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The use of Translanguaging in Read- Aloud Sessions for young children

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Preface

This thesis concludes my studies in Early Childhood Education at Malmö University. My interest in this topic grew from seeing the potential within the multilingual backgrounds of my own children and the children I worked with in an international preschool. I am inspired by the unique way they perceive the world through different languages. Because reading areas and books are vital for expanding a child's inner potential, I wanted to explore how reorganizing the reading corner and utilizing translanguaging could better support these children's identities and learning. I would like to sincerely thank the preschool, the staff, and especially the children and their parents for their participation and support throughout this project. I am also deeply grateful to my supervisor, Jessica Eng, for her guidance. Furthermore, I would like to thank course coordinator, Therese Lindgren, writing centre, Adam Gray, Föflex prefect, Martin Harling and all the teachers in Föflex for their support in this journey.

Finally, a very special thanks goes to my husband, Faizan and my three beautiful boys for their immense patience and support during these three intense years. As it required dedicating long hours in front of the laptop after work and during weekends.

Abstract

Syftet

Syftet med detta utvecklingsprojekt var att utforska en omorganiserad läshörna som uppmuntrar transspråk för barn i åldern 1–3. Jag ville överbrygga gapet mellan vad den svenska läroplanen (Lpfö 18) säger om flerspråkighet och vad som faktiskt sker i den dagliga förskole praktiken.

Teori

Utvecklingsprojektet grundar sig på ett sociokulturellt perspektiv (Säljö 2010), där språk och den fysiska miljön ses som medierande verktyg. Analysen använder begreppen, mediering, scaffolding, den proximala utvecklingszonen (ZPD), den indikativa funktionen och dubbel representation för att förstå hur läshörna och lärarinteraktion kunde stödja barns språkanvändning och meningsskapande.

Metod

Studien har genomförts som ett aktionsforskningsprojekt strukturerat enligt en aktionsforskningspiral två cykler. Läshörnan omorganiserades fysiskt, och två observationer (Cykel 1 och Cykel 2) genomfördes med två pedagoger och fem barn i åldern 1–3. Datainsamlingen bestod av videoinspelningar, semistrukturerade intervjuer samt en forskare dagbok (loggbok) för löpande observationer och reflektioner. För att säkerställa hög språklig kvalitet och tydlighet har AI-baserat språkstöd använts för redigering, medan det intellektuella innehållet, analysen och slutsatserna i sin helhet är min egen.

Resultat

Genom att placera flerspråkiga böcker på låga hyllor skapades förutsättningar för barnen att engagera sig i litteraturen på eget initiativ. Analysen visar att barnen använde både sina modersmål och engelska under högläsningen, men att deras engagemang var beroende av pedagogens respons. I Cykel 1, där barnens språkliga bidrag inte bekräftades aktivt,

tenderade deltagandet att minska. Detta språk och bekräftande barnens ord, ökade engagemanget och interaktionen markant. Genom gemensam reflektion utvecklade pedagogerna en djupare förståelse för transspråkande, även om de betonade behovet av ytterligare praktisk övning för att fullt ut integrera strategierna i vardagen.

Nyckelord: Högläsning, läshörna, transspråkande, mediering, språkliga repertoarer, sociokulturellt perspektiv

Abstract

Purpose

The purpose of this development project was to explore a reorganized reading corner that encourages translanguaging for children aged 1–3. I wanted to bridge the gap between what the Swedish curriculum (Lpfö 18) states about multilingualism and what actually happens in daily preschool practice.

Theory

The development project is based on a sociocultural perspective (Säljö, 2010), where language and the physical environment are seen as mediating, scaffolding, the zone of proximal development (ZPD) to understand how the reading corner and teacher interaction could support children's language use and meaning making.

Method

The study followed an action research spiral consisting of two cycles. The reading corner was physically reorganized, and two observations (Cycle 1 and Cycle 2) were conducted with two educators and five children aged 1–3. Empirical data was collected through video recordings, a logbook for writing down my reflections and observations, and semi-structured interviews. The analysis alternated between theory and empirical data. AI-based language support was used to improve clarity, but all ideas and analyses are my own.

Results

By placing multilingual books on low shelves, the children were given the opportunity to engage with them independently. The children used both their mother tongues and English during read-aloud sessions, but their engagement increased the most when the educator actively acknowledged their languages. In Cycle 1, where the children's own words were not noticed, participation decreased. In Cycle 2, this changed; when the educator paused, switched between languages, and picked up on the children's expressions, it led to greater engagement. Through reflection, the educators learned more about translanguaging, but both felt that they need more practical practice.

Keywords: Read-aloud, reading corner, translanguaging, mediation, linguistic repertoires, sociocultural perspective.

Contents

Introduction.....	8
1. Problem Formulation	8
1.1. Aim and Development Objectives	9
1.2. Background.....	10
1.3. The National Curriculum Lpfö 18 (Skolverket 2018)	10
1.4. Translanguaging and Literacy Engagement.....	11
1.5. Environment and Pedagogical Scaffolding.....	11
2. Literature Review.....	13
2.1. The Reading Corner as a Learning Environment	13
2.2. Multilingualism in preschool	13
2.3. Reading-Aloud and Shared Reading.....	14
2.4. Translanguaging.....	15
2.5. Limitation in Literature.....	16
3. Theoretical Framework.....	18
3.1. Mediation and language.....	18
3.2. Language and functions	19
3.3. Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD).....	19
4. Concepts.....	21
5. Methods.....	22
5.1. Qualitative approach	22
6. Action Research.....	23
7. Data collection methods.....	25
7.1. Observations	25
7.2. Video recordings.....	26
7.3. Logbook	26
7.4. Photographs.....	26
7.5. Interviews.....	26
7.6. Selection.....	27
7.7. Research ethical considerations	28
8. Development Intervention	30
8.1. Planning	31
8.2. Implementation	32
9. Validity in Action Research.....	38

10. Analysis.....	39
11. Discussion.....	45
References.....	50
Appendix 1 (Interviews).....	53
Appendix 2 (Reading area before reorganization).....	54
Appendix 3 (Reading corner after re organization).....	55
Appendix 4 (Observations).....	57
Appendix 5 (Reflection documentation).....	58
Appendix 6 (Language mapping).....	59

Introduction

A young multilingual child in a Swedish International preschool is rarely met by their own language in the reading corner. According to the Swedish national curriculum, Lpfö 18 (Skolverket 2025), preschools have a clear responsibility to ensure that all children are given the opportunity to develop both the Swedish language and their respective mother tongues. Language development is a central mission in preschool. It strengthens a child's identity and their ability to communicate emotions and thoughts. Despite this, a common didactic challenge in international preschools is that reading aloud is often conducted only in Swedish, even when the children speak different primary languages (Skolverket 2025, p. 15). For many children, this means that they do not hear their home language during one of the most language-rich activities of the preschool day.

1. Problem Formulation

During my time in a multilingual preschool group with children aged 1-3, I observed something that bothered me. The reading corner had one basket with books in just Swedish, see Appendix 2. The children present in the group were all multilingual. Children's mother tongues, such as English, Urdu, and Arabic, were not visible. This monolingual norm in the room created a barrier. The children struggled to connect with the stories, and I could see their engagement fade quickly during read-aloud sessions. The gap between the curriculum's multilingual goals and the everyday practice in the reading corner was too large to ignore.

As Kim (2016, p. 383) writes, translanguaging techniques do more than teaching language. They help children understand texts more deeply, enabling them to draw on all their linguistic resources. In the group I observed, these techniques were missing. Reading-aloud was conducted only in Swedish, and the children's spontaneous use of their home languages went unacknowledged. Translanguaging felt like the right approach because, as Svensson (2018, p. 5) explains, it does not ask children to leave their home languages at the door. Instead, it welcomes all languages as part of the learning practices. The children's full language backgrounds needed to be a resource, not something silently pushed aside.

To build the foundation for this project, I chose a sociocultural perspective. For me, this lens is important because it sees the physical environment and digital tools as mediators in a child's development. It also allows children's languages to be treated as tools for growth rather than obstacles. With this perspective, the project could move beyond simply adding books. It could rethink how the whole reading environment supports multilingual meaning-making.

1.1. Aim and Development Objectives

The purpose of this development project is to create a reorganized reading corner that helps children aged 1-3 use their full available linguistic repertoire during read-aloud sessions. To achieve this, the project aims to reduce the gap between the multilingual goals of the Swedish curriculum for preschool, Lpfö 18 (Skolverket 2018) and the Swedish reading practices currently used in the preschool

From this overall aim, the following research question was formulated:

How can a reorganized reading corner with translanguaging strategies support multilingual children's engagement and language use during read-aloud in early childhood classrooms?

For me, it is interesting to examine how physical changes to the reading environment, combined with translanguaging strategies, can influence children's engagement and language use. The reading corner I observed had books only in Swedish, and read-alouds were conducted focused on Swedish, even though no child in the group had Swedish as a mother tongue. This mismatch between the children's linguistic reality and the learning environment made me want to explore what would happen if space and practices were changed.

Against this background, the project focused on three development objectives as follows:

- **To reorganize the physical reading corner** by sorting the book collection and placing materials on low shelves at the children's eye level. This makes Swedish, English, and mother-tongue books visible and easy to reach together, so that children aged 1-3 can pick

up and explore books on their own. The aim is to create a space where children's languages are present and where spontaneous engagement with books in any language is encouraged.

- **To expand the multilingual collection** by introducing books with new literature in children's home languages. This includes setting up a collaborative system for sharing resources across different groups, ensuring a fresh variety of resources.
- **To provide digital support by integrating Polyglutt QR codes**, allowing children to listen to stories in their home language while holding the physical book. This gives language support even when the pedagogue does not speak that particular language.

By reaching these objectives, the project seeks to bridge the gap between what the curriculum says about multilingualism and what happens daily in the reading corner. It is a practical attempt to bring research, policy, and practice closer together.

1.2. Background

This chapter explains the three main ideas behind the project: translanguaging, child centred environment, and pedagogical scaffolding. It also shows how these ideas, when seen through a sociocultural lens, can help us adapt to physical spaces and tools to better support multilingual children. I want to be clear that I have followed ethical guidelines throughout. My focus is on the reading environment and the interactions that happen there, not on children or pedagogues as private individuals.

1.3. The National Curriculum Lpfö 18 (Skolverket 2018)

According to the revised Swedish National Curriculum for the Preschool Lpfö 18 (Skolverket 2018), preschools must help children understand different cultures. It also clearly states that children with a mother tongue other than Swedish should be given the opportunity to develop both their and Swedish (Skolverket 2018, p. 8). This is a requirement, not just a nice idea. The curriculum also says that digital tools should be used to support children's learning (Skolverket 2018, p. 9).

In the group where I did the project, these requirements were not visible in the reading corner. All the books were in Swedish, and the read-aloud were done only in Swedish. To change this, the project brought in books in English, Urdu, and Arabic, and used digital tools like Polyglutt to provide audio support in several languages. In short, the curriculum gave the project both its direction and its legitimacy.

1.4. Translanguaging and Literacy Engagement

Translanguaging became the main strategy for this project. Svensson (2018, p. 1) describes it as an approach that allows a child to use all their language resources rather than keeping languages separate. In practice, this means that a child's Swedish and their mother tongue, whether English, Urdu, or Arabic, can help each other and grow together.

When we stop separating languages in the reading corner, something shifts. Children can use their home language to think, to make connections, and to understand stories more deeply. For children aged 1-3, this is a significant shift away from a teacher-centred approach toward a more inclusive practice (Kim 2016, p. 384). At this young age, connecting home and preschool is especially important in a multilingual world (Kim 2016, p. 371). Instead of just sitting and listening to a story in a language they may not fully understand, children can use what they already know and take an active part in making sense of the story (Kim 2016, p. 377). When that happens, their language backgrounds stop being a problem and become a real resource.

It would have been interesting to follow each child's language development over a longer time, but due to time constraints, that was not possible within this project. I focused instead on what I could observe directly, such as how engaged the children were, how they interacted, and how they used different languages during the reading-aloud sessions.

1.5. Environment and Pedagogical Scaffolding

Axelsson (2019, p. 2) writes in the report published by Skolverket that QR codes can be used to promote multilingualism in preschool. In line with this, iPads and Polyglutt QR codes were introduced into the reading corner, aligning with the project's objective of integrating Polyglutt QR codes as digital scaffolding. These digital tools function as multimodal

resources (Nilsen et al. 2023, p. 13), enabling children to be active language users while engaging with physical books, even when the teacher does not speak the language (Nilsen et al. 2023, p. 19). Thus, the digital environment becomes an active partner in the scaffolding process.

2. Literature Review

This chapter presents the research that informed the project. It is organized into four themes, followed by a discussion of age considerations and a summary.

2.1. The Reading Corner as a Learning Environment

The research conducted by Cabell et al. (2019, p. 5) shows how classroom organization plays a pivotal role in children's language development. The author found that a well-organized classroom creates opportunities for learning, while a chaotic setup can cause significant gaps between the pedagogue, the child, and learning. When materials are arranged properly, teachers can focus on interactive reading rather than managing children's behaviour and looking for the material (Cabell et al. 2019, p. 12).

A study from Indonesia by Rahimah et al. (2023, p. 216) came to similar conclusions. They used observations and interviews and found that reading corners were essential for language development. When books were accessible, children became more independent and explored more freely (Rahimah et al., 2023, p. 218).

Together, these studies highlight how accessibility and an organized space are important for linguistic participation. From a sociocultural perspective, an accessible environment functions as a mediating tool that helps children take part and make meaning. Thus, reorganizing the reading corner was an important first step in my project. This meant placing books on low, open shelf at eye level so that even the youngest children can reach and choose books independently.

2.2. Multilingualism in preschool

Beyond the physical setup, research highlights how pedagogues can work with children who use multiple languages. Alanis (2013, p. 45) argues that when teachers pair children with different language levels, children feel safe to practice speaking without being afraid of mistakes. This creates a low-pressure environment where different languages feel natural (Alanis 2013, p. 46). The reading corner should be exactly that kind of space, a place where

multilingual exploration is welcomed, and home languages are seen as resources, not problems.

Damber and Randevåg (2024, p. 62) point out that a Swedish word might mean something quite different from a similar word in a child's mother tongue. This can confuse children and slow down their understanding. They suggest using multimodal resources and verbal explanations together with visual aids to bridge the gap. This insight directly informed the decision to integrate Polyglutt QR codes into the reading corner. The codes allow children hear a story in their home language while looking at the pictures in a physical book. In this way, the digital tool functions as a mediator, supporting the child's movement from what they know in their mother tongue to the Swedish language context.

2.3. Reading-Aloud and Shared Reading

Quality read-aloud practices for multilingual children need both the right books and an interactive approach. Yong Kong (2024, p. 33) found that books with a balanced combinations of words and pictures help children connect the story to their own experiences, which builds vocabulary and understanding. Based on this, books that were too difficult for 1–3-year-olds were removed in this project to ensure that the remaining materials matched the children's developmental level.

Research on translanguaging during read-aloud also stresses the importance of interaction. Beauchemin et al. (2024, p. 583) describe translanguaging read-aloud as interactive and inclusive. Children can listen in one language while thinking in another. Instead of replacing Swedish words, teachers can place the home language and Swedish side by side (Beauchemin et al. 2024, p. 583). Their study also shows that children who did not engage much in larger groups became more expressive in small groups where their language efforts were noticed. This finding supported why the project limited reading sessions to five children, to give more room for turn-taking, gestures, and translanguaging.

Beauchemin et al. (2024, p. 595) further found that when teachers acknowledged children's different languages and cultural backgrounds, new meanings emerge during shared reading.

In this way translanguaging supports both language development and identity. These findings guided the project's focus on pedagogues responsiveness during read aloud sessions

2.4. Translanguaging

Translanguaging is the main technique used for language development in this project. Torpsten (2018, p. 105) defines it as a way for multilingual people to draw on all their languages to better understand and communicate. In her study of Swedish preschools, and international preschools, she found that when teaching focuses solely on the majority language, children's home languages are pushed into the background. This can harm their understanding and engagement (Torpsten 2018, p. 105). When children use their full language repertoire, learning becomes both more effective and more inclusive.

Furthermore, Torpsten (2018, p. 106) writes that classrooms used to keep languages separate, whereas today's diverse society needs languages to be mixed so that children can make sense of the world. An ecological approach, where children learn through talking with friends and teachers using all their languages, is very powerful. This supports the idea of the reading corner as a social space that welcomes all languages.

A key finding in Torpsten's research was the point about positive teacher responses (Torpsten 2018, p. 108). When a teacher acknowledges and includes those languages, it can be a turning point. The child feels more confident and joins more actively. In my project, this finding directly shaped how I worked with the pedagogues. At first, they were unsure about using languages they did not fully know themselves. Nevertheless, Torpsten's (2018, p. 107) findings suggest that a teacher's openness can be just as important as the materials, and that a positive response works as scaffolding for the child.

All these studies together show that translanguaging, when placed in a more interactive environment, can really change what happens in the reading corner. My early observations showed that these strategies were not being use. My project is to fill a gap between what the research recommends and what actually happened in practice.

2.5. Limitation in Literature

It is important to acknowledge that most of the research cited in this review was conducted with children aged 3-6 years, while the present project focuses on children aged 1-3 years. For example, Yong Kong (2024) studied children aged 3-4 years, and Cabell et al. (2019) studied prekindergarten children (ages approximately 4-5). Nevertheless, the underlying principles of translanguaging, accessible environments, and multimodal scaffolding are developmental, not age specific. Especially:

- Torpsten (2018, p. 107) notes that positive teacher responses to children's languages are critical for developing interest in learning regardless of age.
- The physical principles of accessibility (low shelves, visible books) apply to all age groups, though the specific height adjustments for 1–3-year-olds are based on existing research.
- Nilsen et al. (2023) argue that digital tools as mediating resources are effective for multilingual children across all age groups.

However, the present project acknowledges that further research is needed, specifically on translanguaging practices with children under 3 years. Therefore, findings of this project should be seen as an exploratory contribution to an under-researched age group rather than a direct application of findings from older children.

Summary of Literature Review

The research points to three key findings that guided this development project. First, organized and accessible reading corners increase children's engagement and independence (Cabell et al. 2019; Rahimah et al. 2023). Second, multilingualism is a resource, not a problem, and multimodal tools like audio scaffolding comprehension by linking home knowledge to new content (Alanis 2013; Damber & Randevåg 2024). Third, translanguaging during read-aloud, especially in small groups with teacher acknowledgment, significantly increases engagement and communication (Beauchemin et al. 2024; Torpsten 2018). From

a sociocultural perspective, an accessible environment works as a mediating artefact, and the teacher's responsive interaction draws children into their zone of proximal development. Initial observations confirmed that such strategies and multilingual resources were missing. The changes I made are grounded in these findings. Many multilingual preschool groups in Sweden still have a reading corner that only speaks one language, and research like this can help change that. The next chapter presents the theoretical framework used to analyze the intervention.

3. Theoretical Framework

I decided to draw on the sociocultural theory of Lev Vygotsky, as presented by Säljö, which provides a framework for my research. It supports the idea that social interaction among adults and children can benefit children's learning.

Säljö (2010, p. 65) writes that a child does not inherit an existing understanding of the world, but it is constructed by an adult through building relations between what they see, hear and feel around them. In this project I want to see how children respond to teachers acknowledging their home languages. Säljö (2010, p. 66) highlights that Vygotsky argued that children cannot learn in isolation but need social interaction. In my study, the interaction through reading aloud took place in a reading corner for young children's language development.

Säljö (2010, p. 67) further writes that Vygotsky explains semiotic resources to a child when they socially interact with adults. Children tend to learn what an adult is already engaged in, such as while talking, taking turns; this makes the child an apprentice in the learning process. In a sociocultural perspective explained by Vygotsky, communication, how language is used, is entirely based on the connection between the child and its surroundings. Language isn't just for talking; it is a tool children use to think, within the framework of a certain culture and social community.

3.1. Mediation and language

As presented above, Säljö explains that in Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, humans do not directly interact with the world, but instead, through tools, with language being one of the most powerful. Säljö (2010, p. 83) highlights that children use several tools in language for meaning making. In my study, I noticed that children use their home languages alongside pointing gestures. From a sociocultural perspective, as Säljö (2010, p. 83) has explained, I explore in my study how children rely on tools along with adults to make meaning where both language and gestures function as mediating tools in interaction. Language development gives direction, precision, and understanding in conversations. Words provide

description and meaning, which is very important for young children when reading with an adult.

Säljö (2010, p. 84) writes that through language, knowledge can be exchanged between people, functioning as a tool for understanding things in different situations and from different perspectives. In my study, using translanguaging as a tool, I can draw on the languages present around the children to exchange knowledge through reading aloud and connect it to the context.

3.2. Language and functions

Säljö (2010, pp. 105–106) explains that Vygotsky viewed children’s development as a process that begins in social interaction and gradually becomes part of the child’s own understanding. In this perspective, language is not only a way to speak but a tool that helps children make sense of the world together with others.

Through interaction, children encounter ideas, words, and actions that they later use to understand and communicate in new situations. As Säljö (2010, p. 115) notes, what a person expresses is shaped by the social situation they are part of, and thinking develops through communication, questions, and shared activities.

In this development project, a read-aloud is therefore understood as an active social event. Children do not simply listen; they participate by responding with words, gestures, and sounds. When they use Swedish, English, or their home languages during the read-aloud, they draw on all their available linguistic resources to connect what they see and hear with their own experiences. Translanguaging becomes a communicative tool that supports this meaning-making process, allowing children to build understanding together with the pedagogue and with one another.

3.3. Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)

Säljö (2010, p. 119–120) explains Vygotsky’s Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), a space between what learners can do on their own and what they can achieve with the help of social interaction and language.

Further, Säljö (2010, p. 122) notes that Vygotsky emphasizes that development takes place in sociocultural conditions; specific environments through activities that can lead in certain directions. A development zone is a space where learning is carried out by a competent person, such as a teacher. Säljö (2010, p. 124) writes that a teacher guides the student through a problem, being a practical part of the solution, called scaffolding. This explains that the child is not alone in the learning process; with the teacher's knowledge, the child can see and open new perspectives on the already existing or underlying knowledge.

In my study, I plan to examine, from Vygotsky's perspective, how translanguaging as a communicative resource mediates the Zone of Proximal Development. By analysing when translanguaging is used as a tool in social interaction, how it allows children to enter the ZPD, and how it bridges the gap between children's latent insight in their first language and their future competence in language development through scaffolding.

4. Concepts

Patel and Davidson (2019, p. 22) write about the importance of concepts in a research study. It helps the researcher to develop a connection between what is being studied and what the concept means to avoid misunderstanding.

Translanguaging: As Torpsten (2018, p. 105) mentions, is a pedagogical practice in which multilinguals mix different languages to understand the best of what it means to be understood. It is the switch to a different language to enhance linguistic resources strategically and make learning and interaction easier. In a preschool environment, a pedagogue can introduce the use of a child's dominant language as a tool to develop interest and understanding in language development.

Mediation: Säljö (2010, p. 66) explains that humans do not have direct contact with the world directly, but through tools such as objects and languages. In this project, books and language function as mediating tools for children's learning.

Scaffolding: Säljö (2010, p. 124) explains when a person with the help of a more competent person goes through a process of learning to achieve knowledge. In my study I plan to apply it as a part of the environment and resources to acknowledge children's language and their mother tongue during reading-aloud activities.

Zone of proximal Development (ZPD): The space between what a child can do alone and what they can achieve with support (Säljö 2010, p. 122). This will be used to analyse the gap between children's spontaneous language use and their fuller participation when supported, as well as the pedagogues' own learning process.

5. Methods

This section presents the methodological foundations of the development project. The method section is based on the project's aim to investigate how a reorganized reading corner with multilingual materials can promote translanguaging and language development among young children in preschool.

5.1. Qualitative approach

For this development project, a qualitative research approach was chosen to investigate and understand how a reorganized reading corner with multilingual materials can support young children's translanguaging and language development.

According to Patel and Davidson (2019, p. 55), qualitative research is characterized by a flexible research process in which data collection and analysis occur in parallel, which suits the iterative nature of this development project.

In addition, the qualitative method was selected for its emphasis on meaning-making rather than measurement, foregrounding language, interpretation, and a deep understanding of phenomena (Patel & Davidson 2019, p. 55). Since translanguaging involves nuanced linguistic interaction, a qualitative approach prioritizes words and situated communication, enabling exploration of how participants draw on their linguistic repertoires in practice. Through methods such as observation and in-depth engagement with participants' experiences, the development project can capture the contextual and lived dimensions of translanguaging as a pedagogical resource. Consequently, this allows for a deeper, more nuanced understanding of how translanguaging functions within the specific educational setting and what it means for the participants involved.

6. Action Research

The development project employs action research as its methodological framework. Elvstrand and Närvänen (2019, p. 45) describe action research as a process consisting of four interconnected components: action, research, participation, and reflection. This approach supports the study by enabling action and reflection, with pedagogues actively involved in shaping projects. This ensures that the findings are connected to practice while simultaneously contributing to knowledge development. Indeed, this was reflected in collaborative planning and reflection with the two pedagogues throughout the project (see Appendix 5).

Furthermore, Elvstrand and Närvänen (2019, pp. 47–48) explain that action research unfolds over time as a repeating spiral of planning, action, and fact-finding. These phases are repeated over time, allowing the project to be continuously developed and refined based on ongoing analysis. The choice of action research was motivated by the project's aim to transform the existing monolingual reading corner into an interactive multilingual environment. In other words, this required a methodology that could accommodate both practical change and systematic reflection.

In this project, the action research spiral unfolded across two cycles. Cycle 1 began with planning, which included an inventory of the reading corner and a collaborative discussion with the pedagogues. This was followed by the physical reorganization and the first read-aloud session led by Pedagogue 1. Video recording and a researcher's diary captured the observation, and the cycle concluded with a joint reflection where we reviewed the footage and adjusted the strategy for Cycle 2. Cycle 2 began with this revised planning, followed by Pedagogue 2's read-aloud session applying the adjusted translanguaging strategies. Observation again used video, reflection protocol notes, and researcher diary. The cycle concluded with semi-structured interviews and a final joint discussion. This spiral structure enabled comparison between the two cycles and allowed the intervention to be adjusted based on what emerged.

The analysis of the collected material was structured by the development project's research questions. Specifically, data from the two observation cycles were compared to identify similarities and differences in children's engagement, language use, and interactions with the pedagogues. Similarly, the interview responses from the two pedagogues were compared in a corresponding manner. The empirical material was then interpreted using the sociocultural perspective concepts of mediation, scaffolding, and Zone of Proximal Development (Säljö 2010).

7. Data collection methods

The data collection was carried out using multiple methods to capture both the process and the outcomes of the project. The primary methods were video recordings, observations, and semi-structured interviews. Photographs and a researcher diary (logbook) were used as supporting materials.

7.1. Observations

Unstructured observations were conducted during the initial inventory phase to gain insight into the existing reading corner and its use within the educational environment. Specifically, these observations focused on identifying what languages and materials were present and how children engaged with them. Subsequently, semi-structured observations were conducted after the intervention to examine how children respond to the reorganized reading corner (see Appendix 3). According to Patel and Davidson (2019, p. 117), observations are particularly valuable for collecting information about behaviours and events in a natural context, which aligns with the project's aim to study children's authentic engagement with the reading materials. In addition, as a researcher, a reflexive approach was adopted (Hellman & Hellman 2023, p. 151), which allows the researcher to alternate between active participation and passive observation while remaining an integral part of the situation. I made sure I did not interfere in the activities but stay nearby to make visual and written notes. During reflection times, I discuss decision making together with pedagogues to reduce the risk of my influence and maintain transparency in deriving results. When pedagogues asked for my opinion, I responded with counter questions to encourage them to share their observations. This was important to avoid reflecting my opinions and maintain the difference between a colleague and researcher.

Although I understood some of the children's home languages, I did not assist during the activities; the pedagogue stayed in charge. If I was working with a group member approach. I might have helped to identify the words being used that I recognized. I intentionally refrained to avoid influencing.

7.2. Video recordings

Videos were used during the read-aloud sessions in the observation phase. The reason for using this type of visual documentation was that it enabled revisiting interactions multiple times and capturing both verbal and non-verbal communication, such as gestures, eye contact, and turn-taking (Patel & Davidson 2019, pp. 88–99). In total, two read-aloud sessions were recorded, each with a different pedagogue.

7.3. Logbook

Field notes were taken during both the inventory and observation phases to document key events and interactions. Although diaries are often used for participants' self-reporting, they can also be used by the researcher to document observations and reflections. In this development project, the researcher's diary was used as a field log to record events and support ongoing reflection, which is central to the research process (Patel & Davidson 2019, pp. 90–93). Sensitive information was avoided, as Denscombe (2018, p. 324) writes that diary data is purely subjective and not objective; it was used carefully to enrich the empirical material, strengthening the credibility of the documentation.

7.4. Photographs

Anna Sparrman (2023, p. 211) describes that understanding an image depends on the information and context provided around it. According to Denscombe (2018, p. 332), photographs function as research data, and in this development project, photographs were taken before and after the reorganization of the reading corner to document the physical changes made to the learning environment. These photographs serve as visual evidence of the transformation and are included in the project (see Appendices 2 and 3).

7.5. Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with two pedagogues during the reflection phase to gain insight into their experiences of the intervention. According to Denscombe (2018, p. 269), semi-structured interviews allow questions to be tailored to elicit topic-relevant answers while giving interviewees space to discuss their experiences.

A set of prepared questions was used, focusing on how children respond when read-aloud sessions are conducted in Swedish compared to their home languages, and how often they use their home languages during read aloud. How pedagogues work with children in different languages despite limited resources. If children show interest in Swedish books, and how children use the reading corner beyond read-aloud sessions. The full interview guide is available in Appendix 1.

Finally, the interviews were recorded and transcribed to support further analysis, allowing me to understand the pedagogues perspectives.

7.6. Selection

The selection in this development project was strategic (Denscombe 2018, p. 62), meaning the participants and environment were chosen based on the relevance of the project's aim. This aligns with the qualitative approach described by Patel and Davidson (2019, p. 141), which focuses on identifying individuals who possess the specific experiences or characteristics relevant to the phenomenon being studied.

The development project was conducted at an international preschool in Stockholm, focusing on children aged 1–3 years. It examined how a multilingual reading environment could support children's translanguaging and use of their linguistic resources during shared reading activities. The participants consisted of five children with mother tongues other than Swedish and two pedagogues: one preschool teacher and one child nurse with pedagogical responsibilities.

The children participated through observations of their interactions in the reading area, while the pedagogues participated through interviews and collaborative planning and reflection. These participants were selected because of their daily close contact within the group and relevance to the development project (Denscombe 2018, p. 60). Furthermore, participation was also determined by the number of signed consent forms; only those who cconsented were included in the development project. Since the children were too young to give consent, their parents signed on their behalf.

To protect the participants' identities, the pedagogues were named Pedagogue 1 and Pedagogue 2. The children were given fictive names: Lisa, Piya, and Sara, Jay, and Sunny. According to Patel and Davidson (2019, p.84), each participant's identity must be kept confidential, and no data should be provided that could lead to the identification of any participant.

7.7. Research ethical considerations

Throughout the development project, ethical principles in research have been considered, especially given the involvement of children. This means the project was planned and conducted with respect to participants' integrity and rights. According to Patel and Davidson (2019, p. 83), research should yield reliable knowledge that is credible and meaningful to both individuals and society.

The project follows the research ethics principles published by the Swedish Research Council (Vetenskapsrådet 2024, p. 64) in the publication Good Research Practice. These principles encompass four central requirements.

The *information requirement* was met by informing participants about the purpose of the development project, its implementation, and their right to withdraw at any time without consequences. Before the project began, the *confidentiality requirement* was met by ensuring participants' identities were anonymized to protect their integrity. In other words, no names or details that can be linked to individual people are disclosed in the development project, and information is handled confidentially in accordance with good research ethics practice (Denscombe 2018, p. 439).

The *usage requirement* is met, as the collected material is used solely for this development project and will not be shared or used in other contexts. All data, including consent forms, audio files, and video material, will be destroyed after the completion of the project. Information was provided to the children's guardians, including the project's purpose, how the material would be handled, and who could access it. In addition, the children were also informed about what would happen during the observations and interviews.

The *consent requirement* was met, as the pedagogues voluntarily consented to participate in the interviews, and guardians signed consent forms for their children's participation. Consent was obtained from all children's guardians who participated in the project.

8. Development Intervention

This development project lasted for 16 weeks. Before the development project began, I obtained formal approval from the preschool principal to conduct it within the group I was working with. To begin this phase two question was initially guided: what languages and materials are currently present in the reading corner? An inventory of the reading corner was conducted, which included unstructured observations of the physical reading area to identify existing norms and challenges.

The preschool follows a language plan based on the Swedish curriculum, with each group room including a reading corner to support children's language development and communicative skills. However, during the observations, it became evident that all the books available in the reading corner were in Swedish. This led to a second guiding question: how do children engage with the existing Swedish-only materials? This was particularly relevant as none of the children in the group had Swedish as their mother tongue, and several children were observed using other languages, particularly English, in their verbal interactions.

During the second unstructured passive observation, as a researcher with a reflexive approach where I observed from far and noted that the reading activities were conducted only in Swedish and that children showed limited engagement. They had difficulty maintaining focus, and the activity was sometimes interrupted due to lack of interest.

During the observation, I documented important moments between pedagogues and children in a logbook, avoiding any sensitive information. This allowed me to return to the observation for further analysis.

Based on these observations, this initial phase concluded with a collaborative planning session with the pedagogues. The findings were discussed during reflection time, leading to shared decisions to reorganize the reading corner with multilingual materials to support children's linguistic repertoire.

8.1. Planning

The planning began when the inventory showed that the reading corner was monolingual, with all the books in Swedish, even though none of the children had Swedish as their mother tongue. It was clear from semi-structured observations and from my researcher's diary notes that children were not actively engaged during read-aloud sessions. When they used other languages, such as English, this was rarely acknowledged. Based on this, we agreed to start reorganizing the reading area, including removing and adding materials, with support from relevant research during reflection time. The planning discussion took place during the weekly reflection time on Mondays and was recorded on the preschool laptop to guide implementation. The children's linguistic backgrounds were mapped through school documents and parent communication, identifying Arabic, English, and Urdu as the main languages represented among the participants. (see Appendix 6)

The inventory showed that reading activities were conducted only in Swedish, without using the children's other languages. This led to the decision to introduce translanguaging as a way of working. Research has shown that focusing only on one dominant language can limit multilingual children's opportunities to make sense of content. Torpsten (2018, p. 105) argues that when other languages are not included, they risk being pushed aside, which may affect learning. Furthermore, Torpsten (2018, p. 107) highlights that when teachers respond positively to children's language use, it can support their motivation and interest. Beauchemin et al. (2024, p. 583) also describe how translanguaging during read-aloud sessions can create more inclusive and interactive situations in which children can process meaning using all their languages. Based on this research, the pedagogues were introduced to the concept. Therefore, the read-aloud sessions were adjusted to include children's spontaneous language use rather than overlooking it.

In addition to the pedagogical strategy, the physical environment needed to change. Research has shown that classroom structure can influence children's opportunities to engage with language. Cabell et al. (2019, p. 5) describes how an organized environment can create opportunities for interaction, while a less structured environment may create distance between the pedagogue, the child, and the learning. In a similar way, Rahimah et al. (2023,

p. 218) highlights that when books and materials are accessible, children are more likely to explore independently and interact with their surroundings. Therefore, the books were moved from baskets to low shelves placed at the children's eye level. This made multilingual materials in Swedish, English, and the children's mother tongues more visible and easier to access in everyday situations and reading aloud sessions.

Alongside the physical changes, the materials themselves needed attention. The inventory showed that only Swedish books were available, even though the children spoke Arabic, English, and Urdu. The literature indicates that children benefit when their different languages are recognized as part of the learning environment. Alanis (2013, p. 45) argues that young children with peers are often willing to experiment with new languages without fear of making mistakes, which creates opportunities for participation. In addition, Damber and Randevåg (2024, p. 62) emphasize the importance of combining different forms of expression, such as images and spoken language, to support understanding. Thus, these findings suggest that a broader range of linguistic resources can support both engagement and comprehension. As a result, new books in children's mother tongues were borrowed from the preschool library, and a shared digital system the preschool uses called Polyglutt using QR codes was introduced.

All of these decisions were discussed together with the pedagogues during the reflection session that followed the inventory phase. This made it possible to connect the planned changes to the group's everyday work and ensured the ideas were realistic to implement. At the same time, linking the decisions to research helped provide clearer direction for continued work.

8.2. Implementation

After the planning phase, the intervention was implemented in collaboration with the pedagogues in the group. The reading corner was reorganized. Books were sorted from the basket. Since the group did not have books in other languages, new literature was borrowed from the preschool library, located on the other side of the preschool. This library contained books donated by parents and staff. Physical books in English and Urdu were introduced alongside the existing Swedish books and placed on a low shelf at the children's eye level.

Digital tools were integrated to support access to languages where physical books were not available. QR codes were printed and linked to Polyglutt, a digital book service for preschool children, and placed at children's eye level. During reflection time, pedagogues were informed how to use translinguaging as a resource while reading aloud. We discussed together and reviewed how the reading area and materials, such as books and QR codes, would be introduced to the children during read-aloud sessions.

We agreed to respect children's choice to participate. Any child who does not wish to participate should not be forced to do so, in accordance with the code of ethics. Children would be asked if they wanted to read books.

The aim of this development project was to move away from a monolingual reading practice and instead create a multilingual environment where children could engage with different languages during read-aloud sessions. After the intervention, semi-structured observations were conducted to examine how children responded to the reorganized reading corner. Going back to the aim, the focus was to observe whether children showed interest in picking up books independently, sitting, and interacting with the materials, as well as whether they used their mother tongue or another language while listening to the stories. Attention was also paid to how children responded to the presence of multilingual materials, including books and QR codes.

The pedagogues conducted read-aloud sessions using the new materials, while I served as a passive observer. To ensure detailed and reliable documentation, video recordings were used during the read-aloud sessions. The reason for using video documentation was that it enabled revisiting interactions multiple times and capturing both verbal and non-verbal communication, such as gestures, eye contact, and turn-taking. In addition, a researcher's diary was maintained throughout the process, in which key events, reflections, and observations were noted immediately after each session (see Appendix 4). The combination of video recordings and written notes contributed to richer empirical material and strengthened the credibility of the documentation of the reading area and its materials.

This phase contained two observation cycles with two different pedagogues. The two cycles did not run in parallel. Cycle 2 was conducted a week after the first cycle, as the group was busy with Easter celebrations.

Cycle 1

In the first observation, the pedagogue started with reading aloud using reorganized materials but focused primarily on the story and on keeping the children seated. Children's spontaneous verbal contributions in their mother tongues and, English were not actively acknowledged. Faith handed the pedagogue a Swedish book, *Lilla Spöket Laban*, and the pedagogue began to read in Swedish. The children sat on the mat, looking at the book. Sara pointed at a doll in the illustration and said "guria," the Urdu word for doll. The pedagogue continued reading without acknowledging the word.

Lisa and Sunny repeated words in Swedish after the pedagogue, while Piya was busy flipping through another book. Seeing her, Sunny, and Lisa also pick up another book followed by Sara. Lisa said a few words in English, such as "eating" and "food" Sunny opened his mouth, pretending to eat. These contributions went also unacknowledged. Instead, the pedagogue repeatedly redirected them back to the book and continued reading.

I observed that the children initially showed interest in the multilingual materials, but as their words went unacknowledged, they gradually lost focus, and interaction reduced. None of the children showed interest in QR codes; they went directly to the books.

After the Cycle 1 observation, I sat down with both pedagogues for a reflection session to review the video recording together. It became clear that the children's own languages had gone into the background. Pedagogue 1 shared that the children were very excited about the new reading area. She explained that applying translanguaging was also new for her, and she had been trying to develop the children's interest in the book and its words. She felt that building interest was important as well.

Pedagogue 2 expressed that the children's engagement had been missed because everyone was influenced by reading aloud through participation, words, and actions. She suggested

that it might be better to pause and listen closely to children. We also discussed the QR codes. The children showed no interest in them, going straight to the physical books instead. We agreed not to remove the QR codes, but to introduce them more actively by pointing them out during the session. Our decision was to keep the QR codes and to have the pedagogue in Cycle 2 pause while reading aloud, moving between languages to acknowledge the children's mother tongues.

Cycle 2

During the reflection, Pedagogue 1 shared that translanguaging was new for her and that she saw building children's interest as her focus. She did not refuse to apply the strategy, but her approach came from a different understanding of her role. Since both pedagogues had already agreed during the planning phase to try translanguaging in their respective weeks, and Pedagogue 2 felt comfortable leading the next session, we decided together that Pedagogue 2 would take Cycle 2. Pedagogue 1 remained present and participated in reviewing the video together afterward.

In the second observation, pedagogue 2 applied the strategy. She paused the story to acknowledge children's words, used gestures and body language, pointed back to the book, and let the children take turns showing their books and interacting with the material. The pedagogue constantly switched between English and Swedish, recognizing and using both.

Sara, whose mother tongue is Urdu, first handed a Swedish book to the pedagogue. When the pedagogue asked in Swedish, "Vill du läsa den?", Sara picked up another English book and held it up. The pedagogue then asked, "Vilken bok ska vi läsa?", and Sara pointed back to the Swedish book. Sunny, whose mother tongue is Arabic, looked at the cover illustration, made an angry face, and said, "Totte arg." Sara joined in saying "He is angry". The pedagogue repeated, "Totte är arg. Totte is angry." Sunny nodded repeating "Totte angry", validating the pedagogue's response. Sara joined in pointing at the cup in the book "Pani", showing a drinking gesture. The pedagogue looking at the picture and responded "Pani, water". Lifting her hand to her mouth to gesture drinking: "Drycka vatten, drinking water"

Beside the pedagogue sat Faith and Piya, going through the pictures in a book. Piya, whose mother tongue is English, lifted a book with a cat on the cover and said "Donkey," possibly associating the four-legged animal in the picture with a familiar English word. Faith, who also speaks English as her mother tongue, made the sound "Meow," while Lisa pointed directly at the picture. The pedagogue acknowledged each response without correction, keeping the children engaged. Taking reading aloud, language, and children's languages in parallel.

I observed that the children stayed focused and were actively engaged. Their spontaneous use of words from their mother tongues and English was recognized, even when the pedagogue did not understand every word. However, children again showed no interest in the QR codes during this read-aloud session, even though the pedagogue clearly pointed at them to acknowledge their presence. Instead, they were greatly interested in the books.

The two cycles produced different results in children's engagement, focus, language use, and interactive strategies used by adults.

Following the completion of both cycles, a final reflection phase was conducted. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with Pedagogue 1 and Pedagogue 2 to gain insight into their overall experiences with the intervention. A set of prepared questions focused on children's response to read-aloud session in Swedish and with their home languages, how often children use their mother tongue during read-aloud, how the pedagogues work with limited materials. The interview guide is available in the Appendix. The interviews were recorded and transcribed.

Together, we discussed what had changed from the initial inventory phase to the final observation. By reviewing the video recordings together, both pedagogues observed that children's ability to stay focused during read-aloud sessions varied, with an average attention span of approximately eight minutes before some children began to lose focus. Based on this shared observation, we agreed that future read-aloud sessions would be shorter and more flexible to accommodate children's individual interests.

This reflective process enabled evaluation of how the organization of the reading corner, along with the pedagogues' interaction styles, influenced children's participation, engagement, and communication during read-aloud sessions, thereby supporting language development. The reflection phase contributed to understanding the development process and laid a foundation for further adjustments and potential future cycles within the action research spiral.

It is worth noting that across both cycles, the children with Arabic and Urdu as their mother tongues did not point at the QR codes. Instead, they went straight for the physical books.

9. Validity in Action Research

The trustworthiness of this project was built into its design. Rönnerman (2023, p. 134) writes that validity in action research comes from systematic processes, collaborative reflection, and transparency. These principles shaped how the study was planned.

Democratic validity concerns whose voices are heard. Both children and pedagogues were included from the start. Children's choice to participate or withdraw was respected throughout. The pedagogues contributed through planning, reflection, and interviews, ensuring their perspectives were part of the process.

Process validity was addressed through the action research spiral. Two observation cycles were planned to allow for comparison. Reflection between cycles was built in so that strategies could be adjusted based on what emerged. Multiple data sources, including video recordings, a researcher's diary, and semi-structured interviews, were chosen to provide triangulation.

Dialogic validity was ensured through collaborative structure. Findings from the inventory would be discussed with the pedagogues. Reflections on observations were done together. Their perspectives would be captured through interviews. This ongoing dialogue was intended to ground the analysis in shared understanding rather than my interpretations alone.

The project took place in one preschool group with five children and two pedagogues. Broader conclusions cannot be drawn from a study of this size. However, the systematic process and transparent documentation mean the results can offer insights for similar contexts.

10. Analysis

This section analyses the outcomes of the development project in relation to the sociocultural perspective and the project's aim to transform the monolingual reading corner into an interactive multilingual environment. The analysis draws on the following theoretical concepts from Säljö (2010): as mediation, scaffolding, and the Zone of Proximal Development which serve as the primary analytical tools.

The Reading Corner as a Mediating Tool

After the reorganization, children approached physical books on their own initiative in the reading corner, turning pages and looking at pictures. From a sociocultural perspective, the books functioned as a mediating tool (Säljö 2010, p. 66). Through pictures and letters children encounter meaning-making. The physical placement of these books on low shelf at children's eye level made this tool visible and reachable, inviting spontaneous interaction before any adult intervened. However, the analysis also indicates that materials alone did not sustain children's participation during read-aloud sessions. In both cycles children were observed handing a book to the pedagogue. Yet in Cycle 1, when the pedagogue accepted the book and started to read but did not acknowledge words contribution from children, the engagement faded. This indicated that the books successfully mediated the initial contact, but they cannot operate independently; the pedagogue's response determined their mediating potential in active participation.

Language as a mediating tool in children's translanguaging

Children spontaneously used Swedish, Urdu and English during both observation Cycles. This occurred regardless of whether the story was read only in Swedish (as in Cycle 1) or in both English and Swedish (as in Cycle 2). From a sociocultural perspective, language serves as a mediating tool through which people exchange knowledge. This means children were not simply speaking different languages; they were using their full linguistic repertoire as one connected tool to make sense of the story in the read-aloud (Säljö 2010, p. 84).

English functioned as a bridge language in the group. Sunny, whose mother tongue was Arabic, showed interest in English books and blended English with Swedish words during the sessions. Suggesting that the reading corner had become a space where linguistic risk taking could occur. Furthermore, Sunny and Sara combined spoken words with gestures such as pointing towards a cup, mimicking drinking, and pretending to eat. This fusion of language and bodily action indicates how children use multiple mediating tools simultaneously to create meaning (Säljö 2010, p. 83). Language, gestures, sounds, and words functioned as one communicative system. The children were not merely pointing but indicating physically and verbally what they understood.

The interaction pattern also reflects how the children first encountered the story socially through the pedagogue's read-aloud then processed it internally using their own linguistic resources. (Säljö 2010, pp. 105–106), Translanguaging thus supported the movement from social communication to internal thinking.

However, the two cycles revealed that the children's spontaneous translanguaging did not, by itself sustain engagement. In Cycle 1, where children's own words and gestures went unacknowledged, their participation gradually faded. In Cycle 2, where the pedagogue paused, recognized, and built upon their contributions, engagement grew. This difference can be understood through the concept of mediation in a deeper sense. Language is a tool, but a tool requires someone to pick it up and use it in interaction. The environment and the material could invite children to use their languages, but only the pedagogue could validate that use and transform it into a resource for learning.

Pedagogue Interaction as Scaffolding through Reading-aloud

The comparison between Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 suggest how pedagogue interaction shaped children's engagement. In Cycle 1, the pedagogue focused on reading the book and keeping the children seated in the reading area. When the children spoke words in their mother tongues such as Sara saying “*guria*” (doll) in Urdu, Sunny making eating gestures and Lisa saying “*eating*” and “*food*” in English went unnoticed. Without active acknowledgment, the children's linguistic contributions became invisible, and their engagement faded.

In Cycle 2, Pedagogue 2 paused to acknowledge children's words, switched between English and Swedish, used gestures and allowed the children to take turns showing their books and interacting with the material. When Sara pointed at a cup and said ‘‘*pani*’’ (water in urdu) while gesturing drinking, the pedagogue responded ‘‘*pani, water*’’ and did the same gesture of drinking water adding ‘‘*dricka vatten, drinking water*’’. When Piya looked at a cat and said ‘‘donkey’’ Faith made the sound ‘‘meow’’ and Lisa pointed directly at the picture, the pedagogue acknowledged each response without correction. What a child expresses is shaped by the social situation, which in Cycle 2 included a pedagogue who validated all linguistic contributions (Säljö 2010, p. 115).

This difference can be understood through Vygotsky's concept of scaffolding. Scaffolding occurs when a more competent person guides a learner through a problem, becoming a practical part of the solution (Säljö 2010, p. 124). In Cycle 2, the pedagogue met the children in their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), the space between what they could express on their own and what they could achieve with support (Säljö 2010, p. 122). By recognizing what the children expressed and building upon it through gestures, language switching, and repetition. The pedagogue bridged the gap between their current expression and fuller participation. The pedagogue did not correct Piya's ‘‘donkey’’ instead accepted it. Allowing Piya to draw on prior knowledge to make sense of a new image.

Furthermore, when pedagogue 2 switched between languages and acknowledged all responses, the children learned that their languages were welcome. This reflects what Säljö (2010 p. 67) describes as the child learning as an apprentice, the children learn through participating in social practices alongside more experienced person (ibid). Sunny's participation indicates how the ZPD operates through the languages the child is willing and able to use in a given context.

In contrast, Cycle 1 demonstrates what happens when scaffolding is not fully applied. The materials were physically present, but without active mediation, they became inert. The children's linguistic contributions received no response, and without that response, their engagement dissipated. This comparison suggests that the physical environment and social interactions are interdependent factors.

Digital Scaffolding: the QR code finding

No child showed interest in the QR codes in either cycle, even when the pedagogue pointed towards them in Cycle 2. They were planned as semiotic resources in the reorganization of the reading corner, since availability of books for Arabic and Urdu was limited. Children could scan the code as a digital tool to access books in different languages on Polyglutt. Yet children consistently chose physical books they could hold, turn, and explore with their hands.

From a sociocultural perspective, a tool only functions as a mediator when it carries meaning within the child's specific social and cultural context (Säljö 2010, p. 66). For children aged 1-3, physical objects that can be touched carry more immediate meaning than digital signs. The QR codes were in a theoretical sense, tools, but they were not yet meaningful tools for this group of children. The analysis therefore indicates that digital scaffolding requires a different pedagogical approach, which includes more structured introduction, more pedagogue led and perhaps a separate activity in which children first learn what the codes do. In this project, physical books remained the most effective mediating tool.

Educators' Perspectives on Translanguaging

The interviews revealed that neither pedagogue was fully familiar with the term translanguaging before the project. Pedagogue 1 had encountered it in reading but had never applied it, noting that it was new and required more practice. Pedagogue 2 was experienced with multilingualism but had not worked with translanguaging specifically. Despite this limited theoretical knowledge, Pedagogue 2 observed after the project that children focused for longer when they heard languages they recognized. Pedagogue 2 applied translanguaging effectively with limited knowledge, while Pedagogue 1 did not apply translanguaging and followed the story in the book that was being read. This suggests that theoretical knowledge and practical skill do not always develop together.

From a sociocultural perspective, the pedagogues' understanding of translanguaging could be seen as developing within their Zone of Proximal Development (Säljö 2010, p. 122).

Although neither pedagogue had fully integrated translanguaging into their practice, both demonstrated a willingness and capacity to develop their use of it. During the reflection sessions, where they watched the videos together. They discussed the activities, and planned adjustments for the next cycle, this functioned as scaffolding for their professional learning (Säljö 2010, p. 124). The analysis suggests that openness to translanguaging strategies can develop through systematic reflection and collaborative practice. Although one project cycle alone is insufficient for fully establishing such competence.

Summary of the Analysis

What emerges from the analysis is that the physical space and the pedagogue's interaction depend on each other. Placing multilingual books on low shelves functioned as a mediating tool (Säljö 2010, p. 66), inviting children to explore independently. But books alone could not maintain participation. The children used their languages spontaneously in both cycles; their words and gestures worked together as mediating tools, helping them move from social interaction toward internal thinking. The decisive shift occurred when the pedagogue acknowledged those languages and provided scaffolding within the children's Zone of Proximal Development (Säljö 2010, pp. 122–124). In Cycle 1, where words went unrecognized, engagement faded. In Cycle 2, where the pedagogue paused, moved between languages, and built on what the children offered, their participation grew.

The QR codes did not function as mediators for this age group; analysis shows physical books carried more immediate meaning, indicating that a tool must be culturally and developmentally meaningful to serve as a mediator. Finally, the pedagogues themselves were learners, developing their understanding of translanguaging through collaborative reflection that provided scaffolding within their own ZPD.

Taken together, these findings suggest that the reorganized reading corner supported children's independent engagement with books. The analysis shows that introducing books in children's home languages made multilingual resources available, though Arabic books were missing. Sunny still participated, using English and Swedish instead. This indicates that a multilingual environment, even incomplete, offered more than the monolingual one

before the project. The analysis also shows that the QR codes did not engage the children in reading area despite the adjustments made in pedagogue's approach.

11. Discussion

This project was initiated to reorganize a monolingual reading corner into an interactive multilingual environment that supports translanguaging children aged 1–3. The discussion is about what was achieved and the process that brought this change into effect.

What Was Achieved

The physical reorganization of the reading corner was well received by the children. Children approached multilingual books on their own initiative. Placing multilingual books on low shelves at children's eye level served as a mediating tool (Säljö 2010, p. 66). The area looked organized; the books were few, but their cover pages were clearly visible. The idea was supported by the previous literature on the organized classroom (Cabell et al. 2019, p. 5; Rahimah et al. 2023, p. 218). The reading area looked welcoming and accessible. The objectives of physical reorganization were achieved.

Translanguaging techniques were successfully applied in cycle 2. It was clear that the teacher's acknowledgment played a pivotal role. Children spontaneously used their mother tongue, English, and Swedish. This aligns with Torpsten's (2018, p. 107) statement that children don't disconnect from their languages; instead, they use them to adapt. However, translanguaging alone was not enough. In Cycle 1, where children's words went unacknowledged, engagement dropped. This confirms Torpsten's (2018, p. 105) concern that focusing only on the dominant language pushes multilingual children's languages into the background. In Cycle 2, where the pedagogue paused, switched languages, and acknowledged children's contributions, engagement grew. Teacher interaction was an active factor that complemented children's mother tongues and dominant languages such as English and Swedish. Pedagogical scaffolding, where the teacher met children in their zone of proximal development (Säljö 2010, p. 122), bridged the gap between what children could express and what they were listening to. This objective was partially achieved as both teachers need more practice with using translanguaging as a tool. The objective of integrating multilingual resources was partially achieved. Though English and Urdu books were added, languages like Arabic were not present in physical form. This also reflects the ecological

approach, where children learn through social interaction using all available languages, and we saw Sunny using English and Swedish (Torpsten 2018, p. 106).

QR codes did not engage the children in either cycle even after adjustments made to introduce them. For children aged 1–3, physical books carry more meaning than digital codes. This aligns with Yong Kong’s (2024, p. 33) emphasis on the need for materials to be age appropriate. Digital tools may be better introduced separately with more planning before implementation, and to be merged when the children develop an understanding of how to use them. As a result, digital scaffolding objectives was not achieved as planned. QR codes did not serve as effective mediators in this project.

From reviewing the video recordings together, both pedagogues and I observed that children's ability to stay focused varied, with average attention span of approximately 8 minutes before some children lost focus. This provided a starting point for planning future sessions and reinforced the importance of keeping reading aloud flexible. Video recordings also gave us a chance to observe children and their dynamics as they participated. This helped plan shorter and more flexible reading aloud.

Overall, the findings reflect that the environment alone is not sufficient to sustain children’s engagement. When a pedagogue actively engages with and acknowledges children who are moving between languages, it supports language development in multilingual children. It was observed that the child who spoke Arabic did not use Arabic digital books via QR code, but due to the reading area environment and pedagogue’s engagement, the child used a bridge language and a language familiar to them to participate. This was not seen in a monolingual reading environment before.

Limitations

Several limitations affected the project. Not all participants gave consent, so the study was conducted with five children and two pedagogues in one international preschool group. The findings still hold the credibility to be applied to all age groups and in similar settings as in my project

The sixteen-week timeframe allowed one full action research cycle in two parts: Cycle 1 and Cycle 2. Bigger changes in pedagogical practice require more time and cycles. The project introduced new concepts among pedagogues and demonstrated their potential, but change needs continued implementation if translanguaging.

My dual role as a pedagogue and researcher was demanding. Maintaining distance during observations to avoid influencing the children or the teacher requires constant awareness. This is a known challenge in action research.

The interview questions focused on general experiences rather than asking directly about translanguaging. I wanted teachers to share their thoughts without being guided. In retrospect, more direct questions could provide richer data.

Each pedagogue approached multimodal sources such as QR codes, differently because they were different people with different experiences and personalities. As a researcher, my limitations were to not lead the pedagogues, as it would compromise the credibility of my study results. I informed them about translanguaging in reflections, and how it is used as a tool while reading aloud. When the observations started, I had to be an observer from outside to avoid intimidation.

What does this mean for practice

A well-organized reading corner with multilingual books at children's eye level invites engagement. This reflects a pedagogue's ability to create an environment that communicates to children that their languages are welcome.

Children think and communicate using multiple languages. Within a sociocultural framework, translanguaging enables teachers to interpret communication with multilingual children in more nuanced ways. Beauchemin et al. (2024, p. 595) highlight that when teachers adopt an open stance, they are better able to recognize that words carry unique meanings for each child's language.

For this developmental project, action research proved to be a systematic yet flexible methodological approach. The spiral structure with cycles allowed continuous adjustment based on what we observed wasn't working; it could be changed in the next cycle. As a researcher, it doesn't limit me to stop on a close end, instead, develop with the needs of the project.

For me as a researcher, this project showed how theory and practice can work together. I learned that introducing translanguaging through a sociocultural framework can help teachers see communication with multilingual children in new ways. Teaching evolves around children, and we have a responsibility to adapt as society changes. Working through this project, selecting theory and research on language development, I learned that supporting how children communicate in all the languages they have is part of that responsibility.

The aim of this project was to create a multilingual reading corner for children aged 1 to 3. After reorganization, children used languages familiar to them with pedagogues in interactions not seen before. Although Arabic material in the form of books was absent, the Arabic speaking child participated in English and Swedish, showing more linguistic engagement in the observations.

Future developments

After this development project with the young children's group, for future the group can request more books in different languages that children speak in the group. More illustrative books as young children build interest in books by looking at them. In read-aloud they don't look at the text but at pictures to interact with.

QR codes need a separate activity where children learn about them. A teacher who is involved in the activity needs to show children how they work and then introduce them to the group.

The group can continue using action research with cycles. Young children change interests quickly, and action research allows teachers to adjust to the environment and activities based on what children need at the time.

The preschool has an education manager who can educate the preschool staff about translanguaging methods in staff meetings. Which will help the staff meet the needs of multilingual children in international preschools.

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Appendix 1 (Interviews)

- **Interview questions for pedagogues:** capturing pedagogues' experiences of reading aloud in Swedish and in the children's mother tongues.
 1. How do the children usually react when reading aloud is done in Swedish compared to their mother tongue?
 2. How often children use their mother tongue while reading aloud
 3. How do you work with children's different languages while reading aloud, despite limited materials?
 4. Do children show interest in Swedish books?
 5. How do the children use the reading corner apart from reading aloud activities?
 6. Before this project, had you heard of translanguaging? How would you describe your experience with it?

Appendix 2 (Reading area before reorganization)



Appendix 3 (Reading corner after re organization)





Appendix 4 (Observations)

Trespaltsdokumentation

Vad gör barnen?	Vad säger barnen?	Pedagogens reflektioner

Appendix 5 (Reflection documentation)

Reflektionsprotokoll

Grupp:

Vecka

<i>Våra tankar i förhållande till vårt undersökningsområdes mål och riktning</i>	<i>Utmaning till barnen</i>	<i>Hur gjorde barnen? Vad gjorde barnen?</i>	<i>Reflektioner</i>	<i>Hur går vi vidare?</i>	<i>Koppling till läroplanens reviderade målområden</i>

Appendix 6 (Language mapping)

Språkdomäner

SPRÅKDOMÄNER FÖRSKOLA

Datum _____
 Ansvarig _____

Födelseort	Ankomstår
Pratar helst	
Började prata modersmålet	
Började prata svenska	
Modersmål som talas i hemmet	

