was difficult today and why?"

Classroom procedures

Four procedures put the framework into practice.

Bilingual vocabulary notebooks. Students record new English words with an Uzbek or Russian equivalent and an English example sentence. The equivalent secures meaning quickly; the example ensures that the word is learned in English use.

Planned translanguaging in planning stages. In task-based lessons, groups may plan in any language for a fixed time (e.g. five minutes), but must write their plan in English. The teacher monitors the shift.

Cross-linguistic comparison. Grammar presentations include a short comparison: how Uzbek and Russian express the same meaning. Students who know both languages often notice things the teacher would miss, and the comparison helps to explain persistent errors.

Mediation tasks. Students read an Uzbek or Russian text and report its content in English to a partner. This activity, recognised in the CEFR Companion Volume as cross-linguistic mediation [8], uses other languages as input and produces English output.

Safeguards

To prevent excessive own-language use, the framework includes three safeguards: a visible signal (for example, a card on the board) indicating whether the current phase is "English only" or "all languages"; a time limit on all-language phases; and a brief end-of-lesson self-check in which groups estimate how much of their task time was in English. Together they turn language choice into a conscious, shared decision instead of a hidden habit.

DISCUSSION

The framework does not argue for more Uzbek or Russian in English classes; it argues for more deliberate use of them. Other languages are already present in most classes, only in an unplanned way that teachers either ignore or fight. The purpose–phase–product questions give teachers and students a shared vocabulary for deciding when other languages help.

Two features of Uzbek universities make the framework a good fit. First, the presence of two widely shared languages, Uzbek and Russian, makes cross-linguistic comparison rich: many grammatical categories of English (articles, perfect aspect, phrasal verbs) can be compared with both. Second, the professional future of many graduates involves mediation between these languages and English, so practising it in class has direct value.

The main risk is that the framework is used to justify long stretches of teacher talk in Uzbek. The framework addresses mainly student language use; teacher talk should remain predominantly English, with short switches for efficiency [5]. A further issue concerns minority-language students: when a class uses Uzbek as the shared language, Russian-dominant or Karakalpak-speaking students may be excluded. Teachers should ensure that all-language phases allow any language and that pairings take language backgrounds into account.

So far, the framework is a theoretical proposal. Future research could record and analyse group talk in Uzbek university classes with and without the framework, measuring the proportion of English during task performance and the quality of English output, along the lines of Swain and Lapkin [6].

CONCLUSION

In Uzbek university English classes, own-language use is a fact of life, not an option. Research on own-language use and translanguaging suggests that it can support learning when it serves clear purposes, occurs in appropriate phases and leads to English products. The purpose–phase–product framework proposed here gives teachers a way to plan and regulate such use, together with practical procedures and safeguards. Adopting it would let Uzbek universities treat their students' multilingualism as an asset in English learning, while protecting the time students need to use English itself.

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