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Bilingual Classroom Engagement and Teacher Experiences in Punjabi-Supported Instruction: A Mixed-Methods Study

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Abstract:
Background: Punjabi-supported bilingual instruction may give multilingual pupils more ways to understand a concept, ask a question and explain their reasoning. Its usefulness, however, depends on what teachers can deliver consistently and how pupils experience those lessons.
Aim: This paper sets out a mixed-methods study of learner participation, implementation fidelity, teacher feasibility and classroom challenges during a proposed 16-week Punjabi-supported instructional module in Classes VI–VIII.
Methods: The parent study proposes intervention and comparison classes, learner engagement questionnaires, teacher logs, structured observations and follow-up interviews. Quantitative records will describe the frequency and consistency of planned practices. Interviews and open responses will examine how language choice affects participation and what helps or obstructs implementation. Findings will be integrated by comparing reported experiences with observed teaching and measured engagement.
Research status: The uploaded synopsis contains no completed questionnaires, observations or interviews. Accordingly, this paper presents the research design and reporting framework without inventing findings or participant quotations.

Keywords: Punjabi-supported instruction; bilingual engagement; teacher experiences; implementation fidelity; multilingual classroom; mixed methods

1. Introduction:

A teacher may explain a new concept in English and notice that only a few pupils respond. When invited to discuss the same idea in Punjabi, more pupils may offer an explanation, ask a question or disagree with a proposed answer. That classroom moment is worth studying, but it does not establish that Punjabi *caused* greater participation. The teacher may also have changed the question, offered more thinking time or used a familiar example.

The proposed doctoral study therefore needs evidence about **how** bilingual instruction is delivered and experienced, alongside its separate assessments of cognitive flexibility, memory and problem-solving. This article addresses that classroom process. It asks whether pupils have meaningful opportunities to use Punjabi and English for academic reasoning, whether teachers can follow the planned module, and what practical difficulties arise.

The study is informed by pedagogical translanguaging, which treats learners' linguistic resources as part of planned content teaching. It also draws on the distinction between behavioural, emotional and cognitive aspects of school engagement. Answering aloud is one sign of participation; feeling safe enough to offer an uncertain idea and working carefully through an explanation are other, less visible aspects.

2. Research objectives and questions:

The paper has four objectives:

1. To describe pupils' reported and observed participation in Punjabi-supported lessons.
2. To assess whether the principal components of the bilingual module are delivered as planned.
3. To document teachers' views on the feasibility and usefulness of the approach.
4. To identify language-related, instructional and organisational challenges and explain how they affect implementation.

3. Study context and design:

The parent synopsis proposes a matched-class, pretest–posttest study with approximately 300 multilingual pupils in Classes VI–VIII, subject to final sampling and power calculations. Intervention teachers will deliver two to three planned Punjabi-supported sessions each week for 16 weeks. Comparison classes will study equivalent prescribed content for comparable instructional time through usual practice.

4. The bilingual instructional module:

The proposed module links curriculum learning to purposeful language use. Its principal practices are:

Lesson component	Intended classroom action	Evidence to collect
Concept preview	Introduce a familiar example in Punjabi and connect it to the lesson concept	Plan, concept card, observation
Academic terminology	Link Punjabi explanation to relevant English subject terms	Teacher prompt, pupil notebook
Bilingual questioning	Invite prediction, clarification and justification in an appropriate language	Observation, pupil response
Retrieval	Ask pupils to recall an idea without notes and restate it where useful	Exit ticket
Problem representation	Identify the goal, facts and constraints before solving	Worksheet
Strategy discussion	Compare possible approaches with peers	Group record
Verification	Explain how an answer was checked	Individual response

A lesson should not be judged successful merely because Punjabi words were spoken. The observer must ask whether language use served the intended learning activity. Equally, English terminology should remain accessible so that support in Punjabi does not leave pupils unable to recognise the language used in textbooks and assessments.

5. Measuring classroom engagement:

The learner questionnaire should ask about experiences during a defined recent period, such as the preceding four weeks. Items may address whether pupils could ask questions when confused, explain a

reason in Punjabi, connect Punjabi and English terms, discuss solutions with peers and check their answers. Responses should distinguish **not experienced** from **experienced but unhelpful**.

Teacher reports and observer records can complement pupil answers. For example, an observer might note how many pupils contributed to a group task and whether the teacher accepted an idea expressed in Punjabi before helping the pupil formulate an English academic response. Such records provide context, although they do not directly measure a cognitive gain.

6. Measuring implementation fidelity:

Implementation fidelity asks how closely delivered lessons match the planned intervention. A useful record separates **adherence** to components, **dosage** or time delivered, **quality** of delivery, **learner responsiveness** and possible **contamination** in comparison classes. This separation follows the logic of a published implementation-fidelity framework.

Comparison classes also require observation. If a comparison teacher regularly uses Punjabi explanation and bilingual peer discussion, the actual contrast between groups is smaller than the assigned labels suggest. The final report should describe what both groups received.

7. Teacher and learner interviews;

Semi-structured teacher interviews should explore how teachers prepared lessons, which activities fit the timetable, where pupils appeared to need more support and how prescribed curriculum coverage was maintained. Questions should invite concrete examples rather than only approval or disapproval. For instance: ***"Tell me about a lesson when asking pupils to explain an idea in Punjabi changed the discussion. What else was happening in the class?"***

Learner interviews should use age-appropriate language and avoid suggesting that bilingual lessons must have helped. Pupils might be asked when they felt able to ask a question, whether changing languages ever made a task more confusing, and how they decided which language to use with a peer or teacher. The interviewer should welcome accounts of difficulty and ordinary lessons with no noticeable change.

8. Analysis and mixed-method integration:

Questionnaire responses can be summarised by item and, **only after appropriate pilot and reliability checks**, by a defensible engagement subscale. Report response counts and missingness. Observations should show the proportion of applicable planned components delivered, lesson minutes and patterns of participation. A single fidelity percentage should not conceal whether a teacher consistently omitted one important practice, such as verification.

Interview and open-response material can be analysed thematically. Following the approach described by Braun and Clarke, the researcher should become familiar with the records, code relevant passages, develop candidate themes and check those themes against the full material.

Integration is more than placing questionnaire statistics beside interview quotations. A joint display can examine agreement and disagreement:

Quantitative pattern to examine	Qualitative question	Possible interpretation to investigate
Frequent reported Punjabi use, limited observed discussion	What counted as "use" to pupils?	Teacher explanation may be frequent while pupil contribution is limited.
High module adherence, low pupil engagement	How were activities delivered?	Components may occur without enough time or opportunity to respond.

Strong participation in some classes	What conditions differed?	Teacher preparation, task design or language profiles may matter.
Similar practices in comparison classes	How did usual teaching operate?	The instructional contrast may be weaker than planned.

9. Quality, ethics and limitations:

Pilot the pupil questions with learners outside the main sample to check comprehension and length. Train observers with the same lesson examples and assess agreement on a subset of observations. Record the sampling basis for interviews, maintain transcripts and note the researcher's role in designing the module. These steps make the analysis more open to scrutiny.

The chief limitations are the small number of schools or classes, reliance on some self-reported experiences, possible changes in behaviour when an observer is present and difficulty separating Punjabi support from other active teaching practices. Fidelity should be used to interpret implementation, but a comparison of "high-fidelity" and "low-fidelity" classes may be confounded by teacher experience or school resources.

10. Conclusion:

This paper specifies how learner reports, teacher accounts, lesson records and observations can be brought together to examine Punjabi-supported bilingual teaching as it actually occurs. It focuses on **who participates, what teachers deliver, what is feasible and where the approach becomes difficult**.

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