

## Student Perceptions of Translanguaging Use in English Language Learning in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

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### ARTICLE INFO

Received September 28, 2025  
Revised November 5, 2025  
Accepted November 12, 2025  
Available November 24, 2025

**Keywords:**  
translanguaging, English language learning, student perceptions, Kuala Lumpur, multilingual education

### ABSTRACT

This study investigates university student perceptions of translanguaging practices in English language learning contexts within Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, a multilingual environment where Malay, English, Chinese dialects, and Tamil coexist in educational settings. As translanguaging—the fluid use of multiple linguistic resources across traditionally defined language boundaries—gains recognition as legitimate pedagogical practice, understanding learner perspectives becomes crucial for effective implementation. Employing a mixed-methods approach, this research surveyed 320 undergraduate students from three universities in Kuala Lumpur and conducted focus group discussions with 36 participants representing diverse linguistic backgrounds including Malay, Chinese, Indian, and international students. Data collection utilized validated perception questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and classroom observation protocols. Findings reveal predominantly positive student attitudes toward translanguaging, with 78% of participants viewing multilingual practices as beneficial for comprehension, concept clarification, and identity affirmation. However, perceptions varied significantly across linguistic backgrounds, proficiency levels, and educational contexts, with more proficient English users expressing concerns about potential dependency and reduced target language exposure. Students identified translanguaging as particularly valuable for explaining complex concepts, reducing anxiety, and building inclusive classroom

communities while noting that effectiveness depends on strategic, purposeful implementation rather than indiscriminate code-switching. These findings inform pedagogical practices and language policies supporting multilingual approaches in Malaysian higher education.

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## INTRODUCTION

Malaysia exemplifies linguistic superdiversity characteristic of postcolonial, multiethnic Southeast Asian nations, where multiple languages function simultaneously in educational, governmental, commercial, and social domains. The Malaysian linguistic landscape encompasses Bahasa Malaysia (Malay) as the national and official language, English as a widely used second language with official status, and numerous home languages including various Chinese dialects (Mandarin, Cantonese, Hokkien), Tamil, indigenous languages of Sabah and Sarawak, and others reflecting the nation's multicultural composition (Asmah, 2008). This linguistic complexity profoundly influences educational practices, particularly English language instruction, where students and teachers navigate multiple linguistic resources while pursuing English proficiency goals within institutional policies variably embracing or restricting multilingual practices.

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia's capital and primary educational center, represents the nation's linguistic diversity in concentrated form. The city's universities attract domestic students from across Malaysia's ethnic communities—predominantly Malay, Chinese, and Indian Malaysians—alongside growing international student populations from Indonesia, Middle East, Africa, and other Asian regions. English language courses in these institutions serve diverse purposes: supporting students whose home languages differ from instructional medium, preparing students for English-medium professional programs, and developing English proficiency for global mobility and employment. This diversity creates classrooms where students possess varied English proficiency levels, different home language backgrounds, and diverse attitudes toward multilingualism and language learning—contexts raising fundamental questions about appropriate linguistic practices in English instruction.

Traditional approaches to English language teaching, influenced by monolingual ideologies rooted in native-speakerism and communicative language teaching orthodoxy, typically prescribe exclusive or predominant target language use, treating learners' other linguistic resources as interference to be minimized or eliminated (Cook, 2001) and Muhsyanur (2018). These English-only policies reflect beliefs that maximizing target language exposure optimizes acquisition, that code-switching indicates deficiency or laziness, and that maintaining strict language separation prevents confusion and fosters disciplined language development. However, such approaches increasingly face challenges from emerging scholarship and pedagogical movements recognizing multilingualism as resource rather than

problem and questioning whether monolingual norms appropriately serve multilingual learners and contexts.

Translanguaging—a concept emerging from bilingual education scholarship but increasingly applied to language learning contexts—offers alternative frameworks for understanding and leveraging linguistic diversity in classrooms. García and Wei (2014) define translanguaging as the deployment of speakers' full linguistic repertoires without regard for socially and politically defined boundaries between named languages, emphasizing that multilingual speakers possess integrated rather than compartmentalized linguistic systems. In educational contexts, translanguaging pedagogy intentionally designs instruction to draw upon students' complete linguistic resources for meaning-making, (Kartini and Muhsyanur, 2025) learning, and communication rather than restricting linguistic practices to target language only. This might involve explaining difficult concepts using students' stronger languages, encouraging students to discuss ideas multilingually before producing English texts, or validating code-mixing as legitimate communicative practice rather than error (Muhsyanur, 2023b).

Research on translanguaging in language education demonstrates numerous potential benefits. Studies indicate that translanguaging can deepen conceptual understanding by allowing learners to access familiar linguistic resources when processing complex ideas, reduce affective barriers including anxiety and alienation by validating home languages and identities, support scaffolded progression from comprehension in stronger languages toward production in target languages, develop metalinguistic awareness through comparative reflection on multiple linguistic systems, and create more inclusive, identity-affirming learning environments recognizing students' full linguistic repertoires (García & Kleyn, 2016). These benefits prove particularly significant for students from minoritized linguistic backgrounds whose home languages are often devalued or excluded from formal educational contexts, potentially undermining identity, confidence, and engagement.

However, translanguaging in English language learning remains controversial, with concerns about potential negative effects including reduced target language input and practice opportunities, development of dependency on home language supports preventing autonomous English use, reinforcement of linguistic hierarchies where certain languages dominate interactions, practical challenges in linguistically diverse classrooms where students lack shared languages, and tensions with institutional policies, examinations, and stakeholder expectations emphasizing English proficiency (Cenoz & Gorter, 2017). Additionally, effective translanguaging implementation requires sophisticated pedagogical judgment regarding when, how, and for what purposes to engage multiple languages—expertise many teachers may lack without appropriate preparation. These concerns necessitate careful, context-sensitive consideration of translanguaging's appropriate roles in English learning contexts.

Malaysian educational contexts present unique considerations for translanguaging debates. Historically, language policies have fluctuated between

nationalist orientations privileging Malay and pragmatic orientations recognizing English's instrumental value, creating ongoing tensions reflected in shifting medium-of-instruction policies, language curriculum reforms, and debates about language roles in national identity versus global competitiveness (Gill, 2014). While official policies generally emphasize separate language instruction and English classroom target language use, classroom realities often involve considerable code-switching and multilingual practices—sometimes teacher-initiated, sometimes emerging spontaneously from multilingual student interactions. Understanding how students themselves perceive these multilingual practices provides crucial insights for pedagogically informed, contextually appropriate language policies and instructional approaches (Muhsyanur, 2024).

Despite growing translanguaging scholarship, research examining learner perspectives on multilingual pedagogies in English learning contexts remains limited, particularly in Southeast Asian settings. Most existing studies focus on teacher practices or perspectives, educational outcomes, or theoretical/policy analyses, with insufficient attention to student voices and experiences. Yet students' perceptions significantly influence their engagement with pedagogical practices, their learning strategies, and their developing beliefs about language learning and multilingualism. If students view translanguaging negatively—as indicating teacher inadequacy, reducing learning rigor, or threatening proficiency development—they may resist such practices regardless of teacher intentions or research evidence. Conversely, understanding what students value in multilingual pedagogies can inform more effective, student-responsive implementation (Mufida Nur Tsuraya, Muhammad Fadhil Afif, Muthia Mufida Anwar, Syamsuddin Semmang, Nurfaika Nurfaika, Muhsyanur Muhsyanur, n.d.).

The present study addresses these gaps by systematically investigating how university students in Kuala Lumpur perceive translanguaging practices in English language learning, exploring what benefits and concerns students identify, how perceptions vary across student characteristics and contexts, and what implications emerge for pedagogical practice and language policy. Research questions guiding this investigation include: How do university students in Kuala Lumpur perceive translanguaging use in English language learning? What specific benefits and challenges do students associate with multilingual pedagogical practices? How do perceptions vary across students' linguistic backgrounds, English proficiency levels, and program contexts? What factors do students identify as influencing translanguaging effectiveness? Answering these questions contributes empirical evidence regarding student perspectives on multilingual pedagogies in Malaysian contexts while informing broader discussions about appropriate linguistic practices in diverse English learning environments.

## **METHODE**

This concurrent mixed-methods study combined quantitative survey research and qualitative inquiry to comprehensively examine student perceptions of

translanguaging in English language learning. The research was conducted during the 2023-2024 academic year across three universities in Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, and a private university (anonymized for confidentiality), selected to represent diverse institutional types and student demographics. Participants comprised 320 undergraduate students enrolled in English language courses including General English, English for Academic Purposes, and English for Specific Purposes programs. Purposive sampling ensured representation across key variables: linguistic background (40% Malay, 28% Chinese Malaysian, 15% Indian Malaysian, 17% international students), self-reported English proficiency levels (22% beginner, 45% intermediate, 33% advanced), and program of study (humanities 38%, social sciences 31%, STEM 31%). Participation was voluntary with no grade implications, and demographic diversity reflected Kuala Lumpur's multilingual student populations (Mulyana et al., 2021).

Quantitative data collection employed a validated 42-item Perception of Translanguaging in Language Learning (PTLL) questionnaire adapted from García and Kleyn (2016) and piloted with 50 students to ensure cultural and contextual appropriateness. The instrument measured five perception dimensions using 5-point Likert scales: perceived cognitive benefits (e.g., comprehension support, concept clarification), affective benefits (e.g., anxiety reduction, confidence building), identity and inclusion (e.g., cultural validation, belonging), concerns and limitations (e.g., dependency risks, reduced English practice), and contextual appropriateness (e.g., suitable situations for translanguaging). Additional items assessed frequency of experiencing translanguaging practices and preferences for specific implementation approaches. The questionnaire demonstrated high reliability (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .89$ ) and was administered online via Qualtrics platform in English with Malay translation available. Qualitative data collection involved six focus group discussions (n=36 students, 6 participants each) stratified by linguistic background and proficiency level, lasting 60-90 minutes each, conducted in participants' preferred languages (English, Malay, or mixed) to maximize comfort and depth of expression. Semi-structured protocols explored experiences with translanguaging, perceived benefits and challenges, comparisons with monolingual instruction, and recommendations for effective implementation. Additionally, naturalistic classroom observations (30 hours across 12 classrooms) documented actual translanguaging practices and immediate student responses, providing contextual grounding for perception data. Quantitative data analysis employed SPSS version 28 for descriptive statistics, independent samples t-tests and ANOVA examining perception differences across demographic variables, and correlation analyses exploring relationships between variables. Qualitative data underwent thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's (2006) framework, with bilingual researchers analyzing Malay language data in original language and translating representative quotes for presentation. Methodological triangulation across quantitative surveys, qualitative discussions, and observational data enhanced validity. Ethical approval was obtained from all participating universities' research ethics committees, with

informed consent emphasizing voluntary participation, confidentiality, and right to withdrawal.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Overall Perceptions and Attitudes Toward Translanguaging**

Quantitative analysis revealed predominantly positive overall attitudes toward translanguaging in English language learning, with mean perception score of 3.82 on 5-point scale ( $SD=0.74$ ), indicating general agreement that multilingual practices benefit learning. Specifically, 78% of participants expressed positive views (ratings 4-5), 16% neutral positions (rating 3), and only 6% negative perceptions (ratings 1-2). This strong endorsement suggests that despite traditional English-only pedagogical orientations, students recognize value in leveraging their full linguistic repertoires for English learning. However, mean scores varied substantially across specific perception dimensions, revealing nuanced rather than uniformly positive attitudes requiring careful interpretation.

The cognitive benefits dimension received highest endorsement ( $M=4.12$ ,  $SD=0.68$ ), with students strongly agreeing that translanguaging supports comprehension of complex concepts (89% agreement), clarifies confusing grammatical explanations (86%), and helps them understand abstract vocabulary (84%). These perceptions align with substantial research evidence that strategic home language use scaffolds understanding of difficult content, particularly when students lack sufficient English proficiency to fully process explanations solely in target language (Cenoz & Gorter, 2017). One student explained in focus groups: "Sometimes the lecturer explains grammar rules in English, and I understand the words but not the concept. When she gives example in Malay, suddenly it clicks – I understand not just what she's saying but why the grammar works that way." Such testimonials illustrate how multilingual explanations can bridge comprehension gaps that persist despite adequate English vocabulary knowledge.

Affective benefits also garnered strong support ( $M=3.96$ ,  $SD=0.79$ ), with majority of students agreeing that translanguaging reduces learning anxiety (76%), increases confidence to participate (74%), and creates more comfortable classroom atmosphere (81%). These findings prove particularly significant given extensive research documenting anxiety's detrimental effects on language learning, including reduced participation, impaired information processing, and avoidance behaviors (Horwitz et al., 1986). Students described how exclusive English use sometimes creates psychological pressure inhibiting natural expression and learning. As one participant stated: "When the class is English-only, I spend so much mental energy worrying about mistakes that I can't focus on the actual content. When we can use Malay sometimes, I relax and actually learn better." This testimony highlights how rigid monolingual policies may inadvertently undermine learning by elevating affective barriers beyond productive challenge levels into debilitating anxiety.

The identity and inclusion dimension showed moderately positive perceptions ( $M=3.67$ ,  $SD=0.88$ ), with students somewhat agreeing (Muhsyanur, 2023a) that

translanguaging validates their linguistic backgrounds (68%), makes them feel respected as multilingual individuals (71%), and creates more inclusive learning environments (74%). However, responses proved more varied here, with substantial minority (approximately 25-30%) expressing neutral or somewhat negative views. Qualitative data suggested this variation reflected different identity orientations – some students viewing multilingualism as core identity aspect deserving classroom recognition, while others compartmentalized identities, considering home languages irrelevant to English learning contexts. One student articulated the former perspective: "English class shouldn't mean we have to pretend we're not Malaysian and don't speak Malay or Chinese. We're learning English as Malaysians, and our languages are part of who we are." Conversely, another stated: "I come to English class to learn English. My other languages are for outside – mixing them feels unprofessional."

Concerns and limitations regarding translanguaging received moderate endorsement ( $M=3.24$ ,  $SD=0.92$ ), indicating that while students generally viewed multilingual practices positively, they also acknowledged potential drawbacks. Specifically, 54% worried that translanguaging might reduce their English practice opportunities, 48% concerned it could create dependency preventing autonomous English use, and 61% noted practical challenges when classmates speak different home languages making shared translanguaging difficult. These concerns reflect legitimate considerations requiring pedagogical responses – translanguaging should supplement rather than replace English use, and implementation requires strategic design ensuring it supports rather than substitutes for target language development. One focus group participant thoughtfully balanced benefits and risks: "I think using Malay sometimes is helpful for understanding, but we shouldn't use it too much or we won't improve our English. The teacher needs to decide when it really helps versus when we should struggle through in English to practice."

### **Variation in Perceptions Across Student Characteristics**

Statistical analysis revealed significant perception differences across student demographic and background variables, suggesting that translanguaging's appropriateness and effectiveness varies depending on learner characteristics and contexts rather than constituting universally suitable or unsuitable practice. Most notably, English proficiency level significantly influenced perceptions ( $F(2,317)=18.34$ ,  $p<.001$ ,  $\eta^2=.10$ ), with interesting non-linear patterns emerging. Table 1 presents detailed comparisons across proficiency levels, revealing that intermediate proficiency students expressed most positive translanguaging perceptions, while both beginner and advanced students showed more reservations – albeit for different reasons illuminated through qualitative data (Jonathan Kera, Daniel Wong, 2024).

**Table 1.** Translanguaging Perception Scores by English Proficiency Level and Perception Dimension

Perception Dimension	Beginner (n=70)	Intermediate (n=144)	Advanced (n=106)	F-value	p-value	$\eta^2$
Cognitive benefits	M=3.89 (SD=0.78)	M=4.32 (SD=0.61)	M=3.96 (SD=0.71)	12.67	<.001	.07
Affective benefits	M=3.71 (SD=0.91)	M=4.18 (SD=0.68)	M=3.78 (SD=0.84)	10.89	<.001	.06
Identity & inclusion	M=3.52 (SD=0.95)	M=3.84 (SD=0.81)	M=3.51 (SD=0.91)	6.23	.002	.04
Concerns & limitations	M=3.67 (SD=0.88)	M=3.02 (SD=0.91)	M=3.41 (SD=0.89)	14.52	<.001	.08
Contextual appropriateness	M=3.45 (SD=0.86)	M=3.98 (SD=0.75)	M=3.72 (SD=0.82)	13.41	<.001	.08
Overall perception	M=3.61 (SD=0.83)	M=4.02 (SD=0.68)	M=3.72 (SD=0.76)	18.34	<.001	.10

Note. Scores on 5-point scale (1=Strongly Disagree, 5=Strongly Agree). Post-hoc Tukey HSD tests: Intermediate significantly higher than Beginner and Advanced ( $p<.01$ ) across all dimensions. Beginner-Advanced differences non-significant except for Concerns dimension ( $p<.05$ ).

Qualitative exploration revealed that beginner students' somewhat lower translanguaging endorsement reflected concerns about comprehension when teachers use languages students don't share rather than opposition to home language use per se. Several beginner international students explained that when instructors translanguaged into Malay to help Malaysian students, non-Malay speakers feel excluded and confused. One Indonesian student stated: "Sometimes teacher explains in Malay for other students, but I don't understand Malay well, so now I'm more confused than if she stayed in English." This highlights critical implementation consideration – in linguistically diverse classrooms, translanguaging into particular languages may inadvertently create new exclusions while addressing others. Beginner students generally supported translanguaging when it involved their own languages but felt frustrated when excluded from others' linguistic resources.

Advanced students' more reserved attitudes stemmed from different concerns, primarily that excessive translanguaging might reduce challenging English immersion they believed necessary for further development. Advanced learners tended to view their proficiency as requiring primarily English input and practice, with home language use potentially representing "crutch" preventing continued growth. As one advanced student explained: "At basic levels, using Malay helps

understanding. But now I need to think in English, not translate from Malay. Too much Malay might make me lazy." This perspective reflects beliefs about advanced acquisition requiring target language thinking rather than cross-linguistic processing—beliefs not necessarily supported by multilingual acquisition research but prevalent among learners and influencing their receptivity to translanguaging practices (Cook, 2016). Some advanced students also expressed concerns about translanguaging conflicting with future professional or academic contexts requiring English-only performance.

Linguistic background significantly influenced perceptions ( $F(3,316)=8.92$ ,  $p<.001$ ,  $\eta^2=.08$ ), with Chinese Malaysian students expressing most positive attitudes ( $M=4.08$ ), followed by Indian Malaysian students ( $M=3.89$ ), Malay students ( $M=3.76$ ), and international students showing most reserved views ( $M=3.51$ ). Focus group discussions suggested these differences reflected both linguistic ecologies and identity factors. Chinese Malaysian students, many educated in Chinese-medium schools before university, described particularly valuing translanguaging as validating their multilingual identities and leveraging their Chinese language strengths for English learning. Several mentioned feeling marginalized in Malay-dominant translanguaging contexts, desiring more inclusive multilingual spaces. Indian Malaysian students similarly appreciated multilingual validation while noting they sometimes felt excluded when translanguaging involved only Malay-English rather than including Tamil or other Indian languages.

International students' lower translanguaging endorsement primarily reflected practical exclusion when classroom translanguaging involved Malaysian languages they don't speak. However, international students from linguistically proximate contexts (e.g., Indonesian students understanding Malay) showed more positive perceptions than those from linguistically distant backgrounds (e.g., Middle Eastern or African students). This pattern underscores that translanguaging's effectiveness depends partly on linguistic overlap between classroom participants—practices highly beneficial in linguistically homogeneous or similar contexts may prove problematic in highly diverse settings without careful multilingual inclusive design.

### **Perceived Appropriate Contexts and Implementation Strategies**

Students demonstrated sophisticated understanding of translanguaging as contextually variable rather than uniformly appropriate or inappropriate practice, identifying specific situations where multilingual approaches proved particularly valuable versus contexts better served by target language focus. This nuanced perspective challenges simplistic either/or debates about translanguaging versus English-only policies, instead suggesting that pedagogical wisdom involves determining when and how to leverage multiple linguistic resources strategically.

Students identified explaining complex grammatical concepts as the most appropriate translanguaging context (92% agreement), with many describing how metalinguistic terminology and abstract grammatical explanations become clearer when presented multilingually. One student explained: "English grammar terms like

'past perfect continuous' don't mean anything to me in English. When lecturer says 'masa lampau sempurna berterusan' in Malay, I can understand the concept – past, perfect, continuing – because the Malay words actually mean something to me." This testimony illustrates how metalinguistic awareness can be productively developed through cross-linguistic comparison and translation, making implicit grammatical knowledge explicit through familiar linguistic labels. Additionally, students noted that grammatical explanations involving cross-linguistic differences or similarities particularly benefit from translanguaging, as direct comparison helps learners notice features requiring attention.

Clarifying difficult vocabulary also garnered strong endorsement (88% agreement), particularly for abstract, technical, or culturally specific terms lacking direct translation or familiar referents. Students appreciated when teachers provided English definitions supplemented by equivalent terms in home languages, enabling them to connect new English vocabulary to established conceptual networks. However, students distinguished between vocabulary clarification through home language equivalents versus excessive use of home language labels instead of English—the former supporting learning, the latter potentially reducing English lexical development. As one participant noted: "It helps when teacher gives us the Malay word along with English explanation so we understand the concept. But if we only use Malay words and never practice English ones, we won't learn English vocabulary."

Figure 1 presents student ratings of various translanguaging implementation strategies, revealing clear preferences for certain approaches over others. Bilingual glossaries and vocabulary lists received highest endorsement (M=4.38), suggesting students value written multilingual resources they can reference independently. Translanguaging for complex concept explanation garnered strong support (M=4.21), while student-to-student peer explanation in shared languages proved popular (M=4.08), leveraging multilingual peer resources without requiring teacher multilingual proficiency across all classroom languages. Interestingly, teacher code-switching during lectures received more moderate support (M=3.54), with qualitative data suggesting students appreciated occasional strategic code-switches but disliked frequent, seemingly random language mixing they found distracting or unprofessional.

Figure 1: Student Ratings of Translanguaging Implementation Strategies

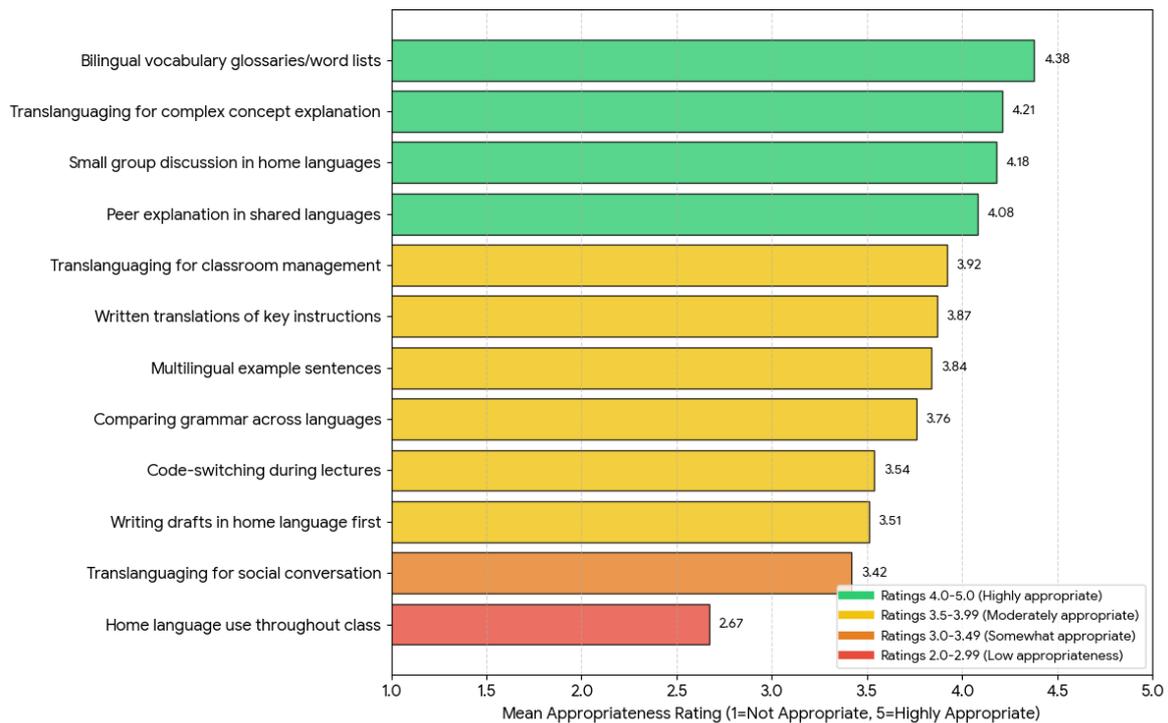


Figure 1. Student Ratings of Translanguaging Implementation Strategies

**Strategies ordered from highest to lowest mean rating.**

The data reveal clear student preference for strategic, purposeful translanguaging for specific pedagogical functions (concept explanation, vocabulary clarification, metalinguistic analysis) over pervasive, undifferentiated multilingual use throughout instruction. This finding has important pedagogical implications – effective translanguaging requires intentional design identifying specific moments where multilingual practices provide unique benefits rather than simply allowing unrestricted language mixing. Students appeared to conceptualize effective translanguaging as selective rather than dominant practice, complementing rather than replacing English-focused instruction.

Certain contexts received notably low translanguaging endorsement, particularly social conversation (M=3.42) and pervasive home language use throughout class (M=2.67). Students explained these preferences through concerns that social translanguaging might reduce English speaking practice opportunities they valued, and that excessive home language use defeated English learning purposes. As one participant stated: "We come to English class to practice English. If we just speak Malay the whole time, how will we improve? Malay is for outside class—we need English practice here." This perspective reflects instrumental orientations toward English learning prevalent among Malaysian students who view English primarily as practical skill requiring deliberate practice rather than identity expression or cultural practice.

Interestingly, students identified affective and social dimensions as important translanguaging considerations beyond purely cognitive learning benefits. Several participants noted that translanguaging creates opportunities for students from minoritized linguistic backgrounds to contribute expertise and receive recognition, potentially shifting typical classroom hierarchies. One Chinese Malaysian student described: "Usually in class, Malay students seem more confident because everything is in Malay or English, and they're comfortable. But when we discuss Chinese language comparisons with English, suddenly I'm the expert and can help others—it feels good to contribute that way." This testimony illustrates how translanguaging can redistribute epistemic authority, validating diverse linguistic knowledge and creating more equitable participation structures.

However, students also cautioned that translanguaging implementation requires cultural and pedagogical sensitivity to avoid reproducing linguistic hierarchies or creating new forms of exclusion. In linguistically diverse Malaysian classrooms, translanguaging predominantly into Malay (the language most students share) may inadvertently marginalize students from minority linguistic backgrounds or international students. Several participants suggested that truly inclusive translanguaging requires teachers to strategically incorporate multiple languages, use visual supports when translanguaging into languages some students don't understand, and create opportunities for students to translanguague into their own languages even when not universally shared. These sophisticated suggestions demonstrate students' capacity to think critically about multilingual pedagogy's equity implications when given opportunities to reflect on their experiences.

## CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that university students in Kuala Lumpur generally perceive translanguaging positively when implemented strategically for specific pedagogical purposes including complex concept explanation, vocabulary clarification, anxiety reduction, and inclusive community building, while expressing concerns about excessive or indiscriminate multilingual use potentially reducing English practice or creating linguistic exclusions in diverse classrooms. Student perceptions vary significantly based on English proficiency levels, linguistic backgrounds, and contextual factors, indicating that translanguaging appropriateness depends on learner characteristics and implementation approaches rather than constituting universally beneficial or detrimental practice. English language educators should adopt strategic, purposeful translanguaging focusing on moments where multilingual resources provide unique cognitive or affective benefits, maintain substantial English use ensuring adequate target language input and practice, provide multilingual resources including glossaries and comparative grammatical explanations, create inclusive translanguaging practices incorporating diverse classroom languages rather than privileging particular languages, and explicitly discuss translanguaging rationales with students to develop shared understanding and acceptance.

Teacher education programs must prepare educators to implement translanguaging effectively through professional development addressing multilingual pedagogical strategies, metalinguistic awareness enabling cross-linguistic comparisons, and skills for managing linguistically diverse classrooms inclusively. Educational policymakers should revise monolingual English-only policies to permit strategic, pedagogically justified translanguaging while maintaining English learning as central goal, support development of multilingual learning resources, and encourage research-informed flexible approaches recognizing translanguaging's contextual variability. Future research should investigate translanguaging's longitudinal effects on English proficiency development, examine effective translanguaging practices across diverse proficiency levels and linguistic contexts, explore teacher perspectives and implementation challenges, and develop evidence-based guidelines for strategic translanguaging implementation balancing multilingual affordances with target language development goals in Malaysian and similar multilingual contexts.

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