



Attitudes Toward Translanguaging of English Teachers in a Private College in Lucena

Fritz Humphrey C. Diaz

College of Teacher Education, Maryhill College, Inc., Lucena City, Philippines

fdiaz@maryhillcollege.edu.ph

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Abstract

In today's multilingual classrooms, English teachers face increasing challenges in meeting the diverse linguistic needs of their students. This study examined the attitudes of English teachers toward translanguaging as a pedagogical approach in a private college in Lucena, Philippines. Drawing on Fang and Liu's (2020) framework, the study focused on teachers' attitudes toward content-oriented, student-oriented, and classroom-oriented purposes. A qualitative case study design was employed to collect data from three English teachers through a focused group discussion, which was then categorized thematically. Findings revealed that English teachers generally held positive attitudes toward translanguaging as a pedagogical approach. Additionally, English teachers acknowledged its importance in promoting inclusive and comprehensible instruction, as well as student-centered learning, which supports classroom dynamics. Moreover, English teachers emphasized its value in accommodating linguistic diversity and increasing learner engagement. However, teachers also identified specific challenges, such as assessment constraints and cognitive demands. Overall, these findings highlight the potential of translanguaging in English language classrooms, particularly in bilingual and multilingual contexts in the Philippines.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Philippines is a linguistically diverse nation, home to more than 180 languages. However, the country's monolingual culture embedded in its language education policies (LEPs) hinders bilingual and multilingual learning of Filipino learners, despite its rich and diverse linguistic landscape (Tupas & Martin, 2016). The widespread use of English around the world has prompted teachers to adopt innovative pedagogical approaches that go beyond traditional approaches to language teaching, especially in teaching English.

One approach in language teaching developing progress that will utilize both L1 and L2 is Translanguaging. Translanguaging is characterized by the fluid use of multiple languages to enhance communication and learning experiences (García & Wei, 2014). As per Conteh (2018), Translanguaging generally refers to the use of two or more languages consciously or unconsciously at the same time for communicative purposes in a multilingual context. Pedagogically speaking, Translanguaging is an approach and cognitive practice where learners

make use of all their linguistic resources in an integrated and strategic way to support meaning-making and learning (Cenoz & Gorter, 2022). Meanwhile, Duarte (2018) highlights translanguaging as a tool for enhancing knowledge construction in classrooms, enabling content formulation, hypothesis testing, correction, negotiation, quoting, disagreement, appraisal, counterarguments, and appropriate wording discussion. Thus, translanguaging enhances classroom participation and meaningful content learning (Makalela, 2018). Moreover, Nambisan (2014) emphasizes the use of translanguaging by students for group discussions, brainstorming, and assisting. Teachers use translanguaging to praise, build bonds, provide feedback, and explain concepts.

As Monje et al. (2019) asserted, there is a need for language curriculum policies in the Philippines to review and address linguistic biases held by teachers and students who believe that English is superior to the local languages. This monolingual orientation often conflicts with the actual multilingual practices of students, thus constraining meaningful language learning opportunities. Recent International assessments highlighted these predicaments, wherein the 2022 results of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), the Philippines ranked 77th out of 81 countries globally, lagging in mathematics, science, and reading (Mangaluz, 2024). According to the findings of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (2023) reported by the Department of Education (DepEd), one of the surprising key results is that students who speak English at home scored lower than those who can speak languages other than English. This finding challenges the long-standing assumption that an English-only policy as a medium of instruction leads to better learning outcomes.

Supporting this shift in perspective, the Common Underlying Proficiency Model of Cummins J. (1981) posits that children learn theoretical knowledge and skills in their first language, and they also learn language-specific information about those skills that can be utilized when learning a target language. This means that encouraging the development of one's native language is crucial when learning a second language, especially in developing one's comprehension (Cummins, 2000). Thus, ignoring learners' home languages in the classroom may limit comprehension and skill development. In this context, Translanguaging presents a significant pedagogical alternative. Whereas Bernardo (2008) supports this view, advocating for language curriculum reforms that acknowledge linguistic diversity, dismantle biases, and recognize local languages as valuable assets in learning. Despite this, the integration of translanguaging remains limited, especially in English language classrooms.

With the Philippines embracing the opportunities and challenges of a multilingual landscape, the study aims to investigate the language attitudes of English teachers in a private college in Lucena. Thus, it specifically explores their language attitudes on translanguaging based on the framework of Fang & Liu (2020) across three dimensions: content-oriented purposes, student-oriented purposes, and classroom-oriented purposes. These attitudes are paramount in understanding the pedagogical practices of language teachers as well as the language policy reforms in a multilingual context.

2. METHODOLOGY

This study employed a case study research design, utilizing a Focused Group Discussion (FGD). Questions used on FGD were adopted from the work of Fang and Liu (2020). However, there are some modifications regarding the questions used in FGD. The FGD aimed to investigate English teachers' attitudes of a private college in Lucena towards the use of translanguaging as a pedagogical approach. Since the scope of this study focuses on the teacher's attitudes toward translanguaging, the participants of this study were purposely selected. They are known as the relevant case for why this study is conducted.

Three (3) English teachers, both part-time and full-time, from the higher education department of Maryhill College, were chosen to answer and were included in the said FGD. Also, they were asked some questions in an interview through a focused group discussion (FGD), focusing on their attitude toward translanguaging as a pedagogical approach. Since translanguaging is not yet fully integrated in classroom practice, especially in most schools, colleges, and universities in Lucena even in the entire Philippines. Maryhill College, a private higher education institution located in Lucena City, was chosen as the setting and as a relevant subject for the case examination and exploration.

In the data gathering procedure, FGD is utilized to fully explore and answer the objectives of this study. Meanwhile, the questions were crafted by the researcher and used Fang & Liu's (2020) attitudinal survey as a guide in making self-devised questions for the FGD. In addition, the questions used in the FGD were designed to answer the key questions in this case exploration. Furthermore, the results of this data gathering process were analyzed through thematic coding.

In conducting this case study, Ethical considerations were strictly observed. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study, assured of confidentiality, and reminded that participation was voluntary. The researcher ensured respect for participants' perspectives, recognizing their diversity of experiences and responses.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings as well as the discussion and interpretation of the study, primarily focusing on the attitude toward translanguaging of English teachers in a private college in Lucena. In addition, this section is divided into three (3) parts based on the specific objectives of the study, which are the attitude of English teachers in terms of content-oriented purposes, student-oriented purposes, and classroom-oriented purposes.

Table 1

Attitude on translanguaging of English teachers in a private college in Lucena for Content-Oriented Purposes

Content-Oriented Purposes	Participant’s Response
	<p>FGD_T1: <i>“I would let them use Tagalog, knowing the fact that they can express things in a more concise manner using it.”</i></p>
	<p>FGD_T2: <i>“...They were able to share thoughts without the fear of being judged regarding the possible misuse of the English language.”</i></p>
<p>Inclusive teaching and learning process</p>	<p>FGD_T1: <i>“It promotes inclusivity as well since you are actually including all the languages in a multilingual classroom, and that also erases the discrimination that also erases the prestige of one language over the other languages. So, it really balances everything, all the languages in a classroom.”</i></p>
	<p>FGD_T1: <i>“It is tantamount to comprehending, understanding the concept and how to use those concepts in real life. So, I guess, based on my observation, they can easily grasp the topic.”</i></p>
	<p>FGD_T2: <i>At first, I thought of using fluent English as a medium of instruction, but at the same time, I also thought that some or a few students might be unable to understand me or comprehend the flow of my classes, so I somehow continued to do it.</i></p>
	<p>FGD_T3: <i>“Teachers should use their native language to assist language learning in the English language primarily because a</i></p>

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Facilitates comprehension *child's mind is not always capable of grasping what he or she is learning."*

FGD_T1: *"There are cases that students cannot really comprehend some English terms, so I have to reiterate it by somehow using my native language, which is Filipino or Tagalog specifically, but that is only to let them really comprehend."*

FGD_T1: *"I'm acknowledging all the available languages or any linguistic repertoire in a classroom since we are in a multilingual society right now."*

FGD_3: *"I am using my native-language as one of the media of Acknowledgement instruction since one of the purposes in teaching is for everyone in of a Multilingual Society the classroom to communicate, to make sense of and interact with the world around them, particularly during instruction."*

English teachers in a private college in Lucena recognized and appreciated translanguaging as a pedagogy for inclusive teaching and learning. They gave greater importance to comprehension over fluency to ensure that students understood the subject matter.

Similarly, the findings of Alemania et al. (2022) revealed that pre-service teachers also held positive attitudes toward the use of translanguaging for content-oriented purposes. Likewise, Fang and Liu (2020) emphasize that teachers have different ways of integrating translanguaging in content-related activities, although it is generally viewed as a positive practice in language education.

Therefore, teachers understood that facilitating comprehension, building rapport in the classroom, and improving learning outcomes for students with limited English proficiency could all be achieved through the use of translanguaging in content learning. Overall, the attitudes of English teachers in a private college in Lucena toward translanguaging were viewed as positive. With these findings, recognizing the existence of a multilingual society is a crucial step toward the broader goal of appreciating and integrating diverse linguistic backgrounds in the classroom.

Table 2

Attitude on translanguaging of English teachers for Student-Oriented purposes

Student-Oriented Purposes	Participant's Response
Student-centered learning	<p>FGD_T1: <i>"It allows that in a way that it helps them to be more comfortable because we learn best with the use of the language, we're comfortable with."</i></p> <p>FGD_T2: <i>"I always allow them in recitations, but about their exam last Finals, I only let them use Tagalog in their impromptu speeches."</i></p> <p>FGD_T3: <i>"I want my students to speak; language allows them to express emotion, persuade others to act in a certain way."</i></p>
Benefits and Challenges	<p>FGD_T1: <i>"So, I just allow translanguaging during discussion when there is interaction between students and students or teachers."</i></p> <p>FGD_T1: <i>"...swiftly transitioning from one language to another language; it requires a higher order thinking capacity to do that."</i></p> <p>FGD_T2: <i>"I think that strategy became effective on both our parts. I just considered it as a warm-up for the students."</i></p> <p>FGD_T3: <i>"One should adjust in any discipline or area by integrating one's native language."</i></p> <p>FGD_T1: <i>"It tests one's capabilities of using two language repertoires."</i></p>

The results of the FGD demonstrated that English teachers in a private college in Lucena revealed a positive attitude toward translanguaging for student-oriented purposes. Based on the analysis, two (2) themes appeared, which are student-centered learning and benefits and challenges. Based on the results, English teachers emphasized some of the benefits of translanguaging in fostering an inclusive environment that enhances students' learning.

The study conducted by De Los Reyes (2018) revealed some benefits of translanguaging in language education, such as students being able to participate in class discussions and effectively demonstrate their knowledge and understanding, and teachers being able to present their lessons, lead classroom discussions, improve students' understanding, and manage student behavior more effectively and efficiently through translanguaging. Although translanguaging is believed to have a lot of advantages. Despite these advantages, the integration of translanguaging as an approach can be a challenging endeavor, particularly in

situations where students speak multiple languages in the classroom and the teacher is not fluent in those languages (Pacheco & Miller, 2015).

Moreover, translanguaging has been observed to have a lot of benefits in English language teaching, which include serving as a warm-up technique, testing students' higher-order thinking skills, and promoting cross-cultural understanding. Teachers perceived that translanguaging was a useful tool for assessing their students' proficiency in speaking and writing in two languages. Generally, the results show that translanguaging is viewed by English teachers as a useful and adaptable approach that is aligned with student-centered principles. The findings suggest that translanguaging is an effective strategy in the context of student-oriented learning environments. However, teachers also acknowledge the difficulties associated with cognitive demands and language repertoire. Overall, the attitudes centered on student-centered learning while also recognizing the benefits and difficulties of translanguaging in the context of teaching English.

Table 3

Attitude on translanguaging of English teachers for Classroom-Oriented Purposes

Classroom-Oriented Purposes	Participant's Response
Classroom dynamism	FGD_T1: “... <i>We need to validate those languages of them so they will not really feel inferior.</i> ”
	FGD_T3: “ <i>I need to smile and make sure they will be safe, secure, and welcome and encouraged during my English class.</i> ”
Classroom Strategy and Skill development	FGD_T1: “ <i>Now, we are emphasizing multilingualism, emphasizing inclusivity. We are now focusing on understanding, critical thinking, reading literacy— those 21st century skills.</i> ”
	FGD_T2: “ <i>I allow them sharing of ideas in ways they want to do it. If there are students with poor performance in recitation.</i> ”

FGD_T1: *“They can use those two languages freely. But in terms of assessment, of course, I cannot really allow them to write in Filipino or in Tagalog.”*

FGD_T1: *“They can use those two languages freely. But in terms of assessment, of course, I cannot really allow them to write in Filipino or in Tagalog.”*

Language policies in the classroom

Based on the findings, three (3) themes emerged: classroom dynamism, classroom strategy and skill development, and language policies in the classroom. The attitudes toward translanguaging of English teachers in a private school in Lucena, in terms of student-oriented purposes, were primarily focused on acknowledging and respecting the linguistic diversity of their students. Additionally, translanguaging was considered a useful method for developing skills, as it supports 21st-century competencies such as comprehension, critical thinking, and reading literacy. It also enabled students to communicate in ways that worked for them, particularly for those who struggled with class recitation.

Language policies in the classroom were likewise highlighted as a means of encouraging students to communicate and share ideas freely in their native languages. In today’s language education, translanguaging is recognized as a pedagogy when García et al. (2017) coined the term “pedagogical translanguaging,” identifying three (3) strands or elements: stance (belief), design (instruction and assessment), and shifts (teacher’s flexibility). Pedagogically, Cenoz and Gorter (2020) underscored that translanguaging can be applied in various ways in both language and content classes. They further emphasized that this approach is anchored in learner-centered principles, ensuring the development of all languages used by learners and safeguarding them against linguistic stratification.

Overall, the attitudes toward translanguaging for classroom-oriented purposes demonstrated a dynamic and strategic approach. This highlights teachers’ dedication to fostering a welcoming and inclusive learning environment while acknowledging bilingualism and multilingualism in the classroom.

4. CONCLUSION

The study examined the attitudes of English teachers at a private college in Lucena toward translanguaging. It focused on the framework of Fang & Liu (2020), which comprises content-oriented, student-oriented, and classroom-oriented purposes. Moreover, the study

utilized a case study design to address the objectives and employed a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and thematic coding for data analysis.

Based on the findings, English teachers generally held positive attitudes toward translanguaging. In content-oriented purposes, they viewed translanguaging as an inclusive teaching pedagogy that facilitated bilingual and multilingual learning in the classroom. They found it helpful in supporting comprehension of subject content. In student-oriented purposes, they regarded translanguaging as a student-centered approach, allowing students to express themselves in their preferred language. Despite challenges with swift language transitions, teachers still considered it aligned with student-centered learning principles. In classroom-oriented purposes, teachers emphasized validating students' languages and creating inclusive environments. They also implemented language policies that allowed students to communicate freely in their native languages, though with restrictions in assessments.

The study recommends integrating translanguaging as a pedagogy in language education, particularly in English teaching, to address bilingualism and multilingualism in the classroom. Further research is also recommended to deepen the understanding of translanguaging implementation in language teaching. Translanguaging should be integrated into teacher education programs, especially for inclusive and effective language education. Pre-service and in-service training should include theoretical foundations, classroom strategies, and practical tools, while workshops and reflective sessions can support translanguaging-informed instruction.

Although the study's small sample size and single-institution focus may limit its generalizability, it nevertheless provides valuable insights for future research. It suggests further exploration of translanguaging practices in diverse educational contexts to understand their pedagogical impact in the Philippine multilingual landscape.

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Appendix - FGD Questions

<p style="text-align: center;">FGD QUESTIONS FOR THE ATTITUDE OF ENGLISH TEACHERS ON TRANSLANGUAGING IN A PRIVATE COLLEGE IN LUCENA</p>
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QUESTION	ANSWER
<p>Note: Not all follow-up questions need to be asked; they will be asked only to supply and spark further discussions on a topic being discussed. Questions with the mark (*) are prerequisites to be asked.</p>	
<i>QUESTIONS FOR CONTENT-ORIENTED PURPOSES</i>	
<p>1. Are you familiar with translanguaging? *</p> <p><i>Follow-up questions</i></p> <p>If yes, how do you regard translanguaging as an approach?</p> <p>If not, what approach do you use in teaching the English subject?</p>	
<p>2. What are your thoughts on the idea that using native languages in an English class is a natural practice for bilingual and multilingual students? *</p> <p><i>Follow-up question</i></p> <p>Do you use your native-language as one of the media of instruction in teaching English classes? In what discipline or area do you integrate your native language in teaching?</p>	
<p>3. In what ways do you integrate subject-specific content and language learning objectives in your English classes? *</p> <p><i>Follow-up question</i></p> <p>In your view, should English teachers use their native language to assist language learning in English? Why or why not?</p> <p>4. Can you share any personal experiences where using native languages in an English class positively or negatively impacted language learning? *</p>	
<i>QUESTIONS FOR STUDENT-ORIENTED PURPOSES</i>	
<p>1. Do you allow your students to speak their native language during English class? *</p> <p><i>Follow-up question</i></p> <p>To what extent? In class activity, student engagement?</p>	
<p>2. When it comes to assisting peers during classroom activities, do you believe it is beneficial for students to use their native languages? Why or why not?*</p>	
<p>3. How do you perceive the idea that your students should use only English when collaborating in the classroom?*</p>	

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4. What are your experiences with using both your first language and English (translanguaging) during lessons? * <i>Follow-up question</i> Does it weaken your English skills?	
<i>QUESTIONS CLASSROOM-ORIENTED PURPOSES</i>	
1. How do you create an inclusive and supportive language learning environment in your classroom? *	
2. Do you have policies in terms of using a language in a classroom? * <i>Follow-up question</i> Can you share what those policies are?	
3. Does the use of the native language in a classroom affect your teaching? How? * <i>Follow-up question</i> What are those challenges? Can you share those challenges in teaching English using native your native language? *	
4. What recommendations/ suggestions do you have regarding the use of the native language in language teaching? * <i>Follow-up question</i> Do you recommend translanguaging as an approach in language teaching, especially in teaching English?	

AUTHOR'S BIO

Fritz Humphrey C. Diaz is a faculty member of the College of Teacher Education at Maryhill College, Inc., where he also served as editor-in-chief of The Collis. He earned his Bachelor of Secondary Education degree, major in English (cum laude), from Maryhill College and is currently pursuing a Master of Arts in Teaching English at Southern Luzon State University–Lucban. His research interests include language teaching approaches and strategies, language assessment, and phenomenological studies. .