

Translanguaging in Malaysian Secondary Schools: ESL Teachers' Practices and Perceptions

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Abstract

Despite the prospective practical opportunities of translanguaging in the discipline of ESL teaching and learning, studies have shown that teachers hold varied perspectives on this particular approach. In light of this, this study used a qualitative method to investigate teachers' practices and perceptions of translanguaging in ESL settings in secondary schools in Malaysia involving four English teachers in Temerloh, Malaysia. The results revealed that the participants used translanguaging as a pedagogical approach in their ESL classroom. Their practices of translanguaging involved the explanation of linguistic structures, enhancement of learners' comprehension of the target language, encouragement for learning, integration of Malay cultural elements, and facilitation of lesson delivery. The participants also showed positive perceptions towards the use of the approach in general, although they implied varying degrees of approval in terms of the appropriate proficiency level of learners to whom it should be applied. Overall, the participants believed that translanguaging provides numerous advantages to learners in enhancing their English language proficiency. Thus, they would continue using the approach in their future teaching. The findings from this study provided insights to the members of the ESL discipline on this new approach, resulting in significant implications for the current education system.

Keywords: Translanguaging, Translanguaging Practices, Teachers' Perceptions, ESL/EFL Classroom, ESL Teaching

Introduction

Globalisation has encouraged people to migrate across countries for many life-improvement reasons such as work demands, trade, educational pursuits, and relocation, to name a few. Under these conditions, people of various backgrounds spread the use of their mother tongue in their daily activities, leading to the emergence of bilingualism and multilingualism. Bilingualism and multilingualism are produced by language contact, caused by the interaction between speakers of different languages as they try to master each other's language for effective communication among them (García & Wei, 2014).

Due to the dominance in economic and political power of English-speaking countries, English has naturally gained its status as the global language and lingua franca, in which it is internationally used and learned as a second or foreign language by speakers of various linguistic backgrounds all over the world. Acquiring proficiency in the English language is inevitable, as it is one of the means to keep up with the advancement in economy, politics, social status, education, and technology—developmental elements that are led by most of the English-speaking nations. As a case in point, English proficiency is given high value in the discipline of knowledge and education, encouraging academic institutions to prioritise English language skills as one of their admission prerequisites (Badwan & Badwan, 2021). These circumstances have caused the English language learning ventures to sustain to date. According to a recent statistic, there are about 3.3 billion bilingual people across the globe, and 43% of the world's population speaks two or more languages as of 2023. Moreover, out of 1.5 billion English speakers, 97% of them are non-natives Rogers (2023), causing English bilingualism and multilingualism to be inevitable in every aspect of today's life.

Background of the Study

Due to factors such as colonisation, trade, and migration, Malaysia has also become one of the most bilingual or multilingual countries. With different races, namely Malay, Chinese, Indian, and aboriginal races, inhabiting this country, Malaysian schools are made colourful by learners of different racial and cultural backgrounds, thus different first languages. In Malaysia, English has been taught as a compulsory subject in all types of schools in the country. In the Third Malaysia Plan, English as a strong second" language has been acclaimed by the Malaysian educational authorities. (Powell & Powell, 2020). Entailing from this, various English development efforts were undertaken with the aim of producing Malaysian citizens with a good command of English. This includes the Teaching and Learning of Science and Mathematics in English Policy (PPSMI) implemented under the Eighth Malaysia Plan, which was then reversed and sustained only in optional dual-language programme (DLP) classes, and the Upholding Bahasa Melayu and Strengthening English' Programme (MBMMBI) introduced under the Tenth Malaysia Plan, which has been continued to date. Despite this, English proficiency levels among students in Malaysia have shown a prominent decrease. This deterioration is even more notable among students from rural areas whose English language command portrays its use as a foreign language rather than spoken as a second language (Ang et al., 2020).

To deal with this concern, ESL teachers need to identify effective methods that can be applied in ESL instruction to enhance the learning outcome in the target language among learners. One of the recent emerging ELT methods advocated by many scholars is translanguaging. Being a bilingual or multilingual country, the opportunity to utilise learners' bilingualism or multilingualism abilities is at teachers' disposal. Translanguaging is a beneficial approach to teaching English as a target language since learners' linguistic repertoire of their first language can be optimally leveraged to learn their second language. This is because translanguaging is not a rigid but rather a flexible operation that allows language users to adapt to an immediate communicative mission by combining, adjusting, and customising their language practices according to what is required in that particular circumstance to ensure effective communication (García & Wei, 2014). Thus, considering the nature of bilingual or multilingual Malaysian ESL classrooms, it is highly opportune to implement translanguaging as one of the teaching approaches in Malaysian school settings.

Advocates have proposed many advantages to translanguaging in ESL education. According to García and Wei (2014), the translanguaging approach can encourage linguistic and literacy development among learners through the practice of utilising their linguistic repertoire of both first and second or foreign languages to communicate their messages during spoken interactions. This enables learners to make sense of complicated ideas and concepts more effectively, which contributes to deeper comprehension of the academic materials and also enhances their critical thinking abilities. This also helps them learn the target language, as the full utilisation of linguistic resources will enable learners to progress to a more complex learning of the language, ultimately enhancing their bilingualism skills. Moreover, translanguaging can widen learners' perspectives of their social surroundings and improve cultural awareness among them.

Despite the prospective practical opportunities of translanguaging in the discipline of ESL teaching and learning, teachers hold varied perspectives on this particular approach. Recent studies collectively show that teachers' perceptions of translanguaging in ESL varied, with some viewing it as useful for teaching and learning ESL, while others could hold certain concerns or face challenges in implementing the approach (Al-Bataineh, 2018; Anderson and Lightfoot, 2018; Yuvayapan, 2019; Batool, 2022; and Chicherina, 2023). Furthermore, research on translanguaging practices in Malaysia is still very limited (Rajendram, 2021). In light of this, this current study aimed to bridge these gaps by investigating teachers' practices and perceptions of translanguaging in ESL settings in secondary schools in Malaysia. It is crucial to understand teachers' practices and perceptions of translanguaging as it would portray the effectiveness of its implementation in actual ESL classroom settings, thus contributing to a deep understanding of the affordances of translanguaging to learners, such as its benefits, challenges, and the best practices for employing the approach. The findings would provide insights into the improvement of teachers' professional development efforts where support and resources can be tailored according to teachers' needs in implementing translanguaging in schools. The input gained from this study would also help with the enhancement of the learning curriculum, which can be adapted to cater for the requirements needed to enable the successful realisation of translanguaging in the ESL classrooms in Malaysia.

In summary, the objectives of this study were to

1. Explore ESL teachers' practices of translanguaging in ESL classrooms.
2. Investigate ESL teachers' perceptions of the use of translanguaging in ESL classrooms.

Literature Review

Dynamic bilingualism

According to García (2009a), dynamic bilingualism is a comparatively emergent paradigm that opposes the traditional perspectives of the bilingualism concept. From the perspective of dynamic bilingualism, there is only one language system in all humans' brains, irrespective of the number of languages spoken. This signifies that the language practices of bilinguals in their first and second languages are rather complex and interdependent on each other instead of performing separate functions as suggested by the traditional concept of bilingualism. The linguistic system of bilinguals consists of features that are frequently used based on the language rules learned from society and surrounding cultures. In fact, the new notion of dynamic bilingualism surpasses the principle of having two interrelated languages,

but rather the concept of a single linguistic system that undergoes constant change as it adapts to new contexts and situations (Cummins, 1979).

Translanguaging

Bringing a reasonably similar notion to dynamic bilingualism, translanguaging refers to a language practice where speakers utilise their linguistic repertoire for effective communication with others. Translanguaging is the creative way speakers use their linguistic abilities to execute a particular communicative task. Bilinguals do this by “soft assembling” all their language resources to adapt to the communicative situation they are involved in and ensure effective communication with their interlocutors. Translanguaging is not a rigid but rather a flexible operation that allows language users to adapt to an immediate communicative mission by combining, adjusting, and customising their language practices according to what is required in that circumstance (García & Wei, 2014).

Dynamic bilingualism and translanguaging

Garcia and Wei (2014) describe the notions of dynamic bilingualism and translanguaging as two interrelated concepts, where the practice of translanguaging is the realisation of dynamic bilingualism. This is because translanguaging practices involve the utilisation of a speaker's entire linguistic repertoire to communicate meaning successfully, which is the primary principle of dynamic bilingualism.

Pedagogical translanguaging

Since most of the ESL classrooms in the current world are enrolled by students of various native languages, an emphasis on a translanguaging approach in ESL teaching and learning is highly beneficial to optimally harness students' translanguaging skills to help them master the target language and ultimately enhance their bilingual skills. In the aspect of ESL, translanguaging helps learners improve their English language skills as it allows them to utilise both their linguistic resources from L1 and L2 to learn the target language.

Furthermore, rigid detachment of languages in ESL contexts can be detrimental as it prevents learners from utilising their existing linguistic resources, which have been developed in other languages. Thus, the main goal of the pedagogical translanguaging concept is to stimulate this linguistic repertoire and enhance learners' metacognitive skills in linguistic awareness to enable them to reap all the potential benefits attainable from their ongoing multilingualism (Cenoz & Gorter, 2020).

Roles of Translanguaging in ESL/EFL Classrooms

Many previous studies have been conducted to investigate the role of translanguaging in the ESL classroom. Firstly, translanguaging has been proven to be able to increase reading comprehension among learners. To illustrate, a study by Li and Luo (2017) conducted among US high school students reported that through the creation of translanguaging space, learners displayed higher interests in reading and gained better comprehension of the text. This was achieved through the use of their existing semiotic resources and discussion of confusing figurative language in their mother tongue to comprehend the reading materials assigned. Furthermore, a study by Bin-Tahir et al (2018) that was conducted to examine the impact of translanguaging on reading comprehension among Indonesian university students discovered that the experimental group who received the translanguaging approach as the intervention showed an improved comprehension level of the text in the literal, inferential, and

comprehension aspects. Similarly, the findings from a study by Namrullah et al (2020) in the same country reported that the reading comprehension scores of the treatment group with translanguaging as the intervention were higher than the control group who received traditional methods. Furthermore, there have also been studies conducted to investigate the utilisation of translanguaging in the African context, such as those by (Mgijima, 2019; Maseko and Mkhize, 2019). The former explored the effects of translanguaging on the reading skills of bilingual speakers of the IsiXhosa and English languages. The researchers found that translanguaging contributed to a significant improvement in learners' reading abilities in their first language compared to the target language, which includes aspects of content familiarity, contextualization, and vocabulary acquisition. Meanwhile, the latter study, which investigated the reading practices among grade 3 pupils and their teachers, discovered that both categories of participants utilised multiple linguistic resources to successfully make meaning of the text, implying the usefulness of bilingual or multilingual strategies in ESL reading instruction.

In addition to enhancing reading interests and reading comprehension skills, studies also found that instructors used translanguaging for a few other aspects of learning. As a case in point, a study by Vaish (2018), who analysed the ability of translanguaging to enhance the reading skills among second grade Singaporean pupils specifically to improve their mastery of English grammar, vocabulary, and text comprehension. The findings showed improvement in terms of learners' metalinguistic skills through their ability to recognise the variations in the spelling system and lexical meaning. Another related study was conducted by De Los Reyes (2019) to examine the language practices of teachers and students in third grade classrooms in the Philippines and discovered that both groups of participants showed explicit and implicit use of translanguaging to facilitate communicative interactions, especially to develop meaning. The translanguaging approach was implemented for classroom discussion, enhancing learners' comprehension of the course content, and classroom management.

Moreover, previous studies also discovered the capability of translanguaging to improve learners' affective factors in learning English as a second or foreign language. For instance, a study by Ahn et al (2018), which was conducted to analyse how the translanguaging approach influences learners' willingness to speak in EFL and their anxiety level in learning EFL, revealed a decrease in the anxiety level among students when translanguaging is applied. This indicates the ability of translanguaging to be utilised as a teaching method to alleviate ESL or EFL learners' anxiety in learning English and thus encourages them to be more willing and eager to communicate in the target language. This is supported by the findings from a study by Back et al (2020), which reported that translanguaging was able to reduce learners' unfavourable emotional filters and thus promote their engagement in completing language tasks. Through the creation of linguistic space and the implementation of translanguaging strategies, teachers can affectively alleviate learners' anxiety when dealing with full English contents, encourage socialisation among the learners and between teacher and learners, as well as allow learners to take charge of their learning.

Teachers' Practices of Translanguaging in the ESL Classroom

Many recent studies have investigated teachers' practices of translanguaging in the ESL classroom. For instance, through the investigation of the language practices in two

multilingual third grade classrooms in the Philippines, De Los Reyes (2019) discovered that teachers applied translanguaging to facilitate the presentation of their lessons, manage classroom discussions, improve learners' comprehension, and make management of the pupils' behaviour more effective. Similarly, Mukhopadhyay (2020) conducted a study to explore teachers' multilingual strategies to teach English as a second language to Indian primary school pupils. It was found that teachers utilised a translanguaging approach for contrastive elaboration in clarifying concepts, giving instructions, facilitating discourse-based management, managing classroom activities, and encouraging learners to communicate in the target language.

Studies on teachers' translanguaging practices have also been conducted in secondary or high school settings. To illustrate, Sahib (2019) explored the interactional strategies between teachers and learners in an Indonesian high school EFL classroom in Bulukumba Regency and reported that teachers' translanguaging practices involved were collectively employed for lesson delivery facilitation. Corresponding to this, Riswanto (2022) conducted research to examine translanguaging as a pedagogical approach used by teachers in a high school in Bengkulu Selatan, Indonesia, and discovered that teachers' translanguaging practices generally centred on managing the lesson processes and drawing learners' attention.

Teachers' Perception of Translanguaging in the ESL/EFL Classroom

Previous studies have shown teachers' varied perspectives on translanguaging in the ESL/EFL classroom. To illustrate, Anderson and Lightfoot (2018) embarked on research to examine the practices of translanguaging and teachers' attitudes towards the approach at all educational levels in India. Their findings showed that most of the respondents employed translanguaging only as an occasional practice when it was unavoidable. The translanguaging approach was far less tolerated in English-oriented institutions compared to non-English-medium schools. Moreover, teachers with more years of experience were more accepting of the translanguaging concept compared to novice language instructors. Additionally, teachers in rural schools were more likely to use translanguaging with the learners as compared to those in urban schools, since urban students have higher English proficiency levels than rural students. This is in line with a study by Yuvayapan (2019), which discovered that although teachers practiced translanguaging, their perspectives towards this approach contradicted their practices. Despite their positive perceptions of translanguaging at some point, they abstained from utilising this approach too frequently considering the expectations of their institutions, colleagues, and learners' guardians, who are mostly still inclined to the notion of English-only ESL/EFL classrooms.

Methodology

To gain a comprehensive understanding of translanguaging in Malaysian secondary schools, the study employed a qualitative method involving one-on-one semi-structured interviews with four English optionist teachers in Malaysian public secondary schools located in Temerloh, who were identified as Respondent 1, Respondent 2, Respondent 3, and Respondent 4. These respondents have more than 15 years of experience in ESL teaching and have used translanguaging as a pedagogical tool in ESL lessons with their students. All participants were aged between 40 and 50 years' old and held a bachelor's degree in the teaching of English as a second language.

The purposive snowball sampling approach was utilised to choose individuals who were most suitable for supplying the information needed by researchers to comprehend how social media was used in Malaysian ESL classrooms. The data gathering process started with Respondent 1, who was then asked to recommend additional teachers who met all the criteria that were looked for as participants in this study. The interviews were conducted separately for each participant via the Google Meet application using the interview protocols adapted from (Dougherty, 2021). The interview transcripts were then manually analysed using a thematic analysis approach using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis guide.

Findings and Discussion

In this discussion, the respondents are labelled as R1, R2, R3, and R4 (Respondent 1, Respondent 2, Respondent 3, and Respondent 4). The findings will be discussed according to the research questions.

RQ1. What are ESL teachers' ESL teachers' practices of translanguaging in ESL classrooms?

Overall, all four teachers involved in this study admitted having used translanguaging as one of the approaches to teaching English as a second language to their learners. Their practices of translanguaging in ESL classrooms revolved around the explanation of linguistic structures, enhancement of learners' comprehension of the target language, encouragement for learning, integration of Malay cultural elements, and facilitation of lesson delivery.

Teachers' use of translanguaging for explaining linguistic structures.

The teachers claimed that they used translanguaging to explain certain grammar principles to students since some grammatical items in English are comparable to those in Malay. As students generally already had knowledge of these grammatical concepts in their first language, teachers made use of this advantage to facilitate the explanation of linguistic structures to them via translanguaging by comparing and contrasting English linguistic rules to those in Malay. This could be helpful especially for learners who possess good linguistic knowledge of their mother tongue. It can be seen from their responses below:

"I walk" means saya berjalan, while "I am walking" means sedang berjalan... we need to put -ing ... it means "sedang". I compare the concept of imbuhan -ing form with the word "sedang" in BM" (R1)

"I tell them that sentence structure in English is almost the same as those in Malay..." (R2)

"...when teaching the structure of the language, the grammar part...since there will be some differences and similarities of English Grammar and Bahasa Melayu 'tatabahasa' respectively" (R3)

"sometimes, the use of the Malay language is important in explaining the structure of the sentence..." (R4)

Teachers' use of translanguaging for enhancing learners' comprehension of the target language

The teachers reported that they also used translanguaging to facilitate and enhance learners' comprehension of the target language. This was done through the practice of translating English to Malay and vice versa, which involved translation by the teachers or the students themselves, as well as the use of English to Malay dictionaries to assist the translation

activities. Translanguaging practices also involved the provision of examples in the first language by the teachers whenever learners faced difficulties internalising concepts or vocabulary that could be too abstract and complicated to be comprehended via mere word translation and explanation in the target language. Moreover, to enhance students' comprehension of the language items, the teachers sometimes utilised translanguaging during class discussions and even allowed group discussions among students to be done in Malay before proceeding with the next stages of lesson delivery in English. All these were done to expedite learners' comprehension of teachers' instructions and the lesson materials, which would then assist them in fulfilling a language task and achieving the learning outcomes planned for that particular lesson. This can be observed from their remarks as follows:

"for instance, if it's a reading task ... I am going to explain it in Malays just to show that it carries different meaning, it carries different context..." (R1)

"...when I'm teaching writing sometimes, I ask them to translate. Yes, translating each of the word from Malay to English..." (R2)

"giving opportunity for better understanding of the English materials used in the classroom serves the purpose of why I use some Malay words" (R3)

"Some students have difficulty understanding... So, a clear explanation in BM is needed to cater to the problem" (R4)

This is supported by the findings from the studies on translanguaging by Li and Luo (2017); Bin-Tahir et al (2018); De Los Reyes (2019); Namrullah et al (2020), which discovered the effectiveness of translanguaging in enhancing learners' comprehension of the target language.

Teachers' use of translanguaging for encouraging learning among learners

The teachers also mentioned that translanguaging is effective in encouraging learning engagement and participation among learners. They claimed to have used this approach to create a welcoming learning environment for the students, as learning English as a target language could be quite intimidating to some learners, especially those with lower proficiency. Hence, to remediate this situation, the teachers used translanguaging to alleviate their anxiety and hesitations about learning the language and to participate in classroom activities. Through translanguaging, the teachers claimed that they were able to gain students' interest in the learning contents, evoke reluctant learners' eagerness to attempt a language task, and ultimately boost their' confidence to use the target language at least during the lessons. Their remarks are as follows:

"..they're usually not interested with my lesson. But once I use BM to explain or to give examples, some of them might be interested to start to learn..." (R1)

"I use Malay when they really don't understand and I want to make them comfortable with me...make them confident to use English ...because when they know some words and sentences in English and its meaning in Malay, they will try to use it" (R2)

"For me, the use of Malay words to get students attention ...serves the purpose of why I use some Malay words" (R3)

"... carried out mainly to attract students' interest in learning English.... use of the Malay language has successfully attracted my students' interest in learning English as they become more confident..." (R4)

This is in line with the findings from the studies by Ahn et al (2018); Back et al (2020), which reported the ability of the use of translanguaging as a pedagogical approach to reduce unfavourable emotional filters such as a lack of confidence and anxiety to use the language.

Teachers' use of translanguaging for integrating Malay cultural elements in an ESL lesson

Some teachers mentioned that they used translanguaging to incorporate Malay cultural elements into their teaching. This occurred when the materials used involved vocabulary items, concepts, or ideas originating from the Malay culture; hence, explanations or translations in Malay were required to ensure that accurate information could be imparted to students. This is because certain words in the Malay lexis do not have an exact equivalence in English, which would cause misconception and misinterpretation among students. Considering this, translanguaging is employed by the teachers as a technique to describe the meaning and concepts of words and ideas related to Malay culture to their students. Moreover, due to learners' Malay backgrounds, the Malay cultural elements encountered in written or spoken English would be more easily grasped when they were explained in the original language. This can be seen from the teachers' responses below:

"...there was a phrase "Malay traditional cakes", I had to translate it to "kuih tradisional" because some of the students were mistakenly relating the word "cakes" to chocolate and cheesecakes." (R4)

"...providing some examples in Malay beliefs makes the lesson more engaging to the students because they experience them themselves... thus they can associate and be familiarised with the content..." (R3)

"...sometimes I will relate the content to their surroundings and usually I will give them a very simple example relating to their everyday life in Malay..." (R2)

Teachers' use of translanguaging for facilitating lesson delivery.

Moreover, the teachers also claimed to have used translanguaging as a technique to facilitate lesson delivery, especially for the weak students. This is because weak learners often lack motivation to learn the target language since a language task might seem too difficult for them to attempt. Learners' reluctance to cooperate and participate caused distractions and ultimately affected the flow of the lesson. Therefore, to ensure smooth delivery of the lesson and improve classroom management, teachers used translanguaging to motivate students to participate in the classroom activities, help them understand the lesson materials, and encourage them to eventually complete the language tasks assigned. This depicts how translanguaging was used by teachers as a support to ensure a smooth flow of lesson delivery and the accomplishment of learning outcomes by the students. The teachers' remarks are as follows:

"I will use Malay basically to facilitate the delivery at the basic level ... for beginner students the use of Malay will only facilitate the lesson delivery for that day," (R1)

"...if they don't understand they can just resort to using Malay, so the lesson will be faster and smoother" (R2)

“when I’m dealing with weak or problematic students...The Malay language is only used when the students have difficulty understanding the instructions and some difficult words” (R4)

This is supported by Sahib (2019), De Los Reyes (2019), Mukhopadhyay (2020), and Riswanto (2022), who discovered that teachers’ translanguaging practices centred on the management of lesson processes and facilitation of lesson delivery.

RQ2. What are ESL teachers’ perceptions of the use of translanguaging in ESL classrooms?

The teachers expressed the varied perspectives of the target group of students to whom translation should be applied. The majority of them advocated translanguaging only for learners with low English proficiency levels, while intermediate and advanced students should not be treated with this approach and should be immersed in English-exclusive educational settings instead. This stems from the compelling role of translanguaging in facilitating weak learners’ comprehension of the instruction and materials in the target language and creating a welcoming classroom environment for them to learn English, making this approach imperative and inevitable most of the time. Contrarily, learners with higher proficiency levels already have a sufficient foundation of the target language on hand, which can help them develop their English skills even without the involvement of the mother tongue; hence, translanguaging is not critically required as compared to weak learners. Moreover, the teachers also stressed the importance of an English-immersive learning environment for all ESL learners in order to give them optimum exposure to the target language, with an exception given only to the weak students where translanguaging is employed to build their basic language skills. This can be seen in their responses:

“...the use of Malay in your ESL lessons are only helpful for weaker students... for the intermediate and the excellent students I rarely use Malay because I know where their level is, they can understand English..so why should I use Malay? .. I have to use full English to familiarise them with the use of English...” (R2)

“...my students mostly are in rural area so the exposure to the real contact of the language in real world is limited..the use of Malay words to get students attention and giving opportunity for better understanding of the English materials..” (R3)

“Most of the time, it’s when I’m dealing with weak or problematic students... I will continue using the Malay language in teaching my weak students...” (R4)

On the other hand, one of the teachers believed that translanguaging should be used for all learners, irrespective of their proficiency levels. In fact, contrary to the majority, the teacher believed that translanguaging had been more beneficial for the advanced and intermediate students compared to the weak learners. This is because the former group often had higher motivation and good attitudes towards learning; thus, they would make use of any strategies that helped them understand certain complicated ideas or vocabulary presented in English. The good students would optimise the translanguaging approach for their learning. In contrast, translanguaging had not always worked well for the weak students, as they were usually reluctant learners with low motivation and poor attitudes towards learning, especially since they considered English a difficult language to acquire. Therefore, although translanguaging was used to remediate their learning difficulties, some weak students did not appreciate the treatment and only committed to a lesson just for the sake of completing a

task given for that day without putting too much care on their mastery of the lesson contents introduced in the lesson. This can be observed from the teacher's remarks:

"...for the beginner level students, using Malay to teach English might not work, because they are not interested to learn no matter what language you use...use of Malay will only facilitate the lesson delivery for that day, but it will not help them understand the content or improve their English language skills..." (R1)

"It's a different case for the advanced students and the intermediate students. We can see that they truly understand the lesson content when I used BM...they take in the information given in BM and they try to relate to the English content...When they make mistakes, they try to correct themselves and this sometimes involve the use of BM." (R1)

Stemming from the different standpoints held about the appropriate proficiency level translanguaging should be targeted at, the teachers showed varied degrees of approval for translanguaging to be applied in the ESL classroom. The teacher who suggested translanguaging be employed by all ESL learners strongly and confidently advocated the use of this approach in any ESL classroom, as can be seen in the following comments:

"I would definitely continue using Malay to teach English regardless of what the theories outside or what the Ministry of Education are suggesting. Whether for good or weak learners." (R1)

"...Some may not agree with me and will say that that to learn a target language we must use only the target language...we still need the mother tongue the to teach the students..." (R1)

Contrarily, the rest of the teachers share an opposing opinion that the application of translanguaging should be done with extra careful selection and only when it is inevitably necessary. Their comments are as follows:

"...for me it is not advisable to use Malays but in order for them to understand in order for them to be more confident and comfortable to learn we have to use it is to help them..." (R2)

".. it is beneficial as long as I know the limitation of using Malay in my class, as well as my students. They can't just simply ask or response in Malay all the time..." (R3)

".. the use of the Malay language to teach English can only be implemented in certain cases..." (R4)

This is in parallel with the findings reported by Anderson and Lightfoot (2018) who discovered that most of the teachers employed translanguaging only as an occasional practice when it was unavoidable.

In general, all the teachers displayed positive perspectives towards the use of translanguaging in ESL classroom settings. They showed clear intention and confidence to continue using this approach in the future, although within specific constraints and defined parameters in terms of urgency, necessity, and learners' proficiency levels as specified by the majority of them as mentioned earlier. This can be seen in their comments as follows:

"...I would definitely continue using Malay to teach English..." (R1)

"...in the future it depends on the students' background and their previous knowledge. if they don't have basic English skills at all, if they are very weak in English, I will need to use Malay to help them" (R2)

"...if using Malay can help them to ease their difficulty in understanding the English language, so yes" (R3)

"I think I will continue using the Malay language in teaching my weak students." (R4)

Conclusion and Limitations

This study investigated teachers' practices of translanguaging in secondary school ESL classrooms and their perceptions towards this pedagogical approach. From the results, it can be concluded that teachers' have used translanguaging as a pedagogical approach in their ESL classrooms. Their practices of translanguaging centred on the explanation of linguistic structures, enhancement of learners' comprehension of the target language, encouragement for learning, integration of Malay cultural elements, and facilitation of lesson delivery. Teachers also exhibited positive perceptions towards the use of the approach in general, although they implied varying degrees of approval in terms of the appropriate proficiency level of learners to whom it should be applied. This implicates the need for teachers to carefully plan their lessons that involve translanguaging so that the approach can be applied to the appropriate audience and contexts. Overall, teachers believed that translanguaging provides numerous advantages to learners in the effort of enhancing their English language proficiency. Therefore, they were optimistic about it and would continue employing the approach in future teaching, although with certain limitations. In spite of this, it should be noted that since this study only involved four participants, the findings might not be generalizable. Future studies should involve a larger corpus to yield better results and generalizability. Other aspects of translanguaging should also be explored, especially in terms of to what extent translanguaging can help second or foreign language learning. Future studies should also look into any negative impacts that could be caused by translanguaging.

Theoretical and Contextual Contributions

Theoretically, the findings of the study add to the existing literature on translanguaging in ESL/EFL contexts by extending the research foundation on translanguaging practices in Malaysia as investigations in this domain are still very limited (Rajendram, 2021). The results build upon the findings from the previous studies and contribute to a deeper understanding of translanguaging practices and the perspectives on translanguaging as a pedagogical approach among ESL teachers.

The findings also provide new insights on the topic of translanguaging, which contributes to the implications for the discipline of second or foreign language teaching and learning. Considering its great potential as a useful pedagogical tool in ESL instruction, the translanguaging approach should be leveraged for use in ESL classrooms. Nevertheless, to successfully implement the use of translanguaging, teachers need to be familiarised with the fundamentals and essentials of this approach so that it can be optimised for teaching and learning. The findings from this study shed light on the affordances of translanguaging to learners, as well as the best practices for employing the approach from the teachers'

perspectives. This provides valuable insights into the integration of translanguaging in the current educational curriculum, where support and resources should be tailored according to students' and teachers' needs in utilising the approach. Thus, the inputs gained from this study can be adapted to cater for the requirements needed to enable the successful realisation of translanguaging as one of the methods for English instruction in Malaysian ESL classrooms.

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