

## The Unheard Story of a Last-Mile Teacher: Translanguaging in English Language Teaching

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### Abstract

Translanguaging has emerged as a significant pedagogical approach in multilingual classrooms, allowing learners to fluidly navigate between languages to enhance comprehension and engagement. In linguistically diverse settings, particularly those involving indigenous learners, translanguaging serves as a bridge between students' home languages and the target language, fostering more inclusive and effective learning experiences. This study explores an English teacher's perceptions, applications, and challenges in implementing translanguaging in a multilingual classroom. Using Narrative inquiry approach and purposive sampling, the study focused on an English teacher at Hinandayan National High School, Agusan del Norte, who has experience teaching Higaonon learners. Thematic analysis was employed to examine the data. Findings indicate that while the teacher perceives translanguaging as beneficial for enhancing learners' comprehension, some students still struggle to improve their English academic performance. The teacher frequently relied on translation to facilitate understanding, yet specific translanguaging strategies were not explicitly employed due to a lack of formal training. A major challenge arose in writing activities, as learners preferred to use their mother tongue, requiring the teacher to reinforce the importance of English usage. The study recommends selectively integrating translanguaging for learners struggling with English comprehension and providing teachers with specialized training to maximize its effectiveness.

**Keywords:** Translanguaging, English Language Learning, Multilingual Education, Teaching Strategies

### Abstrak

*Translanguaging* telah muncul sebagai pendekatan pedagogis yang signifikan dalam kelas-kelas multilingual, memungkinkan para siswa untuk bergerak dengan luwes antara bahasa guna meningkatkan pemahaman dan keterlibatan. Dalam konteks yang secara linguistik beragam, terutama yang melibatkan pembelajar dari komunitas adat, translanguaging berfungsi sebagai jembatan antara bahasa ibu siswa dan bahasa target, sehingga menciptakan pengalaman belajar yang lebih inklusif dan efektif. Studi ini mengeksplorasi persepsi, aplikasi, dan tantangan seorang guru bahasa Inggris dalam menerapkan translanguaging di kelas multibahasa. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan penyelidikan naratif dan *purposive sampling*, studi ini berfokus pada seorang guru bahasa Inggris di Sekolah Menengah Hinandayan, Agusan del Norte, yang memiliki pengalaman mengajar pembelajar Higaonon. Analisis tematik digunakan untuk memeriksa data. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa sementara guru menganggap translanguaging sebagai langkah yang bermanfaat untuk meningkatkan

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pemahaman siswa, beberapa siswa masih kesulitan untuk meningkatkan performa akademis bahasa Inggris mereka. Guru sering kali mengandalkan terjemahan untuk memfasilitasi pemahaman, namun strategi translanguaging tertentu tidak diterapkan secara eksplisit karena kurangnya pelatihan formal. Tantangan utama muncul dalam aktivitas menulis, karena siswa lebih memilih menggunakan bahasa ibu mereka, sehingga guru perlu memperkuat pentingnya penggunaan bahasa Inggris. Studi ini merekomendasikan untuk secara selektif mengintegrasikan translanguaging bagi siswa yang kesulitan dalam pemahaman bahasa Inggris dan memberikan pelatihan khusus kepada para guru untuk memaksimalkan efektivitasnya.

**Kata Kunci:** *Translanguaging*, Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris, Pendidikan Multibahasa, Strategi Pengajaran

## Introduction

In multilingual classrooms, learners frequently face significant challenges in acquiring English proficiency due to linguistic and cultural barriers. These challenges encompass a lack of motivation, self-confidence, fear of making mistakes, hesitation, and limited vocabulary. Consequently, language learning has evolved with emerging theories and pedagogical practices aimed at addressing these difficulties. One noteworthy approach is translanguaging, which has gained traction as a tool for enhancing English language learning, particularly in multilingual contexts.

Translanguaging is a theoretical perspective that views bilingual and multilingual speakers as possessing a unified linguistic repertoire rather than separate language systems.<sup>1</sup> This approach enables learners to draw upon their entire linguistic knowledge to communicate effectively. In the classroom, translanguaging allows teachers and students to bridge language gaps, enhancing comprehension and participation. Research has highlighted several benefits, including increased learner confidence,<sup>2</sup> support for conceptual understanding,<sup>3</sup> and improved classroom engagement.<sup>4</sup>

However, despite its advantages, translanguaging also presents specific challenges. Almashour noted that students' lack of experience with translanguaging and their reluctance to use multiple languages in structured learning environments can limit its effectiveness.<sup>5</sup> Similarly, Liu et al. argued that translanguaging might undermine the development of an

<sup>1</sup> Sara Vogel and Ofelia García, "Translanguaging," in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Education*, by Sara Vogel and Ofelia García (Oxford University Press, 2017), <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190264093.013.181>.

<sup>2</sup> Stephanie Dryden, Ana Tankosić, and Sender Dovchin, "Foreign Language Anxiety and Translanguaging as an Emotional Safe Space: Migrant English as a Foreign Language Learners in Australia," *System* 101 (October 1, 2021): 102593, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2021.102593>.

<sup>3</sup> Dayna Hillcrest, "Academic Benefit of Translanguaging," *MinneTESOL Journal* 37, no. 2 (November 22, 2021): 105–21.

<sup>4</sup> Rahmawansyah Sahib et al., "West Papuan Teachers' Perceptions on Translanguaging Practices in EFL Classroom Interaction," *ELT-Lectura* 7, no. 2 (August 20, 2020): 73–84, <https://doi.org/10.31849/elt-lectura.v7i2.4205>; Margaret Funke Omidire and Sameera Ayob, "The Utilisation of Translanguaging for Learning and Teaching in Multilingual Primary Classrooms," *Multilingua* 41, no. 1 (January 1, 2022): 105–29, <https://doi.org/10.1515/multi-2020-0072>; Ming Li and Zhouqin Qu, "Encouraging Translanguaging in Collaborative Talk in EFL Classrooms: An Epistemic Network Comparative Study," *Linguistics and Education* 84 (December 1, 2024): 101360, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.linged.2024.101360>.

<sup>5</sup> Mohamad Almashour, "Bridging Worlds with Words: Translanguaging and Its Impact on Identity Formation among Jordanian Graduate Students in Ontario," *Frontiers in Education* 9 (November 8, 2024): 1464741, <https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2024.1464741>.

immersive English learning environment, as some students over-rely on their first language.<sup>6</sup> In the Philippine context, Deniega and Neri suggested that translanguaging could lead to excessive dependence on the native language, reduced exposure to English, and challenges in developing writing skills, potentially misaligning with ESL learning objectives.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, Barroga and Tampus reported that some educators perceive translanguaging as detrimental to expanding students' English vocabulary.<sup>8</sup>

At Hinandayan National High School, a remote institution in Nasipit, Agusan del Norte, little is known about how last-mile teachers implement translanguaging and its effects on multilingual learners, particularly those from the Higaonon and Cebuano-speaking communities. Classroom observations indicate that while learners hesitate to participate in English-only discussions, they engage more actively when permitted to use their native languages. This suggests that translanguaging may enhance classroom participation while raising concerns about its potential impact on English proficiency. If students struggle to express themselves in English, this could hinder their development of essential language skills for academic and real-world communication.

Despite the growing body of research on translanguaging, investigations focusing on its effects in rural Philippine schools—where indigenous and local languages intersect—are limited. This study aims to address this gap by exploring a last-mile teacher's perceptions, practices, and challenges in employing translanguaging in teaching English to Higaonon learners. Understanding the role of translanguaging in this unique linguistic environment will provide insights into its ability to facilitate comprehension and engagement, as well as its potential challenges to English proficiency development. The findings will contribute to the development of more inclusive and effective language teaching strategies tailored to multilingual learners in similar contexts.

This study is grounded in Translanguaging Theory, initially proposed by Ofelia García, which offers a distinctive perspective on bilingualism and multilingualism. The theory posits that bilingual and multilingual speakers utilize a single, integrated linguistic repertoire to communicate effectively across various contexts.<sup>9</sup> This framework challenges traditional views of language separation, emphasizing the fluid and dynamic nature of language use among multilingual speakers.

The relevance of Translanguaging Theory to this study lies in its examination of teachers' pedagogical strategies within multilingual and multicultural classrooms. By employing this theoretical lens, the study investigates how teachers purposefully implement translanguaging to enhance students' communication, comprehension, and problem-solving

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<sup>6</sup> Dan Liu, Yi Deng, and Katherine Wimpenny, "Students' Perceptions and Experiences of Translanguaging Pedagogy in Teaching English for Academic Purposes in China," *Teaching in Higher Education* 29, no. 5 (July 3, 2024): 1234–52, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13562517.2022.2129961>.

<sup>7</sup> Marbin Gesher Jay S. Deniega and Socorro L. Neri, "A Case Study on Translanguaging in English as a Second Language (ESL) Class Among Public High Schools Through the Lens of Language Teachers," *Cognizance Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies* 4, no. 8 (August 30, 2024): 9–31, <https://doi.org/10.47760/cognizance.2024.v04i08.002>.

<sup>8</sup> Ivan Barroga and Doreen Tampus, "Pedagogical Translanguaging Realities in the Classroom: Teachers' Practices, Perceptions, and Awareness," *Psychology and Education: A Multidisciplinary Journal* 11, no. 7 (2023): 1–1.

<sup>9</sup> Vogel and García, "Translanguaging."

skills. This approach highlights the adaptability and flexibility of language use in education, particularly in environments where multiple languages coexist.

The application of translanguaging in education has been extensively studied, particularly in bilingual and multilingual settings, where it has been shown to improve student engagement and comprehension. For example, Nur et al. found that translanguaging significantly enhanced students' reading comprehension, demonstrating its efficacy as a pedagogical tool.<sup>10</sup> Their study revealed that students taught using a translanguaging approach exhibited greater academic progress compared to those instructed through a strict translation strategy. These findings accentuate the potential of translanguaging in fostering meaningful learning experiences.

By adopting Translanguaging Theory, this study endeavors to deepen the understanding of how English language teachers implement translanguaging in their instruction. The theoretical framework provides a critical basis for analyzing teachers' language practices, instructional strategies, and experiences in multilingual classrooms. It also offers valuable insights into how translanguaging supports learner engagement and academic success, while recognizing the challenges posed by restrictive language policies and societal attitudes.

Ultimately, Translanguaging Theory serves as an essential lens through which this study examines how teachers utilize multiple languages as a resource for effective instruction. Through this perspective, the study aims to contribute to the growing body of research on multilingual education, particularly within the Philippine context, where translanguaging plays a crucial role in fostering student participation and improving learning outcomes. By understanding how last-mile teachers apply translanguaging in their teaching practices, this study hopes to provide actionable insights that inform educational strategies and policies aimed at enhancing English language proficiency among multilingual learners. This investigation will not only highlight the effectiveness of translanguaging in bridging language gaps but also address the complexities and challenges inherent in implementing such approaches in diverse classroom settings. Ultimately, the findings of this study are anticipated to contribute to the development of more inclusive and effective pedagogical practices, empowering both educators and students in their language learning journeys.

## Method

This study uses a narrative inquiry approach, focusing on understanding the perceptions, practices, and challenges faced by teachers in implementing the approach with Higaonon learners. As part of this methodology, the researcher conducted in-depth, one-on-one interviews with the participant.

Participant in this study were selected using purposive sampling techniques, where the researcher chooses individuals deemed to have deep knowledge about the issue being studied. There was one participant interviewed in this study. The selected participant is an English teacher at Hinandayan National High School located in Nasipit, Agusan del Norte, who has experience teaching English to Higaonon students for more than five years. This

<sup>10</sup> Rafi'ah Nur et al., "Enhancing Reading Comprehension through Translanguaging Strategy," *Journal of Language Teaching and Research* 11, no. 6 (November 1, 2020): 970, <https://doi.org/10.17507/jltr.1106.14>.

selection method aims to obtain rich and relevant insights from experienced individuals in the field.

To gather the necessary data, the researcher formulated a series of questions based on related studies that have been previously reviewed. After obtaining permission from the participant to conduct the interview, the researcher ensured that the collected data would be kept confidential. The interview was conducted while adhering to health protocols, such as maintaining physical distance and wearing masks, to comply with regulations set by the authorities. All responses from the participant, whether in English or in their native language, were recorded and organized into tables to clearly present their answers.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **Multilingual Learners and English Language Learning**

Multilingual classrooms present unique challenges in teaching English, including linguistic barriers and varying levels of language proficiency. English Language Learners (ELLs) often face difficulties in comprehension, communication, and academic performance due to their limited exposure to English. Scholars emphasize that effective instructional strategies should acknowledge and utilize students' linguistic backgrounds rather than restrict them to monolingual English instruction.<sup>11</sup>

One such strategy is translanguaging, which has gained recognition as a dynamic approach to supporting multilingual learners by allowing them to leverage their entire linguistic repertoire. Translanguaging enables learners to express their thoughts using multiple languages, facilitating better understanding and deeper engagement with English.<sup>12</sup> This literature review explores the theoretical foundations and practical applications of translanguaging, highlighting its benefits and challenges while emphasizing its relevance in the Philippine context, where multilingualism is prevalent.

### **Translanguaging in English Language Education**

Teaching English to multilingual learners requires strategies that promote active participation despite language differences. Translanguaging is one such strategy, where bilingual or multilingual speakers fluidly navigate between languages to maximize their communicative potential. Research suggests that prior linguistic knowledge plays a crucial role in acquiring new languages, making translanguaging an effective means of bridging language gaps.

### **Benefits of Translanguaging in Education**

Several studies highlight the advantages of translanguaging in fostering language development, academic achievement, and student engagement. Hamman-Ortiz and Romero emphasized that structured translanguaging support in English-only environments helps

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<sup>11</sup> Suzanne García Mateus, "Translanguaging: Language, Bilingualism, and Education," *Bilingual Research Journal* 37, no. 3 (September 2, 2014): 366–69, <https://doi.org/10.1080/15235882.2014.965361>; Jim Cummins, "Teaching for Transfer: Challenging the Two Solitudes Assumption in Bilingual Education," in *Encyclopedia of Language and Education*, ed. Nancy H. Hornberger (Boston, MA: Springer US, 2008), 1528–38, [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-0-387-30424-3\\_116](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-0-387-30424-3_116).

<sup>12</sup> Mateus, "Translanguaging."

students recognize its academic benefits.<sup>13</sup> Similarly, Kwihangana found that students who engaged in translanguaging during group projects gained confidence in enrolling in English-only classes, regardless of their language proficiency.<sup>14</sup>

Liu and Fang observed that stakeholders in various English Language Teaching (ELT) contexts generally had positive attitudes toward translanguaging, reinforcing its value in multilingual education.<sup>15</sup> Wang and Li examined the role of translanguaging in oral corrective feedback (OCF) for Chinese EFL students' argumentative writing and found that it enhanced writing performance while encouraging a more flexible, student-centered instructional approach.<sup>16</sup> Additionally, Guo and Xu described translanguaging as a key mediational tool for young language learners, serving as both a means of knowledge acquisition and self-expression.<sup>17</sup>

Other studies demonstrate that translanguaging promotes comprehension and engagement. Liando et al. found that translanguaging aids educators in clarifying complex concepts in EFL classrooms, leading to better student understanding.<sup>18</sup> Similarly, Rasmin and Nur discovered that translanguaging-based instruction positively influences students with multilingual backgrounds, enhancing their academic performance and making it an effective strategy for EFL learning.<sup>19</sup>

### Challenges in Implementing Translanguaging

Despite its benefits, the implementation of translanguaging is met with ideological and systemic barriers. Rajendram explored these challenges and noted that while translanguaging encourages educators to utilize students' full linguistic repertoires, its application is often constrained by rigid language policies and socially imposed language boundaries.<sup>20</sup> In a related study, Rajendram found that students strategically employed

<sup>13</sup> Laura Hamman-Ortiz and Deborah Romero, "Translanguaging as Mediated Praxis: A Comparative Case Study of Bilingual and Monolingual Teachers Experimenting with Translanguaging Pedagogy," *Teaching and Teacher Education* 156 (April 1, 2025): 104878, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2024.104878>.

<sup>14</sup> Felix Kwihangana, "Enhancing EFL Students' Participation through Translanguaging," *ELT Journal* 75, no. 1 (March 13, 2021): 87–96, <https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccaa058>.

<sup>15</sup> Yang Liu and Fan Fang, "Translanguaging Theory and Practice: How Stakeholders Perceive Translanguaging as a Practical Theory of Language," *RELC Journal* 53, no. 2 (August 1, 2022): 391–99, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0033688220939222>.

<sup>16</sup> Yibei Wang and Danli Li, "Translanguaging Pedagogy in Tutor's Oral Corrective Feedback on Chinese EFL Learners' Argumentative Writing," *Asian-Pacific Journal of Second and Foreign Language Education* 7, no. 1 (September 5, 2022): 33, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40862-022-00170-5>.

<sup>17</sup> Zhiyan Guo and Xinyue Xu, "Understanding Intercultural Virtual Exchange through a Translanguaging Lens in Chinese as a Foreign Language," *Journal of China Computer-Assisted Language Learning* 3, no. 1 (August 1, 2023): 132–67, <https://doi.org/10.1515/jccall-2022-0018>.

<sup>18</sup> Nihta V. F. Liando et al., "Among English, Indonesian and Local Language: Translanguaging Practices in an Indonesian EFL Classroom," *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics* 13, no. 1 (May 31, 2023): 204–16, <https://doi.org/10.17509/ijal.v13i1.58270>.

<sup>19</sup> La Ode Rasmin and Sahril Nur, "Translanguaging In EFL Classroom And Its Impact On Student's Performance At A Secondary School Level: A Systematic Review," *EJI (English Journal of Indragiri): Studies in Education, Literature, and Linguistics* 7, no. 1 (January 3, 2023): 41–53, <https://doi.org/10.32520/eji.v7i1.2162>.

<sup>20</sup> Shakina Rajendram, "The Affordances of Translanguaging as a Pedagogical Resource for Multilingual English Language Classrooms in Malaysia," in *Research on Teaching and Learning English in Under-Resourced Contexts*, ed. Kathleen M. Bailey and Donna Christian, 1st ed. (Routledge, 2021), 185–98, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003057284-14>.

translanguaging for peer learning, conflict resolution, and identity assertion.<sup>21</sup> However, their ability to use translanguaging was sometimes restricted by teachers' and peers' language policies, parental beliefs regarding linguistic capital, and broader societal narratives on ethnicity, nationality, and marginalization.

### **Translanguaging in the Philippine Context**

Research conducted in the Philippine context further supports the benefits of translanguaging while highlighting local pedagogical strategies. The Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) policy in the Philippines recognizes the role of first languages in learning English and other subjects.<sup>22</sup>

De Los Reyes found that translanguaging enabled teachers to present lessons, facilitate discussions, enhance students' comprehension, and manage classroom behavior more effectively. In turn, students were able to participate in discussions and demonstrate their understanding more substantively.<sup>23</sup>

Bautista et al. investigated the impact of translanguaging on academic performance among pupils speaking Tagalog and Sinugbuanong Bisaya. Their findings showed that Tagalog-speaking students performed better in their mother tongue, while Sinugbuanong Bisaya-speaking students excelled more in English as a second language.<sup>24</sup> Perfecto identified various translanguaging strategies used by teachers, such as direct translation, code-switching, metalinguistic comparison-contrast, and metalinguistic explanation.<sup>25</sup> These strategies leveraged both students' and teachers' linguistic resources to enhance instruction and encourage active participation. Lastly, Macawile and Plata explored how educators used translanguaging to support students in knowledge construction, problem-solving, and meaning-making.<sup>26</sup> Their study revealed that while translanguaging was permitted in formative assessments, it was not allowed in summative assessments, indicating certain restrictions in formal evaluations.

By integrating global and local perspectives, this literature review underscores the significance of translanguaging in multilingual learning contexts, particularly in English language education. While it presents clear benefits in enhancing comprehension, engagement, and academic performance, systemic barriers remain a challenge.

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<sup>21</sup> Shakina Rajendram, "Translanguaging as an Agentive Pedagogy for Multilingual Learners: Affordances and Constraints," *International Journal of Multilingualism* 20, no. 2 (April 3, 2023): 595–622, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14790718.2021.1898619>.

<sup>22</sup> Ahmar Mahboob, Priscilla Cruz, and Ateneo de Manila University, Metro Manila, the Philippines, "English and Mother-Tongue-Based Multilingual Education: Language Attitudes in the Philippines," *Asian Journal of English Language Studies* 1 (December 31, 2013): 1–17, <https://doi.org/10.59960/1.a1>.

<sup>23</sup> Robin Atilano De Los Reyes, "Translanguaging in Multilingual Third Grade ESL Classrooms in Mindanao, Philippines," *International Journal of Multilingualism* 16, no. 3 (July 3, 2019): 302–16, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14790718.2018.1472268>.

<sup>24</sup> Judy Bautista et al., "Mother Tongue versus English as a Second Language in Mathematical Word Problems: Implications to Language Policy Development in the Philippines," *International Journal of Language and Literary Studies* 2, no. 2 (June 8, 2020): 18–29, <https://doi.org/10.36892/ijlls.v2i2.283>.

<sup>25</sup> Marianne Rachel G. Perfecto, "English Language Teaching and Bridging in Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education," *International Journal of Multilingualism* 19, no. 1 (January 2, 2022): 107–23, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14790718.2020.1716771>.

<sup>26</sup> Karen Lynn Macawile and Sterling Plata, "Teachers' Perspectives on Translanguaging as a Pedagogical Resource in Senior High School English Classes," *Journal of English and Applied Linguistics* 1, no. 2 (December 31, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.59588/2961-3094.1022>.

Understanding these factors is essential in shaping policies and pedagogical strategies that fully support multilingual learners.

### **The Role of Last-Mile Teachers in Translanguaging**

Last-mile teachers are educators working in remote, underserved, and geographically isolated areas where access to quality education is often limited. They face unique challenges, including inadequate resources, poor infrastructure, and limited professional development opportunities.<sup>27</sup> Despite these difficulties, they play a vital role in bridging educational gaps, particularly for multilingual and culturally diverse learners. To enhance comprehension and engagement, last-mile teachers employ innovative strategies such as translanguaging—a pedagogical approach that allows students to use multiple languages fluidly in learning. This approach bridges the linguistic gap between learners' L1, L2, and the target language, which is common in a linguistically diverse country such as the Philippines.<sup>28</sup>

By integrating translanguaging into their instruction, these educators scaffold complex concepts, encourage active participation, and create a more inclusive learning environment. They strategically blend students' home languages, Filipino, and English to make lessons more accessible and meaningful. However, their efforts are often constrained by limited training, scarce multilingual teaching materials, and institutional pressures to follow monolingual policies. Despite these obstacles, translanguaging fosters greater learner confidence, improves academic performance, and strengthens cultural identity. As they navigate the complexities of multilingual education, last-mile teachers serve as key agents in bridging language gaps and promoting equitable learning opportunities for their students.

### **Perception of the Translanguaging Approach**

The participant views translanguaging as an essential tool to facilitate comprehension among students, particularly those who struggle with English as a second language.

*“It is my own way of making sure that my students are getting the instructions and especially the topics that I discuss during that day. So, it is so helpful for me to use translanguaging in a way also to enhance for them to understand the English language as our second language also.”*

This statement highlights the participant's positive perception of translanguaging as a means to ensure that learners fully grasp instructional content. Similarly, De Los Reyes found that translanguaging in multilingual third-grade ESL classrooms in Mindanao, Philippines, enabled teachers to effectively deliver lessons, facilitate discussions, enhance students' comprehension, and manage classroom behavior.<sup>29</sup> The findings of De Los Reyes' study align with the experiences of the teacher participant in this study, who recognizes translanguaging as an effective strategy for supporting learners' understanding and engagement in the classroom.

<sup>27</sup> Rasimin et al., “Multi-Dimensional Challenges in the Indonesian Social Science Information Technology-Based Learning: A Systematic Literature Review,” *Heliyon* 10, no. 7 (April 15, 2024): e28706, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2024.e28706>.

<sup>28</sup> Tranie Balderrama Gatil, “Translanguaging in Multilingual English Language Teaching in the Philippines: A Systematic Literature Review,” *International Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Translation* 4, no. 1 (January 30, 2021): 52–57, <https://doi.org/10.32996/ijllt.2021.4.1.6>.

<sup>29</sup> De Los Reyes, “Translanguaging in Multilingual Third Grade ESL Classrooms in Mindanao, Philippines.”



### **Impact on Students' Academic Performance**

The interviewee acknowledges both positive and negative effects of translanguaging. While some students show improvement in their English comprehension, others struggle to transition to full English proficiency.

*“Well to be honest, there are students that cannot really... ahh... have a... an improvement that easy, but... but there are actually some students that improved or they are actually having a... an improvement when comes to English since we are doing translanguaging, they easily understood ahh... ‘this is the right term for it pala sir... ahh... ing-ana diay.”*

This suggests that translanguaging helps students understand instructions and concepts more effectively. However, the participant did not specify whether this improvement is reflected in measurable academic performance indicators, such as quizzes or assessments.

Research by Nur et al. supports the notion that translanguaging enhances comprehension, fosters active participation, and encourages bilingual learning.<sup>30</sup> Their study found that students appreciate translanguaging practices and desire more bilingual interactions in the classroom. This aligns with the participant's observation that translanguaging helps students grasp lesson content more efficiently.

However, the participant also noted that some students struggled to improve, contradicting findings by Bautista et al.<sup>31</sup> Their study suggests that translanguaging helps even low-proficiency learners keep up with subject matter, yet the interviewee observed that certain students still faced challenges. This discrepancy may be due to differences in teaching strategies, students' linguistic backgrounds, or the extent of translanguaging used in the classroom.

### **Application of Translanguaging in the classroom**

The teacher integrates translanguaging regularly during instruction, particularly because the learners belong to the Higaonon tribe, who have limited exposure to English.

*“Actually most of the time, I use translanguaging every time I...I do my discussion. You know why? Because in...in a... in my assigned area, actually we have our Higaonon tribe. They are not well-trained even if it comes to English language, so I am actually teaching English. Every time I do my discussion, I usually do translanguaging in order for them to understand fully what is the topic.”*

While the participant did not specify the exact translanguaging strategies he employs, his statement suggests that translation plays a key role in his approach. He explained that since Higaonon learners have limited training in English, he relies on translanguaging to bridge linguistic gaps and facilitate understanding.

The findings align with Mateus,<sup>32</sup> who emphasized that translanguaging allows teachers to leverage students' full linguistic repertoire, enhancing comprehension and

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<sup>30</sup> Nur et al., “Enhancing Reading Comprehension through Translanguaging Strategy.”

<sup>31</sup> Bautista et al., “Mother Tongue versus English as a Second Language in Mathematical Word Problems.”

<sup>32</sup> Mateus, “Translanguaging.”

engagement. Similarly, Nur et al. found that translanguaging improves reading comprehension and enables learners with lower English proficiency to participate more actively in lessons.<sup>33</sup> The participant's approach reflects this principle—he strategically incorporates translanguaging to ensure that students grasp lesson content effectively. When asked whether he allows students to use their mother tongue in responding to activities, the participant acknowledged that he occasionally permits it but generally encourages English use:

*“There are instances but actually, I... I... ah... let them or challenge them to use English since the... the subject is English so I don't want to make them feel that using their own... ahh... native language is the most appropriate one because we are teaching English so why not allow them to ahh... to explore or to enhance their English skills as well.”*

While the participant recognizes the value of translanguaging, he also encourages students to develop their English proficiency by actively using the language. This approach balances linguistic accessibility and language skill development, ensuring that translanguaging supports rather than replaces English language learning.

### **Challenges in implementing Translanguaging**

One of the key challenges in implementing translanguaging is that it may cause students to become too comfortable, reducing their motivation to write in English. The participant expressed concern that students tend to rely heavily on their native language when given the opportunity to translanguage, which affects their ability to develop English writing skills.

*“Ah actually ah, every time I use translanguaging sir, they are... they... they tend to be more relaxed and ah it decreases their capacity to write something. So every time I let them write something they ask me, ‘Sir, is it okay use Bisaya or Higaonon language?’ So that actually one of the most challenging part because you're...you're teaching them English so basically, you need to let them write in English. So in... in using translanguaging you... you are also somehow tolerating them to use their own language. So that's challenging part for me.”*

This insight suggests that while translanguaging enhances comprehension, it may also hinder students' writing proficiency if not carefully managed. This finding contrasts with the study of Perfecto,<sup>34</sup> which found that translanguaging strategies in English language classrooms promote literacy skills and foster English language development among multilingual learners. Perfecto's research highlights that using multiple languages in the classroom does not necessarily impede English proficiency but instead supports linguistic growth. However, in the context of this study, the teacher-participant's experience suggests that excessive reliance on translanguaging could make students hesitant to practice writing in English.

<sup>33</sup> Nur et al., “Enhancing Reading Comprehension through Translanguaging Strategy.”

<sup>34</sup> Perfecto, “English Language Teaching and Bridging in Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education.”

### **Lack of Formal Training in Translanguaging**

The teacher admits to not having formal training in translanguaging but uses it as a practical necessity.

*“Well actually, ahm... no sir but we have this personal ahh... like logic so that we can let them understand, we... we actually have this resort to use translanguaging.”*

When asked about training related to translanguaging, the teacher-participant admitted having no formal professional development in this approach. This highlights a critical gap that needs to be addressed. Studies by Macawile and Plata,<sup>35</sup> Barroga and Tampus,<sup>36</sup> and Deniega and Neri<sup>37</sup> have identified the lack of teacher training as a key challenge in implementing translanguaging and multilingual instruction in the Philippines. Given this, it is essential to provide teachers with structured training on translanguaging to ensure its effective and informed application. Supporting teachers in aligning their translanguaging practices with existing language policies and programs would further enhance language instruction and student learning outcomes.

### **Coping Strategies in the Absence of Formal Training**

Despite the lack of formal training in translanguaging, the teacher relies on personal experience and intuitive teaching methods to bridge the gap.

*“Well actually, ahm... no sir but we have this personal ahh... like logic so that we can let them understand, we... we actually have this resort to use translanguaging.”*

This response highlights the teacher’s adaptive approach to ensuring students comprehend lessons, even without structured guidance on translanguaging. While this demonstrates resourcefulness, it also underscores the need for professional development opportunities. Studies by Macawile and Plata,<sup>38</sup> Barroga and Tampus,<sup>39</sup> and Deniega and Neri<sup>40</sup> emphasize that the absence of formal training can limit the strategic and pedagogical application of translanguaging in multilingual classrooms. Thus, equipping teachers with structured training on translanguaging would not only enhance their instructional effectiveness but also provide them with research-based strategies to support multilingual learners.

### **Conclusion**

This study explored a teacher’s perception, practices, and challenges in using translanguaging as an instructional strategy for Higaonon learners in a multilingual

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<sup>35</sup> Macawile and Plata, “Teachers’ Perspectives on Translanguaging as a Pedagogical Resource in Senior High School English Classes.”

<sup>36</sup> Barroga and Tampus, “Pedagogical Translanguaging Realities in the Classroom.”

<sup>37</sup> Deniega and Neri, “A Case Study on Translanguaging in English as a Second Language (ESL) Class Among Public High Schools Through the Lens of Language Teachers.”

<sup>38</sup> Macawile and Plata, “Teachers’ Perspectives on Translanguaging as a Pedagogical Resource in Senior High School English Classes.”

<sup>39</sup> Barroga and Tampus, “Pedagogical Translanguaging Realities in the Classroom.”

<sup>40</sup> Deniega and Neri, “A Case Study on Translanguaging in English as a Second Language (ESL) Class Among Public High Schools Through the Lens of Language Teachers.”

classroom. Findings revealed that the teacher views translanguage as an essential tool for facilitating comprehension, particularly for students with limited English proficiency. The participant consistently integrates translanguage in classroom discussions, believing it helps learners grasp lesson content more effectively. However, while translanguage enhances students' understanding, its impact on English proficiency, particularly in writing, remains a challenge. The teacher observed that some students tend to rely too much on their native languages, which affects their motivation to practice English writing skills.

The study also highlighted critical challenges in implementing translanguage, including the risk of over-reliance on students' first languages and the teacher's lack of formal training in translanguage pedagogy. The absence of structured training has led the teacher to rely on intuitive strategies to bridge linguistic gaps in the classroom. Despite its contributions, this study is limited by its focus on a single teacher and classroom context, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings. This underscores the need for professional development programs to equip educators with research-based translanguage techniques that align with national language policies and curriculum goals.

Despite these challenges, translanguage remains a powerful tool for fostering inclusion, engagement, and language development among multilingual learners. This study recommends that educators be given access to specialized training on translanguage strategies to maximize its benefits while addressing potential drawbacks. Future research could further investigate how structured translanguage frameworks impact students' long-term English proficiency, particularly in writing. By refining the use of translanguage in the classroom, educators can create an environment that both supports students' linguistic identities and enhances their proficiency in English.

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