

Multilingual Practices in Classrooms: Translanguaging Insights from Iran for ASEAN Teacher Education

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ABSTRACT

This study, theoretically informed by Garca's (2009) translanguaging as dynamic meaning-making processes, investigated teachers' and students' views on translanguaging in EAP and EGP classes in Iran. Although research studies widely explored the pedagogical value of translanguaging, the use of translanguaging in the Iranian context has received little attention. To fill this gap, a mixed-methods research approach was used. Quantitative data were obtained through a questionnaire from 183 EFL university students, whereas qualitative data were collected through classroom observation and semi-structured interviews with teachers. The results showed students viewed translanguaging positively, perceived it as a helpful resource and a facilitating teaching tool, while the teachers regarded translanguaging as an effective resource but feared its overuse may impede students' learning. Additionally, it was observed that the use of translanguaging practices was different in EAP and EGP. The results contribute to our understanding of effective translanguaging instruction with implications for ASEAN teacher education.

Keywords: ASEAN multilingual education, quality education, students' attitudes, teacher education, translanguaging

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Introduction

Interest in using translanguaging in English classrooms and teacher education has grown in Asian countries and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) region due to its emphasis on multiculturalism and inclusivity in education. The approach no longer concerns adding more languages to teaching (May, 2013) and goes beyond a technique by highlighting identity and plurality in multicultural and multilingual spaces. With reference to English teaching and teacher education, there exists a major thrust to perceive English teaching in a global way (Rose & Galloway, 2019), opening doors to new ideas like using different modes and translanguaging as ways to learn and teach (Garcia & Li, 2014; Li & Garcia, 2022). One feature that stands out in this “trans-era” is the value it places on students’ social and cultural backgrounds. It sees what learners bring into the classroom as useful rather than something to hide (Dovchin & Lee, 2019). Makoni and Pennycook (2012) call this kind of language use *multilingua franca*, where languages mix so much that it is hard to tell them apart (p. 447). There are other names for it, like “code-meshing” (Canagarajah, 2011) and “translanguaging” (Garcia, 2009), but the idea is the same: people mix languages in daily life. These shifts have changed how people think about language learning.

The traditional focus on sticking to one language is being replaced by a focus on how people use language in real life. Ideas like “native speaker” or “mother tongue” are being questioned. Instead, there is more interest in how people find their “voice” (Makoni & Pennycook, 2007, 2012) and how language is used as a social tool (Heller, 2007). Nevertheless, educators working in mainstream SLA and TESOL in the ASEAN countries can easily ignore this

multilingual “turn” through translanguaging as much of it sits inside “critical applied linguistics,” a space that even many educators and education policy makers in Western countries may fail to take seriously.

When looking at Asian countries, there is little research on how multilingual ideas fit into teacher education programs, especially in EAP and EGP classes. There are a few studies in different educational contexts of these countries (e.g., Biglar-Beigi Ghajarieh et al. 2025; Too, 2023; Yusri, 2022) that explored translanguaging in terms of students’ and teachers’ beliefs and perceptions without focusing on implications for teacher practice and professional development programs in Asian educational contexts, particularly in the ASEAN region.

Many teachers in this region may push back against translanguaging in EAP and EGP, even though it is seen as a strong tool for bilingual and multilingual classrooms elsewhere (Elashhab, 2020; Galante, 2020). It is noteworthy that learning another language is, in a way, about adding to what you know, not replacing your first language. Yet, the everyday language practices of bilingual and multilingual speakers rarely get used as models for learning or teaching additional languages. Instead, the target often remains an ideal monolingual or “native-like” speaker.

Interestingly, Hall and Cook (2013) pointed out that what is discussed in ELT theory oftentimes fails to match what transpires in real classrooms around the world. In fact, they quietly pushed back against the strict “English only” rule, especially when students and teachers already share the same home language. And while some educators do use the first language now and then, they have sometimes noted they feel guilty about it (Harmer, 2007; Jenkins,

2010). Still, in those shared-language situations, it seems inappropriate to overlook the value it could bring.

This tension is particularly pronounced in Asian educational contexts, including the ASEAN region, where new educational approaches may be resisted due to cultural and societal norms and conventions. For instance, as Thongwichit and Ulla (2024) note, an English monolingual policy exists in Thai educational settings, making the use of L1 by teachers and students difficult in class. In language education with this deep-seated monoglossic orientation, the potential of translanguaging as a pedagogical resource is largely left untapped.

Nevertheless, the debate on multilingual education has already shaken the traditional monolingual policies in some ASEAN countries such as the Philippines (Gatil, 2021) with linguistic diversity that offers valuable insights for understanding translanguaging in ASEAN educational contexts. Such regional experiences offer an insightful frame of reference for comparing translanguaging practices in other multilingual contexts, including Iran, where Persian serves as the dominant language and teaching English is not fully endorsed by the government due to anti-Western ideologies perpetrated by macro educational policies.

Even though the literature on translanguaging is gaining more attention, there are still gaps in both Iranian and ASEAN settings. While studies of translanguaging have been largely conducted in relation to bilingual education or general EFL teaching, there is a paucity of data on how translanguaging is practiced in the English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for General Purposes (EGP) classrooms at the university level.

Likewise, in the ASEAN context, research on translanguaging has also been emerging, but much of it is conducted primarily on classroom practices, learner perspectives, or policy disputes in English-medium and multilingual contexts. Issues regarding the pedagogical use of translanguaging to support teacher training and professional development have not been taken into account in EAP and EGP instruction in higher education.

These recent investigations from ASEAN contexts add support for the increasing pedagogic significance of translanguaging in English language education as well as draw attention to some of the gaps that the current research tries to bridge. In addition to Rasman's (2018) research in the Indonesian context, Abidin et al. (2026) demonstrated how appropriate use of translanguaging and critical thinking can contribute to learners' scaffolding and reflective practices in Indonesian EFL classrooms. Taken together, these findings indicate the increasing popularity of translanguaging in the ASEAN educational settings. Yet, few (if any) comparative studies have investigated translanguaging outside the ASEAN, e.g., in Iran, with a focus on relating the findings to the ASEAN context.

To address these gaps, this study examines students' and teachers' attitudes towards translanguaging in EAP and EGP classrooms in Iran and relates the results to multilingual pedagogy and teacher education in ASEAN settings.

Literature Review

Translanguaging

Translanguaging theory distinguishes between two perspectives: the external perspective, which is how society labels and views a speaker's use of two named languages, and the internal perspective, which is how a speaker appropriates and uses language features (Otheguy et al., 2015). Common terms used by society to describe people's language practices are traditional conceptions like "Language 1 (L1)" and "Language 2 (L2)," "native speaker," the idea of a pure, static "language," and even named languages like "French," "Spanish," and "Hindi." However, these are social constructions rather than linguistic facts (Duchêne & Heller, 2007; Heller, 2007; Otheguy Garcia, & Reid, 2015).

As the field has grown over time, the term "translanguaging" itself has undergone profound changes. It later widened to become an overarching sociolinguistic theory. For example, Garcia (2009) suggests to conceptualize translanguaging as a theory on speakers' whole repertoires and Otheguy et al. (2015) reiterated that language has to be conceptualized as a social phenomenon, not a cognitive one. Translanguaging, as originated from classroom practice, has developed into a tool for the analysis of multilingualism, language ideology, and identity.

Studies conducted on translanguaging

Recent scholarship on translanguaging yields a broader understanding of how translanguaging is viewed within the contexts of EAP and EMI classrooms. In Bangladesh, Saha and Rahman (2022) found that even though English was the official language of instruction in private universities, students used their first language during group tasks

and casual interactions. Teachers' perceptions of translanguaging were mixed, but overall students had a positive view and reported higher confidence when they were permitted to use it; however, although some teachers noted that translanguaging assisted in rapport building, the majority reported that it conflicted with what they had been trained in.

While a strength of this research was its focus on authentic classroom behaviors and students' affect, self-reported beliefs seemed to heavily influence the data. Similarly, Wang and Ai (2024) examined translanguaging practices in EMI intercultural communication classes in China, showing that instructors used it to facilitate understanding, check comprehension and develop rapport. However, as a result of the policies they were working with, teachers also expressed some concern about the extent of their use of translanguaging due to the expectation of English-only instruction within EMI classrooms. Wang and Ai's (2024) explored little regarding how students' and teachers' view of translanguaging might differ across various contexts. Memari (2024) found that students in translanguaging-based classes performed significantly better on English exams than students in a control group and reported higher confidence.

Aliakbari and Fadaeian (2023) examined Iranian EFL teachers' attitudes towards translanguaging in relation to their resilience and found that the teachers participating in their survey do sometimes encourage translanguaging to teach English. Each of these studies demonstrates pedagogical, affective, and/or professional affordances as well as gaps that need addressing, including the lack of longitudinal data and the prevalence of studies relying on self-report measures. Further research, especially in contexts such as Iran where monolingual

language policies remain while multilingualism flourishes, is justified by the identified gaps.

Most of the previous studies focusing on the Iran context examined teaching practices, learning outcomes or teachers' perceptions of translanguaging generally, rather than specifically in EAP and EGP university courses in Iran. Findings from all these studies, however, reinforce the pedagogical benefits of translanguaging but provide very little about the attitudes towards translanguaging in specific or cross-contextual teaching/learning settings of both teachers and students. This study intends to fulfill this gap by examining students' and teachers' perceptions of translanguaging in university EAP and EGP courses in Iran and garnering pedagogical insights and teacher-training lessons for other contexts such as the ASEAN countries.

Translanguaging dynamics in the ASEAN educational environments

The ASEAN region, given its multitude of languages and vibrant linguistic tapestry, presents ample opportunities for translanguaging practices to be examined (Sah & Kubota, 2022). According to Sah and Kubota (2022), translanguaging is frequently an unplanned response rather than a deliberate instructional practice when both teachers and students are required to abide by the strictures of English-only language policies. Similarly, research on translanguaging in South Asia remains limited, particularly regarding teachers' attitudes, beliefs, and classroom practices. (e.g., see Anderson & Lightfoot, 2021; Mohamed, 2020; Yusri et al., 2022).

These studies highlight the importance of adopting translanguaging practices in classrooms and teacher training programs in the ASEAN region. Examining translanguaging use in the

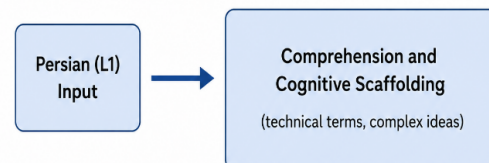
Iranian EFL context, in the study reported here, provides comparative evidence of pedagogical practices that occur in multilingual educational settings in Southeast Asia and becomes more pertinent considering the fact that Iran too shares similar language policies that encourage monolingual instruction despite the multilingual nature of the country.

Figure 1 depicts how translanguaging can be incorporated in the EAP as well as EGP classrooms:

Figure 1

Translanguaging in Academic versus Communicative Contexts

1. EAP (English for Academic Purposes)



2. EGP (English for General Purposes)



To situate the results shown in Figure 1 within translanguaging frameworks, it can be argued that while translanguaging has the potential to affect classroom practices (Garcia & Li, 2014), characteristics of classes, their purposes (EGP versus EAP), and micro-level official curricula play an influential role.

Research Questions/Objectives

The purpose of this study is to investigate how instructors and students perceive the application of translanguaging in EAP and EGP classrooms.

RQ1. What are students' attitudes toward translanguaging in Iranian EAP and EGP classroom settings?

RQ2. What are teachers' attitudes toward translanguaging in Iranian EAP and EGP classroom settings?

RQ3: Is there any difference between the attitudes of teachers and students in EAP versus EGP contexts?

Participants

The quantitative part involved 183 female Iranian students from Ershad Damavand University. In terms of gender, a homogeneous female sample was used due to the institutional setting of Ershad Damavand University where only female students are admitted to bachelor's programs. It should be highlighted that a homogeneous female sample is not a limitation of the current study because studies in EFL are valid if they are designed gender homogeneous. Some studies focusing on female learners and revealing strong results controlling gender as a moderator variable include Rind (2015).

Prior to filling out this study's questionnaire, a short explanation of translanguaging was given to the participants. Among 183 participants, 123 participants filled out the questionnaire online and 60 participants did it in person to help the researchers to obtain more participants. The participants ranged from 18 to 45 years of age and had MA or BA degrees. The students specialized in English and other disciplines.

In the qualitative phase, four female teachers from Iran (30-50 years old) were recruited through convenience sampling. Two of the teachers had PhD and two of them MA degrees. All teachers had more than ten years of experience in EAP and EGP instruction and had completed their academic studies at Iranian universities. Three had completed teacher training courses (e.g., TTC), while one had no formal English teacher training. This study aimed to investigate teachers' attitudes toward translanguaging without explicitly telling them that this was a study investigating their attitudes to translanguaging. The four teachers agreed on signing consent forms after receiving a brief description of translanguaging.

Table 1

Demographic Information of the Observed and Interviewed Teachers

Teachers	Age	Field of study/ Degree	Teaching experience (year)	Training courses
EAP1	47	MA in Management	11	Yes
EAP2	41	Ph.D in Architecture	12	No
EGP1	38	MA in English Literature	20	Yes
EGP2	35	Ph.D in TEFL	13	Yes

Methodology

For the quantitative phase of this study, data were collected with questionnaire distribution. The questionnaire had been evaluated by three evaluators in regard to the content, wording, and cultural suitability. A Cronbach's alpha reliability test was run for estimating the reliability of items

measuring internal consistency, and it proved strong for the translanguaging attitude scale overall ($\alpha = .87$). Qualitative data was obtained via classroom observations and individual interviews. For the observation part, observations were conducted within the space of a month. Each of the four classes of the university was observed for three (90 minutes) sessions, with the total number of 12, which is considered reasonable in many research studies. With full consent of the instructors in classes that they would be observed and filmed; one of the researchers sat and took careful note of all the spoken as well as the gestures in the classroom during all sessions.

In one of the observation sessions and with the full consent of instructors the study's questionnaire was given to all students that attended these classes and 60 students returned it immediately in the class besides the 123 students that filled in the questionnaire via a common link which was previously shared among students. For collecting information on students' opinion, and in order to measure the attitude toward translanguaging, a 5-point Likert scale ranging from (strongly disagree) to (strongly agree) was used. Since some of these students were EGP and some EAP, they had different backgrounds and proficiency. That can affect students' attitude toward the subject matter which makes the basis for comparison in different educational settings. Following the observation sessions and after reviewing the notes, interviews were performed with all the four instructors.

Two of them taught EAP and the other two taught EGP. They were interviewed in person in the Ershad Damavand University and took between 20-30 minutes for each one. The entire interview was in Persian, which is the mother tongue of the participants, and confidentiality was reassured before every interview session

assured. Braun and Clarke's (2006) qualitative analysis was employed to analyze all the data. First the data was coded individually, then it was shared among all researchers to make sure that all the codes and subthemes had a proper merging of initial codes.

Findings and Discussion

Students' attitude

First, the overall viewpoint of students toward translanguaging, as expressed in the questionnaire, was examined. The investigated constructs included translanguaging in general, its educational benefits, and students' perceptions.

Based on the information in Tables 2 and 3, students in both EAP and EGP classes generally responded positively to the use of translanguaging. In Table 2, 63.7% of students agreed that bilingual people tend to move between languages naturally. The mean score for that item was also fairly high, which backs up the idea that students did not find this practice unusual or problematic. One particular item, which scored the highest overall with a mean of 3.87, suggested that many students felt translanguaging was especially useful for those who are not as confident in English.

That kind of response shows, at least in this case, that learners believe switching between languages can help support classmates who may otherwise fall behind. Also, quite a few students said they found it helpful in group discussions and collaborative work, which implies they see it as something that makes group tasks more manageable, not just something used by teachers.

Table 2*Proportion of EAP Students' Responses to the Questions*

Questions	Totally agreed	Agreed	Neutral	Disagreed	Totally disagreed	Mean
6. Bilingual students naturally translanguage in the classroom.	6.6 %	63.7 %	27.5 %	2.2 %	0	3.747
7. Translanguaging is a sign of poor second-language competency.	1.1 %	13.2 %	24.2 %	54.9 %	6.6 %	3.472
8. It is appropriate to use translanguaging in the classroom.	4.4 %	70.3 %	13.2 %	12.1 %	0	3.670
9. Translanguaging is crucial to acquiring a new language.	5.5 %	58.2 %	20.9 %	11%	4.4 %	3.495

Table 3*Proportion of EGP Students' Responses to the Question*

Questions	Totally agreed	Agreed	Neutral	Disagreed	Totally disagreed	Mean
1. It is critical that educators convey topics through translanguaging.	26.1 %	43.5 %	20.7 %	5.4 %	4.3 %	3.815
2. It is important that educators convey guidance via translanguaging.	19.6 %	50 %	16.3 %	8.7 %	5.4 %	3.695
3. Using translanguaging effectively while providing feedback to students is crucial for teachers.	8.7 %	48.9 %	27.2 %	12 %	3.3 %	3.478
4. It is essential that educators utilize translanguaging to compliment pupils.	25 %	44.6 %	15.2 %	8.7 %	6.5 %	3.728
5. To foster a stronger relationship with their pupils, teachers should employ translanguaging.	25 %	44.6 %	13 %	12 %	5.4 %	3.717

Looking at all the results one can say that most students in both EAP and EGP classes think translanguaging is helpful and that should be part of the class. In Iran, many students have different first languages or speak English at different levels. Hence, using both languages in

class can help their understanding of the content and language. It also makes them more relaxed and ready to speak or take up group work.

As displayed in the aforementioned tables above, independent samples t-test revealed a

Table 4

Independent-Sample T-Test Results on Students' Attitudes Towards Translanguaging in EAP and EGP Classes

Variable	Class	Frequency	Mean	Standard Deviation
Students' attitudes towards translanguaging	EAP	91	3.17	.8
	EGP	92	3.95	.9

Table 5

The T-Test Results

Variable	Class	T-test	Degrees of freedom	Significance level	Mean difference	95% confidence interval	
						Standard error	Minimum
Students' attitudes towards translanguaging	EAP/EGP	6.19	181	$p < .001$	.78	.126	-0.7493 to 0.8107

statistically significant difference in students' attitudes toward translanguaging between EAP ($M = 3.17$) and EGP ($M = 3.95$); $t(181) = 6.19$, $p < .001$.

This indicates that students in the EGP class had significantly more positive attitudes toward translanguaging than their EAP peers. This finding could be due to the fact that in the Iranian EGP context with the communicative, less content-heavy focus of EGP classes, students are more familiar with challenges in communication that cannot be addressed through the use of L2. In contrast, EAP courses are mostly centered on academic texts with little emphasis on communication between students and teachers. In this situation, students are less likely to encounter and navigate challenges that L2 alone cannot fully address.

Teachers' attitude to translanguaging

The data from the interviews with EAP and EGP instructors were coded and evaluated, and transcriptions were done to answer the second and third study questions.

Theme A: Attitudes on translanguaging

One of the first things noted was that teacher-initiated translanguaging was heavily dependent on two factors: the type of class being taught and the purpose of the lesson. As far as a class type, and if the main purpose was to ensure comprehension of the course material, many teachers turned to Persian to clarify difficult terms, but this was not something that was done in all lessons, rather in those there was a need for that. Course type was also significant, where the teachers were more likely to employ

Table 6

Themes and Relevant Categories derived from the EAP and EGP Instructors' Interviews

Sample Verbatim Statement	Codes	Categories	Themes
"I rather use Persian more during grammar-heavy lessons in EAP classes"	L1-use EAP, EGP, skill-based; Lesson-dependent; Subject matter influence; Pedagogical goal alignment	1. Type of class and lesson	Attitudes on translanguaging
"When the goal is vocabulary acquisition, I find that a quick L1 equivalent saves time"		2. Lesson objective (vocabulary learning, grammar, etc.)	
"With my beginner students, I naturally slip into Persian because their limited English creates a barrier."	Proficiency-driven switching; Scaffolding beginners; switching; Comprehension monitoring; scaffolding; cultural awareness	1. Students' proficiency	Intentional/ unintentional translanguaging usage
"I switched to Persian when I see the blank stare"		2. Students' comprehension	

translanguaging in an EAP class than in an EGP class, due to the content-focused nature of EAP versus the language-focused nature of EGP. Both course types showed positive attitudes toward translanguaging on behalf of the teachers, with the teachers saying students were more likely to understand.

The EAP teachers showed particular insight into the usefulness of Persian on topics with heavy or technical content, as one teacher stated,

"Students' proficiency levels in universities are generally low, so I can't expect students to understand technical texts, which are already hard in Persian. It is inevitable to teach certain technical phrases and meanings in Persian since my primary objective is for students to grasp the material they are learning."

This statement by another EAP teacher echoed as well. Visual aids could be helpful, but some concepts, particularly technical terms, required Persian to make the subject matter readily understood. EGP teachers, though, were not completely in favor of L1 use in a classroom setting, with one stating,

"Even though I think comprehension comes first, I still think the main focus of class should be on English, and I would prefer to avoid us to take advantage of this excellent, unique opportunity to practice their English rather than waste it. I would want to refrain from utilizing Persian in my courses unless the students are extremely low proficient."

Theme B: Intentional/ unintentional translanguaging usage

This theme indicates that the type of class the teachers were teaching as well as the prior English proficiency of the students were the two main factors influencing the practice of translanguaging in the classroom. If the students are generally adept at English, then the teachers tended to stick to English. But if, as is likely, the students were not grasping a concept, the teachers would turn to translanguaging for more clarity. All teachers mentioned using Persian deliberately; both EAP teachers did. Their stated reason was that certain terms made no sense in English and were therefore best explained in Persian so that the students were guaranteed comprehension (i.e., they did not value language immersion over comprehension).

EGP teachers, however, stated that translanguaging was not always used with intentionality, as one EGP teacher noted,

“I intentionally utilize Persian at the start of the semester to gauge my pupils’ English competence. Later on, though, one language takes over the classroom. In addition, I believe that speaking Persian in class is inevitable, and I unknowingly speak both languages.”

Students at both levels of the courses said that they supported teachers’ use of translanguaging; it was simply a useful practice for them.

An interesting statistic that can be taken from this part of the study is the data regarding six related questions which showed students of both levels were in agreement over their support

of L1 use in the classroom.

Still, there is a bigger issue at play. Students in both EAP and EGP classes responded positively to the idea of teachers using translanguaging. Most found it not only helpful but also practical. One section of the survey—six related items—clearly showed that students felt good about using their own languages in the classroom, regardless of whether they were in EAP or EGP.

Most language education systems tend to push a monolingual model (De Costa et al., 2020), which limits how much students can draw on from their full linguistic backgrounds. If we look at things through the lens of translanguaging, the classroom starts to feel more inclusive. Instead of treating English as the only valid language, this view allows students to draw on all the tools they already have such as language, culture, and even gestures to express themselves.

Among teachers, views were slightly more split. EAP instructors tended to embrace translanguaging, especially since their focus was usually on making sure students fully understood the material. EGP teachers, on the other hand, were more selective. They often wanted students to get as much English-speaking practice as possible, imagining their classes as a place to mimic “native-like” environments.

These ideas are backed up by other studies from different parts of the world. For example, Chang (2019), Chen et al. (2019), He et al. (2016), and others have shown that using students’ full language and symbol resources can help them grow in both academic skills and communication. In Puerto Rico, Carroll and Mazak (2017) examined a psychology university course with translanguaging challenging language ideologies. In Hong Kong, He et al.

(2016) studied a math seminar where the teacher used both language and visual aids to explain complex ideas. Students were able to benefit more out of the lessons that way.

Academic writing has also seen some creative approaches. In one Taiwanese class, Chen et al. (2019) had students write four pieces: one in Chinese, one in English, one with Google Translate, and one revised. The ones that involved some form of translanguaging had more content, stronger word choice, and clearer opinions. It turns out that blending languages—especially with digital tools—helps students work with both their L1 and L2 more effectively (see e.g., Canagarajah, 2013).

Many universities still expect English-only instruction, and that creates real limitations. There is little open discussion of how translanguaging fits in, which means the practice remains underused or even frowned upon (Chang, 2019).

Although translanguaging in our studies showed clear benefits for learner engagement and enhanced communicative output, some scholars caution that L1 use can detract from L2 exposure and lead to overreliance or interference (Kucukali & Koçbaşı, 2021). Furthermore, systematic reviews in EFL settings find that empirical support for proficiency gains, especially in grammar and vocabulary, is equivocal or limited (see Huang & Chalmers, 2023). Thus, to address such concerns, pedagogical designs should include explicit meta-linguistic reflection, clear boundaries for L1 use, and targeted teacher training in translanguaging theory and practice.

To extend findings in the Iranian education, it should be noted that empirical studies from

the ASEAN nations, such as the Philippines and Indonesia, reveal parallel results in terms of translanguaging benefits. A compelling recent study from Thailand highlights the shift away from a monoglossic ideology in the ASEAN context. Thongwichit and Ulla (2024) investigated the attitudes of university EFL teachers regarding English as the sole medium of instruction. Given the monolingual mandate in the educational setting, the teachers were not only aligned with translanguaging but also actively used the approach in their classrooms as vital scaffolding for teaching their students. The teachers noted that translanguaging could encourage a safer and more inclusive learning environment, as it empowered learners and reduced the negative effects of affective filters.

Similarly, in the ASEAN educational context, Rasman (2018) documented Indonesian EFL students' translanguaging practices in meaningful negotiations taking place in various communicative contexts. The findings show multilingual competency improvement. The hierarchical valuation of languages in the classroom, however, was noted as a challenge that is shaped by the socio-political status of English, Indonesian, and Javanese. Perhaps the most significant contribution of works from ASEAN countries is the highlighting of the coexistence of translanguaging within officially monolingual spaces.

Such important observations and findings were also documented in our study of the Iranian context, albeit with a unique twist due to the socio-political status of English in Iran. In this setting, opposing discourses surround English language learning. On the one hand, devaluing English-language learning is perceived by dominant discourses as a form of resistance to Western hegemony; on the other hand, many

Iranians willingly send their children to English classes to facilitate migration opportunities. While it would be logical for the government to promote translanguaging in language education in order to enhance the status of local languages, the authorities' overall resistance to English has made it nearly impossible for education policymakers in Iran to even consider promoting translanguaging practices.

Additionally, ASEAN policies, such as Thailand's English-only mandates (Jindapitak, 2019), enforce monolingualism, similar to Iran's Persian-dominant tendencies. This suppresses multilingualism, leading to teacher resistance and reduced learner confidence. Adopting flexible policies aligned with UNESCO's education policies for inclusive learning environments could mitigate Iran's monolingual constraints, enhance comprehension without undermining L2 goals as indicated by our study and many of those conducted in ASEAN educational settings.

Recent studies across ASEAN contexts found that translanguaging strategies are an effective resource in language education. They could reduce cognitive load, enhance students' confidence, participation, and identity (Miftakh et al., 2025; Putra et al., 2025). Libradilla (2024) reported positive student and parent perceptions of translanguaging and Abidin et al. (2026) highlighted its role in critical dialogue and reflection. Collectively, these studies frame translanguaging as a purposeful teaching strategy. This aligns with the present Iranian study, where translanguaging emerged as both student-driven and pedagogically meaningful.

The Iranian results demonstrate that translanguaging is not only a student-driven practice but also a pedagogical one in a meaningful

context that aids students in comprehending complex EAP situations. For ASEAN teacher education, Iranian findings offer valuable data on L1 use to enhance L2 acquisition rather than impede it. The Iranian study also shows the limits of monoglossic English-only policies to constrain translanguaging in the face of evidence of classroom utility, a problematic issue that is paralleled by ideological limitations in ASEAN countries such as Thailand and Indonesia.

Implications

The findings have some implications for teacher education programs in the way that strategies associated with translanguaging should be incorporated as a pedagogical tool in EAP and EGP teacher preparation, highlighting scaffolding in pre- and in-service professional development courses. Since the study showed discrepancies existing in EAP and EGP contexts, teacher educators should emphasize the need for adapting translanguaging practices as required by course objectives, learners' proficiencies, and learners' needs rather than implementing it uniformly.

ASEAN educational contexts would benefit from the results of this Iranian-focused educational context, where monoglossic ideology in English language education and teacher training courses is still prevalent, just as in many ASEAN countries. As such, guided by the findings of this study, incorporating translanguaging workshops into in-service and pre-service teacher training courses and professional development programs can benefit teachers' language-teaching practices in this region. While several studies on translanguaging in ASEAN educational settings highlight the lack of practical implementation and the absence of

a theoretical framework for translanguaging as a language teaching pedagogy (Gatil, 2021; Rasman, 2018), incorporating translanguaging into in-service and pre-service teacher education can serve as a crucial step toward dealing with this challenge in practice.

Given that tensions with regards to policy restrictions, proficiencies and lack of L1 training also affect most of the ASEAN countries, the case of Iran suggested that, under similar circumstances, a systematic approach can be adopted to facilitate teachers' use of translanguaging through organized workshops, course-specific pedagogical interventions (EAP vs. EGP), and theory-driven approaches. Additionally, to address policymakers' resistance to translanguaging in the ASEAN educational contexts, providing more empirical data from ASEAN multilingual classrooms can foster discourses that reframes translanguaging as a bridge and not a barrier to proficient English language education.

Conclusion

This study examined how both students and teachers in Iranian EAP and EGP classes think about translanguaging, addressing a gap in understanding its use in multicultural spaces relevant to ASEAN. The student responses were largely positive. The teachers, too, were mostly in agreement, though their positions were more nuanced. Most saw translanguaging as useful, especially when the topic being taught was technical or abstract. But at the same time, some hesitated. In EAP classes, where content is often dense and more academically focused, teachers seemed more willing to bring Persian into the discussion. Theoretically, this validates multilingual approaches valuing students'

linguistic repertoires. In contrast, EGP teachers leaned toward sticking with English, aiming for more speaking practice. This highlights the need for teacher training in translanguaging.

The study concludes that translanguaging has potential in Iranian education, offering lessons for ASEAN, and has implications for teachers, teacher educators, and policymakers to incorporate pedagogical translanguaging strategies in pre- and continuing professional development programs, educational textbooks, and language curricula in multilingual and multicultural spaces. Future ASEAN-focused research can investigate the implementation of translanguaging, as well as the constraints of policy and pedagogical development models in EGP and EAP settings.

The authors believe that translanguaging has the potential to craft equitable learning environments in multicultural and multilingual spaces. Translanguaging should be viewed as an approach to highlight how students communicate meaning. When used strategically, it helps students follow the content of a lesson and maintain their focus in class.

This research is constrained by its exclusive focus on female participants, its dependence on self-reported responses, and the limited number of teachers involved.

Positive student attitudes and teachers' cautions regarding translanguaging in Iranian educational settings could align with UNESCO's Global Education 2030 Agenda, particularly Target 4.5 on inclusive education. The findings of this study, grounded on UNESCO's call for culturally responsive pedagogy (Iwuanyamwu, 2023), have implications for ASEAN teacher training programs to incorporate such

multilingual-supporting approaches that build on learners' repertoires rather than repressing them.

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