



## Students' Voice Towards the Translanguaging Practices in EFL Classroom

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### **Abstract**

This study aimed to find out how students' perceptions of translanguaging practices in EFL classroom. This study used a qualitative research approach. The data for this study was gathered through interviews using a qualitative descriptive method. The interview process was conducted with five students from class IX.2 SMPN 4 Bulukumba. The findings showed that students believed translanguaging makes them learn English more easily, feel comfortable in class, communicate with the teacher effectively, be more interested in learning, and add new vocabulary. Some students explained that they experienced difficulty during the use of translanguaging by the teacher, but most of them realized the importance of translanguaging in developing their English skills. Based on the results of the research, it can be concluded that the implementation of translanguaging has a positive impact in the process of teaching and learning English in EFL classroom. So, for English teachers, it is recommended to use translanguaging in classes where students' English ability is still low with the aim that students can understand the material better, create a supportive environment, and encourage students to be active in class. Therefore, the use of translanguaging should be balanced and not replace the use of English as a whole.

**Keywords:** Translanguaging, Students, Perception, Voice, EFL Classroom.

## **Introduction**

A crucial component of teaching and learning is the use of strategies. The best approach to teaching content to students is to maximize their learning, reduce costs and waste, boost their motivation, and foster their creativity (Atmowardoyo, Weda & Sakkir, 2021; Sakkir & Abduh, 2022; Weda, 2023). Translanguaging is one of the pedagogical techniques that teachers might employ while teaching English to foreigners to improve language acquisition in bilingual or multilingual classrooms (Khojan & Ambele, 2022), like those in Indonesia (Rodriquez et al, 2014; Muis, 2023).

Permitting students to use their native language skills to support language acquisition in a classroom that emphasizes the target language is the general notion behind translanguaging. The term "translanguaging," which was first used in Welsh by Williams (1994), describes a bilingual education pedagogical approach in which the input and output languages are purposefully changed (Garcia & Lin, 2017, p. 119). In another definition, Baker (2011) defines translanguaging as a method where a lesson or text is first presented in one language, but subsequent work such as discussion, writing, or completing a worksheet is done in another language. He further explains that in translanguaging, the input and output are intentionally in different languages, with the language used systematically varied. Typically, the input is in one language (either read or listened to), while the output is in another language (either spoken or written).

Some students in EFL classes, like those in Indonesia, are fluent enough in the language, but most struggle because English is not their first language (Atmowardoyo & Sakkir, 2021). According to Sahib (2019), students who struggle with the English language sometimes opt to remain silent while they are learning. Consequently, translanguaging may be the ideal answer. Allowing L1 use in the classroom can motivate students to study the language (Trisnawati et al, 2023). He goes on to say that good communication between teachers and students can be established through translanguaging, creating a positive learning environment.

For language learners, translanguaging can have several advantages, including assisting them in creating conversational strategies and bridging their identities as English language learners and speakers and speakers of their mother tongue. It will benefit students and help them develop useful ways to communicate

in English by allowing them to use their mother tongue as a positive linguistic resource.

However, there is very little research on translanguaging in Indonesia. Putrawan (2022) explains that there were only 13 studies that had been conducted on translanguaging in Indonesia. Moreover, of the 13 studies, only three studies conducted their research in junior high schools. The three studies were conducted by Sahib, Ukka, Nawing, & Sari (2020) in Manokwari, Rasman (2018) in Yogyakarta, and Sapitri, Gede, & Myartawan (2018) in Singaraja. There has yet to be any research on translanguaging conducted in junior high schools in South Sulawesi. Departing from this, in this study, researchers are interested in researching the implementation of translanguaging in a junior high school in Bulukumba, South Sulawesi. This study investigated how the students perceive translanguaging in an EFL classroom. This research focuses on answering the question, "How do students perceive about translanguaging?"

## **Research Methodology**

### **Research Design**

This research used qualitative research. Furthermore, this study employed a descriptive qualitative research methodology. This kind of research was used to scrutinize the language phenomenon, particularly the utilization of the L1 and the L2 in translanguaging within an EFL classroom. Moreover, descriptive qualitative methodology in this research was used to explain the data obtained in the form of a collection of words to answer the research question about the perceptions of students regarding the practice of translanguaging.

### **Research Variable**

This research has a single variable, which is the perception of students. Perception involves selecting, organizing, and interpreting information from our senses. Students' perceptions in this research were about how they perceive the implementation of translanguaging in the EFL classroom. Translanguaging is an English teaching strategy that allows the use of students' mother tongue in the classroom to facilitate better understanding and increase student participation during the learning process.

## **Research Site and Participants**

The research location was in SMP Negeri 4 Bulukumba. The participants of this research were five students in IX.2 grade SMP Negeri 4 Bulukumba. The researcher used a purposive sampling technique in taking the participants of the research. The students selected were students who were considered active in class and had better English skills than most of their classmates.

## **Instruments of the Research**

This study employed an interview as an instrument to gain data. This instrument was chosen for this study to gain a more comprehensive understanding of students' perception of translanguaging. The researcher employed a semi-structured interview technique to acquire information from students. The researcher also utilized voice recording and field notes as tools to assist the researcher in collecting the data.

## **Data Analysis Technique**

The data of this research was analyzed by using thematic analysis. The data analysis process was founded on the six principles proposed by Braun & Clarke (2006) for thematic analysis activities, namely (1) familiarizing with the data, (2) generating initial codes, (3) searching for themes, (4) reviewing themes, (5) defining and naming themes, (6) producing the report.

### 1) Familiarizing with the data

The initial step in the data analysis process was to become familiar with the data. In this step, the researcher listened to recordings of classroom observations and read transcripts of interviews with the teacher as well as the students. To obtain a better comprehension of the data, the researcher listened to it and read it numerous times.

### 2) Generating initial codes

In the second step, the researchers generated initial codes by labeling and coding each word, phrase, or idea that appeared in the data. The codes were

based on the researcher's observations and interpretations of the data. The coding process was facilitated by using data analysis software, which allow the researcher to organize and keep track of the codes.

3) Searching for themes

After generating initial codes, the researchers searched for themes by looking for patterns and connections between codes. The researcher grouped the codes into potential themes, which then reviewed and refined.

4) Reviewing themes

The researchers reviewed the potential themes by comparing them to each other. The themes were evaluated for their relevance to the research question and how well they represented the data. The themes that did not fit well with the data were eliminated, and the themes that were left would have been refined and adjusted as needed.

5) Defining and naming themes

The final themes were defined and named based on their relevance to the research question. The researcher used his knowledge to create meaningful and accurate descriptions of the themes.

6) Producing the report

In the final step, the researchers entered data into the report. The report was based on the researcher's analysis of the data and presented the themes that emerged from the analysis. The report also contained exact quotes from the data to back up the selected themes.

## **Findings and Discussion**

### **Findings**

#### **Students' perceptions of translanguaging**

The researcher obtained the data by interviewing five students from class IX.2 SMPN 4 Bulukumba. Students were selected using purposive sampling, namely students who were active in class or students with better English skills than most of their classmates. The researcher used audio recording to record all explanations from students. The following is an explanation of students' perceptions regarding the use of translanguaging in EFL class:

a. Students learn English more easily

The first question the researcher asked in the interview process with the students was what benefits they got from the use of translanguaging in the English class. Explanations from students can be seen in the extract below:

(Student 1, 1/8/2023)

*"Mempermudah saya dalam belajar bahasa Inggris, lebih mudahki paham."* (It makes it easier for me to learn English, it's easier for me to understand.)

(Student 5, 1/8/2023)

*"Lebih mudahki belajar bahasa Inggris."* (It's easier to learn English.)

In both extracts above, it can be seen that the use of translanguaging by the teacher makes learning English easier for students. In the first extract, the student said that the use of translanguaging makes it easier for him to learn English and to understand the learning material. In the second extract, the student also explained the same thing. She explained that it is easier for her to learn English with translanguaging.

b. Students feel comfortable in class

The interview results with students also show that translanguaging makes students feel comfortable in English class. This can be seen in the following extract:

(Student 2, 1/8/2023)

*"Nyaman, karena ndak susahki lagi mencari artinya."* (It's comfortable, because it's no longer difficult for me to find its meaning.)

(Student 4, 1/8/2023)

*"Iye, karena lebih gampang dirasa kalau pakai dua bahasa."* (Yes, because it's easier if the teacher uses two languages.)

The two extracts show the use of translanguaging makes students feel comfortable in the English learning process. In the first extract, the student explained that she feels comfortable in class because with the help of Indonesian, she understands the meaning of English words easily. In the second extract, the student explained that she feels comfortable because she thinks learning English becomes easier by using two languages.

c. Effective communication with the teacher

In the result of the interview with students, the researcher found that the use of translanguaging in class can make communication between teacher and students effective. It can be seen in the extract below:

(Student 3, 1/8/2023)

*"Iye, bisaki lebih paham sedikit apa yang nabilang juga daripada bahasa Inggris terus."* (Yes, we can understand a little more what is being said instead of using English all the time.)

In the extract above, it can be seen that translanguaging can make communication between teacher and students effective. In the extract, the student stated that by having English accompanied by Indonesian in the English class, she understands better what the teacher is conveying, which makes her able to communicate with the teacher more effectively.

d. Students are more interested in learning

The results of the interview conducted with students show that students are more interested in participating in learning when the teacher uses translanguaging in the class. Student's explanations can be seen in the extract below:

(Student 2, 1/8/2023)

*"Tertarik, karena naajariki juga bagaimana caranya berkomunikasi dalam bahasa Inggris."* (Interested, because we are also taught how to communicate in English)

(Student 5, 1/8/2023)

*"Iye, karena pakai dua bahasa jadi lebih mudah."* (Yes, because using two languages makes it easier.)

The two extracts above indicate that the use of translanguaging has a positive impact on increasing students' interest in the learning process. In the first extract, the student explained that she is interested in following the class with translanguaging. She is interested because the use of translanguaging in the classroom allows her to learn how to communicate in English. Furthermore, in the second extract, the student also explained that she was more interested in participating in the lesson. That is because, according to her, the lesson becomes easier with translanguaging.

e. Students can add new vocabulary

Based on the results of the interview conducted with students, the researcher found that the use of translanguaging in class also contributes to expanding students' vocabulary in English. This can be seen in the following extract:

(Student 1, 1/8/2023)

*"Iye, karena mulai sekarang banyak kudapat."* (Yes, because from now on I get a lot.)

(Student 4, 1/8/2023)

*"Ada disetiap pelajaran."* (Yes, there are in every lesson.)

Based on the two extracts above, it can be seen that students can add new vocabulary by the teacher's translanguaging. In the first extract, the student stated that after he learns English with translanguaging in class, he starts to acquire a lot of new vocabulary. Likewise, in the second extract, she explained that in each lesson there are new vocabulary that she learned through translanguaging.

f. Difficulties in using translanguaging

In this interview, the researcher also asked whether students experienced difficulties during the learning process using translanguaging. Students' answers can be seen in the following extract:



(Student 3, 1/8/2023)

*"Tidak, karena campur-campur juga, biasa bahasa Inggris biasa bahasa Indonesia jadi tidakji."* (No, because it's mixed, sometimes in English sometimes in Indonesian, so I did not.)

(Student 5, 1/8/2023)

*"Ada sedikit, kadang masih bingung sedikit kalau pakai bahasa Inggris Ibu."* (There are a few, sometimes I'm still a little confused when the teacher uses English.)

In the extracts from the interview results above, the researcher found students' views regarding the difficulties they might experience in the use of translanguaging in class. In the first extract, the student revealed that using English and Indonesian, she does not experience difficulties in the English learning class. On the other hand, in the second extract, the student admitted that she has difficulty with the use of translanguaging. She explained that sometimes, she still feels slightly confused when the teacher uses English in learning.

g. The importance of translanguaging

In the last question of the interview process, the researcher asked students' perceptions about whether the use of translanguaging is important in English class. In this case, the students' answers can be seen in the extract below:

(Student 1, 1/8/2023)

*"Kadang penting, kadang kurang penting. Karena kalau memang mau focus bahasa Inggris, harusnya bahasa Inggris terus."* (Sometimes important, sometimes less important. Because if we really want to focus on English, we should speak in full English.)

(Student 4, 1/8/2023)

*"Penting, karena lebih nabantuki supaya lebih lancar berbahasa Inggris."* (Important, because it helps me to be more fluent in English.)

The results of interviews with students show varied views regarding the importance of using translanguaging in the process of learning English. For example, in the first extract, students thought that translanguaging is sometimes important, but sometimes not so important. He argued that if students want to focus on learning

English, English should be used consistently in class. Unlike the student in the second extract, she stated that translanguaging is important in the process of learning English. She explained that translanguaging helps her to be more fluent in speaking English.

## **Discussion**

These findings were obtained from interviews with five grade IX students. Based on interview results, students believed that translanguaging makes them learn English more easily; they feel comfortable in class, makes communication with the teacher effective, they are more interested in learning, and they can add new vocabulary. The researcher also asked students' perceptions about the difficulties they experienced during the use of translanguaging and how important the use of translanguaging was according to students.

The first finding shows that the teacher's translanguaging allows students to learn English more easily. In the interview results, the five students thought that translanguaging positively benefits their learning experience in English class (Liando et al, 2022). The implementation of translanguaging in the class can help students learn and understand the learning material better. As stated by Baker (2011), one of the benefits of using translanguaging in the classroom is that it can promote a more profound and fuller understanding of the subject matter to students.

In the next finding, it can be seen that students feel comfortable in English class with the use of translanguaging. The five students agreed on this matter. With translanguaging, students feel comfortable because the use of Indonesian, a familiar language to the students, makes the teacher's explanations and the English words can be understood by the students. This is the same as what Khairunnisa and Lukmana (2020) explained, who state that translanguaging makes students feel comfortable during the class. They explain that due to students' inability to speak the target language, the use of a familiar language by students can minimize their anxiety in class and create less threatening classes.

In the results of interviews conducted with students, the five students agreed that the use of translanguaging by the teacher in the class can make their communication with the teacher more effective (Ariyani et al, 2023). This is because by translanguaging, students are able to understand the instructions from the

teacher better than the teacher uses English as a whole in class. Translanguaging can minimize communication barriers that arise due to English not being fully mastered by the students. As explained by Anwar (2019), translanguaging is an approach that can assist both teachers and students in foreign language activities. It involves transitioning from using just one language to utilizing multiple languages, with the goal of enhancing effective communication between teachers and students.

In the results of interviews with students, it was found that the use of translanguaging positively impacts students' interest in the learning process. Of the five students interviewed, all answered that they would be more interested in learning if the teacher used translanguaging when teaching. One of the students stated that she is interested in learning because the teacher's translanguaging also teaches her how to communicate in English. This reflects that the use of translanguaging not only helps students understand the material but also in developing their overall English skills. This is the same as the conclusions in the research conducted by Darlene (2018), which concluded that as students engaged in more language practice, supported by the use of their first language (L1), they expressed more interest for the subject and experienced reduced stress when using the second language (L2).

The next finding shows that translanguaging can help students understand new vocabulary in English (Riswanto, 2022). In the results of interviews with students, all student answers indicated that the use of translanguaging contributes to expanding their vocabulary. By translanguaging, teacher can help students to understand the meaning and context of how words are used in English. This is in line with the finding of Saputra (2015), who found that students agreed with implementing translanguaging in class because they thought it would be easier to get new vocabulary when the lecturer uses translanguaging in explaining the material (Bin-Tahir et al, 2018) .

In the interviews conducted with five students, the researcher asked about the difficulties they experienced when the teacher used translanguaging in class. The answers from the students were divided into two, two students stated that they had no difficulty with using translanguaging, and three students stated that they had a little difficulty. The difficulty experienced by students is they are sometimes still

confused when the teacher switches to using English. The use of English and Indonesian by the teacher in explaining learning material helps students understand the English context better, but the difficulty experienced by the students above indicates that some students may need more support in dealing with the transition between Indonesian and English.

In the last finding, it was found that students have different views regarding the importance of translanguaging in learning English. Three of the five students interviewed stated that translanguaging is important in learning English. According to them, the use of translanguaging facilitates the learning process. Meanwhile, one student stated that translanguaging is sometimes important and sometimes not so important, while another student stated translanguaging is not very important. They argued that if the main goal is to focus on learning English, then English should be used consistently. Student answers above show differences in student preferences regarding what strategy is ideal to use in English classes.

### **Conclusion and Suggestion**

Based on the findings and discussions, it can be concluded that students' perceptions of the use of translanguaging in the learning process in the classroom are generally positive. Students believed that translanguaging makes them learn English more easily; they feel comfortable in class, makes communication with the teacher effective, they are more interested in learning, and they can add new vocabulary. However, some students explained that they experienced difficulty during the use of translanguaging by the teacher, but most of them realized the importance of translanguaging in developing their English skills.

For English teachers, it is recommended to use translanguaging in classes where students' English ability is still low with the aim that students can understand the material better, create a supportive environment, and encourage students to be active in class. It is also important for teachers to pay attention to the drawbacks of the use of translanguaging in the classroom, where excessive use of translanguaging can make students lazy to learn English and will only wait for the teacher to change the language to the student's first language. Therefore, the use of translanguaging should be balanced and not replace the use of English as a whole.

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