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Beyond English-Only: Master's Students' Perceptions of Translanguaging Challenges and Strategies in Indonesian EFL Higher Education

Nanda Efriani*, Failasofah, Reli Handayani, Hadiyanto, Mukhlash Abrar

Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Jambi, Jambi, 36369, Indonesia

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* Corresponding author:

E-mail: efriani.nanda27@gmail.com *
failasofah@unja.ac.id
reli_handayani@unja.ac.id
hadiyanto@unja.ac.id
mukhlash.abrar@unja.ac.id

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ABSTRACT

In Indonesian EFL higher education, the use of students' first language alongside English remains a debated issue, as multilingual practices are often perceived as a barrier to English development. However, translanguaging provides a perspective that views learners' entire linguistic repertoire as a resource for meaning-making and academic learning. This study aimed to explore the challenges experienced by Indonesian EFL master's students when using translanguaging in classroom interaction and the strategies they employed to utilize translanguaging as a learning resource. Employing a qualitative case study design, data were collected through semi-structured interviews with five Indonesian EFL master's students and analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings revealed that students experienced challenges related to academic language complexity, uncertainty in managing language choice, and psychological factors. Nevertheless, students strategically employed translanguaging in reading academic literature, classroom discussions, academic writing, and presentations. Translanguaging functioned as a cognitive and interactional scaffold that supported comprehension, knowledge construction, participation, and English academic development. The study concludes that translanguaging should not be viewed as a replacement for English but as a purposeful multilingual resource that facilitates learning in Indonesian EFL higher education contexts.

1. Introduction

Monolingual ideology has historically influenced English language education, with the target language commonly positioned as the only appropriate medium of instruction. English-only instruction has been regarded as a successful strategy in many EFL classrooms to increase students' exposure to the target language and foster the development of language proficiency (Cenoz & Gorter, 2020). This

presumption has been called into question more and more because it frequently ignores the linguistic backgrounds of multilingual learners (Agirdag, 2010; Carroll & Combs, 2016; Cummins, 2007). Nevertheless, especially in multilingual educational settings where students naturally use a variety of linguistic resources to create meaning and engage in class interactions. People who speak more than one language use an integrated linguistic repertoire instead of completely separating their languages (Cenoz & Gorter, 2020; de Oliveira et al., 2014; García & Wei, 2014). According to this perspective, multilingualism is the use of several languages as connected resources to facilitate learning and communication. Moreover, Failasofah (2021) stated that it is the process by which multilingual students utilize their languages as an integrated communication system.

In Indonesia, English is taught as a foreign language, while Bahasa Indonesia and local languages continue to dominate students' daily communication. As a result, when interacting with academic English materials, students frequently rely on their entire linguistic repertoire. This practice is known as translanguaging. As García and Wei (2014) defined that translanguaging is the dynamic application of multilingual speakers' whole linguistic repertoire to support communication, develop understanding, and produce meaning.

Therefore, translanguaging is especially important in higher education because students have to deal with complex academic texts, theoretical discussions, and research-related activities in English. Interpreting academic terminology, disciplinary knowledge, and abstract concepts can be difficult for postgraduate students, particularly those enrolled in English Language Education programs. As Mazak and Carroll (2017), Saqinah et al. (2025), and Wei (2018) stated, that translanguaging practices in higher education provide students to communicate with access to multiple linguistic resources that facilitate deeper understanding, critical thinking, and academic engagement. Moreover, translanguaging can improve students' confidence, participation in class, and comprehension by permitting them to make strategic use of the available linguistic resources (Cenoz & Gorter, 2020; Creese & Blackledge, 2010; Liando et al., 2023; Mazak & Carroll, 2017; Wei, 2018).

As Hadiyanto et al. (2021), who emphasized that students' participation is an important element in the learning process. Furthermore, translanguaging has been found to reduce communication barriers and encourage active participation, particularly among learners who experience difficulties expressing complex ideas in English (Turnbull, 2019). However, translanguaging is not only connected to cognitive processes but also influences students' emotional experiences in the classroom such as lessen their anxiety and increase their engagement. Some studies have reported that students generally perceive translanguaging positively because it helps them understand difficult materials and participate more confidently in classroom discussions (Fang & Liu, 2020). Flexible language use may reduce anxiety caused by the pressure to produce accurate English, especially among students with varying levels of language proficiency (Sahan & Rose, 2021). Through translanguaging, students can express ideas more freely, ask questions, and engage in collaborative learning activities.

Despite these benefits, translanguaging practices remain debated in many EFL classrooms, especially for higher education classrooms. Some students and lecturers continue to believe that English-only instruction provides greater opportunities for language development. As Wang (2019) found that some learners still associate maximum English exposure with successful language learning. Similarly, institutional expectations and English-oriented policies may influence students' willingness to use their first language in academic settings. McMillan and Rivers (2011) explained that monolingual beliefs and language policies often shape classroom language practices and create pressure for students to minimize the use of their first language.

Therefore, implementing translanguaging in higher education requires careful consideration. Translanguaging should not be interpreted as unrestricted language mixing but as a purposeful pedagogical strategy. The pedagogical translanguaging needs to be strategically planned to ensure that students receive support from their first language while still developing competence in the target language (Cenoz & Gorter, 2020). The effective translanguaging practices may include using Bahasa Indonesia to clarify difficult concepts, organize ideas, negotiate meaning during group discussions, and support academic tasks. Through collaborative activities, students can utilize multiple languages to construct knowledge while maintaining opportunities to practice English (García & Wei, 2014).

In many EFL classrooms, translanguaging is still a contentious practice despite its potential benefits. Some educators and students still believe that instruction in English only leads to better language development and higher academic standards. As a result, students might not know when to use Bahasa Indonesia and English, fear about being judged negatively by classmates or lecturers, and be concerned that using their native tongue too much could hinder their ability to become fluent in English. While translanguaging practices have been studied in earlier years, many studies have concentrated on the perspectives of teachers, instructional strategies, or classroom implementation. There has been few investigations into students' own experiences, particularly at the postgraduate level. It is still to be determined how master's students in Indonesian higher education view translanguaging, the challenges they experienced when applying it, and the strategies they used to maximize its benefits.

Therefore, this study aims to explore master's students' perceptions of translanguaging practices in Indonesian EFL higher education. In particular, two research questions are addressed in this study:

1. What challenges do Indonesian EFL master's students experience when using translanguaging in classroom interaction?
2. What strategies do Indonesian EFL master's students employ to use translanguaging as a learning resource?

This study contributes to the growing discussion of multilingual pedagogy by providing insights into students' perspectives on translanguaging practices in postgraduate EFL classrooms. The findings are expected to inform lecturers and

researchers about how translanguaging can be implemented strategically to support meaningful, inclusive, and effective English learning.

2. Methodology

This study employed a qualitative research design to explore students' perceptions, experiences, and strategies regarding translanguaging practices in an Indonesian EFL higher education context. A qualitative approach was selected because it allows researchers to obtain in-depth understanding of participants' perspectives and experiences (Creswell, 2014). The participants were five English Language Education master's students at one of university in Indonesia. They were selected using purposive sampling because they used translanguaging in EFL classroom activities where English and Bahasa Indonesia even their native tongue were used interchangeably. All participants were assigned pseudonyms (P1–P5) to maintain confidentiality. Data were collected semi-structured interview. The interview was conducted with each participant for approximately 40–50 minutes. Interview questions focused on students' challenges and strategies related to translanguaging. The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). The analysis involved six stages: familiarization with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining themes, and producing the final report. To ensure trustworthiness, member checking and detailed descriptions of findings were applied (Creswell, 2009). Ethical considerations included informed consent, confidentiality protection, and the use of data solely for research purposes.

3. Results and Discussion

The thematic analysis identified three major themes concerning students' translanguaging experiences. Two themes emerged that were directly related to the research questions: student challenges and learning strategies. Furthermore, an emerging theme was identified, indicating that translanguaging served as a cognitive and emotional resource that influenced students' learning experiences as shown in the Table 1 below.

Table 1 Main Theme and Subtheme of Data Analysis

Main Themes	Subthemes
Challenges in Negotiating Translanguaging Practices in Academic Contexts	Academic Language Challenges Uncertainty in Managing Language Choice Psychological and Contextual Challenges Translanguaging in Reading Academic Literature Translanguaging in Classroom Discussion and Presentation
Strategic Deployment of Translanguaging as an Academic Learning Resource	Translanguaging in Academic Writing and Self-Regulated Learning Translanguaging as a Cognitive and Emotional Learning Resource

Unlike previous studies that mainly emphasize translanguaging as a pedagogical or communication strategy, this study reveals that postgraduate students also experience translanguaging as an emotional and cognitive support mechanism.

Challenges Experienced by Indonesian EFL Master's Students in Using Translanguaging

Academic Language Challenges

Academic language emerged as the most frequently reported challenge experienced by all participants (P1–P5) when using translanguaging in postgraduate EFL classrooms. The participants explained that understanding journal articles, theoretical frameworks, and discipline-specific terminology often required them to move repeatedly between English and Bahasa Indonesia before they could fully comprehend the content. P1 explained that postgraduate study introduced unfamiliar academic terms that demanded additional interpretation:

“When we enter postgraduate study, we meet many terms that we did not find before. Sometimes we need to search the meaning first, understand the context, and connect it with what we already know.”

Similarly, P2 described how she relied on Bahasa Indonesia to process complex theories before reformulating them in English: *“Usually when I find difficult vocabulary or theories, I translate them into Indonesian first. After I understand the meaning, then I try to explain it again in English.”*

Likewise, P3, P4, and P5 reported that many technical concepts lacked direct Indonesian equivalents, requiring them to interpret the meaning conceptually rather than translate individual words. These findings suggest that although translanguaging facilitated comprehension, students continued to experience difficulties in negotiating academic meaning across two linguistic systems.

The participants' experiences further illustrate that translanguaging involved a dynamic meaning-making process rather than simple translation. When reading English academic literature, students typically identified unfamiliar terminology, interpreted key concepts in Bahasa Indonesia, related them to their prior knowledge, and subsequently reconstructed the ideas in English for classroom discussions, written assignments, or research presentations. In this way, Bahasa Indonesia functioned as an intermediate cognitive resource that enabled students to access complex disciplinary knowledge before producing academic discourse in English. This finding supports García and Wei (2014), who argued that multilingual learners draw on their complete linguistic repertoire to construct meaning instead of separating languages into independent systems. Similarly, Mazak and Carroll (2017) found that translanguaging in higher education promotes deeper conceptual understanding by allowing students to mobilize multiple linguistic resources when engaging with challenging academic content.

However, unlike previous studies that primarily examined translanguaging as a reading comprehension strategy, the present study demonstrates that Indonesian

EFL master's students extended this practice throughout the entire learning process from reading academic literature and interpreting theoretical concepts to participating in classroom discussions, completing written assignments, and preparing research presentations. This finding highlights that translanguaging functions not merely as a strategy for overcoming vocabulary difficulties but as a continuous cognitive scaffold that supports postgraduate students in constructing academic knowledge across multiple learning activities.

Uncertainty in Managing Language Choice

Another challenge experienced by four participants (P2–P5) was uncertainty in deciding when and how to alternate between English and Bahasa Indonesia during classroom interaction. Although participants acknowledged that translanguaging facilitated communication and supported their understanding of complex concepts, they were often unsure about the appropriate point at which they should return to English. This uncertainty was particularly evident during classroom discussions, where students were expected to express academic ideas in English while simultaneously ensuring that their peers understood the content. P2 explained,

“Sometimes I feel confused about when to switch from Indonesian to English because I know we need English practice, but sometimes Indonesian helps me explain my ideas better.”

Similarly, P4 expressed concern that using Bahasa Indonesia too frequently might lead others to question her English proficiency: *“Sometimes I'm not sure whether switching to Indonesian is acceptable because I don't want people to think that I cannot speak English.”*

In contrast, P3 described translanguaging as a deliberate strategy rather than an automatic habit, explaining that she first clarified difficult ideas in Bahasa Indonesia before returning to English to accomplish the communicative goal of the lesson. These findings indicate that participants did not switch languages randomly instead of they continuously negotiated their language choices according to the complexity of the topic, the communicative purpose, and the expectations of the classroom.

The findings suggested that uncertainty in language choice was influenced by several interconnected factors rather than by linguistic competence alone. First, participants attempted to balance two competing objectives: achieving conceptual understanding and improving English proficiency. While Bahasa Indonesia enabled them to explain abstract concepts more accurately, they also recognized English as the target language for academic communication. Second, implicit classroom language norms appeared to shape students' decisions. Several participants reported feeling uncertain because lecturers did not explicitly indicate when translanguaging was appropriate, leading them to rely on their own judgment during discussions. Finally, students' confidence in their English proficiency also influenced their language choices, as those with lower confidence tended to rely on Bahasa Indonesia more frequently when expressing complex ideas. These findings are

consistent with Cenoz and Gorter (2020), who argued that translanguaging is most effective when implemented strategically through explicit pedagogical planning rather than occurring incidentally.

Likewise, McMillan and Rivers (2011) explained that monolingual ideologies in English language education often create tension for multilingual learners, who may perceive the use of their first language as conflicting with expectations for English-only instruction. However, unlike previous studies that primarily discussed translanguaging from teachers' perspectives, the present study demonstrates how postgraduate students actively negotiate language choice in response to classroom expectations, task demands, and their own academic goals. This finding highlights that effective translanguaging is not simply determined by students' linguistic repertoire but is also shaped by institutional language practices and learners' perceptions of appropriate academic language use.

Psychological and Contextual Challenges

Beyond linguistic difficulties, all participants (P1–P5) reported that psychological and contextual factors influenced how confidently they used translanguaging during classroom interaction. Participants explained that fear of making grammatical mistakes, concern about negative evaluation from peers, and uncertainty about lecturers' expectations often affected their willingness to communicate in English. P5 admitted,

"I prefer to use Indonesian because I am afraid of being judged by the person I am talking to. Sometimes I know what I want to say, but when I have to say it in English, I become nervous."

Similarly, P4 explained that she often used Bahasa Indonesia to organize her ideas before speaking because she worried that grammatical errors might affect how others perceived her academic ability. In contrast, P2 reported that being able to temporarily rely on Bahasa Indonesia reduced communication anxiety and encouraged her to participate more actively in classroom discussions. These findings indicate that translanguaging was not merely a linguistic strategy but also a psychological resource that enabled students to maintain communication when they lacked confidence in expressing complex academic ideas in English.

The findings further suggested that these challenges emerged from the interaction of individual and contextual factors. At the individual level, differences in English proficiency and previous academic experience influenced the extent to which students relied on translanguaging. Participants with greater confidence in academic English tended to use Bahasa Indonesia selectively to clarify complex concepts, whereas those with lower confidence depended on it more frequently to maintain communication. At the contextual level, implicit classroom language policies and lecturers' attitudes toward multilingual language use also shaped students' translanguaging practices. Several participants perceived that English remained the expected language of classroom interaction even though occasional use of Bahasa Indonesia was tolerated, creating uncertainty about the legitimacy of

translanguaging. Consequently, students continuously balanced the need to demonstrate English proficiency with the need to communicate meaning effectively. This finding supports Fang and Liu (2020), who argued that translanguaging reduces communication anxiety by allowing multilingual learners to access their full linguistic repertoire during learning.

Likewise, Sahan and Rose (2021) found that flexible multilingual practices foster greater learner participation by creating psychologically supportive learning environments. However, the present study extended these findings by demonstrating that postgraduate students' translanguaging practices are simultaneously influenced by language proficiency, prior academic experience, classroom language expectations, and lecturers' attitudes toward multilingualism. This suggests that the challenges associated with translanguaging should be understood as socially and pedagogically constructed rather than solely as individual language limitations.

Strategies Employed by Indonesian EFL Master's Students in Using Translanguaging as a Learning Resource

Translanguaging in Reading Academic Literature

All participants (P1–P5) reported using translanguaging strategically when engaging with English academic literature. Reading journal articles, textbooks, and theoretical references was described as one of the most demanding learning activities because students frequently encountered unfamiliar academic vocabulary, abstract concepts, and discipline-specific terminology. Rather than translating every unfamiliar word, participants explained that they selectively used Bahasa Indonesia to interpret key concepts before returning to the English text. P2 explained,

“Usually when I find difficult vocabulary or theories, I translate them into Indonesian first. After I understand the meaning, then I try to explain it again in English.”

Similarly, P3 reported that she summarized difficult sections of journal articles in Bahasa Indonesia to help organize her understanding before using the information in academic discussions or assignments. These findings indicated that translanguaging enabled students to process complex academic texts more efficiently while maintaining English as the primary language for academic learning.

The participants' descriptions demonstrated that translanguaging during reading followed a recursive learning process rather than a linear translation practice. Students typically began by identifying unfamiliar concepts in English, interpreting them through Bahasa Indonesia, relating the new information to their existing knowledge, and finally reconstructing the concepts in English when participating in classroom discussions or writing academic assignments. Thus, Bahasa Indonesia functioned as a temporary cognitive scaffold rather than as a replacement for

English. This finding supports García and Wei (2014), who conceptualize translanguaging as the flexible deployment of multilingual speakers' complete linguistic repertoire to facilitate meaning making. Likewise, Mazak and Carroll (2017) found that translanguaging enhances conceptual understanding by enabling university students to draw on multiple linguistic resources while engaging with complex disciplinary knowledge.

However, unlike previous studies that primarily examined translanguaging as a reading-comprehension strategy, the present study demonstrates that reading was only the initial stage of a broader translanguaging process. Students subsequently transferred their understanding into classroom discussion, academic writing, and research presentation, indicating that translanguaging functioned as a continuous learning resource across different academic activities rather than a strategy confined to reading comprehension alone.

Translanguaging in Classroom Discussion and Presentation

Another prominent strategy reported by all participants (P1–P5) was the use of translanguaging during classroom discussions and academic presentations. Participants explained that they frequently employed Bahasa Indonesia to negotiate meaning with peers when discussing complex theories or solving academic tasks before expressing their ideas in English. P1 explained, *"In group discussions, sometimes we explain the idea in Indonesian first because it is easier to make everyone understand."* Similarly, P2 stated, *"We usually discuss difficult points in Indonesian, then when we present, we change it into English."* P3 further explained that group members first ensured that everyone shared the same understanding of the topic before preparing an English presentation. These findings indicated that translanguaging was strategically used to facilitate collaborative learning rather than to replace English during classroom interaction.

The participants' experiences revealed that translanguaging during discussion and presentation followed a systematic sequence of collaborative meaning negotiation. Students initially explored complex concepts through Bahasa Indonesia to establish shared understanding, clarified key arguments through peer interaction, and subsequently reformulated their ideas into English for classroom presentations or academic discussions. This sequence enabled students to focus first on conceptual accuracy before attending to linguistic accuracy in English. Consequently, translanguaging functioned as a collaborative scaffold that supported both knowledge construction and academic communication. This finding is consistent with Turnbull (2019), who argued that translanguaging promotes meaningful interaction by enabling multilingual learners to negotiate ideas collaboratively using their complete linguistic repertoire. Similarly, Cenoz and Gorter (2020) emphasized that pedagogical translanguaging encourages purposeful movement between languages to achieve specific learning objectives rather than replacing the target language.

However, the present study extended previous findings by demonstrating that Indonesian EFL master's students deliberately separated the functions of the two

languages within the same academic task: Bahasa Indonesia was primarily employed to negotiate and refine understanding, whereas English was reserved for communicating finalized academic ideas. This functional distribution of languages illustrates that translanguaging served as an intentional learning strategy supporting both conceptual development and English academic performance, rather than reflecting students' linguistic deficiency.

Translanguaging in Academic Writing and Self-Regulated Learning

Participants (P2–P5) reported that translanguaging also played an important role during independent learning, particularly when completing academic assignments, taking notes, and preparing written work. Rather than using a single language throughout the learning process, participants combined English and Bahasa Indonesia according to the function of each language. P2 explained, *“I usually take notes in both languages. English is for important terms, while Indonesian is for explanation.”* Likewise, P3 stated, *“When I read an article, I write the important terms in English, but the explanation is usually in Indonesian so I can remember the meaning.”* P4 similarly reported that bilingual notes helped her understand theoretical concepts while retaining the original English terminology for future use in assignments and classroom presentations. These findings indicated that participants intentionally assigned different functions to each language: English was retained for academic terminology, whereas Bahasa Indonesia facilitated explanation, reflection, and conceptual understanding.

The findings further demonstrated that translanguaging functioned as a self-regulated learning strategy throughout the academic writing process. Before producing assignments in English, participants commonly organized their ideas in Bahasa Indonesia, developed initial arguments using their stronger language, and subsequently revised or reformulated those ideas into English academic writing. This process enabled them to focus first on developing coherent arguments before attending to linguistic accuracy and appropriate academic expression. Consequently, translanguaging reduced the cognitive demands of simultaneously generating ideas and producing grammatically accurate English texts. This finding supported by Cenoz and Gorter (2020), who argued that pedagogical translanguaging involves the purposeful allocation of multilingual resources according to specific learning objectives. Similarly, García and Wei (2014) emphasized that multilingual learners flexibly integrate their linguistic repertoire to support higher-order thinking and knowledge construction. While previous studies have primarily described bilingual note-taking as a strategy for improving reading comprehension, the present study demonstrated that Indonesian EFL master's students extended translanguaging across the entire academic writing process, including planning, organizing, drafting, revising, and preparing research presentations. This finding suggested that translanguaging functions as an ongoing self-regulatory mechanism that supports both academic literacy development and English language production in postgraduate education.

Translanguaging as a Cognitive and Emotional Learning Resource

Across all academic activities, participants consistently described translanguaging as more than a linguistic strategy; it also functioned as a cognitive and emotional learning resource that enabled them to engage more confidently with postgraduate academic tasks. Four participants (P2–P5) explained that the flexibility to move between English and Bahasa Indonesia helped them understand complex theories, organize ideas more effectively, and participate more actively in classroom interaction. P2 stated, “*It increases my confidence because I know I can rely on L1 when needed. I do not feel stuck, so I participate more actively.*” Similarly, P3 explained that using Bahasa Indonesia before speaking English allowed her to organize her thoughts more clearly, while P4 reported that the opportunity to use Bahasa Indonesia reduced her anxiety about making grammatical mistakes when discussing complex academic topics. These findings indicated that the strategic use of translanguaging not only facilitated conceptual understanding but also created a psychologically supportive learning environment that encouraged greater academic participation.

The findings further demonstrated that the cognitive and emotional benefits of translanguaging emerged throughout the entire learning process rather than during isolated classroom activities. As students moved repeatedly between English and Bahasa Indonesia while reading academic literature, discussing theoretical concepts, preparing written assignments, and delivering presentations, translanguaging enabled them to reduce cognitive overload, regulate their learning process, and maintain active participation despite linguistic challenges. In this sense, translanguaging functioned as a multidimensional learning resource that simultaneously supported comprehension, self-regulation, and communication.

This finding is consistent with García and Wei (2014), who conceptualized translanguaging as the dynamic deployment of multilingual speakers' complete linguistic repertoire for meaning making, and with Fang and Liu (2020), who found that multilingual practices reduce communication anxiety and promote learner engagement. Likewise, Canagarajah (2011) also Mazak and Carroll (2017) argued that translanguaging enables university students to construct academic knowledge by flexibly integrating multiple linguistic resources. However, the present study extends these findings by demonstrating that cognitive and emotional support is not an independent outcome of translanguaging but develops progressively through students' strategic use of translanguaging across different academic activities. This suggests that translanguaging should be understood as a continuous multilingual learning process that strengthens both academic understanding and English language development in Indonesian postgraduate EFL classrooms.

Pedagogical Implications for Indonesian EFL Higher Education

The findings of this study provided several pedagogical implications for EFL teaching and learning in Indonesian higher education, particularly in postgraduate contexts where students are expected to engage with complex academic knowledge through English. The challenges reported by participants demonstrate that English-

only expectations may not always support effective academic engagement, especially when students encounter unfamiliar theoretical concepts, discipline-specific terminology, and demanding academic tasks. Therefore, lecturers may consider adopting a more flexible and strategic approach to language use by recognizing translanguaging as a pedagogical resource rather than a barrier to English development. Instead of viewing Bahasa Indonesia as a sign of limited English proficiency, lecturers can guide students to use their multilingual resources purposefully to facilitate comprehension, critical thinking, and academic participation.

The findings further suggested that translanguaging should be incorporated through planned pedagogical activities rather than occurring only as an unregulated classroom practice. Lecturers may design structured translanguaging opportunities, such as allowing students to discuss complex theories in Bahasa Indonesia before presenting their interpretations in English, encouraging bilingual annotation when reading academic articles, and supporting the development of ideas in students' stronger language before transforming them into English academic writing. Such practices can reduce cognitive barriers while maintaining meaningful exposure to English. This approach is consistent with Cenoz and Gorter (2020), who emphasized that pedagogical translanguaging requires purposeful integration of multiple languages based on instructional objectives rather than unrestricted language alternation.

Moreover, the findings highlighted the importance of creating a supportive classroom environment where students feel confident using English while having access to multilingual scaffolding when necessary. Since participants reported that translanguaging reduced anxiety and encouraged participation, lecturers should establish clear classroom expectations regarding when and why different languages can be used. Explicitly communicating the role of translanguaging may prevent students from perceiving Bahasa Indonesia as an inappropriate resource and help them develop greater awareness of strategic language use. In this way, translanguaging does not replace English as the target academic language; instead, it functions as a scaffold that enables students to gradually move toward more confident and independent use of English for academic purposes.

Overall, the pedagogical implication of this study is that translanguaging in Indonesian EFL higher education should be understood as a complementary approach that balances multilingual realities with English academic development. By integrating translanguaging strategically, lecturers can support students' conceptual understanding, academic literacy, and classroom participation while still maintaining the goal of developing English proficiency. This perspective is particularly relevant in Indonesian postgraduate EFL settings, where students are required to negotiate knowledge, identity, and academic communication within a multilingual learning environment.

4. Conclusion

This study investigated the challenges experienced by Indonesian EFL master's students in using translanguaging and the strategies they employed to utilize translanguaging as a learning resource. The findings revealed that students encountered challenges related to academic language complexity, uncertainty in language choice, and psychological as well as contextual factors. These challenges were not only associated with English proficiency but also shaped by academic demands, classroom expectations, and students' confidence in using English for academic purposes. Moreover, students employed translanguaging strategically across various academic activities, including reading academic literature, negotiating meaning during classroom discussions, organizing ideas for academic writing, and preparing presentations. Rather than replacing English, Bahasa Indonesia functioned as a cognitive and interactional scaffold that supported students in constructing knowledge, regulating learning, and gradually developing English academic communication. Thus, translanguaging emerged as a dynamic multilingual learning process that connected comprehension, interaction, and academic production.

This study contributes to translanguaging research in EFL higher education by showing that students' multilingual practices extend beyond classroom interaction and operate throughout the academic learning process. The findings also highlighted the importance of viewing translanguaging as a purposeful pedagogical resource rather than a limitation to English development. For Indonesian EFL higher education, lecturers may consider integrating planned translanguaging practices that allow students to use their full linguistic repertoire while maintaining English as the target academic language. Although this study was limited to a small number of participants within one postgraduate EFL context, it provides insights into how multilingual students negotiate academic learning through translanguaging. Future research may explore translanguaging practices across different educational levels, disciplines, and instructional contexts, particularly focusing on how lecturers design and implement planned translanguaging strategies.

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