



CLASSROOM TRANSLANGUAGING AS A LEARNING STRATEGY: THAI SECONDARY SCHOOL EFL STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS

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Abstract:

In Thai schools today, English language teaching has evolved from a traditional to an interactive approach. Translanguaging pedagogical practices are becoming more prevalent in Thai schools. There have been extensive debates among teachers and educators in Thai secondary schools regarding translanguaging pedagogy. As a result, little empirical research has been conducted on how Thai students perceive this issue. This study contributes to the existing literature by examining Thai secondary school EFL students' perceptions on the use of classroom translanguaging as a teaching/learning strategy. Data was collected from 36 Thai EFL students via questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The quantitative data were analyzed using quantitative descriptive data analysis, and the qualitative data were analyzed using qualitative content analysis. The results showed that in Thai (EMI) classrooms it is difficult to ignore the learners' L1 (Thai) when learning a foreign language, and students had overall positive perceptions of classroom translanguaging. Limitations and implications are also highlighted.

Keywords: translanguaging, learning strategy, English as a medium of instruction, perceptions, English as a foreign language, learning content

1. Introduction

Traditional bilingual education practices in Thailand have maintained language separation over the years. As a result, languages in Thai English as a medium of instruction (EMI) classrooms are supposed to be separated in accordance with Thai educational policy, an assumption based on monolingual ideology (Eslami et al., 2016; Garcia, 2017; Maphalala & Mpofu, 2020; Almusharraf, 2021; Boonsuk, Wasoh, & Ambele, 2023).

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Students learn English as an additional language, the problem of learning content understanding and interactions among students and teachers using the target language appears to be an issue. Regardless of the learning content taught in the classroom, there are bound to be gaps in using and mastering the target language. To address this issue, academics and scholars have proposed the concept of translanguaging (Garcia, Johnson, & Seltzer, 2017; Otheguy et al., 2015).

Cook (2001) and Ambele (2020, 2022) pointed out the significance of using the learners' native language as a resource, pointing out that there are numerous situations in which their repertoire can potentially support rather than disrupt learning. Translanguaging emphasizes the fact that language is fluid (Chukwuemeka & Ambele, 2022; Pastushenkov, Camp, Zhuchenko & Pavlenko, 2021). Teachers (for example, Thai EFL teachers) may use aspects of the students' L1 (Thai language), such as grammar, phrases, or vocabulary, to assist students in understanding English learning content and English language development.

The translanguaging strategy requires both teachers and students to delve into both their L1 and L2 in order for students to better understand the teaching/learning contents (Boonsuk, Wasoh, & Ambele, 2023; Garcia, 2017; Ooi & Aziz, 2021; Chukwuemeka & Ambele, 2022; Champlin, 2016; Khojan, 2022). Translanguaging requires teachers to consider the student's linguistic background, personal experience, and home knowledge in order to help them communicate meaningfully in several languages (Pastushenkov, Green-Eneix & Pavlenko, 2021, p. 53). Furthermore, translanguaging eliminates the borders between identified languages in terms of pedagogical practices and instructional techniques (Wei, 2018).

Translanguaging aids and engages learners in collaborative learning and peer interactions, as well as improves knowledge and understanding of new concepts and learning contents, because the L1 will serve as a scaffold for completing classroom tasks and retaining newly learned content knowledge (Kleyn & Garcia, 2019; Lewis & Baker, 2012; Poza, 2017; Maphalala & Mpofu, 2020; Almusharraf, 2021). Previous research (García & Kleyn, 2016; Otheguy et al., 2015; Wei, 2011; Hojeij et al., 2019; Rahman et al., 2021) has shown that teachers in other contexts believe that translanguaging is a natural tool for teaching, but in Thailand, Thai EFL teachers have been observed to show hesitation in incorporating this practice in their classrooms.

The Thai EMI classes are largely influenced by the traditional monolingual policy of language separation ideology (Ambele & Watson Todd, 2021; Ambele, 2022). Presently, very little empirical research has been conducted to capture the perspectives of Thai EFL learners in this view.

The present study used a survey questionnaire to collect quantitative data, as well as a semi-structured interview to examine the impact of translanguaging in the Thai EMI classroom. This study addressed the following questions as students implement this strategy in language classrooms: 1) How does the translanguaging learning strategy improve Thai secondary school students' English content learning and English language development in the (EMI) classroom? 2) What are students' perceptions toward

adopting translanguaging as an EFL teaching/learning strategy in English language learning?

2. Classroom translanguaging

Translanguaging is currently a generally supported pedagogical strategy that encourages and supports the use of learners' native language (L1) in language learning and academic activities. Translanguaging provides a conducive atmosphere and space for interactions with the target language whenever EFL students learn a foreign language (for example, English), (Hojeij et al., 2019; Rahman et al., 2021). Despite the fact that researchers have presented various opposing interpretations of translanguaging, Garcia's (2009) operationalization stands out in the literature. (Garcia, 2009; cited in Ambele, 2022, p. 873) operationalized classroom translanguaging as: *"An approach to bi/multilingualism that focuses on how bi/multilinguals communicate and interact in their daily lives. These translanguaging strategies are considered as an accepted norm rather than marked as unusual in this context. As a result, the primary focus of translanguaging in the classroom is no longer about codes or established patterns of language separation."*

Translanguaging is simply a natural and necessary component for bi/multilingual learners' meaning-making processes in classroom interactions, in which learners' L1 is linked with other semiotic features other than the L2 (Wei & Lin, 2019). In this context, translanguaging refers to fluid verbal and linguistic performances in a range of interconnected classroom exchanges between teachers and learners.

Ambele, (2022) Posited that Language, according to Garcia, Johnson, and Seltzer (2016), is an ongoing activity that only exists as translanguaging. Furthermore, translanguaging impacts both teachers and students in the classroom as they interact to negotiate meanings and implications. Traditional bilingual concepts like code-switching or code-mixing have lost their previous popularity as Thai and English (as in this study) use in the classroom is less likely to be perceived as completely separate and different languages.

Garcia (2011) distinguishes between code-switching, translation, and translanguaging because, unlike code-switching and translation, translanguaging *"is not merely a means to support scaffolding, meaning making and language learning; rather, translanguaging is a rhetorical strategy that students should embrace in this 21st century."* In light of this, bilingual teachers and students should regard their natural translanguaging activity as a beneficial (rather than a shameful) tool and use it as a successful learning and teaching strategy in bilingual classrooms (Boosuk & Ambele, 2021; Garcia, 2009).

Furthermore, translanguaging is based on Cummins' (1979) idea of 'interdependence,' which claims that translanguaging is a pedagogy that encourages the use of L1 in the process of L2 mastering and improves learner's second language development (Garcia & Wei, 2014). Code-switching is thought to be a result of L1 interference, which is generally regarded as detrimental to second language teaching and learning (Alhawary, 2018). Code-switching, on the other hand, denotes switching

between languages in a variety of situational circumstances (Ambele & Watson Todd, 2021; Nagy, 2017), which is "*rarely academically endorsed or pedagogically supported*" (Ambele & Watson Todd, 2021; Nagy, 2017; Creese & Blackledge, 2010, 2015). In the classroom, code-switching is viewed as "*embarrassing*," "*vain*," and "*a waste of bilingual resources*" since the languages "*contaminate*" each other (Creese and Blackledge, 2010).

Translanguaging, on the other hand, is viewed as a more adaptable educational approach to learning and teaching in which "*knowledge may be easily expressed, understood, and communicated*" (Lewis et al., 2012). In this sense, translanguaging refers to fluid verbal and linguistic performances in a variety of interconnected classroom exchanges between teachers and learners.

Translanguaging occurs frequently in English medium of instruction classrooms at all levels where the language of instruction is not the learners' native language. Translanguaging as a classroom strategy has blurred and challenged the norms of traditional teaching and learning in EFL classrooms.

The dynamic character of translanguaging was emphasized by Otheguy et al. (2015); Garcia, (2009). They posited that while bi/multilingual students are learning a second language, they do not adhere to the socio-political rules and boundaries that separate languages in the classroom. This has been found to 'improve learners' inclusion, participation, and understandings in the L2 learning process; develop fewer formal relationships among learners; convey ideas more easily; and completing lessons (Wei & Lin, 2019). Wei, (2018) quoted that "*classroom translanguaging emphasizes linguistics of participation*" because both professors and students participate in the co-construction of knowledge.

Although the translanguaging strategy is commonly used in EFL classrooms in Thailand, there is limited research on translanguaging practices in Thailand (southeastern region, in this study case), and from the researcher's observation, the majority of Thai EFL(EMI) teachers/learners use the practices in one of several ways: using a text in one language and discussing it in another, moving from a text in one language to another, or integrating the learners' entire linguistic resources. In summary, translanguaging is commonly used in Thailand, but more research is needed to fully understand its implications and benefits.

3. Translanguaging space

Lefebvre, (1991) proposed the concept of socially created space. Space, according to Jewitt (2016), translanguaging space is a semiotic resource. Pennycook and Otsuji, (2014) coined the phrase "*spatial repertoires*". Li Wei (2011) coined the term "*translanguaging space*," which encompasses translanguaging practices, multilingual, multimodal, and multisensory communication, and meaning co-production (Garcia & Li Wei 2014, Hua et al. 2017). Translanguaging space assumes that symbols and resources are linked in order to create space.

According to Li Wei, (2011), translanguaging space, i.e., socially created settings, enables individuals to use their entire linguistic resources strategically for interaction. Translanguaging defies and destabilizes linguistic hierarchies while broadening and extending behaviors that are frequently valued both in school and in the everyday world of communities and homes (Garcia & Li Wei, 2014). Translanguaging space is a space created by and for translanguaging practices, a space in which multilingual individuals integrate previously practiced social spaces and thus linguistic codes in different spaces by bringing together different aspects of their personal history, experience, and environment, attitude, belief and ideology, cognitive and physical ability, and so on, into one coordinated and meaningful performance (Li Wei, 2011). It posits multimodal interaction - gestures, objects, visual clues, touch, tone, sounds, and other means of communication other than words - and online and digital media create new translanguaging spaces and resources for multilingual and multimodal communication (Hua et al., 2015). Languaging, from a sociocultural perspective, is a social act in the process of meaning development that is fluid and dynamic (Garcia, 2009). Languages are viewed as semiotic resources rather than separate systems (Hua et al., 2015); there are no well-defined boundaries between bilinguals' languages..., rather a language continuum is accessed (Garcia, 2009). Each language has roles connected with a particular level of power, prestige, and identity.

As aforementioned, learners' usage of their L1 in the language classroom can enable many engagements that benefit both learners and teachers in EFL classrooms. The current study investigates the views of 36 Thai EFL students' translanguaging space practices in language classroom in a secondary school in the northeastern region, which have been observed to be using of both learners' L1 and L2 in English language learning in EMI classroom in the Thai context. The nature of the investigated Thai EMI classroom will be presented in the next section.

4. Theoretical framework

This current study is drawn from Garcia, (2009) translanguaging theory, which stated that bilinguals do not have two or more independent language systems. Languages only emerge as unique systems as a result of policy or administrative norms. Moreover, bilingualism is fluid, depending on what people do with language to develop and understand interactions for meaning-making in the language classroom (Garcia & Otheguy, 2020; Li Wei, 2018). When translanguaging is used for educational purposes and students are encouraged to use their linguistic repertoires constructively, the possibility to generate information expands and teachers and students collaborate to promote critical thinking. Thus, translanguaging theory is employed in this study to facilitate an understanding of how Thai EFL secondary school students incorporate this strategy in their L2 classroom and their perceptions of its application at the high school level in Thailand.

5. Methodology

5.1 Context of the study

To address the research objectives, the study was limited to one classroom of 36 EFL students where the teacher and learners used the translanguaging strategy (in this case, utilizing the learners' L1 (Thai) and English in the EMI classroom throughout their foreign language teaching and learning. The context was chosen using a convenient and purposeful sampling method, including (1) the researcher lives and works in this specific region, (2) the researcher is familiar with the language practices of the students in the EMI classroom, and (3) it is easier to make use of the available participants since they are suitable for the study.

The secondary school was chosen because (1) it allowed students the opportunity to adopt translanguaging learning strategies to assist them in L2 (English) content learning; and (2) it is a secondary school where the study's researcher works as a language teacher. Furthermore, the participants were chosen using the purposive-convenience sampling method (Cresswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Selvi, 2020), because (1) the researcher is a Thai secondary school English teacher living in Thailand; and (2) the students have been observed incorporating the translanguaging strategy (i.e., using both Thai and English) in their language classrooms. These criteria were used in the study's sample process to include participants who were familiar with both the traditional and contemporary strategies of learning a second language or the English language.

The 36 students in the (EMI) classroom were recruited and interviewed as part of this study to gain insights into the purposes for using both their L1 and L2 in the (EMI) classroom, in contrast to the prescribed English-only policy, and their perceptions of adopting such a language learning strategy at the secondary school level classes.

It should also be noted that Thailand maintains its ancient bilingual policy of language separation in EMI education (which is still tightly enforced by the majority of Thai educational system). The researcher viewed the translanguaging practice of the EMI Thai students as a unique language learning strategy and proposes for greater investigation into its impact on content learning knowledge and language development. As a result, the purpose of the current investigation is justified.

5.2 Participants

Data for this study were collected from 36 Thai students in the northeast region of Thailand (see Appendix A). All 36 students are EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students studying in EMI classroom.

The justification for this type of inclusion, according to Chukwuemeka and Ambele (2022), is that learners who incorporate modern learning strategies (such as translanguaging) in the classroom are far more likely to support schools in adopting such an approach than learners who do not use such methods. As a result, the participants in this study were chosen with the expectation that their experiences learning English through the traditional English-only approach to now incorporating the translanguaging

strategy would provide more in-depth insights into the practical benefits of using learners' L1 in Thai ELT classrooms.

5.3 Instruments

The research instruments in this study were survey questionnaire and semi-structured interview. The online survey was sent out to the students (through line application) to understand more about how the translanguaging strategy has benefited them in understanding the L2 contents and improvements. The questionnaire had 20 items, with items 1-11 focusing on the participant's information background, and classroom language practices and items 12-20 assessing the impact of the translanguaging learning strategy on students' content learning understanding and language development.

Following the questionnaire responses, an interview was set up at a convenient time and venue (for only ten students). The 10 interviewees were chosen based on their ability to reply to a face-to-face interview with the assistance of a co-Thai teacher.

The semi-structured interview (see Appendix B) was intended to provide the students with insights into their translanguaging practices to support the questionnaire responses. The interview questions were mainly about the students' perceptions of using L1 in L2 classes. The data obtained from the questionnaire were used as a reference throughout the interview and in the finding's discussion.

5.4 Data collection and analysis

Before the actual data collection process began, the participants were formally given a consent form explaining the ethical procedures for participant recruitment and participation. The translanguaging strategy teaching and learning lasted approximately 10 class sessions in total, and each about 45-50 minutes. Based on the important occurrences witnessed during the classes (e.g., switching back and forth L1 and L2 texts, incorporating L1 (Thai) and L2 (English) for contents analysis, explanation and communication). The researcher took notes and prepared potential survey questions which also guided the development of the interview questions.

The interview was recorded with a mobile phone recorder because taking notes during the interview could result in the loss of words and phrases. This allowed the researcher to pay close attention to the students' comments and make corrections and double-check the data.

Furthermore, all of the participants were bilingual students who studies in an EMI classroom and used the translanguaging learning strategy in their L2 classes. The interviews were carried out in Thai with the assistance of a co-Thai teacher. Before conducting the interview, the interview questions were translated from English to Thai and back-checked by expert Thai translators to eliminate translation errors. The reasons for interviewing the students in their native language (Thai) are; (1) to allow the students to express their sincere thoughts without any language barriers and (2) to correspond to the research purposes.

The data from the questionnaire items were analyzed using a quantitative descriptive analytic tool to determine the mean, significance, and frequency of using the translanguaging learning strategy in English language classrooms. Almela (2021) defined quantitative descriptive analysis tools in applied linguistics as the use of data to identify and describe features of language usage and to provide real occurrences of specific phenomena. In this study, quantitative linguistic features are classified and counted as statistical models to explain the observed facts.

Qualitative content analysis was used to analyze the interview. According to Selvi (2020), qualitative content analysis is the systematic classification of content into categories based on subjective evaluation, with consideration given to the presence of category content. Furthermore, before being transcribed, the interview data were translated and then re-checked for validity and translation discrepancies. The translations and transcriptions, as well as the script, were then read numerous times, and any text that seemed relevant to the research questions was highlighted. Each interview was summarized in order to gain a better understanding of its content.

The contents were reviewed, organized into a table, and the similarities and contrasts between the participants' contents were highlighted. The interview and questionnaire contents were analyzed in order to discover relevant components of students' perspectives of translanguaging in L2 class. Finally, the data were integrated into similar contents, and themes from the data were identified and presented as main themes relevant to the research objectives.

6. Findings and discussion

This section presents and discusses issues identified through data analysis of the questionnaire responses and the interviews. To ensure participant anonymity, each participant was assigned a code (for example, S-1).

6.1 Students' L1 use in the L2 classroom

This section demonstrates and answers research question one. In the questionnaire item, the student rated how and why L1 (Thai) was used in the (English) classroom. Based on the student responses to the questionnaire item, the results showed that all of the students used the translanguaging learning strategy for complementary reasons and different purposes (see Figure 1).

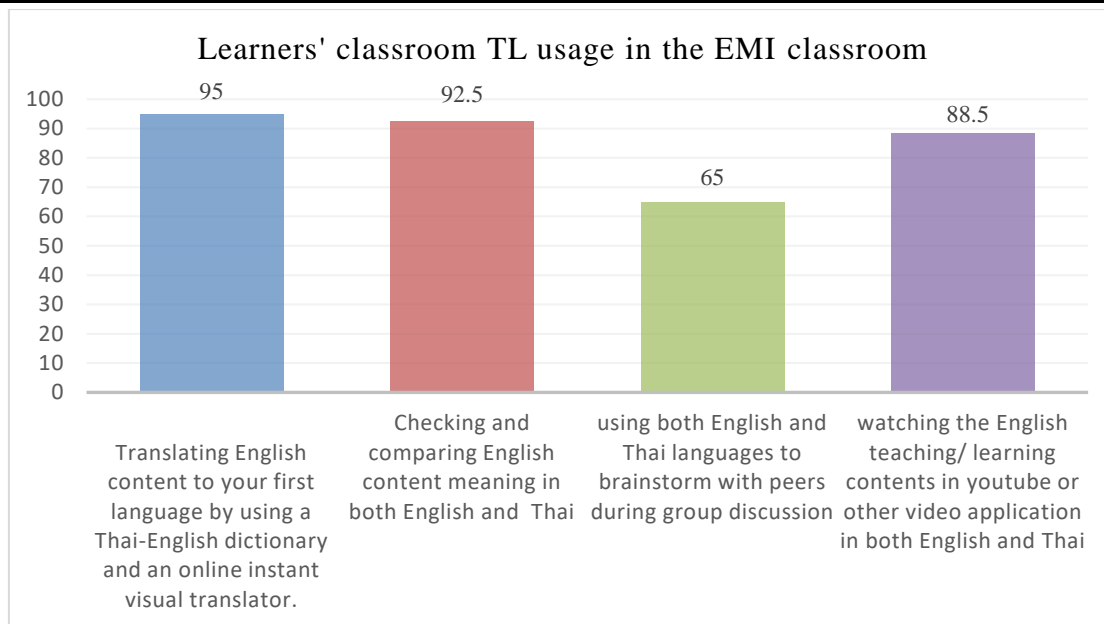


Figure 1: Learners translanguageing usage in the EMI classroom

Figure 1 summarizes the most common translanguageing strategies used by EMI students to understand English learning content and English language development. It was discovered that 95% of students translate English content to their first language using a Thai-English dictionary and an online instant visual translator, 92.5% check and compare English content meaning in both English and Thai, 65% reported using both English and Thai languages to brainstorm with peers during group discussions, and 88.5% said they watch English teaching/learning contents on YouTube or other video apps to better understand the English learning contents and English language development.

The results revealed that the learners employed translanguageing strategy in their classrooms to enhance their content learning knowledge and English language development through different TL strategies. In Thai secondary school EMI classes, administrators and teachers impose restrictive policies on language use, particularly L1 use in the L2 classroom. Such regulations explicitly prohibit the use of learners' L1 in English learning. According to research, the debate over the employment of the L1 in most bi/multilingual classroom contexts has shifted drastically, however, at a slower pace in Thailand. This is due to the stringent bilingual educational policy that separate languages in Thai EFL classrooms, as well as the belief of some Thai teachers that allowing learners to use both L1 and L2 in the language classroom will prevent them from understanding the L2 learning contents. Moreover, in order to assist learners and facilitate learning (where learners' L1 and L2 can be used concurrently to enhance teaching/learning), some secondary school teachers allow their students to switch between L1 (Thai) and L2 (English) and fully utilize their repertoire of resources in the classroom (Ambele & Watson Todd, 2021).

6.1.1 Students translanguaging usage on contents learning in the EMI classroom

Despite Thai teachers' concerns about learners' use of L1 in the classroom, the findings showed that L1 is a valuable tool to support various proficient learners. Littlewood and Yu, (2011), posited that restricting a learner's entire linguistic repertoire can lead to demotivation, especially for learners with low English proficiency. However, it is worth emphasizing, that learners' L1 use in the L2 classroom, like in Thailand, depends heavily on the teacher's teaching philosophies and strategies of the learners and learning. Ambele, (2022); Lewis and Baker, (2012) posited that learners' L1 use in the L2 classroom should be referred to as translanguaging in education.

Table 1: Students translanguaging usage on contents learning in the EMI classroom

	Percentage of L1 using in the classroom
Percentage of students translating English contents in the classroom	95
Percentage of students switching between English and Thai to understand learning contents	83.3
Percentage of students who perceive translanguaging strategy as a drawback to language learning	8.3
Percentage of students who perceive translanguaging approach as useful learning strategy	91.7

Table 1 presents the frequency of translanguaging usage on content learning understanding in the EMI classroom. The majority of participants (95%) reported translating English learning contents, while 83.3% indicated switching back and forth between both languages to understand what is taught in the EMI classroom, Furthermore, only 8.3% of students said they had no difficulty learning with the English-only approach; however, the majority of students (91.7%) had difficulty learning in a typical English-only classroom without alternating between the L1 (Thai) and L2 (English).

Researchers have recognized the fact that using the learners' first language actually supports L2 learning rather than interfering in the L2 learning (Cook, 2001; Littlewood & Yu, 2011; Hall & Cook, 2012; Ambele, 2022; Khonjan, 2021). Indeed, it is currently a useful knowledge in bilingual schools that "*the L1 plays a crucial role in teaching and learning a second language*" (Ambele & Watson Todd, 2021). Table 2 below presented the situations whereby translanguaging occurs in the EMI classroom.

6.1.2 Situational translanguaging occurrences in the EMI classroom

This section presented the translanguaging situational occurrences concept as "*using one language to reinforce the other, to enhance knowledge, and boost the students' development in both languages.*" Translanguaging, according to TESOL research, helps learners develop their weaker language by limiting them from conducting the majority of their activity in their stronger language while performing less difficult tasks in their weaker language. As a consequence, translanguaging improves students' academic linguistic competence

in both their L1 and L2, resulting in enhanced bilingualism and biliteracy development.' Baker, (2001) Källkvist et.al, (2019), for example, researched translanguaging in an 'English only' multilingual classroom and found that both L1 and L2 exist in connection to one another, which is why learners' L1 should be used as supporting aid (See Table 2).

Table 2: Situational translanguaging occurrences in the EMI classroom

Classroom situations	The percentage of frequency				
	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Use of subject-specific books in both English and the native language (Thai)	16.67	38.89	27.78	16.67	0
Presenting teaching and learning content (Textbooks, PowerPoints, videos, and visual aids) in both languages	27.78	33.33	33.33	5.56	0
Encourage drafting notes from a text, graphic organizer, or during practical work in both languages	27.78	33.33	33.33	5.6	0
Encourage translation of learning content (word meaning) in both languages	11.11	55.56	33.33	0	0
Make low-proficiency learners' part of the learning activities in the classroom	29.41	35.29	35.29	0	0
Meaning-making during interaction in the English language classroom	33.33	16.67	50	0	0
Mean Scores	24.4	35.6	35.6	4.6	0

The analysis of mean scores across the five rubric categories of translanguaging occurrences in the classroom by students (always, usually, sometimes, rarely, and never) indicates more extreme variation in the study questionnaire items along these six sections: 1) Use of subject-specific books in native language (Thai), 2) Presenting teaching and learning content (textbooks, powerpoints, videos, and visual aids) in both languages, 3) Encourage drafting notes from a text, graphic organizer, or during practical work in both languages, 4) Encourage translation of learning content (word meaning) in both languages, 5) Make low-proficiency learners' part of the learning activities in the classroom, and 6) Meaning-making during interaction in the English language classroom (see Table 2).

The data indicated that the following views and thoughts as were expressed in the mean score of the students translanguaging learning strategy use in the EMI classroom: Students rated their mean frequency of translanguaging learning strategy used in the classroom with a mean score of Always (24.4), Usually (35.6), Sometimes (35.6), Rarely (4.6) and Never (0). It could be interpreted that this EMI never adhere to Thai policy of language separation in the English as a medium of instruction classroom. The learners employ a translanguaging strategy to better understand the English learning contents and English language development. The interview findings will be elaborated on the next section.

6.2 Students' perceptions of the adoption of classroom translanguaging strategy

The second research question, focused on students' perceptions of translanguaging as an EFL teaching/learning strategy in the EMI classroom. According to the results of the questionnaire items, all the participating students used the translanguaging strategy in learning content understanding, language development, and demonstrated positive attitudes while doing so in class.

The participants highlighted six situations in the classroom where they believe it would be beneficial for them to use both English and Thai. For each situation, examples of the excerpts are provided:

Situation 1: To enable second language development

S-1: *"Checking English word meanings in both English and Thai creates space for language enhancement."*

S-4: *"When the teacher presents learning contents in both English and Thai, it helps students pick up English words or phrases easily."*

Situation 2: To interact with peers during activities

S-6: *"Majority of the students use both English and Thai during group or one on one discussion with classmates to discuss the learning contents."*

S-4: *"Because my classmates are all Thai, learning English requires us to draw on linguistic resources from our native language in order to recall English words and vocabulary."*

Situation 3: To brainstorm during L2 class activities

S-1: *"Using native language generate ideas for solving English language learning challenges and promotes free thinking and participation during brainstorming activities in the classroom."*

S-3: *"Majority of students do not speak English, using both English and Thai is vital in the EMI classroom because using native language engages Thai learners to share similar narratives and concepts in Thai language and compare it with the English language contents."*

Situation 4: Translate to communicate and explain problems related to the learning content to the teachers

S-1: *"Thai students translate English words heard for the first time, allowing them to effectively understand the words and communicate with the teacher during question-and-answer sessions."*

S-5: *"Thai learners easily translate English words that teachers may take a long time to explain when providing feedback."*

Situation 5: To enable quick comprehension of English learning contents and save learning time

S-3: *"Using both English and Thai is beneficial since it familiarizes students with the learning topics and enables for easy comprehension of English learning contents."*

S-6: *"Using both Thai and English saves learning time in the classroom."*

Situation 6: To enable more understanding of the learning content

S-6: *"Learning English in an EMI classroom utilizing both English and Thai language creates an environment in which students could easily engage in speaking."*

S-1: *"Using both English and Thai assists students in understanding more of the English content and apply it in their daily lives."*

The students reported using their native language (Thai) to create collaborative connections with their peers, grasp what was presented in class, and make sense of English vocabulary. For each situation, according to the excerpts above. It is currently a useful knowledge in multilingual schools that *"the L1 plays a crucial role in teaching and learning a second language"* (Ambele & Watson Todd, 2021). Furthermore, learners' L1 use in the classroom helps them acquire the target language and content learning in the target language (Patushenkov et al., 2022).

The use of Thai in the English classroom enhanced participants' learning contents knowledge because they were able to effectively understand the teaching resources, participate in classroom activities, and communicate with the teachers' directions. The learners perceived benefits of classroom translanguaging will be discussed in the next section.

6.2.1 Learners' perceived benefits of translanguaging pedagogy in EMI classroom

This section comprises of excerpts that demonstrate the students' perceived benefits of using both the L1 (Thai) and the target language (English) in learning content understanding and language development. The participants identified three circumstances in the classroom when they believe utilizing both English and Thai were extremely beneficial.

Excerpt 1: Improved classroom communication

S-2: *"When I use both English and Thai in the English classroom, my classroom communication morale improves."*

S-3: *"Using both English and Thai allows Thai students to effectively ask questions, receive feedback on the teaching/learning contents, and express themselves in the English classroom."*

Excerpt 2: Engaging low proficiency learners to be part of the learning

S-7: *"Allowing both English and Thai helps learners with limited English skills to participate in group discussions and brainstorming exercises."*

S-10: *"Low English proficiency learners can communicate with classmates and teachers by using both English and Thai."*

Excerpt 3: Saving classroom session time

S-3: *"Translated textbooks aid in quick comprehension and allow the teacher to serve majority of the learners throughout the class session."*

S-4: *"The use of both English and Thai for meaning construction results in effective classroom time management."*

According to some recent studies (Kyeyune, 2010; Barnard & McLellan, 2014), the usage of L1 as a distinct language learning and teaching strategy benefits learners in successfully acquiring the target language. Similarly, Sah (2014) explored Chinese EFL

students and found that the use of L1 facilitates peer interaction, in which students mediate their understanding to one another for better learning. This indicates that present-day bi/multilingual classroom should not insist on an English-only ideology, which may lead to frustration and anxiety if the information does not provide learners with enough comprehension (Lo & Macaro, 2012; Kyeyune, 2010).

The use of Thai in the English classroom benefited participants' content learning understanding because they were able to effectively understand the learning topics, participate in classroom activities, and communicate with the teachers' directives. The following part will discuss the learners' perceived drawbacks of using and adopting the translanguaging strategy.

6.2.2 Learners' perceived drawbacks of translanguaging pedagogy in EMI classroom

In another aspect, in terms of the drawbacks of using translanguaging in the classroom, the excerpts from a few students below reveal that using both English and Thai in the classroom can be detrimental to students' language learning and language development. The downsides of employing students' native language as a teaching/learning strategy, according to the research, are: 1) students will have difficulties using the target language, and 2) students will lack self-confidence in speaking the target language in the classroom. Overall, these students claimed that they will be passive learners if their L1s are constantly utilized in the English classroom without caution, as seen below.

Excerpt 4: Students' difficulty using the target language

S-2: *"Allowing too much Thai in the English classroom creates an expectation among pupils that the teacher will speak Thai if they have difficulty understanding the learning contents or English language words/phrases."*

S-6: *"Students make little attempt to find or understand English words/phrases meaning on their own since they always anticipate the teacher to explain the learning contents in Thai language."*

Excerpt 5: Lack of self-confidence in speaking the target language in the classroom

S-4: *"Using Thai language excessively in the English language classroom causes students to be afraid of speaking or listening in English."*

S-5: *"Using students' L1 in the classroom causes them to be unwilling to speak or respond to any question in English in the expectation that the teacher will allow them to use Thai instead."*

S-7: *"When too much Thai is used in the EMI classroom, students expect the teacher to speak Thai if they have difficulty understanding the learning contents or English language words/phrases."*

In response to today's language learners' increased linguistic diversity within conventional monolingual societies, classroom language use and practices have been adjusted to accommodate this linguistic diversity (Garcia & Otheguy, 2020; Poza, 2017; Chukwuemeka & Ambele, 2022; Ambele, 2022). The excerpts from the students, stated quite clearly that it is inappropriate to keep apart both L1 (Thai) and L2 (English) in teaching/learning (most especially learning the L2 contents provided by the teacher or the school curriculum) in Thai EMI classrooms.

The learners' statement on the drawbacks of translanguaging teaching and learning strategy: Excerpts 4 and 5 showed that they find the existence of learners' L1 (Thai) in the L2 (English) classroom to be interfering, as it does to enhance their communicative competence and target language usage.

Languages, according to translanguaging scholars, are not independent things but cohabit (Conteh, 2018; Galante, 2020; Maphalala & Mpofu, 2020; Almusharraf, 2021). Littlewood and Yu (2011), stated that using learners' L1 in the L2 classroom to improve target language enhances L2 development. Thus, Ambele (2020), Ambele (2022), Kallkvist et al. (2019), Chukwuemeka, & Ambele (2022) have argued that bilingualism is a resource since languages may complement one another. According to Garcia (2017), all students would benefit from a translanguaging pedagogical approach if teachers made the learners' L1 evident in the language classroom.

7. Conclusion, implications and limitations

Translanguaging pedagogy has received a lot of attention in recent years, especially in higher education and, more recently, in secondary schools; however, there has been a lack of research on Thai learners' perceptions of this issue. As a result, this study adds to the existing literature by investigating the impacts of translanguaging on learning content and language development in a Thai EFL secondary school, as well as investigating students' perceptions of the translanguaging strategy used in Thai (EMI) classroom.

Based on the research findings, Thai EFL secondary school students had generally positive perceptions toward classroom translanguaging pedagogy (i.e., using students' L1 in the EMI classroom) for L2 development and content learning. According to the students, it seems impossible to dismiss the use of both L1 (Thai) and L2 (English) in a Thai secondary school classroom setting where English is the medium of instruction.

Furthermore, all 36 participants agreed that adopting translanguaging pedagogy in Thai secondary school education was a good idea and called for a change in Thai education policy to accommodate the translanguaging learning strategy. This shows that these students strategically use their L1 (Thai) in the classroom to complete various learning tasks and achieve desired results. This necessitates additional investigation into this issue with more students in Thai secondary schools, as well as students who do not support the translanguaging approach.

Some implications for practice, policy, and research should be acknowledged explicitly. To begin, the majority of participants indicated that translanguaging was beneficial and necessary for learning a second language; therefore, bilingual learners may wish to be allowed and encouraged to use the translanguaging learning strategy in EMI classrooms. Furthermore, the primary purpose of EFL classes is to improve student's English proficiency, so efforts to promote an English-only approach should be minimized (Canagarajah, 2018; Garcia & Otheguy, 2020; Ambele, 2020; Ambele & Watson Todd, 2021; Moody & Eslami, 2019; Chukwuemeka & Ambele, 2022). Perceived benefits among

teachers and learners are also critical to the success of translanguaging teaching/learning strategy in EFL contexts. Kleyn and Garcia (2019) stated that, to fulfill translanguaging expectations to their full potential, educators should view all linguistic features and practices of any given student as a general and specific resource for their learning. Furthermore, since the primary goal of EMI classes is to improve students' English proficiency, efforts to promote an English-only approach should be minimized and integrate the learner's native language in their educational curriculum to support the learners' metacognitive and communicative competency. Therefore, policymakers, administrators, and curriculum designers in Thai secondary schools may wish to explore strategic approaches to include translanguaging in language learning (Hojeij et al., 2019; Rahman et al., 2021; Chukwuemeka & Ambele, 2022; Boonsuk, Wasoh, & Ambele, 2023).

The major limitations in the current study, as with every study, are the participants and context. Given the small number of participants and the school settings, the findings of this qualitative but partly quantitative case study cannot be generalized as reflecting the general perceptions of Thai secondary school learners in Thailand regarding translanguaging learning strategy. However, the current study could be useful as a guide to further investigate this issue with more Thai secondary school students and teachers.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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Appendix A

Table 1: Context of the study, participants' demographics and classroom setting

Context	Northeast, Thailand
Educational level	Secondary School
Age range	15 – 17 years
Gender	Male (45%), Female (55%)
Participants native language	Thai
Classroom setting	English as a medium of instruction (EMI)
Learning period duration	40-50 minutes
Learning strategy preference	Translanguaging approach (95%)
	English-only approach (5%)

Appendix B:

Interview questions

1. Do you agree that using both English and your native language helps you in understanding the English language teaching content in the classroom?

ท่านเห็นด้วยหรือไม่กับการใช้ภาษาอังกฤษและภาษาไทยสามารถช่วยในเรื่องการเข้าใจเนื้อหาภาษาอังกฤษในห้องเรียน

2. What are the benefits and drawbacks of teaching and learning in both English and Thai in the classroom?

ข้อดีและข้อเสียของการเรียนการสอนภาษาอังกฤษและภาษาไทยในห้องเรียนมีอะไรบ้าง

3. What are your attitudes towards the adoption of English and your native language (Thai) as a teaching and learning strategy in the classroom?

ท่านมีมุมมองอย่างไรต่อการนำภาษาไทยและภาษาอังกฤษมาใช้ในฐานะการเป็นกระบวนการของการเรียนรู้ในห้องเรียน

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