



## Brief

# Translanguaging Practices in Nordic ECEC: A Review of Research

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The field of multilingual education has seen a paradigm shift with the emergence of the concept of translanguaging. Translanguaging can be understood as both flexible language practices where multilinguals use their entire linguistic repertoire in various communication situations, and as an educational strategy that can be employed in educational institutions to build upon the full linguistic repertoire of multilingual learners (Bonacina-Pugh et al., 2021; Cenoz & Gorter, 2021; Li Wei, 2018). While there has been significant theoretical development on translanguaging and the concept has been explored in empirical studies from various educational context, there is a need to explore its pedagogical implications, particularly within early childhood education, which has not received as much attention in translanguaging research.

This paper presents a scope review of empirical studies published between 2010 and 2022 that describe multilingual practices in Nordic early childhood education and care (ECEC) institutions. To find relevant studies, a list of keywords was developed, including terms describing the educational context and the thematic focus of the search. The search was conducted in three research databases (The Nordic Base of Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC-NB), Education Resources Information Centre (ERIC) and Education Source), supplemented by the snowball method and manual searches for publications from known researchers and projects mentioned in relevant studies. A rigorous selection process resulted in the inclusion of 50 relevant studies, which were further analysed to identify common themes, methodologies, contexts, and stakeholder responses to multilingual practices in Nordic ECEC, which provides a comprehensive analysis of the current state-of-the-art in the field.

Translanguaging, as a theoretical framework, is used in only a few of the studies included in this literature review. This may indicate that translanguaging is still a relatively new theoretical perspective in Nordic ECEC research. Methodologically, there is a dominance of qualitative research in the field, often focusing on one or a few ECEC centres, which may potentially limit opportunities for generalization and drawing conclusions that could contribute to the development of clearer language policy guidelines sought by practitioners. Therefore, more varied research methodologies could be valuable in further research in this field.

The findings show that multilingual practices are present throughout various aspects of ECEC education. Some of the reported multilingual practices may be easier to conceptualize within the understanding of translanguaging as an educational strategy to incorporate children's diverse language resources in planned learning situations, while others are associated with a flexible communication practice where different actors employ their various semiotic resources in meaning-making. Thematic analysis revealed that multimodality as a dimension in multilingual practices seems to be well-documented in Nordic ECEC research in recent years. This aligns with the increased focus on multimodality in translanguaging studies as pointed out by Kusters et al. (2017).

This review contributes to the existing knowledge on translanguaging and multilingual practices by providing a detailed analysis of empirical studies conducted between 2010 and 2022 in Nordic ECEC and offers valuable insights for researchers, teacher educators, practitioners, student teachers and policymakers.

**Keywords:** *early childhood education in Nordic countries; multilingual practices; review; translanguaging*