

A study on translanguaging between Malaysia and China primary schools' students in ESL writing classroom



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ABSTRACT

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This research investigates the efficacy of translanguaging on writing ability and the attitudes of students from Malaysia and China in English lessons. Writing ability, a combination of various skills, is explored through a mixed-method approach with a purposive sampling of 20 students—10 from Malaysia and 10 from China. Interviews were conducted with two teachers and three students from a Malaysian sub-urban school, and a teacher and two students from a primary school in China to gather qualitative data. The study also used a pre-experimental design, employing pre- and post-tests to assess the quantitative aspect. The findings suggest that classroom culture plays a crucial role in fostering positive attitudes toward multilingualism and second language acquisition. Translanguaging allowed students to bridge the gap between their home language (L1) and school language (L2), resulting in improved writing outcomes, particularly for students with low proficiency. It also led to more authentic, well-constructed work. However, some teachers expressed concerns about the influence of translanguaging on students' writing, particularly the risk of substituting L1 strategies for English ones. Despite these concerns, the research demonstrates that translanguaging can be a valuable tool for enhancing writing ability and building positive attitudes towards language learning.

Contribution/ Originality: This study is original in its comparative analysis of translanguaging practices between Malaysian and Chinese students, highlighting the role of classroom culture in shaping students' attitudes and writing abilities. By employing a mixed-methods approach, it uniquely explores the impact of translanguaging on students with varying proficiency levels, bridging L1 and L2 learning environments.

1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to investigate the effectiveness of translanguaging in improving the students' writing abilities. Besides, this study is to determine the attitude of Malaysian and Chinese students towards this approach. The research group consists of 20 primary school students from Malaysia and China. Students' views regarding utilizing L1 during English lessons in Malaysia and China classrooms are expected to be identified by the findings of this study. Furthermore, the researchers want to know the teachers' perceptions about using L1 in English classes. This chapter outlines the background of the research, statement of the problem, the purpose of the research, significance, scope, limitations and definitions of the term.

1.1. Background and Context

Many students may not be able to engage with content in the classroom due to a barrier based on lack of proficiency in the classroom language or perceived lack of acceptance in the classroom due to one's own identity as a language speaker (Kiramba, 2017; Velasco & García, 2014). According to Dorner and Layton (2014) students may struggle to participate and fully express themselves if the classroom language does not mirror the language of their experiences. Students may believe that their experiences are not acknowledged or legitimate in their educational context on an emotional level. Others argue that it is an inevitable aspect of learning (Moll, Saez, & Dworin, 2001; J. Paradis, Crago, & Genesee, 2011).

Recent debates have produced divergent viewpoints on the link between two major concepts, code switching and translanguaging, which code-switching defines the practice of using more than one language in bilingual and multilingual environments, including those where English is the target language. On the one hand, it has been claimed that translanguaging is founded on a distinct understanding of the bilingual mind than codeswitching and that the two concepts should not be used interchangeably (Otheguy, García, & Reid, 2019). Many studies have been done on code switching compared to the translanguaging approach. Although translanguaging has been used in language classrooms since the mid-nineteenth century, little is known about its power to affect students' writing (Williams, 1996). As individuals strive to communicate in a language they are still learning, the act of translanguaging, has come to be acknowledged as a natural, widely witnessed behaviour in both children and adults. Although some study has been done on the use of multiple languages in the writing process to provide learning opportunities in the language classroom, less research has been done on the use of multiple languages in the writing process. As a result, the researchers want to explore the students' attitude towards using L1 during English lessons in Malaysia and China classrooms. Apart from that, the researchers want to investigate the efficiency of the translanguaging approach to enhance students' performance in Malaysia and China classrooms and the perception of the teachers on the usage of L1 in the English classrooms.

1.2. Problem Statement and Rationale

Translanguaging is sometimes used interchangeably with phrases like code-switching, code-mixing, and heteroglossia to express the blending of components from other languages. Translanguaging considers each person's linguistic knowledge as a totality, rather than discrete languages that may be switched between (Wei, 2018). Translanguaging was initially recognized as a pedagogical tool in Welsh language revitalization projects by Williams (1996). In the domain of teaching bilingual students, the issue of using the first language (L1) in a second language (L2) based class has been widely controversial. While some studies have questioned the method of moving between the two languages. Translanguaging, others found it highly beneficial. According to Chomsky (1965) children will naturally engage in the process of language learning in the classroom. As a result, in a circumstance when the emotional filter is decreased and kids are immersed in a language, such as in early immersion instruction, the same would remain true (MacIntyre, Baker, Clément, & Donovan, 2003).

Translanguaging also implies that multilingual students each have their own body of language knowledge based on their linguistic experiences in various languages, resulting in the natural use of aspects that others might categorize as separate languages (Wei, 2018). In an immersion context, students learn through a unique intersection: the development of core literacy abilities in both the home and target languages, while also being exposed to numerous content-area topics for the first time. Students interested in a language learn new concepts while cognitively coding them in a language that they may not speak on a routine basis at home. As a result, it is no surprise that begin their discussion on translanguaging by stating that "nearly all infants who acquire a second language." Thus, this study investigates the students' attitudes as well as the effectiveness of the translanguaging approach in the Malaysian and China, English as Second Language (ESL) writing classrooms.

2. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE AND AIM

The purpose of the study is to investigate the effectiveness of a translanguaging approach in improving students' writing skills. The study allows the researchers to identify the attitude of the students toward using L1 during English lessons in Malaysia and China classrooms. The students have shown positive attitudes, views, and suggestions toward their participation in a writing lesson. The influence of classroom culture allows the ability to develop positive views toward themselves as multilingual and their skills in a second language is still needed, given the importance of these contextual effects. The researchers use a translanguaging approach in both speaking and writing and the approach allows students to achieve higher levels of expression, thought, and creativity than when they are forced to work in a single language. Finally, the researchers want to know the teacher's perception of using L1 in English classes. The teachers have acknowledged that they are apprehensive about using their native language in English language lessons. This framing may take many forms in schools, from mandating English-only classrooms to teachers criticizing students' lawful usage of dialectal differences. As cited by Baker-Bell, 2020, despite hard evidence that all languages are technically equal, educational academics, as is common, continue to emphasize the primacy of English language practices over first language practices.

2.1. Research Objective(s)

1. To measure the efficacy of the translanguaging approach on students' writing ability.
2. To investigate students' attitude towards using L1 during English lessons in Malaysia and China classrooms.
3. To explore teachers' perceptions of the usage of L1 in English lessons.

2.2. Limitation(s)

There are some limitations to the study. The first limitation of this study is due to the small sample size. The participants that are selected for this study are only 20 students from Malaysia and China. A comparable study should be carried out to see how a wider range of multilingual authors employs translanguaging as a self-control approach. However, when doing a comparative study on a wider scale, additional factors such as the participant's level of English proficiency and their connection with one another should be taken into account.

The second limitation is the various levels of topic knowledge made this sort of study difficult. The number of words students can create is heavily influenced by their content understanding of the issue. As a result, when different prompts are utilized, it is very hard to perform a direct comparison of the number of words generated under each situation. Such a difficulty might be avoided in the future study by creating a large number of written prompts and allowing participants to select the ones they are most comfortable with so that the problem has less of an impact on the results.

The last limitation of this study is the lack of prior research studies on the topic. There is only a little research done on how translanguaging approaches students' writing ability compared to code-switching. Thus, there are very few articles that address translanguaging in writing. Prior to this, this study suggests the need for further research on this topic to expose the teachers to the translanguaging approach in order to teach writing in English classrooms.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

In Baker and Wright (2017) defined the concept of translanguaging as "the process of creating meaning, shaping experience, understanding and knowledge through the use of two languages." Therefore, they explained that the development of these two languages requires language planning at the classroom level, and simply use of these two languages is not enough. Accordingly, translanguaging means it is meticulous to arrange how to use two languages in one classroom, the ESL teachers must be aware which language they are going to use in different

activities. The inputs and outputs of these arrangements create chances to develop bilingual writing ability. In addition, Baker and Wright explained that translanguaging is sophisticated because it implied the comprehensive usage of different languages, but they emphasized the value of translanguaging: “one of the values of this concept is that each teacher plans the strategic use of two languages, consciously thinks about the distribution of two languages in the classroom, reflects and reviews what is happening, and tries to stimulate students' cognition through ‘language provocative’ and ‘language diversified’ courses.” Translanguaging needs to make full sense of understanding the input language, sufficient vocabulary and a good command of another language to convey information.

3.1. Students' Attitudes towards Translanguaging

To investigate the students' attitudes towards using L1 during English lessons in Malaysia and China, the current research employs instruments including pre-test and post- test, and interviews. Kircher (2016) defined language attitude as “any valid, cognitively or cognitively assessed response to different languages or their speakers”. Since these attitudes affect the views of native speakers and language learners, they may affect students' learning styles. If the students' attitudes are not positive towards the target language, their language ability can be affected. Prior to this, Muthanna and Miao (2015) emphasized that “students' language ability can influence their attitude towards specific language learning”. Based on the findings of Palfreyman and Al-Bataineh (2018) some students believe that translanguaging is not only an effective classroom management approach, but also a useful classification tool, and it is helpful to complete writing tasks, especially for students with low English proficiency. In the meanwhile, most students believe that translanguaging helps them understand synthetical studies and strengthen their understanding of English.

3.2. Efficiency of Translanguaging Approaches on Students' Writing Ability

Fareed, Ashraf, and Bilal (2016) investigate writing is an important and difficult skill, especially in an ESL environment where students face many challenges in writing. By cultivating students' interest, motivation and fun in writing through technology, students can improve their writing ability (Graham & Perin, 2007). Two studies earlier have explored the impact of translanguaging methods on writing ability. Fu Danling is one of the first and most staunch supporters of developing writing in another language with the children's native language (Fu, 2003) and Fu (2009). Fu wrote that she used translanguaging approaches to develop English writing skills for Chinese students. According to her, the ability to think, reasoning, imagination, and organize ideas is just as indispensable as language skills when students learn how to write. It provides insights into developing writing skills, writing self-efficacy, and teacher's assistance. Later, Velasco and García (2014) observed how young bilinguals used their full language skills to write. Through their study, they found that bilingual learners use different translanguaging strategies in producing written texts at different stages of bilingual combination.

3.3. Teachers' Reactions towards Usage of L1

To explore how teachers react when students use their native language in English classrooms, a recent study from Tabatabaei (2020) students feel that when they're using their native language in class, the teacher's reaction is mostly negative. Most participants thought that their scores might be lowered if they used their native language, although many participants explained that they understood the target language better in their native language. Some students believe that they would learn better if they only used English in ESL classes, which may stem from teachers' attitudes towards translanguaging practices. Although the finding shows that the students are not comfortable with using a second language, they do not think that English plays a crucial part in their social lives, and their responses prove that English is not the language they use outside of school. In general, teachers' reactions

tend to limit the use of native language as little as possible, rather than prohibit the use of L1 in the classroom. Ideally, teachers can use the target language to fully explain what the students already know.

3.4. Similarities and Differences between Code-Switching and Translanguaging

Translanguaging is the ability to transfer languages in dynamic bilinguals. Translanguaging and Code-Switching (henceforth, CS) are two types of operations due to this feature. Translanguaging and CS can be regarded as the form of language conversion, which may be an organic, real and naturally happening language practice in the classrooms (İlhan & Özkan, 2021). Different from the CS, translanguaging is theoretic, because CS adopts the structural view of bilingual text or conversation, while translanguaging focuses on the content that speakers execute and implement by obtaining elements from their tracks (Juffermans, Blommaert, Kroon, & Li, 2014). To focus on the similarities, it begins to look at the overlaps between translanguaging and code-switching recently. Goodman and Tastanbek (2021) point out the similarities between these two concepts. Accordingly, they note that regard to these two concepts, scholars have characterized teachers' linguistic thinking and language choices in the classroom as acts of resistance to a single perspective on language use.

In the field of ESL teaching, most of the studies focus on language practices, while poorly studies focus on bettering the English proficiency. However, most of the studies have a positive attitude towards translanguaging, because it promotes cultural and linguistic diversity. In the translanguaging curriculum, young bilingual students may show their different knowledge reserves, and use their native language or cultural resources to develop the language skills. Taken together, we examine translanguaging as teaching approaches, which is very important to critically think about languages, knowledge, and learners' ideas. Based on this study, we take a qualitative study that allows us to discover writing perceptions in bilingual students. It is mainly aimed at teachers and students in Malaysia and China, hopefully making a timely contribution to their further studies.

4. METHODOLOGY

This study uses a mixed mode approach. According to Creswell and Clark (2018) mixed mode research focuses on the collecting, analysing and mixing both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or series of studies. The combination of both types of research generate more reliable and valid data. Mixed method research allows for more divergent findings. This study incorporates purposive sampling, with 10 Standard 6 students from a rural school in Negeri Sembilan and 10 fifth grade students from a primary school in Yunnan province of China. The interview was conducted with 2 teachers from the rural school in Negeri Sembilan and 1 teachers from the primary school in Yunnan province of China. These teachers had experience of using translanguaging in the language classroom and therefore they knew the students well in terms of writing using translanguaging. In this present study, the researchers utilized three data collection techniques which were pre-test and post-test, document analysis (students' written essays) and interviews.

The researcher analysed the data by using paired t-test from SPSS Version 15. SPSS was used for calculating the mean and standard deviation of the pre-test and the post-test. The paired t-test was applied to compare the difference between the means in both tests. This test was important in determining whether the changes were due to the treatment or some other variables. The researcher evaluated the writing scripts based on a marking scheme of National Assessment Program- Literacy and Numeracy 2010. The evaluation was based on the amount of translanguaging done in the writing script of the pre-test and the post-test. The main purpose was to make a comparison between the content of both the tests. A marking rubric was adapted for the marking of each script considering the criteria such as audience, text structure, ideas, character/setting, vocabulary, cohesion, paragraphing, sentence structure, punctuation and spelling.

A semi- structured interview was done to collect data about the teachers' and students' opinions, beliefs and feelings about translanguaging in their own words. It was conducted on the basis of a set of questions that were

devised from the literature review and past studies. Prior to the interviews, a consent form was given to the participants. Then, each participant was interviewed face-to-face and the interview was being recorded. After the recording, each of the interviews was transcribed verbatim. Once the interview session was dealt with, the verbatim transcribing process began and now the researcher has engaged in the initial stage of analysis. Flick (2018) stated four main processes post-interview which are, transcribing, analysing, verifying and reporting.

5. DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

This chapter discusses the results of the analysed data obtained from the study based on research objectives in Chapter 1. The data are presented based on the three research questions outlined and this is followed by the discussion of findings.

5.1. Efficacy of Translanguaging

RQ1: How efficient is the translanguaging approach on students' writing ability?

The first research question in this study explores the efficiency of the translanguaging approach on students' writing ability. The primary findings are illustrated through the pre-test and the post-test results. The sample of students writing before and after the intervention, the translanguaging writing strategy, are also included.

5.1.1. Pre-Test and Post-Test Results (Malaysia)

There are twenty students who participated, 10 from Malaysia and 10 from China, throughout this study. A pre-test and post-test were given to the students before and after the intervention to identify the efficiency of the translanguaging approach on students' writing ability. The data was analysed and presented in a descriptive table and a comparative T-test. Based on the numerical data gathered for Malaysian students there is a significant improvement in these students' marks. As shown in Table 1, there is a significant increase in mean from 39.8% to 73.4%. The overall mean difference between the Pre-test and Post-test is 33.6% (95% CI [37.40, 29.79]). Table 2 shows paired samples correlation shows the bivariate Pearson correlation coefficient (with a two-tailed test of significance) for each pair of variables entered. Table 2 shows that pre-test and post-test marks are significantly positively correlated ($r = .765$). The positive high score also indicates a less standard error in both pre- test and post-test. Table 3 shows the scores for paired-sample t-tests. Since the two-tailed P- value, as shown in Table 3, is $p = .001$ which is lower than $.025$ ($.001 < .05$), it is safe to conclude that the translanguaging writing strategy has a statistically significant impact on Malaysia students' performance.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics (Malaysia).

MAL	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. deviation
Pre-test	10	20.00	28.00	48.00	39.8	5.76
Post-test	10	30.00	60.00	90.00	73.4	8.22

Table 2. Paired samples correlations (Malaysia).

MAL	N	Correlation	Sig.
Pre-test & post-test	10	0.765	0.010

Table 3. Paired samples test (Malaysia).

MAL	Paired differences					t	df	Sig. (2- tailed)
	Mean	Std. dev	Std. error mean	95% confidence interval of the difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Pre-test – Post-test	-33.6	5.32	1.68	-37.40	-29.79	-19.98	9	0.001

5.1.2. Pre-Test and Post-Test Results (China)

Based on the numerical data gathered for Chinese students the results also show a significant improvement in these students' marks. As shown in Table 4, there is a significant increase in mean from 37.6% to 74.2%. The overall mean difference between the Pre-test and Post-test is 36.6% (95% CI [-40.23, 32.96]). Table 5 shows that pre-test and post-test marks are significantly positively correlated ($r = .829$). The positive high score also indicates a less standard error in both pre-test and post-test. Table 6 shows the scores for paired-sample t- tests. Since the two-tailed P-value, as shown in Table 6 is $p=.001$ which is lower than $.025$ ($.001 < .05$), it has been proven that the translanguaging writing strategy has a statistically significant impact on Chinese students' performance.

Table 4. Descriptive statistics (China).

CHN	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. deviation
Pre-test	10	24.00	28.00	52.00	37.6	7.76
Post-test	10	28.00	62.00	90.00	74.2	9.06

Table 5. Paired samples correlations (China).

CHN	N	Correlation	Sig.
Pre-test & post-test	10	0.829	0.003

Table 6. Paired samples test (China).

CHN	Paired differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. deviation	Std. error mean	95% confidence interval of the difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Pre-test - Post-test	-36.6	5.08	1.61	-40.23	-32.96	-22.776	9	0.001

5.1.3. A Comparison between Malaysia and China

Figure 1 shows a comparison between the descriptive statistics of the pre-test and post-test in a figurative form. The data shows improvement in knowledge received and the learning ability through the translanguaging writing strategies. Though there is a slight variant of the starting point and the end result, all the teachers in the interview after the intervention, have agreed that the usage of first language has helped students gain understanding thus connecting the missing dots which resulted in improved outcomes for most students of lower proficiency. Parallel to Adamson and Coulson (2015) findings, this study also proved that students' awareness of translanguaging resulted in better and authentic written work.

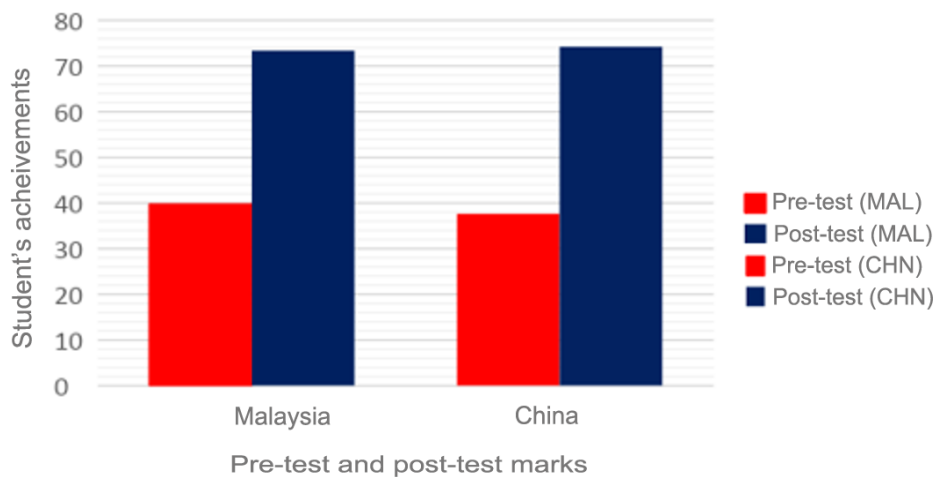
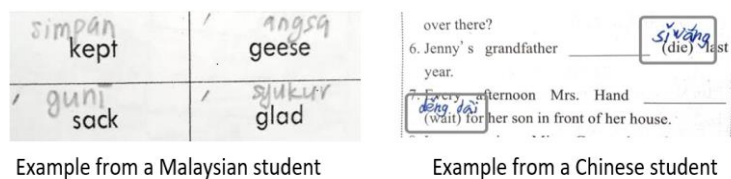


Figure 1. A comparison between Malaysia and China.

The difference between the pre-test and post-test in Figure 1 proves translanguaging in both speaking and writing allows students to achieve higher levels of expression, thought, and creativity than when they are forced to work in a single language. This is because students come from a variety of backgrounds, cultures, and experiences; different words in different languages have different emotional and linguistic connotations for them (Velasco & García, 2014).

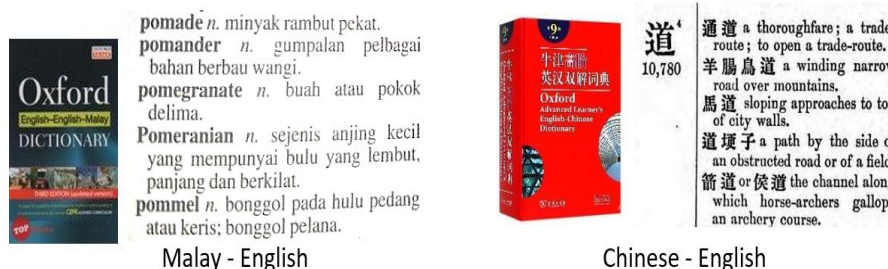
5.1.4. Document Analysis

The efficiency of the translanguaging approach on students' writing ability also can be addressed through the document analysis to understand to what extent structured translanguaging in the writing process could affect students' written product. Structured translanguaging here refers to students' opportunity to choose between and use of English and their first language in their writing lesson thus accommodating to unplanned switching of languages as students engage in while socializing with peers.



Example from a Malaysian student Example from a Chinese student
 Figure 2. Written excerpts from Malaysian and Chinese students.

Teachers also allow the usage of bilingual dictionaries to translate words from their first language to the English language. Figure 2 shows examples of how words were translated from English to Malay and Chinese. Student B, for example, translated the word kept to *simpan* (Figure 2) in the pre-writing stage to keep after using the bilingual dictionary. In the interview, he stated that “it helps him to come up with sentences if he knows what the words mean.” Both of these students' strengths came through in their writing. Based on the interviews and their written work, using their first language helped them in encoding what they wanted to write. Figure 3 shows how dictionaries used by students in Malaysia and China. The meaning of words in the dictionary are translated to Malay and Chinese words to ease understanding among young English learners.



Malay - English Chinese - English
 Figure 3. Examples of bilingual dictionaries.

Findings also show students' use of descriptive words was quantified by the increase of unique adjectives that appeared in student writing samples as well as comparing the ratio of overall word count. Furthermore, students also are able to write the essay in a proper structure, whereby there is paragraphing and accurate sentence structure. The progression of the student's work can be seen in Figure 1A (refer to Appendix A).

5.2. Students Attitude towards Translanguaging

RQ2: To explore the attitudes of Malaysian students' and Chinese students' towards using L1 in English lessons. The second research question concerns the perceptions and experiences of both Malaysian and Chinese students using the first language in English writing lessons. The data were obtained through an interview of the

students. After a thematic analysis was done, five emerging themes were identified which are learner's personality, social context and educational context. Figure 4 shows the summary of the emerging themes for RQ2.

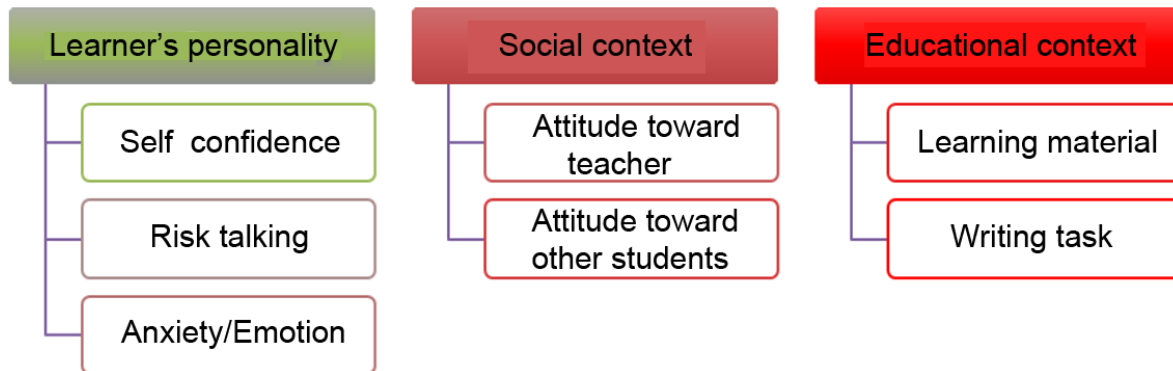


Figure 4. Summary of emerging themes.

5.2.1. Learner's Personality

The findings suggest that there is an increase in students' confidence where they are no longer shy and seem more eager to ask for help if needed. And this situation puts the student's in a position to take risks in writing. They have stated that they were more willing to try and are not afraid to make mistakes. The findings suggest the impact of classroom culture allows the ability to develop positive views toward themselves as multilingual and their skills in a second language is still needed, given the importance of these contextual effects. These are the statements made by the students on their feelings, views and suggestions toward their participation in a writing lesson.

However, when asked if they would like the teacher to continue to use L1 in the writing classroom, the finding of the interview students from Malaysia and China greatly vary. Students from Malaysia have reported that they were confused at first because they were not allowed to use L1 in their English classes, but once they got the hang of it they were happy and expressed gratitude for allowing the translanguaging strategy. Based on the Malaysian student's interview all of the feedback was positive, conversely, both students from China gave negative feedback. Both Chinese students don't want the teacher to use L1. It will not be conducive to learning English in such a manner. To them the only way to become fluent in a language is by being immersed in the language, is a component in a monolingual ideology which will be discussed further in finding RQ3. Keeping these findings in mind, Burden (2000) has also reported that Japanese students believe lessons should be mainly spent on communicative activities in the target language, L1 can be used explaining grammar and class rules or giving instructions for a task. In addition, Källkvist, Gyllstad, Sandlund, and Sundqvist (2017) stated teachers being are prevented or dissuaded from using the students' L1 due to rigorous implementation of the monolingual ideology.

"Happy because I understand the words so saya tahu nak buat apa [I know what to do]. I can finish my work."
Student C

"I wouldn't feel happy, but it's okay if my English teacher uses Chinese in writing classes as long as it's helpful to achieve a comprehensive study."
Student D

"I wouldn't feel happy about that, I'll never learn how to write in English if my teacher continues to use Chinese in an English writing classroom."
Student E

5.2.2. Social Context

The second emerging theme is the social context. The finding will be viewed from the aspect of attitude towards the teacher and attitude towards other students. When it comes to attitude towards teachers, this study can conclude that students feel less threatened when conversing with teachers. This is because they feel they will be able to accept their request, question and responses as a whole without setting terms and conditions such as 'only

English allowed' or 'only English questions will be answered'. Students have stated that they feel more comfortable and could immediately engage with their teachers.

The findings also suggest that there is a change in the attitude toward other students. Students have described events where they are able to welcome criticism in class because they are not embarrassed about the mistakes they have made. Students also have reported that they are able to give and receive help in the process of writing. Students also have stated they are happy that they are able to speak up without thinking repercussions of using L1 in English lessons.

"I like helping my friend. If my friend doesn't know a word, I help him in Malay... Yes, sometimes I also need help. We [are] helping each other." Student B

"I quickly think in Chinese then [it] translates into English... Yes, I consider it as a meaningful way to keep a record of my daily life." Student D

5.2.3. Educational Context

The third theme is a relationship with learning materials. The findings suggest when students are allowed L1 they use their dictionary more. 4 of 5 (80%) students have stated that they use their bilingual dictionaries in their English lessons, this is because they are able to understand each and every word and instruction properly before attempting to write. Student D however stated that though he has a bilingual dictionary, he prefers to ask his teacher for assistance. Findings also suggest students are more willing to try and not immediately reject a writing task. There is also an effort to be conscious of grammar and spelling rules. These findings correspond to previous research in a literary review, where students saw their L1 as a useful tool in L2 practice and to interact with one another.

"Actually it's not allowed to use Chinese in the writing classroom... When I can't express myself. In English classrooms, I use English as much as I can, but I'll use Chinese to replace the English vocabulary that I don't know." Student D

"I feel hurt when I can't do anything [participate in the lesson] because I don't understand. I fell so lost... when I understand I try my best to finish my essay." Student A

"I find words I dictionary... hum it has two languages so I can understand the meaning...Yes meaning is important to me because I want to be a smart student." Student B

5.3. Teachers Perspective of Translanguaging

RQ3: How do teachers perceive the usage of L1 in English classrooms? The last research question concerns the perceptions and experiences of both Malaysian and Chinese teachers in using the first language in English writing lessons. The data were obtained through an interview of the teachers.

5.3.1. Out of the Norm

All three teachers have stated that they are unsure with the use of the first language in English language classrooms. Teacher X has stated that "it's as if she has done something wrong". The overwhelming uneasiness is understandable as both Malaysia and China adopt monolingual language ideologies in language learning. This framing can take many forms in schools, from mandating English-only classrooms to teachers criticising students' lawful usage of dialectal differences. Despite long-held evidence that all languages are linguistically equal, educational scholars continue to highlight the dominance of English language practises over first language practises, as is the norm (Baker-Bell, 2020).

"I try to limit the use of L1 in my classrooms as much as possible, I don't forbid its use, but I will encourage the use of English wherever possible." Teacher Z

“I understand that this is just a project of 4 weeks but I worry over the consequences because... Hurmm I have never done this before. All this while I was repeatedly told that I can only use English in English classroom. I have PPD [The District Officers] and LINUS [Literacy and Numeracy Screening Program] officers coming in and checking up on us. I mean there was one time I was explaining, instructions to my weaker students in Malays and they left written report saying I did not do what I was supposed to do.”

Teacher Y

5.3.2. Positive Impact of the Translanguaging Strategy

All three teachers have agreed that the influence on students' written work is evident. All 20 students were able to produce texts more or less around the expected length of 80 to 100 words, indicating that they are capable of pursuing writing tasks on their own. Keeping the findings in mind, Kiramba (2017) and Martínez-Álvarez (2017) also proved that frequent translanguaging in student writing samples in response to prompts that challenged students to write in English. Findings also suggest students are also motivated to complex the given task even when it is not perfect, evidently their English lesson became nosier.

“It is nice to see them working on their own. I don't expect them to be writing a perfect essay and truly they didn't but it is nice to see them trying.”

Teacher Y

“I am going to be totally honest here, I am saying my students can win Pulitzer Prize or something but they know what is expected of them when they come across questions like this given. They attempt to do their questions and these days they finish their essay before submitting their work. Might not be an A essay [laughs], I accept it as it is.”

Teacher Z

5.3.3. How Translanguaging is Used?

The findings of the interview also suggest how translanguaging is used in an English classroom. Teachers also have reported that, when students were encouraged to use their first language whenever they felt the need to do so, they were able to overcome the possibility of idea breakdowns. Teachers affirm data from student's interviews saying the first language is used in five different ways, as listed below:

- Asking their friends for vocabulary related assistance.
- Using L1 to recall words in L2 or looking them up in the bilingual dictionary.
- Using L1 instead of finding appropriate words in L2 to move the discussion forward during prewriting activities.
- Clarifying the point of discussion using L1.
- Use of L1 when learners do not have the necessary vocabulary in their L2.

“I notice they don't use Malay in the essay itself. Did you see? The kids use it before or during writing. Well you see, they use Malay to ask friends words. For an example, Weh macam mana nak eja shouting? [How do you spell shouting?] or Cendarehati dalam English ape ye? [What is souvenir in English?]. Mostly using Malay to clarify something.”

Teacher X

“If I do not believe that the student is capable of producing the required target language and that the language they are trying to enquire about is necessary, I will allow them to use both languages to solve the problem.”

Teacher Z

5.3.4. Concern for Further Interventions

The present study illustrated various functions of prewriting discussions held in translanguaging conditions while showing possible difficulties that may arise in an English only condition. Teacher states these moments of translanguaging initiated by the students themselves illustrated how legitimization of the flexible use of the entire

linguistic repertoire possessed by bilingual writers can foster their writing. However all three teachers have concerns about using this intervention during their lesson in the future.

Enactment within a meaningful context, which helps the processing of linguistic and writing demands, is required for effective language learning, including the appropriate application of translanguaging procedures. Teachers can use translanguaging tactics by creating places that allow the recursive writing process to interact with the languages a student knows. Unfortunately, teachers are concerned about the negative impact transfer translanguaging will have on students' writing. This is because the learning tasks of the two languages are relative but distinct, English language learners use their first language's expression and comprehension methods to replace their English language methods. According to [Corder \(1983\)](#) many students with a low level of second language rely heavily on their first language.

“Well, when I was in college my lectures told me we should only speak English in an English classroom.

It's like common practice. Using BM [Malay Language] here and there is okay but, how can we permit students to speak BM [Malay Language] casually in English Class?” Teacher Y

“I think this approach has its uses but it should not be the main way of learning a new language. I believe it should be used as a last resort or as a tool to help students discover new vocabulary independently. There is a value in discovering the meaning of a word by yourself and not being taught by someone else.”

Teacher Z

They are hopeful that the Ministry of Education supports the use of translanguaging can and should be extended to English language classrooms that include students who were traditionally viewed as 'monolinguals'. Teacher X and Teacher Y are hopeful that this teaching strategy will make them more active users of their entire linguistic repertoire and teachers can create a meaningful context in which emergent bilinguals can further develop their linguistic abilities.

6. DISCUSSION

The study's main findings show that the translanguaging writing approach has a statistically significant influence on their performance. Through the use of translanguaging writing styles, the data reveals a gain in knowledge and learning capacity. The results of the pre-test and post-test are used to show the main conclusions. Though the beginning position and the final result differ slightly, all the teachers in the post-intervention interview agreed that using the native language helped students develop knowledge and connect the dots, resulting in improved results for most students of poor ability. Similar to [Adamson and Coulson \(2015\)](#) findings, this study revealed that students' grasp of translanguaging resulted in stronger and more authentic writing. Furthermore, the data suggest that when students are forced to work in a single language, their levels of expressiveness, intellect and originality improve significantly. Various words in diverse languages have different emotional and linguistic implications for pupils since they come from a variety of backgrounds, cultures, and experiences ([Velasco & García, 2014](#)).

Apart from that, students in Malaysia and China classrooms have positive attitudes toward using L1 during English lessons. The students have expressed their feelings and made suggestions for how they should participate in a writing lesson. Given the importance of these contextual effects, the findings suggest that the impact of classroom culture allows students to develop positive views of themselves as multilingual and their skills in a second language. There are three primary reasons why they had a favourable impression of the experience. Firstly, it is easier to converse with friends in L1. Secondly, the students are capable of comprehending the meaning of the text/question/word and lastly, the students are motivated to write the essay in their English class. The translanguaging writing method is also included in the sample of students' writing before and after the intervention. Document analysis can be used to assess the impact of coordinated translanguaging in the writing process on students' final output. Structured translanguaging refers to students' capacity to choose between and use

English and their native language in writing sessions, allowing for unexpected language switching when they communicate with their peers. Students may also utilize a bilingual dictionary to translate phrases from their original tongue to English if the teacher allows it. The students also stated that writing in their own tongue helped them encode what they wanted to communicate. Students' use of descriptive words was quantified by calculating the ratio of overall word count and the rise in unique adjectives that occurred in student writing samples. Additionally, students will write an essay that follows a proper style, including paragraphing and exact sentence construction. Some recommendations for teaching and other practices are as described in the following: So, instead of focusing solely on writing lessons, students should be exposed to a variety of challenges in other language skills for future investigation. Students' views on utilizing L1 during English classes in Malaysia and China classrooms, the efficacy of the translanguaging strategy on students' writing skills and the response to L1 usage in English classrooms were all investigated in the present study. It would be beneficial for the research to collect information on additional concerns that students and teachers experience in order to have a better understanding of their challenges. Translanguaging techniques have improved students in writing classes, according to the conclusions of this study. This study proves that students enjoy translanguaging writing sessions because it inspires them to write better. Teachers play an important role in assisting students with limited English proficiency to become better writers. In addition, more studies may be done to discover if the translanguaging approach strengthens the study of improving writing. Teachers have incorporated the translanguaging approach by opening up the spaces that will allow the recursive process of writing to the interplay between the languages a student has. However, teachers are afraid of the negative impact transfer translanguaging will have on students' writing as the learning task of the two languages is relative but different.

7. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussion, it can be concluded that the translanguaging strategy had a substantial impact on the students' writing. Translanguaging is more closely associated with the natural use of two languages in a single statement. Translanguaging is generally associated with spontaneous utterances, in which students use both their languages to optimize learning and performance. Canagarajah (2011) contends that, in contrast to the comparatively spontaneous act of speaking, writing is significantly more sophisticated and requires strategic alternatives and choices. Students must have a critical awareness of rhetorically more effective options. Unlike speaking, writing is mostly fostered in schools. Beyond language proficiency, literate behavior necessitates knowledge of appropriate textual and rhetorical conventions. However, translanguaging in literacy is more difficult than it is in speech. Translanguaging is highly controlled in literate environments because formal writing is a high-stakes activity in schools, with major implications for evaluation.

Apart from that, depending on the outcome of the interview, students have put what they have learned to good use, consider past knowledge and experience, and apply what they have learned outside the context in which it was taught. The teacher has encouraged students to be open to new learning experiences, to be proud and modest enough to recognize when they do not know something and to accept new tactics that will help them improve their language-learning experience. This type of support will undoubtedly help the student to see that they are all learners of the new language and that there are no such things as "excellent writers" and "poor writers."

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APPENDIX A (Figure 1)

Pre-test (Day 1)

Question Number: 1

Mak Zaidah livest alone in a village. One night a burglar come to Mak Zaidah house to stole valuables. She sleeping in goose. **kejar** and **ketua** burglar sack full so fast run. **Kompang** run.

Written in one paragraph.

Usage of first language.

Limited number of words.

Correction (Day 5)

Correction:

Mak Zaidah live alone in a village. One night a burglar come to her house to stole valuable things.

When, her sleeping he kept some goose to protect the house. When goose saw the burglar the goose chase to pecked him around the house. It was so noise and her waked up.

The burglar dopper the sack full of valuables things, some money. Her so glad of her goose that stopped the burglar from burgling the house.

Written in few paragraphs.

There are no traces of the usage of first language in the written text.

Number of words have increased.

Sentences are cleverly formed.

Figure 1A. Progression of student's work.

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