



Teacher's Translanguaging Practice in EFL Classroom Interaction in A Junior High School

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ABSTRACT

This research intends to examine the teacher's translanguaging practices in EFL classroom interaction at a junior high school setting. A qualitative research approach was adopted. The data gathered through observation and interviews. The participant in this study was a seventh-grade English teacher from SMP Negeri 5 Percut Sei Tuan. The findings revealed that the teacher utilized four types of translanguaging practices: (1) translanguaging within one named language (Indonesian), (2) translanguaging through translation, (3) translanguaging through peer support, and (4) translanguaging through two named languages (Indonesian and English). These practices were employed to deliver instructions, clarify learning materials, and ensure students' understanding. The reasons for using

translanguaging included students' limited vocabulary mastery, the need to clarify teacher instructions and the creation of a comfortable learning environment. The study concludes that translanguaging is an effective pedagogical strategy for enhancing student comprehension and supporting the teaching-learning process of English as a foreign language.

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INTRODUCTION

In multilingual education settings, especially in countries where English is taught as a foreign language, the use of multiple languages within the classroom has become increasingly common and necessary. One approach that reflects this reality is translanguaging, which refers to the use of a speaker's full linguistic resources to make meaning, communicate, and learn (Garcia & Wei, 2014). Translanguaging does not

separate languages into fixed systems, but allows fluid movement between them, enabling more effective interaction and comprehension in bilingual or multilingual classrooms.

In Indonesia, where English is not used in daily communication and is taught solely as a school subject (Nayar, 1997), English language learners often rely on Bahasa Indonesia or local languages to support their understanding. Teachers similarly switch between languages to help students grasp new concepts, explain tasks, or give instructions. As shown by Siregar (2020), EFL teachers frequently combine English with the students' first language to ensure comprehension, especially when dealing with unfamiliar vocabulary or complex grammar. This bilingual strategy is increasingly recognized not as a failure to stay within the target language, but as an intentional and pedagogically sound choice that reflects multilingual realities (Beres, 2015; Cummins, 2014).

Several studies have highlighted the benefits of translanguaging in classroom contexts. It enhances students' understanding (Puspitasari & Sugirin, 2024), supports identity development in multilingual learners (Ng & Lee, 2019), and creates a more inclusive and participatory learning environment (Yuvayapan, 2019; Vogel & García, 2017). Teachers also report that translanguaging allows them to scaffold learning more effectively by connecting new content to students' prior knowledge (Liando et al., 2022). In EFL classrooms, especially in contexts like Indonesia, translanguaging helps address the gap between students' limited exposure to English and the curriculum's linguistic demands.

Despite these documented advantages, translanguaging remains under-explored in many EFL classrooms in Indonesia, particularly regarding the teacher's role in intentionally applying translanguaging strategies. While many studies have examined translanguaging from the students' perspective (Raja et al., 2022), few have focused on how teachers use translanguaging in real classroom interactions and their reasons for doing so.

To address this gap, this study is guided by the following research questions:

1. How does the teacher use translanguaging in EFL Classroom Interaction?
2. Why does the teacher use translanguaging in EFL Classroom Interaction?

This study draws on the theoretical framework of Garcia and Wei (2014), who conceptualize translanguaging as a pedagogical practice that empowers both teacher and students in multilingual classrooms. By analyzing actual classroom interactions and teacher interviews at a junior high school in Indonesia, this study aims to contribute to the understanding of translanguaging as a meaningful instructional strategy. It also offers insight into how translanguaging can support both content learning and language development in EFL contexts where English is not the dominant language of communication.

METHOD

In conducting the research for this study, the researcher employed qualitative research since the aims of this research is to describe the factual phenomena of translanguaging practice as it occurs in EFL classroom interaction. The participant of this study is an English Teacher at SMP Neger 5 Percut Sei Tuan. The data for the research were collected from classroom interaction in which the researcher recorded to obtain the utterances spoken by the teacher in the EFL classroom interaction as well as from an interview with an English teacher. The collected data in form of teacher's and students' utterances were the transcribed and analyzed by paying attention to the translanguaging. The collected data were analyzed using three steps: reduction of data, display of data, and conclusion drawing. Researcher typically employed a three-step procedure to assess data from observation and in-depth interviews regarding translanguaging in EFL classroom interaction. The researcher ultimately interpreted the data about how and what the reasons and goals are behind the teacher's translanguaging practice in EFL classroom interaction.

RESULTS

1. Translanguaging Used by A Teacher in EFL Classroom Interaction

According to the classification of translanguaging methods outlined by Iversen (2019), there were five types of translanguaging practices including translanguaging within one named language, translanguaging with visual support, translanguaging through translation, translanguaging through peer support, and translanguaging through several named languages. Meanwhile, in the classroom that the researcher

observed and analyzed, the teacher took a different approach. The teacher chose to explain the learning content to the entire class without providing any visual support to assist her students. Therefore, there is no translanguaging practices involving visual support were observed. In this study, there were four types of translanguaging practices that the researcher obtained from the observation namely translanguaging within one named language (Indonesian), translanguaging through translation, translanguaging through peer support, and translanguaging through several named languages (two named languages). The data analyzed consisted of utterances and words produced by the teacher.

Table 1. The Results of Observations

Components	Summary	Frequencies
Translanguaging through one named language (Indonesia)	The teacher used this type for giving instructions to the students.	4 times
Translanguaging through translation	The teacher most used this type to manage classroom interactions and clarify students' misconception about the learning material.	72 times
Translanguaging through peer support	The teacher used this type to help the students who possessed limited knowledge in English.	7 times
Translanguaging through two named languages	The teacher frequently used this type for movement using linguistic sources.	19 times

First, translanguaging through one named language (Indonesia) which occurred 4 times. The teacher used this type for giving instructions to the students. Second, translanguaging through translation which occurred 72 times. The teacher most used this type to manage classroom interactions and clarify students' misconception about the learning material. Third, translanguaging through peer support which occurred 7 times. The teacher used this type to help the students who possessed limited knowledge in English. Fourth, translanguaging through two named languages (English and Indonesia) which occurred 19 times. The teacher frequently used this type for movement using linguistic sources.

2. The Reasons for The Teacher's Translanguaging in EFL Classroom Interaction

According to open-ended interview, the researcher got the data about some reasons why English teacher practiced translanguaging in EFL classroom interaction. These reasons are in line with advantages that stated by Baker (2001), including to promote a deeper and fuller understanding of the subject matter, help students to develop skills in their weaker language, and to develop learners second language ability concurrently with content learning. There are three reasons of translanguaging practiced. First, students' lack of vocabulary mastery. Since it was among seventh-grade students in junior high school. The students, who were categorized as beginners, still had limited vocabularies. This reason was strongly supported by the teacher who was teaching in the first year. For example, the teacher said:

"I use English first and I use Indonesia too. I often to use both language in classroom for making students understand what I said. Because my students are 7th grade, they are the beginners and most of them used Indonesia from primary school (SD) so maybe they do not understand if I use full English to explain the lesson. So, I have to use both Indonesia and English. Translate the English into Indonesia. I always do like that for making my students understand what I said to them."

Considering the information provided, it can be seen that the lack of vocabulary mastery becomes the reason of the translanguaging implementation. The teacher never tried to use English fully, because at the end of the learning process, the learning objectives could not be reached well.

The second reason is related to the teacher's instruction. The English teacher used translanguaging to enhance the clarity of the instructions for the students. To prevent any misunderstanding of instruction, the teacher implemented translanguaging. Teacher says:

"By the use of translanguaging, the students can understand what the teacher said, translanguaging can influence the students' comprehension and the students can understand what teacher said"

"There is improvement in English skill as a result of using translanguaging. Because, when I ask students "do you understand what

I said? do you understand what I have explained?" Then they answer me "Yes mam I do" and then we can see from the they can do the exercise, they do their homework and they answer my question, so I know they understand. But if they do not answer my question, it means they do not understand. Nah, so we can see the improvement from that, the students understand and then they do their all exercise in paket book."

Based on data above, it can be seen that the second reason is related to the teacher's instruction. The English teacher used translanguaging to make the instruction clearer for the students. Therefore, translanguaging can serve as an effective technique for clarification when students encounter difficulties in understanding the lesson.

The third reason is to create a comfortable learning environment. Since it is not their first language and at the seven-year level, the teacher should design a comfortable learning environment. Teacher says:

"In my opinion, the learning process becomes more alive..."

"I use translanguaging when open the class, like greeting and ask some question about their condition. And also, when I explain the material in learning process in the classroom."

"I used translanguaging to make students understand the material, and then I want my students understand what we are talking about in classroom"

According to the information provided, the third reason highlights the importance of establishing a comfortable learning environment. Since it is not students' first language, the teacher should design a comfortable learning environment. The use of translanguaging allows the teacher to foster a more responsive learning environment. Therefore, translanguaging can be an effective method to reduce confusion in language learning, particularly beneficial for junior high school students at the lower levels.

DISCUSSION

The data analysis was indicated that there are five types of translanguaging practiced by the teacher in EFL classroom interaction and four reasons why

translanguaging used by the teacher in EFL classroom interaction obtained from the conversations between teacher and students in the EFL classroom interaction and from the interview with the English teacher as well.

First, the translanguaging practiced by the teacher in the EFL classroom interaction was analyzed through conversations between the teacher and students. It was found the teacher performed four out of five types of translanguaging mentioned. They were translanguaging through one named language (Indonesia), translanguaging through translation, translanguaging through peer support, and translanguaging through two named languages (English and Indonesia). The teacher preferred to explain the learning material

and did not show any visual support to her students. Therefore, there was no translanguaging practices with visual support. It was clearly found from the analyzed data that the teacher practiced translanguaging through four types.

Second, from the interview with the English teacher and transcribed into the written form, the researcher analyzed the reason why the teacher used translanguaging in EFL classroom interaction. There were three reasons which were students' lack of vocabulary mastery, teacher's instruction, and comfortable learning environment.

Since the use of translanguaging by the teacher may have an impact on students' academic and confidence in using English as a foreign language in the classroom. Therefore, in the learning process, the teacher needs to practice translanguaging. It can be applied based on the types of how translanguaging is practiced and the reasons for performing such translanguaging practice.

CONCLUSION

In summary, translanguaging is a critical pedagogical approach in the EFL classroom interaction, as it is based on transcript of observation and strong arguments and leads to substantial positive outcomes. Teacher's translanguaging practice in the EFL classroom interaction was used to support teaching and learning process. They were translanguaging through one named language (Indonesia), translanguaging through translation, translanguaging through peer support, and translanguaging through two named languages (English and Indonesia). Translanguaging practice had a significant effect on the students in terms of their academic and confidence in using English as a

foreign language. Therefore, in the learning process, the teacher needs to practice translanguaging. Furthermore, Translanguaging not only promotes student engagement but also promotes a supportive and enjoyable learning environment by addressing challenges such as limited vocabulary mastery, instructional clarity, and create a comfortable environment in the classroom. Future studies should incorporate both teacher and student perspectives to achieve a full understanding of these limitations. Besides, future researchers and teachers must continue to investigate the dynamic function of translanguaging in language acquisition.

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