

**THE USE OF TRANSLANGUAGING IN EFL CLASSES:
THE VIEWS OF ENGLISH TEACHERS**

THESIS

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UNIVERSITAS ISLAM MALANG

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ABSTRACT

Barakwan, Fuad Mohamad. (2025). *The Use of Translanguaging in EFL Classes: The Views of English Teachers. Thesis*, English Education Department, Postgraduate Program, Universitas Islam Malang, Advisor: (1) Prof. Drs. H. Junaidi, M.Pd., Ph.D., (2) Sonny Elfiyanto, S.S., S.Pd., M.Pd., Ph.D.

Keywords: English as a Foreign Language (EFL), Teachers' Views, Translanguaging.

The use of translanguaging in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) has become an increasingly relevant pedagogical strategy in Indonesia, particularly as students continue to struggle with comprehending the target language.

This study aims to examine the use of translanguaging in EFL classrooms from the perspective of English teachers. The focus of the study covers four main aspects: how translanguaging is used by teachers in English learning, the purposes of using translanguaging, the challenges teachers face in implementing it, and the strategies teachers use to overcome these challenges in the context of junior high school EFL classrooms.

A qualitative phenomenological design was employed in this study. Three English teachers from Sekolah Menengah Pertama Islam (SMPI) in Malang and two Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs) in Pasuruan were selected through purposive sampling based on their teaching experience, educational background, and active use of translanguaging. Data were collected through classroom observations and in-depth interviews. The data were analyzed using Miles and Huberman's model, consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The trustworthiness of the data was ensured through triangulation of sources, techniques, and time.

The findings reveal that translanguaging serves as a meaningful bridge between English and the students' familiar languages, predominantly Indonesian and local languages. Its primary functions include clarifying concepts, enhancing understanding of vocabulary and structures, reducing student anxiety, and promoting classroom participation. Nevertheless, several challenges emerged, including the risk of overdependence on L1, English-only school policies, linguistic diversity among students, and limited formal training on translanguaging. Teachers addressed these issues by applying controlled and intentional translanguaging, adjusting their language use based on students' responsiveness, and combining English and Indonesian proportionally.

In conclusion, translanguaging proves to be an effective and flexible pedagogical strategy that supports EFL learning at the junior secondary level. Its practice enhances students' comprehension, motivation, and engagement; however, it must be implemented thoughtfully to avoid reducing exposure to English as the target language.

ABSTRAK

Barakwan, Fuad Mohamad. (2025). *Penggunaan Translanguaging dalam Kelas EFL: Pandangan Guru Bahasa Inggris*. Tesis, Jurusan Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, Program Pascasarjana, Universitas Islam Malang, Pembimbing: (1) Prof. Drs. H. Junaidi, M.Pd., Ph.D., (2) Sonny Elfiyanto, S.S., S.Pd., M.Pd., Ph.D.

Kata Kunci: Bahasa Inggris sebagai Bahasa Asing (EFL), Pandangan Guru, Translanguaging.

Penggunaan translanguaging dalam Bahasa Inggris sebagai Bahasa Asing (EFL) telah menjadi strategi pedagogis yang semakin relevan di Indonesia, khususnya karena siswa terus berjuang untuk memahami bahasa sasaran.

Studi ini bertujuan untuk meneliti penggunaan translanguaging di kelas EFL dari perspektif guru Bahasa Inggris. Fokus penelitian ini mencakup empat aspek utama: bagaimana translanguaging digunakan oleh guru dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris, tujuan penggunaan translanguaging, tantangan yang dihadapi guru dalam menerapkannya, dan strategi yang digunakan guru untuk mengatasi tantangan ini dalam konteks kelas EFL sekolah menengah pertama.

Desain fenomenologi kualitatif digunakan dalam penelitian ini. Tiga guru bahasa Inggris dari Sekolah Menengah Pertama Islam (SMPI) di Malang dan dua Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MT) di Pasuruan dipilih melalui pengambilan sampel bertujuan berdasarkan pengalaman mengajar, latar belakang pendidikan, dan penggunaan translanguaging yang aktif. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi kelas dan wawancara mendalam. Data dianalisis menggunakan model Miles dan Huberman, yang terdiri dari reduksi data, tampilan data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Kepercayaan data dipastikan melalui triangulasi sumber, teknik, dan waktu.

Temuan menunjukkan bahwa translanguaging berfungsi sebagai jembatan yang bermakna antara bahasa Inggris dan bahasa yang familiar bagi siswa, terutama bahasa Indonesia dan bahasa daerah. Fungsi utamanya meliputi mengklarifikasi konsep, meningkatkan pemahaman kosakata dan struktur, mengurangi kecemasan siswa, dan mendorong partisipasi di kelas. Meskipun demikian, beberapa tantangan muncul, termasuk risiko ketergantungan berlebihan pada L1, kebijakan sekolah yang hanya menggunakan bahasa Inggris, keragaman linguistik di antara siswa, dan pelatihan formal yang terbatas tentang translanguaging. Guru mengatasi masalah ini dengan menerapkan translanguaging yang terkontrol dan disengaja, menyesuaikan penggunaan bahasa mereka berdasarkan respons siswa, dan menggabungkan bahasa Inggris dan Indonesia secara proporsional.

Kesimpulannya, translanguaging terbukti sebagai strategi pedagogis yang efektif dan fleksibel yang mendukung pembelajaran EFL di tingkat sekolah menengah pertama. Praktiknya meningkatkan pemahaman, motivasi, dan keterlibatan siswa; namun, harus diimplementasikan dengan bijak untuk menghindari pengurangan paparan bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa sasaran.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the Background of the Study, Research Questions, Research Objectives, the Significance of the Study, the Scope and Delimitation, and the Definition of Key Terms.

1.1 Background of the Study

Every human being naturally needs a native language to communicate and express emotions, both orally and in writing. Language functions as a means of interaction among individuals and groups, allowing people to express real events or experiences (Munibi, 2023). According to Herdiani and Riansi (2024), psycholinguistics studies language acquisition because it provides insights into the development of one of humanity's most essential abilities. Clear and compelling language helps build a supportive social environment and ensures information is conveyed and understood easily. Without language, social contact and self-expression would be impossible, as language is a primary medium for human expression.

Language acquisition occurs naturally as individuals grow. The first language, or mother tongue, is acquired gradually from birth as children develop their linguistic abilities. Azizah et al., (2023) explain that childrens' language development progresses dynamically, from simple sounds and utterances to more complex speech. A baby's cries and babbling act as the foundation for later language

mastery, as these early vocalizations train the speech organs (articulators) that will later produce accurate and fluent language.

When a kid learns their mother tongue or first language, a process known as language acquisition occurs in their brain. Language acquisition is possible without self-consciousness at an early age (Kamilah & Elfiyanto, 2023). According to Nurjamiaty (2015), the process by which a child learns their first or native language occurs in their brain. This process is known as language acquisition in humans or acquisition in English. This phrase is different from learning, which is the process carried out in a formal context (studying in class and being taught by a teacher). Accordingly, learning is the process by which an adult (usually) learns in a classroom, while acquisition is the process by which a child learns to understand their mother tongue (Dardjowidjojo, 2010).

According to Nurqomariyyah et al., (2023), learning a second language is a long process that starts with mastering the first language, also known as the native language. Then it introduces the second language, with second-language proficiency gradually increasing until it equals that of the first language. Osman et al., (2022) Learning a second language typically occurs when a child enters school, whereas acquisition and learning are not the same thing. Anywhere, a kid can learn their mother tongue or first language. The situation with a second language is different, however. The majority of second languages can only be learned in school, which is much different than learning the first language.

Changes that occur over time can influence how knowledge and information are shared (Wahyu et al., 2025). In the era of globalization, English has become the

language of international communication and plays an essential role for people worldwide (Sari et al., 2024). As a global language, English enables individuals from different countries to communicate without worrying about linguistic barriers (Astika, 2015). It is also the primary language in modern technological development (Ali et al., 2020), leading many countries to prioritize it as a target language (Alhadad et al., 2021). To communicate effectively, individuals must master four language skills: reading, speaking, listening, and writing (Permatasari et al., 2020). The dynamic nature of globalization encourages educators to explore effective teaching methods to enhance students' English proficiency (Bozorgian & Fallahpour, 2015). In teaching English as a foreign language, the use of the mother tongue (L1) is a crucial aspect, offering both benefits and challenges in the learning process.

The ability of the mother tongue to help students comprehend challenging content is one of the most frequently cited advantages. This is in line with studies conducted by Cook (2001), Nanda (2021), and Suhayati (2018). A recent study has reexamined the potential advantages of using the First Language (L1), emphasizing its role in boosting comprehension, maintaining classroom discipline, fostering positive connections, and enhancing learning. Thus, students are more inclined to ask questions and participate in class discussions because they feel more at ease using Indonesian to overcome their English language challenges. Since teachers' thoughts and behaviors ultimately shape how students interact, this study examines their perspectives on using L1 to help explain these intricate, multifaceted topics.

According to Baker and Wright (2017), "prior knowledge serves as a foundation for further learning, and there is ease of cross-language transfer because

the two languages are interdependent,” which makes translanguaging effective in fostering understanding. To communicate in speaking and writing, translanguaging “utilizes various cognitive processing skills in listening and reading, assimilation and accommodation of information, selecting and filtering from brain storage,” according to Lewis et al., (2012). When these abilities are developed, the subject matter is understood more thoroughly than when only one language is used.

Nugrahaeni and Asib (2022) showed that translanguaging can help students learn English by using their L1. Students may become more interested in learning English as a result. Teachers and students will have a healthy and productive communication relationship through translanguaging (Rahayu et al., 2023). Therefore, many English teachers have used translanguaging as a pedagogical method while teaching English to speakers of other languages. Teachers can assist when students’ competency in the target language is still low by utilizing L1, as practical knowledge shared between students depends on the teacher’s ability to present the information or topic in the activity in an acceptable manner (Sundari & Febriyanti, 2021).

Although many studies support the use of translanguaging in EFL classes, several considerations need to be taken into account. Another study clarified that the direct method requires Second Language (L2) instruction only in the target language and does not use the students’ L1 (Cummins, 2007). The cognitive processes required for L2 learning can be disrupted by excessive and incorrect use of L1; hence, some scholars argue that teachers should only use L2 in L2 classes (Escobar & Dillard, 2015). The most basic cause of students’ errors, according to Kazazoğlu (2020), is L1 interference, which occurs when they use L1 vocabulary

or grammar norms that do not apply in L2, leading to mistakes when speaking or writing. Therefore, pupils accustomed to speaking Indonesian find it challenging to speak English outside the classroom.

Some researchers showed various results when applying translanguaging in EFL classes. Therefore, researchers demonstrated that strategically using L1 can help overcome barriers to target-language comprehension. L1 acts as a cognitive bridge in English language learning, particularly when students have a ‘‘poor foundation in English’’ and when teachers and students share the same L1, according to Luitel et al., (2023). These results are consistent with those of Arisandi et al., (2023), who demonstrate that lecturers can improve students’ English language proficiency in the classroom by implementing translanguaging techniques. According to another study, the 2020 class of students in Makassar State University’s English Education Program has a favorable opinion of the use of translanguaging in the English teaching and learning process (Hafidzah et al., 2023). According to later studies, teachers believe that translanguaging enables them to use students’ native languages in English language classes. Furthermore, incorporating local and contextual values and cultures from the Pesantren school into the English classroom is achieved by integrating knowledge and skills from other languages (Madkur et al., 2022).

There is still a significant gap that should be further explored in the use of translanguaging in education, even though the current literature offers a thorough understanding of its significance in supporting student learning in the classroom. The goal of this study is to investigate the use of L1 (Indonesian) in Junior High School English as a Foreign Language.

1.2 Research Questions

From the background of the study above, these research questions can be concluded as follows:

1. How is translanguage used by teachers in English classes?
2. What are the purposes of using translanguage by teachers in English classes?
3. What challenges do teachers face in using translanguage to develop English language learning?
4. What strategies do teachers employ to overcome the challenges they face when implementing translanguage in EFL classrooms?

1.3 Research Objectives

Related to the statement of the research questions above, this study is intended to:

1. Analyzing the contexts in which teachers use translanguage in English classes.
2. Analyzing the purposes of using translanguage by teachers in English classes
3. Analyzing the difficulties faced by teachers in using translanguage in learning English as a foreign language.
4. Analyzing the strategies that teachers employ to overcome the challenges they encounter when implementing translanguage practices in EFL classrooms.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study contributes to the development of translanguage theory by providing empirical evidence on how translanguage is implemented by Indonesian EFL teachers in real classroom settings. By examining the contexts, reasons, and challenges that shape teachers' use of translanguage, this research

enriches existing literature with more nuanced and context-specific insights. The findings also extend the understanding of translanguaging not only as a linguistic phenomenon but also as a pedagogical approach that supports comprehension and meaning-making in multilingual environments. Thus, the study offers valuable theoretical reinforcement for future studies on translanguaging, especially within EFL contexts.

The results of this research offer meaningful contributions for English teachers, schools, and future researchers. For teachers, the study provides guidance on when and how translanguaging can be used effectively to support students' comprehension, reduce anxiety, and improve participation during English lessons. For schools and educational practitioners, the findings may serve as a reference in formulating language policies or professional development programs that support teachers' ability to manage multilingual classrooms. Additionally, this study offers a useful reference for future researchers who wish to investigate translanguaging from different perspectives, such as students' experiences, different educational levels, or the impact of translanguaging on specific language skills.

1.5 Scope and Delimitation

This study focuses on the use of translanguaging in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) at the Junior High School, specifically examining how teachers apply translanguaging during English language teaching, which includes Speaking, Writing, Reading, and Grammar skills. The purposes behind its use, the challenges they face, and the strategies to overcome the challenges. However, this study is limited in several ways. It does not focus on beliefs and attitudes towards translanguaging practices; instead, the focus is primarily on teachers' experiences

and perceptions. Only teachers with more than three years of experience and who actively use translanguaging are included as participants. Furthermore, the study is confined to junior secondary schools, so its findings may not represent translanguaging practices in primary schools, senior high schools, or higher education institutions.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

In this part, some necessary points related to the title are discussed. These terms need to be known to readers because they relate to the participants' criteria and the study's scope.

1. Translanguaging

Translanguaging in this study refers to a classroom practice in which English teachers and students flexibly use both English and the students' first language during teaching and learning activities to support understanding and communication. When practiced in the classroom, translanguaging involves the use of multiple languages for explaining concepts, giving instructions, managing classroom interaction, and helping students comprehend lesson content.

2. English as a Foreign Language (EFL)

Teaching English to non-native speakers in nations where English is not the primary language is referred to as EFL. Learners frequently use their first language (L1) in EFL contexts to better understand and acquire English, particularly when encountering difficult ideas.

3. Teacher's View

Teachers' views refer to English teachers' perceptions, uses, purposes, challenges, and strategies regarding the use of translanguaging in EFL classrooms.

In this study, teachers' views encompass their understanding of translanguaging, perceived benefits and challenges, and their reasons for using or limiting translanguaging practices in English teaching.



CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

This chapter discusses the results of research on The Use of Translanguaging, The Purpose of Using Translanguaging, The Challenges of Using Translanguaging, and Strategies to Overcome the Challenges of Using Translanguaging in junior high schools.

5.1 The Use of Translanguaging

Translanguaging is a dynamic technique that considers students' needs and the nature of the content, according to interviews with three professionals. A more adaptable strategy is to switch to a different language when explaining complex material or when there are signs of confusion. This is consistent with research showing that translanguaging is a valuable tool for cognitive development, especially for explaining challenging vocabulary and grammatical structures (Nguyen, 2025). Translating every English sentence into Indonesian is another consistent method that mirrors the translanguaging pedagogical technique, which emphasizes exposure to the target language and direct engagement in student comprehension (Tannenbaum, 2024).

Furthermore, the humanistic aspect of education, in which teachers understand and respond to students' emotional and cognitive needs, is highlighted by the flexible, responsive use of translanguaging grounded in students' nonverbal cues. According to some research, translanguaging may enable an enjoyable

multilingual environment, improve student participation, and reduce language learning anxiety (Putrawan, 2022). Through the use of their complete language material, students are enabled by this method, which also demonstrates the teaching concept of translanguaging as a kind of “emancipation” from a strict monolingual approach.

Theoretically, these methods encourage the translanguaging pedagogical concept set forward by Mashala and Sanders (2025), which is a deliberate tactic that increases students’ linguistic and metalinguistic awareness. Additionally, the use of translanguaging as a bridging tool—whether through classroom management, construction materials, or beginner empowerment—aligns with research recommendations that highlight its advantages in the Indonesian EFL context, such as improved communication, self-confidence, and student engagement (Chicherina & Strelkova, 2023).

5.2 The Purpose of Using Translanguaging

Translanguaging is shown to be a humanistic instructional approach that might bridge students’ cognitive and emotional demands rather than only being a technical tactic using inductive reasoning to solve problems. This approach is consistent with the findings of Efendi and Syafradin (2024), which demonstrate that translanguaging is used to “make the instruction clearer,” increase student engagement, and “reduce students’ anxiety.” Teachers use this strategy when they decide to combine students’ first language with the target language to ensure understanding of the material, especially in complex sections. The development of communication intentions (Willingness to Communicate) is also supported by this

technique, according to Kuncoroningtyas et al., (2023), who observed that translanguaging enhances students' communication competence and flexibility.

Furthermore, translanguaging creates a safe psychological space, reducing speaking anxiety, which is crucial in language learning. Nursanti (2021) emphasized that this strategy “decreases students’ anxiety” and creates a comfortable learning environment. Khairunnisa & Lukmana (2020) also reported that EFL teachers in Indonesia have a positive attitude towards translanguaging as a scaffolding tool that facilitates the learning process without increasing student stress.

In a dynamic classroom context, translanguaging practices help maintain a balance between target-language exposure and student comprehension, thereby supporting cognitive and emotional engagement. A study by Meliya Sari & Syafradin (2024) found that translanguaging strengthened students’ comprehension, confidence, and active class participation, even when the material was quite complex.

This approach’s theoretical success concurs with the concept of translanguaging, which views language as a resource rather than a barrier and emphasizes students’ linguistic repertoires as an inclusive teaching space. Additionally, the concept of responsive pedagogy, which emphasizes teacher sensitivity to students’ emotional and cognitive needs, is supported by spontaneous translanguaging that is attentive to students’ emotional responses and quickly redirected when they struggle.

5.3 The Challenges of Using Translanguaging

Although translanguaging has proven effective in facilitating student comprehension and creating a comfortable learning environment, this practice is not without contextual and structural challenges. First, the rule of a high proportion of English usage forces teachers to balance the need for target-language exposure with the need for student comprehension, as found in a study of translanguaging implementation in Indonesia (Aba Sha'Ar & Rofiah, 2024). Second, students' tendency to rely excessively on their mother tongue for even simple material, requiring teachers to explicitly clarify the structural differences between Indonesian or local languages and English to minimize linguistic interference that damages the target language's grammar (Kristanti & Pei, 2024). Third, in classroom contexts where students are unresponsive and not fluent in formal Indonesian, translanguaging becomes more complicated. Teachers may need to utilize regional languages as analogies that are closer to students' experiences, but must still be careful not to overly erode exposure to the target language (Sahib, 2019).

Theoretically, these challenges can be explained within a translanguaging framework that recognizes the ideological and political constraints behind language policies, as well as the need to formulate translanguaging as a planned and contextual pedagogical strategy, not mere improvisation (Nugrahaeni & Asib, 2022). Translanguaging theory encourages a critical assessment of students' linguistic repertoires and their planned and strategic uses of structural adjustment and language interference, rather than the simple, uncontrolled use of the mother tongue (Yulandha & Ashadi, 2024).

5.4 Strategies to Overcome the Challenges of Using Translanguaging

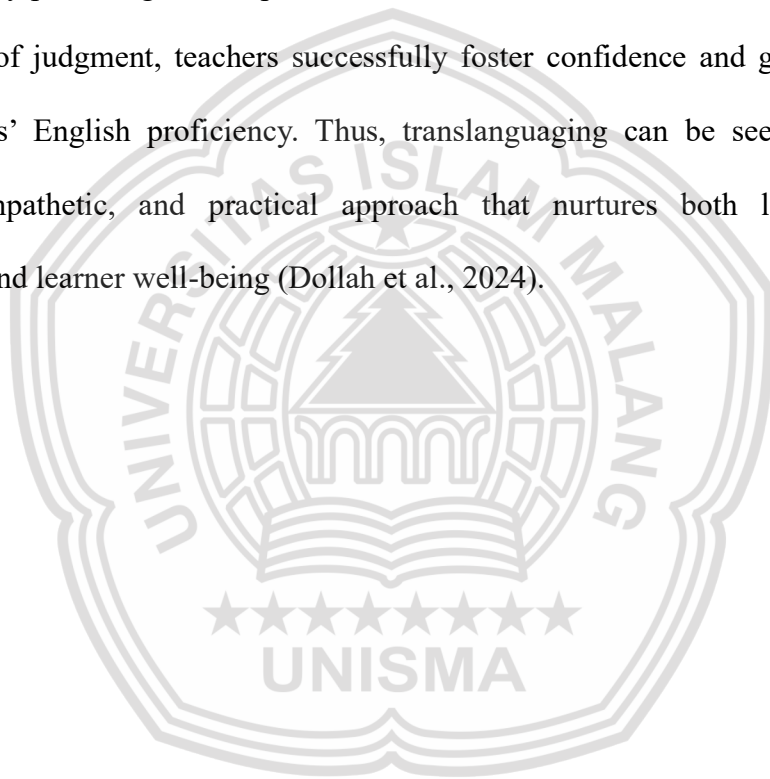
Based on the findings, teachers employ various strategies to overcome the challenges of translanguaging that reflect both awareness and empathy toward students' learning conditions. Translanguaging is not merely viewed as a communication tool but as a teaching strategy that bridges differences in students' language abilities within the classroom (Storheil & Iversen, 2024). In practice, teachers aim to balance the use of English and Indonesian so that students can both understand the lesson and gain exposure to the target language.

Teachers generally apply translanguaging gradually, starting with more frequent use of the first language in the early stages of learning, and then increasing the proportion of English over time. This gradual approach helps students adapt to the target language without feeling overwhelmed. In addition, translanguaging is used to explain structural differences between English and Indonesian so that students do not merely memorize translations but understand the underlying grammatical logic. This strategy is consistent with Vygotsky's scaffolding theory, which suggests that the use of the first language functions as a cognitive tool to support understanding of new concepts until learners become more independent in using English (Wei, 2018).

Institutional support also plays a vital role in the successful implementation of translanguaging. Curriculum changes and the availability of more flexible textbooks have made it easier for teachers to integrate translanguaging systematically into English instruction. Teachers also recognized the importance of creating non-formal learning opportunities, such as English extracurricular programs, to expand students' exposure to the target language. This is in line with

findings by Liando et al., (2023), which highlight that translanguaging practices are more effective when supported by favorable school policies and multilingual learning environments.

These strategies demonstrate that teachers act not only as language instructors but also as facilitators of students' emotional and motivational growth. They maintain a balance between academic rigor and a supportive learning atmosphere. By providing a safe space where students can use their first language without fear of judgment, teachers successfully foster confidence and gradually build students' English proficiency. Thus, translanguaging can be seen as an inclusive, empathetic, and practical approach that nurtures both linguistic competence and learner well-being (Dollah et al., 2024).



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