

Leveraging Linguistic Repertoires: A Conceptual Framework for Translanguaging in Malaysian Higher Education

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Abstract

As globalization transforms higher education, Malaysia has emerged as a primary ASEAN hub for international students, particularly postgraduate cohorts from mainland China. Despite meeting English proficiency entry requirements, many of these students encounter significant barriers in academic communication, leading to "language anxiety" and hindered performance. This paper proposes a conceptual framework for Pedagogical Translanguaging (PT)—the intentional integration of a learner's full linguistic repertoire—as a strategic response to these challenges in English-Medium Instruction (EMI) contexts. Drawing on Edgar R. Eslit's 40-item Translanguaging Questionnaire, the framework categorizes pedagogical translanguaging into seven interconnected constructs: Effectiveness, Inclusivity, Engagement, Skill Development, Teacher Support, Peer Support, and Challenges. The model defines Inclusivity and Support as independent variables that influence the mediating processes of Effectiveness and Skill Development, ultimately driving the dependent variable of Student Engagement. While acknowledging potential challenges such as linguistic over-reliance, the paper outlines implementation strategies including "translanguaging zones," specialized faculty training, and bilingual resources. Ultimately, this framework seeks to move translanguaging from an informal classroom occurrence to a structured, data-driven pedagogical tool that validates student identity and ensures sustainable academic success in globalized professional landscapes.

Keywords: Pedagogical Translanguaging; Malaysian Higher Education, English-Medium Instruction (EMI), Mainland Chinese Postgraduates; Student Engagement, Conceptual Framework, Linguistic Repertoires, Academic Comprehension

Introduction

The increasing globalization of higher education has positioned Malaysia as a significant ASEAN education hub, attracting a diverse cohort of international students, particularly from mainland China. Despite meeting standard English proficiency requirements, many of these postgraduate students face persistent challenges in academic communication, which can

hinder their confidence and academic performance. Translanguaging pedagogy (TP)—the intentional use of a learner's full linguistic repertoire—emerges as a strategic response to these challenges (Küçükali, 2025; Rajendram et al, 2023).

Studying translanguaging pedagogy (TP)—the intentional integration of a student's full linguistic repertoire—is essential because it addresses these gaps by moving beyond rigid monolingual instruction. This area of study is crucial for the contemporary university because it validates students' cultural identities while providing the cognitive scaffolding necessary to master complex, technical academic discourse that might otherwise remain inaccessible.

The utility of this study lies in its ability to transform the English-Medium Instruction (EMI) classroom into an inclusive and high-functioning environment. For students, the study highlights how translanguaging reduces "language anxiety" and boosts engagement, turning their native language into a strategic asset for critical thinking and problem-solving rather than a barrier to learning. For educators and institutions, this research is beneficial as it provides a structured framework for lesson planning and faculty training, ensuring that linguistic support does not compromise English immersion goals. Ultimately, the study of translanguaging is significant because it equips international postgraduates with the "real-world fluency" needed to navigate globalized professional circles, ensuring their academic success is sustainable beyond the classroom.

This paper conceptualizes a framework for implementing and measuring translanguaging based on the integration of Edgar R. Eslit's standardized assessment tool with the specific needs of mainland Chinese postgraduates in English-Medium Instruction (EMI) contexts (Eslit, 2025).

The Theoretical Dimensions of Translanguaging

Translanguaging is more than simple code-switching; it is a pedagogical resource that validates a student's cultural and linguistic background while scaffolding complex learning. Based on the **Translanguaging Questionnaire**, the approach is defined by the eight key dimensions which are discussed in the following sections.

- 1) **Effectiveness & Skill Development:** The capacity of TP to help students understand complex English concepts, improve academic performance, and enhance writing and vocabulary-building strategies.
- 2) **Inclusivity & Engagement:** How the approach validates student backgrounds, boosts confidence, and encourages active participation in group activities.
- 3) **Teacher & Peer Support:** The essential role of the instructor in guiding these practices and the collaborative benefits of blended language use among peers.
- 4) **Challenges in use:** Potential risks such as over-reliance on the first language (L1), confusion during transitions to all-English environments, and the need for specialized teacher training.

Effectiveness on the use of pedagogical translanguaging for postgraduate students

Pedagogical translanguaging serves as a vital cognitive scaffold for postgraduate students in English-Medium Instruction (EMI) contexts, particularly those from mainland China who may struggle with complex academic discourse (Qureshi & Aljanadbah, 2022). By leveraging

their full linguistic repertoire, students can better understand intricate English concepts and improve their overall academic performance. This approach does not merely simplify content; it enhances high-level cognitive functions, such as problem-solving and critical thinking, while helping students retain information for longer periods (Lin, 2025; Rauteda, 2025). Consequently, the effectiveness of this method lies in its ability to make rigorous academic material more accessible to learners who are navigating the transition to advanced research and specialized vocabulary.

Beyond academic comprehension, translanguaging significantly impacts the psychological and social engagement of postgraduate students. It fosters a more inclusive classroom environment where students feel their cultural and linguistic backgrounds are respected, which in turn boosts their confidence. This sense of validation encourages more active participation in discussions and makes collaborative group activities more productive, as students feel comfortable using both their first language and English to negotiate meaning. By reducing the anxiety often associated with foreign-language communication, translanguaging creates a welcoming atmosphere that prepares students for the multilingual realities of real-world communication. (Bibi, 2023).

However, the effectiveness of translanguaging is contingent upon strategic implementation and a balance with English immersion. While the approach supports skill development—such as writing and vocabulary building—there are recognized challenges, including a potential over-reliance on the native language or confusion when transitioning to strictly English-only environments. For this reason, the framework emphasizes that teachers play an essential role in guiding these practices and should intentionally incorporate translanguaging into their lesson planning. Ultimately, when tailored to specific lesson objectives and supported by trained educators, the benefits of translanguaging are perceived to outweigh the challenges, leading to greater English fluency over time. (Refer Table 1).

Table 1

Effectiveness on the use of pedagogical translanguaging for postgraduate students

Dimension	Impact on Postgraduate Students	Supporting Evidence/Statements
Academic Comprehension	Facilitates the understanding of complex English academic concepts and difficult lessons.	Helps students understand complex concepts better and improves academic performance in English.
Engagement & Participation	Increases interest and active involvement in high-level academic discourse.	Encourages more active participation in discussions and makes group activities more productive/easier.
Cognitive & Critical Skills	Enhances the ability to process information and solve problems in a multilingual context.	Improves critical thinking skills and enhances problem-solving abilities.
Identity & Inclusivity	Validates the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of international students.	Makes students feel their language and culture are respected and boosts confidence in learning.
Language Transition	Supports the bridge between a student's first language (L1) and English (L2).	Helps students draw connections between English and their first language and aids in vocabulary building.
Challenges to Effectiveness	Risk of over-reliance on L1 or confusion during transition to English-only environments.	May slow down English proficiency development if not balanced correctly.

Skill development with the use of pedagogical translanguaging for postgraduate students

Pedagogical translanguaging serves as a robust mechanism for cognitive and academic skill development among postgraduate students, particularly those navigating English-Medium Instruction (EMI) environments (Yasar Yuzlu & Dikilitas, 2022). By allowing students to draw connections between English and their first language, the approach helps develop both academic and conversational English skills simultaneously. This dual development is crucial for postgraduates who must master high-level scholarly discourse while maintaining the interpersonal communication skills necessary for networking and collaborative research.

A significant area of growth lies in critical thinking and problem-solving. Research indicates that using multiple languages in the classroom enhances a student's ability to solve complex problems and improves their overall critical thinking skills (Liu et al, 2026). For a postgraduate student, this means the ability to process dense theoretical frameworks is not

hindered by a language barrier; instead, their full linguistic repertoire is leveraged to deconstruct and analyze information more deeply, leading to better information retention over time.

The development of specific literacy and vocabulary skills is also central to this pedagogical approach. Translanguaging supports the development of writing skills in English by providing a linguistic bridge during the drafting and brainstorming phases of academic work (Robillos, 2023a). Furthermore, it enhances students' vocabulary-building strategies, as they can use their native language as a reference point to grasp the nuances of technical terms and subject-specific jargon common in Master's and PhD programs.

Finally, these developed skills translate into improved perceived outcomes and real-world readiness (Memari, 2024). Students who utilize translanguaging are often better prepared for real-world communication, as they learn to navigate fluidly between different linguistic contexts—a skill highly valued in globalized professional and academic circles. By fostering a positive attitude toward learning and increasing confidence, the approach ensures that skill development is not just a classroom exercise but a sustainable foundation for future success in English-speaking academic environments.

Table 2

Skill development with the use of pedagogical translanguaging for postgraduate students

Skill Area	Impact on Postgraduate Students	Supporting Evidence (Item #)
Academic & Conversational	Develops both formal	"The approach helps develop
English	scholarly language and the interpersonal communication needed for university life.	both academic and conversational English skills".
Critical Thinking	Enhances the ability to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information using the student's full linguistic repertoire.	"Translanguaging improves students' critical thinking skills".
Writing Proficiency	Provides a bridge for drafting and organizing complex academic arguments in English.	"Translanguaging supports the development of writing skills in English".
Vocabulary Acquisition	Improves strategies for learning and retaining technical, subject-specific terminology.	"This approach enhances students' vocabulary-building strategies".
Linguistic Connectivity	Encourages students to find cognitive shortcuts by linking	"It encourages students to draw connections between English and their first language".

	new English terms to their first language.	
Problem-Solving	Utilizes multiple languages to process and solve complex academic tasks more	"Using multiple languages in the classroom enhances problem-solving skills".
	effectively.	
Real-World Fluency	Prepares students for globalized, multilingual professional environments beyond the classroom.	"Students using translanguaging are better prepared for real-world communication".

Inclusivity with the use of pedagogical translanguaging for postgraduate students

Inclusivity through pedagogical translanguaging is fundamental to creating an equitable environment for postgraduate students in English-Medium Instruction (EMI) universities (Driouch, 2022). This approach validates and respects the diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds that international students bring to higher education. By allowing students to utilize their first language, the classroom transforms into a space where their pre-existing identities are viewed as assets rather than barriers to learning.

This sense of validation significantly boosts the confidence of postgraduate students as they navigate complex academic landscapes (Lister & Ollerhead, 2025). When students feel that their native language is a respected part of the learning process, they are more likely to feel comfortable participating in high-level academic activities. This reduction in "language anxiety" allows students to focus on the intellectual rigors of their research rather than the fear of linguistic inadequacy.

Furthermore, translanguaging facilitates more effective collaboration among students from varied linguistic backgrounds. In group work and peer discussions, the ability to blend languages allows for a more fluid exchange of ideas and ensures that no student is marginalized due to temporary English fluency gaps (Tai, 2022). This collaborative inclusivity ensures that the collective knowledge of the postgraduate cohort is fully utilized, leading to more productive and diverse academic outcomes.

Ultimately, an inclusive translanguaging policy makes the classroom environment feel more welcoming and supportive for all learners (Wei, 2024). It acknowledges that postgraduate success is not solely dependent on English proficiency but also on the ability to integrate one's full identity into the scholarly community. By fostering a positive attitude toward the learning environment, translanguaging promotes a sustainable sense of belonging that is essential for long-term academic success in foreign institutions. (refer Table 3).

Table 3

Inclusivity with the use of pedagogical translanguaging for postgraduate students

Inclusive Benefit	Impact on Postgraduate Experience	Supporting Evidence (Statement #)
Cultural Validation	Respects and integrates the student's unique linguistic and cultural identity.	"Validates and respects students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds".
Confidence Building	Empowers students to share ideas without the immediate fear of linguistic error.	"Boosts their confidence in learning English".
Active Participation	Increases the frequency and quality of contributions to classroom discourse.	"Students feel more comfortable participating in activities".
Effective Collaboration	Enables diverse peers to work together more productively by removing language barriers.	"Allows students from diverse linguistic backgrounds to collaborate more effectively".
Welcoming Atmosphere	Creates a sense of safety and belonging within the international academic community.	"Makes the classroom feel more welcoming for me and others".
Identity Respect	Ensures students feel their primary language is an academic resource, not a deficit.	"This approach makes me feel that my language and culture are respected".

Engagement with the use of pedagogical translanguaging for postgraduate students

Engagement in the postgraduate classroom is significantly amplified through pedagogical translanguaging, as it transforms the learning environment into a more dynamic and interactive space (Deroo et al, 2022). By incorporating a student's native language into English lessons, educators can maintain a higher level of student interest and focus, especially during cognitively demanding tasks. This approach ensures that postgraduate students do not become disengaged due to linguistic exhaustion, but instead remain mentally present and motivated to explore complex academic themes.

Furthermore, the blending of languages encourages a shift from passive listening to active participation. When postgraduate students are permitted to utilize their full linguistic repertoire, they report a greater enjoyment of lessons and a stronger desire to contribute to class discussions. This is particularly evident in English-Medium Instruction (EMI) settings, where the ability to bridge the gap between their first language and English makes the act of participating feel more natural and less intimidating (Lin, 2025).

The productivity of group work—a cornerstone of postgraduate study—is also enhanced through translanguaging practices (Rauteda, 2025). Students find that collaborative activities are more efficient and easier to navigate when they can negotiate meaning using both their native language and English. This fluid communication allows for deeper academic inquiry during peer-to-peer interactions, leading to more substantive outcomes in seminars and research workshops.

Finally, engagement through translanguaging is linked to improved long-term information retention (Yuasa & Takeuchi, 2025). When students process and discuss new information through multiple linguistic channels, they form stronger cognitive connections to the material. This deep engagement ensures that the knowledge acquired during their postgraduate journey is not just memorized for an exam but is integrated into their long-term professional and academic expertise. (refer Table 4).

Table 4

Engagement with the use of pedagogical translanguaging for postgraduate students

Engagement Metric	Impact on Postgraduate Students	Supporting Evidence
Sustained Interest	Keeps students more focused and interested in challenging English-medium lessons.	"Translanguaging keeps students more engaged in English lessons".
Lesson Enjoyment	Increases overall satisfaction and enjoyment of the learning process.	"Students enjoy lessons more when their native language is incorporated".
Active Participation	Encourages students to voice their ideas more frequently in open discussions.	"Discussions that blend languages encourage more active student participation".
Collaborative Productivity	Makes group work more efficient and results-oriented.	"Group activities are more productive when students use translanguaging".
Knowledge Retention	Helps students remember and apply learned information over a longer period.	"Translanguaging helps students retain information longer".
Incentive to Participate	Acts as a motivational trigger for students to join classroom activities.	"Using both... makes me want to participate more".

Teacher and peer support on the use of pedagogical translanguaging for postgraduate students

The implementation of pedagogical translanguaging for postgraduate students relies heavily on a collaborative ecosystem involving both instructors and classmates (Meletiadou, 2022).

Teachers play an essential and guiding role in managing these practices, ensuring that the use of a student's first language is integrated purposefully into the curriculum. Rather than being a passive allowance, teacher support involves intentional lesson planning where translanguaging is matched with specific learning objectives to maximize academic impact. When a teacher actively encourages the use of a student's full linguistic repertoire, it makes the practice feel natural and valid within the high-pressure environment of postgraduate studies.

Peer support serves as a critical secondary pillar, particularly through collaborative group work and feedback cycles. Discussions that blend languages allow peers to negotiate complex meanings more effectively than they might in an English-only setting (Paul Sun & Jun Zhang, 2022). Students often find that peer feedback is more constructive and helpful when they are permitted to use both their first language and English to explain nuanced academic critiques. This shared linguistic space fosters a supportive community where students help one another bridge the gap between their native thought processes and English academic requirements. Furthermore, the synergy between teacher guidance and peer interaction creates a "safety net" for international students. When a teacher sets a clear precedent for translanguaging, it empowers students to use their primary language as a tool for mutual aid during difficult lessons (Liu et al, 2026). This collaborative atmosphere is perceived to lead to better learning outcomes, as students feel less isolated in their linguistic struggles. This support structure is especially vital for mainland Chinese postgraduates who may face significant anxiety when communicating in English-medium universities.

Finally, for this support system to be truly effective, it requires systemic backing from the institution. Both teachers and students recognize that instructors need specialized training to guide translanguaging practices without compromising English immersion goals. Schools and universities are encouraged to provide more resources so that teachers can move beyond "ad hoc" language use toward a structured, pedagogically sound model. Ultimately, when teacher encouragement and peer collaboration are aligned, translanguaging becomes a powerful tool for academic success and social integration (Zheng, & Drybrough, 2023). (refer Table 5).

Table 5

Teacher and peer support on the use of pedagogical translanguaging for postgraduate students

Dimension	Role and Impact on Postgraduate Students	Supporting Evidence
Teacher Guidance	Plays an essential role in showing students how to use translanguaging effectively.	Meletiadou, 2022
Lesson Integration	Instructors should incorporate translanguaging into formal lesson planning.	Paul Sun & Jun Zhang, 2022
Peer Collaboration	Group work with classmates helps students learn better through shared linguistic resources.	Liu et al, 2026
Constructive Feedback	Peer feedback is more helpful when students can blend languages in discussions.	Zheng, & Drybrough, 2023
Instructional Support	Schools should provide training to help teachers implement these practices.	Liu et al, 2026
Classroom Culture	Teacher encouragement makes translanguaging feel like a natural classroom practice.	Zheng, & Drybrough, 2023

Challenges in use of pedagogical translanguaging for postgraduate students

While pedagogical translanguaging offers numerous benefits, its implementation in postgraduate settings presents specific challenges that can impact the trajectory of language acquisition (Bowden et al, 2024). A primary concern is that the approach may inadvertently slow down the development of English proficiency if students become too comfortable operating in their first language. For postgraduate students, who are required to master high-level academic discourse, there is a risk that constant linguistic scaffolding might delay the "immersion" necessary to achieve native-like fluency in professional English environments. Another significant hurdle involves the potential for cognitive confusion during linguistic transitions. Students may experience difficulty when moving between a translanguaging-friendly classroom and a strictly English-only professional or examination environment (Bowden et al, 2024). This "transition fatigue" can make it difficult for learners to balance their native language use with the demands of full English immersion, potentially leading to inconsistencies in their academic output or oral performance.

Furthermore, there is the risk of over-reliance on the first language (L1), where students might use it as a "crutch" rather than a strategic bridge. If not carefully managed by the instructor, students might default to their L1 for complex tasks, avoiding the productive struggle required to expand their English academic vocabulary. This dependency can limit the effectiveness of the pedagogy, as the goal is to enhance English skills, not to replace them with L1-dominant communication.

Finally, the success of this approach is heavily dependent on teacher competency and institutional support. Implementing translanguaging effectively requires additional, specialized training for educators to ensure they can maintain the delicate balance between L1 support and L2 immersion (Mushtaq, 2023; Padchonga et al, 2025). Without this training, teachers may find it difficult to guide the practice naturally, leading to haphazard implementation that might confuse students rather than support them. (refer Table 6).

Table 6

Challenges in use of pedagogical translanguaging for postgraduate students

Challenge Category	Description of Potential Impact	Supporting Evidence
Proficiency Speed	May slow down the overall development of English proficiency if used excessively.	Mushtaq, 2023; Padchonga et al, 2025
Environmental Transition	Difficulty adjusting to all-English environments or high-stakes English-only exams.	Bowden et al, 2024
Linguistic Over-reliance	Risk of students relying too heavily on their first language for complex tasks.	Mushtaq, 2023; Padchonga et al, 2025
Instructional Difficulty	Challenges in balancing native language use with the requirements of English immersion.	Bowden et al, 2024
Need for Training	Requires additional teacher training to implement the approach effectively and strategically.	Mushtaq, 2023; Padchonga et al, 2025
Cognitive Confusion	Possible confusion for students when constantly switching between linguistic modes.	Bowden et al, 2024

Overall Implementation strategies on the use of pedagogical translanguaging for postgraduate students

The overall implementation of pedagogical translanguaging for postgraduate students requires a shift from informal, ad-hoc language use to a structured, intentional framework (Huang & Chalmers, 2023). Successful implementation begins with strategic lesson planning, where instructors explicitly identify stages of a seminar or research workshop where the first language (L1) can serve as a cognitive bridge. For instance, complex theoretical brainstorming or peer-review sessions can be designated as translanguaging zones, while final oral presentations or executive summaries remain strictly in English. This structured approach ensures that the use of multiple languages serves a specific academic purpose rather than becoming a default "crutch" that bypasses English development.

To ensure these strategies are effective, institutional professional development is essential. Faculty members in English-Medium Instruction (EMI) environments often require training to move past the traditional "monolingual bias" and learn how to manage a multilingual classroom. This training should focus on techniques such as "translanguaging documentation," where students are encouraged to take notes or draft research outlines in their native language before translating them into formal academic English (Robillos, 2023a). By providing teachers with the tools to facilitate these transitions, universities can maintain high linguistic standards while supporting the diverse needs of international cohorts, such as mainland Chinese postgraduates. Another core strategy involves fostering a collaborative classroom culture that promotes peer-to-peer linguistic support. Implementation should encourage "flexible grouping," where students with the same native language can occasionally pair up to clarify difficult technical concepts, provided they report their findings back to the class in English. This practice turns the students' linguistic repertoires into a shared resource, reducing the cognitive load of navigating high-level research (Robillos, 2023b). When peer support is formally recognized as a valid part of the learning process, it boosts student engagement and reduces the isolation often felt by international students struggling with language barriers.

Finally, the implementation must include regular assessment and feedback loops to monitor the balance between L1 support and English proficiency. Using tools like the 40-item Translanguaging Questionnaire allows institutions to gather data on student perceptions of effectiveness, inclusivity, and challenges. These insights can then be used to refine pedagogical strategies, ensuring that translanguaging remains a scaffold for success rather than a hindrance to immersion. By treating translanguaging as a dynamic and measurable pedagogical tool, universities can better prepare postgraduate students for the multilingual demands of the global professional landscape (Tang et al, 2024). (refer Table 7).

Table 7

Overall Implementation strategies on the use of pedagogical translanguaging for postgraduate students

Implementation Category	Strategic Action Plan	Intended Outcome
Curriculum Design	Integrate specific "translanguaging zones" into syllabus and lesson objectives.	Prevents over-reliance on L1 while maximizing cognitive clarity for complex topics.
Faculty Training	Provide workshops on multilingual pedagogy and managing EMI classrooms.	Equips teachers to guide language transitions naturally and strategically.
Scaffolded Assessment	Allow multilingual drafting and brainstorming for high-stakes research projects.	Enhances writing proficiency and ensures deep understanding of technical content.
Peer-Led Support	Formalize peer-mentoring and collaborative groups that utilize shared languages.	Boosts confidence and ensures more productive group discussions.
Resource Allocation	Develop bilingual glossaries and reference materials for core postgraduate modules.	Aids in vocabulary acquisition and bridges the gap between L1 and English academic terms.
Data Monitoring	Use standardized questionnaires to evaluate student perceptions and performance.	Allows for evidence-based adjustments to teaching methods and policy.

The Seven Constructs of Pedagogical Translanguaging

Based on the **Translanguaging Questionnaire** developed by Edgar R. Eslit and the research framework involving mainland Chinese postgraduate students, the seven core constructs of pedagogical translanguaging can be visualized as an interconnected system. These constructs move from the foundational environment (Inclusivity and Support) through the process of learning (Effectiveness and Skills) to the resulting student behavior (Engagement and Outcomes), while acknowledging the inherent Challenges. (refer Table 8).

Table 8

The Seven Constructs of Pedagogical Translanguaging - definitions

Construct	Core Definition & Role
1. Effectiveness	The perceived capacity of translanguaging to enhance academic performance and the understanding of complex concepts.
2. Inclusivity	The extent to which the approach validates cultural backgrounds and creates a safe, respectful learning environment.
3. Engagement	The level of student interest, active participation in discussions, and enjoyment of the lessons.
4. Skill Development	The improvement of specific competencies, such as writing, vocabulary building, and critical thinking.
5. Teacher Support	The role of the instructor in planning, guiding, and encouraging translanguaging as a strategic tool.
6. Peer Support	The collaborative benefit of students using their shared linguistic repertoires to help one another.
7. Challenges	The potential hurdles, such as over-reliance on the first language or difficulty transitioning to English-only environments.

The constructs are then defined as Variables. This classifies them based on their functional role within the research design—moving from what is measured (Independent Variables) to the results (Dependent Variables) and the factors that interfere with that relationship (Moderating/Mediating Variables). (refer Table 9).

Table 9

The Variable Framework of Pedagogical Translanguaging

Variable Name	Variable Type	Role in the Conceptual Model
Inclusivity	Independent Variable (IV)	The primary "input" or cause; the degree to which a student feels their culture is represented.
Teacher Support	Independent Variable (IV)	A foundational predictor; the level of guidance provided by the instructor.
Peer Support	Independent Variable (IV)	A foundational predictor; the quality of collaborative linguistic help from classmates.
Effectiveness	Mediating Variable (MV)	The internal process; how students perceive the utility of the method for their
		learning.
Skill Development	Mediating Variable (MV)	The practical growth; the bridge between being supported and being fully engaged.
Challenges	Moderating Variable	The "interference" factor; a variable that can strengthen or weaken the impact of support.
Engagement	Dependent Variable (DV)	The final "output" or effect; the measurable level of student participation and interest.

Conceptual Model of Student Engagement

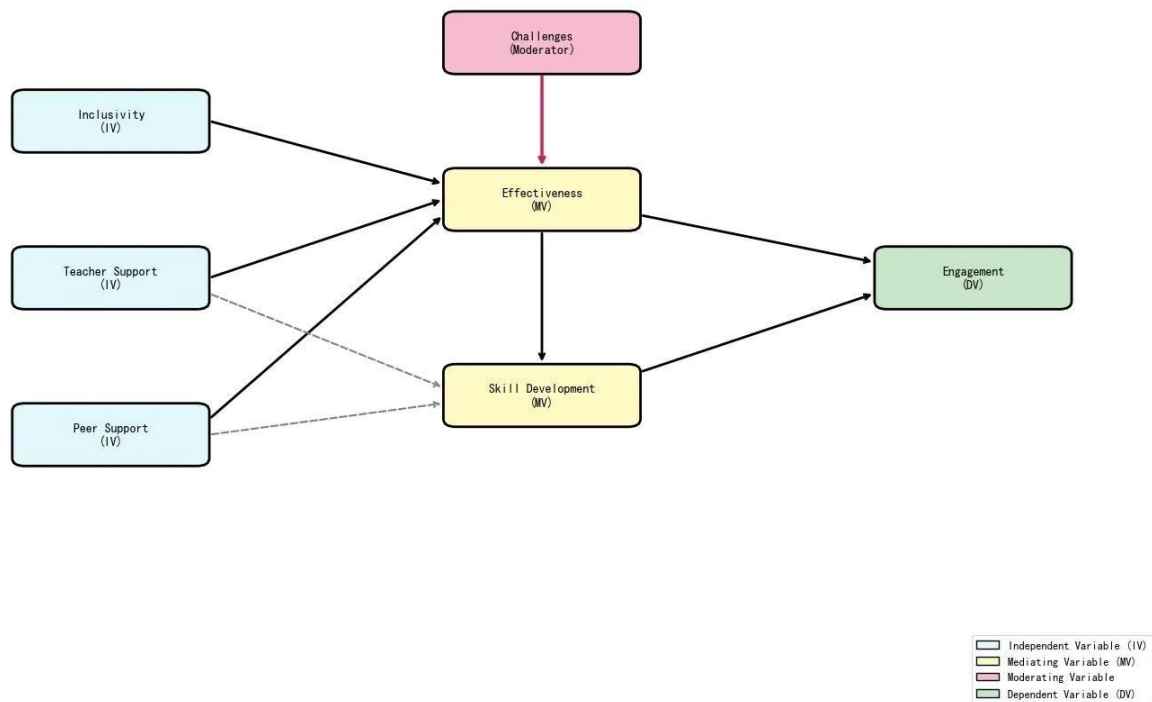


Figure 1 conceptual framework

A Proposed Research and Implementation Model

To move from theory to practice, a structured quantitative approach is necessary to understand student perceptions and predict outcomes. The following model is proposed:

1. Validated Measurement

Implementation should begin with a culturally and linguistically appropriate version of the **40-item Likert scale**. For mainland Chinese cohorts, this involves forward and back-translation into Mandarin to ensure conceptual clarity. Content validity is established using the **Content Validity Index (CVI)**, where items are rated by experts on a 4-point scale. An **item with CVI of 0.78** or higher is the threshold for acceptable item relevance. (Creswell & Creswell, 2022; Roy, 2020; Robinson, 2020).

Analyzing the Impact on Outcomes

The framework suggests that perceptions of **Inclusivity** and **Teacher/Peer Support** are not just secondary benefits but are likely predictors of **Engagement** and **Perceived Learning Outcomes**. By using multiple regression analysis, institutions can determine the extent to which a supportive translanguaging environment overcomes common barriers like foreign-language anxiety.

Strategic Integration

The goal of translanguaging in this context is not to replace English immersion but to **complement** it. Effective implementation requires:

- 1) **Lesson Planning:** Integrating TP into specific lesson objectives.
- 2) **Teacher Training:** Providing professional development to help faculty balance native language use with English immersion.

Conclusion and Future Directions

Translanguaging offers a pathway to transform the EMI classroom from a site of linguistic struggle into an inclusive space for high-level academic inquiry. By quantifying student perceptions through standardized tools, Malaysian universities can better tailor their curricula to support the success of international postgraduate students.

The conceptual framework for pedagogical translanguaging (PT) serves as a structured, interconnected system that moves from foundational support to measurable academic outcomes. By categorizing elements like **Inclusivity** and **Teacher Support** as independent variables, the model provides a clear roadmap for how institutional validation directly influences the mediating processes of **Effectiveness** and **Skill Development**. This systematic approach is essential because it shifts translanguaging from an informal, "ad hoc" classroom occurrence into a rigorous, data-driven pedagogical tool. Ultimately, the framework acknowledges that while **Challenges** like linguistic over-reliance act as moderating factors, they can be mitigated through strategic "translanguaging zones" and specialized faculty training, ensuring the practice remains a scaffold for success rather than a hindrance to English immersion.

The primary benefit of adopting this framework in Malaysian higher education is the creation of an equitable and high-performing environment for international postgraduates. For **students**, the model validates their cultural identities and reduces the "language anxiety" that often stifles critical thinking and complex problem-solving in EMI contexts. For **educators**, it provides a "safety net" and a strategic action plan—including bilingual glossaries and scaffolded assessments—to maintain high academic standards while supporting diverse linguistic repertoires. By treating a student's native language as a cognitive asset rather than a deficit, this framework ensures that postgraduates are better prepared for the fluid, multilingual demands of the global professional landscape.

In conclusion, the proposed conceptual framework moves pedagogical translanguaging from an informal classroom occurrence to a structured, data-driven academic strategy. By integrating standardized assessment tools with a clear understanding of the linguistic needs of mainland Chinese postgraduates, Malaysian universities can transform English-Medium Instruction (EMI) from a site of potential linguistic struggle into a dynamic space for high-level inquiry. While challenges such as potential over-reliance on the first language must be managed through specialized teacher training and intentional lesson planning, the overarching benefits—enhanced cognitive processing, increased student engagement, and the validation of diverse cultural identities—provide a sustainable foundation for international student success. Ultimately, this framework ensures that postgraduate success is not solely dependent on English proficiency, but on the ability to leverage a student's full identity to meet the rigorous demands of the global professional landscape.

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