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## Translanguaging Pedagogy: Benefits and Perceptions in EFL Listening and Reading Comprehension

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### ABSTRACT

This mixed-method study explores the impact of translanguaging pedagogy on listening and reading comprehension in an EFL setting. Fifty-six intermediate-level EFL learners participated and identical listening and reading tasks were administered with a monolingual focus in the control and a translingual focus in the experimental groups. The focus of the research was the impact of translanguaging pedagogy on comprehension in receptive skills, and participants' perceptions regarding the influence of translanguaging on listening and reading comprehension. Qualitative data was gathered via teacher journals, open-ended surveys, and interviews, while quantitative data was obtained through comprehension questions. The research revealed statistically significant difference in one of the five listening tasks. In-depth qualitative data indicated that topic, complexity of the text, lack of background knowledge and proficiency levels may affect the translingual pedagogy. It was revealed that learners might need translanguaging, especially at low proficiency levels, and a systematic translingual technique is presented for teachers.

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Listening and reading are essential skills for input in English as Foreign Language (EFL) contexts. The activities for receptive skills can be conducted individually or through pair-group collaboration to enhance understanding (Teng, 2017). In individual tasks, when learners struggle to comprehend, they may become disoriented and unable to progress with the remainder of the task. Nevertheless, learners can assist one another in enhancing understanding when structured as pairs or groups. Collaborative activities are conducted in numerous foreign language classes before, during, and after listening to or reading texts. In such tasks, numerous educators forbid the utilization of the native language. Thinking critically, it might be necessary to consider the objectives of pre-, during-, and post-listening and reading activities. Before tasks, learners may acquire new vocabulary they will encounter in texts. They may articulate their prior knowledge of the issue or respond to preliminary queries. Consequently, they can anticipate their forthcoming exposures. Do learners consistently engage in the target language during a warm-up activity conducted in pairs or groups? It could be observed that when students struggle to comprehend some sections or respond to inquiries, they instinctively resort to their native languages, which are consistently accessible to them (Li Wei, 2017).

This study investigated the impact of incorporating learners' native languages into reading and listening tasks by systematic translanguaging breaks during pre-, during-, and post-activities to enhance comprehension. Translanguaging is a practice and procedure (Garcia & Li Wei, 2014) wherein the input is delivered in learners' native languages, but the output is in the target language. Pedagogical translanguaging employs the entire linguistic repertoires of learners to enhance understanding (Baker, 2001; Williams, 1994). It was posited that diverse topics in listening and reading texts could enhance subject understanding and develop listening skills through a task organized with a translangual orientation in an EFL context (Cenoz & Gorter, 2022). This was not to say that the fundamental objective of EFL should be overlooked (Renandya & Chang, 2022): to cultivate proficiency in the target language. Nonetheless, allocating limited time for the

native language, referred to as translangual breaks in this study, may enhance learners' comprehension of the contents. Students may instinctively employ their home languages during pair or group work activities, and implementing translangual breaks for a designated period can mitigate the excessive usage of the native language.

A mixed-method orientation was employed, and both quantitative and qualitative data were gathered to address the following three study questions:

1. What is the effect of translanguaging pedagogy on comprehension in receptive skills?
2. What do participants think about the effect of translanguaging on listening comprehension?
3. What do participants think about the effect of translanguaging on reading comprehension?

## **2. Literature Review**

Translanguaging is grounded in sociolinguistic theories that contest conventional perceptions of language as static and distinct. García and Wei (2014) contend that translanguaging embodies the essence of multilingualism, wherein speakers utilize their language resources to construct meaning. This viewpoint corresponds with Canagarajah's (2011) assertion regarding the flexibility of language use and the necessity for pedagogies that mirror students' authentic linguistic practices. Translanguaging is a practice whereby multilingual speakers employ all their languages as a cohesive communication system (Garcia, 2009; Li Wei, 2017). It involves utilizing the native language for input and the target language for output, or vice versa, to enhance comprehension or communication (Baker, 2001; Williams, 1994).

Translanguaging is often erroneously equated with code-switching and translation, leading some scholars and practitioners to regard the three phenomena as a single construct. Although code-switching and translation can occur within translanguaging practices, they represent discrete activities grounded in different theoretical assumptions. Prior to introducing pedagogical translanguaging, clarifying these distinctions is essential, particularly because a 'monoglossic' orientation in EFL settings tends to discourage both code-switching and translation.

Ortega (2019) notes that ‘...translanguaging may include translation and code-switching practices, not necessarily as a shuttle between two languages, but as elaborated bilingual linguistic practices to make sense by doing various production and comprehension tasks’ (p. 159). Thus, translanguaging constitutes a broader, theoretically distinct framework. Ortega’s (2019) article offers the following illustrative contrasts:

When a person has a document in English and writes the content in Spanish for a Spanish-language audience to understand it, that is translation (Baker, 2001). When two bilingual people are having an informal conversation and they switch languages as a strategy because they cannot find the phrase/word meaning in one of the languages, that is code-switching (Gumperz, 1982). If I read an article in English and then I discuss the content in Spanish with my peers, that is translanguaging (García & Li Wei, 2014). (As cited in Ortega, 2019, p. 158)

From the passage, it can be inferred that translanguaging is a systematic, comprehension-oriented practice designed to facilitate meaning-making or communicative success, whereas code-switching and translation tend to be situational strategies. Moreover, García argues that code-switching differs from translanguaging because it rests on a monoglossic assumption that bilinguals maintain separate linguistic systems (Garcia & Lin, 2017). By contrast, translanguaging conceptualises the bilingual repertoire as heteroglossic (Bakhtin, 1981), dynamic, and fully integrated (Garcia & Lin, 2017).

Pedagogical translanguaging (Garcia & Li Wei, 2014) is an approach that facilitates input in either the target or native language while necessitating output in the alternate language during classroom activities. The pivotal aspect of the strategy must be its execution for a defined objective. Translanguaging pedagogy contests the monolingual standards frequently observed in language instruction. It urges educators to develop programs that utilize students’ native languages. Creese and Blackledge (2010) propose that translanguaging approaches can improve engagement and comprehension since students are more inclined to relate to content that mirrors their language experiences. Moreover,

translanguaging fosters critical thinking and cognitive adaptability. García and Kleifgen (2018) found that students who practiced translanguaging had enhanced academic performance and superior analytical and synthesis skills. This method not only improved language competency but also cultivated metalinguistic awareness.

In 2021, Cummins introduced the Crosslinguistic Translanguaging Theory (CTT) and asserted that ‘bilinguals utilize languages, encompassing various registers, and effective pedagogy fosters translanguaging that entails conceptual and linguistic transfer between languages’ (Cummins, 2021; p. 4). The CTT advocates for language transfers to enhance teaching and learning efficacy. In an EFL situation focused on developing the target language, where learners may possess several native languages, employing CTT as a theoretical framework may be suitable. This study employed CTT and facilitated transfers between the native and target languages. In their literature review, Bonacina-Pugh et al. (2021) classify translanguaging research that treats languages as distinct and promotes linguistic transfer between languages as those employing a ‘fixed language approach.’ In a translanguaging study employing a fixed language strategy, the strategic and deliberate transfer across languages is of paramount importance. This study was conducted using a fixed language approach. Languages were seen as distinct, and linguistic exchanges among all recognized language repertoires were promoted.

Researchers have recently stated the need to envision TESOL through a translanguaging lens, leading to a “translanguaging TESOL profession” (Tian et al., 2020). The call for a “translanguaged language class” has attracted the attention of researchers (Aghai et al., 2020; Anderson, 2018; Gallego-Balsà & Cots, 2019; Haukås, 2015; Khatib, 2021; Llanes & Cots, 2020; Rajendram, 2021). The findings of the studies examining the effects of pedagogy on reading skills have indicated learners’ positive experiences for particularly negotiation of meaning (Alexis, 2023; Hungwe, 2019; Parra & Proctor, 2021; Rafi & Morgan, 2022). A recent study by Robillos (2023) investigated the impact of integrating pedagogy into listening tasks, and the results suggested better listening comprehension. The qualitative data in the study

also highlighted participants' positive experiences of the pedagogy in the tasks.

Notwithstanding its prospective advantages, translanguaging pedagogy encounters obstacles. Certain educators may express concerns regarding the use of home languages in the classroom, apprehensive that it could hinder the acquisition of the target language (Duarte, 2018). Addressing these issues necessitates illustrating how translanguaging can coexist alongside language acquisition, augmenting students' total proficiency instead of diminishing it. Furthermore, more research is necessary to explore effective translanguaging strategies across various educational contexts and language pairs. Although numerous research studies emphasize the beneficial effects of translanguaging, additional empirical evidence is required to comprehend its influence on varied student demographics (Li Wei, 2017).

This study may contribute to foreign language education by proposing a method for integrating translanguaging pedagogy. It determines the impact of adopting a translingual orientation, through translingual breaks, on comprehension in receptive skills. It examines the hypothesis that translanguaging enhances content comprehension and language development, potentially benefiting receptive abilities in EFL contexts (Robillos, 2023).

### 3. Methodology

The study employs a mixed-method approach, incorporating qualitative and quantitative data collection. A quasi-experiment assessed the effects of translingual breaks in reading and listening tasks.

#### 3.1. Setting

The research was carried out in an English preparatory program at a university. General English classes were offered to engineering students within the program. In an academic year, a total of 560 hours of General English courses were provided, starting from an elementary level (A1) and concluding at an intermediate level (B1+), conforming to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). The program comprised two

courses: main course and academic writing classes. The research was conducted in main cause classes, adapting five randomly selected listening and reading tasks with a translingual focus.

#### 3.2. Participants

The study involved 56 engineering students with intermediate-level English proficiency enrolled in a preparatory program. The convenience sampling method was employed to establish two groups: an experimental group and a control group. The researcher had classes with both groups. The participants were selected using the convenience sampling method. The groups exhibited comparable proficiency levels based on their mean scores from prior elementary and pre-intermediate assessments: the control group scored 67.67, while the experimental group scored 69.57. The control group comprised 30 learners, while the experimental group consisted of 26 learners. In the preparatory program, learners underwent two achievement exams at each level, evaluating four language skills and one quiz. The testing commission evaluated the validity and reliability of the questions for each exam. The program contained a substantial collection of questions demonstrating high reliability and validity.

Additionally, a distinct reading and listening assessment was administered before the study, revealing comparable grade point averages for the control group (82.30) and the experimental group (81.78), suggesting that both groups possessed similar reading and listening proficiency levels. The reading and listening questions were extracted from a sample IELTS exam.

The native language of 54 learners was Turkish; consequently, Turkish was utilized during the translingual breaks.

#### 3.3. Listening and Reading Tasks with Translingual Breaks

The tasks were adapted translingually following the recommendations outlined in the translanguaging guide by Celic and Seltzer (2013). The tasks were executed utilizing the cooperative activity design "think-pair-share" (Olsen & Kagan, 1992) and structured in three phases as "preview-

view-review" (Freeman & Freeman, 2007). Five listening and reading tasks were selected randomly from the units in the coursebook addressed in the main course class.

Translingual breaks of three minutes were provided in each phase of preview, view and review phases in the experimental group. It was hypothesized that using all language repertoires for a limited time could help students prepare for receptive skills text comprehension as they could more actively engage in collaborative "think-pair and share" activity design in their own language repertoires. Approximately, preview was for 10, view for 15 and review was for 10 minutes for each

listening and reading task. The researcher started stopwatch on screen for a translingual break of three minutes, informed the learners that they could use their native languages in the break but for the remaining 7 minutes, they had to use only English. The researcher used English in all phases. The pedagogical aim of these translingual breaks was to provide 'breathing space' (Fishman,1991) for learners and help them get ready to receive the reading and listening texts with low affective filter.

Sample listening task with translingual breaks plan could be seen in Figure 1. Activity duration can change according to time available

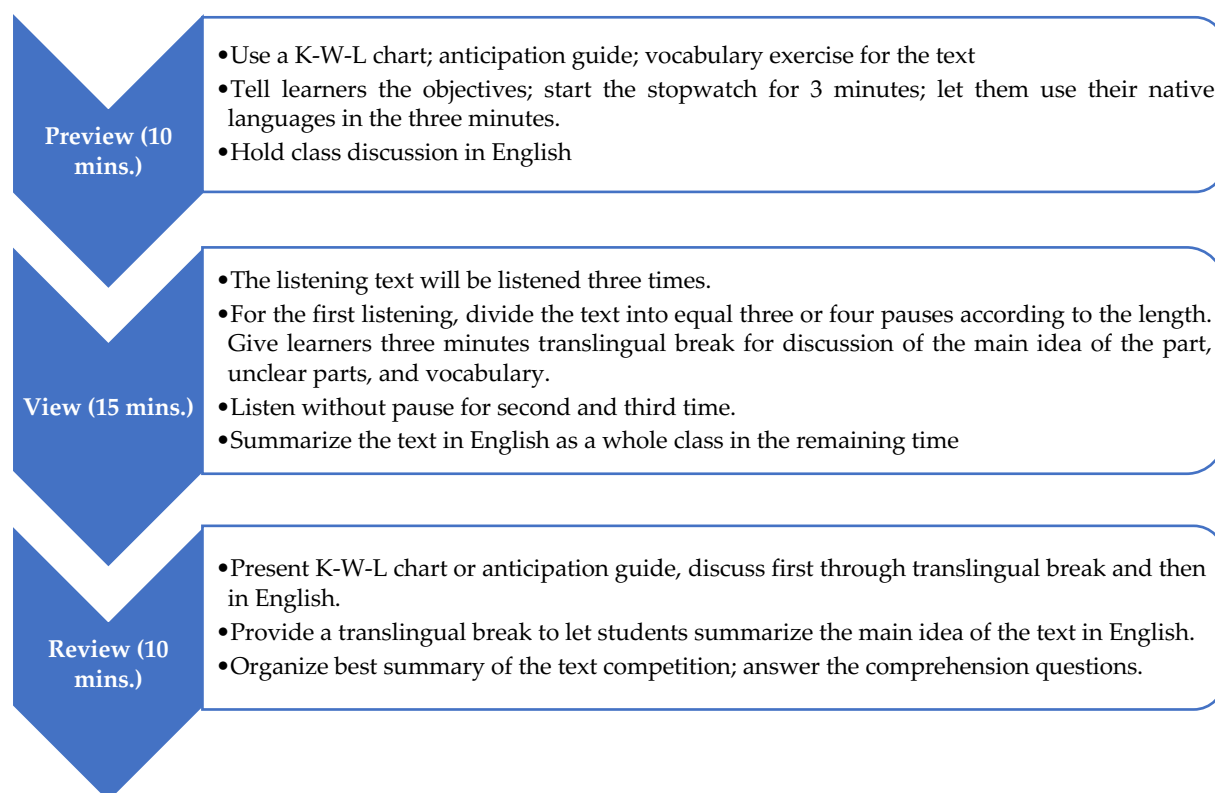


Figure 1  
Listening tasks with translingual break

Sample reading task with translingual breaks plan could be seen in the Figure 2 below. As both listening and reading skills are receptive skills many of the suggestions are the same with slight differences. In the listening task, the learners were provided translingual breaks after each listening

phase; however, in reading, the researcher read the text first slowly, told learners to follow and underline target sentences. These sentences were chosen considering the main idea of the text and they were the sentences that were important to get the meaning of the whole text.

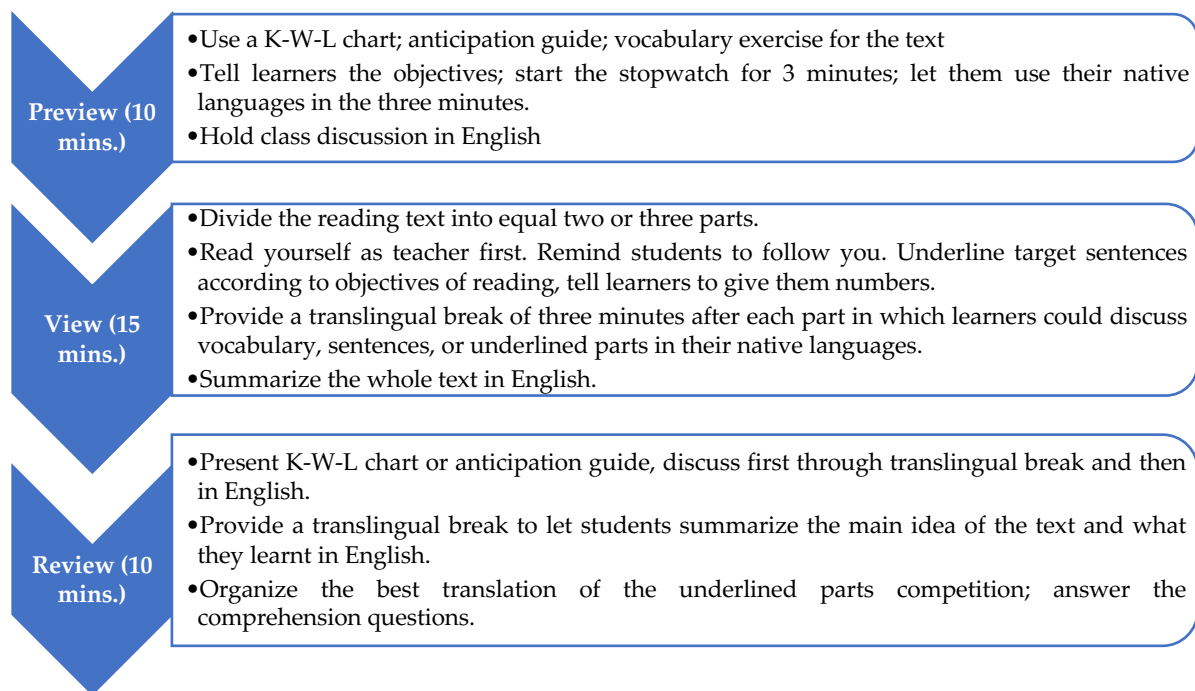


Figure 2  
Reading tasks with translingual breaks

The control group underwent identical phases for the five listening and reading tasks; however, the learners were restricted to using only English at all stages. Following the three stages, the experimental and control groups collaboratively answered ten comprehension questions regarding the texts. They engaged in discussions with their partners and collaboratively and addressed the questions as a pair or group rather than individually.

### 3.4. Data Collection

The study's quantitative data comprised a statistical comparison of comprehension scores for five reading and listening tasks. Qualitative data comprised teacher/researcher journals documenting the tasks, an open-ended questionnaire for the control group to express their perspectives on pair/group work activities conducted exclusively in English, and the experimental group to articulate their thoughts on translingual breaks. An interview was conducted with nine voluntary participants in the experimental group to obtain in-depth data regarding perspectives on translingual breaks.

#### 3.4.1. Listening and Reading Comprehension Questions

The researcher formulated ten comprehension questions by creating them or directly utilizing those from the coursebook for each task. The questions were identical for both the experimental and control groups. Participants in both groups responded to the questions collaboratively during the view phase of the task. The question types included true/false, multiple choice, and open-ended questions necessitating one- or two-word responses.

The selected question types were those necessitating brief responses to ensure reliability. A subsequent group of 20 learners responded to the questions, and the researcher reviewed wording issues and responses with a colleague from the same institution. The requisite modifications were implemented after piloting and expert review by a colleague. The teacher-researcher and a colleague at the same institution evaluated the responses from both experimental and control groups.

### 3.4.2. Teacher/Researcher Journals

The teacher-researcher did a full-participant, overt, and single observation. There were six questions guiding the journals:

1. Did learners discuss warm-up activities efficiently?
2. Could they participate in pair-group work during tasks?
3. After the tasks finished, did the pairs efficiently summarize and talk about the text's main ideas in pairs?
4. What were the differences in these activities between the control and experimental groups?
5. What might be the problems that learners had?
6. What kind of questions did learners ask, and what comments did they make about listening tasks?

The teacher-researcher took jotted notes for each task (Bryman, 2012). Jotted notes are "very brief notes written down on pieces of paper to jog one's memory about events that should be written up later" (Bryman, 2012, p. 450). After each observed class, he kept journals considering the jotted notes and answering the questions above.

### 3.4.3. Open-ended Questionnaire for the Control Group

The following two questions were asked to examine the ideas of the participants about using only English in pair-group work activities in the tasks:

1. What is the effect of using only English in pair work activities on reading comprehension?
2. What is the effect of using only English in pair work activities on listening comprehension?

### 3.4.4. Open-ended Questionnaire for the Experimental Group

The following three questions were asked to examine the ideas of the participants about translanguaging pedagogy in listening tasks:

1. What is the effect of translingual breaks on listening comprehension?

2. What is the effect of translingual breaks on reading comprehension?
3. Do you think pair/group work activities should only be in English or be translingual?

### 3.4.5. Interview

An interview with nine voluntary participants from the experimental group was conducted to obtain deeper data about their ideas on translanguaging for receptive skills. The question was:

1. What do you think about the effect of translingual breaks on listening and reading comprehension?

### 3.5. Data Analysis

The comprehension scores of the control and experimental groups were analyzed and compared using SPSS software. Due to the non-normal distribution of the data, the Mann-Whitney U test, a non-parametric alternative to the t-test, was utilized. The effect size was manually calculated using Cohen's (1998) method in instances of statistically significant differences.

The qualitative data analysis for teacher-researcher journals, open-ended questionnaires, and interviews was performed using conventional thematic content analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This study's analysis was conducted under Dörnyei's recommendations (Dörnyei, 2007). He posits that genetic analytical techniques, coding, and memoing are central to qualitative content analysis and outlines the subsequent steps:

1. Transcribing the data,
  2. Pre-coding-coding,
  3. Growing ideas-memos, vignettes, profiles, and other forms of data display,
  4. Interpreting the data and concluding.
- (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 246)

Considering these steps, all qualitative data underwent transcription. Subsequently, pre-coding involved reviewing the transcripts and documenting initial impressions three times, with intervals of two weeks between each review. Coding was conducted by selecting the most prevalent codes. An additional researcher with expertise verified the analysis at this stage. Subsequently, the most significant codes were



selected, and categories were constructed by analyzing common codes, their interrelations, and the nature of these relationships. An additional researcher subsequently verified all analyses to ensure reliability.

#### 4. Findings

Quantitative and qualitative data findings will be presented in the same order as the methodology section.

##### 4.1. Comprehension Scores

The researcher and another colleague rated ten comprehension questions for both groups in each task. The ratings were compared, and an average point was given for each paper. As all the data was not normally distributed, the non-parametric alternative of the t-test, the Mann-Whitney U test, was implemented.

##### 4.1.1. Listening

In the first listening task, the Mann-Whitney test indicated that the experimental group ( $Mdn = 6$ ) got statistically significantly higher scores than the control group ( $Mdn = 4.5$ ) ( $U = 163, p = .028$ ). Cohen (1998) proposes the following numbers for calculating the effect size: .1=small / .3; medium / .5; large effect sizes. The calculation result was .32. It indicated that the experimental group showed a statistically significant difference from the control group in their scores for comprehension questions with a medium effect size. The experimental group got higher scores in the third listening task ( $Mdn = 7$ ) than the control group ( $Mdn = 5$ ). However, it was not a statistically significant difference. In the second listening task, the control group got higher scores ( $Mdn = 7$ ) than the experimental group ( $Mdn = 6$ ). Finally, in the fourth ( $Mdn = 4$ ) and fifth listening tasks ( $Mdn = 7$ ), the median scores of the two groups were identical.

The experimental group achieved superior scores in two tasks. The difference was statistically significant in one, while the control group achieved higher scores in one listening task. In the remaining two listening tasks, the scores of both groups were identical.

##### 4.1.2. Reading

In first reading task, the Mann-Whitney test indicated that the experimental group ( $Mdn = 7$ ) got higher scores than the control group ( $Mdn = 6$ ) ( $U = 182, p = 0.32$ ), in the second task similar scores with same median ( $Mdn = 6$ ) ( $U = 285, p = 0.77$ ), in the third the experimental group got higher scores ( $Mdn = 8$ ) than the control group ( $Mdn = 7$ ) ( $U = 312, p = 0.48$ ), in the fourth task the experimental group got higher scores ( $Mdn = 6$ ) than the control group ( $Mdn = 5$ ) ( $U = 239, p = 0.10$ ). In the fifth reading task, the control group got higher scores ( $Mdn = 7$ ) than the experimental group ( $U = 275, p = 0.25$ ).

The experimental group attained higher scores in three reading tasks. The control group scored higher in one task, while both groups exhibited similar scores in another. The differences were not statistically significant across all tasks.

##### 4.2. Teacher/Researcher Journals

The control group exhibited significantly lower interaction levels than the experimental group during pair-work activities. In three listening tasks within the control group, two pairs communicated in Turkish with their partners. It might indicate that forbidding the use of the native language in a language class may not be a viable option. The experimental group exhibited increased interaction in both their native and target languages when permitted to use their native languages for a limited duration.

The topic of the text may influence the effectiveness of translingual activities. The first listening task focused on 'traveling abroad,' which garnered the interest of all learners. The topic was suitable for developing an anticipation guide, KWL chart, and translingual vocabulary chart. The experimental group engaged in the activity and subsequently reported their positive thoughts. A suitable topic for developing an anticipation guide and KWL chart during the preview and review phases of the course plan may provide a sense of activity completion.

The activity's success may diminish if learners lack background knowledge on a topic. The third listening task addressed "how to avoid online mistakes," while the fourth reading task focused on "advertisements can be detrimental to

children." Implementing preview activities using the KWL chart was ineffective for both the control and experimental groups. The learners appeared to lack the requisite background knowledge for partner discussions, or the topic was unsuitable for an extended discourse.

The complexity of the texts may influence the effectiveness of translingual pair work activities, as observed in the fourth listening task. The speakers in this text exhibited a faster pace than those in the other texts. The mean scores of the learners for the fourth listening task further corroborate this finding. The learners in the control group engaged in individual listening and responding to the questions. The experimental group engaged in discussions with their partners in the native language, followed by discussions in the target language as a whole class, demonstrating increased activity. Nonetheless, the mean scores of both groups (3.89 and 3.91) indicate no significant difference in comprehension. The scores indicate that reading texts were more easily comprehended than listening texts. Excessive ease may undermine collaboration, as students might not find it necessary to engage with one another.

Facilitating collaboration among pairs presented an additional challenge. The pairs may be modified for each translingual task to facilitate collaboration. The review step demonstrated efficiency in producing summaries for both the control and experimental groups; nonetheless, the experimental group exhibited more significant interaction in their native and target languages. Interactive software platforms facilitate an engaging environment for summary competitions, promoting collaboration, especially

in reading tasks, which learners found highly enjoyable.

The teacher-researcher journals indicated that the experimental group exhibited more significant interaction across nearly all phases. It may reinforce Cummins' assertion that translanguaging facilitates learners' confident engagement with literacy and academic tasks in both languages (Cummins, 2007). Nonetheless, only one statistically significant difference was observed across ten tasks. The topic engaged learners and was appropriate for developing an anticipation guide, KWL chart, and translingual vocabulary chart. Likewise, learner interaction may decrease in both complex and simple tasks.

Consequently, the design of medium difficulty translingual reading and listening tasks may be optimal. Facilitating genuine collaboration can pose challenges for educators. The pair may be modified for each task. The optimal summary and translation of the underlined sentences in a reading text competition can be developed using online interactive presentation software, fostering a competitive atmosphere and promoting collaboration among learners, as participants appeared to appreciate this activity.

#### *4.3. Open-ended Questionnaire for the Control Group*

Two questions in Table 1 below were posed to the control group to elicit their perspectives on English-only pair or group work activities. Codes assigned to each participant with the letter "P" and number are presented in each extract.

Table 1  
Thematic Analysis for the Questionnaire in the Control Group

Question 1: What is the effect of using only English in pair work activities on <u>reading</u> comprehension?			
Themes	<i>n</i> of participants contributing ( <i>N</i> = 21)	<i>n</i> of transcript excerpts assigned	Sample Quote
Positive short answers	21	14	"Nice" / "Beneficial" / "It was good."
Learning vocabulary better	21	3	"Discussing words with our partners made it easy for us to learn new words in the text." (P1)
Translation to Turkish is necessary ( <i>Negative</i> )	21	2	"To comprehend a reading text well, we can translate the sentences into Turkish. We don't need to discuss them in English". (P15)
Need for comprehension	21	1	"To discuss with a partner, you need to understand a text better, so you try more..." (P7)
Question 2: What is the effect of using only English in pair work activities on <u>listening</u> comprehension?			
Positive short answers	19	10	"Nice" / "Beneficial" / "It was good."
More focus	19	3	"...useful because we force ourselves to understand the text more to discuss with partners..." (P3)
Need for comprehension	19	3	"It is necessary to comprehend the text to discuss with a partner (P8)."
Information exchange	19	2	"We exchanged information for vocabulary, and for unclear parts in the text..." (P14)
Not being able to express in English ( <i>Negative</i> )	19	1	"...it is good, but we had difficulty in explaining something about the text in English..." (P6))

Table 1 indicates that numerous responses consisted of positive words without accompanying explanations. It may suggest that learners lack clarity regarding using English in pair work activities during reading and listening tasks. The findings indicate a discrepancy between practice and theoretical concepts. Despite the limited negative responses, the control group exhibited no interaction with their partners. Their level of passivity exceeded that of the experimental group.

Students may assist one another with vocabulary in reading tasks through collaborative pair or group work activities. The necessity for comprehension emerged as a central theme in both listening and reading tasks, as students were required to share information with their partners, necessitating greater focus and understanding of

the task. The relationship between comprehension and focus is evident, with increased focus identified in three responses related to listening tasks. Participants identified the exchange of information regarding unclear and complex sections in the listening texts as a beneficial approach for listening tasks.

Three responses were negative, which supports the implementation of translanguaging pedagogy. Two responses to reading tasks indicated that translating to the native language may be essential for enhanced comprehension rather than relying on dialogues in English. One participant expressed difficulty providing mutual assistance solely in English, as their proficiency may not suffice to convey all necessary information in the target language.

The results of the open-ended questionnaire for the control group may suggest a discrepancy between practice and perceptions, as evidenced by teacher journals. Positive responses lacking justification indicate participants' unclear concepts. Negative responses may provide support for translanguaging pedagogy.

#### 4.4. Open-ended Questionnaire for the Experimental Group

Three questions in Table 2 were posed to the experimental group to elicit their perspectives on translingual pair work activities.

Table 2  
Thematic Analysis for the Questionnaire in the Experimental Group

Question 1: What is the effect of translingual breaks on <u>listening</u> comprehension?			
Themes	<i>n</i> of participants contributing ( <i>N</i> = 21)	<i>n</i> of transcript excerpts assigned	Sample Quote
Mutual support for unclear points	21	6	"Translingual breaks were useful, especially for difficult conversations, because we were completing each other and giving answers." (P2)
Moving away from English ( <i>Negative</i> )	21	6	"It is easier to continue to interact in the language you start speaking. We speak Turkish in the breaks with our friends, but it is difficult to return to English when the teacher asks us to discuss in English and answer the questions." (P16)
Helpful in low levels of proficiency	21	3	"The breaks are generally useful for beginner and elementary levels. But discussions at higher levels need to be in English." (P19)
Helpful with collaborative partners	21	2	"Yes, it was beneficial in general, but it is much more important for your friend to have a command of the subject and to help you in this situation; if your friend does not understand and distracts you, it is very useless." (P11)
Translating sentences for comprehension	21	1	"...the translations made it easier for me to understand, so it was easier for me to answer." (P8)
Learning vocabulary by translating	21	1	"...using native language was particularly beneficial for discussing vocabulary..." (P4)
More comprehension through translingual summaries	21	1	"We listen in English; we turn to Turkish for discussion. To write summaries again in English, we must comprehend the text very well. That was helpful." (P20)
Covering all the text repetitively through breaks	21	1	"I think it was great to go repeatedly. I loved it." (P11)

Table 2 (cont'd)			
Question 2: What is the effect of translingual breaks on <u>reading</u> comprehension?			
More comprehension	19	6	"Translanguaging is helpful for sentences and the words we do not understand." (P12)
Habit formation to use native language ( <i>Negative</i> )	19	5	"It is better to continue to discuss in the language we are learning. If the purpose is to learn English, everything should be in English. Many friends in our class know grammar and vocabulary; however, they do not force themselves to speak, and their speaking skill does not improve." (P14)
Translating difficult parts for more comprehension	19	4	"Only the breaks for the translation of difficult sentences were useful for me." (P5)
Time-saver	19	2	"Instead of looking at the dictionaries and trying to find meanings of words, we can discuss and learn the vocabulary faster." (P7)
Translating improves English	19	1	"It was useful because trying to translate naturally from English into my language is very developing and enjoyable." (P18)
Helpful with collaborative partners	19	1	"...if you contribute to the discussion equally with your partner, they are efficient..." (P11)
Question 3: Do you think pair/group work activities should be only in English or translingual?			
Only in English for more practice	20	8	"...it should be only in English so that we can have an opportunity to practice the language..." (P18)
Translanguaging when having difficulty understanding	20	5	"...it is complementary to do translanguaging to our native language when we cannot understand." (P4)
Translanguaging in case of inability to express oneself	20	5	"...we should use the native and target language together; otherwise, we might not be able to express ourselves..." (P9)
Translanguaging to cover main points	20	2	"It must be from English to our native language to understand key points." (P12)

The analysis in Table 2 revealed comparable results for both listening and reading tasks. The responses indicated that allowing learners to use their native languages for a limited duration during translingual discussions effectively facilitated mutual support in reading and listening tasks. The second most prevalent theme in responses to the three questions was negative,

with critiques of translingual discussions highlighting their tendency to reduce time and opportunities for target language practice, leading to a habitual reliance on the native language. It may be a warning for EFL educators to incorporate translanguaging pedagogy within their teaching contexts. Key takeaway could be that a restricted duration must be allocated for the

native language. The findings from the teacher journals indicated that when tasks were conducted solely in English, learner participation was minimal, resulting in predominantly low engagement. Some pairs utilized their native languages. Analysis of additional themes and frequencies indicated that learners at low proficiency levels may require translanguaging to comprehend challenging text sections and engage effectively in discussions, especially when they struggle to articulate their thoughts. The responses for translingual reading tasks highlighted a focus on translation, suggesting that this is an everyday activity among learners when engaging with texts in the target language. Translating was regarded as a skill that required development. The listening tasks were completed during breaks by pausing the audio file. A suggested approach for listening tasks indicated that incorporating breaks with repetitions and discussions during each break enhanced comprehension. In reading tasks, two responses indicated that translingual discussions reduced class time, as participants engaged in quicker discussions of meanings with partners rather than searching for vocabulary.

A further negative aspect of translingual discussions stemmed from uncooperative partners. It may necessitate an alternative focus for further studies. To address the issue, educators may rotate partners for each task and communicate the importance and advantages of collaboration to students.

The results from the experimental group reaffirmed the discrepancy between beliefs and practice. Pedagogy can be explicitly instructed to promote translanguaging among learners, serving as scaffolding for practice in the target language, thereby alleviating learners' concerns regarding translanguaging. Despite the negative themes, the majority of students endorsed translanguaging in discussions to facilitate mutual support in navigating unclear and complex sections, as well as in articulating the main points of a text. This practice is viewed as a skill that students can develop, particularly when they encounter difficulties in expression. The analysis of teacher/researcher journals and open-ended questionnaires suggested that prohibiting the use of the native language in favor of exclusive English instruction may not yield optimal

outcomes. Explicitly teaching translingual pedagogy as a scaffolding method for practicing the target language for a limited duration, particularly at low proficiency levels, could present a viable strategy for EFL teachers in their classrooms. Additionally, this may also mitigate the excessive use of the native language.

#### *4.5. Interview*

In the interview conducted with nine voluntary participants from the experimental group, a single question was posed to elicit detailed information regarding translingual reading and listening tasks, thereby facilitating data triangulation.

Table 3  
Thematic Analysis of the Interview

Question: What do you think about the effect of translingual breaks on listening and reading comprehension?			
Initial Code	<i>n</i> of participants contributing (N = 9)	<i>n</i> of transcript excerpts assigned	Sample Quote
Helpful for giving breaks and discussion	9	4	"...for example, when we listen to a ten-minute text as a whole, I only start to understand something in my third listening, but when you divided it, I comprehended the whole text much better because it was much easier to comprehend those parts, we listened to..." (P6) "...in long reading texts, we can be distracted if we read and discuss the whole text. Therefore, dividing the text into parts and giving breaks were useful, especially for summarizing and telling our partners what we had understood in our native language..." (P1)
Helpful in lower levels of proficiency	9	3	R: "If I had told you to use only the target language during those translingual breaks, would it have been better for you?" P7: "...it is difficult for learners with low proficiency. In my opinion, in that case, discussing in Turkish can be beneficial too." "... I think we should use Turkish in these breaks for learners with low proficiency or learners with the same English levels should be partners. Discussing in English improves learners with higher levels more whereas discussing in native language disrupts English development for higher-level learners..." (P7)
Translanguaging to comprehend complex texts better	9	3	R: "Would it have been better to use only English during these listening breaks?" P5: "The last listening texts were challenging, and I think using the native language was more advantageous."
Translanguaging to learn vocabulary	9	2	"... in the last units, we had a more difficult and various vocabulary. Translingual breaks were helpful for that. Even if I could understand sentences, there were many words and meanings which I did not know. Discussing them with a partner by translanguaging was faster and easier." (P6)
Translanguaging hinders English practice ( <i>Negative</i> )	9	2	"I think these discussions should be in English because everything should be in the target language when learning a new language. The more we force ourselves, the better we learn; using native language is choosing the easier way..." (P8)

Table 3 indicates that out of twelve responses, participants expressed support for translanguaging, while two responses opposed it. The results align with those obtained from the

open-ended questionnaire. Participants endorsed translanguaging pedagogy for reading and listening tasks, especially for lower levels of English proficiency, to facilitate effective

discussions regarding complex texts and vocabulary, thereby enhancing comprehension. In contrast to the results of the open-ended questionnaire, there was a greater emphasis on "giving breaks." Participants found these breaks beneficial—the negative responses aligned with the open-ended questionnaire, opposing translanguaging for increased practice in the target language.

## **5. Discussion**

Examining comprehension scores in reading and listening tasks indicated that translanguaging pedagogy may not enhance text comprehension within the EFL context. Among five reading and five listening tasks, a statistically significant difference was observed solely in one listening task for the experimental group. Translanguaging pedagogy may yield positive outcomes in listening tasks, contingent upon various factors, including the text's topic, difficulty level, and the feasibility of incorporating practical preview and review activities, all of which could influence the effectiveness of translanguaging pedagogy as revealed by teacher-researcher journals and other studies (Chen & Lin, 2023). In two of five listening tasks, the experimental group exhibited higher mean, and median scores compared to the control group, with one instance of statistical significance. Conversely, the experimental group achieved superior comprehension scores in three reading tasks, though none reached statistical significance. In other tasks, both groups' mean and median scores were comparable.

The analysis of teacher-researcher journals indicated that prohibiting the native language is likely unattainable, as translanguaging is inherently present among learners (Moore, 2013). Additionally, learners' native languages may serve as an overlooked resource for comprehension (Atkinson, 1987). Open-ended questionnaires and interviews could further validate this finding, as participants indicated that they naturally resort to their native languages when unable to express themselves. The teacher-researcher journals revealed that the control group exhibited limited interaction with their partners in English, and specific pairs within this group persisted in using their native languages during the translanguaging breaks despite prior

warnings to utilize only the target language. The experimental group demonstrated more interaction in both their native and target languages compared to the control group, indicating findings consistent with research on the impact of translanguaging on participation and task engagement (Kwihangana, 2021; Muguruza et al., 2020). The first listening task exhibited the highest level of task engagement, with a statistically significant difference between the experimental and control groups. The text was suitable for developing a translanguaging vocabulary chart, KWL chart, and anticipation guide. The topic of "traveling abroad" was engaging for students. The class observation indicated that the text's subject may influence translanguaging pedagogy's effectiveness. In certain subjects, learners may lack the requisite background knowledge to engage with their partners, as observed in the third task, potentially leading to reduced interaction in their native language. Thus, it can be concluded that the subject of the text may influence the effectiveness of translanguaging pedagogy.

Achieving real collaboration could present significant challenges (Chen, 2018). Multilingual collaborative groups may face challenges in effectiveness if learners are accustomed to teacher-centered instructional models. Explicit instruction on translanguaging strategies and forming multilingual collaborative groups may be essential (Haukas, 2015), and students should be made aware of the 'transcollab' model (Mbrimi-Hungwe & McCabe, 2020). The responses to the questionnaire verified this conclusion from the journals. Numerous responses employed translanguaging and translation as interchangeable terms. Translanguaging, translation, and code-switching can be explicitly taught (Ortega, 2019). Additionally, partners may be altered for each task, fostering an environment of play and competition through contests for the best summary or translation. These may enhance collaboration among learners.

The experimental group demonstrated support for translanguaging pedagogy by assisting one another with challenging aspects of tasks and engaging in vocabulary discussions, particularly among learners with lower levels of English proficiency. Other studies have suggested



that learners prefer translanguaging pedagogy when their English proficiency is low (García & Kleyn, 2016; Pacheco et al., 2019; Rahmawansyah, 2019; Wang, 2019). Further research is required to investigate the impact of pedagogy across varying proficiency levels, as findings suggest that even advanced learners may favor translanguaging pedagogy (Zhou & Mann, 2021). The teacher-researcher journals indicated that the group engaged actively in their native and target languages, potentially corroborating the findings. Furthermore, research in the field has substantiated the conclusion that translanguaging can assist learners in vocabulary acquisition, meaning negotiation, and the sharing of background knowledge (Aghai et al., 2020; Gallego-Balsà & Cots, 2019; Rajendram, 2021; Yuzlu & Dikilitas, 2021). Thus, asserting that learners require translanguaging for vocabulary discussion and meaning negotiation appears plausible.

The primary concern among learners in the experimental group was establishing a habit centered exclusively on using their native language. However, the journals indicated that interaction decreased when only the target language was permitted, thereby supporting the necessity for translanguaging pedagogy. The findings suggest that educators and planners should carefully design the translanguaging strategy, allocate limited time for the native language, and prioritize the primary objective of English instruction in the EFL context: teaching and practicing English. The systematic inclusion of the native language can yield positive outcomes when combined with explicit instruction on translingual strategies for both educators and students, as suggested by Haukas (2015).

## **6. Conclusion**

In conclusion, translingual breaks may have functioned as a 'breathing space' for students (Fishman, 1991), allowing them to utilize their native languages as scaffolding for practice in the target language as suggested by qualitative data in the study. Translanguaging pedagogy, facilitated by translingual breaks, can be effectively integrated into receptive skills tasks within the EFL context. While a significant difference in comprehension scores is not assured

due to variables such as text difficulty, topic, or the feasibility of effective preview, view, and review activities, learners may engage in discussions with their peers regarding unclear sections and vocabulary within the text. This may lead to increased engagement with the task. The native languages of learners are consistently present and can be leveraged for further language acquisition. Designating a limited duration for the native language may facilitate utilizing the target language during other periods. Explicit instruction in translanguaging practices may be essential to enhance learners' awareness, as they may be concerned about losing opportunities for target language practice by incorporating their native language.

## **7. Implications, Suggestions for Further Research**

In the field of language education, teachers often become discouraged when students do not consistently use the target language in class. They must negotiate the tension between offering ample opportunities for target-language practice and responding to learners' broader needs. Despite teachers' best efforts, students naturally revert to their first language during pair-work activities.

This study introduces translingual breaks—brief, structured intervals in which learners may use their L1—within the framework of the 'transcollab' model (Mbrimi-Hungwe & McCabe, 2020) for reading and listening tasks. Qualitative findings indicate that these breaks can increase learner interaction and maintain attention without detracting from target-language exposure. The translingual breaks for a limited time could serve as scaffolding for comprehension and exposure to the target language for the remaining time could be ensured. Teachers could adapt the technique in diverse instructional settings and, where time permits, to extend task duration to further enhance engagement. Overall, the analysis suggests that translingual breaks foster higher levels of task involvement and more substantive peer collaboration.

Throughout this study, several issues related to translingual pedagogy in EFL settings emerged, suggesting directions for future research. In the listening task that produced a statistically

significant difference, the topic proved engaging for students, and the use of KWL charts, anticipation guides, and translingual vocabulary charts appeared appropriate. Although the experimental group achieved higher scores and demonstrated greater interaction in most listening and reading activities, both groups occasionally struggled with the topic's unfamiliarity, the text's complexity, gaps in background knowledge, and the need to sustain collaboration. Future investigations might examine how these variables interact with translingual pedagogy.

The present study involved intermediate-level tertiary-education learners; therefore, the proposed translingual techniques should be

tested with learners of varying proficiency levels and profiles. Moreover, the intervention targeted only receptive skills (reading and listening). Subsequent work could extend this approach to productive skills, particularly speaking and writing.

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