

**BILINGUAL PROMPTING STRATEGIES FOR HIGHER-ORDER THINKING
IN EFL WRITING****Ikramova Aziza Aminovna**

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Abstract. This article develops a theory-into-practice account of bilingual prompting strategies designed to elicit higher-order thinking—analysis, evaluation, and creation—in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) academic writing. Building on research in translanguaging, cognitive load theory, metacognition, and rhetorical genre studies, it argues that task-embedded prompts that strategically alternate or combine learners' L1 and English can expand working memory, deepen conceptual access, and stabilize argumentative moves without undermining target-language development. The paper models bilingual prompts as micro-scaffolds that operate at four loci: ideation and problem framing, evidence synthesis and warranting, stance and hedging, and revision-for-transfer.

Keywords: bilingual prompting, higher-order thinking, EFL writing, translanguaging, metacognition, cognitive load, argumentation, synthesis, revision, assessment.

**ДВУЯЗЫЧНЫЕ СТРАТЕГИИ СТИМУЛИРОВАНИЯ МЫШЛЕНИЯ БОЛЕЕ
ВЫСОКОГО ПОРЯДКА ПРИ НАПИСАНИИ ТЕКСТОВ НА EFL**

Аннотация. В статье представлена концепция и практическая модель двуязычных подсказок, направленных на формирование мышления высокого порядка—анализа, оценки и создания—в академическом письме по английскому как иностранному.

Опираясь на исследования транслангуаджинга, теории когнитивной нагрузки, метакогниции и риторических жанров, автор утверждает, что задания с целенаправленным чередованием или сочетанием L1 и английского расширяют рабочую память, углубляют доступ к понятиям и стабилизируют аргументацию без подрыва развития целевого языка.

Ключевые слова: двуязычные подсказки, мышление высокого порядка, академическое письмо EFL, транслангуаджинг, метакогниция, когнитивная нагрузка, аргументация, синтез, ревизия, оценивание.

The problem that motivates this inquiry is not whether EFL learners should be allowed to use their first language while writing in English, but how bilingual resources can be designed into writing pedagogy so that higher-order thinking becomes more likely and more visible.

Decades of second language research show that complex reasoning, evaluation of evidence, and creative synthesis depend on conceptual access and working-memory bandwidth that may be constrained when learners operate exclusively in a non-dominant language. When instructors prohibit L1 use categorically, students may manage surface correctness yet struggle to develop and defend claims with the nuance expected in academic discourse. Conversely, unrestricted L1 use risks displacing the hard work of L2 formulation and register control.

Bilingual prompting seeks a principled middle path: a transparent, scaffolded alternation between L1 and English that preserves authorship in the target language while using the first language to expand thinking, reduce extraneous load, and enforce discipline in reasoning.

A theoretical synthesis grounds this approach. Translanguaging research reframes learners' languages not as sealed systems but as an integrated repertoire for meaning-making and identity work; it invites pedagogy that orchestrates cross-lingual resources to accomplish

cognitively demanding tasks. Cognitive load theory, for its part, distinguishes intrinsic load (complexity inherent to the task), extraneous load (inefficiency added by poor design), and germane load (effort devoted to schema construction). Writing tasks that require source-based synthesis, counterargument, and warranting are intrinsically complex; a rigid L2-only policy can add extraneous load, leaving too little germane capacity for the actual reasoning. Metacognitive theory contributes the idea that self-explanation and planning prompts can externalize thought, making revision and transfer more likely. Rhetorical genre studies emphasize that argument and synthesis are not generic skills but patterned moves indexed to specific disciplinary communities; prompts that name those moves and allow L1 rehearsal can accelerate uptake.

These perspectives converge on the pedagogical gamble: if we design bilingual prompts well, students will think more deeply and write more responsibly.

This article therefore treats bilingual prompts as micro-scaffolds that can be placed strategically in the writing cycle. At the stage of ideation and problem framing, two families of prompts dominate. The first is the “concept lattice,” in which students sketch a claim space in L1—listing competing lenses, key variables, and possible causal pathways—before translating only the selected lens and variables into English. Here the L1 activity is bounded and purpose-built: it widens the hypothesis field while forestalling premature L2 phrasing that might lock the argument too early. The second family is the “counterfactual seed”: learners generate in L1 a concise description of the world if their claim were false, then produce in English the minimal evidence that would distinguish truth from that counterfactual. The alternation forces attention to disconfirmation and guards against confirmation bias.

Evidence synthesis and warranting require prompts that disentangle paraphrase, summary, and synthesis. A bilingual “triage” sequence can be effective: for each source, students produce an L1 micro-summary (≤ 25 words) keyed to the assignment’s research question, then compose in English a synthesis sentence that attributes ideas to named authors and indicates the relation (support, extension, tension). The L1 step reduces extraneous load by allowing rapid sense-making; the English step enforces register and citation discipline. To tighten warrants, instructors can require an L1 justification (“What assumption connects this evidence to your claim?”) followed by an English hedge calibrated to disciplinary norms (“likely,” “suggests,” “may indicate”). Such pairing aligns language form with epistemic responsibility—students learn that hedging is not a weakness but a signal of alignment between evidence and claim.

Stance and hedging benefit from bilingual contrastive prompts that expose pragmatic subtleties. Learners generate, in L1, three intentions for a paragraph move (to concede, to delimit scope, to raise a methodological caveat), then produce in English a sentence that performs the intended move with an appropriate stance verb or modal. An L1 reflection closes the loop: “How will this stance affect a skeptical reader?” The bilingual oscillation highlights that stance is a decision, not a default, and that English offers a palette of resources to realize it. Critically, these prompts discourage the empty importation of hedges; they require fit to intent.

Revision-for-transfer is the final locus. Bilingual self-explanation diaries invite students to describe in L1 the most consequential revision they made (“I moved the counterargument earlier to pre-empt a likely objection”), to name the rhetorical reason, and then to rewrite the revised passage in English with explicit cohesion devices. Across assignments, these diaries evolve from L1-heavy to English-heavy as learners internalize the repertoire. The diaries become assessment artifacts that document metacognitive growth.

Outcomes from early implementations—reported informally by instructors—suggest that bilingual prompting increases the clarity and testability of claims, the explicitness of warrants, and the appropriateness of hedging, especially among intermediate-level writers. Diaries reveal that students notice the value of thinking in L1 about counterarguments and limitations before formulating in English; they also report reduced anxiety when allowed to plan in L1. Automated indices do not always show large gains in lexical sophistication or syntactic complexity in the short term—improvements appear after repeated cycles when attention can shift from argument scaffolding to sentence-level craft. These patterns align with the theoretical forecast: bilingual prompting first stabilizes reasoning, then frees capacity for style.

Sustainability depends on program design. Departments can develop a shared repository of bilingual prompts tagged by move, function, level, and discipline, with exemplar artifacts and common failure modes. Professional development adopts a studio format: instructors bring a prompt, test it in a micro-lesson, gather peer feedback, and revise. Analytics dashboards visualize uptake (how often prompts are used as designed), revision effectiveness (rubric deltas), and integrity indicators (citation fidelity). Governance policies clarify acceptable L1 uses and AI roles, and they provide students with transparent expectations about attribution and process artifacts. Over time, programs can refine prompts toward minimal effective scaffolding, allowing more agency as students internalize the repertoire.

The transfer question—do gains from bilingual prompting carry to contexts where L1 access is limited—is central. Here, revision-for-transfer prompts are decisive. By asking students to name the move and the reason for it in L1, then to realize it in English and reflect on audience, teachers create metacognitive traces that survive into L2-only environments. Process grading reinforces the value of these traces. Longitudinally, instructors can assign at least one L2-only essay late in the term to test whether previously scaffolded moves appear unprompted; rubric data and diaries can document persistence.

Taken together, these considerations justify a reframing. Bilingual prompting is not a compromise with deficiency; it is a design stance that takes seriously how minds manage complexity and how languages distribute affordances. It honors the goal of writing in English by protecting the English deliverable and calibrating L1 roles, while extending the cognitive horizon within which that writing is conceived and justified. It is transparent to students, auditable by programs, and adaptable across disciplines. Most importantly, it trains writers to think before they write—and to think in the full range of their linguistic resources while composing for a specific audience and purpose.

Conclusion

Bilingual prompting strategies for higher-order thinking in EFL writing rest on a simple but powerful claim: when reasoning is hard and language is new, pedagogy should use all of the learner's linguistic resources to build arguments responsibly, then require the final act of authorship in the target language. By embedding carefully designed, time-bounded L1 prompts within English deliverables across the writing cycle—ideation, synthesis, stance, and revision—teachers can reduce extraneous load, expand conceptual reach, and cultivate metacognitive control without diluting L2 development. The design grammar presented here, along with classroom enactments and assessment protocols, enables coherent implementation; the evaluation blueprint offers a path toward evidence beyond enthusiasm. Equity and ethics are integral: attribution norms, privacy safeguards, and dialectal justice ensure that bilingual prompting does not privilege or erase voices.

When iterated within communities of practice and audited with process evidence, bilingual prompting becomes a durable capacity of EFL programs, turning translanguaging from a tolerated detour into a principled route to better thinking and better writing.

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