

TRANSLANGUAGING STRATEGY FOR TEACHING ENGLISH TO INDIGENOUS NINTH GRADE STUDENTS

Adolfo José Contreras Lidueñas, Camila Andrea Moreno Ordosgoitia and Marledis Arrieta
Castillo.

Facultad de Educación, Universidad Santo Tomás

Maestría en Ambientes Bilingües de aprendizaje

Advisor

Andrés Felipe Dussan Pérez

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Author Note

Marledis Arrieta Castillo <https://orcid.org/0009-0002-5289-8580>

marledis.castilloarr@usantoto.edu.co

Adolfo José Contreras Lidueñas <https://orcid.org/0009-0003-2056-4380>

adolfo.liduenascon@usantotomas.edu.co

Camila Andrea Moreno Ordosgoitia <https://orcid.org/0009-0002-6374-8713>

camila.ordosgoitiamor@usantotomas.edu.co

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Table of Content.

1. Introduction.....	8
2. Research Question	10
3. Objectives	11
3.1 General Objective	11
3.2 Specific Objectives	11
4. Theoretical Framework.....	12
4.1 Background.....	12
4.2 Conceptual Framework.....	18
4.2.1 Translanguaging.....	18
4.2.2. Contextualized Language Learning	19
4.2.3. Empowerment in Bilingual Education.....	20
5. Methodology	23
5.1. Research Design.....	23
5.2. Participants.....	24
5.3. Inclusion Criteria	24
5.4. Data Collection Instruments	25
5.5. Procedure	25
5.6. Data Analysis	26
5.6.1. Open Coding	26

5.6.2. Axial Coding.....	27
5.6.3. Triangulation of Findings	27
5.7. Ethical Considerations	27
6. Analysis of Results	39
6.1. Cognitive and Functional Support of Spanish	39
6.2. Mental Translation and Linguistic Mediation.....	41
6.3. Confidence, Participation, and Learning Strategies.....	42
6.4. Relationship Between English, Culture, and Community	44
The results in this category showed that translanguaging also supported a meaningful connection between English learning, students’ cultural identity, and their community context. Interview data revealed that students did not perceive English as entirely detached from their social and cultural reality; instead, they associated classroom activities with their identity, customs, family life, and community environment. One participant referred to the importance of cultural identity in the learning process, explaining that English activities could be connected to “nuestra identidad cultural” (ENT-P08). Similarly, another participant associated English learning with the community context through the phrase “nuestra comunidad” (ENT-P06). A third participant linked English learning to local traditions by referring to “nuestras costumbres” (ENT-P07).....	
	44

This perception was also supported by classroom observations. During classroom activities, students related English content to situations drawn from their everyday experiences and community environment. This was reflected in the observation note stating that “Las rutinas

descriptas estuvieron relacionadas con el contexto cotidiano del estudiantado” (OBS-S03). Such evidence suggests that classroom interactions created opportunities for students to connect English learning with their own cultural and social realities, making learning more meaningful and relevant. 44

Taken together, these findings suggest that English learning became more meaningful when it was connected to students’ lived experiences rather than treated as a decontextualized school subject. This finding is consistent with Canagarajah (2005), who argues that bilingual pedagogy should resist monolingual norms and promote culturally sustaining practices, and with Kumaravadivelu (2003), who emphasizes that effective language teaching must emerge from learners’ local realities and sociocultural contexts. 45

6.5. Triangulation of Findings	45
7. Conclusions.....	48
8. Contributions to Bilingual Learning Environments / ABA	51
9. Recommendations.....	53
10. References.....	55
11. Appendices.....	58
11.1 Appendix A. Semi-Structured Interview Guide.....	58
11.2 Appendix B. Classroom Observation Guide.....	61
11.3 Appendix C: Informed Consent / Assent.....	64
11.4 Appendix D. Institutional Authorization	65
11.5 Appendix E. Interview Coding Evidence	67

11.6 Appendix F. Observation Coding Evidence 67

Table 1 Participants 28

Table 2 Description of Data Collection Instruments 29

Table 3 Open Coding of the Semi-Structured Interviews 30

Table 4 Open Coding of the Classroom Observations 32

Table 5 Joint Axial Coding of Interviews and Observations 34

Table 6 Triangulation of Findings by Axial Category 35

Abstract

This study examines how translanguaging, understood as a communicative and contextualized pedagogical strategy, supports English language learning among ninth-grade students at Institución Educativa Indígena Guaimí, an indigenous educational context in San Antonio de Palmito, Sucre. The research followed a qualitative descriptive-interpretive design aimed at analyzing students' perceptions and classroom practices related to the use of Spanish and English in the learning process. Data were collected through a semi-structured interview conducted with eight students and three classroom observations focused on English lessons. The information was analyzed through open coding, joint axial coding, and triangulation of both instruments. Four analytical categories emerged from the data: Cognitive and Functional Support of Spanish, Mental Translation and Linguistic Mediation, Confidence, Participation, and Learning Strategies, and Relationship Between English, Culture, and Community. The findings indicate that translanguaging functioned as a meaningful pedagogical resource that facilitated comprehension, supported oral participation, strengthened students' confidence, promoted collaboration in classroom interaction, and connected English learning with their cultural identity and community context. Overall, the study suggests that translanguaging can contribute to more inclusive, context-sensitive, and pedagogically relevant English teaching practices in indigenous bilingual educational settings, while also highlighting the value of recognizing students' linguistic and cultural resources as central to meaningful language learning.

Keywords: *translanguaging, bilingual education, indigenous education, English learning, qualitative research.*

Resumen

Este estudio examina cómo el translanguaging, entendido como una estrategia pedagógica comunicativa y contextualizada, apoya el aprendizaje del inglés en estudiantes de noveno grado de la Institución Educativa Indígena Guaimí, ubicada en un contexto educativo indígena de San Antonio de Palmito, Sucre. La investigación siguió un diseño cualitativo descriptivo-interpretativo orientado a analizar las percepciones de los estudiantes y las prácticas de aula relacionadas con el uso del español y el inglés en el proceso de aprendizaje. La información se recolectó mediante una entrevista semiestructurada aplicada a ocho estudiantes y tres observaciones de clase centradas en la enseñanza del inglés. Los datos se analizaron a través de codificación abierta, codificación axial conjunta y triangulación de ambos instrumentos. Del análisis emergieron cuatro categorías: apoyo cognitivo y funcional del español, traducción mental y mediación lingüística, confianza, participación y estrategias de aprendizaje, y relación entre inglés, cultura y comunidad. Los hallazgos indican que el translanguaging funcionó como un recurso pedagógico significativo que favoreció la comprensión, fortaleció la participación oral, incrementó la confianza de los estudiantes, promovió la colaboración en la interacción de aula y vinculó el aprendizaje del inglés con la identidad cultural y el contexto comunitario. En conjunto, el estudio sugiere que el translanguaging puede contribuir a prácticas de enseñanza del inglés más inclusivas, contextualizadas y pedagógicamente pertinentes en contextos educativos bilingües e indígenas.

Palabras clave: *translanguaging, educación bilingüe, educación indígena, aprendizaje del inglés, investigación cualitativa.*

1. Introduction

In today's globalized educational landscape, bilingualism has become a cornerstone of students' academic formation, particularly in contexts where English functions as a foreign language. The mastery of a second language not only provides access to broader academic and professional opportunities but also enhances cognitive processes such as mental flexibility, creativity, and problem-solving. As García and Otheguy (2020) emphasize, the concepts of plurilingualism and translanguaging have transformed traditional understandings of bilingualism by positioning language use as a fluid and dynamic practice rather than a rigid separation of linguistic codes. Understanding these concepts is therefore essential to the development of inclusive pedagogical approaches that respond to the linguistic diversity present in contemporary classrooms. In addition, Kramsch (2013) argues that language learning should not only focus on linguistic proficiency but also on the development of intercultural competence, as it enables learners to understand the symbolic, historical, and ideological dimensions embedded in language use.

At Institución Educativa Indígena Guaimí, an indigenous public school, ninth-grade students stand at a crucial stage in the development of their communicative competence in English. However, despite the implementation of bilingual education programs, a noticeable gap persists between curricular goals and the actual language proficiency achieved by learners. This disparity often results from teaching methodologies that fail to recognize students' sociocultural contexts and the potential of their native languages as learning resources. As Pennycook (2017) points out, translanguaging allows learners to integrate their full linguistic repertoires, including

their cultural and spatial experiences, into the learning process, thus creating more equitable and authentic educational interactions.

In this regard, the main purpose of this study is to analyze how translanguaging, understood as a communicative and contextualized pedagogical strategy, supports English language learning among ninth-grade students at Institución Educativa Indígena Guaimí. More specifically, the study seeks to describe current pedagogical practices in the English classroom, explore students' perceptions and experiences regarding translanguaging, and analyze how this strategy supports comprehension, participation, confidence, collaboration, and cultural connection in the learning process. Through a qualitative descriptive-interpretive design, this study aims to generate situated evidence that contributes to the improvement of pedagogical practices in bilingual and indigenous educational contexts.

Furthermore, this study is aligned with the thematic axis of Bilingualism promoted by the Master's Program in Bilingual Learning Environments (MABA), as it examines how translanguaging contributes to understanding bilingual language practices in an indigenous educational context. By exploring the interaction between Spanish and English in classroom practices, students' participation, identity, and sociocultural realities, the study contributes to the discussion on bilingualism from a contextualized perspective that recognizes learners' linguistic and cultural resources as valuable assets for English language learning.

2. Research Question

How does translanguaging as a communicative and contextualized pedagogical strategy support English language learning among ninth-grade students in an indigenous educational context?

3. Objectives

3.1 General Objective

To analyze how translanguaging supports the development of English communicative skills among ninth-grade students at Institución Educativa Indígena Guaimí.

3.2 Specific Objectives

1. To describe the current pedagogical practices used in the teaching of English to ninth-grade indigenous students at Institución Educativa Indígena Guaimí.
2. To explore students' perceptions and experiences regarding the use of translanguaging as a communicative strategy in the English classroom.
3. To analyze how translanguaging supports comprehension, participation, confidence, collaboration, and the connection between English learning and students' cultural identity.

4. Theoretical Framework

4.1 Background

Understanding how translanguageing supports English language learning in indigenous contexts requires acknowledging the linguistic, sociocultural, and pedagogical factors that shape bilingual education. Research developed in Colombia and other multilingual settings has increasingly emphasized the need for educational practices that not only foster second language development but also affirm learners' cultural identities and linguistic resources. In this sense, the present study is grounded in theoretical perspectives that highlight translanguageing, contextualized language learning, and empowerment as key elements for inclusive and meaningful bilingual education.

Recent scholarship has shown that bilingual education in Colombia faces diverse challenges that vary according to regional, cultural, and socioeconomic conditions. Castell-Britton (2024) explains that inequalities in resources, demographic differences, and inconsistencies in policy implementation continue to affect the effectiveness of bilingual programs. These concerns are particularly relevant to the context of Institución Educativa Indígena Guaimí, where students often experience a gap between curricular expectations and the support they receive in the classroom. From this perspective, bilingual teaching cannot rely on universalized models detached from local realities; instead, it must respond to learners' sociocultural environments and value the linguistic resources they already possess.

In the specific case of San Antonio de Palmito, the educational context of this study is directly linked to the historical, territorial, and cultural presence of the Zenú people. Official sociodemographic information identifies the Zenú as one of the largest Indigenous peoples in Colombia, with a strong presence in the departments of Córdoba and Sucre, particularly within the broader territorial configuration of San Andrés de Sotavento. Likewise, official institutional records recognize the existence of Indigenous communities and cabildos as part of the organizational structure through which these peoples preserve their authority, identity, and territorial belonging. This contextualization is especially relevant for the present study because it means that English language learning takes place in a setting where cultural identity, territorial belonging, community organization, and collective forms of life remain highly significant. Therefore, understanding translanguaging in this research requires moving beyond a generic reference to an indigenous educational context and recognizing the concrete sociocultural reality of the Zenú community of San Antonio de Palmito as a central dimension of the learning environment (Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística [DANE], 2022; Ministerio del Interior, n.d.)

It is important to clarify that, in the context of this study, the indigenous dimension refers mainly to the students' sociocultural, territorial, and community background as members of the Zenú context, rather than to the use of an indigenous language as a vehicular language in the English classroom. According to the participants' profile, Spanish was reported as the mother tongue and the main language used both at home and at school, while English functioned as the foreign language being learned. Therefore, the translanguaging practices analyzed in this study were primarily developed through the interaction between Spanish and English. This clarification strengthens the conceptual coherence of the study by distinguishing between the linguistic

repertoire observed in classroom interaction and the sociocultural identity that frames the indigenous educational context.

Similar perspectives have been explored in other multilingual and multicultural settings. For example, Song, Makinina, and Ng (2023) describe pedagogical strategies in Canada that encourage learners to draw on their linguistic and cultural repertoires in order to participate more meaningfully in classroom activities. Their study shows that learning becomes more engaging when students are allowed to connect new knowledge with familiar languages, experiences, and identities. Although that work was developed in a different context, its pedagogical principles are relevant to indigenous Colombian students, who also benefit from approaches that validate their own ways of knowing. In the same line, Nyaaba (2025) highlights the importance of designing educational processes that are grounded in local realities and community-based linguistic frameworks, reinforcing the idea that language teaching should be responsive to learners' everyday contexts rather than disconnected from them.

At the center of this study is the concept of translanguageing, originally proposed by Williams (1994) and later expanded by García and Wei (2014). Translanguageing challenges traditional conceptions of bilingualism that treat languages as separate and autonomous systems. Instead, it understands language practices as fluid, dynamic, and interconnected. From this perspective, multilingual learners draw from their full linguistic repertoires and culturally situated communicative resources in order to construct meaning, express ideas, and learn effectively. In the present study, these translanguageing practices were mainly observed through the interaction between Spanish, as the students' reported mother tongue and primary language of school communication, and English, as the foreign language being learned. In educational contexts, translanguageing involves allowing and encouraging students to use their available

linguistic and cultural resources to facilitate comprehension, participation, and deeper engagement with academic content.

Research has shown that translanguaging practices are especially powerful in culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms. Creese and Blackledge (2015) argue that translanguaging contributes to identity development because it challenges hierarchical language ideologies that often marginalize minority or indigenous languages. When students are allowed to use their mother tongue as an analytical and communicative resource, they are more likely to feel respected, capable, and included in classroom interaction. This also has important cognitive implications, since learners can build conceptual understanding more effectively when they are not required to suppress the linguistic resources that help them process meaning.

In a similar way, García, Johnson, and Seltzer (2017) explain that translanguaging is not simply a pedagogical technique, but a broader stance that recognizes students' linguistic practices as legitimate and meaningful. From this perspective, translanguaging transforms the classroom into a space where language practices are not restricted by monolingual norms, but instead become resources for communication, reflection, and participation. This view is reinforced by Mulyadi and Abdullah (2023), who found that translanguaging in English as a Foreign Language classrooms can reduce anxiety, promote confidence, and support conceptual understanding. These contributions are particularly relevant to the present study, since one of its central concerns is how translanguaging supports students' participation, confidence, and learning in the English classroom.

Closely related to translanguaging is the principle of contextualized language learning. This perspective challenges traditional grammar-centered approaches to EFL teaching by emphasizing that language develops more effectively when it is taught in meaningful cultural and lived contexts. Harrington (2021) and Kumaravadivelu (2003) argue that standardized teaching methods often fail to address the needs of diverse learners, particularly those from historically marginalized communities. Kumaravadivelu's postmethod pedagogy, in particular, advocates for instructional approaches rooted in local knowledge, sociocultural realities, and learner autonomy. In indigenous educational contexts, this means that English teaching should be connected to students' daily experiences, community life, and cultural practices rather than presented as an abstract or decontextualized subject.

This perspective is further supported by Richards and Rodgers (2014), who emphasize that communicative competence develops more effectively when language instruction is linked to real-life situations that are meaningful to learners. Similarly, Canagarajah (2005) argues that bilingual pedagogy should resist monolingual norms and instead promote culturally sustaining practices that empower students through the use of their existing linguistic and cultural resources. In the Colombian context, Castell-Britton's (2024) conclusions reinforce this argument by showing that bilingual learning becomes more effective when pedagogical practices are adapted to the cultural, demographic, and linguistic conditions of local communities. For this reason, contextualized language learning is especially important in the present study, since it helps explain why English teaching in indigenous classrooms should be grounded in students' own realities.

Finally, the theoretical framework incorporates perspectives on empowerment in bilingual education. From this viewpoint, language learning is not only a cognitive process, but also a means through which students develop identity, belonging, and agency. Solis and Jiménez (2024) highlight that educational processes can either reproduce exclusion or create opportunities for empowerment, depending on whether students' linguistic and cultural identities are recognized. In this same vein, García and Kleifgen (2018) defend additive bilingualism, which supports the development of an additional language without displacing the first. This approach contributes to self-esteem, academic engagement, and investment in learning. Likewise, Lau and Shea (2024) emphasize the role of teachers in creating culturally responsive learning environments that validate students' linguistic strengths and support their social and emotional development.

Across these perspectives, a common conclusion emerges: equitable bilingual education must move beyond monolingual assumptions and recognize students' full linguistic repertoires as valuable resources for learning. For indigenous students at Institución Educativa Indígena Guaimí, translanguaging and contextualized instruction offer opportunities not only to strengthen English learning, but also to support confidence, participation, cultural identity, and meaningful engagement in the classroom. Therefore, this theoretical framework provides the conceptual basis for understanding translanguaging as a pedagogically relevant practice in indigenous bilingual education and for interpreting the findings of this study in relation to comprehension, linguistic mediation, participation, and cultural connection.

4.2 Conceptual Framework

4.2.1 Translanguaging

Translanguaging is a central concept in this study because it challenges conventional perspectives on bilingualism and offers a more flexible framework for understanding how students use their full linguistic resources to construct meaning and learn effectively. Originally introduced by Williams (1994) and later expanded by García and Wei (2014), translanguaging refers both to the pedagogical practice of drawing on more than one language during instruction and to the cognitive and social processes through which multilingual individuals move fluidly across languages. From this perspective, students do not operate within strictly separated linguistic systems; instead, they mobilize their complete linguistic repertoire to access, interpret, and produce knowledge.

In indigenous educational contexts, translanguaging is particularly relevant because it validates the use of students' existing linguistic and cultural resources alongside English. Rather than treating students' first language as an obstacle, translanguaging recognizes it as a legitimate resource for participation, comprehension, and expression. Creese and Blackledge (2015) argue that translanguaging practices contribute to identity development by challenging hierarchical language ideologies that often marginalize minority or indigenous languages. In this sense, allowing students to draw on Spanish and other culturally situated linguistic resources can create more equitable and inclusive spaces for learning.

This perspective is reinforced by García, Johnson, and Seltzer (2017), who explain that translanguaging should not be understood merely as a classroom technique, but as a pedagogical stance that recognizes students' linguistic practices as meaningful, legitimate, and academically

valuable. According to these authors, translanguaging transforms classroom interaction by positioning students as active meaning-makers who can use all of their linguistic resources to communicate, reflect, and learn. Likewise, research in EFL contexts has shown that translanguaging may reduce anxiety, foster confidence, and support conceptual understanding. For example, Mulyadi and Abdullah (2023) found that translanguaging practices helped learners participate more confidently in English learning processes, while Song et al. (2023) emphasize that translanguaging-based pedagogies can strengthen student agency and participation. These contributions are especially relevant to this study because they support the idea that translanguaging may enhance not only comprehension, but also confidence, engagement, and participation in the English classroom.

4.2.2. Contextualized Language Learning

Contextualized language learning refers to an educational approach that prioritizes teaching language through authentic, meaningful, and culturally relevant contexts. This perspective contrasts with traditional decontextualized and grammar-centered models of English as a Foreign Language instruction, in which language is often presented as an isolated system of rules detached from students' lived experiences. In indigenous education, contextualization is not only a methodological decision but also a cultural and pedagogical necessity, since it requires aligning instruction with students' realities, identities, and community knowledge (Harrington, 2021).

Kumaravadivelu (2003) supports this perspective through his concept of postmethod pedagogy, which emphasizes the importance of local knowledge, learner autonomy, and the sociocultural conditions of teaching and learning. He argues that no single universal method can

respond adequately to the diversity of educational contexts, particularly those involving historically marginalized or multilingual communities. Instead, effective teaching must emerge from the specific realities of learners and their environments. In the case of indigenous students, this means that English instruction should connect with their everyday experiences, cultural practices, and community life rather than relying exclusively on abstract or standardized content.

This idea is also supported by Richards and Rodgers (2014), who stress that communicative competence develops more effectively when language instruction is linked to meaningful real-life situations. Similarly, Canagarajah (2005) argues that bilingual pedagogy should resist monolingual norms and instead foster culturally sustaining practices that empower learners through the integration of their own linguistic and cultural resources. From this viewpoint, contextualized language learning in indigenous settings implies that English should not be taught as disconnected from students' identities and environments, but rather as a language that can be meaningfully linked to community traditions, routines, and local knowledge. Castell-Britton (2024) further reinforces this argument by showing that effective bilingual education in Colombia depends on pedagogical approaches that are adapted to students' socioeconomic, demographic, and cultural realities. Therefore, contextualization is essential in this study because it helps explain why English learning becomes more meaningful when it is grounded in students' own contexts.

4.2.3. Empowerment in Bilingual Education

Empowerment in bilingual education refers to the process of providing students, especially those from linguistically and culturally diverse communities, with the opportunities, resources, and support needed to succeed academically while preserving and valuing their first

language and cultural identity. This concept assumes that language learning is not only related to communication, but also to identity, agency, belonging, and participation in broader social and educational processes. In this sense, bilingual education can either reproduce exclusionary dynamics or create conditions for students to feel recognized, capable, and valued in the classroom (Solis Delgado & Jiménez Amores, 2024)

From this perspective, empowering bilingual education goes beyond subtractive approaches that prioritize assimilation into the dominant language. Instead, it aligns with additive bilingualism, which supports the development of a second language without displacing the first. García and Kleifgen (2018) explain that additive bilingualism promotes academic engagement, self-esteem, and positive investment in learning because it affirms students' cultural and linguistic identities rather than suppressing them. This is especially important in indigenous educational contexts, where students' home languages and cultural knowledge should be recognized as strengths within the learning process.

Teachers play a fundamental role in this process of empowerment. Culturally responsive pedagogy, understood as the recognition and integration of students' linguistic strengths, cultural backgrounds, and community experiences, can contribute to more inclusive and supportive classroom environments. In this regard, Lau and Shea (2024) emphasize that teachers' practices are key to validating students' identities while fostering both academic development and social-emotional wellbeing. In addition, broader support systems such as community participation and school policies that value linguistic diversity also contribute to students' empowerment. Within the context of this study, empowerment is a relevant concept because it helps explain how translanguaging and contextualized teaching may contribute not only to English learning, but also to students' confidence, participation, and sense of identity within the classroom.

Taken together, these three concepts, translanguage, contextualized language learning, and empowerment in bilingual education, provide the conceptual basis for this study. They allow the researchers to understand English learning not as an isolated linguistic process, but as a situated, social, and culturally mediated experience. In the case of indigenous students at Institución Educativa Indígena Guaimí, these perspectives are especially relevant because they highlight the importance of valuing students' full linguistic repertoires, connecting instruction with their everyday realities, and promoting learning environments where participation, confidence, and cultural identity are strengthened alongside the development of English.

5. Methodology

5.1. Research Design

This study adopted a qualitative descriptive-interpretive design, as it sought to understand how translanguaging supported English language learning among indigenous ninth-grade students at Institución Educativa Indígena Guaimí, an educational context located in San Antonio de Palmito, Sucre. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), qualitative research is appropriate when the purpose is to understand participants' experiences, meanings, and interpretations within a specific social or educational context. This perspective was consistent with the purpose of the present study, which focused on students' perceptions, classroom practices, and the meanings constructed around the use of Spanish and English in the learning process.

Likewise, the study was descriptive because it aimed to identify and characterize the pedagogical practices observed in class, as well as students' experiences regarding the use of translanguaging. At the same time, it was interpretive because it sought to understand how translanguaging supported comprehension, participation, confidence, collaboration, and the connection between English learning and students' cultural identity. Rather than implementing a formal pedagogical intervention, this study focused on observing existing classroom practices and exploring students' perceptions through a semi-structured interview and classroom observations. Therefore, the purpose of the research was not to evaluate the effects of a designed strategy, but to describe and interpret how translanguaging emerged and functioned within the observed educational context.

Given the size of the corpus, consisting of one semi-structured interview with eight students and three classroom observations, the scope of the study should be understood as

context-specific and interpretive rather than generalizable. The intention was to provide a situated understanding of translanguaging practices within a particular indigenous educational setting, not to establish universal conclusions applicable to all bilingual or indigenous contexts.

5.2. Participants

The main participants in this study were ninth-grade students at Institución Educativa Indígena Guaimí, located in the rural area of San Antonio de Palmito, Sucre. They were adolescents between 13 and 15 years' old who belong to an indigenous educational context with strong cultural roots. Their English proficiency level was basic, and Spanish was the main language used in school interaction and everyday communication. Therefore, the vehicular linguistic repertoire considered in this study was mainly Spanish–English. The indigenous character of the research context was understood as a sociocultural and community-based dimension linked to the Zenú context, students' cultural identity, and their local realities, rather than as the use of an indigenous vernacular language in classroom communication.

The classroom observation also involved the English teacher indirectly, since his pedagogical practices and classroom interaction were part of the data analyzed in the study. For confidentiality purposes, participants' excerpts were identified through alphanumeric codes. Interview participants were labeled as ENT-P01 to ENT-P08, while classroom observations were labeled as OBS-S01 to OBS-S03.

5.3. Inclusion Criteria

- Being a ninth-grade student enrolled at Institución Educativa Indígena Guaimí.

- Willingness to participate voluntarily in the interview process.
- Parental or guardian authorization to participate.
- Attendance in the English classes observed during the study.

5.4. Data Collection Instruments

Two qualitative instruments were used to collect the data: a semi-structured interview and a classroom observation guide.

The semi-structured interview was used to explore students' perceptions and experiences regarding the use of translanguaging in the English classroom. This type of interview allowed the researchers to follow a guide of previously designed questions while also providing flexibility to deepen participants' responses and meanings.

The classroom observation guide was used to identify how translanguaging emerged in actual classroom interaction. Observation made it possible to register teacher practices, students' responses, interactional patterns, and the ways in which both languages were used to support comprehension, participation, collaboration, and cultural connection.

Together, these instruments provided complementary evidence: the interview revealed students' perspectives, while the observation documented what actually occurred in the classroom.

5.5. Procedure

The research process was carried out in three stages.

First, an initial identification of the context was conducted through classroom observation in order to recognize the pedagogical dynamics of the English classroom and the general role of translanguaging in teaching and learning processes.

Second, data collection was conducted through one semi-structured interview applied to eight students and three classroom observations focused on English lessons. These instruments made it possible to gather information about students' perceptions, classroom practices, and interactional patterns related to translanguaging.

Third, the collected information was organized and analyzed through open coding, axial coding, and triangulation in order to identify common patterns and construct the main analytical categories of the study.

5.6. Data Analysis

5.6.1. Open Coding

First, open coding was conducted separately for the semi-structured interviews and the classroom observations. At this stage, meaningful excerpts were identified and labeled with short descriptive codes that represented recurring ideas, actions, and meanings emerging from the data. In the interviews, the open codes reflected students' perceptions and experiences. In the classroom observations, the open codes reflected teacher practices, students' responses, and interactional patterns observed during the lessons.

5.6.2. Axial Coding

After the open coding process, axial coding was conducted jointly across both instruments. The open codes obtained from the interviews and the classroom observations were grouped into broader shared analytical categories. This stage allowed the researchers to connect students' reported perceptions with classroom practices and observed interactional dynamics. As a result, four common categories were established: Cognitive and Functional Support of Spanish, Mental Translation and Linguistic Mediation, Confidence, Participation, and Learning Strategies, and Relationship Between English, Culture, and Community.

5.6.3. Triangulation of Findings

Finally, triangulation was carried out by comparing the findings from the semi-structured interviews and the classroom observations. This process made it possible to contrast what students said with what was actually observed in the classroom, thus strengthening the consistency and credibility of the findings. Through this triangulation, the study identified convergences between students' perceptions, teacher practices, and classroom interaction in relation to translanguaging.

5.7. Ethical Considerations

Ethical principles guided the entire process. Students' participation was voluntary, and confidentiality was respected at all times. Consent was obtained from parents or guardians before collecting any information. In addition, the study recognized and respected the cultural and linguistic identity of the participants, considering their indigenous context as an essential

dimension of the educational process. This approach sought to make the research not only academic, but also respectful, context-sensitive, and ethically grounded.

Table 1
Participants

Characteristics	Participants n=8
Age range	13-15 years
Grade	9°
Home City	San Antonio de Palmito, Sucre
Mother tongue	Spanish
Second language	English
English Proficiency Level	A1
Languages at home	Spanish
Languages at school	Spanish, English

Note. Own elaboration 2026

In accordance with ethical research practices, this study ensured the appropriate management of informed assent and consent procedures. Prior to the data collection process, the school received a formal institutional approval letter outlining the objectives, methods, and ethical principles guiding the research. This document confirmed that the study complied with the institution's ethical standards and educational guidelines.

The ninth-grade students involved in the study, together with their parents or guardians, were fully informed about the purpose and scope of the research and voluntarily agreed to

participate. An age-appropriate assent form was shared with both parents and students, clearly stating the purpose of the study, the ethical considerations involved, and the inclusion criteria. Both documents emphasized confidentiality, the voluntary nature of participation, and the right to withdraw from the study at any time without consequences.

To maintain anonymity and protect participants' privacy, each student was assigned a unique identifier code (ENT-P01, ENT-P02, ENT-P03, ENT-P04, ENT-P05, ENT-P06, ENT-P07, and ENT-P08). Likewise, the classroom observations were identified as OBS-S01, OBS-S02, and OBS-S03. This coding system allowed systematic data organization, promoted transparency, and safeguarded participants' identities throughout the study.

For transparency, the informed assent form, the institutional approval, the semi-structured interview guide, and the classroom observation guide can be consulted in the appendices of the study.

The following tables summarize the coding and triangulation process carried out in this study. First, the open coding of the semi-structured interviews and classroom observations is presented. Then, the joint axial coding of both instruments is shown, followed by the triangulation of findings across the four analytical categories.

Table 2
Description of Data Collection Instruments

Instrument	Purpose	Participants	Type of data collected
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Semi-structured interview	To explore students' perceptions and experiences regarding translanguaging	8 ninth-grade students	Verbal accounts, perceptions, experiences
Classroom observation guide	To identify how translanguaging emerged in classroom practice	3 observed sessions	Teacher actions, student responses, classroom interaction

Note. Own elaboration 2026

Table 3
Open Coding of the Semi-Structured Interviews

Interview	Question	Significant excerpt	Open code
ENT-P01	2	“así es más fácil comprender un tema”	comprensión facilitada por el español



ENT-P01	4	“Pienso	piensa
		primero en español	primero en español
		y después lo	
		traduzco”	
ENT-P05	6	“me siento	más
		un poco más	seguridad al
		segura”	participar
ENT-P06	1	“la mayoría	aprendizaje
		de las veces logro	autónomo
		comprender lo que	extraescolar
		el profesor nos dice	
		en inglés, ya que, en	
		mis tiempos libres	
		veo videos en inglés	
		y eso me ha	
		ayudado bastante	
		para aprender	
		vocabulario en el	
		idioma.”	
ENT-P06	4	“aunque, en	pensamiento
		varias ocasiones, he	directo en inglés



		pensado en inglés directamente, cuando es fácil lo que voy a expresar y está dentro del vocabulario que he aprendido.”	
ENT-P06	10	“en realidad yo creo que aun cuando la clase sea totalmente en inglés, yo entendería la mayoría de las cosas”	menor dependencia del español
ENT-P08	7	“nuestra identidad cultural”	identidad cultural

Note. Own elaboration based on the semi-structured interviews.

Table 4
Open Coding of the Classroom Observations



Observation	Section	Significant excerpt	Open code
OBS-S01	Teacher actions	“explicó la estructura del presente simple en español”	explicación bilingüe del docente.
OBS-S01	Students' responses	“dijeron primero la idea en español antes de expresarla en inglés”	traducción previa a la respuesta
OBS-S02	Students' responses	“La participación aumentó después de la explicación bilingüe”	mayor participación con apoyo bilingüe.
OBS-S03	Classroom interaction	“Las rutinas descritas estuvieron relacionadas con el contexto cotidiano del estudiantado”	contextualización cultural

Note. Own elaboration based on classroom observations.

Table 5
Joint Axial Coding of Interviews and Observations

Axial category	Interview open codes	Observation open codes
Cognitive and functional support of Spanish	comprensión facilitada por el español; uso del español en grupo; mejor comprensión con combinación de lenguas; explicación frecuente en español; menor dependencia del español.	explicación bilingüe del docente; aclaración gramatical en español; uso del español para comprender instrucciones; organización grupal en español; comprensión favorecida por bilingüismo
Mental translation and linguistic mediation	piensa primero en español; traducción o consulta de palabras nuevas; pensamiento y traducción previa; traducción para expresarse; pensamiento directo en inglés.	producción mediada por español; traducción previa a la respuesta; reformulación previa en español; secuencia español-inglés en producción; mediación lingüística para producción oral
Confidence, participation, and learning strategies	más seguridad al participar; atención y práctica extraescolar;	mayor participación con apoyo bilingüe; más confianza al participar; aumento de



	atención y repaso en casa; confianza para participar; mejora integral; aprendizaje autónomo extraescolar.	participación; disminución de vacilación; validación del español en clase
Relationship between English, culture, and community	identidad cultural; cultura como contenido; comunidad como contenido; entorno cultural; costumbres como contenido	conexión con comunidad; vinculación con contexto comunitario; conexión con familia y comunidad; contextualización cultural; relación con vida cotidiana

Note. Own elaboration based on the joint axial coding of both instruments.

Table 6
Triangulation of Findings by Axial Category

Axial category	Evidence from interviews	Evidence from observation	Triangulated meaning
Cognitive and Functional Support of Spanish	Most students reported that Spanish helped them understand topics, explanations,	The teacher used Spanish to explain grammar, vocabulary, and instructions;	Spanish functioned as a cognitive scaffold and a functional classroom resource for most participants, although its relevance was not

and classroom tasks. students organized experienced in the same way
However, one work in Spanish by all students.
participant indicated
a lower dependence
on Spanish because
he was able to
understand most
classroom content in
English.

Mental Translation and Linguistic Mediation	Most	Students	Translanguaging
	students reported	were observed	operated primarily as a
	thinking first in	formulating ideas in	mediating bridge between
	Spanish and then	Spanish before	comprehension and
	translating into	producing responses	production, although this
	English. However,	in English	process was not entirely
	one participant		uniform across participants.
	stated that he		
	sometimes thought		
	directly in English		
	when the expression		
	was simple or		
	familiar		

Confidence, Participation, and Learning Strategies	Students	Participation	Translanguaging
	associated Spanish with confidence, participation, and personal learning strategies. In addition, one participant reported autonomous English learning through videos and vocabulary practice outside school.	increased and hesitation decreased after bilingual support	supported socio-affective engagement and learning strategies, while also interacting with individual forms of autonomous learning.
Relationship Between English, Culture, and Community	Students	The	Translanguaging made
	referred to identity, community, culture, and daily life	classroom activities were linked to family, routines, community, and context	contextualized and culturally meaningful learning possible.

Note. Own elaboration based on the triangulation of interviews and observations.

These tables provided the analytical basis for the interpretation of findings presented in the following section, which is organized according to the four shared categories that emerged from the joint analysis of the interview and observation data.

6. Analysis of Results

This section presents the interpretation of findings derived from the joint analysis of the semi-structured interviews and the classroom observations. Based on open coding, axial coding, and triangulation, four shared analytical categories emerged: Cognitive and Functional Support of Spanish, Mental Translation and Linguistic Mediation, Confidence, Participation, and Learning Strategies, and Relationship Between English, Culture, and Community. The following analysis integrates evidence from both instruments and interprets the findings in light of the theoretical framework of the study.

6.1. Cognitive and Functional Support of Spanish

The findings in this category revealed that Spanish played an important cognitive and functional role in students' English learning process. Interview data showed that several participants perceived Spanish as a helpful resource for understanding English content, teacher explanations, and classroom tasks more effectively. This perception was reflected in students' statements indicating that Spanish made classroom topics easier to understand and helped them access the lesson more clearly. For example, one participant explained that using Spanish made it easier to understand a topic, stating, "así es más fácil comprender un tema" (ENT-P01). Similarly, another participant expressed that Spanish helped him understand the lesson in a better way, as shown in the statement "para entenderlo de una mejor manera" (ENT-P02).

This perception was also supported by classroom observations. In OBS-S01, the teacher used Spanish to explain the structure of the present simple, as reflected in the observation note "explicó la estructura del presente simple en español" (OBS-S01). This shows that Spanish was used to clarify grammatical content and facilitate students' comprehension. Similarly, the

observations showed that Spanish was used to clarify instructions, guide vocabulary comprehension, and support group organization during classroom tasks (OBS-S02; OBS-S03). These observation notes suggest that Spanish functioned not only as a cognitive scaffold for understanding English content, but also as a functional resource for organizing classroom interaction and task completion.

However, the interview data also revealed an important variation among participants. Although most students perceived Spanish as a necessary support for understanding English content, one participant indicated that the teacher's use of either Spanish or English did not affect comprehension in the same way, since he was able to understand most classroom explanations in English. This difference appeared to be associated with a more autonomous learning trajectory, supported by exposure to English through videos and independent vocabulary learning outside the classroom. This was reflected in the participant's explanation that he was often able to understand what the teacher said in English because he watched English-language videos in his free time and used them to learn vocabulary, as expressed in the statement "la mayoría de las veces logro comprender lo que el profesor nos dice en inglés, ya que, en mis tiempos libres veo videos en inglés y eso me ha ayudado bastante para aprender vocabulario en el idioma" (ENT-P06). The same participant also stated that even if the class were entirely in English, he would understand most of the content, as reflected in the statement "en realidad yo creo que aun cuando la clase sea totalmente en inglés, yo entendería la mayoría de las cosas" (ENT-P06). This variation suggests that the supportive role of Spanish was highly relevant for most participants, but not experienced in exactly the same way by all of them.

Taken together, these findings suggest that Spanish functioned not as an obstacle to English learning, but as a scaffold that supported comprehension and classroom interaction for

the majority of participants, although its relevance varied according to individual learning trajectories and prior exposure to English. This interpretation is consistent with García and Wei (2014), who argue that translanguaging enables multilingual learners to use their full linguistic repertoire to construct meaning, and with García, Johnson, and Seltzer (2017), who explain that students' linguistic practices should be recognized as legitimate resources for learning.

6.2. Mental Translation and Linguistic Mediation

The results in this category showed that students frequently relied on Spanish as a mediating language before producing English. Interview data revealed that several participants first organized their ideas in Spanish and then translated them into English in order to answer, describe, or express themselves more clearly. One participant explained that he usually thought in Spanish before translating into English, as reflected in the statement “Pienso primero en español y después lo traduzco” (ENT-P01). Similarly, another participant indicated that the process of answering in English often began with a prior formulation in Spanish, which was expressed in the phrase “primero pienso en español y luego traduzco al inglés” (ENT-P02). This pattern was also evident in classroom observations, where students were seen preparing responses in Spanish before expressing them in English, especially during oral participation and descriptive tasks. For instance, one observation registered that students “dijeron primero la idea en español antes de expresarla en inglés” (OBS-S01), which supports the interpretation that Spanish mediated the transition from comprehension to oral production.

At the same time, the interview data revealed a relevant nuance. While mental translation through Spanish was predominant across participants, one student reported that this process did not occur in all cases, since he was sometimes able to think directly in English when the

utterance was simple or belonged to familiar vocabulary. This perspective was reflected in the statement “aunque, en varias ocasiones, he pensado en inglés directamente, cuando es fácil lo que voy a expresar y está dentro del vocabulario que he aprendido” (ENT-P06). This suggests that linguistic mediation through Spanish was frequent, but not entirely uniform across the group.

These findings suggest that mental translation did not operate as a sign of deficiency, but as a mediating strategy that helped students move from comprehension to production. At the same time, the variation identified in ENT-P06 indicates that translanguaging processes were shaped by differences in students’ prior exposure to English and by their individual levels of familiarity with the language. This interpretation aligns with García and Wei (2014), who explain that translanguaging enables learners to draw from their complete linguistic repertoire in order to make meaning, and with Creese and Blackledge (2015), who emphasize that multilingual learners use their linguistic resources strategically rather than separately.

6.3. Confidence, Participation, and Learning Strategies

The findings in this category revealed that translanguaging supported students’ confidence, classroom participation, and personal learning strategies. Interview data showed that students associated the use of Spanish with feeling safer, less confused, and more willing to participate during English lessons. One participant explained that relying on Spanish made participation feel more secure, which was reflected in the statement “me siento un poco más segura” (ENT-P05). Another participant stated that bilingual support reduced confusion and made classroom participation easier, as expressed in the phrase “me siento más seguro porque así no me confundo tanto” (ENT-P07). In addition, one participant referred to personal strategies

such as asking questions and reviewing content at home, as seen in the statement “preguntar cuando no entiendo y repasar en la casa” (ENT-P06).

The interview data also suggested that personal learning strategies extended beyond classroom support and included autonomous exposure to English outside school. In particular, one participant reported that watching videos in English during his free time had helped him learn vocabulary and understand classroom input more independently, as expressed in the statement “en mis tiempos libres veo videos en inglés y eso me ha ayudado bastante para aprender vocabulario en el idioma” (ENT-P06). This indicates that students’ confidence and participation were supported not only by translanguaging practices in the classroom, but also, in some cases, by individual efforts developed beyond the formal lesson. This perception was reinforced by classroom observations, where participation increased and hesitation decreased after bilingual explanations. For instance, one observation noted that “La participación aumentó después de la explicación bilingüe” (OBS-S02), while another showed that the validation of Spanish in class helped students participate with greater confidence during classroom activities (OBS-S03).

Taken together, these findings suggest that translanguaging had not only a cognitive role, but also a socio-affective and strategic function in the learning process. They also indicate that this pedagogical support interacted with students’ own learning initiatives, including autonomous strategies developed outside the classroom. This is consistent with García, Johnson, and Seltzer (2017), who argue that validating students’ linguistic practices fosters more equitable participation in the classroom.

6.4. Relationship Between English, Culture, and Community

The results in this category showed that translanguaging also supported a meaningful connection between English learning, students' cultural identity, and their community context. Interview data revealed that students did not perceive English as entirely detached from their social and cultural reality; instead, they associated classroom activities with their identity, customs, family life, and community environment. One participant referred to the importance of cultural identity in the learning process, explaining that English activities could be connected to “nuestra identidad cultural” (ENT-P08). Similarly, another participant associated English learning with the community context through the phrase “nuestra comunidad” (ENT-P06). A third participant linked English learning to local traditions by referring to “nuestras costumbres” (ENT-P07).

This perception was also supported by classroom observations. During classroom activities, students related English content to situations drawn from their everyday experiences and community environment. This was reflected in the observation note stating that “Las rutinas descritas estuvieron relacionadas con el contexto cotidiano del estudiantado” (OBS-S03). Such evidence suggests that classroom interactions created opportunities for students to connect English learning with their own cultural and social realities, making learning more meaningful and relevant.

Taken together, these findings suggest that English learning became more meaningful when it was connected to students' lived experiences rather than treated as a decontextualized school subject. This finding is consistent with Canagarajah (2005), who argues that bilingual pedagogy should resist monolingual norms and promote culturally sustaining practices, and with Kumaravadivelu (2003), who emphasizes that effective language teaching must emerge from learners' local realities and sociocultural contexts.

6.5. Triangulation of Findings

The triangulation of the semi-structured interviews and the classroom observations revealed a predominantly convergent pattern across the four analytical categories, although some variation was also identified among participants. First, students' perceptions regarding the use of Spanish as a helpful resource for understanding English content were confirmed through classroom observations, where bilingual explanations, clarification of instructions, and collaborative interaction in Spanish were repeatedly documented. Students consistently reported that Spanish facilitated comprehension and made classroom content more accessible. For example, one participant explained that using Spanish made it easier to understand a topic, stating, "así es más fácil comprender un tema" (ENT-P01). Similarly, another participant expressed that Spanish helped him understand the lesson in a better way, as shown in the statement "para entenderlo de una mejor manera" (ENT-P02). These findings suggest that Spanish functioned as both a cognitive and a functional support in the learning process. At the same time, interview data revealed that this support was not experienced uniformly by all participants. One student reported that he was often able to understand classroom explanations in

English due to autonomous learning experiences developed outside school, particularly through exposure to English-language videos and independent vocabulary learning.

Second, students' accounts of relying on Spanish before producing English were also supported by classroom observations. Several participants explained that they typically organized their ideas in Spanish before expressing them in English. For example, one participant stated that he first thought in Spanish and then translated his ideas into English, explaining, "Pienso primero en español y después lo traduzco" (ENT-P01). Similarly, another student described the same process, stating, "primero pienso en español y luego traduzco al inglés" (ENT-P02). Likewise, classroom observations documented situations in which students discussed or formulated ideas in Spanish before providing responses in English. These findings reinforce the interpretation that translanguaging functioned as a mediating bridge between comprehension and language production. However, a relevant variation emerged through the experience of one participant, who reported that he sometimes thought directly in English when the language required was simple or familiar, suggesting that linguistic mediation varied according to students' prior exposure to English and individual learning trajectories.

Third, students' reported confidence and willingness to participate when Spanish was allowed in class were reflected in both data sources. Participants explained that bilingual support helped them feel more comfortable, secure, and less confused during English lessons. For instance, one participant stated that she felt more secure when Spanish was available as support, saying, "me siento un poco más segura" (ENT-P05), while another explained that bilingual support helped him avoid confusion, stating, "me siento más seguro porque así no me confundo tanto" (ENT-P07). Similarly, classroom observations showed that students participated more actively after bilingual explanations and demonstrated greater confidence when Spanish was

available as a support resource. In addition, students described personal learning strategies such as asking questions, reviewing content at home, and practicing independently. One participant also reported autonomous exposure to English through videos and vocabulary learning outside the classroom, indicating that confidence and participation were influenced not only by classroom translanguaging practices but also by individual learning initiatives.

Finally, both instruments showed that translanguaging created opportunities to connect English learning with students' cultural identity, family life, and community context. Interview data revealed that students associated English learning with elements of their social and cultural reality. For example, one participant referred to the importance of cultural identity in the learning process, using the expression “nuestra identidad cultural” (ENT-P08). Another student connected English learning with the community context through the phrase “nuestra comunidad” (ENT-P06), while a third participant linked classroom content to local traditions by referring to “nuestras costumbres” (ENT-P07). These perceptions were consistent with classroom observations, where activities were connected to family roles, daily routines, and community experiences. Overall, the triangulation process confirmed a strong convergence between interview and observation data while also revealing individual differences in how translanguaging was experienced. Rather than weakening the analysis, these variations strengthen the interpretation by showing that translanguaging functioned as a meaningful pedagogical resource whose relevance was shaped by students' previous experiences, learning strategies, and exposure to English.

7. Conclusions

This study examined how translanguaging, understood as a communicative and contextualized pedagogical strategy, supported English language learning among ninth-grade students at Institución Educativa Indígena Guaimí. Overall, the findings indicate that translanguaging was not an isolated or incidental feature of classroom interaction, but rather a meaningful pedagogical resource embedded in both teaching practices and students' ways of engaging with English. The study made it possible to identify an English classroom dynamic characterized by the flexible use of Spanish to explain grammatical structures, clarify instructions, support vocabulary comprehension, and guide task development. In this sense, the pedagogical practices observed were not merely bilingual in a general sense, but strategically mediated through translanguaging, with Spanish functioning as an important support in the teaching and learning process. This finding confirms previous scholarship that recognizes learners' full linguistic repertoires as valuable pedagogical resources rather than as obstacles to second language development.

From the students' perspective, translanguaging was experienced predominantly as a supportive and enabling practice. The interview data showed that students associated the use of Spanish with greater clarity, reduced confusion, and increased confidence when participating in English lessons. Spanish was also described as an important mediating resource for organizing ideas, responding to questions, and approaching unfamiliar vocabulary before producing English. These findings confirm the literature that highlights translanguaging as a means of facilitating meaning-making and participation, while at the same time complementing it by showing how these dynamics operate in a Zenú indigenous educational setting, where the use of Spanish is

closely related not only to comprehension, but also to students' sense of security, belonging, and classroom engagement.

At the same time, the findings showed that the support provided by translanguaging operated across multiple and interconnected dimensions of learning. It facilitated comprehension by enabling students to better understand classroom content, instructions, and explanations; it supported participation and confidence by reducing hesitation and encouraging more active classroom involvement; it strengthened collaboration by allowing students to organize and solve tasks together; and it connected English learning with identity, community, and everyday life, thereby making classroom content more meaningful and relevant. In this respect, the findings not only confirm perspectives advanced by Creese and Blackledge (2015), Canagarajah (2005), and Kumaravadivelu (2003), but also extend them by providing situated evidence from an indigenous sociocultural educational context in which translanguaging operates simultaneously as a cognitive, socio-affective, and cultural resource.

Although the general pattern of the findings was predominantly convergent, the analysis also revealed that translanguaging was not experienced in exactly the same way by all participants. In particular, the case of one student who reported greater autonomy in English, including exposure to English through videos and occasional direct thinking in English, suggests that the pedagogical value of translanguaging was highly significant for the group as a whole, but mediated by differences in prior exposure, confidence, and individual learning trajectories. Rather than weakening the interpretation, this variation strengthens the analysis by showing that students' experiences were not entirely homogeneous and that translanguaging functioned differently according to personal and contextual factors.

These conclusions, however, must be interpreted in light of the limitations of the study. First, the research was conducted with a small sample of eight interviewed students and three classroom observations, which means that the findings are situated and context-bound rather than generalizable. Second, the study was developed in a single institution and with only one grade level, which limits the transferability of the conclusions to other indigenous or bilingual educational contexts. Third, only the students' perspective was collected through interviews; although the teacher's practice was observed, the teacher was not interviewed directly. Fourth, the observation period was limited, which may have reduced the possibility of identifying broader variations over time. Finally, the qualitative and interpretive nature of the study may also involve potential observer bias. These limitations do not invalidate the findings, but they do delimit their scope and reaffirm the exploratory nature of the research.

Overall, this study suggests that translanguaging should not be understood as a barrier to English language development, but as a pedagogically relevant practice that can foster more inclusive, participatory, and culturally meaningful learning experiences in indigenous bilingual educational settings. More broadly, the findings reinforce the need to move beyond monolingual assumptions in English teaching and to recognize students' linguistic and cultural resources as central to meaningful language learning. In this way, the study provides situated evidence that contributes to the understanding of bilingual learning environments and supports the development of context-sensitive pedagogical practices in indigenous education.

8. Contributions to Bilingual Learning Environments / ABA

This study contributes to the field of Bilingual Learning Environments by offering situated evidence on how translanguageing operates within an indigenous English classroom. In line with the institutional perspective of the Master's Program in Bilingual Learning Environments, bilingual learning environments are understood as educational spaces in which languages, cultures, identities, and pedagogical practices interact to support meaningful learning processes (Rodríguez & Araque, 2019). From this perspective, the principal contribution of this study lies in showing that bilingual learning environments should not be understood merely as spaces where two languages coexist, but as pedagogical contexts in which students' linguistic and cultural resources can be meaningfully mobilized to support learning. In this regard, the study demonstrates that Spanish may function as a legitimate pedagogical resource in the English classroom, not only as a means of facilitating comprehension, but also as a resource for participation, confidence, collaboration, and cultural connection.

A second contribution of the study is its contextual and sociocritical relevance. By focusing on ninth-grade students at Institución Educativa Indígena Guaimí, the research provides evidence from a Zenú sociocultural educational setting that remains underrepresented in discussions of bilingual education and English language teaching. From a sociocritical perspective, the findings suggest that English teaching in indigenous contexts should not reproduce standardized or monolingual models detached from local realities. Instead, bilingual education should recognize students' community knowledge, cultural identity, and everyday experiences as legitimate foundations for language learning. In this sense, the study broadens the scope of Ambientes Bilingües de Aprendizaje by showing that bilingual pedagogical practices

acquire particular meaning when they are interpreted in relation to students' community life, cultural identity, and local realities.

The study also contributes methodologically by illustrating a qualitative analytical route for examining translanguaging in classroom practice. Through the integration of semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, open coding, axial coding, and triangulation, the research offers a coherent interpretive framework for analyzing how bilingual pedagogical practices emerge in real educational contexts. In addition, by incorporating both convergent patterns and individual variation, particularly in the case of one participant who showed greater autonomy in English, the study highlights the value of qualitative inquiry for capturing the complexity of students' experiences in bilingual classrooms.

Finally, the study contributes pedagogically by supporting the design of more inclusive and culturally responsive approaches to English teaching. By showing that translanguaging can mediate not only comprehension, but also confidence, participation, collaboration, and cultural relevance, the research reinforces the view that students' linguistic and cultural resources should be recognized as strengths rather than limitations. For the Zenú educational community, this implies that English teaching can become more meaningful when it is connected to students' identities, family life, community practices, and local forms of belonging. In this way, the study contributes both to theoretical discussions on bilingual learning environments and to the improvement of pedagogical practice in indigenous education.

9. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations can be proposed for teaching practice, institutional action, and future research. First, English teachers working in indigenous and bilingual educational settings should integrate translanguaging intentionally and strategically in classroom practice. Rather than excluding Spanish from English lessons, teachers may use it to clarify instructions, explain grammatical content, scaffold vocabulary learning, and facilitate students' participation, while still maintaining meaningful exposure to English.

Second, English teaching should be more deliberately connected to students' cultural identity, community life, and everyday experiences. Designing activities that draw on local realities, family roles, daily routines, and cultural references may strengthen students' engagement and make English learning more meaningful in indigenous educational contexts. In this regard, contextualization should not be treated as an optional addition to instruction, but as a central pedagogical principle.

Third, teachers should promote collaborative classroom tasks in which students can use their full linguistic repertoires to negotiate meaning, solve problems, and construct responses together. Such practices may help create more participatory and inclusive learning environments, while also supporting students' confidence and reducing hesitation during oral participation. In addition, it would be valuable for schools to recognize and encourage autonomous learning strategies beyond the classroom, such as students' exposure to English through videos, digital resources, and independent vocabulary practice.

Finally, future research should broaden the scope of analysis by including a larger number of participants, extending the observation period, and incorporating the teacher's perspective through interviews. It would also be valuable to explore how translanguaging practices develop over time across different grade levels, institutions, and indigenous communities. Such studies could offer a more comprehensive understanding of the role of translanguaging in culturally diverse bilingual educational settings.

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11. Appendices

11.1 Appendix A. Semi-Structured Interview Guide

This appendix presents the semi-structured interview guide and the codification applied to ninth-grade students at Institución Educativa Indígena Guaimí.

Interview with Ninth-Grade Students of Institución Educativa Indígena Guaimí

Master's Program in Bilingual Learning Environments

Title: Translanguaging Strategy for Teaching English to Indigenous Ninth-Grade

Students

Researchers: Marledis Arrieta Castillo, Adolfo José Contreras Lidueñas, Camila Andrea Moreno Ordosgoitia

Specific objective

To explore the perceptions and experiences of ninth-grade students at Institución Educativa Indígena Guaimí regarding the use of translanguaging in the English classroom, in order to understand how this pedagogical practice supports their learning process in an indigenous bilingual educational context.

Description

This instrument consists of a qualitative semi-structured interview addressed to ninth-grade students at Institución Educativa Indígena Guaimí. It is composed of 10 open-ended questions designed to explore students' perceptions and experiences regarding the use of Spanish

and English during classroom interaction. The interview seeks to gather information about comprehension, linguistic mediation, participation, confidence, learning strategies, and the relationship between English learning and students' cultural and community context. Its semi-structured nature allows the researchers to follow a common guide while also giving participants the opportunity to expand their responses and provide relevant examples from their own classroom experiences.

Interview questions

1. ¿Durante la clase de inglés, en qué momentos usas el español? Describe una situación reciente.
2. ¿Utiliza el profesor o la profesora el español para explicar temas en inglés? ¿Puedes dar un ejemplo concreto de una clase donde esto haya ocurrido?
3. Cuando encuentras una palabra nueva en inglés, ¿qué haces primero? ¿La traduces al español? ¿preguntas su significado?, ¿buscas un ejemplo o intentas entenderla por el contexto? Explica cómo lo haces normalmente.
4. Cuando vas a hablar en inglés, ¿piensas primero en español y luego traduces, o intentas pensar directamente en inglés? Explica cómo es tu proceso.
5. En las actividades grupales, ¿qué lengua utilizan más para organizarse y resolver la tarea? ¿Cambian entre español e inglés? ¿Por qué?
6. ¿Te sientes más seguro participando cuando puedes usar el español en clase de inglés? Describe una experiencia donde eso haya pasado.

7. ¿Recuerdas alguna actividad donde el inglés se haya relacionado con tu cultura, comunidad o experiencias personales? ¿Cómo te ayudó el español en esa actividad?
8. ¿Notas diferencias entre una clase donde el profesor usa solo inglés y otra donde combina inglés y español? Explica tu respuesta.
9. ¿Qué estrategias usas tú para aprender inglés?
10. ¿Crees que usar el español dentro de la clase de inglés te ayuda a mejorar? ¿En qué aspectos específicos (comprensión, vocabulario, pronunciación, escritura o confianza)?

11.2 Appendix B. Classroom Observation Guide

This appendix presents the classroom observation guide used to document teacher practices, students' responses, and interactional patterns during English lessons.

GUÍA DE OBSERVACIÓN DE CLASE

Título del proyecto:	Translanguaging Strategy for Teaching English to Indigenous Ninth Grade Students
Institución:	Institución Educativa Indígena Guaimi
Observador(a):	
Fecha:	
Grado:	9th
Tema de la clase:	
Hora de inicio:	
Hora de finalización:	
Docente:	

Objetivo del instrumento

Observar cómo aparece el translanguaging en la clase de inglés a través de las acciones del docente y las respuestas de los estudiantes, con atención a la comprensión, la participación, la confianza, la colaboración y la conexión cultural.

Parte A. Acciones del docente

Aspecto a observar	Sí	No	Evidencia / notas
El docente alterna entre inglés y español durante las explicaciones.	☐	☐	
El docente usa el español para aclarar gramática, vocabulario o instrucciones.	☐	☐	
El docente promueve la participación de los estudiantes usando ambas lenguas.	☐	☐	
El docente permite que los estudiantes hagan preguntas en español.	☐	☐	
El docente conecta la clase con la cultura, la comunidad o la vida cotidiana de los estudiantes.	☐	☐	
El docente fomenta el trabajo grupal con recursos bilingües.	☐	☐	
El docente valida la identidad lingüística y cultural de los estudiantes.	☐	☐	

Notas descriptivas sobre las acciones del docente



Parte B. Respuestas de los estudiantes

Aspecto a observar	Sí	No	Evidencia / notas
Los estudiantes usan el español para entender instrucciones o contenidos.	☐	☐	
Los estudiantes traducen mentalmente antes de responder en inglés.	☐	☐	
Los estudiantes hacen preguntas en español cuando no entienden.	☐	☐	
Los estudiantes participan más cuando se usan ambas lenguas.	☐	☐	
Los estudiantes muestran confianza cuando cuentan con apoyo en español.	☐	☐	
Los estudiantes usan el español para organizar el trabajo grupal.	☐	☐	
Los estudiantes usan el inglés para tareas específicas, como responder, leer o presentar.	☐	☐	
Los estudiantes relacionan el contenido de la clase con su cultura, comunidad o experiencias personales.	☐	☐	

Notas descriptivas sobre las respuestas de los estudiantes



Parte C. Interacción en el aula

Aspecto a observar	Sí	No	Evidencia / notas
El translanguaging aparece de manera natural en la interacción docente-estudiante.	☐	☐	
El translanguaging aparece de manera natural en la interacción entre pares.	☐	☐	
El uso de ambas lenguas favorece la comprensión.	☐	☐	
El uso de ambas lenguas favorece la participación.	☐	☐	
El uso de ambas lenguas favorece la colaboración.	☐	☐	
El uso de ambas lenguas favorece la expresión cultural.	☐	☐	

Notas generales sobre la interacción en el aula

Parte D. Episodios clave observados

1.

2.

3.

Parte E. Interpretación general de la sesión

El translanguaging apoyó principalmente: ☐ comprensión ☐ participación ☐ confianza ☐ colaboración
☐ expresión cultural

Interpretación breve



11.3 Appendix C: Informed Consent / Assent



Proyecto de grado:
TRANSLANGUAGING STRATEGY FOR TEACHING ENGLISH TO INDIGENOUS NINTH GRADE STUDENTS
FORMATO ASENTIMIENTO INFORMADO
Padres de familia y participantes menores de edad

A través de este formato de asentimiento informado, se contextualiza el proyecto titulado **TRANSLANGUAGING STRATEGY FOR TEACHING ENGLISH TO INDIGENOUS NINTH GRADE STUDENTS**, el cual se desarrolla en el marco de la Maestría en Ambientes Bilingües de Aprendizaje de la Universidad Santo Tomás, como requisito para optar al título de magister. El equipo investigador está conformado por los maestrantes: (1) Marledis Arrieta Castillo, (2) Adolfo José Contreras Lidueñas y (3) Camilla Andrea Moreno Ordosgoitia.

Este proyecto busca analizar cómo el translanguaging, entendido como una estrategia pedagógica comunicativa y contextualizada, apoya el aprendizaje del inglés en estudiantes de noveno grado de la Institución Educativa Indígena Guaimí. La investigación no pretende determinar la efectividad de una intervención pedagógica, sino describir las prácticas de aula relacionadas con el uso del español y el inglés, explorar las percepciones y experiencias de los estudiantes frente al translanguaging y analizar cómo este recurso apoya la comprensión, la participación, la confianza, la colaboración y la conexión entre el aprendizaje del inglés y la identidad cultural de los estudiantes.

La participación de estudiantes de noveno grado es fundamental para este estudio, ya que permite comprender cómo experimentan y perciben el uso del translanguaging en el aprendizaje del inglés dentro de un contexto educativo indígena. Sus experiencias, opiniones e interacciones en el aula constituyen una fuente valiosa de información para analizar las prácticas pedagógicas observadas y comprender de qué manera el uso combinado del español y el inglés apoya los procesos de aprendizaje, participación y construcción de significado en el contexto escolar.

Con base en la contextualización previa acerca del proyecto, a continuación, se explicitan los términos del formato de asentimiento:

• Yo, Ainara Noble manifiesto que he(mos) sido informados acerca del proyecto titulado **TRANSLANGUAGING STRATEGY FOR TEACHING ENGLISH TO INDIGENOUS NINTH GRADE STUDENTS**, el cual es liderado por los maestrantes: (1) Marledis Arrieta Castillo, (2) Adolfo José Contreras Lidueñas y (3) Camilla Andrea Moreno Ordosgoitia, en el marco de su proyecto de grado para el programa de Maestría en Ambientes Bilingües de Aprendizaje de la Universidad Santo Tomás.

• Asimismo, fue explicado el objetivo del proyecto y su justificación, mediante los cuales se invita a nuestro@ hij@ a participar en el estudio.

11.4 Appendix D. Institutional Authorization




Sinclair, Septiembre 16 de 2025

Miembros Comité de ética, bioética e integridad científica (CEBIC)
Maestría en Ambientes Bilingües de Aprendizaje
Universidad Santo Tomás

Cordial saludo.

A través de esta comunicación, y en calidad de mi rol como rector confirmo que hemos sido contextualizados acerca del proyecto de grado titulado, **translanguaging strategy for teaching english to indigenous eighth grade students** el cual, estará liderado por los maestrantes, **Marledis Arrieta Castillo, Adolfo José Contreras Lidueñas, Camila Andrea Moreno Ordosgoitia** quienes actualmente, cursan la maestría en ambientes bilingües de aprendizaje de la Universidad Santo Tomás.

Desde nuestra institución comprendemos que el desarrollo del proyecto involucra un desarrollo metodológico, el cual, involucra un proceso de recolección de datos con miembros de esta comunidad. En este sentido, se nos ha informado que se recogerán datos verbales (entrevistas, testimonios, grupos focales), datos observacionales (notas de campo, comportamientos, interacciones sociales), datos documentales (diarios, políticas, medios de comunicación), datos visuales (fotografías, videos, dibujos) y datos contextuales (descripción de ambientes, condiciones sociales, dinámicas grupales), los cuales, se gestionarán mediante consentimiento informado con los diferentes participantes.

En cuanto al acceso a la institución, se aclara que, se realizarán tres observaciones de clase regular en la sede principal, en la jornada de la mañana. Por tal motivo, se solicita el acceso a estas tres clases para que los investigadores realicen los respectivos diligenciamientos de los formatos de observación de clase y cuestionarios, los cuales serán compartidos previamente y anejados con esta carta. Adicionalmente, solicitamos su apoyo y permiso para compartir algunos ejemplos de la rúbrica de evaluación de la clase regular, la cual no tendrá ningún dato o nota del o los estudiantes, y demás formatos en el documento final de la propuesta de grado como forma de ejemplificar y soportar el propósito y funcionalidad de cada una de estas clases en su institución.

Igualmente, la institución ha sido informada que para la recolección de la información del proyecto participarán menores de edad, [menores, personas con discapacidades o comunidades indígenas], por lo cual, la institución establece su compromiso con la protección de los derechos y el bienestar de los participantes. Los investigadores deberán igualmente, gestionar de asentimiento informado para menores de edad y/o población vulnerable como lo mencionada.

También, se aclaró que, en el marco del desarrollo del proyecto, el equipo investigador socializará los resultados y/o diseminará la información, según los términos definidos por la institución en formato (digital o físico), mediante un reporte o informe y/o reunión. La información será accesible para la comunidad educativa y se reitera la disposición del equipo investigador para responder preguntas o inquietudes que surjan a partir del proyecto. Para ello, estará siempre disponible el(a) investigador@ Adolfo José Contreras Lidueñas. Como institución que avala el proyecto, entendemos que el acceso a los hallazgos y resultados nos beneficiará en términos de acceso prioritario a nuevos conocimientos y hallazgos antes de su publicación, fortalecimiento de su reputación como centro de excelencia académica, contribución al avance del conocimiento en su área de especialización y finalmente desarrollo de líneas de investigación propias.

Se firma la carta de aval por parte de la INSTITUCIÓN EDUCATIVA INDÍGENA GUAIMÍ





NIT.: 860.012.357-6
Carrera 9 # 51 - 11
PBX.: +57 (601) 5878797



Dalis Mercado

Dalis Astrid Mercado González - CC 64 569 560
Rectora de la Institución Educativa Indígena Guaimí

Contacto en la institución:

Correo: ie_indigenaguami@sucra.edu.co

Celular: 323 6308987

11.5 Appendix E. Interview Coding Evidence

This appendix includes representative coding evidence derived from the semi-structured interviews conducted during the study. The appendix contains examples of open coding processes and analytical interpretations related to students' perceptions and experiences regarding translanguaging.

11.6 Appendix F. Observation Coding Evidence

This appendix presents representative coding evidence derived from the classroom observations. The evidence illustrates how translanguaging practices emerged during classroom interaction and how they supported comprehension, participation, and communication.