

The Practice of Translanguaging Pedagogy Approach In EFL Classroom

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Abstract

In the last decade, the application of translanguaging in language teaching has attracted the attention of researchers and educational practitioners. Although many studies have explored the benefits of Translanguaging, a gap remains in the literature on how Translanguaging is effectively applied in the context of learning English as a foreign language (EFL) in Islamic higher Education. This study explores the practice of the translanguaging pedagogy approach in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes at the English Education Department of IAIN Sultan Amai Gorontalo. This research employed a qualitative approach with a case study design, focusing on first-year students and English lecturers in the English Education Department at IAIN Sultan Amai Gorontalo. The participants included 25 students (six males and 19 females) and two English lecturers. The results revealed that translanguaging was frequently used by both lecturers and students across five observed sessions in various English courses, including Literal Inferential Reading, Speaking for Formal Interaction, and English Basic Grammar. A total of 300 translanguaging instances were recorded, with Insertion (24.67%), Intra-sentential (23%), and Inter-sentential (18.67%) being the most common types, followed by Entire (17.33%) and Congruent Lexicalization (16.33%). This helps improve their understanding of the material being taught and gives them greater confidence in learning the target language.

Keywords: Translanguaging, Approach, EFL Classroom

Introduction

Over the last decade, learning English as a foreign language (EFL) has become increasingly essential in education, particularly in non-English-speaking countries. Over time, the paradigm of English learning in Indonesia has changed. In the past, the learning approach focused more on teaching grammar and vocabulary (Hawkins, 1997). However, the communicative approach has become a fundamental principle, encouraging students to speak, listen, read, and write in a more tangible context (Canale, 1980). English plays a central role in the curriculum in schools across the country. From elementary school to college, English lessons go beyond academic fulfilment.

Colleges have become important centers for developing pedagogical innovation, especially in English as a foreign language (EFL) Education. Recently, there has been a significant change in student demographics, with an increasing number of students having multilingual backgrounds (Madiba, 2014). This change demands a more inclusive and responsive pedagogical approach to the linguistic needs of students. Lecturers are essential in ensuring that students understand learning, encouraging deep understanding, and enabling students to be more confident in speaking, writing, and participating in English language interactions. In addition, lecturers must create a classroom environment that supports student involvement to maintain students' interest and enthusiasm in learning English.

Different linguistic backgrounds can be viewed as a source of linguistic richness. The mother tongue or regional language can be used as an alternative to help students understand complex or unfamiliar material in English (Sahib, Nawing, Sari, & Bin Ukka, 2020). Instead of strictly separating languages, lecturers can translate English into their native or regional language, making students feel valued and facilitating easier understanding of the subject matter. This translanguaging approach promotes inclusivity (Driouch, 2022) and supports cognitive development (Khair, Rosmayanti, & Firman, 2020) by allowing students to make meaningful connections between their prior linguistic knowledge and the new language. Furthermore, it fosters a more supportive learning environment where students feel confident participating, especially those who may struggle with English proficiency. By acknowledging and integrating students' linguistic repertoires, lecturers can create a more equitable classroom that respects cultural identity while enhancing comprehension and engagement (Charalambous, 2016).

The term "translanguaging" was formulated by Colin Williams in 1994 (King, 2021). It originated from Welsh bilingual education and was first used in Welsh as 'trawsieithu'. In a Welsh context, Translanguaging refers to "pedagogical practices that deliberately alter the modes of input and output language in bilingual classrooms" and has since been developed by educators such as Colin Baker and Ophelia Gràcia (Cenoz & Gorter, 2021). William uses this term to define teaching practices in a bilingual classroom where the input is one language (mother tongue) and the output is another (English). It is based on

a holistic view of bilingualism. This view, promoted by Ofelia Gràcia, states that bilinguals have only one language system, not two or more and that effective teaching lies in finding ways to help students use all their language resources and repertoire to learn academic content in a new language (Khair et al., 2020).

According to Garcia (2011), the success of foreign language learning cannot be separated from the linguistic knowledge of the first language of the learner and its role in foreign language learning (Anjarsari, 2022); this Translanguaging takes advantage of the positive transfer of the learner's first language into the target language he wants to master (Conteh, 2018). Translanguaging is an approach to communication in which individuals or groups use and combine various languages they master to interact. This approach regards the boundaries between languages as flexible, and individuals can move from one language to another without viewing them as separate uses. In Translanguaging, language is considered a communication tool that can be mixed for better understanding, and this can be adopted by lecturers or as a pedagogic approach (Vogel & García, 2017).

Translanguaging and code-switching refer to using a student's first language to help students learn a second language in the classroom (Gabryś-Barker, 2020). They are similar in the activity of changing from one language to another in the process of communication. However, functionally, they are different; when lecturers use Translanguaging in the classroom, it means that, as a pedagogical reason, according to Garcia's theory. The only Translanguaging function lecturers use is explaining so students can easily understand the material. Translanguaging functions as an explanatory reason; it also means code-switching. However, code-switching has another function of excluding and including a person in the communication process in the sense that the use of code-switching must be planned, and attention must be paid to the social norms in which it communicates (Sahib, 2019).

Based on the discussion above, it is crucial to examine further how translanguaging is practiced in English language classrooms, particularly in higher Education contexts. Therefore, the research question in this study is: *How do lecturers and students implement translanguaging practices in English language teaching?* This study aims to explore EFL lecturers and students in practicing translanguaging during English instruction in the classroom. By examining how lecturers utilize students' linguistic repertoires to support understanding and engagement, this research is expected to contribute to developing more inclusive and responsive pedagogical approaches in multilingual learning environments. Specifically, the findings of this study are expected to provide valuable insights for improving English language instruction in the Tadris Bahasa Inggris Department at IAIN Sultan Amai Gorontalo. By understanding how translanguaging can be strategically integrated into teaching practices, lecturers can enhance students' comprehension, participation, and confidence in using English.

Methodology

The researchers employed a qualitative research approach using a case study design. The participants in this study focused on first-year students in the English Education Department at IAIN Sultan Amai Gorontalo and lecturers who teach English courses. There were 25 first-year students and two English lectures in the English Education Department, comprising six males and 19 females. First-year students were selected because their linguistic backgrounds are still strongly retained and have not yet been significantly influenced or altered, as is often the case with students in their second year.

The type of observation instrument is frequency observation; that is, the author has made an observation instrument based on previous relevant theories and research, which is a guide to develop observation indicators that want to be examined and then observed in class by calculating how many behavioral indicators appear during learning on a scale of 0 (does not occur), 1 (occurs one time), 2 (occurs two times) until so on then take notes to record likely additional information appears during observation (Sukendra & Atmaja, 2020). Before analyzing the data obtained, researchers manage the data by recording the collected data, then reducing the data so that the data does not overlap, grouping by theme, and finally checking the completeness of the data and suitability with additional data (Rahmadi, 2011).

The next step in this study involved data analysis using thematic analysis (Braun, V. and Clarke, 2006) to identify, analyze, and interpret key patterns (themes) that emerged from the observational data recorded during periodic classroom observations. Thematic analysis was conducted through a systematic process, beginning with familiarization with the data, where the researchers repeatedly read the field notes and observation transcripts to gain an overall understanding of the content. Following this, the researchers proceeded with generating initial codes by identifying significant features of the data relevant to the research focus on translanguaging practices. These codes were then collated and categorized into potential themes that represent patterns of translanguaging implementation observed in the classroom. In the next phase, the researchers reviewed and refined the themes to ensure that they accurately reflected the data and addressed the research question. Each theme was then defined and named, providing clear descriptions and interpretations grounded in the data. The results are then expressed in the narrative as frequency diagrams to facilitate a conclusion.

Findings

The researchers examined translanguaging practices by conducting classroom observations across five learning sessions. These included one session of the Literal Inferential Reading course, three sessions of Speaking for Formal Interaction, and one

session of English Basic Grammar. The sessions were selected based on the specific indicators the researchers aimed to observe.

The researchers organized the findings from each learning session into three stages: the class opening, the main activity, and the closing. They then categorized the quotations based on the identified codes and types of translanguaging, and calculated the frequency of translanguaging occurrences. The following presents the instances of translanguaging practices observed by the researchers.

Table 1. Appearances of Translanguaging during the Learning Process

Types of Translanguaging	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Inter-Sentential	56	18,67%
Intra-Sentential	69	23%
Insertion	74	24,67%
Entire	52	17,33%
Congruent Lexicalization	49	16,33%
Total	300	100%

a. Inter-sentential Translanguaging

This type occurs when the language is shifted between sentences or clauses. The example [*"Did you remember the material? Coba apa ada yang bisa menjelaskan ?"*] When the lecturer asks about the topics that have been studied using English, then adds a clause from Indonesian, which stimulates students' memory of the material that has been given.

Another example is when students debate and give opinions, such as [*"you can't buy happiness but when you sick example your keluarga tidak disamping"*]. Students state agreement in English but provide additional straightforward arguments in Indonesian.

b. Intra-Sentential Translanguaging

Language displacement in one sentence. The example, [*"asking and giving opinion itu menanyakan pendapat dan memberikan pendapat terkait sesuatu berikut beberapa ungkapan dari asking and giving opinion..."*]. Here, the lecturer reminded the previous learning to use Indonesian phrases and then mentioned the topic using English phrases in one sentence. Other data students use this type of data such as;

S1: *"bagaimana dengan abstract noun?"*

S2: *"abstract noun itu termasuk di noun yang tidak dapat dihitung macam angin"*

When analyzed, students asked and answered questions using Indonesian. However, the topic in this case still mentioned English, so there was a shift between two languages in one sentence spoken by students during the discussion.

c. Insertion Translanguaging

This type involves inserting words or phrases from one language into sentences that are mostly in other languages. The Example [*"trus bagaimana dengan **statement** uang tidak mo dibawa mati tapi kalo tidak ada uang rasa **mo** mati?"*]. In this example, the student provides a rebuttal by inserting the word 'statement' from English and 'mo' in the mother tongue in the dominant Indonesian sentence. Not only students but lecturers also use this type of insertion in learning. Here are the findings;

*"sekarang **torang** artikan english boosternya"*

*"**torang** pindah ke student book 2 ya"*

Lecturers use this type when instructing students by using the subject, namely the student and herself, in his native language, namely the word 'torang,' which means in Indonesian 'kita' and English 'we.' Meanwhile, verbs use Indonesian, and objects use English.

The sentence pattern students use inserts words from their first language to facilitate the meaning of the words they want to say. Lecturers using this type aim to build communication persuasively so that students understand and follow the instructions given.

d. Entire Translanguaging

Entire Translanguaging means using both languages interchangeably to accomplish a specific task or goal. Examples include;

"contohnya waktu saya menjadi bagian dari implementasi kurdeka berbasis komunitas disana banyak anak-anak korban divorce, tapi dorang pakai sepatu mahal like nike tapi malas sekolah, so money can't buy happines memang mereka punya kebutuhan terpenuhi but their didn't get affection from their parent, sama sajakan".

When the above findings are analyzed, the lecturer gives examples and relates them to the discussed topic using free language transfer. This happens when a long explanation is given to give his argument on the topic being debated. Other examples are;

"next meeting I will check group assigment, ingat ya sebelum uas tidak ada lagi yang baru memasukan tugas, baru alasan ini itu tidak ada ya pokoknya share link ke ma'am lewat keting nanti keting yang forward ke ma'am".

It was found that lecturers use extensive Translanguaging when reminding students about the assignments that must be collected. Lecturers use English time prepositions and verbs in more than one sentence.

e. Congruent Lexicalization Translanguaging

This type of Translanguaging occurs when the grammatical structure of two languages is used together in a single sentence. The example [*"next, apakah ada halaman at your house misalnya"*]. In this sentence, the elements of both languages are combined simultaneously and reflect the grammar of the two languages. Another sentence is also when the lecturer gives instructions; [*"Jadi tugasnya kalian buat conversation in pairs ya berpasangan..."*] and [*"yang tugas last meeting, ayo kumpul"*]. To identify this type, the sentence structure of both languages can be analyzed using one pronunciation; if you use one language as a whole, the sentence structure will be different.

Students also use this type, for example, [*"Saya tidak tahu how to say kata ini"*]. Students combine Indonesian and English sentence structures in sentences. Students also insert language structures in other languages, such as the following findings: [*"Ma'am skimming itu. Cuma boleh buku bacaan for example novel?"*] Students insert the word, for example, where it is an English structure.

This type of Translanguaging can make it easier to analyze communication patterns carried out by students and lecturers in the classroom. However, lecturers and students may use Translanguaging as a communication medium without planning. Translanguaging goes beyond a narrow focus on language structure. It emphasizes the meaning-making process, which requires speakers to strategically and spontaneously utilize their multilingual and multimodal skills in an integrated manner rather than "Language" as a unique and independent code (Saputra, 2014).

The results of the observation data show that Translanguaging also has functions such as explaining the material, explaining the difference between two concepts or two similar vocabulary uses, explaining the questions asked, providing examples by describing situations that suit the students' daily lives, checking comprehension, explaining grammar rules, organizing classes and summarizing learning materials. In addition to lecturers, students also use translation to explain concepts. However, they are hampered in their vocabulary mastery, such as explaining concepts from the previous meeting and interpreting the material to be studied.

This study's findings show that Translanguaging can integrate knowledge from languages that lecturers and students already own. From the findings of the translanguaging practice above, Translanguaging helps bridge communication between lecturers and students so that they are still understood when learning in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) classes. These findings align with the Theory developed by García and Wei (2014), which states that Translanguaging is a pedagogical practice that can utilize the entire linguistic repertoire of students to facilitate learning (García & Lin, 2017).

Discussion

The findings of this study reveal that translanguaging plays a significant role in the teaching and learning process in EFL classrooms, particularly in first-year classes at the English Language Education Department of IAIN Sultan Amai Gorontalo. The data show that translanguaging was frequently employed by both lecturers and students across five observed sessions, covering various English courses such as Literal Inferential Reading, Speaking for Formal Interaction, and English Basic Grammar. The total number of translanguaging instances reached 300, with Insertion (24.67%), Intra-sentential (23%), and Inter-sentential (18.67%) being the most commonly used types, followed by Entire (17.33%) and Congruent Lexicalization (16.33%).

These findings indicate that translanguaging is a natural part of classroom interaction and a functional tool for facilitating understanding. For instance, inter-sentential translanguaging allowed lecturers and students to switch between languages when emphasizing a point or recalling prior knowledge. This was particularly useful in checking students' memory and comprehension. Intra-sentential translanguaging, on the other hand, was often used to deliver content and terminology, helping students connect new English vocabulary with their existing knowledge in Indonesian.

The most frequent type, insertion translanguaging, appeared when students or lecturers inserted English or local language words into predominantly Indonesian sentences. This practice indicates an active engagement with the second language while still relying on the first language for clarity and fluency. Additionally, entire translanguaging, which involves extensive code-switching within extended speech, was observed when lecturers explained complex concepts, related real-life experiences, or provided instructions, showing that fluid language shifts effectively contextualize and personalize the learning material.

Though less frequent, Congruent lexicalization provided evidence of grammatical blending between English and Indonesian. This type shows students' and lecturers' capacity to navigate and mix language systems, suggesting an emerging linguistic flexibility valuable in multilingual learning contexts. These findings align with a related study, which stated that translanguaging is a pedagogical practice that draws upon the learners' full linguistic repertoire to support meaning-making and learning (Kleyn, 2020; Lewis, 2012; Lin & Wu, 2015; Rasman, 2018; Tran, 2021). Rather than being seen as language interference or deficiency, translanguaging in this context functions as a strategic tool for negotiating meaning, explaining complex ideas, and ensuring student engagement. It also supports scaffolding, especially for first-year students still developing their English proficiency.

Moreover, the functions of translanguaging observed in this study—such as explaining material, giving examples, checking comprehension, organizing classroom tasks, and summarizing content—demonstrate its pedagogical value (King, 2021; Mazak,

2014; Nyimbili & Mwanza, 2020). Students also used translanguaging to ask and answer questions, clarify previous lessons, and express themselves when limited by their English vocabulary. This reflects a bidirectional process where lecturers and students actively use multilingual resources to support communication and learning.

However, while the benefits are clear, some pedagogical risks and challenges must be acknowledged. First, excessive reliance on the first language during English instruction may limit students' exposure to the target language, potentially slowing the development of their English fluency. There is a delicate balance between using translanguaging as scaffolding and falling into overdependence, where students may resist engaging with more complex English input.

Second, the implementation of translanguaging practices can vary widely between lecturers, depending on their own language ideologies and confidence in managing multilingual classrooms. Without clear pedagogical guidelines, the use of translanguaging may become inconsistent or unintentional, possibly reinforcing linguistic hierarchies or confusing students about language boundaries.

Additionally, observational data may be subject to observer bias, especially in how translanguaging instances were recorded or interpreted. Lecturers may have altered their language practices due to the presence of researchers, and students might have used translanguaging more consciously than usual. Furthermore, this study was limited to five sessions, which may not fully represent the broader dynamics of classroom translanguaging throughout the semester.

Despite these limitations, the findings highlight that translanguaging, when applied strategically, can serve as a bridge between languages and provide cognitive and instructional support. It facilitates better comprehension, encourages active participation, and helps sustain meaningful communication. Recognising translanguaging as a valid and effective classroom strategy requires not only an appreciation of its benefits but also an awareness of its boundaries and responsible use in multilingual and multicultural educational settings.

In conclusion, translanguaging in the EFL context of IAIN Sultan Amai Gorontalo serves as a bridge between languages and a cognitive and instructional support system. It facilitates better comprehension, encourages active participation, and helps sustain meaningful communication. These findings highlight the importance of recognizing translanguaging as a valid and effective classroom strategy, particularly in multilingual and multicultural educational settings.

Conclusion

This study suggests that translanguaging can be strategically integrated into EFL instruction as a scaffold to support students' learning processes. Rather than discouraging the use of the first language, educators should embrace it to bridge knowledge gaps, clarify complex content, and connect new English material with students' existing linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Practical applications may include the use of bilingual glossaries, structured code-switching activities, and collaborative tasks involving multiple languages. These approaches not only enhance comprehension and participation but also validate students' identities as multilingual learners. At the policy and curriculum level, it is recommended that educational institutions formally acknowledge translanguaging as a legitimate instructional strategy, particularly in multilingual settings such as Indonesia. Curriculum frameworks should include translanguaging techniques as part of inclusive teaching practices, while teacher training programs must prepare future educators to implement them effectively and responsibly. Educational policies should also encourage the creation of learning materials that incorporate local languages and cultural references. For future research, expanding the scope across diverse educational contexts and using varied methodologies—such as longitudinal designs and stakeholder interviews—would provide a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the pedagogical value and long-term impact of translanguaging in English language teaching.

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