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The Evolving Role of L1 in EFL Collaborative Tasks: A Longitudinal Study of Translanguaging and Learner Perceptions*

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ABSTRACT

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This longitudinal study explores the evolving role of learners' first language (L1) in a Korean EFL university classroom from a translanguaging perspective. Through transcribed pair interactions and post-task interviews over a semester, it reveals that while L1 use was initially frequent for managing low-level form issues and expressing difficulties, its use declined as learners gained confidence. However, L1 remained strategically important for vocabulary negotiation and affective support. Learners' perceptions shifted from initial hesitation to more confident and intentional language choices. Stable peer partnerships and interactive task design fostered L2 engagement while maintaining L1's supportive functions. The findings support the pedagogical value of integrating L1 strategically in task-based EFL contexts and suggest that translanguaging can facilitate both cognitive development and social cohesion.

KEYWORDS

translanguaging, L1 use, English as a foreign language, task-based language teaching, learner perceptions

1. Introduction

Research on interactions among second language learners has demonstrated that task-based group activities provide learners with abundant opportunities for foreign language acquisition (Adams 2006, Kim 2017, Storch 2004). These studies indicate that learners can enhance their foreign language skills through collaborative interactions (Storch 2002, 2004, Kim 2019, Watanabe 2008). Despite these advantages, language educators often exhibit reluctance to incorporate group activities into their classrooms. A primary concern is that students may excessively use their native language (L1) during these activities. In particular, in the foreign language context where learners have fewer opportunities to use and are less exposed to the target language outside the classroom, teachers tend to discourage the use of L1 in the language classroom on the assumption that it will have harmful consequences for second language (L2) learning.

The role of L1 in L2 and foreign language classrooms has long been a subject of considerable debate. Historically, a prevalent monolingual assumption advocated for the exclusive use of the target language (TL), discouraging or even banning L1 use in classrooms, particularly in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) settings. This perspective, often rooted in the belief that maximum TL exposure enhances acquisition, has permeated many communicative language teaching (CLT) methods, including Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT).

However, this traditional stance has been increasingly challenged since the 1990s, leading to a re-evaluation of L1's role. Research (e.g., Hall and Cook 2012, Azkarai and García Mayo 2015) has demonstrated that a balanced use of L1 can offer positive cognitive and social functions in learner interaction, helping maintain interest and manage difficult tasks. Sociocultural theory, in particular, views L1 not as an obstacle but as an important and often indispensable semiotic device that mediates the learning process, supporting problem-solving, attention focusing, and task management (DiCamilla and Antón 2012).

More recently, the concept of translanguaging has emerged, shifting the understanding of bilingualism beyond mere code-switching to encompass the fluid, agentive, and strategic mobilization of a learner's entire linguistic, cognitive, and semiotic repertoire (Bui and Tai 2022). This perspective suggests that effective communication and meaning-making in multilingual contexts often involve drawing on all available language resources, transcending the boundaries of named languages. For TBLT, which aims to foster real-world communicative competence through meaning-oriented tasks, translanguaging offers a practical tool for improving L2 task-based performance, especially in achieving functional adequacy that is the successful achievement of communicative goals (East and Wang 2024). Both TBLT and translanguaging share common grounds, including an emphasis on student collaboration, content-language integration, experiential learning, and functional language use.

Despite growing theoretical support for translanguaging, longitudinal empirical studies that examine how such practices evolve over time in real classroom settings remain scarce. While numerous studies (e.g., Storch and Wigglesworth 2003, DiCamilla and Antón 2012, Tognini and Oliver 2012) have investigated L1 use in EFL contexts, many have adopted a cross-sectional approach or focused primarily on frequency and function without fully capturing learners' evolving perceptions and strategic intentions. There is a need to better understand how translanguaging unfolds across extended instructional periods, how it interacts with social relationships and task design, and how learners themselves reflect on their language choices.

2. Literature Review

The theoretical foundation of translanguaging originates from Cen Williams (1994, cited in East and Wang

2024), who introduced the concept in bilingual Welsh-English classrooms as a pedagogical practice where learners read in one language and write in another. García and Li (2014) later expanded this concept into a broader framework that reflects how multilingual individuals fluidly navigate their linguistic repertoires. From their perspective, translanguaging is not merely about switching between named languages, but rather the fluid, agentive, and strategic mobilization of all linguistic, cognitive, and semiotic resources available to multilingual individuals. This view positions translanguaging as a means to resist monolingual norms and embrace the full communicative potential of multilingual learners.

In the context of second language (L2) education, translanguaging is increasingly recognized for its capacity to reframe learners' first language (L1) not as an impediment but as a valuable cognitive and communicative resource. Empirical studies highlight the diverse pedagogical functions of L1, such as facilitating comprehension, reducing cognitive overload, supporting peer collaboration, and enhancing participation (Hall and Cook 2012, Shin et al. 2020). L1 can serve as a powerful semiotic device that mediates learning, aiding in problem-solving, scaffolding assistance, establishing intersubjectivity, and externalizing inner speech during difficult activities.

Crucially, learners' perceptions of L1 use in the classroom play a central role in shaping their engagement with translanguaging practices. These perceptions are not static but evolve over time, influenced by contextual factors and interpersonal dynamics. In particular, longitudinal studies or those comparing different proficiency levels suggest a developmental progression in L1 use and perceptions. For example, Brooks et al. (1997) observed L1 use progressively diminishing over time in peer interactions, while DiCamilla and Antón (2012) found that less proficient learners heavily relied on L1 for content creation and problem-solving, whereas more advanced learners performed these functions predominantly in L2, implying a shift in L1's mediational role. Similarly, Levine (2011) found that learners' acceptance of L1 use increased when instructors explicitly positioned it as a legitimate tool for meaning-making. Furthermore, Moore (2013) noted that L1 use could change with increased task and partner familiarity. Studies also indicate that explicit recognition of L1 as a legitimate tool for meaning-making can increase learners' acceptance and reduce anxiety, transitioning from initial discomfort to more confident strategic deployment. This shift reflects a growing sense of learner agency, self-efficacy, and awareness of the functional affordances of their entire bilingual repertoire. Such findings emphasize the importance of longitudinal perspectives in understanding how learners' beliefs about L1 use develop over time and interact with broader pedagogical and ideological discourses.

Translanguaging practices are particularly relevant within TBLT, which emphasizes peer interaction that focuses on meaning and aims toward communicative goals. In TBLT, learners work together to solve problems, plan actions, or make decisions using the target language. However, English-only policies may unintentionally prevent learners from drawing upon their full range of linguistic resources. Kuiken and Vedder (2018) and Bui and Tai (2022) argue that translanguaging, particularly in the context of peer and group collaboration, can improve task performance by enabling learners to maintain fluency, negotiate meaning, and co-construct knowledge. This can occur across all task stages: in the pre-task phase for brainstorming and planning; during the task to maintain fluency and avoid breakdowns; and in the post-task phase for reflection and knowledge co-construction (Bui and Tai 2022). Although such uses of L1 are frequently misunderstood as signs of avoidance or lack of proficiency, when examined through a translanguaging lens, they appear as strategic choices to maintain task flow and interpersonal rapport.

A key evaluative concept in task-based language teaching is functional adequacy. It refers to the extent to which learners successfully use language to accomplish communicative goals within the parameters of a given task. Rather than focusing solely on accuracy or complexity, functional adequacy emphasizes the communicative effectiveness of learner output. It is typically operationalized through three interrelated dimensions: task

completion, comprehensibility, and contextual appropriateness (Kuiken and Vedder 2017). These dimensions assess whether learners fulfill the communicative requirements of the task, produce messages that are intelligible to interlocutors, and use language in a manner that is contextually suitable and pragmatically relevant.

Recent studies have applied this construct to analyze learner performance in task-based interaction. For example, Bui and Tai (2022) argue that translanguaging practices employed during peer collaboration can enhance functional adequacy. These practices include the flexible use of multilingual resources to scaffold meaning and manage interaction, which helps prevent communication breakdowns and supports sustained task engagement. Viewed from a translanguaging perspective, these practices are reframed not as markers of linguistic deficiency, but as agentive strategies that enable learners to fulfill task demands by mobilizing the entirety of their linguistic repertoires.

At the micro-interactional level, Language-Related Episodes (LREs) provide a useful lens to capture moments when learners focus explicitly on linguistic form. First introduced by Swain and Lapkin (2000), LREs include discussions about grammar, vocabulary, or other linguistic issues that arise during collaboration. Later research by Storch and Wigglesworth (2003) showed that many LREs are facilitated through L1 and serve essential metacognitive and cognitive functions. These findings align with the argument made by Seals et al. (2020), who view translanguaging as a broader ideological and pedagogical stance. In this view, codeswitching and other micro-level practices are not contradictory to translanguaging but are instead interpreted as part of a wider framework that validates learners' full linguistic repertoires as legitimate and agentive tools for learning.

Despite the growing recognition of translanguaging in L2 classrooms, there remain important gaps in the empirical literature. While some studies have documented L1 use in collaborative tasks, much of this research remains cross-sectional, capturing a snapshot rather than the developmental progression of learner behavior. For instance, while Brooks et al. (1997) explored peer interaction during collaborative writing, few studies have explicitly tracked how L1 use and learner perceptions of that use change over time in a longitudinal manner. Moreover, most interactional studies rely on transcripts alone, often neglecting to investigate learners' underlying intentions, reflections, or shifting beliefs about language use. These omissions limit our understanding of how translanguaging unfolds as both a social and cognitive process within the evolving dynamics of classroom interaction.

In other words, while previous studies shed light on the changes in L1 use and function over time or across proficiency levels, research explicitly tracking the 'evolution' of learners' perceptions and strategic intentions regarding their L1 use remains relatively limited. In this study, the "evolution" of learner perception refers to the gradual transformation in how learners understand, value, and strategically deploy their L1 and L2 within the learning process, shifting from initial hesitation or unconscious reliance to more confident, intentional, and balanced linguistic choices as their proficiency and comfort with tasks increase.

To address these limitations, this study adopts a longitudinal design that examines both interactional data and learner perceptions across multiple tasks over a semester. By analyzing when and why learners use L1 and how they reflect on its value, this research offers a deeper understanding of translanguaging as a pedagogical practice. It contributes to a growing body of work advocating for more inclusive, multilingual approaches to second language education and aims to inform the development of pedagogies that support functional adequacy through strategic language use. To achieve these research objectives, the following three research questions are proposed:

1. What are the emerging patterns of L1 use and translanguaging practices in pair interactions?
2. How do the functions of L1 use and translanguaging practices evolve over time in pair work, particularly in facilitating task engagement and functional adequacy?

3. How do learners' perceptions of L1 use and translanguaging evolve, and how do these perceptions influence their strategic language choices in pair work over time?

3. Research Methods

3.1 Participants

This study was conducted in a 15-week English course at a university in Seoul, South Korea. The course, which met once a week for three hours, was open to undergraduate students across all departments. Among the 49 students enrolled, 12 volunteered to participate in the study. All participants were Korean native speakers and shared the same L1, creating a relatively homogenous linguistic background that allowed for close examination of L1 use and translanguaging in a shared L1 context. In this study, Korean is referred to as 'L1' when describing observable language behavior during pair tasks. However, such instances are not treated as simple code-switching. Instead, they are interpreted through a translanguaging lens, which views these practices as strategic, dynamic uses of multilingual resources in service of communication, meaning-making, and task engagement.

Participants were permitted to choose their own partners, with most forming pairs with peers seated nearby on the first day of class. These self-selected pairs remained stable throughout the semester. The resulting interactional data reflect ongoing social relationships that may have influenced language choice and interactional dynamics. This is particularly relevant to the present study's focus on how translanguaging practices are shaped by social familiarity and strategic collaboration.

The participants' English proficiency was assessed through a university-administered mock TOEIC test, with scores ranging from the 500s to the 900s. Based on both test scores and instructor judgment, learners were categorized into five proficiency bands: high (900s), upper-intermediate (800s), intermediate (700s), lower-intermediate (600s), and low (500s). Table 1 presents detailed participant information.

Table 1. Participant Information

Pair	Name (Pseudonym)	Relative English Proficiency	Gender	Age
Pair 1	Kyunghoon	Intermediate	Male	21
	Minsu	Lower-Intermediate	Male	22
Pair 2	Dongsoo	High	Male	23
	Jimin	Upper-Intermediate	Male	21
Pair 3	Eunji	Upper-Intermediate	Female	21
	Minsang	High	Male	21
Pair 4	Gunwoo	Low	Male	21
	Jisoo	Upper-Intermediate	Female	22
Pair 5	Seongsu	Lower-Intermediate	Male	21
	Taesoo	High	Male	24
Pair 6	Seowoo	Upper-Intermediate	Female	22
	Jiwon	Upper-Intermediate	Female	22

The research data consisted of three recorded pair tasks conducted during the 2nd, 9th, and 14th weeks of the course. These tasks were selected to represent early, mid, and late stages of the semester and were consistent in structure and length to enable longitudinal comparison. In addition, semi-structured interviews were conducted during the 2nd and 14th weeks to gain insights into participants' perceptions of L1 use and their evolving strategic

language choices.

3.2 Tasks Used in the Study

This study incorporated three dialogic tasks into the course curriculum, implemented during the 2nd, 9th, and 14th weeks of the semester. Each task was thematically based on a well-known English-language film, providing relatable and engaging contexts for learners to practice language use. Learners first collaborated in pairs to write a dialogue in response to a task prompt and then practiced the script through role-play. This process aimed to enhance their fluency and oral proficiency by encouraging naturalistic speech and functional language use across a range of communicative contexts. The emotional and narrative familiarity of the film-based scenarios was intended to increase learner engagement and contextual relevance.

The tasks were designed to present varied communicative purposes and interactional demands, rather than strictly controlled linguistic difficulty, to observe how L1 use adapted across different contexts.

3.2.1 Task 1: Conflict resolution in ‘Coco’

Learners were presented with a conflict scenario from the animated film Coco, where Miguel and his great-great-grandmother Imelda disagree about Miguel’s aspiration to become a musician. Each pair was asked to assume a mediator role to resolve a conflict, fostering persuasive language skills and negotiation. This task introduced complex interpersonal communication and problem-solving, which could initially be cognitively demanding for learners in L2.

3.2.2 Task 2: Press conference in ‘Notting Hill’

The second task drew on a press conference scene imagined from Notting Hill, where the character Anna Scott announces her marriage to William. Students played the roles of journalists and a famous actress, Anna, emphasizing formal interaction, spontaneous responses, and question-answer pragmatics in a public setting. This task presented structured, yet unpredictable, communicative challenges.

3.2.3 Task 3: Christmas party in ‘Love Actually’

The final task was inspired by the Christmas party scene in Love Actually. Learners imagined they were guests at the party, engaging in informal conversations with other attendees, including characters from the film. The dialogue was intended to simulate informal social exchanges as guests at a party, promoting fluency and sociolinguistic competence in casual small talk. This task focused on less formal and more spontaneous interaction.

Each task was designed to provide opportunities for authentic, contextually rich dialogue while encouraging active English use. The task format allowed learners to draw on their full linguistic repertoires to achieve communicative goals. This design allowed for the systematic observation of how translanguaging practices and L1 use developed across different task stages throughout the semester.

3.3 Research Procedure

The study spanned a 15-week semester, with three main data collection stages: early (Week 2), middle (Week

9), and late (Week 14). Pair tasks were administered at these intervals to capture the evolving use and functions of L1 within a collaborative EFL classroom. The initial task in Week 2 was designed to observe L1 use in an unfamiliar setting, with subsequent tasks revealing changes as learners developed familiarity with their peers and task structure.

Crucially, no explicit instruction or guidance was provided by the instructor regarding L1 use during pair work or task completion. Learners were free to use L1 as they deemed necessary, allowing for the natural emergence and evolution of their language choices. This approach aimed to reflect authentic language use in a foreign language classroom where such strict monolingual policies might not be enforced, or might be gradually relaxed to foster learner autonomy and comfort. All task interactions were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim for detailed analysis, allowing for a longitudinal comparison of both the frequency and functional types of L1 use.

Additionally, semi-structured interviews were conducted in Weeks 2 and 14. The Week 2 interviews focused on eliciting learners' initial attitudes, reasons for using their L1 and its perceived role in the learning process. Sample questions included: "Can you estimate the percentage of English and Korean you used while performing the task?", "If you used one language more than the other, what were the reasons for that choice?" and "Why did you choose to use your first language during the task?" In Week 14, the follow-up interviews aimed to examine any shifts in perception and practice. Learners were asked questions such as: "Do you think the proportion of English and Korean use changed over time? If so, how?", "If your use of either English or Korean increased, what factors do you think contributed to that change?" and "Based on your learning experience, what do you think is the role of the first language in second language learning?" These interviews allowed for a comparison of initial and final responses, offering insights into how learner perceptions of L1 evolved over the course of the semester. All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed.

3.4 Data Analysis

To ensure a comprehensive understanding of learners' L1 use, the study triangulated data from task performances, transcriptions, and interviews. This approach provided a holistic view of how L1 use evolved over the semester and offered insights into learners' attitudes and intentions regarding L1 use in an FL context.

3.4.1 Frequency analysis

The transcribed pair work dialogues were analyzed to assess the frequency of L1 use. The amount of L1 employed in each pair work session was calculated as a percentage of the total linguistic output (L1 + L2). This quantified L1 usage, expressed as a ratio, was utilized to analyze changes in L1 use across the 2nd, 9th, and 14th weeks, comparing the extent of variation. However, the dialogue from role-playing practice was excluded from this analysis, as it consisted predominantly of rehearsed English lines and did not reflect learners' spontaneous language choices. Including these rehearsed utterances could distort the actual extent of L1 usage during collaborative task completion.

3.4.2 Functional analysis

To analyze the functions of L1 use, all L1-containing segments were segmented into episodes based on their communicative purpose. Drawing on established frameworks for L1 functions in collaborative L2 interaction (e.g., Swain and Lapkin 2000, Storch and Wigglesworth 2003, Alegría de la Colina and García Mayo 2009, DiCamilla

and Antón 2012, Shin et al. 2020), L1 functions were coded into the following categories:

- Task Clarification: Utterances used to comprehend or explain task content and instructions.
- Task Management (Metacognitive talk): L1 use for planning, organizing, or monitoring the activity, including setting goals or checking comprehension related to task procedures.
- Language-Related Episodes (LREs):
  - Form-focused LREs (F-LREs): Discussions focusing on grammatical issues and linguistic structures.
  - Lexical LREs (L-LREs): Deliberations on vocabulary, expressions, and word meanings or searches.
  - Mechanical LREs (M-LREs): Discussions concerning spelling, punctuation, or other mechanical aspects of language.
- Affective Expressions: Utterances used to express learners' emotions, such as frustration, confusion, or encouragement, or to establish/maintain social rapport.

The distribution of these functional categories was compared across the three tasks to investigate developmental changes in the specific purposes for which L1 was used throughout the semester.

3.4.3 Interview analysis

To explore learners' perceptions of L1 use and translanguaging, interview transcripts were analyzed thematically. Responses were first categorized according to the intent of each statement, identifying recurring themes related to learners' reasons for L1 use, their evolving comfort with L2, the influence of social dynamics (e.g., peer relationships, classroom atmosphere), and the perceived benefits of translanguaging for task participation and outcome quality.

4. Findings

4.1 Frequency of Native Language Use

This section presents the findings related to Research Question 1: What are the emerging patterns of L1 use and translanguaging practices in pair interactions? The transcribed pair work dialogues were analyzed to identify longitudinal changes in the frequency of L1 use during collaborative task performance. Table 2 presents the L1 word count and its proportion relative to total utterances (L1 + L2) across three key time points: Week 2, Week 9, and Week 14. These figures provide insight into how learners' reliance on their first language shifted over time as they became more engaged with target language interaction.

Table 2. Frequency of Native Language Utterances

Pair Number	Week 2 L1 word count / Percentage (%)	Week 9 L1 word count / Percentage (%)	Week 14 L1 word count / Percentage (%)
Pair 1	812	754	529
	66.88%	56.94%	37.49%
Pair 2	851	614	497
	55.54%	38.08%	30.41%
Pair 3	795	602	532
	53.07%	39.78%	34.47%
Pair 4	801	712	641
	58.12%	49.96%	44.79%
Pair 5	798	697	601
	58.50%	49.32%	40.12%
Pair 6	714	589	457
	44.32%	35.37%	26.99%

Across all pairs, there was a clear downward trend in L1 use, indicating a gradual transition toward greater reliance on English (L2) throughout the semester. Notably, Pairs 1 and 2 demonstrated the most substantial decreases in L1 usage, with reductions of approximately 29 and 25 percentage points, respectively. By Week 14, these pairs consistently produced over 60% of their utterances in English. This suggests that these learners may have experienced substantial growth in their confidence and competence in using English for task completion. In contrast, Pairs 4 and 5 showed more moderate reductions in L1 usage, while Pair 6, who began with the lowest proportion of L1 (44.32%), maintained this trend, declining to 26.99% by week 14. This consistent low L1 use by Pair 6 may reflect an initial higher comfort level with English.

The overall trend observed in Table 2 was a steady decrease in L1 use across all pairs over time, suggesting an increase in target language use. For instance, while L1 use constituted a significant portion of pair-work activity in Week 2, its proportion had markedly decreased by Week 14. This reduction in L1 use can be interpreted not merely as a decline in L1 dependence, but as evidence of qualitative improvement in learners' L2 fluency and confidence. This developmental pattern aligns with previous studies suggesting that as learners gain greater competence and confidence in the target language, their reliance on L1 tends to decrease naturally (Brooks et al. 1997, DiCamilla and Antón, 2012, Shin et al. 2020).

4.2 Evolution of L1 Functions: Facilitating L2 Learning and Task Engagement

This section addresses Research Question 2: How do the functions of L1 use and translanguaging practices evolve over time in pair work, particularly in facilitating task engagement and functional adequacy? The analysis revealed that L1 served various functional roles that facilitated learners' engagement and understanding, and these functions evolved over time. These functions reflect how L1 acted as a strategic cognitive tool for managing complex demands and enhancing interaction. The primary functions identified included Task Clarification, Task Management, LREs, and Affective Expressions.

4.2.1 Task clarification

At the onset of tasks, students utilised their L1 to comprehend and explain the task content. The following dialogue from Week 9 illustrates how students in Pair 4 shared their understanding of the task topic:

Excerpt 1[1]: Pair talk	
Gunwoo:	상황이 Anna만 기자회견장에 있는 거야? (So, is Anna the only one at the press conference?)
Jisoo:	그렇겠지. Anna는 배우니까 결혼발표 기자회견을 하는 상황이겠지? (I think so. Since Anna is an actress, it must be a press conference for her marriage announcement, right?)
Gunwoo:	그럼, 기자들의 질문을 생각해야 하고 (Then, we need to think about the questions the reporters will ask.)
Jisoo:	그 질문에 대한 Anna의 대답을 우리가 생각해서 대화문으로 만들어야지. (And we need to create a dialogue with Anna's responses to those questions.)

As shown in the dialogue above, learners exclusively used L1 to understand task content and confirm instructions. This suggests that L1 played a crucial role in establishing initial intersubjectivity and managing cognitive load for learners. Such initial reliance on L1 enabled participants to build shared understanding. This pattern is consistent with findings from Antón and DiCamilla (1998) and DiCamilla and Antón (2012), who highlighted the strategic use of L1 as a mediating tool in collaborative learning settings, particularly in the early stages of task engagement.

In Week 14, a clear shift occurred. While L1 was still employed for complex nuances in task clarification, several pairs increasingly incorporated L2 as shown in Excerpt 2. The pair alternated between their first language and English to clarify the task instructions, demonstrating a more flexible use of both languages as they progressed through the study.

Excerpt 2: Pair talk	
Minsu:	Okay, it's Christmas party.
Kyunghoon:	Yes, we are a guest, right?
Minsu:	I think so. 우리가 직접 파티에 참석하는 손님이 돼서 서로 small talk을 하는 상황을 만들면 되는 거지? (So, we need to create a situation where we become guests at the party and engage in small talk with each other, right?)
Kyunghoon:	That's what I understand.
Minsu:	Okay, got it.

This demonstrated a more flexible and evolving use of their linguistic repertoire, indicating growing confidence in processing procedural information in L2 while strategically using L1 for efficiency. Although some pairs were observed using both English and L1 interchangeably in Weeks 9 and 14, no pairs were observed to use only English for task clarification during the three tasks.

[1] See the transcription conversions in Appendix.

4.2.2 Task management

After understanding the task instructions, students interacted using their L1 to discuss how to perform the task. In Week 2, most pairs relied exclusively on L1 when negotiating procedural elements such as idea generation, role assignment, and turn-taking. This was evident in Pair 1's interaction in Excerpt 3, where the students used Korean throughout to suggest different options and reach agreement on how to structure their script. Similar patterns were observed across most pairs, except for Pairs 2 and 6, who occasionally attempted brief exchanges in English.

Excerpt 3: Pair talk	
Minsu:	어떻게 할까? 내가 이멜다를 하고, 너가 미구엘 역을 맡는다고 생각해 보는 거 어때? (How should we do this? What if I play Imelda, and you play Miguel?)
Kyunghoon:	어… 그럼 한 명씩 역할을 해서 대화문을 각자 생각하는 거야? (Hmm... So, we each take a role and think of our dialogue?)
Minsu:	꼭 그러자는 건 아니야. 어떻게 하지? (Not necessarily. What do you think?)
Kyunghoon:	같이 내용을 생각해서 한 문장씩 만들어 보는 거 어때? (How about we create sentences together, one by one?)
Minsu:	그래 그렇게 하자. (Okay, let's do that.)

The dominant use of L1 in this phase illustrates its key function in establishing intersubjectivity and supporting the collaborative management of cognitive and organizational demands. This use of L1 aligns with previous findings that emphasize its role as a tool for organizing collective activity and reducing working memory overload during complex tasks (DiCamilla and Antón 2012).

As the semester progressed, the data revealed a gradual shift toward increased integration of English into task management discourse. In Week 9, learners began initiating parts of the discussion in English while falling back on L1 for clarification and confirmation. For instance, in Excerpt 4, Pair 6 opened their planning phase in English, with Seowoo proposing an idea in the target language. When Jiwon appeared uncertain about the suggestion, she briefly used L1 to confirm her understanding before switching back to English. This flexible alternation between languages reflects a growing comfort with L2 use, alongside a continued strategic deployment of L1 to ensure mutual understanding and planning efficiency.

Excerpt 4: Pair talk	
Seowoo**:**	I want to change something. Umm… maybe a secret wedding?
Jiwon	A secret wedding? What do you mean?
Seowoo:	Just think about a secret wedding. The couple already got married without any announcement. Then press found the fact. So, the press conference is about the secret wedding.
Jiwon:	Okay, if I understand well, is it right? 이미 Anna는 비밀리에 결혼식을 올렸고 그걸 언론이 뒤늦게 알게 된 거야. 그래서 결혼과 관련한 질문을 위한 기자회견을 하는 내용을 만들자는 거야? (Anna has already had a secret wedding, and the press found out about it later. So, do you mean to create a press conference scene where she answers questions about her marriage?)
Jiwon:	Correct.
Seowoo:	Okay, I got it. It's very interesting.

By Week 14, this trend became more pronounced. Learners began managing larger portions of the planning dialogue in English, reserving L1 for particularly nuanced conceptual negotiation or to address momentary breakdowns in communication. Excerpt 5, taken from Pair 2, illustrates how one learner maintained his use of English even when his partner switched to L1 for elaborating on more complex story elements. This kind of asymmetrical code use highlights not only the learners' increased linguistic confidence, but also their individual autonomy in navigating task demands with varying degrees of translanguaging.

Excerpt 5: Pair talk	
Jimin:	How should we start?
Dongsoo:	At first, we should decide who we talk to. Umm… any character? Who do you think?
Jimin:	How about the famous man? The sketchbook scene.
Dongsoo:	You mean Mark? He secretly loves Juliet. His best friend's wife. Right?
Jiwon:	Yeah. How do you think?
Dongsoo:	Good. Ah… We could ask him how he feels about Juliet.
Jimin:	Yes, that's what I want to ask. 가장 친한 친구의 부인을 사랑한 기분이 어떤지, 그리고 왜 결혼 전에 고백하지 않았는지 물어보면 재미있을 거 같아. (It would be interesting to ask him how it feels to be in love with his best friend's wife and why he didn't confess before they got married.)
Dongsoo:	Yeah, but we are so mean for asking such questions.
Jimin:	Probably, but it's fun.

Interview data further supported this pattern of L1 use in task management. Many students explicitly reported consciously using L1 during the initial planning stages of each task to secure alignment on objectives and reduce the risk of early-stage miscommunication. They found this L1 reliance crucial for effective task initiation. Concurrently, several students noted that as their familiarity with the task formats and communicative demands increased, they gradually attempted to initiate and sustain procedural talk in English. However, they consistently continued to strategically rely on L1 when precision was essential to ensure clarity in task performance and avoid misinterpretations.

Overall, L1 was primarily employed to facilitate discussions about how to perform the task, organize content, and structure the script. These functions, ranging from joint planning to ongoing regulation of task progress, underscore the cognitive and metacognitive roles of L1 in supporting successful task completion (DiCamilla and Antón 2012, Hall and Cook 2012). While learners continued to use L1 strategically throughout the semester, its use for task management decreased as their ability to execute such functions in L2 improved. This shift reflects a progression toward increased L2-mediated collaboration and greater functional autonomy in interactive performance.

4.2.3 Language-related episodes (LREs)

During collaborative task performance, students engaged in various types of LREs, in which they used L1 to resolve lexical, grammatical, and mechanical issues. Across all three task cycles (Weeks 2, 9, and 14), the use of L1 in LREs evolved in nuanced ways depending on the type of linguistic challenge.

In all three tasks, learners frequently used their L1 during vocabulary-related episodes (L-LREs), particularly when faced with lexical gaps that hindered the progression of dialogue construction. These L-LREs illustrate how

L1 served as a strategic cognitive tool to negotiate meaning and ensure mutual understanding, reflecting its crucial role in managing cognitive load, and facilitating efficient communication. This pattern remained consistently high across Weeks 2, 9, and 14, indicating the persistent relevance and functional necessity of L1 for lexical access, even as learners' overall reliance on L1 declined. This consistency aligns with findings that L1 use for vocabulary searches is often task-dependent and a persistent strategy regardless of proficiency level, particularly when precise terminology is needed (Woodall 2002, Azkarai and Mayo 2009, 2015, DiCamilla and Antón 2012).

During the first task in Week 2, learners often used L1 to both introduce and confirm vocabulary items they had encountered in previous lessons. As shown in Excerpt 6, Pair 5 engaged in a metalinguistic discussion using L1 to select the phrase "take a side," which had been introduced during class instruction. Taesoo explained its meaning in Korean to ensure shared understanding, then clarified the grammatical function of "whose" as a possessive determiner, noting its correct usage in contrast to "who". The pair ultimately produced the sentence "Whose side are you on?" through an extended L1-mediated negotiation, drawing on prior instruction and shared linguistic knowledge. Throughout this episode, L1 was used exclusively to construct the utterance accurately, reflecting its instrumental role in facilitating form-function mapping.

Excerpt 6: Pair talk	
Seongsu:	당신은 누구 편입니까? 이거 어떻게 영어로 말하지? (How do you say "whose side are you on" in English?)
Taesoo:	Take a side가 편을 들다라고 했잖아. 그럼 side를 이용하면 될 거 같은데. (We learned that 'take a side' means to take sides, right? So, we could use 'side'.)
Seongsu:	Who side are you? 아닌 거 같은데. (Doesn't sound right.)
Taesoo:	Who랑 side랑 같이 올 수 없잖아. 소유격 whose라고 해야 하지 않을까? (You can't use 'who' with 'side'. Shouldn't it be possessive, 'whose'?)
Seongsu:	Whose side? 그렇겠다. 누구의 편. 그럼 (That makes sense. So,) whose side are you?
Taesoo:	음… be on my side라는 표현 배웠 잖아. 그럼 on도 써야하는 거 아닐까? (Umm… We learned 'be on my side'. So, shouldn't we use 'on'?)
Seongsu:	Whose side are you on? 이건가? (Is it 'whose side are you on' then?)
Taesoo:	맞는 거 같아. (Seems right.) Whose side are you on?

In subsequent tasks, L1 continued to play a central role in resolving lexical difficulties. As demonstrated in Excerpts 7 and 8, students turned to L1 when they could not recall appropriate English vocabulary. In Excerpt 7, Eunji from Pair 3 expressed confusion about the word "overwhelming" and requested clarification in L1. Her partner Minsang promptly provided the English equivalent, allowing the pair to complete the sentence collaboratively

Excerpt 7: Pair talk	
Eunji:	The media attention was … umm … 너무 컸다? 부담되었다? (Too big? Was it overwhelming?) Do you know how to say it?
Minsang:	How about overwhelming?
Eunji:	Overwhelming. The media attention was overwhelming. Yes, overwhelming.

Similarly, in Excerpt 8, Pair 4 confronted a situation where neither member could recall the English expression

"washed-up." They first confirmed their shared understanding of the Korean equivalent and then consulted a dictionary, ultimately selecting "washed-up" as the most accurate translation. The pair repeated the full sentence "Billy was a washed-up rock star," reinforcing comprehension and production of the new lexical item.

Excerpt 8: Pair talk	
Gunwoo:	Billy was a rock star. Umm… 내가 하고 싶은 말은 한물간 락스타였다고 Billy에 관해 얘기하는 거야. (What I wanted to say was that Billy was a washed-up rock star.)
Jisoo:	한물간? 뭘까? … 나도 잘 모르겠다. 사전 찾아보자. (Washed-up? What is it? … I'm not sure either. Let's look it up in the dictionary.)
Gunwoo:	Okay.
Jisoo:	There are several expressions. I think washed-up is find. 너가 표현하려고 한 문장과 비슷한 문장이 예문에 나온다. (There's a similar sentence to what you tried to express in the example sentences.) He is a washed-up baseball player.
Gunwoo:	그러네. (Yeah.) Billy was a washed-up rock star. 이렇게 하면 되겠지? (This should work, right?)
Jisoo:	Yes, Billy was a washed-up rock star. Washed-up.

L1 use in vocabulary-related LREs was prevalent across all time points. Rather than attempting to describe unknown words in English, students opted for immediate understanding by discussing in Korean. This strategy was not only cognitively efficient but also socially cooperative, facilitating smoother interactions. As seen in all three weeks, lexical elaboration in L1 played a persistent role in helping learners access and integrate new vocabulary items into their spoken output.

On the other hand, in grammar-related discussions, a notable shift occurred. In Week 2, students often relied heavily on L1 to identify and explain grammatical issues. By Week 14, however, most explanations were attempted in English, with L1 being used only for specific metalinguistic terms. In Excerpt 9, Minsang from Pair 3 recognized the lack of an article and tried to explain it using English. Instead, when he could not recall the English word for "article," he substituted it with the Korean equivalent ("관사"). This pattern illustrates that learners, while increasingly capable of discussing form in L2, still fell back on L1 when precise grammatical terminology was inaccessible, suggesting L1 as a crucial cognitive tool in moments of linguistic challenge (Alegría and García Mayo 2009, DiCamilla and Antón 2012, Shin et al. 2020).

This selective use of L1 demonstrates learners' metacognitive awareness and strategic allocation of linguistic resources. While students primarily relied on English for general explanations, they resorted to Korean when referring to specific linguistic terms that had not yet been fully internalized in L2. This practice optimized clarity and efficiency in collaborative problem-solving, as found in Bui and Tai's (2022) research.

Excerpt 9: Pair talk	
Eunji:	Why don't you just ask blunt question?
Minsang:	Wait. I think the sentence should be added to something.
Eunji:	What? What is it?
Minsang:	I don't know how to say it in English, but it's 관사. ('but it's' an article.)
Eunji:	Oh, got it. A? need a, right?
Minsang:	Yes, a 관사. ('Yes, a' article.)

Discussions around spelling and punctuation revealed the most dramatic change over time. In Week 2, learners almost exclusively used L1 during M-LREs, a common initial strategy for managing low-level form-focused issues as noted by Storch and Aldosari (2010). For example, Excerpt 10 shows how Jisoo noticed a misspelling of "compromise" in Gunwoo's writing. She used Korean to explain the error and repeated the correct pronunciation.

Excerpt 10: Pair talk	
Gunwoo:	It sounds like we are reaching a compromise.
Jisoo:	Ah… compromise, compromise.
Gunwoo:	왜? 뭐가 틀렸어? (Why? What's wrong?)
Jisoo:	Compromise가 스펠링이 틀린 거 같아서. (The spelling of 'compromise' seems to be wrong.)
Gunwoo:	그래? 스펠링 불러줘. (Really? How should it be spelled?)
Jisoo:	단어 끝에 e가 빠진 거 같아. S가 끝이 아니라 e를 붙여줘야 해. (It's missing an 'e' at the end. It should end with 'e', not 's'.)
Gunwoo:	Okay.

However, by Week 14, as shown in Excerpt 11, Pair 2 used English exclusively to correct a spelling issue, signaling increased comfort with metalinguistic discussion in L2. This shift from L1 to English in M-LREs reflects learners' growing autonomy and their ability to handle low-level form-focused issues within the target language. This aligns with broader trends of L1 use decreasing as familiarity with tasks increase (cf. DiCamilla and Antón 2012, Shin et al. 2020). By Week 14, all pairs demonstrated the ability to discuss mechanical aspects without reverting to L1, indicating successful proceduralization and automatization of certain linguistic routines within the L2.

Excerpt 11: Pair talk	
Jimin:	Absolutely.
Dongsoo:	Jimin, I think something wrong.
Jimin:	Something wrong?
Dongsoo:	Yes, the spelling, absolutely.
Jimin:	absolutely… I don't know.
Dongsoo:	Between t and l, I think missing e.
Jimin:	Oh, t-e-l-y. Right.

These findings reveal distinct patterns in L1 use across various types of LREs over time. In L-LREs, learners consistently relied on L1 to resolve vocabulary-related difficulties, a pattern that remained stable across all three observed time points. This persistent L1 use underscores the continuous cognitive demands of lexical retrieval and the strategic value of L1 in facilitating efficient word access and meaning negotiation (Hall and Cook 2012). In contrast, L1 use in M-LREs significantly decreased over time. By Week 14, learners increasingly resolved mechanical issues, such as spelling corrections, through the target language. It reflects an increased internalization of L2 forms and improved procedural control over linguistic rules.

Significantly, these differentiated trajectories suggest that while certain linguistic domains (e.g., mechanical aspects) became more readily managed through L2 interaction, vocabulary and complex grammar remained persistent areas of L1-mediated support. Even in later tasks, the continued L1 use in L-LREs and for challenging

grammatical issues indicates that learners strategically used their full linguistic repertoire to ensure clarity, enhance task quality, and achieve mutual understanding when encountering linguistic gaps. This aligns with translanguaging perspectives, which advocate for learners' dynamic use of all their linguistic resources as a practical tool for improving L2 task performance and functional adequacy.

Interview data further support this interpretation. Learners reported switching to Korean when struggling to express unfamiliar words or encountering complex grammatical constructions that remained challenging in English, such as passive voice or possessives. These learner reflections highlight that L1 was not perceived as a fallback due to inadequacy, but rather as a purpose-oriented, metacognitive resource for problem-solving (Brooks-Lewis 2009). Thus, the evolving patterns of L1 use within LREs demonstrate a developmental progression. While learners increasingly managed mechanical and some surface-level linguistic challenges in L2, they continued to rely on L1 for complex lexical and grammatical mediation, thereby demonstrating both linguistic growth and strategic bilingual competence (Shin et al. 2020).

4.2.4 Emotional expression

Students consistently used their L1 to express emotional responses during task performance, particularly when articulating nuanced or affect-laden thoughts. This pattern was most pronounced among pairs with relatively lower L2 proficiency. For instance, Excerpt 12 illustrates Pair 1(intermediate to lower-intermediate English proficiency) expressing frustration with cognitive and linguistic challenges of conveying their thoughts in English during the Week 9. This use of L1 served as a means of articulating emotional frustration and fostering interpersonal alignment (Brooks-Lewis 2009, DiCamilla and Antón 2012, Bui and Tai 2020).

Excerpt 12: Pair talk	
Minsu:	내 생각을 영어로 말하려고 하니 너무 어렵다. (It's so hard to express my thoughts in English.)
Kyunghoon:	생각한 내용을 바로 영어로 말 할 수 있으면 좋을 거 같은데 난 영어 단어가 잘 생각이 안나. (I wish I could just say what I'm thinking in English, but I can't think of the words.)
Minsu:	내말이. (Exactly.)

Conversely, L1 was also employed to express positive affect. Excerpt 13 shows Pair 6 sharing enjoyment and enthusiasm in Korean about the Week 9 task topic. It emphasizes how the imagined context evoked personal excitement and deeper relational engagement.

Excerpt 13: Pair talk	
Seowoo:	이번 주제 잼있지? 마치 내가 유명 인사가 된 거 같다. (This topic is fun, isn't it? I feel like a celebrity.)
Jiwon:	여주 같아? 난 결혼발표라는게 더 잼있는 거 같아. 연예과정과 프로포즈를 말하는 게 웃기면서도 잼있어. (Do you feel like the lead actress? I think talking about the engagement announcement is more fun. Talking about the courtship and proposal is both funny and enjoyable.)
Seowoo:	상상만으로도 기분 좋다. (Just imagining it makes me feel good.)

These examples demonstrate that learners utilized their L1 to communicate both negative and positive emotions in an open and elaborated format, often to build rapport, share affective perspectives, or facilitate deeper emotional connection. The choice to use L1 for extended emotional content or when relational in nature suggests its role as a socially and emotionally facilitative tool in peer interaction. This is consistent with sociocultural perspectives that view L1 as a social and emotional interactions, serving to build rapport and reduce anxiety (DiCamilla and Antón 2012, Hall and Cook 2012, East and Wang 2024).

In contrast, brief and self-contained emotional comments (e.g., "I like this topic," "It's fun," or "I wish I could attend the party someday") were more frequently delivered in English. These utterances typically did not require a response or mutual elaboration. It indicates that learners reserved L1 for emotional sharing that necessitated mutual understanding or socio-affective alignment, while L2 sufficed for declarative, lower-stakes affective comments. This reflects a strategic choice in language use, where L1 supports complex meaning-making and maintaining fluency during real-time communication when L2 alone might lead to breakdowns (Hall and Cook 2012, Bui and Tai 2022, East and Wang 2024).

Taken together, this pattern underscores that learners' language choice for emotional expression was dynamically shaped by the complexity of the emotion, the social purpose of the utterance, and the desired level of interpersonal engagement. L1 thus functioned as a crucial resource, enabling learners to draw upon their full linguistic repertoire for effective and nuanced emotional communication within collaborative tasks.

4.3 Evolution of Learner Perceptions of Language Use

This section explores the findings concerning Research Question 3: How do learners' perceptions of L1 use and translanguaging evolve, and how do these perceptions influence their strategic language choices in pair work over time? Learners' perceptions of L1 and L2 use underwent a marked evolution over the course of the semester, shifting from initial anxiety-driven avoidance of English to a more confident and strategic engagement with both languages. This shift directly influenced their strategic language choices in EFL pair work over time.

At the beginning of the semester, initial interviews revealed that learners were hesitant to speak in English due to a combination of social discomfort, self-perceived linguistic limitations, and implicit classroom norms favouring L1. For example, Jimin (Pair 2) articulated this discomfort, stating that "Just a moment ago, I was speaking Korean with my friend next to me, and suddenly switching to English feels somewhat embarrassing and… awkward," leading her to continue using Korean. Similarly, Minsang (Pair 3) expressed concern about drawing "unnecessary attention" if he spoke English when everyone else was using Korean, reflecting a peer-induced pressure that discouraged L2 use. This initial reluctance was rooted in a fear of making mistakes and a lack of familiarity with English as a medium for spontaneous interaction. Such sentiments are consistent with findings that learners often experience anxiety in monolingual classrooms and feel a sense of disadvantage (Brooks-Lewis 2009).

However, as the semester progressed, learners described a more balanced and intentional view of L1 and L2 use. This evolution in perception was facilitated by repeated exposure to L2 in the classroom, supportive peer relationships, and familiar task formats. English began to feel less foreign and more accessible. Students like Eunji (Pair 3) noted a growing tolerance for imperfection, recognizing that "getting things wrong sometimes" is "part of learning". This mindset shift allowed learners to take more linguistic risks and significantly increased their engagement in L2 communication.

The consistent engagement with the same partners played a crucial role in building comfortable relationships, which fostered confidence in using English. Seowoo (Pair 6) commented, "Working with the same partner throughout the semester made using English a bit easier. Speaking with someone familiar helped alleviate the

pressure of using English." Supportive peer attitudes, where partners listened carefully and confirmed understanding, were particularly vital in increasing motivation for L2 use. Sungsoo (Pair 5) remarked, "When I expressed my thoughts in my not-so-good English, my partner listened carefully and sometimes repeated what I said in English to confirm that they understood. I think my partner helped me a lot in speaking English better." This highlights how positive peer interactions can mitigate fears related to language barriers and encourage more frequent L2 usage (Philp et al. 2010, Philp et al. 2014, Philp 2016, Kim 2019, 2021).

Classroom-level changes further reinforced these shifts in perception and language choice. Learners observed that English use became more normalized as the semester progressed, making it less socially risky to initiate conversations in the target language. Dongsoo (Pair 2) articulated this change, noting that "at some point, pairs started having conversations in English, and I thought I might as well try speaking English more comfortably". This reduced the perceived social cost of using L2, allowing learners to view English not as a performance but as a means of interaction. The design of tasks, particularly the dialogic and performative ones, also played a crucial role. This helped learners integrate English more naturally and fostered deeper engagement with L2, especially through repeated interactions within familiar structures.

By the final interviews, students had also come to appreciate the role of L1 as a supportive tool rather than a crutch (Brooks-Lewis 2009). They increasingly viewed L1 as a cognitive scaffold that allowed them to express more complex or nuanced thoughts when L2 was insufficient. For instance, Minsu (Pair 1) stated that "Without the option to use L1, I would have spoken very little, if at all". Taesoo (Pair 5) elaborated that "When I can only use English, I end up using simpler expressions more often because it's harder to explain alternative ones". These reflections indicate that students developed a more metacognitive awareness of their linguistic limitations and made deliberate decisions about language use based on task demands and communicative goals. This aligns with sociocultural perspectives that emphasize L1 as an indispensable semiotic device mediating the learning process, especially for cognitive challenges (DiCamilla and Antón 2012, Shin et al. 2020). The use of L1 for clarifying task procedures, solving linguistic problems, and managing complex cognitive loads was understood as enhancing the quality of task performance.

Overall, the evolution in learners' perceptions reflects a fundamental shift from seeing L1 and L2 in opposition to recognizing their complementary roles. Learners increasingly viewed English as a tool for active communication rather than formal correctness, and Korean as a strategic resource for cognitive support. These findings underscore the dynamic nature of learner attitudes, shaped by interpersonal relationships, evolving classroom norms, effective task design, and growing linguistic self-efficacy. This also supports the view that allowing strategic L1 use can lower anxiety and boost confidence (Bui and Tai 2022, Hall and Cook 2012, Neokleous 2017). The ability of learners to utilize their full linguistic repertoire, or engage in translanguaging, was increasingly seen as an agentive strategy to fulfill task demands and achieve functional adequacy (Bui and Tai 2022).

5. Discussion

The findings of this study illuminate the dynamic interplay between cognitive strategies, social dynamics, and evolving learner attitudes that shaped L1 use during collaborative writing tasks in an EFL setting. This longitudinal approach, tracking changes in language use and perceptions over a semester, provides novel empirical evidence on how multilingual repertoires are dynamically deployed and adapt within a developing social learning environment. While prior research has noted L1's role in cognitive load management and the influence of social dynamics, this study specifically explores how these aspects evolve over time within consistent peer relationships

and a changing classroom atmosphere, integrating learners' own voices to interpret these shifts.

This study indicates that all pairs exhibited the highest frequency of L1 use during the second week of the pair works and progressively reduced their reliance on L1 over time, although the extent and pace of this reduction varied among the pairs. This finding aligns with previous longitudinal research indicating a progressive decrease in L1 use as learners gain familiarity and confidence in the target language environment. For instance, Brooks et al. (1997) observed L1 use progressively disappearing from interaction over time in their study of learners' language development. The extent and pace of this reduction varied among pairs, influenced by individual factors like initial English proficiency and reluctance to use L2, as well as evolving social dynamics. By Week 14, all pairs consistently produced a significantly higher proportion of their utterances in English, indicating a general shift toward greater reliance on the target language.

While the frequency of L1 use generally declined over time, its functional importance remained evident. Learners strategically employed L1 in four key areas: task clarification, task management (metacognitive talk), language-related problem-solving (LREs), and emotional expression. These uses were not random but strategic, aimed at sustaining the task, resolving linguistic uncertainties, and maintaining interpersonal rapport. The functional roles of L1 observed in this study corroborate findings from numerous studies within the sociocultural tradition that highlight L1 as a crucial mediating tool for L2 learning. For example, Antón and DiCamilla (1998) found that L1 enabled learners to provide scaffolding, establish intersubjectivity, and externalize inner speech during difficult activities. Swain and Lapkin (2000) similarly identified L1 use for moving the task along, focusing attention, and interpersonal interaction. The use of L1 to navigate complex cognitive tasks and enhance task engagement and performance is consistent with Cummins' (2000) framework, which posits that bilingual individuals use their dual-language capabilities for cognitive flexibility and superior academic outcomes. This study further provides empirical evidence of this well-documented phenomenon within a specific longitudinal EFL context, showing how it is driven by evolving social factors and learner perceptions.

Specifically, LREs particularly revealed the differentiated roles of L1. In lexical LREs, learners frequently turned to L1 to negotiate or verify vocabulary meaning, especially when encountering unfamiliar or abstract terms. This tendency persisted even in later weeks, indicating that L1 continued to serve as a reliable support for navigating conceptual difficulties. This aligns with previous findings that L1 is essential for retrieving language from memory and making meaning of text (Friedlander 1990, Villamil and De Guerrero 1996, Upton and Lee-Thompson 2001). In contrast, mechanics- and form-focused LREs showed a noticeable shift toward English over time. As learners gained familiarity with task routines and became more confident in managing grammatical forms, they began to resolve such issues increasingly in the target language. This trend suggests a developmental trajectory where L1 supports initial comprehension and planning, while English becomes the default for operationalizing form. This task-dependent functional use of L1 aligns with Azkarai and García Mayo's (2015) findings that L1 functions vary by task type, with vocabulary searches more frequent in speaking tasks and grammar deliberations more frequent in speaking and writing tasks. Notably, as L1 use for form-focused and mechanical LREs decreased, students' confidence in discussing these linguistic aspects in L2 increased. This indicates a growing self-regulation in the target language and a potential improvement in their L2 metalinguistic awareness.

A critical contribution of this study is the integration of learners' evolving perceptions, which revealed the underlying motivations for their language choices. Initially, students expressed significant discomfort and awkwardness in switching to English, alongside a perceived lack of L2 proficiency that made them hesitant to participate fully. This supports the notion that linguistic insecurity often drives L1 reliance.

However, over the semester, a proactive shift occurred. Learners developed a self-imposed expectation to use

English, driven by a desire for progress and frustration with their continued L1 reliance. This commitment, coupled with strengthening peer relationships and a conducive classroom atmosphere, led to a noticeable decrease in awkwardness and increased comfort with making mistakes in English. This highlights how supportive peer interactions can mitigate fears related to language barriers and encourage more frequent L2 use. This finding echoes Storch and Aldosari's (2010) observation that peer attitudes, not just proficiency, influence language choice. The classroom atmosphere also played a role, as students observed peers increasingly using English, which encouraged their own L2 engagement.

Crucially, learners came to view L1 not as a barrier but as a resource that, when used judiciously, enriched the quality of the tasks. They reported that L1 enabled them to explore more complex ideas, verify meanings, and co-construct richer dialogues. This directly addresses concerns about task quality, as learners perceived an improvement in quality and the ability to express more complex ideas by using their L1. This facilitative role of L1, enhancing task participation and outcomes by allowing access to a wider range of vocabulary and more precise expressions, supports the findings of Swain and Lapkin (2000) and Anton and DiCamilla (1998) regarding L1 as a cognitive tool for scaffolding and problem-solving. Rather than undermining English learning, L1 use was reinterpreted as a facilitative tool that enhanced both task performance and L2 development. This also ties into the concept of functional adequacy in TBLT, where translanguaging helps learners achieve communicative goals more effectively by mobilizing their full linguistic repertoire.

The observed shift in L1 functions, from being a primary medium for most interactions to becoming a more specialized tool for complex cognitive processes and deeper emotional expression, reflects a developmental trajectory. As learners' L2 confidence grew, their reliance on L1 for basic task management and form-focused discussions diminished, but it retained its strategic value for navigating conceptual complexities and fostering deeper meaning-making. This nuance is crucial for understanding how L1 supports L2 development, transforming from an "essential tool" for beginners to a "cognitive tool" for complex thought at higher levels. The instructor's role was largely non-interventional regarding L1 use, as students had no specific instructions on language choice. This suggests that the observed shift towards greater L2 use was largely driven by learners' evolving perceptions, increased comfort, and peer influence, rather than explicit teacher directives. This further reinforces the importance of organic social and cognitive development in language learning.

6. Conclusion

This study significantly contributes to the existing literature by providing a longitudinal examination of L1 use and learners' perceptions within an EFL classroom, a dimension often lacking in previous research. By tracking changes across multiple tasks over a semester, it offers insights into the developmental trajectory of translanguaging practices and the evolving interplay between social relationships, task familiarity, and strategic language choices. The inclusion of learners' explicit reflections and intentions through interviews, beyond mere interactional data, offers a deeper comprehensive understanding of why and how translanguaging unfolds as both a cognitive and social process. This distinguishes the study from cross-sectional observations that capture only a static snapshot of language use.

Despite its contributions, this study also has limitations. First, the research was conducted within a specific Korean university context with self-selected pairs, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings to other instructional settings or learner populations. The self-selection of partners also means that participants were likely already familiar or comfortable with each other, which may have influenced interaction patterns. Second, while

the study captured changes in L1 use frequency and function, it did not directly measure the quality of task output or the direct improvement in L2 proficiency as a result of the observed shifts in language use. Instead, learner development was assessed primarily through self-reported perceptions, which, while insightful, may not fully capture actual language growth.

Nevertheless, the findings offer several actionable insights for language educators. Rather than viewing L1 as an impediment to L2 learning, instructors should consider integrating it as a strategic pedagogical tool that facilitates deeper understanding, encourages fuller participation, and enhances the quality of task performance. It is equally important to cultivate a classroom environment that encourages risk-taking and reduces anxiety related to L2 use. Given the substantial role of peer influence, educators are encouraged to foster supportive peer interactions and continuity in collaborative pairings, thus promoting a socially cohesive and linguistically empowering space. In addition, designing sequenced tasks that gradually build in cognitive and linguistic complexity can scaffold learning more effectively, enabling learners to strategically mobilize their full linguistic repertoires.

Ultimately, this approach, grounded in a translanguaging perspective, affirms the value of multilingualism in language education. Future research should extend this work by investigating how translanguaging practices influence measurable gains in L2 proficiency, as well as by exploring these dynamics in more diverse instructional contexts. Recognizing and embracing learners' full linguistic repertoires not only fosters more inclusive pedagogy but also empowers learners to take ownership of their language development in meaningful and authentic ways.

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Examples in: English
Applicable Languages: English
Applicable Level: Tertiary

Appendix

The transcription conventions

(in English)	translation made by the researcher
(‘in English’)	the original language of the speaker
(“hi”)	a Korean translation by participants
:	an extension of the sound of the word
=	a rapid change of turn between speakers
…	short pause
?	rising intonation at the end of a word, phrase, or sentence
.	a falling intonation
,	a continuing intonation