Review Article

Exploring the key research features and themes on the issue of translanguaging and EFL learners' writing skills

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate key features and themes of research on the impact of translanguaging on the development of EFL learners' writing skills, based on published studies in the Scopus and Google Scholar databases from January 2022 to December 2024. The findings showed that the key features were (i) the qualitative research design was mostly used (ii) Interview and writing script were employed as the top data collection tools (iii) the participants were mostly multilingual (iv) thematic analysis was in the top as data analysis technique (v) the central findings showed that there was a positive impact of translanguaging on student learning and identity development but the tension between students' translanguaging practices in informal/social contexts and their hesitation in formal academic environments exist and (vi) the insights for recommendation of the study are the curriculum reformation, teachers' training in multilingual pedagogy, recognition of students' full linguistics repertoires and integration of AI and digital tools to support multilingual writing. On the other hand, the key themes in existing literature were teaching practices, pedagogical approaches, multilingual classroom experiences, multilingual writing practices, decoloniality, and educational technologies. The findings provided valuable insights for researchers, teachers, policymakers, and those involved in this field.

1. Introduction

The term "translanguaging" originates from the Welsh word "trawsieithu," coined by Cen Williams (Moreno-Fernández, 2020; Lewis, 2012). Translanguaging is the way bilinguals use their full linguistic repertoire for communication, as well as a teaching approach that incorporates multiple languages within a single lesson. In contrast, translingualism is a theoretical framework that explores interactions between languages, creating spaces for identification and reflection (Hugueny-Léger, 2024). Williams (1994) described translanguaging as a pedagogical approach using two languages in a single lesson, distinguishing it from earlier bilingual methods (García & Wei, 2015; Fuster & Bardel, 2024). Since Ofelia García's influential research (Moreno-Fernández, 2020), translanguaging has been studied globally in various contexts.

In North America, studies have examined translanguaging in various higher education settings. For example, in the United States, literature focuses on translanguaging in first-year writing (Zhang-Wu & Jones, 2022), translanguaging pedagogy for multilingual learners (Passi,

2023), decolonizing TESOL practices (Krishnamurthy, 2022), and identity negotiation in multilingual writing (Lee, 2023).

Turning to Europe and South America, research has examined contexts such as the United Kingdom, where scholars have explored translanguaging in master's thesis writing and academic literacies (Kaufhold & Dymond, 2022; Storheil & Iversen, 2024). In Norway, studies addressed non-native speakers in English-medium programs and included literature reviews on translanguaging theory (Storheil & Iversen, 2024; Morais & Hübner, 2023), while in Finland, a case study focused on emotional and academic support for a Turkish-speaking student (Altun, 2023a). Research in Brazil presented a Latin American perspective advocating plurilingual teacher training (Morais & Hübner, 2023); in France, studies explored translingual creative writing (Hugueny-Léger, 2024); and in Poland, a theoretical review urged inclusion of non-Anglophone contexts (Roguska-Németh, 2022).

In Asia, investigations included Bangladesh, with research on teacher identity and translanguaging in higher education (Rafi & Morgan, 2022) and on the use of Google Translate as a translingual tool for EFL learners (Azima & Fithriani, 2024). For instance, in South Korea, studies

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addressed multilingual identity and classroom engagement through translanguaging (Choi, 2022; Lee, 2023), while in China, the focus was on teachers' attitudes toward translanguaging and the tension with monolingual norms (Lin & Shi, 2021).

Beyond writing, literature identifies core aspects of translanguaging (Rafi & Morgan, 2022; Choi, 2022; Lin & Shi, 2021; Zhang-Wu, 2023; Hugueny-Léger, 2024; Morais & Hübner, 2023; Roguska-Németh, 2022; Nicolarakis & Mitchell, 2023). Student engagement in translanguaging classrooms grows when their linguistic identities are acknowledged (Rafi & Morgan, 2022; Choi, 2022). Teachers' views are shaped by their own linguistic backgrounds (Lin & Shi, 2021). A documented gap exists between social and academic translanguaging (Zhang-Wu, 2023). Creative writing leverages translanguaging to build identity, memory, and culture (Hugueny-Léger, 2024). The absence of a unified framework remains a field limitation (Morais & Hübner, 2023; Roguska-Németh, 2022). Further research is recommended on marginalized populations' translingual experiences (Nicolarakis & Mitchell, 2023).

Recent qualitative studies have examined EFL writing practices, teacher beliefs, and institutional ideologies (Altun, 2023a; Rafi & Morgan, 2022; Passi, 2023; Storheil & Iversen, 2024; Hugueny-Léger, 2024). Translingual approaches enhanced students' confidence, engagement, and identity formation (Passi, 2023; Rabbi & Rahman, 2024; Sun, 2024), while monolingual methods often limited participation and voice (Rafi & Morgan, 2022; Choi, 2022). Teachers were central to facilitating translanguaging (Lin & Shi, 2021; Storheil & Iversen, 2024; Krishnamurthy, 2022). Creative/reflective writing, multimodal texts, home language use, and AI tools such as Google Translate also supported translingual pedagogy (Azima & Fithriani, 2024; Choi, 2022; Hugueny-Léger, 2024; Lee, 2023; Liao, 2023).

Despite this growing global interest in translanguaging in EFL contexts, there is a limited comprehensive analysis of how translanguaging practices affect EFL learners' writing skills. Moreover, there is a lack of clarity regarding current research trends in this area, as reflected in the published literature. Hence, the purpose of this study is to explore the impact of translanguaging on EFL learners' writing skills and to trace out the research trends of this area from published works. The study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the key features of the research trends on the impact of translanguaging on EFL learners' writing skills in the published studies from January 2022 to December 2024?
2. What are the keywords or themes on translanguaging and EFL learners' writing skills in the published studies from January 2022 to December 2024?

2. Method

This study employed a systematic literature review to identify recent research trends and key themes in translanguaging and EFL writing, focusing on published studies between January 2022 and December 2024. The purpose of selecting a time period is to investigate the recent past published research in this field. The study followed the guidelines of the PRISMA model (Fig. 1) for searching, screening, and selecting relevant studies (Ibna Seraj et al., 2024; Moher et al., 2015) for synthesising in response to the research questions of the study.
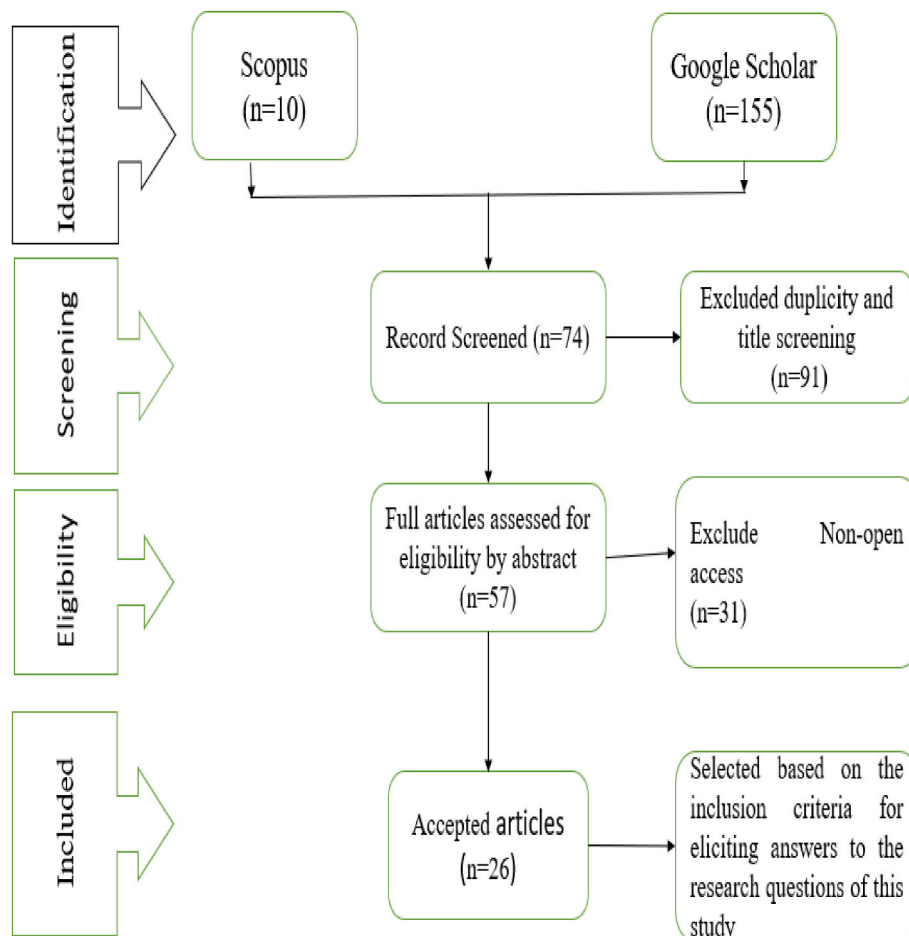

Fig. 1. PRISMA Model Note: Guidelines for searching, screening and selecting relevant studies.

2.1. Search strategy

The data collection process began with a targeted search on Scopus and Google Scholar using the keyword phrase "translingualism in writing," and the publication timeline was set from January 2022 to December 2024. This initial search yielded 10 in Scopus and 155 results in Google Scholar. To narrow the focus, duplicity was checked, and a manual screening of titles was conducted, and only those works that explicitly included the terms "translingualism," "translingual," or "translanguaging" along with "writing" in the title were selected. Through this process, a total of 74 articles were identified. The next step involved checking the accessibility of these sources. Only open-access articles were included in the final dataset. As a result, 57 open-access articles were selected for detailed analysis. Finally, after reviewing the abstracts, only 26 open-access articles met the criteria of the objectives of this study. As the authors did not have access to all published research, this research was conducted with open-access research works.

2.2. Inclusion and exclusion criteria

The following inclusion and exclusion criteria were followed to consider studies for this study:

2.3. Data analysis process

After selecting studies, a database with Mendeley, accessed by all researchers, was prepared with 27 articles. After this stage, the researchers analyzed and synthesized the ideas for getting answers to the research questions. For research question no. 1, the researchers prepared a literature matrix. Whereas, answering research question no. 2, the Mendeley database was exported as ris. file for employment with VOS-Viewer, a software for producing networking visualisations (Dindorf et al., 2023; Sweileh et al., 2017) (see Table 1).

3. Results

In response to research question no. 1, Table 2 was prepared to present the key features. The table is discussed below:

The key features were assigned in this study as methodology, data collection tools, participants, data analysis, process, key findings, and recommendations from the recent publications on translangualism and EFL learners' writing.

In terms of methodology, most of the studies employed a qualitative research method. The different types of studies employed different kinds of qualitative research methods, such as ethnography (Altun, 2023b; Kalan, 2022; Lee, 2023; Rabbi & Rahman, 2024; Zhang-Wu, 2023), narrative inquiry (Kaufhold & Dymond, 2022; Rabbi & Rahman, 2024), case studies (Altun, 2023a; Buskivadze & Baratashvili, 2023; Hiddleston, 2023). Some other studies were systematic reviews (Morais & Hübner, 2023; Tang et al., 2024). No studies were found conducted through a quantitative research design in the given timeline. These

findings show that further study should be done to explore the impact of translinguaging in writing quantitatively. Moreover, mixed methodology may explore new insights for eliciting the use of translinguaging in academic writing. Thus, the findings will assist researchers in designing research methods for conducting future research.

For data collection, a wide range of qualitative data collection tools was employed for eliciting responses in getting answers to the different objectives. The majority of the studies employed interviews for collecting data (Altun, 2023a; Azima & Fithriani, 2024; Storheil & Iversen, 2023; Tang et al., 2024). The other qualitative data collection tools, such as classroom observations (Altun, 2023a; Tang et al., 2024), focus groups (Rafi & Morgan, 2023; Tang et al., 2024) writing samples analysis (Robillos, 2023; Tang et al., 2024) and AI-supported tools (Azima & Fithriani, 2024) were employed. Thus, this finding left insights for researchers to elicit the perceptions of different stakeholders on the impact of translinguaging in academic writing. Moreover, these findings will allow researchers to design data collection tools for future research. These findings also indicate the research gaps for designing quantitative data collection tools in the future.

In terms of participants, most of the studies dealt with multilingual participants (Altun, 2023a; Kalan, 2022; Passi, 2023; Akkus & Atas, 2023). The objectives of most of the studies were to explore the use of translanguaging for empowering plurilingual and multilingual learners by validating their linguistic repertoires and enhancing their confidence, participation, and voice in academic writing. It also facilitates deeper identity work and fosters critical consciousness, particularly in settings where language ideologies and power hierarchies are deeply rooted. Hence, there is a demand to explore the use of translinguaging by monolingual students who are learning a second or foreign language. It means how translanguaging works for monolingual learners who are learning other languages.

For eliciting the responses from the extraction of data, different types of qualitative data analysis techniques were used. The thematic approach was at the top of these studies (Kalan, 2022; Nicolarakis & Mitchell, 2023; Zhang-Wu, 2023). Some studies employed content analysis (Robillos, 2023; Storheil & Iversen, 2023). The other used creative analysis (Hugueny-Léger, 2024; Lee, 2023). Finally, discourse analysis is also used in some studies (Namubiru, 2023; Rafi & Morgan, 2023). Besides, participants' data should be collected quantitatively and used for different statistical analyses to quantify responses. Thus, these findings left insights for researchers and investigators conducting quantitative research designs for quantifying participants' responses to measure statistically significant.

Most studies found that there was a positive impact of translanguaging on student learning and identity development. Students who were encouraged to use their full linguistic repertoires demonstrated greater confidence, engagement, and agency in writing. For instance, personal narrative writing and creative practices were shown to strengthen multilingual learners' academic self-concepts and challenge imposed language hierarchies (Hugueny-Léger, 2024; Passi, 2023). Therefore, the result shows that students should allow translinguaging in learning a second or foreign language. It means that the findings indicate translinguaging should be practiced in learning a second or foreign language in the language classroom.

Several studies also highlight the tension between students' translanguaging practices in informal/social contexts and their hesitation in formal academic environments, calling for institutional and pedagogical reforms. While some teachers, such as those studied by Lin & Shi (2021), negotiated hybrid professional identities, others lacked the training or frameworks to implement translanguaging effectively (Krishnamurthy, 2022). This suggests an urgent need for professional development in multilingual pedagogies and institutional support to legitimize translingual approaches in formal curricula. Interestingly, some research (e. g., Zhang-Wu, 2023) illustrates the contrast between students' natural use of translanguaging in social settings and their reluctance in academic contexts, often due to rigid expectations or fear of negative

Table 1
Inclusion and exclusion criteria.

Inclusion	Exclusion
• Only the studies published in peer-reviewed journals. • Only journal articles were considered. • The studies focused on translangualism and EFL learners' writing skills. • Only open-access studies were considered. • Must be published from January 2022 to December 2024.	• No peer-reviewed publications. • No chapters, conference proceedings and theses were considered. • The studies on translangualism and others were not considered, e.g., (Kaufhold & Dymond, 2022; Kochetova & Ilyinova, 2021; Nicolarakis & Mitchell, 2023) etc. • No subscribed publications were considered. • Preceding and exceeding timeline publications were not considered.

Table 2
Literature review matrix.

Author(s)'name Year	Method	Data collection instruments	Participants	Data Analysis Process	Findings	Recommendations
Kaufhold and Dymond (2022)	narrative methods	4 dialogues	authors, a sociolinguist in Stockholm, Sweden and a scholar of literature in Bangor, North Wales,	Creative analysis	Revealed translocal and translingual writing practices linked to place-making and community evocation	Standards for valid texts and propose alternative approaches to meaning-making in academic and creative writing is interrogated.
Altun (2023a)	ethnography	students' written outputs, interviews and audio sessions	two academic writing classes	analytical framework	Plurilingual students used full repertoire through recontextualization and envoicing	translanguaging has potential as key tool in EFL writing for plurilingual learners.
(Rafi & Morgan, 2022)	Qualitative	classroom observation, pedagogical intervention, focus group Discussion	Students from a private university in Bangladesh	Thematic analysis	English-only policies reduced participation; translanguaging boosted engagement	Further research is needed to explore metalinguistic awareness, multilingual practices, and translanguaging with a broader sample of teacher-educators, practitioners, and policymakers.
Passi (2023)	Qualitative	students' personal narratives, writing reflections, and self-evaluations	Students from an advanced, pre-university B-block English course at a Francophone CÉGEP in downtown Montréal, enrolled in various programs like visual arts, social sciences, and natural sciences.	inductive thematic, poetic analysis, coding technique	personal narrative writing strengthened the linguistic confidence of multilingual students.	Further research is needed to see if instruction helps students challenge language hierarchies and build confidence in multilingual identities.
(Hiddleston, 2022)	Review	close reading of Assia Djebar's Vaste est la prison (1995)			Translingualism seen as contact zones under postcolonial pressure.	
(Storheil & Iversen, 2024)	Qualitative	60-min writing session where students wrote an academic text in Norwegian, Student interviews exploring translanguaging strategies and prior learning experiences.	Six multilingual newly arrived students in Norway (ages 16–19), who had lived in Norway for six months to 3.5 years.	Analysis of students' written texts and interview responses to identify translanguaging strategies and their connections to prior experiences.	Students used translanguaging without support.	Teachers should encourage students to leverage their multilingual repertoire.
Zhang-Wu (2023)	exploratory qualitative	digital ethnographic and interview methods	10 first-semester undergraduate students.	content coding	participants were practicing translanguaging in social contexts but reluctant in academic settings.	instructors must reposition themselves as co-learners with multilingual students.
(Lin & Shi, 2021)	Qualitative		two Western-educated Taiwanese professors of English writing (Beth and Nita)		Beth saw herself as a capable writing teacher beyond native and nonnative labels, while Nita considered herself superior for focusing on fluency, showing how translingual identity helps explain EFL teachers' identity negotiation.	further studies should use multiple data sources.
Lee (2023)	Qualitative	a classroom-based ethnographic study	self-identified Latina bilingual student	analysis of the student's multimodal composition, other classroom writings, and a semistructured interview	Writing transformed injustice into shared knowledge	students' engagement with multimodality should be enhanced.
Hugueny-Léger (2024)	Review	Taking reflections from translingual writers and concrete writing prompts			Creative writing supported identity negotiation.	expertise developed in Modern Languages can provide stimulating frameworks for Creative Writing.
(Liao, 2023)	Qualitative	a three-week curriculum design and interview	five monolingual and five multilingual students	content analysis	Multilinguals saw greater value in differing poetry engagement;	curriculum development to enact translingual pedagogy is needed.
Altun (2023b)	Qualitative	think aloud protocols, followup interviews, field observations, and analysis of students' writing products over an academic semester	plurilingual students enrolled in an online Turkish writing course at a preparatory school at a public university	Canagarajah's translanguaging strategies and traditional coding methods	translanguaging strategies to enhanced writing skills and understanding of language learning	institutional support is needed for teacher development in sociolinguistics and multilingualism, further

Table 2 (*continued*)

Author(s)'name Year	Method	Data collection instruments	Participants	Data Analysis Process	Findings	Recommendations
Sun (2024)	Qualitative	essay collection, semi-structured interviews	23 international students from 60 countries in a liberal arts and science university in southeastern China	qualitative thematic analysis and critical discourse analysis	Language ideologies shaped identities	research in diverse contexts is needed. decolonization of writing education necessitates critical awareness of power dynamics and pedagogical strategies that need to incorporate into translingual practices.
(Choi, 2022)	Qualitative	the child's compositions brought from school	a multilingual child	translingual approach to literacy	Home writing encouraged stronger multilingual use compared to school	Schools should integrate multilingualism into the curriculum.
Rabbi and Rahman (2024)	qualitative	case studies of the authors autobiographical narratives	Authors	Conversation analysis	Translingualism shaped academic identity	The English language field should value contributions from outer-circle scholars, embrace translingual approaches, integrate World Englishes in academic socialization, and explore diversity's impact on writing pedagogy.
Morais and Hübner (2023)	Systematic Review	Pubmed/Medline, Lilacs, Eric, Scopus, PsycINFO, and Web of Science databases for papers published between 2017 and 2021.		four papers focusing on written production, ten on oral production, and ten on both	Diverse methods show evolving research on translanguaging	
(Nicolarakis & Mitchell, 2023)	Qualitative	Interview	fifteen bilingual deaf adults who had previously been identified as high-scoring readers and writers in another study	collecting, reviewing, coding, and identifying overarching themes	Deaf participants used advanced translanguaging strategies.	Research about incorporating translanguaging in writing for deaf learners is needed.
Azima and Fithriani (2024)	Qualitative	online questionnaire	Ten English education majors in their seventh semester	Used variety of analytical procedures, including reviewing and analyzing all responses, sorting the data, organizing, coding, and analyzing data to create research topics, and describing	Google Translate and AI aid the writings of EFL learners.	AI-based technology into EFL writing will be beneficial. Research needed to determine impact of each element influencing students' use of AI-based translation tools.
Krishnamurthy (2022)	Qualitative	dialogic interviews with tutors and key informants, observations of tutoring sessions, tutor reflection journals, writing center tutor training materials and researcher field notes	six tutors from the Midlantic writing center	Inductive and deductive coding	Tutors had limited application of translingual and anti-racist practices.	tutor training can be conceptualized
(Way, 2022)	Qualitative	Process diaries	Japanese undergraduate students	Examining students' tracked writing processes in academic and non-academic texts.	Japanese scripts challenge language boundaries, question uniform writing norms, and offer style and meaning flexibility.	Pedagogical practices should incorporate transmodal approach
(Roguska-Németh, 2022)	Review	Literature on transculturalism.			Transculturalism grew from multicultural and intercultural ideas. Welsch shaped modern theory. Dagnino's definition is debated. Canonizing transcultural writers is hard. Hungarian writers show challenges.	
(Namubiru, 2020)	review	Frost, Kiernan, and Malley's collections		Comparative analysis	Translingualism is context-dependent and contested; student views reveal both gains and tensions. Hierarchical language norms persist, calling for flexible pedagogy and holistic reading.	Pedagogical practices should avoid rigid linguistic hierarchies and readers should engage with the entire book.

Table 2 (*continued*)

Author(s)'name Year	Method	Data collection instruments	Participants	Data Analysis Process	Findings	Recommendations
Kalan (2022)	review	writing practices of three plurilingual writers in Toronto, Canada		Ethnographic andThematic	Translanguaging shapes writers' semiotic engagement across five dimensions.	Teachers should use translanguaging as intellectual and political practice.
(Zhang-Wu & Jones, 2022)	review	translingual scholarship in US writing and rhetoric studies over the past decade		corpus linguistic methods	Domestic multilingual writers of color are underrepresented.	Journals should prioritize anti-racist translingual research.

evaluation. This insight underscores the importance of creating safe, supportive classroom environments where multilingual expression is not only accepted but encouraged. In addition, the integration of digital tools and AI into EFL writing is emerging as a significant trend. For instance, Azima and Fithriani (2024) found that tools like Google Translate and other AI-based applications can enhance writing fluency and comprehension, although further research is needed to evaluate their pedagogical value and ethical implications.

In terms of recommendations from these studies, some studies called for curriculum reform (Lee, 2023; Tang et al., 2024) and some recommended teacher training in multilingual pedagogy (Morais & Hübner, 2023). The other studies highlighted the recognition of students' full linguistic repertoires (Kaufhold & Dymond, 2022; Rabbi & Rahman, 2024). Some other studies recommended the integration of AI and digital tools to support multilingual writing (Azima & Fithriani, 2024). Overall, there is a recommendation for the changes at the policy level for embracing translingual and anti-racist policy (Tang et al., 2024). Thus, this finding reveals that researchers should work on reforming curriculum, multilingual pedagogy, recognizing students' linguistic repertoires, and integration of technology to support developing writing skills.

3.1. RQ.2. The keywords or themes on translanguaging and EFL learners' writing skills

In response to the RQ. no 2, keywords from the title, abstracts, and authors' keywords were analyzed with VOSViewer, the bibliometric networking software. The results are presented below with networking visualisations:

3.1.1. Title and abstract

While analyzing titles and abstracts, a list of 750 keywords was found. For identifying the most frequent themes of 750, 18 keywords appeared at least 5 times, each visualized in the networked Fig. 2. Here, larger nodes (e.g., language, education, translanguaging) indicate a higher frequency of occurrence in the dataset. On the other hand, the thicker or more numerous connecting lines indicate stronger co-occurrence relationships between terms. For example, language connects to nearly all clusters, showing it is a central concept. This networking map assists in identifying thematic clusters and semantic relationships among key terms in the published studies. Moreover, these keywords were grouped into different clusters according to their weight and strength in networking. Thus, these findings will provide researchers and other stakeholders in identifying themes and concepts for further research in this field.

The most frequent terms or themes are those keywords in the red cluster. The keywords are here: language, approach, experience, translingualism, pedagogy, communication, multilingual student, writing instruction, teaching, and English. These themes focused on teaching practices, pedagogical approaches, and multilingual classroom experiences. The other central terms or themes are in the green cluster. These are translanguaging, research, analysis, and work. These themes indicate that the concurrent and frequent theme in this field was highlighting translanguaging as a subject of analysis and scholarly investigation. It emphasises research frameworks and analytical approaches to understanding translanguaging practices.

The final cluster marked with blue contains the keywords especially, education, translingual practice, strategy, and second language. It emphasises educational strategies, second language acquisition, and
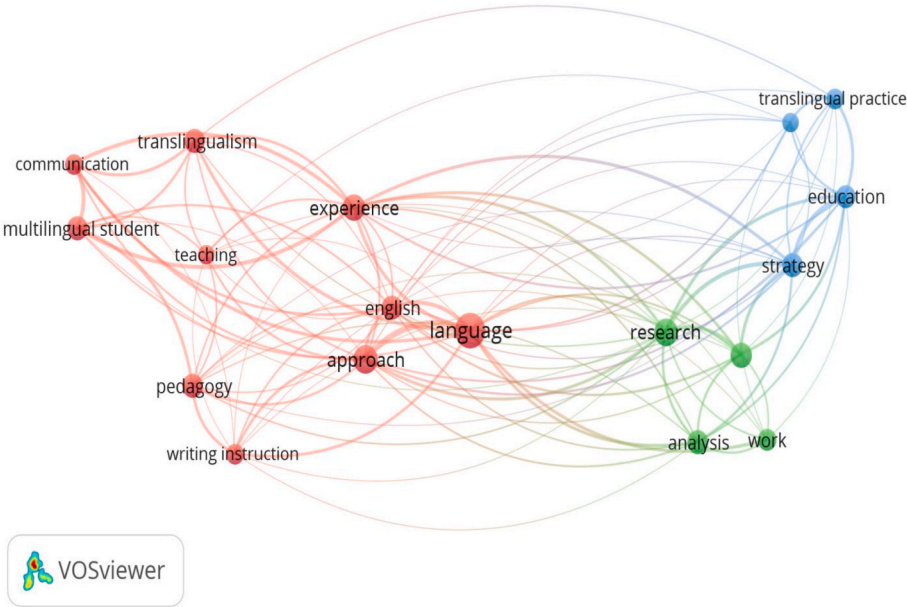
Fig. 2. Keywords mapping from titles and abstracts.

translingual practices. Moreover, the current studies reflect the discussions on educational planning, language learning strategies, and policy-level practices for the impact of translangualism on EFL learners' writing.

The results from the keynote analysis from titles and abstracts through the networking map will leave insights for researchers, teachers, policy makers, and students for identifying the trends and subject matters of the research in translianguaging in academic writing development.

3.1.2. Authors' keywords

The authors' keyword analysis found 68 keywords from the selected publications. Fig. 3 below shows 13 keywords through co-occurrence networking visualization. The purpose of this networking map is to visualize the relationship among authors' keywords based on their co-occurrence in the selected publications. In the figure, the circles represent keywords; the larger circles represent the most frequent keywords. The lines within the circle represent co-occurrence links; the thicker lines present a stronger relationship. The keywords are clustered with six different colours that represent the keywords that often appear together, signifying thematic groupings.

The most prominent theme here is translanguaging; the term is connected with some other core themes, which indicates the diversification of research in this field. Here, both the green and pink color clusters contain 3 and 1 keywords, such as "translanguaging", "writing discourse", "creative writing", and "EFL writing instruction", which the concurrent research focuses on multilingual writing practices and pedagogical discourse.

The blue cluster contains 3 themes, such as "L2 writing", "decoloniality", and "language", which indicates the recent research focuses on second language writing and socio-political themes. The red cluster and brown clusters contain the keywords, such as "artificial intelligence", "(de)coloniality", and "linguistic imperialism", that suggest that emerging or less connected themes related to technology and postcolonial critique in terms of the impact of translanguaging on EFL writings. The purple cluster contains one keyword, "multilingual writers'' that is thematically close to the translanguaging.

The visualization emphasises a strong scholarly focus on translanguaging and multilingual writing practices, with growing intersections in areas such as decoloniality and educational technologies, especially AI tools. Thus, the results from the keynote analysis from authors' keywords through the networking map will leave insights for researchers, teachers, policy makers, and students for identifying the existing trends and subject matters of the research in translianguaging in academic writing development.

4. Discussion

This study systematically reviews recent literature on the impact of translanguaging on the writing skills of EFL learners. The review covers methodological features and thematic trends in research from January 2022 to December 2024. Results show that translanguaging is central to EFL writing pedagogy, highlighting its transformative potential and revealing critical gaps for future study.

A key theme in the literature is recognizing translanguaging as both a teaching strategy and a way for multilingual learners to form identity. Studies from Canada (Passi, 2023), Bangladesh (Rafi & Morgan, 2022), and Turkey (Altun, 2023a) show that translanguaging empowers EFL learners to use their full linguistic repertoires when writing. This supports García & Wei''s (2015) view that translanguaging is rooted in sociocultural language use, helping learners navigate complex identities. The literature notes that personal narrative writing and creative expression—especially in native languages and cultural contexts—boost confidence, participation, and linguistic flexibility (Passi, 2023; Hugueny-Léger, 2024; Lee, 2023). In Passi's (2023) study, students reported more confidence when including multilingual experiences in academic tasks. Studies also find that translanguaging contrasts with monolingual ideologies in academics. Rabbi and Rahman (2024), using collaborative auto ethnography, show how translanguaging helped them shape transnational identities and resist linguistic imperialism in English-language publishing. Sun (2024) similarly critiques colonial writing instruction and argues that translanguaging helps analyze power dynamics in EFL writing classrooms.

A major methodological trend is the frequent use of qualitative research. Ethnography, narrative inquiry, and case studies are common and allow deep insights into multilingual learners' experiences (Altun, 2023; Lee, 2023; Zhang-Wu, 2023). This suggests a consensus that studying translanguaging and multilingual writing is best done using detailed, context-rich methods that focus on learners' voices. Researchers often used interviews, think-aloud protocols, classroom observations, and writing sample analyses as data tools. For example, Altun (2023b) combined think-aloud protocols with follow-up interviews to study how Turkish EFL learners used translanguaging in writing. Storheil & Iversen (2024) combined student interviews and
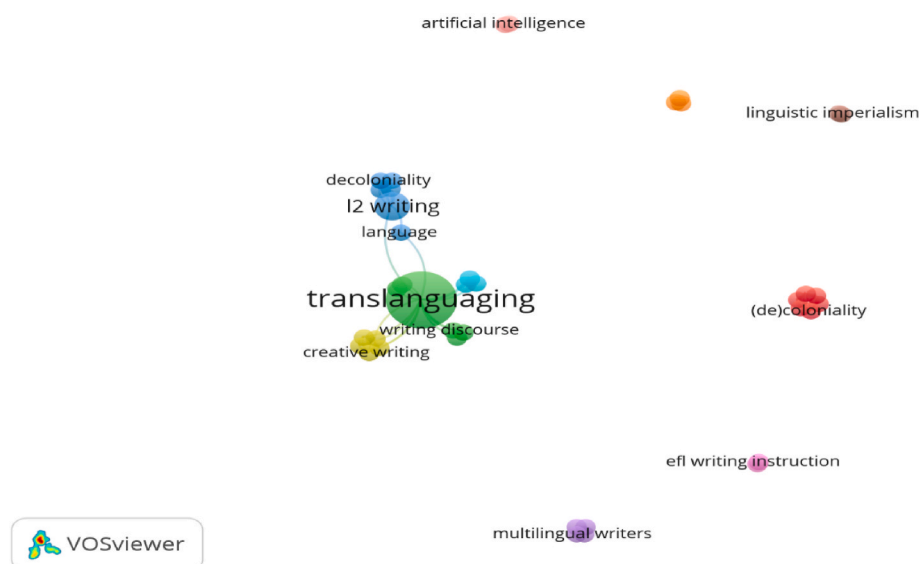

Fig. 3. Keywords mapping from authors' keywords.

writing samples to explore how multilingual students in Norway applied prior language skills in academic work. These qualitative approaches offer an in-depth understanding, but the almost complete lack of quantitative or mixed-methods research is a gap. Without statistical evidence on areas like lexical richness or grammatical accuracy, findings remain hard to generalize. Future studies could use experimental or longitudinal designs to prove causality and study the long-term effects on EFL writing.

A common finding is the gap between using translanguaging in social situations and the reluctance to use it in academic writing. Zhang-Wu (2023) and Lin & Shi (2021) found that students use translanguage freely in social settings but face barriers in formal academic work. These include fear of poor assessment, strict language policies, and the belief in English-only standards. Such tensions reflect broader language ideologies in EFL teaching and assessment. Krishnamurthy (2022) shows that writing center tutors are often underprepared for supporting to translanguaging and anti-racist practices, which can reinforce pedagogies, thereby reinforce monolingual norms. These findings support the echo calls by critical applied linguists (e.g., Pennycook, 2021) to reject deficit views of multilingual learners, reframing challenge deficit-based perceptions of multilingual learners, and to reframe translanguaging as an asset-based pedagogy. Institutional reform and teacher training are essential for integrating translanguaging into curricula. Several studies (Morais & Hübner, 2023; Tang et al., 2024) explicitly recommend professional development programs that equip educators for multilingual classrooms. Teacher attitudes, as Lin & Shi (2021) note, are influenced by their own language backgrounds, making with the theoretical and practical tools to foster multilingual classrooms. Teacher attitudes, as highlighted by Lin & Shi (2021), are often shaped by their own linguistic trajectories, indicating the importance of reflective practice and identity work in training and professional development.

A newer, yet underexplored, theme is the use of digital tools and artificial intelligence (AI) in translingual writing. Azima and Fithriani (2024) demonstrate how Indonesian EFL students use learners utilize Google Translate not just as a crutch but as a tool to manage complex writing. This fits with theories that place traditional tools to navigate complex writing tasks. This aligns with recent theoretical shifts that position AI tools within sociocultural learning frameworks of learning (Warschauer & Liaw, 2010), acknowledging their potential to support and scaffold multilingual writing practices.

While these tools have teaching benefits, their ethical and knowledge implications need more study. For example, does using automated translation affect learner. However, while the pedagogical benefits of such tools are evident, their ethical and epistemological implications warrant closer scrutiny. For instance, what does reliance on automated translation mean for language learning autonomy? Does it reinforce English-centric norms, or can it empower learners? Future research should address these questions, ideally by combining insights from different sources to empower multilingual expression. These are questions that future research should address, ideally through interdisciplinary inquiry that combines applied linguistics, educational technology, and digital literacy studies.

Translanguaging is increasingly linked to the literature, which increasingly connects translanguaging with decolonial theory, demonstrating how translingual writing serves as a form of resistance against dominant linguistic and academic standard norms. Studies by Lee (2023), Sun (2024), and Canagarajah (2020) underscore that translanguaging is both a teaching and political tool. This supports the review's claim that translanguaging challenges linguistic gatekeeping and supports diverse knowledge production. This finding supports that researchers need to investigate decolonized pedagogy in writing education to mitigate the challenges posed in monolingual context in learning and teaching a second and foreign language.

Despite progress, critical gaps remain. Research on translanguaging in monolingual contexts is limited. Studies rarely address assessment or research gaps that persist. There is limited exploration of translanguaging in monolingual contexts, little attention to assessment practices, and insufficient focus on teacher influence, agency, and institutional barriers. Tackling these issues is key to unlocking translanguaging's full potential. Addressing these issues is essential to fully realizing the transformative potential of translanguaging in EFL writing, which is the study's main conclusion.

5. Conclusion

This study aimed to investigate key features and themes of the research on the impact of translanguaging in developing EFL learners' writing skills from the published studies in the Scopus and Google Scholar databases from January 2022 to December 2024 through a systematic review. The findings showed that the key features were (i) the qualitative research design was prominently used (ii) interview and writing script were employed significantly as the data collection tools (iii) the participants were mostly multilingual (iv) thematic analysis was in the top as data analysis technique (v) the central findings showed that there was a positive impact of translanguaging on student learning and identity development but the tension between students' translanguaging practices in informal/social contexts and their hesitation in formal academic environments exist and (vi) the insights for recommendation of the study are the curriculum reformation, teachers' training in multilingual pedagogy, recognition of students' full linguistics repertoires and integration of AI and digital tools to support multilingual writing. On the other hand, the key themes in existing literature were teaching practices, pedagogical approaches, multilingual classroom experiences, multilingual writing practices, decoloniality, and educational technologies. Depending on these findings, researchers, teachers, and policymakers will have insights to pursue further research in this field.

However, this study had several limitations. Firstly, this study only searched the published literature in the database of Scopus and Google Scholar. Secondly, the timeframe covered only from January 2022 to December 2024. Thirdly, in this study, only 26 published open-access publications were selected to address the study's objectives. Finally, this study only investigated translanguaging in developing writing skills. Therefore, this study found a limited number of datasets.

Despite these limitations, the study recommends directions for future research for researchers, teachers, policy makers and students. Firstly, there is a scarcity of quantitative studies; future work could measure quantitatively the effect of translanguaging on EFL writing. Secondly, research on translanguaging in monolingual contexts is scarce and should be expanded. Thirdly, future studies would explore curriculum reform to improve outcomes linked to limitations mentioned above. Fourthly, the themes that emerged from the keyword analysis and authors' keywords provide valuable insights for researchers to formulate future research studies. Finally, a rigorous review can be held in this field using other databases and including both open-access and subscribed publications.

CRediT authorship contribution statement

Prodhan Mahbub Ibna Seraj: Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Visualization, Validation, Resources, Methodology, Investigation, Formal analysis, Data curation, Conceptualization. **Mashfia Afrin:** Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Visualization, Software, Resources, Investigation. **Blanka Klimova:** Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Resources, Methodology, Investigation, Funding acquisition, Formal analysis.

Availability of data and material

The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author.

Authors' contributions

PMIS designed the study, wrote, and revised the whole article, MA drafted, wrote and revised the article, BK wrote, revised and reviewed the whole article.

The authors are based in two locations because one researcher is currently affiliated with a university in the Czech Republic, while the remaining team members work at institutions in Bangladesh. The study was carried out through a shared digital workflow. All stages of the project were managed through regular online meetings, a jointly maintained reference database, and collaborative drafting of the manuscript. The distribution of tasks was organised so that literature screening, data extraction, analysis, and manuscript revision could be completed efficiently across time zones. This arrangement allowed consistent communication and access to the shared dataset, which ensured accuracy and coherence in the preparation of the final manuscript.

Declaration of the use of AI assisted technologies

During the preparation of this work the authors used Grammarly for proof reading and spell checking. The authors reviewed and edited the content as needed and take full responsibility for the content of the publication.

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'The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.'

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