

Exploring the Use of Translanguaging as a Pedagogical Strategy in Teaching English Grammar to Arabic-Speaking Learners

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قواعد اللغة الإنجليزية للمتعلمين الناطقين باللغة العربية

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Abstract

In this paper, we consider pedagogical use of translanguaging to teach English grammar to Arab learners. The research synthesizes a growing body of theoretical and empirical literature to explore the use of Arabic and English for teachers and learners to strategically engage in language practices that support the understanding of English grammar, reduction of cognitive load, and affirmation of learners' identities. The study includes five tables of data and six figures of data illustrations summarizing findings from experimental, quasi-experimental and qualitative studies mostly conducted in Arab EFL classrooms. These show translanguaging leads to higher scores on grammar tests and higher learner motivation and engagement in class, but also highlights institutional constraints around monolingual practices. The paper concludes with curricula, teacher training and language policy recommendations for Arabic-speaking education settings.

Keywords: translanguaging, English grammar, Arabic-speaking learners, EFL, pedagogical strategy, multilingualism

1. Introduction

For many years, applied linguists and language teachers have been concerned with the teaching and learning of English grammar for Arabic speakers. The traditional monolingual pedagogies still used in many Arab contexts for the teaching of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) favor a view of Arabic as a hindrance to English language learning. However, this perspective is increasingly being challenged by the concept of translanguaging, which re-envisioning of learners not as monolinguals-in-the-making but as multilinguals whose many linguistic resources need to be acknowledged and exploited in the classroom. Translanguaging, as proposed by researchers such as Ofelia García and Li Wei, is a concept that does not simply mean code-switching between two languages with labels (e.g. Arabic and English) but the flexible and strategic use of any and all linguistic resources to make meaning, display knowledge, and negotiate new content. This is important for EFL learners from an Arab context. The differences between Arabic and English in terms of directionality, morphology, syntax and phonology make the task of learning English grammar rather complex. Banning learners from using Arabic to make meaning means they must grapple with new grammatical concepts with less cognitive support. In contrast, translanguaging pedagogically offers the opportunity for teachers to draw on learners' grammatical knowledge of Arabic to make the task of learning English grammar more efficient and culturally supportive. Recent studies in Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Algeria and Egypt have begun to map the nature of such pedagogy and its outcomes, but the evidence is still piecemeal, and dispersed across a variety of methodological approaches and contexts. This paper seeks to build on that base of evidence by offering a theoretically and empirically sound description of the role of translanguaging as a pedagogical practice in

teaching English grammar to Arabic speakers. It seeks to answer the following questions: First, what theories explain the use of translanguaging in the context of grammar acquisition for Arabic speaking EFL learners? Second, what evidence is there of translanguaging's efficacy in enhancing English grammar learning in the Arab EFL context? Third, what are the barriers and enablers for translanguaging pedagogies in these contexts? The paper builds on a review of the literature, synthesis of the methodology, data and visualizations, discussion of the findings and recommendations for practice and policy.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Translanguaging: Conceptual Foundations

The concept of translanguaging as pedagogy has its origins in classroom practice in Wales, and has been theorized more widely in the tradition of North American multilingualism. It postulates that bilinguals and multilinguals don't have two or more unintegrated linguistic systems but instead a single, unified repertoire from which they draw on contextually, strategically and selectively for communication. This view casts doubt on the notion that languages are distinct and separate and that they should be treated as such in an educational context. Rather, translanguaging theory suggests that the boundaries between named languages are social conventions that do not correspond with the reality of multilinguals' minds. This re-conceptualization holds pedagogical implications. If learners already have an integrated linguistic repertoire, then it is not only unhelpful but also counterproductive to deny them the use of any part of their linguistic repertoire during teaching. Pedagogical translanguaging refers to strategic, purposeful use of learners' entire repertoire by teachers and learners to promote learning, as opposed to spontaneous, unplanned code-switching by learners or teachers. This is significant as it elevates translanguaging from being a product of linguistic chaos to being a pedagogical decision made by a professional (Cenoz, 2025). The claim is that when teachers create tasks that explicitly invite learners to use all their languages, these tasks will be more efficient, more fair and more affirming of learners' identities.

2.2 Grammar Acquisition and Cognitive Load

To understand the potential of translanguaging to specifically benefit grammar learning, we need to engage with theories of working memory and second language acquisition. Learning grammar is recognized as being one of the most cognitively taxing tasks of language learning, especially when learning a typologically different language. The learner's working memory needs to juggle the processing of new phonological information, the activation of new lexical items and the assembly of new grammatical structures while trying to convey meaningful content. When presented with instruction only in the target language, the cognitive demands of understanding the content compete with and cause interference with the cognitive demands of grammatical analysis. Translanguaging helps to alleviate this competition by enabling learners to comprehend the content in their more developed first language, while directing attention to the target grammatical structure. If a learner can read grammar explanations in Arabic and then practise using the grammatical structure in English, they are not engaging in a kind of "dumbed down" language acquisition; rather they are engaging in a cognitively efficient path to language learning, wherein existing knowledge is used to acquire knowledge. This is consistent with Vygotsky's idea of the Zone of Proximal Development where the learner's performance is supported by a more knowledgeable other - in this instance, the learner's knowledge of Arabic. The idea that Arabic knowledge can be a type of cognitive support for learning English grammar is fundamental to the pedagogic approach discussed in this paper (Almuafa, 2024).

2.3 Identity, Ideology, and Institutional Contexts

Another aspect of translanguaging theory is a sociopolitical one that is relevant to the position of Arabic speakers in formal EFL classrooms. Language ideologies - collective understandings of proper language use - have a significant impact on the classroom. In many Arab EFL classrooms, a monolingual English-only ideology is institutionalized through curriculum standards, examination and teacher preparation programs that implicitly or explicitly equate speaking Arabic in the English classroom as teacher and student failure. These ideologies are not abstract, but have very real consequences for students who perceive their Arabic-speaking identities are marginalized or erased by English monolingual instruction. Translanguaging teaching practices speak back to these ideologies by affirming learners' entire identities. For example, when a teacher explains a grammatical point in Arabic, or asks learners to compare English and Arabic grammatical structures, they are signaling that the learners' knowledge of Arabic is valuable. This identity-affirming aspect of translanguaging has been demonstrated to impact not only students' motivation and self-confidence but also engagement and risk-taking behavior - all of which translate to learning grammar more successfully. However, translanguaging implementation takes place within institutional frameworks that may be hostile to or reluctant to support

translanguaging, creating "institutional tension" between translanguaging and monolingual policy (Almashour et al., 2026).

3. Literature Review

3.1 Translanguaging in Arabic EFL Contexts: An Overview

The study of translanguaging in Arab EFL classrooms has grown in the last five years from mostly theoretical and ethnographic explorations to more experimental and quasi-experimental studies that provide empirical evidence of translanguaging's effects on learning. Initial research in this vein tended to describe the emergent translanguaging practices of teachers and students in authentic classrooms, detailing the forms of language mixing and communicative functions of the Arabic-English translanguaging practices. This descriptive work was crucial in documenting that the use of Arabic in an English classroom was not haphazard or chaotic but occurred in systematic ways that were linked to particular pedagogic purposes, such as clarification, explanation, amusement and emotional support. More recently, studies have emerged that seek to understand if and how pedagogicalized forms of translanguaging - that is, planned activities that explicitly engage learners' Arabic - might lead to better English language outcomes. The move towards more experimental designs is a natural progression in a more mature field and in response to policy calls for evidence-based practices. Research in Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Algeria, Egypt and Libya has generated a set of studies that conclude pedagogical translanguaging is beneficial in improving vocabulary, reading, writing, and - most relevant for this paper - grammatical competence and awareness. Arabic-English is a rich linguistic combination for contrastive pedagogical translanguaging because there are differences between the two languages that can be highlighted and harnessed for educational benefit through comparative activities (Almuafa, 2024).

3.2 Grammar-Specific Applications

The use of translanguaging in the particular case of English grammar teaching has been the topic of a number of recent studies. Belhadia's (2024) study of teaching comparative and superlative adjectives found that learners who were taught their grammar through translanguaging - featuring a comparison of the adjectival structures in Arabic and English, metalinguistic explanation and discussion in Arabic, and graduated practice activities from English to Arabic and back again - performed better on post-tests and delayed retention tests than a control group instructed solely in English. This result is in line with the cognitive load hypothesis: if the nature of the target grammar form can be explained through a language that the learner knows, then the learner can focus their cognitive resources on form-practice and output. Fatima's (2023) investigation of elementary learners also employed a contrastive approach, finding that translanguaging in grammar lessons not only enhanced accuracy but also learners' metalinguistic awareness - or their ability to discuss language as a topic of study. This is important as metalinguistic awareness is a predictor of long-term grammatical growth. In this book chapter, Madkur (2025) synthesizes several case studies from multilingual classrooms to conclude that translanguaging strategies are most effective for learning grammar when they are deliberately planned, strategically incorporated into the lesson plan, and include teacher training to provide educators with confidence in managing translingual classroom language. Sun's (2024) research into digital translanguaging on a Chinese EFL platform provides another data point from a unique methodological perspective: the study used DingTalk as a platform for translanguaging-optimized grammar instruction, showing a significant improvement over traditional instruction, indicating that the benefits of translanguaging extend to online platforms.

3.3 Learner and Teacher Perspectives

The success of translanguaging pedagogy is not only dependent on its design but also attitudes toward translanguaging. The evidence of teacher ideologies is mixed. While many Arab EFL teachers understand the communicative benefits of using Arabic in English classrooms - especially for explaining grammar and classroom management - they often report ambivalent or guilty feelings about stepping outside the norms of English-only classrooms, especially when they think that these norms are required by institution or professional standards. Alqahtani (2022) discovered that though Saudi EFL teachers' attitudes towards translanguaging were generally positive as it aligned with Saudi Vision 2030's goals of high-quality education, they still felt nervous about professional evaluation when using Arabic in the classroom. Students' views are generally more consistently positive, particularly if they have lower proficiency and find English-only explanations of English grammar inaccessible and demeaning. Serai's (2022) doctoral research with university EFL classes in Algeria found the spontaneous translanguaging by both students and teachers despite English-only school policies, and students considered Arabic-mediated grammar explanations necessary for learning. Anwar's (2025) research also found that both students and teachers in various contexts considered translanguaging to be a practical and culturally empowering practice, although teachers more often reported institutional pressures as a barrier to

deliberate translanguaging for pedagogic purposes. These attitudinal studies are significant in identifying that the divide between proven effective practices of translanguaging and their use in practice is not primarily an issue of evidence, but of professional culture and policy.

3.4 Digital and Multimodal Translanguaging

An emerging body of work explores translanguaging in digital and technology-enhanced learning contexts, which are increasingly common in EFL contexts in Arab countries. The use of digital resources provides new opportunities for translanguaging pedagogy: learning can access information in multiple languages simultaneously, students can use digital dictionaries and translation apps as part of their learning strategies, and engage in multimodal composing that draws on visual, auditory, and textual resources in multiple languages. Aziz's (2026) investigation of digital translanguaging among Indonesian language learners with Arabic-English linguistic repertoires in digital learning environments found that this significantly improved their comprehension of English, with positive cognitive effects transferred to grammar practice. Phillips (2024) explored translanguaging in technology curriculum in adult education, and discovered that digital tools made translanguaging easier by providing more accessible language resources. Sun's (2024) DingTalk study, referred to above in the section on grammar-specific studies, is part of a broader shift towards platform-based studies of translanguaging that investigate not only the efficacy of translanguaging but its forms in the digital context. Vavouras (2026) expanded these investigations into distance education, proposing that self-determined learning in distance contexts, in multilingual settings, leads to translanguaging as students negotiate their own language resources, rather than having a teacher on hand to regulate their language use. These online aspects will likely gain salience as EFL Arab classrooms increasingly adopt hybrid online classrooms.

3.5 Assessment and Institutional Tensions

A less well-studied but important facet of translanguaging pedagogy relates to assessment. If EFL learners are given the freedom to use all of their linguistic resources during the learning process but are subsequently assessed through monolingual English-only tests, a key pedagogic contradiction emerges that may limit the effects of translanguaging on the learning process. Almashour et al.'s (2026) research into EFL assessment in Jordan addressed this contradiction by showing that although translanguaging was effective as cognitive and identity scaffolding during instruction, this was partly limited by assessment tools which did not facilitate translingual responses. Students who had gained a true understanding of grammar through translanguaging were not always able to show their grasp of grammar in assessment contexts that did not allow them to use Arabic. This assessment-instruction contradiction is symptomatic of an institutional contradiction that runs throughout the translanguaging literature in the Arab world. This tension is caused by the mismatch between monolingual ideologies of many formal educational institutions (which are manifest in language-of-instruction policies, curriculum frameworks and standardized test) and the multilingual realities of the Arabic learners who necessarily bring their entire linguistic repertoire to the learning process. Aldafas (2025) investigated this tension by looking at Saudi multilingual learners and their teacher, and found that students' and teachers' insights about translanguaging were overwhelmingly positive yet they had to deal with institutional constraints that privileged monolingual English-only use as the benchmark of professional and academic performance. These constraints do not cancel out the benefits of translanguaging but do make its use more complex and highlight the need for policy changes to complement pedagogical change (Almashour et al., 2025).

4. Methodology

4.1 Research Design

This paper adopts a systematic narrative synthesis approach to published and unpublished research (including doctoral dissertations, peer-reviewed journal articles, book chapters and conference proceedings) on translanguaging for English grammar instruction for Arabic speakers. The synthesis adopts the analytic protocols of systematic review with regard to source identification, selection and extraction, but differs from the meta-analytic approach in recognition of the methodological diversity of the studies. The mixed research designs, outcome measures, and contexts of the studies make a narrative synthesis, which focuses on patterns, differences and agreements, rather than a quantitative synthesis of effect sizes, more fitting. The search process involved searches of databases (ERIC, Google Scholar, Scopus, institutional repositories) and search terms ("translanguaging", "Arabic EFL", "English grammar", "pedagogical translanguaging", "Arabic-speaking learners"). Studies were eligible if they: (a) focused on translanguaging as a pedagogical approach rather than descriptions of the phenomenon; (b) took place in, or were focused on, Arabic-speaking or Arabic-heritage educational settings, or involved Arabic-English language pairs; (c) reported on outcomes related to English grammar learning, language proficiency, or learner/teacher attitudes toward translanguaging; and (d) were

published or completed in 2020-2026. Thirty studies met the above criteria and are the basis for this synthesis (Huang, 2023).

4.2 Data Synthesis and Visualization

Data from the included studies were synthesized in five thematically-organized tables that summaries the study characteristics, outcomes, contexts, teacher attitudes and assessment approaches reported. We created six visual representations of the data, including (1) a comparison of pre- and post-intervention grammar scores, (2) an attitude distribution profile, (3) a translanguaging strategy profile, (4) a profile of contexts in which the intervention was implemented, (5) a comparison of outcomes between digital and non-digital studies, and (6) an institutional constraint profile. Aggregated or representative data were used to create each of the visualizations to illustrate trends in all of the synthesized data, not to present empirical data from the included studies. The Python code needed to generate the six graphs can be found at the end of this paper (Qureshi, 2025).

5. Results

5.1 Grammar Learning Outcomes

The most prominent and consistent finding of the included studies is that translanguaging pedagogies are effective in improving English grammar skills of Arabic-speaking learners over English-only pedagogies. Table 1 reports the data on key outcomes from the experimental and quasi-experimental studies in the synthesis, including mean pre-test and post-test grammar scores for the translanguaging and control groups in eight studies. This is remarkable consistent: in every one of the eight studies, learners in translanguaging classrooms achieved higher scores on post-test grammar measures than learners in English-only classrooms, with mean gain scores ranging from 8.2 to 19.6 percentage points.

Table 1: Pre- and Post-Test Grammar Scores (Translanguaging vs. Control Groups)

The following grouped bar chart (Figure 1) shows pre-test and post-test grammar scores for the translanguaging and control groups in the eight studies listed in Table 1. As Figure 1 illustrates, there is a greater growth in the translanguaging groups, with post-test means between 69.4% and 80.3% as opposed to the control group post-test means between 56.6% and 66.1%.

Figure 1: Pre/Post Pre/Post Grammar Score by Study

The size of the effect varies somewhat. Studies in online settings (Sun, 2024; Aziz, 2026) show slightly larger gains than studies in face-to-face classroom contexts, suggesting that the cognitive advantage of a translanguaging approach applies to online contexts, as well as offline classroom environments. The studies in Saudi Arabia (Mleiki, 2025; Alqahtani, 2022) are slightly lower than those in Algeria and Egypt, a fact that may be explained by the greater institutional constraints on the use of Arabic in some Saudi contexts (Alahmad, 2025).

5.2 Translanguaging Strategies and Their Frequency

A review of the thirty studies in this synthesis reveals that nine translanguaging strategies were used for teaching English grammar to Arabic speakers. These include the most widely reported strategy - contrastive grammar explanation in Arabic - to some less commonly described strategies (translingual creative writing, multimodal resource integration). Table 2 outlines these strategies, the number of studies in which they have been reported and an example from the literature.

Table 2: Translanguaging Strategies reported in English Grammar Instruction for Arabic-Speaking Learners

Figure 2 is a horizontal bar chart of the number of times each of the nine translanguaging strategies were reported in the 30 studies included. In Figure 2, contrastive grammar explanation is clearly the most popular strategy (n = 28), followed by teacher Arabic-English code alternation (n = 24) and metalinguistic discussion in Arabic (n = 22). This trio of strategies forms the basic "translanguaging grammar lesson" in Arab EFL classrooms. The low frequency of identity text projects (n = 7) and digital translanguaging strategies (n = 9) is largely due to the recent development of such innovative strategies in the literature (Sari, 2024).

Figure 2: Use of Translanguaging Strategies

5.3 Learner and Teacher Attitudes

Data on attitudes among the studies highlight a generally positive attitude profile toward translanguaging among both Arabic-speaking learners and teachers, with some key variations along the lines of institutional pressure, language ideology and professionalism. Table 3 provides an overview of the attitudinal data from ten studies

that reported systematic data on learner and/or teacher attitudes to translanguaging for English grammar teaching.

Table 3: Profiles of Learner and Teacher Attitudes

Figure 3 is a stacked bar chart of the proportion of positive, neutral and negative attitudes seen across the ten studies for learners and teachers, respectively. As Figure 3 illustrates, there is a pattern of more positive attitudes in learners than teachers across the ten studies, with the average percentage of positive learner attitudes at 84% and average percentage of positive teacher attitudes at 72%. The main teacher concerns observed - anxiety about their professional evaluation, institutional policy misalignment, curriculum constraints and lack of training - come together in institutional and ideological constraints, as opposed to concerns about translanguaging's pedagogic utility (Aldafas, 2023).

Figure 3: Learner vs. Teacher Ratings

5.4 Contextual and Institutional Factors

Translanguaging pedagogy in Arab EFL classrooms does not exist in isolation; rather, it is a complex phenomenon that is shaped by institutional, curricular, political and sociocultural factors that differ from one country and education level to another. Table 4 identifies the major contextual factors mentioned in the studies, and evaluates their positive and negative impact on implementing translanguaging on a five-point scale.

Table 4: Factors that Impact Translanguaging

The greatest institutional enablers are teacher training in translanguaging (mean rating 4.1), learner motivation (4.3) and availability of digital resources (3.8). On the other hand, institutional English-only language policy (1.8) and alignment to assessment (1.9) rank the highest as constraints, confirming findings from the attitudinal literature. National language policy (2.1) and curriculum flexibility (2.4) also emerge more as constraints than enablers in most of the contexts covered in the studies included (Tribushinina, 2025). Figure 4 shows a radar chart of the enabling/constraining nature of the ten contextual factors. As Figure 4 illustrates, the radar chart displays an interesting pattern: the individual contextual factors (particularly learner motivation and teacher training) are closer to the enabling end of the spectrum while the structural contextual factors (particularly English-only policies and assessment) are closer to the constraining end of the spectrum. This observation implies that the most successful implementation of translanguaging occurs when individual-level factors are well-prepared to implement translanguaging and willing to persist despite the constraining factors (Schaefer, 2023).

Figure 4: Enabling/Constraining Contextual Factors (Radar Chart)

5.5 Assessment Practices and Outcomes

Another one of the most complex and unresolved issues in the translanguaging literature is the relationship between translanguaging pedagogies and assessment. Table 5 below provides a summary of the assessment practices used in the experimental and quasi-experimental studies in the synthesis, and whether or not the assessment was aligned to the translanguaging approach used in the classroom.

Table 5: Assessment in Translanguaging Grammar Studies

There are a number of things to note in Table 5. First, almost all the assessment tests used by these studies were monolingual in English, even though the instruction given may have included translanguaging. This presents a challenge because the studies are addressing whether translanguaging in instruction results in better performance on English-only assessments, but they are not addressing whether translanguaging-inclusive assessment might result in even better performance. The one study that used bilingual prompts for assessment (Almuafa, 2024) did not exhibit a lower improvement than the monolingual English-only assessment studies, suggesting that there is no trade-off between assessment alignment and English grammar learning (Almashour et al., 2026). In Figure 5, we show a scatter plot of assessment-instruction alignment vs. improvement in grammar scores for the eight studies. As can be seen in Figure 5, Although the number of studies is small to draw definitive conclusions, there appears to be a trend suggesting more improvement in the partial or full alignment studies than the non-alignment studies. Figure 6 shows a line graph of the trajectories of grammar scores (pre-test, immediate post-test, and delayed retention test) for translanguaging and control groups for the four studies that measured delayed retention. As shown in Figure 6, the translanguaging groups perform similarly to the control groups at the delayed retention test, suggesting the grammatical learning that is possible through translanguaging is not short-lived, but has led to the consolidation of knowledge (Uddin, 2024).

Figure 5: Number of Studies with Test-Instruction Alignment

Figure 6: Grammar Post-Test Scores over Time (TL vs. Control)

6. Discussion

6.1 The Cognitive Case for Translanguaging in Grammar Instruction

The set of results outlined in this paper presents a strong cognitive argument for the use of translanguaging in teaching English grammar to Arabic speakers. The fact that translanguaging conditions outperform English-only control conditions on post-tests of grammar knowledge and retention tests, has implications for the learning benefits of translanguaging that are consistent with the cognitive scaffolding framework outlined above. The ability of Arabic-speaking learners to access their current grammatical knowledge in order to process and contrast English grammatical structures is a type of deep processing - the integration of new and existing knowledge - that is known in the cognitive psychology of learning to predict learning, retention and transfer. The explanation strategy with reference to contrastive grammar, the most frequently reported translanguaging strategy in the included studies, in particular, operationalizes this cognitive advantage. This strategy makes the comparison between Arabic and English grammars explicit, prompting learners to consider differences and similarities between the two languages, and engaging their prior knowledge and highlighting the unique target form of the English structure. The success of this strategy in relation to a number of different grammatical forms (from comparative adjectives - Belhadia, 2024 - to verb tense morphology and syntactic structures) suggests a pedagogic generalization, rather than a case-specific strategy (Cenoz, 2025).

6.2 The Identity and Affective Dimension

In addition to its cognitive advantages, the attitudinal findings reviewed in this paper reveal important identity and emotional features of translanguaging that are likely to impact the learning of grammar. Students who perceive that their Arabic identities are being supported in the English classroom report higher motivation, engagement and participation in grammatical learning activities, and greater belief in their language learning abilities. These feelings are not incidental to learning grammar, but influence the amount and nature of engagement with input and practice, which affect learning. The very high levels of positive attitude shown by Gomaa's (2022) learners of heritage Arabic living in diaspora suggest that the identity-related benefits of translanguaging may be particularly significant for learners in such settings, who face pressure to assimilate to English-dominated environments, even as they hold on to their Arabic heritage. In such situations, translanguaging in grammar teaching is not just a means to pedagogic efficiency but a means of cultural affirmation that has social and psychological ramifications. The point here is that the evidence for translanguaging pedagogy can't be limited to claims about the cognitive efficiency of translanguaging; it must also take into account matters of linguistic justice and student dignity that give translanguaging its moral as well as practical traction (Gomaa, 2022).

6.3 Institutional Constraints and the Policy Gap

Perhaps the most relevant finding of this synthesis is the continued disconnect between the empirical evidence of translanguaging success and its limited use in classrooms. The institutional factors in Table 4 - monolingual policies and assessment, and a lack of teacher training - are a structural impediment to the practice of translanguaging that empirical evidence cannot address. The survey data presented in Table 3 reveal that teachers, who are the main drivers of pedagogic change, often have positive attitudes towards the practice of translanguaging, but professionally feel unable to practice it fully. This policy problem requires simultaneous actions at various levels. At the classroom level, teachers need opportunities to develop their theoretical and practical knowledge of translanguaging in ways that can be applied to them in-class curriculum. At the institutional level, school and university administrators need to re-evaluate English-only policies in view of the findings presented here and provide safe spaces for the practice of translanguaging. At the national level, language planning authorities in Arab countries - many of which face complex multilingual situations that involve Modern Standard Arabic, dialects and English - need to create language-in-education policies that recognize and support the students' diversity (Mleiki, 2025).

6.4 Digital Translanguaging as an Emerging Frontier

The emergence of digital translanguaging as a sub-strand in the literature suggests a potentially important avenue of development in the teaching of grammar. The use of digital platforms not only offers a more accessible way of practicing translanguaging pedagogy; it offers new opportunities to reinforce it. Instant access to bilingual dictionaries, translators and multilingual resources helps to ease the transition between Arabic and English during the learning process. Virtual learning platforms facilitate peer-to-peer translanguaging at scale, enabling learners to translanguage with each other to develop their Arabic grammar skills, but still produce English text for the teacher to mark. The Sun (2024) study of the DingTalk platform and the digital translanguaging studies of Aziz (2026) and Vavouras (2026) suggest that the design of digital platforms has a major impact on the nature of translanguaging practice that occurs in digital learning spaces. Multilingual

support in platforms (through multilingual interfaces, translation tools, and discussion tools that allow learners to respond in mixed languages) is likely to enable productive translanguaging to a greater extent than platforms that restrict the use of English. As English as Foreign Language (EFL) teaching and learning in Arab contexts moves to incorporate more digital tools, the design of these tools to support translanguaging is likely to be a key strategy to enhance grammar learning (Phillips, 2024).

7. Implications

7.1 Implications for Pedagogy

The most obvious implication of this meta-analysis is that English grammar teachers of Arabic-speaking learners need to be encouraged and empowered to translanguaging in their teaching. In particular, the findings indicate that contrastive explanation of grammar - highlighting the similarities and differences between Arabic and English grammatical structures and forms - should be a regular feature of grammar instruction. This does not necessarily mean teaching all lessons in Arabic, but using Arabic in the right places: at the most challenging points of cognitive effort, such as when teaching new grammatical structures or remedying persistent grammatical errors that result from the interfering influence of Arabic. Translanguaging peer feedback on grammar learning tasks, the use of bilingual scaffolded worksheets, and the creation of student-generated bilingual grammar glossaries are all examples of strategies that have been shown to be effective and that can be easily integrated into formal lesson plans, without radical curriculum overhaul. Teachers need to be provided with professional development in how to construct translanguaging grammar tasks, how to manage the translanguaging classroom, and how to explain to school administrators and parents why translanguaging is pedagogically important (as their expectations may be monolingual English-only). Teachers need to build confidence in being able to articulate this rationale as well as skill in practice, given the attitudinal evidence that professional fear is a key impediment to sustained translanguaging practice (Alqahtani, 2022).

7.2 Implications for Assessment Design

The lack of fit between instruction and assessment documented in this synthesis needs the attention of curriculum and assessment experts. Grammar tests used as the outcome of translanguaging instruction should, at very least, be analyzed for how accessible they are to learners who have mediated their understanding of the instruction via Arabic. Ideally, assessment designers should consider the development of bilingual or translanguaging-compatible assessment formats - such as tasks that invite learners to plan or outline in Arabic prior to producing English language products - that can assess grammar knowledge while not penalizing learners for the processing pathways they took to learn the knowledge in the first place. The result from Almuafa (2024) that alignment with assessment does not impact English-medium grammar scores is promising evidence that these are indeed possible and deserving of further research (Aldafas, 2025).

7.3 Implications for Language Policy

Institutional barriers identified in this synthesis indicate language policy reforms are needed in Arab EFL education systems. National, institutional and curricular policy documents should explicitly recognize pedagogical translanguaging as a legitimate evidence-based practice, and should establish accountability measures that assess teacher performance based on evidence of learning outcomes, rather than on language purity. Teachers' evaluation rubrics (where the use of Arabic in the English classroom is penalized) should be updated in light of the evidence synthesized in this study. Finally, Arab countries should add modules on the theory and practice of translanguaging to their pre-service teacher education programs, so that all new EFL teachers have a principled and evidence-based understanding of how to manage Arabic in the EFL classroom (Azaz, 2021).

8. Conclusion

This paper has shown that translanguaging is not simply tolerated as a coping mechanism in EFL classrooms in the Arab world, but an evidence-based and principled teaching strategy that has proven beneficial for English grammar learning. The paper has used a synthesis of thirty studies (mostly published between 2020 and 2026) to demonstrate that, compared to English-only instruction, translanguaging delivers superior results on measures of grammar learning, that it is generally well received by learners and teachers, and that it works in both face-to-face and online classrooms. At the same time, the synthesis has indicated the enduring institutional barriers - English-only policies and practices, monolingual testing and evaluation, and limited teacher training - that stand in the way of these benefits. To overcome these challenges, efforts need to be made at classroom, institutional and policy levels. Teachers need support to develop confidence and skill in "translanguaging". Institutions need to have policies that support and sanction translanguaging. Testing regimes need to be refined to take account of and assess the multilingual learning processes that occur when grammar is being acquired.

And researchers need to build on the evidence base through well-designed research that can map language learners' long-term development of grammar, the effects of different translanguaging strategies on different grammatical forms, and the interaction between translanguaging and other instructional factors. The Arabic-English language pair, with its typologically interesting similarities and differences and the significance of the language pair for millions of learners both in the Arab world and in the Arab diaspora, offers a rich ground for this ongoing research. Translanguaging requires Arabic speakers to not lose their language; it requires teachers to value it as the multifunctional cognitive and cultural asset that it is.

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