

THE USE OF TRANSLANGUAGING BY PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS DURING THEIR TEACHING PRACTICES

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Abstrak

This study investigates pre-service teachers' perspectives on and implementation of translanguaging within curriculum, instruction, and evaluation, an area with limited research despite the topic's popularity. Employing a qualitative single case study design, data were collected from five pre-service teachers in Malang through semi-structured interviews and document analysis of lesson plans. The findings show that participants primarily used spontaneous translanguaging, believing it is useful for creating context and bridging student-teacher's connection, while also acknowledging the limitations of teacher and student language proficiency. A key finding was the pre-service teachers' unfamiliarity with school language policies, causing them to rely heavily on teaching advisors. While translanguaging was present in instruction, its evaluation was mostly informal feedback from these teaching advisors on language use during lessons. These results highlight a critical need for teacher education programs to provide more explicit training on how to systematically integrate translanguaging into formal curriculum design and evaluation, moving beyond spontaneous use.

Keywords: translanguaging; curriculum; pre-service teachers' perspective

INTRODUCTION

Translanguaging is a process of collaborating with two or more languages that the speaker has as a unit to create meaning, shape experiences, and gain understanding and knowledge. This definition was based on two definitions; the first one is "Translanguaging is using language as a unitary meaning-making system of the speaker" (MuDiLe 2017, 2017, 0:00:13). This statement came from a 2017 lecture by Ofelia García, an American linguist, well-known in the research and study of translanguaging. The second source explains that translanguaging is also defined as a meaning-making process, shaping experiences, and gaining understanding and knowledge from using two languages (Baker, 2011) (as cited in Lewis et al., 2012). This definition may be related to and strengthened by the creator of translanguaging, Cen Williams. Cen William explained that to receive and use information from one language to another, the subject matter must first be fully understood so that the information can be used successfully (William, 1996, as cited in Lewis et al., 2012). This explanation was closely related to the definition of translanguaging above, where the meaning-making process was emphasized to shape experiences and gain understanding.

The term translanguaging originally came from the Welsh word "trawsiethu" and was first introduced by Cen Williams, an educator from Wales, in one of his classes in the 1980s (García & Lin, 2016; Lewis et al., 2012). In recent years, translanguaging has gained significant attention following the release of Baker's Foundations of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism (2001, 2006, 2011) and Ofelia García's Bilingual Education in the 21st Century (2009a), as well as Lewis et al.'s (2012) work.

A considerable amount of research has been conducted on the use of translanguaging, particularly in educational contexts. Many of these studies have demonstrated a positive impact on

the practical implementation of translanguaging. Yuzlu and Dikilitas (2022) researched the use of translanguaging in EFL classrooms in Turkey (now Türkiye), and the results showed a positive impact on enhancing the English skills of four students. They also give more specific information about students' improvement in constructive and cognitive dimensions (See Yuzlu & Dikilitas, 2022). One additional example of translanguaging in a multilingual country like Indonesia is provided by Rasman (2018). The result also shows a positive impact on enhancing students' English skills. However, there is a slight difference, which may be attributed to the socio-political conditions in Indonesia that limit the full potential of students' language repertoire. However, the recommendation for teachers to give more room for the students has been given following the socio-political disadvantages. In summary, many articles consider translanguaging a valuable methodology for classroom implementation because it has a positive impact on both students and teachers.

Proven to positively enhance students' English skills, teachers should consider integrating translanguaging into their curriculum, materials, and evaluation (Yuzlu & Dikilitas, 2022). These teachers include pre-service teachers who will also teach inside a classroom. Lawson et al. (2015) explained that pre-service teachers (also known as student teachers) are not initially clearly aware of the possible challenges they will face but are expected to be able to face any challenges when teaching in school even though they will still require the help from school-based teacher mentors and university-based teacher educators (Lawson et al., 2015). In response to such challenges, pre-service teachers can also apply the curriculum to create materials and evaluations as part of their tasks. Thus, the requirement for these pre-service teachers to understand translanguaging also arises.

Based on the background that already been discussed, researchers generated the research question below:

1. What is the pre-service teachers' point of view toward using translanguaging in the classroom?
2. How is translanguaging integrated into English learning curriculum, instruction, and evaluation based on pre-service teachers' teaching practicum experiences?

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach using a single case study design to gain an in-depth understanding of how pre-service English teachers implement translanguaging during their teaching practicum. This method was chosen to effectively identify patterns across the participants' diverse experiences. The research was conducted at a prominent university in Malang, Indonesia. The participants were five 7th-semester pre-service teachers from the English Education Department who had already completed their teaching practicum. To ensure a variety of perspectives, participants from different school placements were selected through a purposive survey.

Data were gathered using two primary methods: semi-structured interviews and documentation. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to maintain focus on key topics while allowing flexibility for follow-up questions. The Interview is following the protocol guidelines from Jacob & Furgerson (2012). Interviews were held in Indonesian to ensure participants could express themselves clearly and comfortably. Each session lasted approximately between 20-40 minutes and was conducted either face-to-face or online (via Zoom or WhatsApp), based on the participant's preference. To strengthen the result, participants were asked to provide documents from their practicum, such as lesson plans, teaching materials, or evaluation forms.

Before data collection, all participants were provided with an informed consent form that explained the research objectives and guaranteed the confidentiality and anonymity of their data. The collected data were analyzed using thematic and content analysis. Interview data were analyzed

using Braun & Clarke's (2006) six-phase thematic analysis, which involved data familiarization, generating initial codes, searching for and reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the final report. An inductive coding approach was used, allowing themes to emerge naturally from the data itself (Jansen, 2024). On the documents side, the data were analyzed using Bowen's (2009) framework, which combines content and thematic analysis through a process of skimming, reading, and interpretation.

To ensure the study's trustworthiness, its credibility was established following the criteria of Lincoln & Guba (1985). Credibility was addressed through member checking, where participants reviewed their interview transcripts to confirm the accuracy of the information. Additionally, the results of the document analysis were discussed with a senior researcher to validate the interpretations.

FINDINGS

The findings are drawn from semi-structured interviews with five pre-service teachers (referred to by pseudonyms: Adin, Dina, Khairul, Tomi, and Ujang) and an analysis of their lesson plans and textbooks. This section first explores the teachers' general perspectives on translanguaging before examining its practical integration within curriculum, instruction, and evaluation.

1. Pre-Service Teachers' Perspectives

All pre-service teachers reported using translanguaging, primarily in a spontaneous, unplanned manner. They identified two main triggers for this spontaneous approach: unintentional "slips of the tongue" when giving instruction and the need to adapt to students' comprehension levels. As one participant noted, this often happened automatically in the middle of a lesson "...I unconsciously switched to using Indonesian, as if it were automatic, even though I was supposed to be using English." (Dina). Another explained the need to adapt to the students' mother tongue, stating, "Sometimes when a student asks a question, I'll start by using English, but then suddenly, I'll re-explain it using Indonesian, or sometimes I'll even use their mother tongue (Malay)." (Tomi).

Despite its unplanned nature, the participants viewed translanguaging positively. They believed it served three main functions:

Bridging Connections: It helps build a better connection between teachers and students in multilingual classrooms.

Creating Context: It is "very important" for helping students understand the lesson's context, preventing them from becoming disengaged or even falling asleep.

Expanding Vocabulary: It can motivate students by helping them learn new vocabulary after understanding the meaning of specific words.

The only drawback mentioned was the potential limitation of both the teacher's and students' linguistic repertoires, which could hinder the effective application of translanguaging.

2. Translanguaging in Practice: Curriculum, Instruction, and Evaluation

The finding below was divided into three parts ranging from curriculum integration, instruction integration and evaluation integration.

2.1 Curriculum Integration

A significant finding from the interviews was that pre-service teachers were generally unaware of official school policies regarding language use. Instead of formal guidelines, they relied heavily on informal advice from their teaching advisors. For example, one advisor recommended an

"80% English" usage policy, while another, teaching abroad in Malaysia, was actively encouraged to mix languages to prepare students for future studies in Indonesia. Another participant noted that while English was "mandatory," there was no written policy enforcing it.

In contrast to the teachers' lack of awareness of formal policy, the document analysis revealed that translanguaging was implicitly embedded in the curriculum. Textbooks and lesson plans showed evidence of translanguaging through:

Translation Models (TM): Word boxes translating English vocabulary.

Code-Switching Models (CSM): Stories and texts that mixed languages.

Indonesian Element Models (IEM): Content that used local culture and language to explain concepts.

However, while teachers used translanguaging when writing their lesson plans, they did not formally plan for its use in their teaching activities, reinforcing the finding that their classroom practice was spontaneous.

2.2 Instruction Integration

The pre-service teachers confirmed that their use of translanguaging during instruction was spontaneous rather than a planned pedagogical strategy. Even the teacher required to use 100% English admitted to using translanguaging because it was "beneficial" and helped create a "bridge between teachers and students". Analysis of their lesson plans supported this, showing that translanguaging was rarely incorporated into the design of instructional materials or activities on more than a tiny scale.

2.3 Evaluation Integration

Evaluation of the pre-service teachers' language use was almost entirely informal and conducted by their teaching advisors. Feedback was often direct and corrective, as one participant recalled being told, "Your English is not enough, miss; add more tomorrow". Another teacher noted that there was "no formal evaluation" of language use, only recommendations.

The document analysis confirmed this lack of formal assessment. The evaluation sections of both the textbooks and the teachers' lesson plans were written almost exclusively in English, with no evidence of translanguaging being used as a tool for student assessment.

DISCUSSION

This study reveals a significant paradox in how pre-service teachers approach translanguaging. While they recognize its value in the classroom, their implementation is almost entirely spontaneous and unplanned, driven by immediate needs rather than pedagogical design. This discussion explores the reasons behind this spontaneity and the critical disconnect between the teachers' practices and the formal curriculum.

1. Pre-Service Teachers' Perspectives

The findings confirm that pre-service teachers view translanguaging as a helpful tool for creating context, bridging connections with students, and expanding vocabulary. This aligns with established theory that translanguaging is a process of meaning-making and knowledge-building (Baker, 2011; Lewis et al., 2012). Students can better grasp materials and feel more connected when their full linguistic repertoire is acknowledged.

However, the teachers' reliance on a spontaneous approach—rather than a planned, pedagogical one—presents a challenge. This reactive use of language switching risks making students overly dependent on their native tongue, potentially hindering target language acquisition

as warned by Harbord (1992). It misses the opportunity for a more structured, pedagogical translanguaging approach, which involves intentionally planning the use of multiple languages to achieve specific learning outcomes (Cenoz & Gorter, 2021).

The reasons for this spontaneity appear to be twofold:

Teacher Anxiety: The "unconscious language switch" reported by participants can be seen as a coping mechanism. "First-time teaching is a cognitively demanding and emotionally challenging experience" (Megawati et al., 2023; Dzulfikri & Azami, 2024), and language slips are a likely symptom of this pressure.

Student Needs: Teachers also use translanguaging to adapt to students' diverse abilities. "Limited vocabulary is a major barrier to communication" (Yunus et al., 2023), and as one respondent noted, students may "fall asleep" from confusion if only English is used. Translanguaging can be "a necessary tool to maintain engagement and facilitate understanding" (Romadhon et al., 2024).

2. Translanguaging integration inside the curriculum, instruction, and evaluation

A central finding is the pre-service teachers' profound unfamiliarity with school language policies. Lacking formal guidance, they rely entirely on their teaching advisors' informal instructions, such as the "80% English" rule. This knowledge gap is critical, as effective curriculum implementation requires that educators have sufficient information about it (Sunismi et al., 2022). Without understanding the curriculum's stance on language use, the crucial alignment between curriculum, instruction, and evaluation cannot be achieved (Martone & Sireci, 2009). ♂

This is where the document analysis provides a crucial insight. While the teachers operate without formal knowledge, the official Merdeka curriculum textbooks do contain planned, pedagogical translanguaging. Models such as the Translation Model (TM), Code-Switching Model (CSM), and Indonesian Element Model (IEM) are already embedded in the materials. This reveals a major disconnect: the curriculum contains pedagogical tools that the pre-service teachers are not being trained to recognize or use.

Finally, the approach to evaluation reflects this same informality. Feedback on language use comes from advisors, not from a structured evaluation framework. Correspondingly, the evaluation sections in textbooks and lesson plans show no evidence of translanguaging, focusing solely on material comprehension in English. This further widens the gap between the multilingual reality of the classroom and the monolingual assumptions of its assessment.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study aims to answer the research question related to how pre-service teachers perceive the existence of translanguaging during their teaching practicum and how translanguaging is implemented within a curriculum, instruction, and evaluation.

The results of this research have shown that pre-service teachers consider the use of translanguaging to be a valuable resource for teachers and English language learners. The consideration stemmed from the fact that translanguaging can provide students with a broader way of incorporating English into their language, such as creating context, bridging connections, and adding vocabulary. One thing to note is that, although they consider the use of translanguaging helpful, the extensive use of translanguaging should be reduced. Instead, using a pedagogical approach of translanguaging is more recommended, as it offers translanguaging usage within a class in a structured manner, thereby reducing the dependency on using L1. The lack of knowledge among these pre-service teachers about the curriculum, particularly the language policy used in

their school, has added difficulties for the researcher in analysing the data. Therefore, document analysis is then involved to solve the issue. The results show that there is an implementation of inside the curriculum and instruction, but less evidence of translanguaging being implemented in the evaluation.

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