

## PERCEPTIONS OF TRANSLANGUAGING AMONG THE STUDENTS AND TEACHERS OF EMI CLASSROOMS IN POLAND

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**ABSTRACT:** The central objective of this paper is to examine and understand the perceptions of translanguaging among the students and teachers of Polish EMI classrooms. The paper begins with a brief introduction to the topics of foreign language teaching and bilingual provision in Poland to familiarize the readers with language education in Poland. The issues of translanguaging and English Medium Instruction are defined on the succeeding pages, with a comparison of the latter term to Content and Language Integrated Learning. The empirical study is outlined then. Two cohorts of respondents: students and teachers from three different schools were observed and interrogated with the use of surveys and questionnaires about their perceptions of translanguaging in the EMI classrooms. In addition, several statements concerning their attitudes towards the model of translanguaging have been delineated in the last part of the article to validate the quantitative results of the study.

**KEY WORDS:** translanguaging, EMI, attitudes, perceptions, language education

### *PERCEPCIONES DE TRANSLAGUAGING ENTRE ESTUDIANTES Y PROFESORES DE LAS AULAS DE EMI EN POLONIA*

*RESUMEN:* El objetivo central de este trabajo es examinar y comprender las percepciones de translanguaging entre los estudiantes y profesores de las aulas polacas de emi. El artículo comienza con una breve introducción a los temas de la enseñanza de idiomas extranjeros y la provisión bilingüe en Polonia para familiarizar a los lectores con la educación en idiomas en Polonia. Los temas de translanguaging y English Medium Instruction se definen en las páginas siguientes, con una comparación del último término con Content and Language Integrated Learning. El estudio empírico se describe a continuación. Se observaron e interrogaron a dos cohortes de encuestados: estudiantes y docentes de tres escuelas diferentes con el uso de encuestas y cuestionarios sobre sus percepciones de la translanguaging en las aulas de EMI. Además, en la última parte del artículo

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*se han delineado varias declaraciones sobre sus actitudes hacia el modelo de translanguaging para validar los resultados cuantitativos del estudio.*

*PALABRAS CLAVE: translanguaging, emi, actitudes, percepciones, educación de idiomas*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In order to better understand foreign language teaching and bilingual provision in Poland and other countries of Central and Eastern Europe, one needs to consider how the educational context has been shaped by significant political transformations occurring in the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. With the fall of communism in 1989 and Poland's membership in the European Union becoming a reality in 2004, learning foreign languages suddenly started to be perceived as a necessity one could only dream of in the past forty years. The role of English, regarded as an elitist language, has significantly grown and evolved at an unprecedented speed and level (Romanowski, 2016; Romanowski, 2019). English alongside other languages (German, French and Spanish) is considered to be the prevalent means of instruction in bilingual programmes that have sprung up like mushrooms across the country. At the same time various international schools offering programmes such as: the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme or the European Baccalaureate, started to exist on the Polish educational market. In such contexts English Medium Instruction (EMI) remains the predominant methodology. For less privileged students, who cannot afford high tuition fees, bilingual classrooms in state schools have been available for a very long time although their popularity rose severely with the Education System Reform of 1999. Needless to say that English is regarded as the most favoured foreign language. This language has witnessed the dominance and ubiquity at all educational levels in Poland. Its omnipresence is not only visible in regular foreign language classes, but also through various innovative approaches which originated in the European Union in the 1990's and are still efficiently being implemented nowadays. It was Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) that revolutionised the Polish bilingual classrooms and became the most popular medium of bilingual provision at the beginning of the new millennium (Romanowski, 2018).

In this paper, I aim to scrutinise the perceptions of translanguaging as a pedagogical principle among the students and teachers of EMI classrooms in Poland. The concept of translanguaging is understood as a languaging practice integrating other linguistic resources on a pedagogical principle that deliberately draws on the students' plurilingual competencies. It is expected that such linguistic behaviour positively affects the acquisition of taught content and further language proficiency development of the whole repertoire (Romanowski, 2019). This study reflects research conducted among the students and teachers of three Warsaw schools employing EMI methodology. The students and teachers were interviewed and observed in the period of three months from January to March 2019.

## 2. DEBUNKING THE MYTHS OF TRANSLANGUAGING

The practitioners of bi- and multilingual education both in North America and Europe have by this time become very familiar with the concept of translanguaging. Numerous definitions have been put forward and multiple studies have been conducted in order to show its full potential and the many benefits it brings about for education in bi- and multilingual communities (Williams, 1996; Garcia, 2009; Blackledge & Creese, 2010; Baker, 2011; Li Wei, 2011). In the past few years, the concept was also successfully researched in Asia, Australia and Africa although when considering its beginnings it has to be clearly stated that it originated in Wales and was coined for the purpose of observations of Welsh-English bilinguals in secondary education in order to define their complex linguistic behaviours exhibited in their receptive and productive use of the two languages (Romanowski, 2019). Baker defined translanguaging as a process of creating meanings, shaping experiences, understanding and gaining knowledge with the use of two or more languages (2011: 288). Languages are used dynamically and in a functionally integrated way in translanguaging, hence Lewis, Jones and Baker (2012) rightly stipulate that translanguaging involves effective communication, cognitive activity as well as linguistic production.

According to Mignolo (2000) and Li Wei (2011) the prefix *trans* means transdisciplinary consequences of *linguaging*, which when contrasted with *language*, implies the many dynamic actions involving human ways of use and functioning in the language reality. Such a model considers language as a fluid construct, functioning within social, cultural, historical and political contexts (Bloomaert, 2010). Pennycook (2010) posits that the language needs to be interpreted as a creative action, and not just a structure we derive from.

In the same vein, Canagarajah (2011) understands translanguaging as a phenomenon entailing frequent “movement between languages”, and perceiving various languages forming a repertoire or one integrated linguistic system. Cook (2008) and Franceschini (2011) consider translanguaging as an ability which is part of multi-competence of bi- and multilingual speakers whose life, minds and actions are distinct from those of monolingual speakers, since two languages function in their minds, and their complex interactions are always visible in the background.

In many instances, translanguaging is wrongly labelled as a pedagogical dimension of code switching or just reframing code switching. Thus, it should be implied clearly that translanguaging entails the formation and application of a speakers’ utterance, which cannot be assigned to a traditional definition of language, and it is always a complete speaker’s linguistic system that gets involved (García & Li Wei, 2014; Romanowski, 2019). In translanguaging unlike code switching one does not focus on an individual language or languages, but on speakers’ linguistic activities. Speakers are said to have one repertoire, from which they draw necessary elements, forms, without wondering which language they belong to (Romanowski, 2018).

On that account translanguaging is an activity manifesting the complexity of interactions among speakers of divergent linguistic experiences which were previously

hidden by a national identity and now they are released (Romanowski, 2018). Here individual languages such as: English, Spanish or Polish are defined as those which have the social reality because they are constructed socially, therefore they belong to particular speakers, they are not political property, neither are they the property of particular countries or regions (Otheguy, Garcia & Reid 2015).

### 3. ENGLISH MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION (EMI)

EMI (English Medium of Instruction) is defined as providing instruction in English in contexts where English is not the language commonly spoken (Dearden & Macaro, 2016; Macaro, 2018). It is a rapidly growing global phenomenon, the demand for which seems to have spread throughout the world only in the past twenty years. Brumfit (2004) asserts that English is already the language of education and the most dominant L2 medium of instruction in Europe forecasting its position to strengthen further. It was however in the 1990s when English-medium teaching in European universities grew exponentially (Coleman, 2006).

I understand EMI as the use of the English language to teach academic subjects, in countries such as Poland, that is where the first language of the majority of the population is other than English. This seems to be in line with the fast-moving worldwide shift in non-anglophone states where English seized to be taught as a foreign language (EFL), but it became the medium of instruction (EMI) for academic subjects such as: Science, Maths, Geography, etc.

It is crucial to distinguish between EMI and Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) as these two concepts are often confused. CLIL is deeply rooted in the European ideal of plurilingual competence for EU citizens. On the contrary, EMI has no contextual origin. Whereas CLIL may refer to any second, additional or foreign language (L2), e.g. English, German, Spanish, Italian, etc., EMI clearly underlines the significant role of English as the medium of instruction at any educational levels. In addition, CLIL as an objective sets out furthering both content and language, in EMI there is concentration on the acquisition of grammatical structures. The main objective of EMI programmes is the development of communication skills and intercultural relations with native and non-native speakers of English (Dearden, 2015). Last but not least, it should be highlighted that although CLIL has often been used to describe programmes within primary and secondary education, EMI can be implemented at any stage of the educational cycle (Simpson, 2017; Toth, 2018).

Although the factors for EMI growth vary across the continents and countries, the move towards teaching in English comes at grassroots level. There are practical reasons for this, for most academic research is published in English (over 90% in international, high-impact publications). So if students want to stay current with their field, it makes sense for them to learn in English, given that the content is mostly in English. In many technical fields, much of the content and vocabulary is also in English, as are students' dissertations and research. EMI is increasingly being used in universities, secondary schools and even primary schools. Despite this growth, there

is little research into the impact of EMI on how much English students learn, and how much content they absorb. Not enough is known with regard to the consequences of using English rather than the first language (L1) on teaching and learning. Provision is definitely outpacing empirical research. This is a major concern because it makes it difficult to tell whether EMI actually achieves its goal of improving students' English.

Dearden (2015) also makes one more thing clear that the term itself is so new that no proper definition exists. Hence, the notion is sometimes misunderstood in various educational contexts. As a result, EMI is wrongly associated with teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) through English implying that the interaction and texts used for instruction in EFL should avoid any recourse to the students' first language. It is also mistakenly perceived as part of ESP (English for Specific Purposes) programmes where courses are specifically designed to aid the students with undertaking particular professions. In addition, EMI often misleads researchers and practitioners into believing that it is similar to EAP (English for Academic Purposes) designed to provide students with academic lexis and discourse enabling them to function at a university where academic subjects are delivered in English.

#### 4. MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY

Translanguaging is a relatively new and under-researched concept in Poland, for the fact that the country is monolingual (Romanowski, 2018; Romanowski, 2019). Furthermore, it is hard to search for a bi- or multilingual context where translanguaging is usually in operation. Having analysed the Polish system of education and being familiar with various educational institutions in the country, the only choice for research is either secondary schools offering a wide selection of programmes in English or other foreign languages, or tertiary education. Along the same lines, since the EMI methodology has not been investigated exponentially as such and not many projects have taken off the ground in Europe yet, it seemed ideal to take a closer look at the perceptions of translanguaging among the students and teachers of EMI classrooms in Poland, bearing in mind the fact that it is still not known how effective this type of instruction might prove and what learners and teachers think of it.

##### *4.1. Participants*

Two cohorts of respondents from three different schools were involved for the purpose of the study aimed at investigating the perceptions of translanguaging in EMI classrooms. The first studied group involved 27 teachers employed in three Warsaw secondary schools. There were 19 women and 8 men, 5 of which were native speakers of English fluent in Polish and the remaining 22 teachers were all Polish graduates of English with additional qualifications for teaching the content subjects, e.g. Geography, Maths, Chemistry, etc. Their level of English was very high: C1 or C2 according to Common European Reference for Languages (CEFR). Hence, their command was sufficient to provide the instruction in English.

The second investigated group consisted of 98 secondary school learners –55 girls and 43 boys at the age of 18-19 enrolled in three Warsaw secondary schools. They were all native speakers of Polish in the final year of secondary education. All the students were aiming at IBDP, hence their proficiency in English was at least B2, and in most of the cases it had already reached C1. Otherwise, they would not have been able to absorb the amount of information imparted during the classes, write essays or prepare projects in English. It is also worth emphasising that all the students had a good level of one or two other foreign languages, e.g. German or Spanish.

#### *4.2. Methodology*

The research at hand, based on linguistic ethnography, is framed as a case study, which included questionnaires, interviews and observations of both students and teachers. Two types of questionnaires were used to address the students' and the teachers' responses. The first instrument, including only three questions, was a short survey meant for the students who were supposed to select one out of three or four multiple-choice answers. The idea of this brief questionnaire was to measure their exposure and verify their general attitude towards translanguaging. To provide a clearer picture of their perceptions, the groups of students were observed for three months from January to March 2019. Recordings were made during the observations, which later served as examples of their opinions on translanguaging (discussed in section 5.1). In total ca. 24 hours of audio recordings were analysed to better understand the complex nature of translanguaging as used by the students of the three Warsaw secondary schools.

On the other hand, the teachers were exposed to recorded interviews. All the 27 teachers were interviewed and recorded in the period of January-March 2019. A questionnaire consisting of 9 statements was administered where the teachers were instructed to mark their responses on the 5-point Likert-type scale. Each teacher read the statements out loud with the interviewer and marked their answers according to their understanding and interpretation of translanguaging in the EMI classroom. This helped enormously in checking their perceptions regarding the pedagogy of translanguaging in the EMI classroom. Each interview lasted from 20 to 30 minutes as all the teachers gladly provided comments to the statements, and they also asked a number of questions so as to better understand the aim of the study.

### 5. DISCUSSION

#### *5.1. The students' attitude and exposure to translanguaging*

The students participating in the study were asked three simple questions on the operation of the translanguaging pedagogy in the classroom. The objective was to collect as much information about their perceptions of translanguaging, and hopefully discover whether their attitudes are for or against it. To achieve the envisaged results, the following questions were asked:

1. Do you use a combination of Polish/English in your Geography/Maths/Chemistry lessons?
2. Do other teachers/students use a combination of Polish/English in your Geography/Maths/Chemistry lessons?
3. Do you think teachers/students should use a combination of Polish/English in your Geography/Maths/Chemistry lessons?

For each question, three or four answers were suggested for the students to choose from. Limiting the number of responses was supposed to narrow the focus of the study. Hence, the responses were limited to Never/Sometimes/Always in case of Question 1, Never/Sometimes/Always/ I don't know for Question 2 and Yes/No/I don't know in Question 3.

Survey	Students' responses (N = 98)
<b>Question 1</b>	Never (22) Sometimes (47) Always (29)
<b>Question 2</b>	Never (21) Sometimes (38) Always (30) I don't know (9)
<b>Question 3</b>	Yes (79) No (9) I don't know (10)

Table 1. *Students' responses to a mini-survey*

First of all, it must be stated that the term of translanguaging was not introduced to the students as such. The concept was presented descriptively by means of a very simple language where more examples were given than theoretical definitions as this way of demonstrating the pedagogical benefits of translanguaging seemed more efficient in the studied context.

As can be observed in the table, the general perception of translanguaging is very positive. When asked whether it is used at all, around 77% of the students responded that they took advantage of it either always or sometimes in the classroom. Only 23% of them showed negative attitudes, which in my opinion, resulted from their not realising of the full potential of translanguaging.

Similarly, in Question 2, the respondents expressed their approval when providing answers. Around 70% of them were sure translanguaging was applied by other teachers and students, and they were fully aware of its existence in the classrooms. Only 20%

of them stated firmly it was not used. Last but not least, 10% of the students remained unsure.

Eventually, by replying to Question 3 the students proved to be in favour of using translanguaging in the classroom environment more often. 80% of them agreed that translanguaging should be incorporated as a frequent practice by both teachers and students. Only 10% of the respondents were against the idea, which would suggest, in their view, sticking to English only. Unfortunately, another 10% of the students had no opinion. That would suggest their indifferent attitude towards translanguaging.

To provide a clearer picture of the collected responses and in order to support them as well as make use of the recorded material, it appears important to deliver a few example opinions and/or statements from the transcribed audio recordings. The results of the mini-survey, which the students of the EMI classrooms were exposed to, show the general approval of the translanguaging pedagogy in the studied context. This can be validated by some randomly selected statements from the pool of recordings. No negative opinions were voiced.

*My teacher demands a strict use of English during the classes and I think we learn more and much faster in this way. Polish is also helpful as some texts for homework are in my native language.*

It is easily noticed that using both languages is not an issue for the students. They are aware of the benefits of the constant use of English perceived as the only means of communication in the EMI classrooms. Polish, as implied in the statement above, takes on the role of auxiliary medium. It is not the language of instruction, but it helps in readings and homework.

*We have been forced to use English since the first lesson. However, I use my native language when I communicate with my classmates.*

English is imposed in the EMI methodology, hence it should be treated as the only medium of instruction. However, switching to Polish is a frequent practice especially while talking to classmates. This artificial use of English outside the teaching tasks would seem unnatural among the speakers of the same tongue.

*I have been learning English for 15 years so it is natural for me to speak this language most of the time.*

For most of the students adhering to the constant use of English is an inherent way of functioning in an EMI classroom. The fluency achieved after 15 years of studying the language makes it feasible and reasonable.

*I only speak Polish when my colleagues don't understand the instructions. This sometimes happens, because instructions can be long.*

Polish, as indicated earlier, functions as an additional means of communication, and it is only used when necessary in case of long and ambiguous instructions.

*I spend a lot of time speaking English outside school, but if necessary I can switch to Polish, and I do, mostly when we have pair work.*

Some students have also reported using English outside the school hours, but they also admit that they can easily switch to Polish when necessary, especially while



working in pairs. This again proves the hypothesis that speaking another tongue in a group of speakers of the same language looks unreal and counterfeit.

*I switch between English and Polish when I don't understand what someone has said or when I explain a word or a phrase to my classmate.*

In cases of miscomprehension or the lack of understanding the students tend to use Polish. It is also frequently spoken in situations when classmates require help. This sustains the opinion that the mother tongue performs a secondary, supplementary or even subordinate role.

*I switch to Polish only when I have forgotten a phrase or I find it hard to give a definition of a new concept. I think it helps me a lot.*

Translanguaging between English and Polish can be viewed as a tool for clarification. Obviously, it does help in the development of students' vocabulary and communicative skills.

*I try to speak English because it improves my speaking skills, but I always change to Polish when a new concept is discussed and I am not sure if I understand everything correctly.*

The students are fully aware of the fact that speaking English will enhance their proficiency and fluency, hence they employ it as the primary mode of communication. In order to avoid potential misunderstandings Polish is used but only for a limited period of time as it is English that prevails.

*When we work on a new project, for example, a poster or a presentation, we always start in English and we tend to speak Polish when necessary. We just use both languages as long as the teacher allows for it.*

In some cases, the students switch between the languages only when they are allowed to. What is more, they use one language for a particular task, e.g. doing a poster or a presentation whereas they tend to speak the other having changed an activity. This is exactly when the full potential of translanguaging gets revealed.

## 5.2 The teachers' perceptions of translanguaging

The teachers who gladly agreed to participate in the study and whose classes were observed in the period of three months reacted to nine statements by revealing their perceptions of translanguaging on the 5-point Likert-type scale. The questionnaire concerned the use and presence of translanguaging in the EMI classroom, but also outside of it. The statements were part of an interview and each teacher was questioned separately to obtain unbiased responses. In addition, they were allowed to ask some extra questions as they were not familiar with the translanguaging pedagogy, either. Those who graduated from English mentioned that code switching was the term they had heard about earlier, and in fact, translanguaging reminded them of it. The interviewer highlighted the difference and stressed the educational value of translanguaging for bi- and multilingual education as well as the most essential differences between the two concepts. The interviewees were expected to react to

the following statements and mark each of them as either (1) *I strongly agree* or (2) *I agree* or (3) *I don't know* or (4) *I disagree* or (5) *I strongly disagree*:

1. I view the use of translanguaging pedagogy in the EMI classroom as appropriate;
2. Translanguaging is frequent in the EMI classroom;
3. In my view, translanguaging is a socially acceptable activity in daily life;
4. My translanguaging is professional;
5. Translanguaging can be viewed as a tool for clarification in teaching in the EMI classroom;
6. In general, it is a positive feature enhancing the process of teaching in the EMI classroom;
7. Translanguaging may help in the development of students' communicative skills in the
8. EMI classroom;
9. (8) All teachers should translanguage more in the EMI classroom;
10. (9) Students should be encouraged to use translanguaging.

Each statement was thoroughly analysed with the interrogated teachers. In the first statement the teachers were expected to mark their way of perceiving appropriateness of the translanguaging pedagogy in the classroom. The second statement addressed the issue of the presence of translanguaging. The teachers had to decide whether how frequent a practice it was in the EMI classroom. In the following statement, the interviewer was interested in the social acceptability of translanguaging in daily life. Statement 4 concentrated on the teachers' professionalism, hence translanguaging was to be rated as either professional or unprofessional. The concept of professionalism, for the purpose of the studied context, referred to a teacher's ethos. The fifth statement addressed the usefulness of translanguaging as a teaching tool. It was also important to know whether the teachers viewed translanguaging as a positive feature in the classroom, hence a score had to be given for the following statement (6). The next statement (7) was related to the usefulness of translanguaging in the development of students' communicative skills. Also, statement 8 indicated the question whether teachers should translanguage more or not. Last but not least, the interviewer was interested in the teachers' opinion on encouraging their students to use translanguaging in the EMI classroom (statement 9).

The results of the interview and the responses provided by the teachers have been presented in the figure below. Overall, a very positive attitude towards translanguaging may be stated. The highest values were given to the two positive responses on the 5-point Likert-type scale, namely: *I strongly agree* or *I agree* and these are demonstrated by the longest bars. It occurred during the interviews that most teachers,

although being initially unaware of the potential of translanguaging, started to notice its advantages and the benefits for their teaching as well as for the students. The third bar which represents the neutral response is the shortest, hence it may be assumed that the answers labelled *I don't know* are not meaningful for the study. The two final negative responses are not very significant, either. There were very few interviewees who developed negative attitudes towards the pedagogical model of translanguaging. Finally, yet importantly, it should be emphasised that it becomes obvious in the figure that the two extreme responses: *I strongly agree* and *I strongly disagree* were in fact less frequently selected by the teachers than respectively *I agree* and *I disagree*. This may prove the teachers' insecurity and the incomplete awareness or understanding of the benefits translanguaging may generate.

In a similar manner, it was important for the researcher to discover the details of the interrogated teachers' perceptions of translanguaging, hence some randomly selected statements from the audio recordings have been listed below in order to validate the quantitative side of the study. The teachers, just like the students, were positive about translanguaging occurring in their classrooms.

*It is much easier for them to learn the content of my lesson when they can compare the languages and use their native one.*

This teacher is aware of the fact that the students learn at a faster pace if they can compare and contrast the languages. This is possible when they translanguague. The teacher highlights the issue of using a native language in the acquisition of content.

*My students are already proficient in English, thus they can use Polish whenever they need it if it enhances the process of learning.*

The students' high competence in English lets the teacher believe that using Polish is not harmful, and it may even enhance the process of learning. Using a mother tongue can drastically accelerate the acquisition of content.

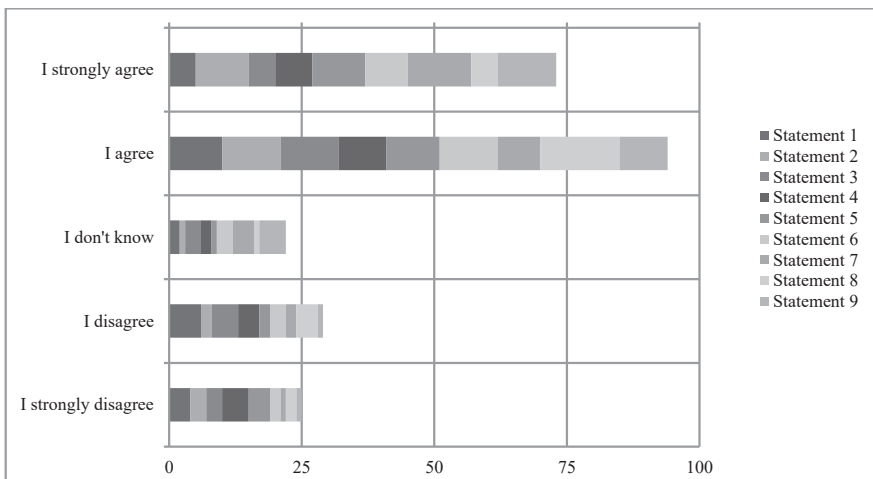


Figure 1. Teachers' ratings of the statements

*I am fine with my students constantly translanguaging, because I am fully aware of the fact that they are learning.*

This statement is similar to the previous one as one of the educational roles of translanguaging has been underlined. Translanguaging facilitates the process of learning the content and the language.

*The students know English well enough to have the lessons conducted in English solely, but I am not against their discussing things in Polish if a problem arises.*

Just like before, this teacher does not object to the students' speaking Polish in situations when comprehension fails. It is stressed that the students' command of English is good enough, hence the use of Polish will not have any detrimental effects on their performance in the target language.

*Students can use Polish with one another while working on a project in a group, otherwise it is forbidden in my class.*

With this statement it becomes obvious that the teacher prefers English to be spoken by the students. However, there are some exceptions when Polish is acceptable. The students are allowed to speak their mother tongue when they are involved in project work. Probably other forms of group work will also aid and promote the use of translanguaging, e.g. presentations, debates, etc.

*To avoid possible misunderstandings, my students can switch from English to Polish when there are obstacles with understanding the content of a new lesson. However, I never do it.*

The teacher makes a confession that she never translanguages, however she allows her students to take advantage of it only in instances when the understanding of the taught content is jeopardised. In such cases, translanguaging turns into a very convenient tool for enhancing the process of understanding and learning.

*If students can't manage to express their ideas in English, I allow them to speak Polish, but only for a moment. Otherwise, I think... but I am not sure ... the use of their mother tongue may be detrimental. Right?*

In this case, the teacher is very careful and reserved about the use of translanguaging pedagogy in his classroom although he seems to be unsure of its effects. However, he clearly states that he would rather his students spoke English. Polish is used under one condition: when understanding is impossible and there is no other means of helping his learners to follow the progress of the lesson.

*In theory, we should be using English, but I can't stop them from switching between English and Polish when the topic we are working on is difficult.*

The teachers are familiar with the rules of language use implemented by the EMI methodology, hence they would prefer a constant use of English, however they allow for the use of L1 when the topic or the content they are working on is particularly challenging for their students.

*Regardless of the mistakes they make, I always encourage them to speak English only.*

It is always better to use the target language despite the mistakes that are made, because such a consistency will result in a higher proficiency and fluency of the

speakers. The teachers also try to encourage their students in the use of English by not switching to Polish themselves.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

The translanguaging pedagogy has been gaining currency for quite some time as it enhances the process of teaching and learning as well as offers freedom to both learners and teachers in the choice of language while they are expressing themselves. The main aim of this study was to examine, analyse and understand the perceptions of translanguaging among the students and teachers of Polish EMI classrooms. It utilised observations, surveys and questionnaires with audio recordings. The results show this particular cohort of students has a positive outlook on classroom translanguaging. The second investigated group –EMI teachers– has a positive attitude, too, however some of their statements may underline neutrality and indifference. It seems obvious that the instructor’s choice of language is an important factor influencing student understanding of the content. However, we need to bear in mind one fact that the choice to use English exclusively in EMI classrooms results from the rules of methodology and the regulations of a particular educational institution. Consequently, it might seem unnatural or surprising to see the translanguaging pedagogy being employed in EMI teaching as it allows for a learner’s linguistic repertoire to be activated if needed. This, however, is against the main assumptions of EMI where English is the only medium of communication and instruction.

For the study of both groups, the most pertinent information came from the analysis of the mini-survey administered to the students and the Likert-type scale statements in case of the teachers, as these questions most importantly informed the researcher on their attitudes towards the translanguaging pedagogy and the teachers’ linguistic and pedagogical choices.

As indicated earlier, the students were positive in their answers to the statements discussed. The consensus was that translanguaging was appropriate, necessary and helpful, among a series of other answers. A likely interpretation of this result is that the students are ready and conditioned to work within a context where translanguaging occurs on a frequent basis, and thus, they would also expect their teachers to be more flexible with regard to the implementation of this pedagogy.

This should not surprise as there is a growing body of research in favour of the use of L1 in foreign language education. It may be stipulated that a learner’s attention is divided between learning the language and studying the content if s/he has not achieved proficiency. Following this line of thinking, I need to add that the use of L1 in EMI is always associated with better results in English proficiency because accessing learning through a stronger language ensures content mastery although one would think that the more English we use, our fluency in this language accelerates.

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