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Exploring an EFL Teacher's Translanguaging Practice of Giving Instruction in English Learning and Teaching Process: A Case Study at Junior High School in Bogor

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ABSTRACT

This study explores how an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teacher implements translanguaging practices when giving instructions in a multilingual junior high school classroom in Bogor, Indonesia. Using a qualitative case study approach, data were collected through classroom observations, interviews, and documentation. The findings reveal that the teacher spontaneously employed translanguaging strategies to facilitate comprehension, reduce confusion, and enhance student engagement. Three types of translanguaging were identified: intrasentential, intersentential, and tag-switching. Intrasentential and intersentential translanguaging were most frequently used to scaffold instructions and explain tasks, while tag-switching was used to manage classroom interaction and attention. Although not formally planned in the lesson plan, the use of translanguaging emerged as a purposeful pedagogical strategy to support students' understanding and participation. This study underscores the importance of recognizing translanguaging as an inclusive and effective instructional tool in multilingual EFL classrooms.

1. Introduction

Translanguaging has become an increasingly discussed topic in the field of education, especially in foreign language learning. Generally, translanguaging is defined as the practice of using all the linguistic resources available to students to understand, develop, and convey knowledge. In the context of a language classroom, translanguaging allows students to switch between languages, such as from their mother tongue to English, to help them better understand the lesson material (Chicherina, 2023).

In Indonesia, translanguaging is highly relevant due to the multilingual nature of society. However, the implementation of translanguaging in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) classrooms faces several significant challenges. This has resulted in the practice of translanguaging in classrooms heavily relying on individual teacher's initiatives, who do not always have sufficient theoretical understanding or practical skills (Titania, 2024). There is even concern that using the first language may hinder English proficiency, whereas research has shown that translanguaging can enhance student engagement and self-confidence (Khairunnisa, 2020).

According to Donley (2022), translanguaging functions not only as an instructional strategy but also as a theoretical framework and research methodology that reflects the multilingual dynamics within educational practice. By using translanguaging, teachers can create an interactive learning environment where students can improve their understanding of lesson content, especially in English. The use of translanguaging has been proven to help students comprehend English language materials more effectively (Afriadi, 2021).

Liu (2022) explained that translanguaging is a practical theory of language that has evolved in response to the limitations of monolingual approaches in language education. Anderson (2024) supports this perspective, stating that translanguaging has become a new paradigm in the theory and practice of English language teaching. Thus, this study does not understand translanguaging as a random or spontaneous language shift. Rather, it is seen as a consciously designed strategy to construct meaning, reduce communication barriers, and enhance the effectiveness of teaching and learning, especially within multilingual EFL classrooms, such as those found in Indonesia. The concept of translanguaging as both a pedagogical approach and a linguistic theory has strong roots in the work of (Wei, 2022). Historically, the term translanguaging was first introduced by Cen Williams in the context of bilingual education in Wales, referring to the pedagogical practice of alternating between Welsh and English during the learning process (Jones, 2017). However, Wei (2022) expanded the meaning of translanguaging beyond a mere instructional strategy. They framed it as a social practice and a critical theory that challenges conventional views of bilingualism and monolingual ideologies.

As a pedagogical approach, translanguaging reflects a shift in perspective toward language use in education. This approach encourages teachers to no longer view languages as separate systems, but rather as dynamic and interrelated elements. Accordingly, teachers are urged to value and incorporate students' home languages into the learning process, thereby creating a more inclusive and flexible classroom environment (Driouch, 2022). Studies indicate that the application of translanguaging by teachers contributes to improving students' understanding, engagement, and confidence in language learning contexts (Agustin, 2024). In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning, instructions play a crucial role in classroom management and the success of the teaching and learning process. Instructions are not merely verbal commands, but strategic guidance that helps students understand what they need to do in each activity. Teachers must possess technical skills and experience in designing appropriate instructions because,

without clear and structured instructions, even well-planned learning activities can fail if students do not understand the teacher's intentions (Kemma, 2019).

Gumilar (2023) highlight the importance of the strategies used by teachers to capture and maintain students' attention during lessons so that the instructions given can be received and understood properly by the students. In line with this, Adara (2023) emphasize that teachers' instructional communication plays a crucial role in enhancing students' motivation and comprehension during the learning process. The linguistic diversity within EFL classrooms has a significant impact on the learning process. Students with different mother tongues may have distinct ways of understanding concepts, language structures, and thought patterns, which may not always align with the norms of English language learning. Furthermore, interference from the first language to English frequently occurs, leading to errors in vocabulary acquisition, grammar usage, and pronunciation (Liando, 2023).

In addition, language differences may lead to difficulties in classroom management. For instance, during situations such as giving instructions, organizing group activities, or enforcing classroom rules, teachers may struggle to ensure that all students understand the directions clearly (Yasin, 2022). Such conditions demand that teachers adopt adaptive instructional strategies, such as the use of translanguaging to bridge linguistic gaps, enabling all students to actively participate and gain the maximum benefit from the learning process. Therefore, teachers need to be capable of designing effective instructional strategies that ensure all students can comprehend the material well (Riswanto, 2022). Furthermore, translanguaging plays an essential role in enhancing students' understanding of the lesson content, particularly when they encounter complex terminology or new concepts involving unfamiliar terms. The application of translanguaging in these situations helps provide clearer and more comprehensive explanations, ultimately promoting deeper understanding of the material (Efendi, 2024).

More specifically, this study aims to identify the types of translanguaging employed by the teacher to support students' comprehension, particularly in classrooms with diverse English proficiency levels. By directly observing the teacher's instructional practices in the classroom, this research seeks to provide deeper insights into how translanguaging can be effectively used as a pedagogical tool. Overall, translanguaging is crucial in situations where students struggle to comprehend instructions and lesson concepts. Within the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning, translanguaging serves as a pedagogical strategy that addresses linguistic barriers and strengthens students' comprehension of the material. Therefore, translanguaging significantly creates a more inclusive, supportive, and effective learning process.

2. Methodology

This study employed a qualitative approach to explore the translanguaging practices of an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teacher in an actual classroom setting.

According to Donley (2022), a qualitative approach was appropriate for exploring complex social phenomena in depth, especially in educational contexts where understanding the teacher's experiences and perspectives was essential. As stated by Letarina (2022), case studies offered opportunities to gain comprehensive insights into the dynamics of teaching practices within their natural environments.

In this study, the case focused on how an EFL teacher in a multilingual classroom integrated students' linguistic resource, including local languages such as Sundanese, their first language (L1) such as Indonesian, and English (L2), to enhance comprehension, reduce misunderstandings, and create a more inclusive learning environment. This study applied a triangulation strategy by combining three data collection techniques: observation sheet, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. Triangulation, as defined by Miles (2014), involves the use of multiple data sources or methods to cross-verify and validate findings, thereby increasing the credibility and accuracy of qualitative research. In addition, Carter (2014) emphasized that triangulation enhanced the trustworthiness, depth, and richness of qualitative studies, particularly in educational research.

The data analysis in this study employed Thematic Analysis as developed by Braun (2006). This approach was chosen due to its flexibility and suitability for exploring qualitative data in the context of a case study. Finally, in the producing the report phase, the researcher constructed a narrative of the findings that explained the translanguaging practices in depth and reflectively, supported by data excerpts and discussions that referred to the literature, such as Liando (2023).

3. Result and Discussion

The data were collected through classroom observations focusing on the use of translanguaging by the EFL teacher to facilitate the teaching and learning process, particularly in giving instructions. An interview with the EFL teacher was also conducted to explore how the teacher applied translanguaging practices when giving instructions in the English language teaching process, as well as to identify the types of translanguaging used by the teacher during instruction. Figure 1 is the translanguaging used by the teacher in the research activities.



Figure 1. Research Activities for Translanguaging in the Teaching

Analysis of the observation sheets revealed that the teacher regularly deployed three types of translanguaging when giving instructions, in table 1.

Table 1. Second Meet Observation Sheets

No.	Transcripts	Types of Translanguaging	Explanation
1.	<i>Okay</i> , hmm, doa dulu, ketua kelas!	Tag-switching	This is an example of tag-switching because “Okay” at the start of the sentence is a short English word inserted into the Indonesian sentence structure. Here, “okay” functions as an opening marker or attention-getter, not as part of the main content of the sentence.
2.	Okay, hari ini kita belajar tentang <i>giving instruction</i> .	Intrasentential	This is classified as intrasentential translanguaging because it involves mixing languages within a single sentence structure.
3.	Yeah, okay, hmm.	Tag-switching	This includes tag-switching in the form of brief expressions or exclamations that occur spontaneously.
4.	Okay, kita kemarin pernah sempet belajar ini juga, ya? Apa, hmm... <i>procedure text</i> , cara membuat makanan. Masih ingat, nggak?	Intrasentential	This is classified as intrasentential translanguaging because it mixes languages within a single sentence
5.	Karena kalau tertulis itu, itu <i>notice</i> dengan catatan. Masih inget kan yang <i>notice</i> ? Yah, yang waktu itu sempet dipajang disini ya? Kalian membuat ya kan, disini? Yang kayak <i>non-smoking</i> , masih inget ga?	Intrasentential	It is classified as intrasentential translanguaging because the words “notice” and “non-smoking” are English vocabulary used within a single complete sentence. This sentence illustrates a translanguaging practice of explaining a concept while building on students’ prior experiences.
6.	Nanti kita ada permainan, disini memberikan perintah, nanti Fahri deh yang contohin! Kalimat perintahnya apa? Misalkan, <i>stand up please!</i> Tau <i>stand up</i> , apa?	Intrasentential	It is classified as intrasentential translanguaging because the language switch happens within the same sentence or phrase. For example: 1. “Stand up, please!” 2. “You know ‘stand up,’ right?” The translanguaging strategies the teacher used are: 1. Inserting the command in English (“stand up, please”). 2. Then explaining it or confirming students’ understanding in Indonesian (“You know ‘stand up,’ right?”).
7.	Okay, belum sabar. Sabar neng. <i>Okay</i> , <i>stand up, please!</i>	Intersentential	It is classified as intersentential translanguaging because in these sentences:

No.	Transcripts	Types of Translanguaging	Explanation
			1. “Okay, belum sabar. Sabar neng.” – entirely in Indonesian (using the Sundanese address “neng”). 2. “Okay, stand up, please!” – entirely in English. This fits the definition of intersentential translanguaging, which involves switching from one language to another between sentences.
8.	<i>Giving instructions</i> adalah kalimat perintah, kalimat perintah sederhana.	Intrasentential	It is classified as intrasentential translanguaging because it occurs when two languages are used within a single sentence structure, such as mixing a foreign (English) word or phrase into a main sentence in Indonesian.
9.	<i>Okay, have you finished?</i> Udah beres?	Intersentential	It is classified as intersentential translanguaging because two different languages are used in separate sentences, but they complement each other in meaning.
10.	Jangan sit don, tapi <i>sit down</i> (sit daon).	Intrasentential	It is classified as intrasentential translanguaging because both Indonesian and English are used flexibly within the same sentence structure for teaching purposes and pronunciation correction.

These practices appeared systematically in moments of task-setting and concept explanation, suggesting a deliberate pedagogical strategy rather than random code-mixing.

Types of Translanguaging

Have you ever given instructions in two different languages in the same sentence? Could you give an example? (Intrasentential translanguaging).

⇒ Yes, I frequently teach in both English and Indonesian.

Example from the transcript of the second observation on page 157:

“Okay, kita kemarin pernah sempet belajar ini juga ya apa, hmm procedure text, cara membuat makanan, masih inget ga?”

Explanation:

Intrasentential translanguaging was employed by the teacher to discuss the issue of giving instructions and relate it to the procedure text.

Do you occasionally begin a sentence in English and then switch to Sundanese or Indonesian for the next sentence? (Intersentential translanguaging).

⇒ To help students comprehend what I'm saying, I do translate from English to Indonesian or the other way around.

Example from the transcript of the second observation on page 422:

“Drink the water! Minum airnya, itu juga perintah.”

Explanation:

The teacher used intersentential translanguaging when he gave an example of an imperative sentence from the procedure text.

When giving instructions in English, do you frequently use short words like “ya?” or “kan?” or other expressions? (Tag-switching).

⇒ Yes, while I'm teaching English, I usually prefer to utilize Indonesian.

Example from the transcript of the second observation on page 1:

“Okay, hmm doa dulu, ketua kelas!”

Explanation:

One of the students was instructed by the teacher to lead the prayer. He added the word “okay” to his speech of the moment.

Would the instructions be clearer to students when you use these kinds of translanguaging?

Yes, it is very helpful to use translanguaging.

Addressing RQ 1: Translanguaging as Instructional Support

The observation results showed that translanguaging was used spontaneously by the teacher when giving instructions during English lessons. There were no formal guidelines, such as lesson plans or syllabi, directing the use of translanguaging; instead, this strategy emerged based on the teacher’s intuition and the immediate needs of the classroom.

Addressing RQ 2: Types of Translanguaging Employed

The classroom data analysis also revealed employed various forms of translanguaging when giving instructions during the English teaching and learning process. In line with the findings of Liando (2023), the teacher’s translanguaging practices were spontaneous and reflected three distinct types of translanguaging: tag-switching, intrasentential, and intersentential. Each type serves a specific pedagogical function and responds to the linguistic dynamics of the classroom.

The use of these three types of translanguaging shows that it is not a random instance of code-switching, but a deliberate pedagogical strategy to bridge students’ understanding and participation. Taken together, these translanguaging practices demonstrate how the teacher creates an inclusive, accessible, and effective learning environment for all students.

Discussion

Through the thematic analysis approach by Braun (2006), it was found that translanguaging plays a significant role both pedagogically and functionally. The teacher employed various forms of translanguaging adaptively to create an inclusive and effective learning environment. This practice not only clarified lesson content but also strengthened social interaction, built students’ confidence, and

bridged linguistic gaps in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction.

The empirical evidence from this case study confirms that translanguaging is a dynamic, multi-functional pedagogical approach that enhances clarity, engagement, and inclusivity in multilingual EFL classrooms. By systematically employing intrasentential, intersentential, and tag-switching strategies, the teacher not only scaffolds comprehension but also fosters a positive learning environment. These findings underscore the need to reconceptualize instructional guidelines and teacher training to embrace translanguaging as an essential component of effective EFL pedagogy in Indonesia.

4. Conclusion

The use of translanguaging was found to be spontaneous and flexible, allowing the teacher to switch between English, Indonesian, and occasionally Sundanese. This practice was not only used to clarify instructions but also to reduce students' confusion and enhance their engagement in the learning process. Three main types of translanguaging were identified: intra-sentential, inter-sentential, and tag-switching. Among these, intra-sentential and inter-sentential translanguaging were more frequently used when giving tasks and instructions, while tag-switching appeared mostly during the opening of lessons.

Translanguaging served as a scaffold to bridge the gap between students' linguistic abilities and their comprehension of classroom instructions. This strategy enabled students to better understand English instructions by relying on their knowledge of Indonesian and occasional local/Sundanese expressions. Although translanguaging was not formally planned in the lesson plans, the teacher perceived it as an essential practice to ensure that all students especially those with lower English proficiency could follow the lessons effectively.

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