TRANSLANGUAGING STRATEGIES: GUIDE OF MULTILINGUAL STUDENTS IN DEVELOPING L2 ESSAY

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to determine the translanguaging strategies in producing written text in L2. It utilized a descriptive-qualitative-exploratory research design. It involved ten participants from grade 10 who consistently belonged and considered as academic achievers from grade 9 up to third quarter of school year 2024 - 2025. The main instrument of the study were the think-aloud protocol and the essays. They did think-aloud protocol while making an essay in L2 to determine the translanguaging strategies. A focus group discussion was done to validate the challenges encountered by the students. The study's results indicated that students utilized different translanguaging strategies in producing written text in L2 such as multilingual brainstorming, word-to-word translation, self-correct strategy, collaborative translation, what's next strategy, meta-cognitive and metalanguage strategies and "what's next" approach. The findings of this research identified the challenges encountered by the students in producing written text, these include limited grammatical knowledge, lack of vocabulary enrichment, poor in paragraph development and organization of ideas. The findings recommend that the students may engage themselves in reading and writing activities that will help them acquire fluency in a second language. Also, the teachers may implement more writing activities inside the classroom to enhance and develop the writing and thinking skills of the students. Furthermore, this study found out that translanguaging strategies guide multilingual students in developing L2 essays.

Keywords: *Multilingual students, second language, think-aloud protocol, translanguaging strategies, translation*

1. INTRODUCTION

Translanguaging is a dynamic and evolving concept in multilingual education and linguistic theory that challenges traditional boundaries between languages. Translanguaging refers to the act of bilinguals using different linguistic features to maximize communication (Garcia, 2009)[1]. It recognizes that bilinguals don't simply switch between languages but draw upon their entire linguistic repertoire to communicate effectively. Rodriguez (2023)[2] states that translanguaging is a skill naturally used by bilingual people and can promote understanding of content. It helps the development of the weaker language, it can create a link from home-to-home learning and it can integrate fluent speakers with early learners. Students should be empowered to engage in translanguaging to express themselves fully during the drafting process (Northwest Evaluation Association, cited by McLaughlin, 2022)[3].

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The succeeding related literature and studies believed to support the preceding of this study.

2.1 Multilingualism in Educational Setting

Philippines has recorded more or less 170 languages. Department of Education (DepEd) recognizes 19 languages as Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) program which uses the student's first language as the primary language of instruction in reading, writing and academic material. The implementation of MTB-MLE aims to bridge learning and develop the child's cognitive skills across multiple languages. This implementation is anchored to the theory that there should be a mastery first of L1 before acquiring the L2 (Piaget, 1995)[4].

English is one of the official universal language in the Philippines. In fact, according to Mariñas (2021) cited by Santos et al., (2022)[5], two-thirds of the population are fluent in English. But as years gone by, a gradual deterioration in English language proficiency can be observed among Filipinos based on the EF English Proficiency Index, Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC), and the average score of Filipino IELTS takers (Santos, Fernandez & Ilustre, 2022)[5]. Kadwa and Alshenqeeti (2020)[6] and Tumudi and Hajan (2020)[7] stated that English learners from the Philippines also facing difficulties in learning English. In February 2018, GMA News and PhilStar Global published an article saying that the English proficiency level of College graduates from the Philippines is lower than the target English proficiency of High school students in Thailand (Santos et.al., 2022)[5]. Moreover, the result of Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) in 2022 for Filipino students shows slight improvements in reading compared in 2018. However, the Philippine ranked 77th out of 81 countries around the world. In an interview to DepEd Regional Director Maria Ines Asuncion, she reported the significant improvements in students performance in the Caraga Region during the Kapihan sa Bagong Pilipinas forum in Butuan City on October 15, 2024. Her report highlighted the gains from the 2022 PISA and NAT for Grade 10. These results showed that multilingual learners need an immediate remediation or even a review in the curriculum to enhance language learning. Moreover, Edcom 2 page and GMA News (April 30, 2025)[8] posted that approximately 18 million junior high school graduates who are considered "functional illiterate" or those who have problems in comprehension and understanding. These results are alarming to the Second Congressional Commission on Education (EDCOM) which is responsible for assessing and recommending reforms to the country's education system.

2.2 Writing in ESL Context

Writing has been recognized as a crucial ability in acquiring English and essential medium to communicate his/her emotions, thoughts and arguments (Ghafar & Mohamedamin, 2022)[9]. Writing is not only a productive skill but also a cognitive and metalinguistic tool in language acquisition, enhancing learners' ability to internalize grammatical structures, expand vocabulary and engage deeper language processing (Khudaverdiyeva, 2025)[10]. Some learners find it hard to communicate directly using the second language so they express their thoughts through writing. People engaged themselves in writing to deliver ideas that sometimes cannot be exposed by a utterance. It is noted that multilinguals think in L1 before writing in L2. However, Mirzayev (2024)[11] revealed that L1 interference significantly affects ESL learners' writing skills in grammar, vocabulary, and discourse organization. Grammatical errors arise when learners apply rules from their native language to English (Malip & Aziz, 2022)[12].

2.3 Translanguaging as an Effective Tool in Aiding L2 Learners

Translanguaging is the use of different languages together which can be a powerful tool for learning. Translanguaging involves the intentional use of a learner's first language (L1) alongside the target language (L2) to enhance comprehension, communication, and learning. Recent studies have highlighted the effectiveness of translanguaging. It increases classroom engagement and participation among L2 learners (Almashour 2024)[13]. This statement was supported by the study of Macawile and Plata (2022)[14], when one of their participants highlighted that through translanguaging, students acquire fuller and greater experience of the language and generate interactive and dynamic experiences for students. Translanguaging improves comprehension of academic content (Almashour, 2024)[13]. Champlin's (2016)[15] study revealed that translanguaging did promote the growth of students' English language development.

2.4 Challenges in Developing L2 Writing Skills

The writing process became a challenge and even difficulties in writing skills faced by students.Various challenges encountered by the students were identified by most of the researchers in developing L2 writing skills. Misbah et al. (2017)[16] claimed that lack of vocabulary has caused the students to face challenges in acquiring writing skills. Wherein, Asep (2014)[17] asserts that vocabulary is the fundamental element in constructing sentences which is the core of effective writing skills. Students use spoken and written words every day to communicate their ideas, beliefs and feelings with people. Good vocabulary can help the students communicate their thoughts clearly (Moses & Mohamad, 2019)[18]. Grammar is also one of those faced challenges of students in writing. Fareed et al. (2016)[19] states that students make mistakes in subject-verb agreement, pronouns, tenses, articles, prepositions and basic sentence structures. Moses and Mohamad (2019)[18] and Nyang'au (2014)[20] find out that poor spelling is another cause of anxiety for students in learning writing skill. Foster (2015)[21] states that students' readiness is another challenge in learning writing and lack of exposure to books and reading materials are also an issue. Also, Azana-Labo (2024)[22], in her study on fluency and accuracy in written works of junior high school, revealed that the students encountered difficulties in terms of fluency and accuracy, coherence and organization of ideas in their writing, including spelling, punctuation and capitalization.

2.5 Strategic Guide Using the Full Linguistic Repertoires

A linguistic repertoire refers to the set of vocabulary, expressions and grammatical structures that a person uses to express themselves. A person's linguistic repertoire is diverse, and includes both native and languages learned (Smile & Learn, 2024). Providing a strategic and practical guide for students using their full linguistic repertoire is essential in fostering inclusive, equitable, and effective learning environments especially in multilingual contexts. Using the full linguistic repertoire supports translanguaging which helps the learners understand complex concepts by thinking and processing in all their languages. Translanguaging has emerged as a promising educational approach that provides theoretical and pedagogical tools to support emergent bilinguals' learning of content knowledge and academic language by embracing students' full linguistic repertoires (Schissel et al., 2020)[23].

3. RESULTS

The following are the results gathered from the conduct of the study.

3.1 **Translanguaging Strategies.** Ten students were asked to do a think-aloud strategy while writing an essay in English. In this section, ten think-aloud strategy and ten essays were analyzed. The data are presented in Table 1 containing the translanguaging strategies and their corresponding collective description.

Table 1: Translanguaging strategies description

Translanguaging Strategies	Collective Description
Multilingual Brainstorming (5 out of 10)	Students do brainstorming as a creative technique in generating ideas. Most of the sources define brainstorming as it consists of a group of individual who are talking to each other and sharing their insights regarding something. In this study, brainstorming is done by a single individual talking to him/herself. The students talk to themselves in L1, asking themselves a questions regarding the topic and recalling the previous experiences to expand their ideas and solve the problem they are facing in writing a certain topic using L2.
Word-for-Word Translation (10 out of 10)	Word-for-word translation or literal translation is the easier and faster translation strategy for some texts with a focus on accuracy and precision. It is helpful for language learner to express their thoughts and ideas. The students construct sentences first in L1 and translate it in L2. There are also students who write in L1 paragraph and literally translate it in L2.
Collaborative Translation (2 out of 10)	Collaborative translation is done in this study because the students kept on asking the observer of the English term of a certain word they do not know. This strategy saves time in grasping and searching for the appropriate word and it improves communication.

Self-Correct Strategy (4 out of 10)	Self-correct strategy involves learner correcting their own errors or mistakes instead of relying on the help of others. This approach encourages active learning and a deeper understanding of the language. This promotes students independence, responsibility and decision-making skills. The students in this study correct the sentences they are constructing before writing it on their paper.
Meta-cognitive and Metalanguage Strategy (4 out of 10)	Meta-cognitive strategy is a technique that help students understand and control their own thinking processes in improving their learning. In this study, the students reflect on what they are thinking before they write those ideas in their paper. Also, they ask themselves of an appropriate word to use. They do self-questioning and outline to achieve their goal in writing.
"What's Next" Strategy (3 out of 10)	"What's next strategy encourages a proactive and forward-thinking mindset, focused on identifying and taking action on the next steps needed to achieve goals. Uzawa (1996) found out in his study that most of the students used "what's next approach.

The table shows the translanguaging strategies used by the participants in this study through observation method and think-aloud protocol. Through observation and analyzation, the researcher identifies the translanguaging strategies being utilized by the participants of this current study. These are the following: multilingual brainstorming, word-to-word translation, collaborative translation, self-correct strategy, meta-cognitive strategies and "what's next" strategy.

3.2 Challenges in Producing Written Text using Translation

One of the objectives of the current study is to identify the challenges in producing written text using translation. In a group interview with the participants, they enumerated the challenges they encountered in producing written text using translanguaging and translation. These challenges are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Challenges in Producing Written Text

Theme	Collective Description
Limited Grammatical Knowledge	Grammatical structure refers to the organization of words and sentences that is comprehensible. It includes word order, inflection, syntax, punctuation marks, and the like. It is important for language acquisition in enabling effective language use. In the contrary, this is the very common challenges encountered by most of the writers of L2.
Lack of Vocabulary Enrichment	Vocabulary enrichment is the process of improving or expanding one's vocabulary, new words, their meanings and how they are used in language. However, L2 learners are still struggling in acquiring vocabulary, new words and word meaning.
Poor Paragraph Development and Organization of Ideas	Paragraph development involves creating a cohesive and well-supported block of text that revolves around a central idea. While, organization of ideas refers to arranging thoughts in a logical and clear manner according to writer's purpose. These are another identified challenges in the present study. Some of the students find it hard to organize ideas in an essay writing.

Table 2 introduces the challenges encountered by the students in producing written text. These are based from the written text of the students, validated through interview. The challenges are summarized into lack of grammatical knowledge, lack of vocabulary enrichment and poor paragraph development and organization of ideas.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, this research came out to the following conclusion: the students utilized different translanguaging strategies which facilitated the multilingual learners in producing written text in L2. The

findings of this research identified various challenges the students encountered in producing written text using translation. This study proposed a translanguaging workbook for multilingual learners which will guide the students in learning the language through writing.

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