Saudi EFL Students' Perceptions of Pedagogical Translanguaging in English Medium Instruction

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The English language has been increasingly used as a medium of instruction (EMI) at the tertiary level in Saudi Arabia. Recent research has garnered Saudi students' perceptions regarding EMI, revealing that some participants preferred a mixture of English and Arabic while others favored EMI. Although these studies have yielded valuable results, they did not expose participants to translanguaging before investigating their perceptions, which would have enhanced their research validity. Hence, this paper reports on the findings of a quantitative study that surveyed 18 Saudi college students about their perceptions of a four-week pedagogical translanguaging intervention delivered to improve their academic writing skills. The purpose of this study is to investigate the effectiveness of incorporating pedagogical translanguaging into an EMI setting. A Likert-scale questionnaire consisting of 12 items was used to collect data after which it was analyzed via SPSS. Findings revealed most participants found translanguaging useful as it made lessons and activities less challenging and more comprehensible. We suggest that teachers and policymakers adopt a flexible language use policy in tertiary education, normalizing translanguaging as a medium of instruction in EMI contexts. Implications for incorporating translanguaging as a medium of instruction and recommendations for future research directions are discussed.

1. INTRODUCTION

English has always been undoubtedly the most spoken foreign language among speakers of other languages—or as the lingua franca (Jenkins, 2006) and the main academic lingua franca (Lasagabaster, 2022) in education, especially in tertiary settings. The main academic lingua franca refers to English as a medium of instruction (EMI) in the education systems of non-Anglophone countries. EMI is defined as the policy of using only English to teach academic courses in countries in which English is considered a second or foreign language (Curle et al., 2020). Academic courses such as mathematics, biology, chemistry etc. are offered through English at universities for various beneficial reasons, one of which is to internationalize universities, attracting international students, instructors and researchers to join them (Lasagabaster, 2022). Keeping pace with this trend, the presence of EMI has witnessed an exponential increase in Saudi Arabian tertiary education (Al-Kahtany et al., 2016). In 2022, the Saudi Ministry of Education launched, for the first time, an ambitious academic scheme called "Study in Saudi Arabia" to attract international students, professors and researchers—

males and females—to join Saudi higher education to study and conduct research. Also, Saudi Arabia has been recently hosting international events as part of the "Saudization movement's openness to an international contact" (Elyas et al., 2021 p. 222). This movement, along with the launch of the academic program mentioned above were inspired by Saudi Arabia's vision 2030, a futuristic strategic framework to make Saudi Arabia "a vibrant society, a thriving economy, and an ambitious nation" (Vision 2030). In light of this vision, an increasing number of visitors including international students and researchers whose first language is not Arabic will be, through expanding EMI at Saudi universities, attracted to visit the country and be able to communicate with classmates, professors, and administrators through English without having Arabic language competence before coming to Saudi Arabia.

Besides the internationalization and globalization which EMI offers, EMI has been proven to be advantageous to students whose first language is not English (Curle et al., 2020; Xie & Curle, 2020). It equips them with sufficient English competence, prepares them for the job market, and allows them to capitalize on the abundant availability of academic sources and resources offered through English to succeed in academia (Lasagabaster, 2016). However, the English-only language policy has been problematized by various researchers because it bans and demarginalizes learners' L1 (e.g. Canagarajah, 2011; Cenoz & Gorter, 2022; Lasagabaster & Doiz, 2020; Muguruza et al., 2020; Vogel & García, 2017), hinders students' comprehension of the cognitive complexity of disciplinary knowledge and vocabulary that exists in their fields, arguing for incorporating pedagogical translanguaging into language classrooms (Alhamami, 2021; Al-Kahtany et al., 2016; Elashhab, 2020; Louber & Troudi, 2019; Muguruza et al., 2020). Translanguaging, in an educational context, refers to teachers' strategic and purposeful use of learners' languages, allowing them to scaffold learning by making use of learners' full linguistic repertoires in which their languages are stored collectively (Barahona, 2020; Gomez, 2020; Wei, 2018).

Studies such as (Al Zumor, 2019; Alhamami, 2021; Elashhab, 2020; Louber & Troudi, 2019) have scrutinized students' and university instructors' perceptions regarding EMI and translanguaging policies in Saudi higher education institutions and found that the majority of participants had negative attitudes toward the former, advocating for the latter as a medium of instruction for several reasons. Academic courses contain cognitively complex concepts including lexical complexity with which students, especially those with lower English proficiency, face great difficulty. Translanguaging was found to simplify and facilitate such concepts and make students acquire disciplinary knowledge efficiently as opposed to English-only policy, which may contribute to students' low grades, impacting their GPA (Alhamami, 2021). Furthermore, Translanguaging increases students' participation because some students feel more comfortable participating in L1 than L2 given their low proficiency (Elashhab, 2020). In contrast, several studies (Allard & Link, 2017; Lyster, 2019; Qureshi & Aljanadbah, 2021) have shown that participants held negative attitudes toward translanguaging since it distracts and disempowers them in terms of acquiring knowledge in the target language, preferring EMI.

Although the aforementioned studies have explored students' and teachers' perceptions regarding EMI vs incorporating translanguaging in EMI classes at the university level, they failed to expose students to translanguaging before exploring their perceptions, which could have produced more accurate, valid, and reliable results. This research gap is significant

because pedagogical translanguaging is a specific teaching strategy that involves the intentional use of multiple languages for instructional purposes. Exposing students to this approach may lead to different perceptions and experiences than those obtained from simply allowing students to use multiple languages in the classroom without any guidance or direction from the teacher. By bridging this gap, our study will contribute to the understanding of how students perceive and experience pedagogical translanguaging as a medium of instruction. This information is important for language educators and policymakers, as it can inform the development of more effective and inclusive teaching practices. Furthermore, by exploring the perceptions and experiences of students exposed to pedagogical translanguaging, our study will provide a more comprehensive understanding of the potential benefits and challenges of using this approach in language education. Also, areas on investigating translanguaging as a medium of instruction at the Saudi tertiary level remain under-researched.

We implemented pedagogical translanguaging in an EMI class consisting of 18 Saudi EFL university students and examined their perceptions of its effectiveness in improving their comprehension in general and academic writing particularly. We focused on writing because it was found to be one of the main hurdles for students in EMI classes (Doiz & Lasagabaster, 2020; Kamasak et al., 2021), especially concerning coherence (Kamasak et al., 2021). This study contributes to the growing area of research on translanguaging as a medium of instruction by designing pedagogical translanguaging, incorporating it into an EMI class to familiarize students with translanguaging, and investigating their perceptions of it.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW
2.1. EMI in Tertiary Level

The presence of EMI—or English-only language policy—has witnessed an exponential increase in higher education institutions in the Middle East (Lasagabaster & Doiz, 2020; Muguruza et al., 2020; Rose et al., 2019). As a result of this widely spread policy, an increasing number of studies have garnered instructors' and students' viewpoints on the effectiveness of EMI. For example, Başıbek et al. (2014) surveyed 63 university lecturers about their perceptions of EMI at universities in Turkey. The overall results revealed that universities adopting EMI are more favoured and effective than their counterparts. The majority of lecturers also reported that materials in English are easily accessible as opposed to Turkish which does not have as many resources. EMI, it is also argued, enhances students' English proficiency, making them successful academically—equipping them with disciplinary knowledge of their fields—and professionally. Some lecturers, on the other hand, mentioned that students' English proficiency is low, hindering their comprehension of subject matters in their field. Thus, they advocated for Turkish as a medium of instruction (TEM) as it "provides deeper and clearer understanding in terms of the content of the lesson" (p. 1824). A recent study by Curle et al. (2020), similarly, called for Turkish to be the means of instruction along with English at the tertiary level. This suggestion was based on an investigation of whether general English proficiency and TEM predict 159 EMI students' academic success at a public Turkish university. The findings indicated that the former did not significantly predict academic success, whereas the latter played a significant role in EMI students' educational outcomes. Therefore, Curtle et al. suggested what they call "a Multilingual Model of EMI implementation", which uses students' L1 to better equip them with disciplinary knowledge

and vocabulary. Similar to the call for TEM, various commentators, as mentioned by Elyas and Al-Hoorie (in press), emphasized the need to Arabize Saudi Arabian higher education.

In another context, Belhiah et al. (2015) surveyed and interviewed students (n=500) along with university instructors (n=100) at six universities in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) about the effectiveness of EMI. The study's findings showed that when asked about whether EMI improved their macro skills in English, most students (75%) agreed that it helped them to speak more fluently, (79%) highlighted that it promoted their listening skills, (76%) and (78%) of them mentioned that it enhanced their reading skills and writing skills, respectively given the intensive exposure to English they had. Regarding instructors' perceptions, most of them (67%) also confirmed that EMI has improved students' overall English proficiency. An important finding that has emerged from analyzing teachers' interviews is that EMI enriched students' lexicon of subject matters. However, similar to Başıbek et al's findings regarding using students' first language as a medium of instruction, most instructors (75%) and students (62%) agreed that alternating between students' L1 and L2 is the ideal way of ensuring that all students, especially those with lower English proficiency, comprehend and grasp the content of the subject.

In East Asia, additionally, Kim et al. (2016) carried out a striking large-scale study consisting of 522 engineering students—503 males, 125 females and 20 unspecified—in three Korean universities. The study's findings indicated that more than half of the participants (62%) had a negative attitude towards EMI and the reason for enrolling in EMI classes is it was compulsory to take such classes. A few participants (6%), conversely, noted that they registered for EMI classes because it was convenient to speak in English. Similar results were found by Hu and Wu (2020) who interviewed seven Chinese university students, followed by stimulated recalls about their perceptions and goals for enrolling in EMI classes. All seven students reported that they did not pay attention to the language but rather, they were only concerned with the content of the subject, implying that they reacted negatively to EMI. The studies presented thus far provide evidence that EMI could be effective in improving students' overall language proficiency; however, it seems to be a major hurdle for students' success in EMI, leading to a growing trend toward incorporating translanguaging into EMI courses.

2.2. Translanguaging as a Medium of Instruction in Saudi Arabia

In recent years, there has been an increasing amount of literature investigating students, teachers, and stakeholders' perceptions regarding implementing a flexible language policy at the tertiary level—translanguaging as a means of instruction as opposed to English-only language policy. Proponents of translanguaging such as García and Wei (2014) claimed that translanguaging promotes students' metacognition and critical thinking skills and offers cognitive support. EMI policy, on the contrary, places a cognitive load and heavy burden on students whose English proficiency is limited, affecting their learning outcomes (Alhamami, 2021; Doiz & Lasagabaster, 2021). To overcome this challenge, Lasagabaster (2022) and Muguruza et al. (2020) suggested adopting hybrid language practices—translanguaging as an example. According to Yuvayapan (2019), furthermore, translanguaging "leads to deepen students' understanding of the content, create a bilingual identity and make sense of their bilingual world" (p. 691).

Studies such as (Al Zumor, 2019; Alhamami, 2021; Al-Kahtany et al., 2016; Elashhab, 2020; Louber & Troudi, 2019) have examined the use of translanguaging as means of instruction at the tertiary level in Saudi Arabia. Louber and Troudi(2019), for instance, recruited five Saudi engineering students, five Arabic-speaking engineering and science teachers, and three native EFL teachers to explore their perceptions of EMI and AMI. The participants responded to an open-ended questionnaire after which they were interviewed. All 13 participants were critical of EMI policy and regardless of such policy, they reported, that Arabic is often used as a medium of instruction. An engineering teacher was concerned about students' low proficiency and thus, he often resorted to Arabic. Also, students unanimously agreed that using Arabic simplifies ideas and is more practical. These findings are supported by studies of Alhamami (2021) and Al-Kahtany al. (2016), which argued against English-only pedagogy as it had a negative effect on students' learning outcomes in EMI contexts. Alhamami's argument was based on a study surveying 42 university instructors and 250 students about their attitudes and perspectives toward EMI at a public university in Saudi Arabia. While the instructors held positive attitudes toward EMI, most of the participating students preferred Arabic to be used as a medium of instruction in classes, resulting in obtaining higher GPA. Hence, Alhamami suggested, "students be taught in their native language, especially at lower levels and that bilingual instructors be hired when possible" (p. 6560). Likewise, in her observational study, Elashhab (2020) noticed that students with lower and intermediate proficiency tended to shift to their L1 (Arabic) when doing collaborative activities. Elashhab observed and surveyed 52 Saudi female university ESP students in three different groups to investigate the impact of translanguaging on students' English proficiency. She also informally discussed the use of translanguaging with the three groups' teachers, revealing that 44.2% of the students used translanguaging to understand new words, 30.7% processed ideas in Arabic before speaking English, and to comprehend concepts. An important observation by Elashhab was that allowing students to use their full linguistic repertoires increased the level of participation, which otherwise, increases students' affective filter and hinders language production (Al Zumor, 2019).

Al Zumor's study supported the claim that English-only pedagogy is detrimental to students' progress in scientific courses, drawing on his study of surveying 264 Saudi ESP (computer science, engineering and medicine) students about the challenges they encounter in EMI settings. Eighty-three percent of participating students attributed course failures to their inability to understand English, suggesting that they would obtain better grades if classes were to be delivered in Arabic as well. Overall, these studies indicate that the English-only language policy places a cognitive load on students, especially those with limited language proficiency, highlighting the need for incorporating translanguaging practices in EMI classes. Adding to the discussions on EMI vs translanguaging, Shamim et al., (2016) conducted a case study of the use of EMI at Taibah University in Saudi Arabia. The authors observed and interviewed seven teachers and their students about their attitudes toward EMI. Analysis of the interviews found that the teachers and students had positive attitudes toward EMI, preferring English to be continued as the only medium of instruction. However, the researchers noticed several practices employed by the teachers and students in the classrooms that contradicted their positive attitudes toward and preference for EMI. For instance, the presentation slides that the teachers used contained several translated words and concepts in Arabic. They also realized

that the students used Arabic when asking questions and teachers explained some concepts and instructions using Arabic as well. Shamim et al concluded that teachers "were forced to make accommodations due to their students' low proficiency in English" (p. 41). It seems that the use of L1 is inevitable in EMI classes given the nature of students' limited English proficiency.

Conversely, recent research findings have been contradictory, indicating that translanguaging does not significantly benefit bilingual students; it disempowers their learning processes and L2 development (Allard & Link, 2017; Lyster, 2019; Oraif & Alrashed, 2022; Qureshi & Aljanadbah, 2021). Allard and Link, for example, carried out an ethnographic study to explore two teachers' use of translanguaging in a high school ESL program in the USA. They also interviewed 17 students and seven administrators. Although translanguaging strategies such as the teachers asking questions in English and students answering in L1 (Spanish) as well as using Spanish for clarifying texts written in English occurred, beginner students were discontented with teachers' use of Spanish for two reasons. The insufficient exposure to English and inconsistent language policy obstructed their learning process and language learning development, which they believed led to lower grades and hence unacceptable. This contradiction—students' attitudes toward translanguaging and their actual practices—suggests that bilinguals' alternation between L1 and L2 is inevitable regardless of their preferences. Even though Allard and Link (2017) seem to be critical of translanguaging because of teachers' misuse of it, they acknowledged that it helped students to achieve content-related objectives and that teachers "accepting answers in any language gave students agency in their language choices and allowed for participation from a wider range of students than would have been possible in English only" (p. 7).

Another study that is critical of translanguaging was experimentally conducted by Qureshi and Aljanadbah (2021), who scrutinized the impact of translanguaging and whether it would promote students' English reading comprehension. Participants were divided into an experimental group (n=36) and a control group (n=29) to which translanguaging and English-only pedagogical interventions were delivered, respectively. Examples of translanguaging practices that Qureshi & Aljanadbah employed included, allowing students to use Arabic glosses, using L1 for summarizing reading texts and during peer discussions. Findings showed that there was no statistically significant difference between the two groups regarding reading comprehension. In other words, the translanguaging strategies employed failed to improve the reading comprehension of the participants in the experimental group. However, the evidence for the insignificant results is inconclusive because Qureshi and Aljanadbah delivered pedagogical translanguaging intervention for only one session, which was insufficient to measure significance. Extensive exposure to translanguaging could have shown different and more conclusive results.

Adding to the critique of translanguaging, a recent study by Oraif and Alrashed (2022) surveyed 24 Saudi female students in a business English class to garner their attitudes toward EMI. Findings showed that 76% of the participants preferred EMI over translanguaging. 81% strongly agreed that using only English can enhance their English, and 79% enjoyed their teachers' use of only English. Regardless of such preference, 59% noted that they would not feel bothered if teachers used L1 to teach L2. The reliability of the participants' responses may be questionable. One may question whether the participants had been explicitly taught to use

translanguaging before they were surveyed. The evidence presented in this section—although most were inconclusive—suggests that translanguaging could be an effective tool in promoting students' comprehension of subject-specific content and encouraging engagement and participation. However, it may not work well in certain contexts, and misusing or overusing it may lead to unpleasant experiences and negative effects on students in EMI classes. One common source of limitation that the above-mentioned studies share is that their participants had been exposed to translanguaging in EMI classes before investigating their attitudes and perceptions, which otherwise, would have revealed more valid, reliable, and conclusive findings. Hence, to bridge that gap, the current study has developed pedagogical translanguaging, implemented it to ESP students in an EMI setting, and explored their perceptions of its effectiveness.

2.3. Research questions

This study has attempted to answer the following three research questions:

1. What are students' perceptions of the effectiveness of translanguaging practices in an EMI class?
2. What are the challenges that students faced with implementing translanguaging practices?
3. What are the most effective translanguaging strategies that students found?

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

3.1. Participants

The participants for the current study were 18 first-year Saudi ESP male students at a large University in Saudi Arabia. Their age range was between 19 and 21. All students were distributed into classrooms based on the Oxford placement test. For this study, students' English proficiency level was A2 according to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). Those students studied foundational courses that prepared them to study at undergraduate levels. Courses included general English, English for specific purposes (ESP), biology, mathematics, computer science, chemistry, and physics. The participants' major was administration.

3.2. Instrument

A Likert-scale questionnaire designed via Qualtrics was used to explore participants' perceptions and experiences of implementing translanguaging as a medium of instruction in an ESP classroom. This study employed a questionnaire given its status as the most widely used data collection tool in EMI research (Curle & Derakhshan, 2021). The questionnaire consisted of three sections; section one was concerned with perceptions regarding the usefulness of translanguaging, section two investigated the challenges and experiences that students had with translanguaging, and section three explored the amount of knowledge students gained from the translanguaging practices. All items in the questionnaire were translated into Arabic to ensure that participants did not misunderstand them.

3.3. Data Collection procedures

First, we contacted an instructor from the university asking for permission to recruit him to deliver an intervention study to his students as part of the current study. Second, we held two meetings with the instructor, which took place via a Zoom video conference to

visually show him the lessons and activities that we designed using translanguaging. Each meeting took an hour to discuss how to incorporate translanguaging into the EMI setting. Third, after the instructor agreed to deliver the intervention on behalf of the researcher and to recruit his students as participants, we sent a link containing an informed consent designed via Qualtrics to the instructor, which he sent to his students to read and sign whether they want to participate in the study voluntarily or not. Students who agreed to participate were asked to write their WhatsApp (a free texting application) number in the informed consent to which the researcher sent the survey link. WhatsApp was chosen given its dominant status in Saudi Arabia. Besides, it is the preferred medium of communication among Saudi students unlike E-mail, which is not a common platform to use.

Finally, after the teacher implemented pedagogical translanguaging as a medium of instruction, which lasted four weeks during the second semester with a total of three sessions per week, we sent the Likert-scale survey to each student's WhatsApp number to investigate their perceptions of using translanguaging as a medium of instruction, and their challenges and experiences that they had with translanguaging.

3.4.Data Analysis
Statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS) was used for the quantitative analysis. The researcher ran the analysis for the first part of the survey and obtained frequencies and percentages of participants' responses to six questions, which were concerned with exploring their perceptions of the effectiveness of translanguaging as a medium of instruction. The researcher, similarly, analyzed the second part of the survey and obtained the frequencies and percentages of the participants' responses to the challenges and development they had with translanguaging.

4. RESULTS
The first question that this paper seeks to address is "What are students' perceptions of the effectiveness of translanguaging practices in an EMI class? The participants completed six online Likert-scale questions designed via Qualtrics to investigate their perceptions and opinions regarding the usefulness of the pedagogical intervention. Table 1 demonstrates participants' responses to the first five Likert scale questions.

4.1.Students' Perceptions of Translanguaging Practices: Survey Results Part 1
Table 1: The Frequency and Percentages of Participants' Responses to the Five Questions on Their Perceptions of the Effectiveness of Pedagogical Translanguaging

Questions	Useful			Neither useful nor useless	Useless		
	Extremely.	Moderately.	Slightly.		Slightly.	Moderately.	Extremely.
How did you find the	6	5	2	4	0	0	1
	33.3%	27.8%	11.1%	22.2%	0	0	5.6%

lessons in general?	72.2%			22.2%		5.6%	
How did you find the discussion on differences between English and Arabic writing systems?	10	3	3	1	0	1	0
	55.6%	16.7%	16.7%	5.6%	0	5.6%	0
	89%			5.6%		5.6%	
How did you find the activities in the lessons?	10	5	3	0	0	0	0
	55.6%	27.8%	16.7%	0	0	0	0
	100%			0%		0%	
How was the effect of the use of Arabic by the instructor?	10	6	2	0	0	0	0
	55.6%	33.3%	11.1%	0	0	0	0
	100%			0%		0%	
How useful was the use of Arabic with your classmates?	7	7	4	0	0	0	0
	39%	39%	22%	0	0	0	0
	100%			0%		0%	
Mean of percentages	92.24%			5.56%		2.24%	

Overall, participants found that the translanguaging pedagogical intervention was useful. In the first question of the first section of the survey, participants were asked, "how did you find the lessons?". The responses indicated that the majority of participants (72%.2) acknowledged the usefulness of the intervention study. Specifically, 33.3% of participants responded that the lessons were (extremely useful) (F=6), followed by 27.8% who stated that the lesson was (moderately useful) (F=5). Furthermore, two participants (11%) noted that the lesson was (slightly useful). On the other hand, one participant responded that the lessons were extremely useless. This was the lowest frequency value gained. In terms of neutrality, respondents (F=4) neither found the lessons useful or useless.

1. Arabic and English Writing Systems

The second question in the first section of the survey was "How did you find the discussion on the differences between English and Arabic writing systems?". In response to this question, a significant majority of the participants (55.6%) responded that the explanation of the differences between Arabic and English writings was (extremely useful) (F=10). Just as 16.7% of the responses were for (moderately useful) (F=3), the other 16.7% of them were also for (slightly useful) (F=3). For the choices of (moderately useless) and (neither useful nor useless), both gained the lowest frequency value with a proportion of 5.6% for each (F=1).

2. Activities in the Lessons

The third question that participants were asked was, "how did you find the activities in the lessons?". Similar to the responses to the second question, over half of the participants (56%) responded that the activities were (extremely useful). While the response rate was 27.8% for participants who found that the activities were (moderately useful (F=5), 17% of them reckoned that they were (slightly useful) (F=3). Neutrality and uselessness gained no response.

3. The instructor's use of L1

The fourth question that participants responded to was "How was the effect of the use of Arabic by the instructor?". One hundred percent of the participants highlighted that the instructor's use of Arabic was useful. Specifically, 55.6% found it (extremely useful), followed by 33.3% (F=6) for (moderately useful), and 11.1% (F=2) for (Slightly useful), which was the lowest frequency gained in the row.

4. Use of Arabic Among Classmates

The final question in this section of the survey was "how useful was the use of Arabic with your classmates?". Thirty-nine percent (F=7) of the participants responded that the use of Arabic with classmates was (extremely useful). Likewise, the choice of (moderately useful) accounted for 39% of the responses, followed by (slightly useful) at 22% with (F=4).

All in all, participants found that the lessons' activities and the use of Arabic with classmates were the most useful elements, followed by the explanation of the differences between English and Arabic writings as the second most useful one

4.2. Students' Challenges with the Pedagogical Intervention: Survey Results Part 2

Table 2 *The Frequency and Percentage of participants' Responses to the Difficulty They had in the Intervention Study*

Questions		Levels of Difficulty										
		Low					Medium	High				.
		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
How much difficulty did you have in	F											
		1	2	2	3	1	3	3	2	1	0	0

Question												
understanding the content of lessons?	%			50%				17%			33%		
How much difficulty did you have in doing the activities?	F	0	2	3	4	3	1	1	2	1	1	0
	%			67%			5%			28%		
Rate the difficulty of writing topic sentences, supporting sentences and conclusion	F	0	3	1	4	1	4	0	1	1	2	1
	%			50%			22%			28%		
Rate the challenges of writing linking words? (however, and, so, moreover)	F	1	6	3	0	2	2	2	0	1	1	0
	%			67%			11%			22%		
Mean of percentage				58.5%			13.75%			27.75%		

Note. The low difficulty level was determined in the grade range between (0-5) and the high difficulty level was determined in the grade range between (6-10).

Overall, the participants' responses revealed that they did not face noticeable difficulties with the pedagogical intervention.

1. Difficulty in Comprehending the Lessons

Students were first asked "how much difficulty did you have in understanding the lessons?". As shown in Table 2, 50% of the participants indicated that the difficulty rate for understanding the lessons was low as their chosen responses ranged between (0-4) (F=9). Participants (F=6), on the other hand, found that the comprehension rate for the lessons was high, ranging between (6-10) with a proportion of 33%. Only three participants indicated that the level of difficulty was medium.

2. Difficulty in Doing Activities

The second question asked participants, "how much difficulty did you have in doing the activities?". It was found the activities and assignments were not difficult for a significant majority (67%) of the respondents (F=12) since their chosen rate ranged between (0-4). However, those who acknowledged that they had faced difficulties accounted for 28% (f=9).

3. Difficulty of Organization

The third question in this section was, "rate the difficulty of writing topic sentences, supporting sentences, and a conclusion?". While more than half of the participants (58.5%)

(F=9) did not face difficulty in understanding and writing topic sentences, supporting sentences, and conclusions, 28% of the respondents (F=5) rated the difficulty as high, and (F=4) as medium with a proportion of 22%.

4. Challenges of Using Linking Words

The fourth question that was provided to students was, "rate the challenges of writing linking words?". A significant number of the participants (67%) reported that the challenges of writing linking words were low (F=12). Comparably, very few participants (F=4) and (F=2) experienced a high and medium degree of difficulty by 22% and 11%, respectively.

4.3. Students' Benefits from Translanguaging Practices: Survey Results Part 3

Table 3: *The Frequency and Percentage of Participants' Responses to the Learning Rate They Gained from the Intervention*

Questions		Degree of learning										
		Low					Medium	High				
		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
On a scale from 0-10, how much did you learn from the activities?	F	0	0	0	0	2	1	3	2	4	3	3
	%	11%					6%	83%				
On a scale from 0-10 How much did you learn from using L1	F	0	0	3	0	0	3	0	4	0	4	4
	%	17%					16%	67%				
On a scale from 0-10, how much did you learn from your classmates' feedback using L1	F	0	1	1	2	1	6	2	0	4	0	1
	%	28%					33%	39%				
Mean of Percentages	%	18.6%					18.3%	63%				

Overall, the responses regarding how much participants have learned from the translanguaging practices showed that they have gained a considerable amount of knowledge since 63% of them rated learning as high.

1. Learning from the Activities

The first question in the third section of the survey that students were asked was, "on a scale from 0-10, how much did you learn from the activities?". Whereas 83% of the participants (F=15) indicated that they had significantly benefitted from the activities (F=15), 11% of the participants (F=2) responded that the knowledge that they gained from the activities was low.

2. Negotiating in Arabic

Regarding the second question, which was, "on a scale from 0-10, how much did you learn from negotiating in Arabic?", more than half of the participants' responses (F=12) ranged between 7-10 with a proportion of 67%, indicating that they have significantly learned from the use of Arabic. In contrast, those who highlighted that the degree of learning they have gained from L1 was medium and low accounted for 16% and 17%, respectively.

3. Feedback of Classmates

The last question in the survey was, "on a scale from 0-10, rate how much did you learn from your classmates' feedback using L1?". Participants who noted that they did not benefit from classmates' feedback using L1 accounted for 28% (F=5), followed by participants (F=6) who moderately learned from classmates' feedback. Conversely, participants (F=7) who acknowledged that they had learned from their classmate's feedback considerably accounted for 39%.

In conclusion, writing topic sentences, supporting ideas, and a conclusion was the most challenging aspect for students by 50%, followed by understating the lesson by 33%. Writing linking words; however, was the least difficult for students by 78%. Following that, doing the activities and assignments came as the second least difficult. In addition, doing the activities was the most beneficial for students by 83% whereas negotiating in Arabic is second most beneficial by 67%.

5. DISCUSSION

The first question in this study sought to scrutinize participants' perceptions in terms of the effectiveness of translanguaging as a medium of instruction. The analysis of the first part of the questionnaire reveals that participants' overall perception of translanguaging was positive. More than half of them found the pedagogical translanguaging lessons to be useful. Although this finding differs from Oraif and Alrashed's (2022) study, which indicated that participants disliked translanguaging, preferring only English as medium of instruction, it is in agreement with those of other studies (al Zumor, 2019; Alhamami, 2021; Louber & Troudi, 2019; Soosaji Raj et al., 2018) which revealed that the majority of their participants held positive attitudes toward incorporating L1 in EMI classes.

Regarding this study's second research question, which attempted to explore participants' perceptions of the most useful translanguaging practices, the results indicate that activities in the lessons and the teacher's use of L1 were the most beneficial practices. These activities included providing students with texts and questions in English and asking them to discuss using Arabic and English, and vice versa. Another translanguaging practice involved asking students to write a short essay on a topic of their interests in which they were encouraged to translanguage whenever they could not generate ideas and did not remember words in English. This practice, according to Canagarajah (2011a), prevents writer's block, which otherwise could obstruct students' progress in writing. In terms of the second translanguaging practice; teacher's use of L1, the teacher alternated between Arabic and English whenever students felt bewildered. Also, because the participants in this study were ESP students who needed to acquire disciplinary knowledge and field-specific vocabulary, the teacher translanguaged, ensuring that all students comprehended the content of the lessons and difficult concepts. Another important strategic use of translanguaging was translating the lessons' objectives and instructions for the activities in Arabic. This strategy, as Kumaravadivelu (2003) argued, reduces the chances of mismatch between the teacher's intention and interpretations of the learners. These translanguaging practices allowed participants to capitalize on their full linguistic repertoires for achieving communication and negotiating meaning. Like similar studies (e.g., Al-Kahtany et al., 2016; Başıbek et al., 2014; Belhiah et al., 2015), this study

argues that translanguaging facilitates complicated concepts that ESP students encounter in EMI classes.

Additionally, the other two translanguaging practices participants found useful were classmates' use of translanguaging during pair and group discussions and discussion on the differences between Arabic and English writing systems. When completing activities collaboratively, students were encouraged to negotiate and ask questions in both Arabic and English. This translanguaging practice helps students to "follow the content of the course with lower levels of anxiety than if the course was taught in English" (Muguruza et al., 2020 p. 13), encouraging more participation (Allard & Link, 2017; Elashhab, 2020). It especially empowers students with limited English proficiency because it gives them voices, puts them at ease to participate by using their full linguistic repertoires, and demarginalizes their important roles as participants. It is common, however, that some teachers do not allow their students to use L1 in the classroom, demarginalizing those who do not have the ability to communicate fluently in L2. Hence, this paper problematizes disallowing students to use L1 in the classroom because it makes certain students apprehensive, resulting in poor learning outcome.

Regarding the other translanguaging practice students found useful, it involved differentiating between Arabic and English writing systems. Because writing poses a great challenge for students in EMI classes (Doiz & Lasagabaster, 2020; Kamasak et al., 2021) and since Saudi students face tremendous difficulties with English writing given the conspicuous differences between Arabic and English (Al-Seghayer, 2019), this study focused on ensuring that students became aware of such differences. Having said that, the researcher argues that translanguaging can be an effective tool in clarifying the complexity of the differences between two languages' writing systems or structures, resulting in L2 development. This finding further supports the work of Almuhailib (2018) which found that using L1 in the classroom positively affected Saudi students' L2 writing development.

In terms of the third question that this study attempted to answer, "what are the challenges that students faced when with implementing translanguaging as a medium of instruction?", the results of the third section in the questionnaire show that most participants did not face noteworthy difficulties with understanding the content of the lessons, completing the activities, and using linking words. However, half of the participants noted that organizing their writing was challenging.

With regards to the difficulty of understanding the lessons, 12 participants reported that understanding the lessons was easy, whereas only six respondents indicated that the lessons were difficult. This low level of difficulty could be attributed to the instructor's alternation between Arabic and English when explaining the lessons, their objectives, and instructions. We assume that students would have had more difficulties if the teacher had not used and allowed them to use Arabic. An implication of this finding is that translanguaging could be a useful practice to facilitate complicated concepts and decrease the degree of difficulty in EMI classes. As for the other six participants who thought the lessons were challenging, this rather contradictory result may be due to their discontent with the teachers' use translanguaging as it distracted them. This finding is in agreement with those of Allard & Link's (2017) which showed that students were dissatisfied with their teacher's alternation between Spanish and

English because they believe that such practice hinders L2 development. It seems that students may not be aware of the privilege of bilingualism and multilingualism; therefore, this study suggests that teachers should raise students' awareness of the advantages that L1 brings to L2 learning.

For the challenges of doing the activities, over half of those surveyed indicated that the activities were easy to do. An example of one activity is that two sentences were provided; one was in Arabic and one in English. The Arabic sentence contained the repetition of the conjunction *and*, while the English one contained only one *and*. These sentences were accompanied with a figure that illustrated the convention of Arabic and English writing patterns. Students in groups were then asked to recognize the differences between them without the teacher's interference. They were given the choice to alternate between Arabic and English while discussing with their groups as well as while telling the answers to the teacher. After students revealed their answers using English and Arabic, the teacher elaborated on the differences by alternating between the two languages strategically. In other words, when explaining English writing patterns, the teacher used mainly Arabic, but for Arabic writing patterns, he used mostly English. This strategic use of the two languages, according to García et al, (2017), reinforces students' comprehension of and engagement with difficult concepts. Given the facilitative effect that translanguaging had on the participants' understanding of difficult content, this study suggests that teachers use translanguaging while explaining challenging ideas.

Furthermore, the third element that posed no difficulty for most participants was the use of conjunctions such as *therefore, however, furthermore,* and *besides*. The teacher spent an abundance of time on teaching conjunctions because Saudi students were found to struggle considerably with connecting ideas to flow smoothly and cohesively together (Almutairi, 2017; Othman, 2019). The fact that participants did not encounter difficulties with understanding and using linking words in their writing could be attributed to the use of translanguaging while explaining them and to the number of activities dedicated to them.

Conversely, one unanticipated finding was that half of the participants' responses indicated that writing a topic sentence, followed by supporting ideas and conclusion was a challenging task. This finding accords with Kamasak et al.'s study (2021), which found that students in EMI classes face difficulties with the organization of their essays. One possible explanation for this difficulty may be that organization in English writing differs from Arabic considerably and thus, participants may have needed more elaborations and practices. A further study with more focus on organization is therefore suggested.

6. CONCLUSION

This study has—after exposing students to pedagogical translanguaging—explored their perceptions of the usefulness of implementing translanguaging in an EMI class. Although the effectiveness of EMI policy has been well documented in terms of promoting internationalization and globalization, previous research has revealed that it could be detrimental to students learning outcomes because of their limited English proficiency and the complexities of disciplinary knowledge and field-specific vocabulary, advocating for more translanguaging pedagogies (Alhamami, 2021; Al-Kahtany et al., 2016; Elashhab, 2020; Louber & Troudi, 2019; Muguruza et al., 2020). The current study's findings further supported

the above studies as most participants responded that they did not face difficulties with the lessons content and that translanguaging was useful. This study also aimed to identify the most beneficial translanguaging practices students found, which were the teacher's strategic use of alternating between L1 and L2 when discussing complex concepts such as explaining the differences between English and Arabic writing patterns, encouraging students to translanguage in writing activities whenever they were facing difficulties with generating ideas, and allowing them to negotiate in Arabic when completing activities collaboratively. We argue that these practices facilitate complex concepts, help students acquire field-specific vocabulary, equip them with disciplinary knowledge, and increase students' participation, leading to a more successful outcome. We also argue that English-only pedagogies dilute content of lessons and decrease learners' participation and engagement.

Based on the analysis of the findings, this study provides several suggestions for teachers and policymakers at tertiary level. Instead of banning students from using L1 in an EMI context, teachers should encourage them to capitalize on the benefits of being bilingual, allowing them to leverage their various learning resources. In fact, bilingual students are inevitably translanguage (Elashhab, 2020); therefore, the ideal solution is to promote their dynamic bilingualism rather than diminishing it. Policymakers should also allow teachers to employ translanguaging in EMI courses because, in such courses, the emphasis is on content rather than language (Muguruza et al., 2020). In other words, if the focus of EMI is on improving students' English language, then the use of translanguaging could be arguable. Thus, we suggest that teachers should adopt more translanguaging pedagogies in contexts where EMI is the norm to deepen students' understanding of disciplinary knowledge and leverage their full linguistic repertoires.

Although this study adds to a growing body of literature on translanguaging as a medium of instruction, several limitations need to be acknowledged. First, this study limited itself to male participants because of the gender segregation in Saudi higher education. Hence, a future study recruiting male and female participants is recommended as it may produce more interesting results. Second, the study's major limitation is the low rate response for the open-ended questions. More research is therefore required to better understand learners' perceptions and experiences of implementing translanguaging as a medium of instruction. Third, this study was limited to a specific ESP context—English for administrative purposes. Translanguaging pedagogies policy may be viewed differently by students in other EMI courses, so future research is needed to determine whether students in other EMI courses have different perspectives.

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