



# Journal of Tertiary Education and Learning (JTEL)

ISSN: 2994-4015 (ONLINE)

VOLUME 3 ISSUE 2 (2025)



PUBLISHED BY  
E-PALLI PUBLISHERS, DELAWARE, USA

## Kadaiyang Magtutungha: The Lived Experiences of the Tertiary Students on Translanguaging in the Teaching-Learning Process

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### Article Information

**Received:** March 02, 2025

**Accepted:** April 08, 2025

**Published:** June 25, 2025

### Keywords

*ESL Classroom, Mother Tongue, Multilingual, Tertiary Education, Translanguaging*

### ABSTRACT

The study examines the lived experiences of tertiary education undergraduates and the influence of translanguaging in English as a Second Language (ESL) settings, specifically within the Teacher Education Department of a local college in Misamis Oriental province. A qualitative research design was utilized using the phenomenological approach with the adaptation of the procedure to give comprehensive insights through two focus group discussions (FGDs) via in-depth face-to-face discussions among 16 participants (i.e., BEEd and BSED students). The data from the FGD were analyzed using thematic analysis. From the findings, there are four themes that emerged regarding language students' views on translanguaging in ESL, namely: mixing of languages in teaching concepts, a chance to utilize the mother tongue, building students' confidence, and proficiency in multilingual communication. With regard to students' views on teachers' facilitating translanguaging in the classrooms, five themes emerged: promoting student-centeredness in the classroom, building comprehension among ESL students, addressing the diverse students' needs, fostering student engagement, and recognizing cultural-linguistic differences. In the implications of translanguaging in ESL, six themes arise: guided learning, the advantage of collaborative learning, dependency on one's mother tongue, lacking effectiveness in writing skills, insufficient exposure to English, and inconsistency with English proficiency.

### INTRODUCTION

English is not a monolithic language, as colonization introduced it as a means of “civilizing” non-native English speakers. Kachru's (1996) concentric circles highlight variations in phonological, lexical, morphological, and syntactical features among speakers across different contexts. During American colonization in the Philippines, the government incorporated English into the formal education system and promoted it as the language that would “civilize” Filipinos (Martin, 2012). Thus, the mode of civilization, a life directed by reason and prudence (Martin, 1999, Macawile & Plata, 2022), for Filipinos was advanced to be English. It was presumed that English would serve as a unifying language, fostering mutual understanding across the varied linguistic and regional backgrounds of the Filipino people.

The use of the English language has been adopted and retained as a medium of instruction (MOI) because it facilitates international communication, promotes economic growth, and fosters technology and globalization (Madrurnio *et al.*, 2016). Executive Order No. 2010, series of 2003, mandates all public and private high schools, including experimental and laboratory schools, to use English as the MOI, as well as in vocational, informal, non-formal, and technical institutions such as those that operate under the umbrella of TESDA. English, being the language of choice in the outbound and inbound communication for the call center company or the Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) industry, is an obvious instance of how English is used in the Philippines. The monolingual approach ingrained in the country's

language education policies (LEPs) continues to hinder bilingual and multilingual learning despite the Philippines' rich linguistic diversity (Macawile & Plata, 2022). According to Bernardo (2008), the promotion of English language proficiency to equip Filipinos for local and global careers is not necessarily seen as neglecting Filipino or other lingua franca. He further emphasizes that leveraging English as an effective educational tool must be based on a nuanced understanding of Filipinos' bilingual and multilingual experiences, the intricate set of skills they need to acquire in school, and the interplay between languages used for learning and instruction (Bernardo, 2008).

K to 12 Law (RA 10533) strongly advocates the use of English as the MOI for English subjects, while the 1987 Bilingual Policy (Department of Education, 1987) mentions that the official languages of instruction are only Filipino and English. However, these policies pose challenges for multilingual students whose first language is not Filipino or English. Moreover, Claudine and Ramos (2019) indicated that DepEd Order No. 60, series of 2008, further institutionalized English as the primary MOI and stressed that it should fill at least 70% of the instruction time, even in secondary and tertiary education (Deniega & Neri, 2024). This heavy reliance on English in teaching marginalizes translanguaging, both as a theoretical framework and as a teaching tool.

In practice, despite the mandates set by central offices, the realities in the field often diverge from these policies (Deniega & Neri, 2004). Although English is the MOI in tertiary ESL classrooms in Philippine schools, the rural school context (like ours) is somewhat different. Students

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can be from varied linguistic and cultural backgrounds, including minority groups like the Higaonon. These students have difficulty presenting, reporting, or voicing their opinions in English. In response to this, teachers have turned to translanguaging practices (Villanueva *et al.*, 2023). This is a move to help students who might not be so proficient in the English language (Perfecto, 2020; Deniega & Neri, 2024; Zhou *et al.*, 2021)—such as using their mother tongue or Binisaya—in another attempt to support college students.

While translanguaging is getting more attention globally, it is still largely unexplored in Philippine schools. Despite some efforts to investigate translanguaging in the Philippine context (Perfecto, 2020; Gatil, 2021; Deniega & Neri, 2024), literature devoted to the study of translanguaging pedagogy in ESL classrooms remains scant even as language teachers start to embed it in their practice (Ooi & Azis, 2021). In this study, it aims to examine the lived experiences of the tertiary students with translanguaging in an English as a Second Language (ESL) context, given the limited understanding of its impact in higher education. In doing so, it seeks to address a gap in understanding both the intended and unintended uses of translanguaging in everyday learning, contributing to the expanding body of knowledge.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### Research Design

A qualitative design was used in this study to gain a complete understanding of the topic. It specifically adopts the phenomenological approach (Hartigan-Go *et al.*, 2024). This phenomenological approach is defined as the reflective study of pre-reflective experience as it seeks to ‘fully describe a lived experience’ (Mapp, 2008). This study is underpinned by the constructivist paradigm, allowing for exploration of phenomena in depth. Constructivism primarily aims to understand why and how phenomena occur and how people make meaning out of them (Mann & MacLeod, 2015). The approach and paradigm are chosen since the present study centers on lived experiences.

### Participants

The study was conducted in one of the Local Colleges in the province of Misamis Oriental. This recent study focused on the Teacher Education Department, which has a total population of 525 students. The focus group discussions (FGDs) with students who experienced translanguaging in ESL classrooms were divided into two separate sessions (Table 1).

**Table 1:** Distribution of FGD Sessions based on the Degree Program

Year Level	No. of Participants	No. of FGDs
BEEEd		1
First-year	2	
Second-year	2	
Third-year	2	

Fourth-year	2	
BSEEd		1
First-year	2	
Second-year	2	
Third-year	2	
Fourth-year	2	
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>2</b>

### Data Collection

The study involved two groups of participants: the BEEEd and BSEEd students, with 8 participants in each group. Two FGDs were conducted on October 21 (first group) and November 8, 2024 (second group) in the school where the researcher is currently employed, involving a total of 16 participants (see Table 1). The study also adhered to the recommended size of FGDs of between six (6) to twelve (12) participants, expected to be small enough to be conducive to sharing while large enough to allow for diversity (Onwuegbuzie *et al.*, 2012).

The study employed purposive sampling, intentionally selecting participants according to their ability to elucidate a specific phenomenon (Robinson, 2014). In other words, the participants of this recent study were chosen according to their experience and knowledge related to translanguaging in an ESL classroom. Participants were recruited through prior arrangements with college instructors and the dean of Teacher Education.

FGD guides were developed for each group of participants. The FGD questions followed a two-part structure, with the first part focusing on students’ lived experiences on translanguaging employed by their instructors or professors. The researcher asked the participant to walk him through the day-to-day experiences of the learning environment when their instructors or professors used translanguaging in discussing concepts or lessons. The questions also covered how they engaged in class, understood concepts, and interacted in class when their instructors used translanguaging in the teaching-learning process. The guide also covered questions on challenges and personal difficulties faced by the participants when instructors used translanguaging in an ESL classroom. Meanwhile, the second part tackles participants’ insights on policy recommendations intended to enhance the teaching and learning process in an ESL classroom using translanguaging. These include exploring the effectiveness of translanguaging, imposing classroom or departmental policy on using translanguaging as MOI, and the learning process in improving the academic performance of the students based on translanguaging.

The FGDs adhered to an iterative process, which entailed reviewing data after each FGD session and making adjustments to the discussion guide. This process involves modifying certain topics based on newly gathered insights and broadening the scope to investigate emerging points of interest. Follow-up questions that drew out detailed responses were also integrated to enhance the depth and

direction of the discussions in the subsequent sessions. Throughout the study, the researcher declared no characteristics or conditions that influenced the conduct or outcomes of the findings. The researcher maintains rigor and objectivity and raises no conflicts of interest.

### Data Processing

The participants provided written and verbal consent for the audio recording of the sessions. The recordings were transcribed, and the transcripts were verified for accuracy against the original recordings. Once transcription was complete, the recordings were immediately destroyed. Furthermore, the transcripts did not include any personal names or identifying information; instead, identification codes were used. All data were accessible only to the researcher, who was committed to maintaining the participants' confidentiality. Excerpts included in the final report were also de-identified to ensure they could not be linked to any specific participants.

### Data Analysis

In the FGDs, the data gathered were analyzed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), which involves identifying patterns or key themes based on the participants' lived experiences. This approach enables researchers to interpret and understand common experiences (Braun & Clarke, 2012). The researchers extracted the recurring themes from the transcripts, conducting preliminary coding through open reading. The transcripts then underwent several coding rounds to refine the identified themes. To minimize subjectivity, the themes were finalized through consensus among the interrater (i.e., English Language Teachers). Triangulation was employed to verify the trustworthiness of the data by situating the existing literature findings. The researcher also maintained an audit trail through the use of memos on the field notes, which were reviewed after every FGD session.

### Ethical Considerations

The researchers obtained written informed consent from participants before the FGDs. Approval was also sought from the Teacher Education Department and the College Research Ethics Committee of the institution to ensure the protection of participants' rights and identities. The participants were assured that their involvement would remain confidential and anonymous. Additionally, it was also stressed that participation was totally voluntary, and participants could withdraw at any point.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The students' lived experiences are organized into themes derived from the interview transcripts of eight BEEd program participants and eight BSEd-English program participants, totaling 16 participants across two FGD sessions. This study uses anecdotes or vignettes as examples of phenomenological experiences for presentation. To maintain the participants' anonymity and

for narrative purposes, fictitious names or pseudonyms are employed. According to Zwack *et al.* (2016), stories are memorable and relatable, serving as credible sources for understanding the experiences and perspectives of others. In fact, stories and other imaginative creations foster direct, meaningful experiences related to translanguaging in academia. Translanguaging is a pedagogical approach used in teaching ESL students (Deniega & Neri, 2024), especially in public institutions. Among all these stories, the experiences of tertiary students are particularly significant, as they reflect personal encounters with teachers who used translanguaging to explain concepts and facilitate discussions in ESL classrooms.

### Language Students' Perspectives on Translanguaging in ESL Classes

Four (4) themes were derived from the analysis of participant's responses to the research question on the perspectives toward translanguaging in ESL in public tertiary institutions of the sixteen (16) FGD participants. The students refer to translanguaging as a) Mixing of Language in Teaching Concepts, b) Chance to Utilize the Mother Tongue, c) Building Student's Confidence, and d) Proficiency in Multilingual Communication.

#### Mixing of Language in Teaching Concepts

In the participants' responses, participants viewed translanguaging as the translation of language in an ESL classroom in the context of the teaching-learning process. Translanguaging frequently involves teachers delivering instructions in English while incorporating elements of their or their students' native languages, often Bisaya, particularly when emphasizing key concepts or addressing comprehension challenges. Participants observed that translating from English into languages or dialects commonly spoken by teachers fosters an environment of comprehension. This approach enables students to utilize familiar languages to enhance their comprehension of lessons in the English course.

S1\_EL: Para sa ako, sir...I can understand well the lesson kung mag-binisaya ug mag-English among maestra. If they speak straight English, usahay maglisod mi or maybe ako ra ug sabot sa topic, sir, pero usahay naay translation among learning materials aron masabtan namo gayud.

T: For me, sir...I can understand the lesson well if my teacher speaks Bisaya and English. If they speak straight English, sometimes we'll have a hard time, or maybe only me, understanding the topic, sir, but sometimes there is a translation in our learning materials so that we can understand it.

This way of adapting phrases with translation to both the instructor's and the student's mother tongue allows the content of the lesson to be understood by students, even if their English level is low (Yusri *et al.*, 2022). It also allows students to better understand the material by adding Bisaya to their English teachings. Translanguaging functions as a translator for the lesson material, allowing students to better access and understand the lesson

content. In addition to translation, Macawile and Plata (2022) found that educators use translanguaging as an additional strategy. Their research demonstrated that teachers frequently rely on the students' native languages to assist them with understanding and expressing themselves, particularly when students struggle to comprehend or articulate their thoughts. When students are struggling, this model allows student-driven classroom interactions, increasing collaboration and engagement.

S5\_SE: Mas makasabot ko, sir, if mag-Ininglish ug mag-Binisaya akong instructor sa klasi than pure English lang iya discussion, kay mag-nosebleed gyud ko...labi na kung lisod ang topic, especially sa among major subjects.

T: I can understand more, sir, if my instructor used English and Bisaya in class than pure English in the discussion, for I'll be nosebleed [hard time to understand]...particularly if the topic is difficult, especially in our major subjects.

S4\_EL: Mas maayo gyud mag-Bisaya ug mag-Ininglish pud amo maestra sa classroom, sir...kay mas easy ang comprehension sa topic...

T: It is better that our instructor speaks Bisaya and English in the classroom, sir...for easy comprehension of the topic...

Students also observed that teachers often use translation to clarify complex concepts, particularly when discussing major subject topics. Translating the content into the native languages of both students and teachers ensures that students achieve a clear understanding (Baynham & Lee, 2020). This method goes beyond simply finding equivalent words in the languages used; it involves conveying contextual meaning, emphasizing the depth and nuance required to foster mutual comprehension of the lesson (Halberg, 2022).

Translation is the translanguaging act that serves several educational purposes. New concepts are clarified (Yuvayapan, 2019), and bilingual or bi-literate skills are improved (Halberg, 2022). According to Nyimbili and Mwanza (2021), words are translated by students for their teachers, and translations are also provided by teachers for students, with both often working together during learning. Indeed, the use of both languages is reinforced by these practices, and spontaneous biliteracy development is facilitated (Halberg, 2022). This means that one can carry out two tasks simultaneously without missing a single word, which is essential for an ESL learner as it blooms their language into a comprehensive search.

S8\_SE: I noticed, sir...that whenever lisod ang topic gina-translate niya into bisaya ang topic aron mas dali ra namo ma sabtan ang lesson.

T: I noticed, sir...that whenever there is a difficult topic they translate the topic in Bisaya [for us] to easily understand the lesson.

S3\_SE: usahay kung mag-discuss among mga instructor, sir, kung naa mi dili ma sabtan they translate the lesson into Bisaya...then ayaha pa dayon namo ma sabtan ang lesson.

T: sometimes, if our instructor [will] discuss, sir, if we

have things that we do not understand, they translate the lesson into Bisaya...then that's the time that we can understand the lesson well.

Using translation but in a pedagogical context that considers the sociocultural theory of learning, where scaffolding is an important factor in learning. Translation is a tool that language teachers use when guiding and scaffolding students' understanding. A study by Rajendram (2019) found that translation provides cognitive support, helping students use their existing language knowledge to develop new language skills. Furthermore, incorporating translation in ESL classrooms has been shown to enhance students' metacognitive abilities.

According to Macawile and Plata (2022), students might be using their native language to organize their thoughts beforehand to think and write in English. Hence, it perceives the need for native language during understanding the tasks where students can come up with ideas in their first language and put them into words in English. To ESL, translation also has diversified purposes. For instance, Perfecto (2020) reported that teachers used collaborative activities with visual aids, direct translation, code-switching, and metalinguistic explanations to help clarify lessons for students. The gap between the student's current language skills and the target language, English, is bridged by incorporating translation into ESL teaching practices (Bolkvadze, 2023).

### Chance to Utilize the Mother Tongue

Using a mother tongue in ESL classrooms can be really important to designing a more inclusive and efficient learning space, which translanguaging can make possible. Just like in this study, allowing the use of native languages, such as Bisaya in this case, substantially increases student engagement and participation. This is an approach to mitigate the inherent difficulty of engaging students, particularly if students have always used one language they may be discouraged from speaking it. A participant also expressed reluctance to participate in oral recitations held only in English, highlighting the need to include the mother tongue for a more interactive and responsive classroom.

S7\_EL: kung naa mi oral recitation, sir, ma-ulaw man ko mag-participate kung mag-ininglish, sir...kay basin masayop ko sa akong pronunciation ug grammar unya kantsawaan ko sa ako maestra ug classmates.

T: if we have oral recitation, sir, I am hesitant to participate if we speak English, sir...I might commit mistakes in my pronunciation and grammar, and my teacher and classmates may humiliate me.

S15\_SE: mas confident pa man ko mag-bisaya, sir uy... though ga-English man ko usahay pero conscious lang ko sa ako grammar ug pronunciation kay basin sayop ba...

T: I am more confident when I speak English, sir... though I often speak English, I am conscious that my grammar and pronunciation might be wrong...

Translanguaging as an instructional strategy is especially beneficial to students who have to learn English

quickly. This is a transitional device, allowing students to rapidly move toward using English as their primary means of communication, which it will eventually become by first using their native language. This gradual approach allows for a smoother transition, allowing students to build a solid base in their mother tongue before immersing themselves in English. This view matches Larsen-Freeman's (2019) argument that translanguaging helps preserve our heritage language while also creating learning opportunities based on students' life experiences and identities.

Students' perception and application of translanguaging are said to foster an inclusive learning environment created by language teachers supporting linguistic diversity in the classroom. Giving students the option to speak in their mother tongue allows teachers to tailor learning to the student's specific needs and creates a feeling of belonging in the classroom. It also allows students to participate in their own learning in ways that honor and respect their linguistic identities. Furthermore, it was claimed by Garcia & Kleifgen (2019) and Tai & Wong (2022) that traditional monolingual norms are counteracted by translanguaging, with students being granted the agency to use their entire language arsenal in the processes of mentalization and learning, leading to positive effects on their schooling.

S2\_EL: gina-encourage man gayud mi sa amo mga instructors na mag-English, sir...pero usahay there are instances na mag-lisod gayud mi pag-express sa among kaugalingon sa English maong ok ra pud sa among instructors na mag-bisaya mi kung mag oral mi.

T: we were encouraged by our instructors to speak English, sir...but there are instances that we are having a hard time expressing ourselves in English, which is why our instructors were lenient as we speak Bisaya in our oral.

S7\_SE: In our case, sir...BSED-Eng man gayud mi pero ganahan ra pud biya mi or ako lang ba kaha na mag-bisaya mi sa klasi kay there are times na mag-lisod mi ug translate sa Bisaya to English bitaw, sir, na mga terms. But our teachers help us kung unsa to na term sa English.

T: In our case, sir...we are BSED-Eng, but we find comfort, or maybe only me when we speak English in class, for there are times that we find it difficult to translate Bisaya to English, sir, those terms. But our teachers help us [translating] to what term is that in English.

In public tertiary education, where students may struggle to comprehend English quickly, incorporating their native language proves especially beneficial. Students acknowledged that while teachers are expected to demonstrate English proficiency, enforcing a rigid English-only policy is often impractical. Allowing the mother tongue promotes students' linguistic backgrounds, creating an environment for better comprehension and active involvement. Following Tabatabaei (2019), who notes that students often resort to their native language when attempting to learn the target language, this approach demonstrates the practical use of translanguaging for educational purposes.

S1\_EL: sa akona, sir...kung mag speak mi in our own vernacular mas maka-express mi sa among kaugalingon ug maka-sabot pud mi sa lesson kung usahay mag-bisaya among maestra. Kung pure English ang discussion, usahay mag-lisod ko ug sabot tungod sa terms pero maayo nalang kay gina-translate or mag-bisaya ang among maestra sa topic na need ug in-depth understanding.

T: for me, sir...if we speak in our own vernacular, we can express ourselves, and we can understand the lesson if sometimes our teacher speaks Bisaya. If the discussion is pure English, sometimes I find it difficult because of the terms, but it is a good thing that my teacher translated or speaks Bisaya on a topic that needs an in-depth understanding.

Translanguaging in ESL classrooms supports language learning and students' emotional well-being. Permitting the use of their mother tongue puts students at ease and builds confidence, decreasing anxiety and consequently creating a positive learning environment. This study shows that allowing students to write in their native language helps them feel included and connected, which is important for learning (Thongwichit & Ulla, 2024). Translanguaging, therefore, is a comprehensive and supportive method that not only fosters language development but also encourages all other aspects of growth by valuing linguistic plurality and embracing the native tongue in the educational setup.

### Building Student's Confidence

One important aspect of translanguaging, as highlighted by the participants of this study, is that of building learners' confidence. It was explained that students are allowed to use their first language (L1) in a comfortable space through translanguaging, reducing the anxiety often felt when speaking a second language. It was related to how comfort was provided by the ability to use translanguaging in class, as the pressure of translating thoughts from Bisaya to English was no longer felt. Consequently, more interest was drawn, leading to an increase in discussions.

S8\_SE: In my case, sir...mas prefer nako i-mix nako akong English and Bisaya kay mas confident man gayud ko, sir, especially if there are terms that are hard to translate in English, unya mag huna-huna pa ta sa grammar ug pronunciation...burden na sa akong part.

T: In my case, sir...I prefer to mix my English and Bisaya [language] for I am more confident, sir, especially if there are terms that are hard to translate into English, then I need to consider the grammar and pronunciation...burden on my part.

S7\_EL: sa tinuod lang, sir...mas ma-express pa nako akong kaugalingon kung mag-Bisaya ug English sa among oral recitation kay dili ko ma-balaka kung ma-sayop ko sa akong pag-istorya.

T: honestly, sir...I could express myself in Bisaya and English during our oral recitation because I would not be worried if I committed mistakes when I spoke.

This confidence comes from the use of the native

language when needed, which heightens self-esteem while helping students to participate more actively (Muguruza *et al.*, 2020). For many students, their first language offers a familiarity that can enhance both understanding and interest. Introducing translanguaging feels much less daunting, and students experience less anxiety and greater participation, which is critical to effective learning. This is consistent with findings from Tabatabaei (2019), who showed that when translanguaging is not used, language anxiety arises as it is acknowledged that translanguaging can ease the pressure and promote student learning in a supportive atmosphere.

It was enabled by translanguaging for students to speak and use their native language as well as English freely. Both English and a native language were used during these lessons, making students feel less intimidated by English, which, in turn, helped gain confidence and promote active engagement in learning. When translanguaging was allowed, participants noted that their peers appeared more at ease and willing to participate in class, highlighting the relationship between native-language use and positive feelings of relaxation (Im, 2020). This ultimately leads to an efficient and enjoyable learning process.

S4\_EL: kasagara sa among klasi, sir, akong na bantayan kay participative gayud mi kung gina-allow mi sa among maestra na mag-bisaya sagol ininglis sa among klasi kay sa kadtong maestra namo na ipa speak English gayud mi... perting hiloma gayud.

T: usually in our class, sir, I noticed that we are participative if we are allowed by our teacher to speak in Bisaya with English in class than with our teacher who requires us to speak in English...deafening silent.

Their ability to immediately translate back and forth allows students to combat the language barriers that might keep them from fully engaging in the class. The students can struggle to comprehend these instructions and be able to respond, and they may become shut out. However, making room for translanguaging enables students to express their thinking more clearly and with more confidence. They teach this by giving examples, which not only leads to a better understanding of the content but also makes them more concerned about the course. As emphasized by Garcia and Kleifgen (2020), by allowing multilingual students to engage through translanguaging, they can better comprehend and bolster their 'confianza' (Deniega *et al.*, 2024) or confidence.

S6\_SE: we are BSED-Eng man gayud, sir...but I don't know unsay rason na mas ma express paman namo among idea kung mag Binisaya mi sa klasi rather straight English bitaw it seems na limited lang na idea amo ma express and we are confident as well kung mag Bisaya sagol Ininglis.

T: we are BSED-Eng, sir...but I don't know the reason [behind] that we can express our ideas freely if we speak in Bisaya rather [than] straight English for it seems we have limited ideas that we can express and we are confident as well if we speak Bisaya mixed with English.

Therefore, not only does translanguaging in ESL

classrooms enhance the student's confidence, but it also helps the students mitigate their anxiety, ultimately leading to improved language abilities. As Akbar and Taqi (2020) observe, learners engage in more sustained self-extending, which can involve less anxiety and more confidence, liberating them to draw on their entire linguistic resource to understand the material. This way of learning the language helps bring students to a more adaptable and confident position, as switching between their native language to English can make learning more efficient and inclusive (Thongwichit & Ulla, 2024).

#### Theme 4: Proficiency in Multilingual Communication

The participants see translanguaging in ESL classrooms as a flexible practice where people use multiple languages to communicate and understand each other. They believe translanguaging should be seen as using different language varieties and communication tools together to express ideas, highlighting the importance of linguistic diversity. This approach shows how students use all their language skills to understand and create meaning in learning.

Translanguaging is a method where two or more languages are used together in a classroom, giving ESL classrooms more flexibility. It helps both teachers and students learn English. According to Ooi and Azis (2021), translanguaging is considered useful because the native language can be used alongside English by students to understand the content better. This reduces the effort required to learn a new language and encourages more participation in class activities.

S5\_SE: what I really like sa akong mag instructor, sir, kay gina-allow mi niya mag-bisaya, especially if we are having a hard time expressing ourselves sa English bitaw, sir... mao ng usahay Ininglis pero sagol binisaya.

T: what I really like about my instructors, sir, is that they allow us to speak Bisaya, especially if we are having a hard time expressing ourselves in English, sir...that is why, sometimes [we] English with Bisaya language.

S8\_EL: naa gayud higayon, sir, na suko kaayo among maestra kay need lage namo mag speak ug English as a practice sa among profession...so, mag-hilom na lang mi kay dili man kaayo namo ma express among ideas kung English maka-bisaya man gayud mi.

T: there were instances, sir, when our teacher was so mad because she required us to speak English as our practice in our profession...so, we just keep our mouth shut for we cannot express our ideas well if we speak English there could [mix] with Bisaya.

Translanguaging in ESL classrooms helps students improve their English by using their knowledge of other languages, like Bisaya and English or Boholano and Higaonon. Mahmoud and Galante (2020) note that this method allows students to use their native languages to understand and learn English better. For example, letting students use Bisaya or their mother tongue along with English helps them express their ideas more clearly, especially when speaking only in English is hard.

Translanguaging helps students link their native languages with the target language. Ting and Jintang (2020) found

that Malaysian learners used both Malay and English to understand and apply new content. This bilingual approach improves learning by allowing students to compare language structures and vocabulary, deepening their understanding. Encouraging students to use texts in different languages and make comparisons creates a richer, more diverse learning environment (Mahmoud & Galante, 2020).

### Students' View on Language Teachers Facilitate Translanguaging in ESL Classes in Public HEIs

In response to the second research question, the language students interviewed expressed a range of reasons for incorporating translanguaging in their ESL classes. A detailed analysis of their responses uncovered the following motivations for adopting translanguaging practices; these are: a) Promoting Student-Centeredness in the Classroom, b) Building Comprehension among ESL Students, c) Addressing the Diverse Students' Needs, d) Fostering Student Engagement, e) Fostering Active Student Engagement.

#### Promoting Student-Centeredness in the Classroom

The participants highlighted that using translanguaging in ESL classrooms supports student-centered teaching philosophies such as constructivism and progressivism. These approaches focus on meeting students' needs and interests, with teachers as facilitators. The participants believe classrooms should help students build their own knowledge with translanguaging, creating an environment that encourages active engagement and independent learning.

The constructivist perspective facilitates a student-centered approach that challenges them to discover and share—noting that code-switching—or using both English and Bisaya in the classroom—speaks to students at an emotional level, with a deeper understanding than they would have in English. This makes it a more friendly and less intimidating place to study (Yusri, Huzaimi, & Sulaiman, 2022). Using students' L1 in lessons makes the material more accessible and values their cultural and linguistic identities, promoting an inclusive and supportive classroom.

S3\_SE: for me, sir...mas appreciate gayud nako akong teacher bitaw na ipa-talk mi sa class based on our preferred language than imposing the English-only policy.

T: for me, sir...[I] appreciate more my teacher if [we] were allowed to speak based on our preferred language than imposing the English-only policy.

S4\_EL: maayo na lang gayud sa amo klasi, sir, kay gina-allow ra mi sa among mga instructors na mag-shift usahay sa among mother tongue kay dili man gayud malikayan mag-ininglish dayon mag-bisaya, sir.

T: good thing in our class, sir, we were allowed by our instructors to [code] shift sometime with our mother tongue for we cannot get away from English to Bisaya, sir. In addition to constructivism, translanguaging aligns with progressivist approaches, as one participant mentioned.

They stressed the necessity of actively involving students in learning. Translanguaging encourages participation in discussions and activities that can lead to higher levels of engagement and learning outcomes. This is reinforced in Mahmoud and Galante (2020) as students must have an opportunity to take risks and have their learning supported/modified through collaboration as teaching moves from a teacher-centered approach (low risk) to a more constructivist or learner-centered approach (high-risk).

Additionally, it was also emphasized that linguistic inclusivity and cultural relevance are important for language teachers in creating a student-centered classroom. Translanguaging helps teachers recognize and celebrate students' language diversity, creating an inclusive environment where all students feel valued. This supports Wong and Yoong's (2019) findings, showing that translanguaging helps teachers connect with students, improving language skills, motivation, and engagement. Allowing native languages in the classroom bridges comprehension gaps, making learning more effective and meaningful.

S1\_EL: in all fairness sa amo mga instructors, sir...dili sila kasagara strict sa amoa klasi in terms sa language na amo gagamiton sulod sa klasi labi na sa oral recitation.

T: in all fairness to all our instructors, sir...they are not so strict with us in class in terms of the language we use inside the class, especially during oral recitation.

S6\_SE: What I like sa amo klasi, sir, kay diverse kaayo mi kung asa lahi-lahi mi ug pinanggalingan ka ng naa bitaw naa gayud sense of inclusivity pero gina-accept gihapon mi sa amo maestro.

T: What I like about our class, sir, is that we are diverse, wherein we come from various [communities], and there is a sense of inclusivity, but we are still accepted by our teacher.

Inductive methods and constructivist approaches transform teachers' roles to facilitators of students' exploration of topics, allowing students to share their understanding with translanguaging (rules for switching and using multiple languages in conversation). This teaching transition supports young students in strengthening their critical thinking and problem-solving skills since they are working with the material to expand their knowledge. Kleyn and García (2019) emphasize that flexible language practices are student-centered and focused on keeping learners embedded in the learning process.

#### Building Comprehension among ESL Students

The participants agreed that translanguaging in ESL classrooms is an important strategy to help students understand the material. This approach focuses on helping students grasp the lesson rather than only using English in the classroom. Students mentioned that the focus on translanguaging comes from the belief that understanding is key to learning. Since many students struggle with speaking and understanding English

due to limited skills, using their native language helps them understand better. Participants emphasized that effective teaching depends on students understanding the concepts, so comprehension is more important than speaking fluently in English.

Translanguaging is particularly useful in classrooms with students with varying English proficiency levels. Whether students are proficient in English or not, teachers can use students' native languages in an educational context to help them better grasp the subject. Translanguaging teachers can break through language barriers that can hinder comprehension, thereby facilitating learning for students facing difficulties with the English language (Sahan & Rose, 2021). This method is integral to education's primary objective: ensuring learners grasp the lesson. For instance, strict "English-only" policies can create confusion and misunderstandings that impede academic success (Azhar & Gopal, 2021).

S5\_SE: para nako, sir...magkasinabot pami sa maestra namo kung mag-bisaya siya sa klasi labi na sa among major ug Mathematics in the Modern World na subject kay very poor biya mi ug comprehension basta math.

T: for me, sir...we could understand our teacher if she speaks Bisaya in class, especially in our major and Mathematics in the Modern World subjects, for we are very poor in comprehension in terms of math.

The difficulty of English, with its complex words and grammar, often makes translanguaging necessary. Many students struggle with challenging vocabulary and grammar, slowing their learning. One ESL student mentioned that not all classmates are strong readers, and translanguaging helps them understand better. This method lets students connect challenging ideas to their native language for clearer understanding. Zulfikar (2019) also points out that using the first language can clarify instructions and save time in class.

Akbar and Taqi (2020) believe that translanguaging helps students communicate and understand better by letting them express complex ideas using all their language skills. This flexibility allows teachers to explain concepts in students' native languages, making things more transparent and improving comprehension. Kleyn and Garcia (2019) agree, noting that translanguaging helps students develop stronger learning skills.

S1\_EL: akong na matikdan, sir...mas spontaneous among pag-storya sa oral recitation, sir, labi na kung mag-bisaya sagol ug ininglis.

T: I noticed, sir...we are spontaneous in our speaking during our oral recitation, sir, especially if [we speak] Bisaya with English.

S4\_SE: mas prefer gayud nako, sir...ang combination sa English and Bisaya, sir, kay mas ma express man gayud nako akong kaugalingon kay sa English lang gayud.

T: I prefer more, sir...combination of both English and Bisaya, sir, because I could express myself more than English only.

In general, using translanguaging as a tool for ensuring understanding is an essential component of effective

ESL teaching (Ting & Jintang, 2020; Kleyn & Garcia, 2019). This strategy makes students understand lessons, which is part of breaking through language barriers. Translanguaging, which essentially empowers students to use all of their linguistic resources, leads to better comprehension and increases students' confidence and contribution to discussions, resulting in a more inclusive and productive learning environment, research has shown. Studies show that students' native languages must be utilized to assist their comprehension and learning (Tabatabaei, 2019; Putri & Rifai, 2021).

### Addressing the Diverse Students' Needs

For the students interviewed, translanguaging in ESL classrooms is a flexible and inclusive method that enhances learning for students with various language backgrounds and English levels. The approach addresses different learning needs and helps students understand lessons better. In diverse classrooms, where students have varying skills, translanguaging helps bridge gaps and ensures all students can follow the curriculum, regardless of their proficiency.

Furthermore, Burton and Rajendram (2019) found that teachers use translanguaging as a short-term strategy to help students with lower English proficiency. This method improves lesson understanding and creates a supportive classroom where students feel more comfortable joining in language activities.

Teachers' practices can be adjusted to meet students' needs through translanguaging's flexibility. Focusing on instructional flexibility and modifying teaching methods could support student development of clearer thinking. This flexibility is especially important for accommodating students' varied academic and language needs. In Indonesian ESL classrooms, teachers applied translanguaging, embedding local languages, to facilitate low-proficient learners to comprehend and learn better (Khairunnisa & Lukmana 2020).

S8\_EL: ang akong gi-angayan sad sa akong mga maestra diri, sir...kay mo adjust pud sila sa among level labi na kung mag-lisod mi sa among lesson. Kasagara, gina-Bisaya ug English niya among discussion haron magkasinabot mi.

T: what I like about my teachers here, sir, is that they adjust within our level, especially if you find the lesson difficult. Often, they speak Bisaya and English during the discussion so that we can understand each other.

In simple terms, translanguaging helps build students' confidence and encourages them to participate more in class. By allowing students to use all their language skills, teachers create a supportive environment that reduces the anxiety of learning a new language. Samar and Patham (2023) noted that using L1 is especially helpful for students with lower proficiency, making them feel more comfortable and motivated to engage, which is important for their language development.

Translanguaging as an instructional approach highlights the value of the use of students' various languages and

their use of language in the context of individualized instruction. Teachers translanguaged to support their students better, which they do despite these challenges (Burton & Rajendram, 2019). This proves that learning should never only be restricted to one language especially when working in diverse classrooms. Using the languages students bring, teachers can maximize learning, language development, and academic success while minimizing the learning needs of their students.

### Fostering Student Engagement

For the language students interviewed, translanguaging in ESL classrooms is a flexible and inclusive approach that improves their learning, especially for those with different language backgrounds and English skills. It helps address diverse learning needs by making lessons easier to understand. In a classroom with varying abilities, translanguaging is a helpful tool for bridging gaps and ensuring all students can follow the curriculum, regardless of their proficiency level.

This approach helps students share their ideas in their native languages, reducing language barriers often holding them back (Samar & Patham, 2023). Teachers also noticed that students felt anxious about speaking English, highlighting the need to use their L1. Allowing communication in Tagalog or Bisaya boosts their confidence. This supports Hu's (2020) view that translanguaging fosters a positive learning environment and encourages more active participation.

S3\_SE: akong namatikdan sa among mga maestra, sir, kay kung naa gayud complicated topic or lesson...mag-nga-nga man gayud mi, so, mao to mag-English ug Bisaya siya, sir...ayha pa dayon mi maka-sabot.

T: what I noticed with our teacher, sir, is if there are complicated topics or lessons...we will be perplexed about it, so that is why they speak English and Bisaya, sir...then we could comprehend well.

S5\_SE: mas prefer nako na mag-English ug Bisaya akong maestra or maestro, sir, kay sa English lang bitaw...sama sa iyang gi-ingon ganina na maka-nosebleed gayud labi na ang major subjects.

T: I prefer that my instructors speak English and Bisaya, sir, than English only...the same as what was mentioned earlier that makes us nosebleed (difficult), particularly the major subjects.

Translanguaging boosts students' confidence, which positively impacts the whole classroom environment. Participants noticed that when students can use their native language, they are more likely to join discussions, ask questions, and interact with others. This active participation improves learning and helps with classroom management, reducing discipline problems (Holi Ali, 2020). Neault (2020) supports this, noting that translanguaging strategies can enhance classroom interaction and academic performance.

The flexibility of translanguaging also encourages students to participate in activities they might usually avoid. For example, students often struggle to express

complex ideas in English during presentations or role-playing tasks. Allowing them to use their native languages helps everyone engage more. Zhou and Mann (2021) support this, saying that using students' L1 creates a supportive, inclusive environment where students can participate according to their language abilities.

S1\_SE: mas daghan pa nu-on mi maka-participate and engage sa discussion, sir...if mag-mother tongue mi compared to English only policy sa among usa ka subject. T: a lot of us could participate and engage in discussion, sir...if we used [our] mother tongue compared to English-only policy in one of our subjects.

S2\_SE: true, sir...kay kadto man gayud na instructor strict kaayo siya in terms sa English, mao na mag-hilom na lang mi sa klasi kay 'Carabao English' lage.

T: true, sir...that instructor was so strict in terms of using English, that is why we just keep our mouth shut inside the class because of [our] 'Carabao English.'

Students generally view translanguaging favorably, seeing it as a way to increase engagement and participation. This aligns with Samar and Patham (2023), who found that many ESL teachers believe using students' native language in class boosts involvement. Similarly, Yusri *et al.* (2022) highlight the importance of using students' L1 to encourage active participation. Thus, translanguaging helps improve comprehension and creates an inclusive and engaging classroom environment for ESL learners.

### Recognizing Cultural and Linguistic Differences

The responses reflect that translanguaging in ESL classes was imperative to acknowledge and celebrate cultural and linguistic diversity. This makes them feel they belong and valued and validates their identities even when mastering English. In diverse classrooms, participants mentioned different languages and traditions of students, such as Mandaya, Higaonon, Boholano, Subanen, and dominantly Bisaya. Such diversity demonstrates the need for translanguaging to cater to all learners' needs.

This practice aligns with Mahmoud and Galante's (2020) view that using students' language skills helps teachers connect with and appreciate their culture. Students said their teachers use translanguaging to include cultural diversity in lessons, which shows respect for their backgrounds and promotes mutual respect in the classroom. Deroo and Ponzio (2019) also agree, noting that translanguaging encourages collaboration between students and teachers, improving English learning while valuing students' cultural and linguistic identities.

S2\_EL: kasagara sa akong mga classmates, sir, dili gayud sila gikan diri na dapit ang uban namo taga-Zamboanga, naa pud koy classmates na taga-Bohol ug Davao.

T: Some of our classmates, sir, are coming from here, some from Zamboanga; we also have classmates from Bohol and Davao.

S4\_SE: in our classroom, sir...diverse gayud mi naa koy classmates na taga-Surigao, naa pud taga-Bukidnon. Mailhan gayud namo sa ilang accent ba kung as ana tribe sila gikan.

T: in our classroom, sir...we are diverse, for we have classmates from Surigao, [and] we have classmates also from Bukidnon. We can identify them based on their accent and what tribe they come from.

Translanguaging also helps students connect with English materials through their own cultural experiences. This approach makes learning more relevant and allows students to relate new information to what they already know. Ooi and Azis (2021) emphasize that teachers understanding students' native languages improves communication and develops both intracultural and intercultural skills, which are crucial for managing diversity in ESL classrooms.

S1\_SE: sa among Linguistics class, sir, kay ganahan kaayo ko kay gina-integrate sa amo instructor ang among local dialects bitaw in which gina studyhan namo, gina explore ang among structure. We feel pud biya na gina dawat ang among unique identity ba na kung asa mi gikan.

T: In our linguistics class, sir, I really liked it because our instructor allowed us to integrate the local dialects we studied, and we explored [our] structure. We feel that our unique identity values us as to where we came from.

Similarly, language students have remarked that the use of translanguaging in the classroom not only recognizes their ethnic backgrounds and roots but also enhances their imaginative and critical thinking capabilities. This points towards the importance of accepting linguistic diversity, as accepting such diversity allows teachers to evaluate and develop students' speaking, writing, reading, and other language skills in the most effective manner (Thongwicht & Ulla, 2024).

### Implications of Translanguaging in an ESL Class in Public HEI

The data collected from participants' responses to the third research question identified the following themes regarding the implications of translanguaging: a) Guided Learning; b) Advantage of Collaborative Learning; c) Dependency on One's Mother Tongue; d) Lacking Effectiveness in Writing Skills; e) Insufficient Exposure to English; and f) Inconsistency with English Proficiency.

#### Theme 1: Guided Learning

The participants see Translanguaging in ESL classrooms as an effective tool that helps teachers and students learn a second language. Language students recognize that some of their peers have not yet mastered English, making translanguaging important for closing this gap. Similarly, Ebsworth *et al.* (2018) emphasize that ESL translanguaging strategies should allow learners to use all language skills to understand and engage with English content. They argue that students achieve better performance when their knowledge of their L1 and other languages is connected with learning a second language.

S4\_EL: admittedly, sir...dili gayud mi fluent sa English language naa gayud instances na mo shift mi sa Bisaya no matter how we try to speak straight English bitaw.

T: admittedly, sir...we are not fluent in English, for there are instances when we shift from Bisaya no matter how

we try to speak straight English.

The diverse language skills and academic levels of students require a flexible teaching approach. Translanguaging was referred to as a "blessing" by participants, as it is seen as supporting students with different levels of achievement, confidence, and adaptability. Burton and Rajendram (2019) agree that students' existing language skills are being used by translanguaging to improve their English, creating a more supportive learning environment.

Participants also emphasized that the main goal of teaching is to make learning accessible. This is aligned with the findings of Thongwicht and Ulla (2024), which suggest that the gap between student's current language abilities and the target language is bridged by translanguaging, improving understanding and engagement. The language challenges faced by many students are also addressed by translanguaging, making it considered a valuable tool for better supporting students in overcoming learning obstacles.

S3\_SE: maayo na lang gayud na considerate among mga instructors, sir, bai.

T: good thing that our instructors are considerate, sir.

S4\_SE: bitaw, sir, kay kung uban pa ni mag-lisod gayud mi ug sabot sa discussion.

T: that is true, sir; if other [instructors] have difficulty understanding the discussion.

S1\_EL: in our case, sir...naa man mi subject na multilingual...good thing kay maka-learn mi sa mga basic words bitaw sa among mga classmates.

T: in our case, sir...we have a multilingual subject...good thing that we can learn the basic words from our [fellow] classmates.

The idea that translanguaging helps students fully use their language skills to understand English content is supported by Aoyama (2020). The use of students' first language (L1) as support is considered important for understanding complex English concepts. Turnbull (2017) suggests that translanguaging is especially helpful for beginner ESL learners and can be reduced as students' English improves. By using their L1, students can build on what is already known while gradually increasing their exposure to English.

Finally, when used as temporary support, the focus on English proficiency is maintained through translanguaging, while students' multilingual abilities are also utilized. It is argued by Kleyn and García (2019) that using translanguaging in this way ensures the focus remains on developing English skills, rather than just promoting multilingualism. This approach is aligned with sociocultural theory, which views scaffolding as key to language learning (Rajendram, 2019). By adopting a balanced approach, students can be effectively supported by teachers in improving their English skills.

#### Advantage of Collaborative Learning

Many benefits are seen in translanguaging in ESL classrooms, particularly in group work and discussions. Complex ideas in English are often seen to be struggled

with by peers, making translanguaging a valuable tool for better understanding and communication. In group activities and brainstorming, students use L1 to explain complex concepts and instructions, helping the material to be grasped more easily. This is observed in both peer interactions and communication with teachers.

A study by Thongwichit and Ulla (2024) in Thailand found that group tasks provide valuable opportunities for translanguaging. The use of group activities within a translanguaging framework recognizes the varying language skills of students and creates a supportive environment. This approach allows ideas to be shared confidently by students and meaningful discussions to be engaged in, which improves language learning, builds confidence and encourages active class participation.

S3\_EL: sa among klasi, sir...mas interactive mi ug mas ma-express namo among kaugalingon diha sa groupings kung mag-Bisaya mi kaysa sa mag-English.

T: in our class, sir...we are more interactive, and we could express ourselves in our group [activity] if we speak Bisaya than speaking English.

S4\_EL: correct, sir, kaysa English kay murag awkward man paminawon dayon dili pa namo ma express among kaugalingon pag-ayo.

T: correct, sir; when speaking English, it seems we feel awkward as we listen to each other, and then we cannot ourselves freely.

It was found in the study that valuable linguistic support is offered by translanguaging, particularly during group work and discussions, with students being helped to express themselves more clearly (Thongwichit & Ulla, 2024). The ability to switch between Bisaya, Filipino, and English is seen to help language students communicate better. For example, when a student leader experiences difficulty explaining ideas in English, translanguaging can be used to ensure the group understands the task, demonstrating the value of using the first language in group work. It is also suggested by Zulfikar (2019) that the use of L1 helps learners clarify concepts and tasks, promoting better communication and more efficient use of class time.

Teachers often use translanguaging strategies to support peer learning and encourage interactive activities. Multilingual group discussions are facilitated by ESL teachers through the pairing of students from different linguistic backgrounds, brainstorming before tasks is encouraged, and students are allowed to use their cultural backgrounds to build knowledge together (Hasan, Islam, & Shuchi, 2020). It is also argued by Ooi and Azis (2021) that the use of students' native languages in ESL classrooms helps bring their cultural backgrounds into the learning process, emphasizing the importance of cultural relevance in language learning.

S5\_SE: sa among Linguistics class, sir...gina-pair mi sa among instructor sa lahi ug cultural background.

T: in our Linguistics class, sir...we are paired by our instructors from different cultural backgrounds.

S6\_SE: yes, sir... same sa akoa Bisaya man gayud kung

dako pero sa gina-expose ko sa akong classmate na Higaonon, sir.

T: yes, sir... same with me that I am a pure and native Bisaya but I was exposed to my classmates who is a Higaonon, sir.

S5\_SE: mao ng mag-learn pud biya mi ginagmay sa ila cultural practices, mga basic words, ug sa ilang tribe.

T: that is why we can learn from them a little about their cultural practices, basic words, and their tribe.

Collaboration is not just seen among students but also between students and teachers. It was noted by Mahmoud and Galante (2020) that translanguaging encourages a shift away from teacher-centered approaches, with students no longer expected to view teachers as the sole source of knowledge. Instead, students are motivated to take charge of their learning through collaborative activities, risk-taking, and engaging with peers and classroom resources. Additionally, it was found in Deroo and Ponzio's (2019) study with teachers in the United States that collaboration between students and teachers is fostered by translanguaging, helping both groups better understand and navigate the English learning process. Language barriers are broken down, comprehension is improved, and a more inclusive and effective learning environment is created through this approach. Mutual support and shared responsibility in the learning process are also promoted.

### Dependency on One's Mother Tongue

Participants acknowledge the benefits of translanguaging in second language learning but also recognize that over-relying on their native language can be problematic. They suggest that this dependence can hinder effective English learning by reducing the need and opportunity to practice and internalize the language. They believe frequent switching to their L1 can lower motivation to practice English, as students feel they can always use a language they are more comfortable with.

Thongwichit and Ulla (2024) emphasize that while a student's first language is helpful for learning, relying too much on it can be harmful. This is particularly true when English is not commonly spoken outside the classroom, which limits opportunities for practice in everyday situations like at home or in the community.

S2\_SE: apan naa gihapon disadvantage ani, sir...as BSED-English students...as future English teacher, dili namo ma-practice ang among degree like speaking English kay mas na-hasa man mi sa Bisaya kay sa among L2.

T: but there is a disadvantage to it, sir...as BSED-English students...as future English teachers, we cannot practice our degree like speaking English for we can sharpen more our Bisaya language than our L2.

S1\_SE: mao pud na ang nakapait, sir...pero sige lang, what is important kay maka-padayag mi sa among gibati ug huna-huna even though we oftentimes used Bisaya, sir.

T: that is also the saddest part, sir...but it is okay; what is important is we can express our feelings and thoughts even though we oftentimes use Bisaya, sir.

Another significant drawback of translanguaging is that students may hesitate to engage with the target language fully. It is suggested by Samar and Patham (2023) that this behavior comes from a comfort zone that limits interaction with English, slowing language progress. Over-reliance on translanguaging is commonly observed in classrooms where students are frequently asked to use their native language during oral recitations and discussions, as noted by many teachers.

Additionally, translanguaging is less effective when students in class do not actively use English. It was found by Deniega & Neri (2024) that teachers notice less effort to help students improve their English because translanguaging is expected to be allowed. It was noted by Yusri, Huzaimi, and Sulaiman (2022) that this lack of effort can become a habit, making it more difficult for students to be encouraged by teachers to use English consistently. As a result, students' language skills can be stalled, and their confidence in independently using English may decline.

S4\_SE: mao pud na ang loophole sa translanguaging sa klasi, sir...labi na sa amoa na mga English major dili namo ma-master ang English language kay mas ma-preferred man ang Bisaya diha sa classroom.

T: that is the loophole of translanguaging in class, sir... especially to us as English majors, we cannot master the English language for we prefer the Bisaya inside the classroom.

S5\_SE: that's the reason why, sir, na even in our demonstration teaching, maka-bisaya gayud mi kay mao man among na-andan sa klasi.

T: that's the reason why, sir, even in our demonstration teaching, we can speak Bisaya, for that is what we get acquainted with in class.

The socio-cultural context is considered important in this dependency. In places where English is not the main language, students may not feel the need to master it. It is noted by Thongwicht and Ulla (2024) that while the value of using the native language (L1) to overcome learning challenges is recognized by teachers, it should not be allowed to dominate the classroom. A balance between L1 and English is key to ensure that L1 does not take over and distract students from learning English. It was also noticed that dependence on the L1 often leads to students relying more on the teacher for translations and explanations. Many participants observed that teachers often ask students to translate using their first language. Yusri, Huzaimi, and Sulaiman (2022) pointed out that this dependence limits the ability of students to learn independently and places extra pressure on teachers to bridge the language gap. This habit can hold students back, as they often ask for immediate help instead of working through the language independently.

### Lacking Effectiveness in Writing Skills

While translanguaging in ESL classrooms is recognized for helping with comprehension and speaking, participants expressed concerns about its effectiveness in improving

writing skills. While using native languages can help with oral skills, it seems less effective for writing tasks. Participants mentioned that teachers usually discourage using native languages in written assignments, focusing only on English for these tasks. They noted that teachers typically avoid using translanguaging in written work, seeing it as incompatible with the strict rules of written English.

Students' limited vocabulary and grammar skills reduce the effectiveness of translanguaging in writing. While speaking and discussions are aided by translanguaging, students often struggle with applying these skills to writing, as vocabulary and grammar have not been fully mastered. This shows that while understanding and speaking are supported by translanguaging, long-term improvement in writing is not always achieved. Scholars support this, as challenges in writing persist for students, even when translanguaging is helpful for other language skills. For example, Muguruza *et al.* (2020) found that students experience difficulty in understanding teachers' explanations and using English effectively in both speaking and writing. This emphasizes the need for focused practice in writing solely in English to achieve proficiency.

S7\_EL: in all honesty, sir...mag-lisod gayud mi pag-sulat labi na kung essay.

T: in all honesty, sir...we have a hard time in writing, especially in essays.

S8\_EL: tinuod, sir!

T: that is right, sir!

S7\_EL: same ani karon, sir, maayo kaayo mi mo storya nimo pero kung ipag-essay mi mag-lisod ug gamay ra gayud among ma-sulat sa papel...

T: same today, sir. We are good at talking with you, but if we try to write an essay, we find it difficult and a little to write in our paper...

S8\_EL: siguro, tungod kana sa limited lang among vocabulary sa English kay ga-Bisaya man mi sa classroom, sir.

T: maybe because of our limited vocabulary in English, for we [usually] speak Bisaya inside the classroom, sir.

In writing, the limitations of translanguaging are evident in classroom practices, wherein instructors often forbid using L1 in written activities or tasks. Further, Yusri *et al.* (2022) found that using L1 in group presentations or writing is discouraged by most participants, emphasizing the need to use English. This is based on the certainty that writing in English requires rigorous adherence to grammar, syntax, and spelling rules (Fang & Liu, 2020), areas where diminutive help is offered by translanguaging. The challenges of writing in a second language are well-known. Anderson (2022) found that in India, English is mainly used in writing, while spoken communication often involves multiple languages. Similarly, the difficulties faced by Pakistani students in reading and writing, especially with complex lexis, syntax, and parsing, were noted by Atta and Naqvi (2021). Yusri *et al.* (2022) also found that while translanguaging is helpful in group

discussions, English is preferred for writing tasks. These findings support the concerns raised by ESL students about the limitations of translanguaging in improving their writing skills.

### Insufficient English Language Exposure

As noted by participants, limited exposure to the English language or L2 is one of the disadvantages of using translanguaging in ESL classrooms. This reduced exposure is believed to slow the development of fluency, as regular practice in English is considered crucial for mastering the language, according to student input and research. Participants also observed that using L1 too often can reduce motivation to engage fully with English. Students may rely on their native language, knowing that teachers offer translations, which limits opportunities to practice English.

It is suggested by Alrabah *et al.* (2015) that too much reliance on a student's native language can hinder the immersive experience required for effective language learning. Developing key language skills can be slowed down, and this limited exposure can impact communication abilities. A comfort zone can be created by constantly depending on translation, discouraging students from challenging themselves and enhancing their English vocabulary or linguistic repertoire and grammar (Thongwichit & Ulla, 2024).

S4\_EL: kung mag-essay mi, sir...usahay gayud kay maka-pangutana mi sa among classmates ug instructors kay dili mi kabalo sa translation sa Bisaya word to English.

T: if we have an essay, sir...sometimes we ask our classmates and instructors about the translation of a Bisaya word to English because we do not know.

S5\_EL: mao ng maka-google ug maka-gamit gayud mi ug AI, sir, para mag-translate sa akong essay.

T: that's the reason why we use Google, and we ask AI, sir, in order to translate [words] in my essay.

The effectiveness of translanguaging is a topic of discussion, especially when it comes to improving communication skills. It is suggested by Brevik and Rindal (2020) that consistent practice in English is crucial for students to achieve proficiency. Excessive reliance on translanguaging could limit students' full engagement with the target language.

Translanguaging can also present challenges in activities that demand active language application. Participants observed that a limited vocabulary results from the reduced use of English, as students do not consistently practice new words. This highlights the necessity for increased exposure to English to enhance vocabulary and language proficiency (Akbar & Taqi, 2020). The right balance between the advantages of translanguaging and the need for more English exposure is an ongoing challenge for educators.

Thongwichit and Ulla (2024) highlight the need to balance exposing students to the target language and appreciating their linguistic backgrounds. Sufficient practice with English must be provided to students, as it is necessary

for their academic and professional success. The aim is to strategically incorporate translanguaging to support understanding while still providing the immersion required to master the English language (Akbar & Taqi, 2020).

### Theme 6: Lack of consistency in English proficiency

Another drawback of using translanguaging in ESL classrooms, as mentioned by the participants, is that it may conflict to achieve English proficiency, especially in settings where mastering English is crucial. While translanguaging helps with understanding and communication, it can also hinder the development of essential language skills for ESL students.

Macaro *et al.* (2018) suggest that in environments where high English proficiency is essential for success, frequent use of native languages can hinder the development of crucial English skills. Additionally, translanguaging may not be beneficial in tasks that demand exclusive use of English, like oral presentations or written assignments, as it lacks the immersion necessary for mastering the language (Yusri *et al.*, 2022). Moreover, over-relying on translanguaging could shift attention away from the primary goal of mastering English. Participants noted that although translanguaging helps with comprehension, it may detract from the focus on enhancing English communication. While it may speed up understanding, it can also leave gaps in students' ability to communicate proficiently in English, which is fundamental in ESL education (Marshall, 2019). This situation often leaves teachers uncertain about the most effective language policy to implement.

S2\_EL: tungod sa openness namo sa classroom, sir... usahay mo tipas nami sa discussion kay some of us will react ug mo butt-in sa discussion kay mag-bisaya naman among instructor sa klasi maong magka-sinabot mi.

T: because of our openness in the classroom, sir... sometimes we deviate from our discussion. Some of us react and join the discussion. Our instructor speaks Bisaya in class, which is why we understand each other.

The varying views on language selection in ESL classrooms have led to discussions about the most effective approach for teaching multilingual learners. This has also brought attention to the "English-only policy" challenges in the Philippines (Gatil, 2021). Thongwichit and Ulla (2024) highlighted that conflicting language policies can create confusion among students and limit their readiness for practical situations where English proficiency is necessary.

A study by Burton and Rajendram (2019) found that translanguaging might actually limit students' progress in English, preventing them from reaching the required proficiency. This is why many teachers still prefer a monolingual approach, as Yuvayapan (2019) noted, with teachers believing that English proficiency should be achieved by using only English in teaching.

S1\_SE: kung gusto gayud namo ma-develop among English communicative competence, sir...I think it would be better gayud na mag-speak mi sa English...

T: if we would like to develop our English communicative competence, sir...I think it would be better if we spoke English...

S2\_SE: pero dili man gayud pud nato malikayan na mag-Bisaya bai sa klasi.

T: but we cannot avoid the fact that we could speak Bisaya in class.

The aim is to find a balance between leveraging the advantages of translanguaging and ensuring complete immersion in English. Educators should incorporate translanguaging to aid comprehension while keeping English instruction as the main focus to achieve educational objectives. This balanced method will foster a more effective learning space that supports students in developing the language skills necessary for success in their academic and professional lives (Sahan *et al.*, 2022).

## CONCLUSION

English plays a key role in globalization, economic growth, international communication, and technological development, helping connect the world. Participants in this study shared common experiences and challenges related to translanguaging in ESL classrooms at public higher education institutions. Results indicate that while most participants consider translanguaging to be an important means of promoting student confidence, reducing anxiety, and improving understanding, it also has serious disadvantages. These are an over-reliance on the native language, limited English exposure, no writing improvement, and failure to align with ESL classroom goals. This increased awareness of the benefits and drawbacks of translanguaging means a more balanced outlook is necessary. Carefully considering its use in individual lessons can help mitigate its disadvantages while encouraging its use in a way that suits individual students and lessons. Translanguaging should be used by teachers strategically and only when necessary in certain lessons.

Moreover, this study acknowledges that the conflicting roles assigned to translanguaging and language policies in institutions further complicate its use in the Philippine setting. Teachers in ESL classrooms where English-only policies abound teach through translanguaging but do so unwillingly, challenged by their monolingual views. This study highlights the tensions between (international) language policies and the linguistic profile of 21st-century classrooms, demonstrating a need for reconsidering policies on language. In summary, translanguaging in ESL classrooms is a polychromatic process with implications beyond the language policy. Teachers, too, grapple with this duality. Thus, they need to address this ambiguity so that translanguaging takes place appropriately and effectively, serving the purpose of linguistically enriching students in the language they seek services for and keeping English proficiency building as a core focus area.

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