

## PRE-SERVICE ENGLISH TEACHERS' TRANSLANGUAGING PRACTICES

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Submitted: 2023-11-24

Accepted: 2024-01-03

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**Abstract:** Translanguaging in which more than one language is allowed to be used in the classroom is currently a trending issue that has been widely claimed to be helping students to foster foreign language learning, including learning English as a foreign language. While research on translanguaging within the EFL settings has been abundant, only a few studies are within the Indonesian context. Thus, it is crucial to investigate how translanguaging is employed within a high school context in Indonesia. Employing a qualitative case study, the study involved four pre-service English teachers who had a teaching practicum at a senior high school. The data were gathered from observing the recorded videos of participants' teaching practicum teaching practicum as the participants while having a teaching practicum, interviewing them as a follow up of the observation, and open-ended questionnaire. The obtained data were analyzed thematically based on emerging themes. The findings indicate that pre-service teachers translanguaged as they teach their students for various reasons, suggesting that translanguaging is important to enhance students' comprehension and to create a less stressful classroom atmosphere.

**Keywords:** Translanguaging, pre-service teachers, teaching practicum

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### INTRODUCTION

In a world that is getting more global, monolingualism is no longer a norm to be able to be global citizens. While English as one of the international languages still becomes a dominant language that is learned and spoken worldwide, the approaches to teaching the English language are no longer following the trend in monolingual speaking countries where English is the sole language of instruction. In countries where the citizens are bilingual or multilingual, learning a foreign language using various languages that learners and teachers know can be beneficial for facilitating language learning. Utilizing more than one language, which is known as translanguaging is a practice that is mainly within language classroom settings, and can be one of the strategies applied by language teachers, including EFL teachers to maximize language learning (Anderson, 2018; Rasman, 2018; Wei, 2018).

The utilization of translanguaging, especially for teaching students with bilingual or multilingual backgrounds promotes the development of learners' skills, particularly language skills. This is possible because learners are given opportunities to get access to their language repertoires to maximize their communicative potential (Raja et al., 2022; Wei, 2018). In brief, translanguaging has been claimed to help promote students' language learning (Anderson, 2022; Kampittayakul, 2017; Turnbull, 2019).

Considering the benefits of translanguaging practices in enhancing students' competencies in language learning, the issue of translanguaging has been widely researched. Within the EFL

contexts, there has been much research addressing translanguaging in connection with learners' emotion (Zhang, 2021), teachers' perception (Al-Ahdal, 2020; Aoyama, 2020; Yasar Yuzlu & Dikilitas, 2022), teachers' attitude (Raja et al., 2022; Sobkowiak, 2022), classroom practices (Afriadi, 2021; Ahn et al., 2020; Anderson, 2022; Gabryś-Barker, 2020; Kampittayakul, 2017; Ku, 2019; Rasman, 2018; Turnbull, 2019; Zhang & Chan, 2022; Zuo & Walsh, 2021), and its challenges (Ticheloven et al., 2021). The abundant studies that are concerned with translanguaging show that translanguaging is considered to be useful for promoting learners' competencies in language learning. According to Wei (2018), translanguaging can be considered a practical theory of language that can be applied within language classrooms.

In addition to the utilization of translanguaging for developing learners' language competent, translanguaging has also been researched in many countries such as Thailand (Kampittayakul, 2017), China (Wang, 2021; Zhang, 2021; Zhang & Chan, 2022; Zuo & Walsh, 2021), Taiwan (Ke & Lin, 2017; Ku, 2019) Korea (Ahn et al., 2020), Japan (Aoyama, 2020; Turnbull, 2019), Chile (Barahona, 2020), Poland (Sobkowiak, 2022), Turkey (Yasar Yuzlu & Dikilitas, 2022), and Indonesia (Raja et al., 2022; Rasman, 2018). While there has been abundant research related to translanguaging in many countries, there have been only two studies addressing how translanguaging is practiced within Indonesian contexts. Thus, it is important to conduct research related to translanguaging in Indonesian school contexts to contribute to existing literature on the practices of translanguaging within Indonesian contexts, especially in high school contexts. In particular, the current research is intended to know how pre-service teachers use and perceive translanguaging in their teaching practicum.

## **METHODOLOGY**

A qualitative case study is used by the goal of the research, which is to discover how translanguaging is applied by EFL pre-service teachers in their teaching practicum and how they view it. A case study is used as the methodology in this study since it deals with providing answers to why and how questions (Yin, 2018). Given that the researcher wants to learn in-depth details on how a group of EFL pre-service teachers uses translanguaging in a high school teaching practicum, a case study is thought to be acceptable.

The data for this study was obtained through the observation of video-recorded teaching practicum, interviews as a follow-up to the observation of recorded teaching practicum, open-ended questionnaires as a follow-up to the interviews, as well as document analysis. The indirect observation was done by looking closely at the participants' video-recorded teaching demonstrations and their transcriptions. While the main data was collected through analyzing the videos and interviews, an open-ended questionnaire was also distributed to the participants as a

follow up to the interview with the intent to better understand how translanguaging is practiced by pre-service teachers. To triangulate the data, interviews and an open-ended questionnaire related to their reflection on their teaching practicum were used as secondary data sources. The obtained data was then analyzed qualitatively. The data from the interview was first transcribed and read carefully before being coded and categorized to see the emerging themes.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Pre-service teachers' translanguaging practices**

Data from classroom observations, the questionnaire, and the interview indicate that the participants in the current study translanguaged in their teaching practicum at a senior high school in Pontianak City. However, they have various reasons for applying translanguaging in their teaching. One of the participants considered using translanguaging only when it is necessary, for instance, for making sure that practices as a way to help students understand the instruction better as indicated in the following excerpt:

I am teaching the specialization class, so, in this class there are some of the students who want to deepen their knowledge in English, but some of them are just beginners in learning English. So, I use Indonesian to make it easier for everyone to understand the same thing, especially those who are just a beginner in learning English (Intan, interview)

As indicated in the excerpts above, Intan and Mirna consider translanguaging as a useful way to ensure students understand their instruction and it is intended to make sure that all students have a similar understanding of her instruction. Unlike Intan, two other participants, Mirna and Rita use translation as one form of translanguaging practice to ensure that their students understand her instruction as exemplified in the following excerpt:

I prefer to use English mostly and Indonesian a little bit when the students are not able to understand my instruction well. And I do the reinforcement for instruction in the Indonesian language because sometimes the students are confused. Not all of the students understand and are at the same level in English. So I need to restate the things that I say in Indonesian. But I try to use English in the whole process of teaching. I use English for about 90% of my class (Mirna, interview).

To make sure the students understand what I'm saying. So the students will keep on track with what I'm teaching at that time. So just to make sure, what I want the students to know... And what the students get is the same, Ma'am. So after I mention it in English, I translate it into Indonesian or their language (Rita, interview)

From the two excerpts above, it is clear that Mirna adopts a monolingual approach in her teaching practicum. Yet, as she encountered problems with students' understanding of her instruction, she used the Indonesian language, a language that both she and her students share to

ensure that misunderstanding does not occur. Unlike Mirna, Rita has a different consideration for applying translanguaging in her class. For her, translanguaging in the form of translation was used to ensure that students have a similar understanding of the issues raised during the teaching and learning process.

Unlike Intan and Rita, another participant, Tiara intentionally translanguaged to help students understand the materials better for she realized that students of high students do not have similar language competencies. So, for her, translanguaging helps students understand the materials and tasks more comprehensively. In the classroom, translanguaging was manifested in the daily interaction between pre-service teachers and their students during teaching practicum at schools. One of the participants indicated that she translanguages during her teaching practicum as indicated in the following excerpt:

Yes, I have some moments to do translanguaging. One of them is when I teach about the explanation text which is related to natural or social phenomena around the students. I presented the material and talked about the concepts in English. At the time, I asked the students which parts that they difficult to understand and most of them answered about the process of the phenomenon. I translanguaged to Indonesian when I talk about this and they immediately understand so I talk in English again while asking students about this part, they can answer in English even though there is a grammar mistake in their speech (Tiara, Questionnaire)

Another participant, Mirna also claimed that she utilized translanguaging in her teaching as shown in the following excerpt:

Yes, there are several moments that I have done before. First, as I said before I used translanguaging when I gave the instructions. This is because not all the students in the classroom have a good ability to understand English, they have different levels of English. Because of that, I have to repeat my explanation slowly and use gestures or sometimes body language to demonstrate what I am trying to say, and if it does not work I have to code mixing my instructions with the Indonesian language. Second, when I use unfamiliar terms in certain topics, I have to use a word that has a similar meaning to the unfamiliar word before in Bahasa to my students. For instance, when I explain news item text there is a term or word that is new for students such as "newsworthy". But then their reaction was confused and they asked me about it. Then I used the Indonesian "layak untuk diberitakan" to help them understand about that term easily. Most of the time the reaction from the student when I was using translanguaging relieved. It helps them a lot to understand my explanation well (Mirna, Questionnaire)

For Intan, translanguaging is important to make students and teachers have the same perception as stated by Vindri in her interview with the researcher. She mentioned that "during my teaching practicum at SMAN 1 Pontianak, I used translanguaging when both my students and I didn't have the same understanding of a topic". Further, Intan explained that she used Indonesia to ensure that there was no misunderstanding between teachers and students. In the interview, Intan mentioned,

"I use Indonesian to make it easier for everyone to understand the same thing, especially the one who is just a beginner in learning English". Similar to Vindy, Rita also used translanguaging to make sure that students what she explained as shown in the following excerpts:

That method that I use... To make sure the students understand what I'm saying. So the students will keep on track with what I'm teaching at that time. So just to make sure, what I want the students to know... And what the students get is the same, ma'am. So after I mention it in English, I translate it into Indonesian or their language (Rita, interview)

In line with what Rita explained in the interview, the results of the questionnaire indicate that Rita makes use of translanguaging as a tool to make sure students have similar interpretations of what she taught the students as shown in the following excerpt:

At that time I explained the Myth about what Malays believe. When I explained about the cut nails at night they seemed don't understand what I meant. So when I translated the sentence, they directly nodded their head showing they understood what I was talking about. Some of them said they misheard about the vocabulary (Rita, Questionnaire)

In addition to using translanguaging in teaching, the participants also allow students to translanguage in the classroom as indicated in the following excerpt:

For discussions they still use Indonesian... many people use Indonesian, and sometimes they also interact with their colleagues using the local language. For English, usually when we ask English students they also answer using English (Tiara, interview)

As shown in the excerpt, allowing students to use their first language is also beneficial for the students since they can make use of their language repertoire to maximize their learning.

### **Pre-service teachers' perspectives on translanguaging**

One theme that emerged from the data analysis of the current research is that pre-service teachers have different perspectives on the use of translanguaging in the teaching and learning process. The following excerpts provide clues to how the participants view translanguaging about teaching English as a foreign language in a senior high school context where they have their teaching practicum.

I think it's very good. Translanguaging is a form of ability to improve students' language skills, so it also includes their language intelligence English is not their first language, so they use the language mixed with local languages, for example, with their first language, namely Indonesian. Also related to English, students learn how to use English in the context of everyday life, for example, they also continue to use English in class. So, in my opinion, Translanguaging is very good for increasing English students' language (Tiara, interview).

The benefit that may come out of using translanguage the students' understanding of the topic or material is easier and faster. Then, it puts less pressure on students when they have to communicate using English but they do not know certain words or terms they may use words that have similar meanings in Bahasa. Additionally, it allows them to figure out new vocabulary that they didn't know before with help from the teacher about that word and expand their vocabulary. (Mirna, Questionnaire)

As indicated in the excerpts above, both Tiara and Mirna have positive perceptions of translanguaging. Yet they have different views on the use of translanguaging in teaching English as a foreign language. For Tiara, translanguaging helps students improve their foreign language competence as the learners can make use of their language repertoire to maximize their language learning. In contrast, Mirna views translanguaging as helpful for students to understand learning materials better when the teacher translanguaged in their teaching. Mirna also highlights the psychological aspects of learning a language. When the students and teachers are allowed to translanguaging, students become less pressured.

In addition to understanding materials better and having less pressure in learning, translanguaging is also considered to be helpful for learners to connect their culture with the culture in the target language, and to find more resources for their language learning as mentioned by Intan, one of the participants. She claims that "translanguage can establish a cultural connection and enhance student comprehension, reduce anxiety, and bridge language gaps among students". For the other participant, Rita, translanguaging helps students communicate better and help their learning more effectively. In the questionnaire, Rita mentioned that translanguaging allows "the students can easily communicate their thoughts. It also enables the students to draw some resources to make the learning more efficient and effective".

Overall, it can be concluded that pre-service teachers applied translanguaging as one of their teaching techniques and considered translanguaging as something beneficial for students. Even though the participants have different ideas on the purposes of translanguaging in their language teaching, all of the participants consider the practice of translanguaging as unavoidable in teaching English foreign language where both students and teachers share a similar mother tongue.

The findings of the current study, which relate to pre-service teachers' views on translanguaging indicate that the participants have varying views on the use of multiple languages in teaching EFL in the context of high school in Indonesia. Even though the participants have different reasons for translanguaging, they consider translanguaging to be beneficial for improving students' comprehension of the materials being taught and improving classroom management. This is in line with previous research conducted by (Akkari, 2023; Chaika, 2023;

Yuan, 2023), in which the study highlighted the importance of translanguaging for assistance to the peer during classroom activities, implying that translanguaging is viewed as a good thing to be done to promote better understanding and to create better classroom atmosphere.

Additionally, the current research findings also resonate with the previous research that highlights the use of translanguaging in creating a better classroom atmosphere (Lee, 2023). As indicated in the findings of current research translanguaging makes students have less pressure to learn English as students can use their existing language repertoire to support their language learning. The current research supports a previous study by Genc et al. (2023)) in which the participants use translanguaging to promote participation and for social and affective functions. The current research findings also add more insights into how pre-service teachers utilize translanguaging as one of the teaching techniques to foster comprehension of the students. These findings support previous studies related to the benefits of translanguaging in enhancing students' multilingual literacy skills (Carrim & Nkomo, 2023; Genc et al., 2023), which has positive effects on students' language development (Chaika, 2023).

In relation to the translanguaging practices by pre-service teachers, the findings of the current study resonate with previous studies (Alharbi & Alqefari, 2023), in which incorporating multiple languages is something natural when teaching students who share a similar mother tongue. Additionally, the various reasons that pre-service teachers have in implementing translanguaging practices in the current study can be seen as a manifestation of teachers' ability to enhance students' comprehension of the materials being taught, and translanguaging in this sense can serve various pedagogical functions as argued by Silalahi and Santoso (2023).

## **CONCLUSION**

Translanguaging has been considered to be an important teaching tool that fosters students' comprehension in learning a foreign language. The findings of the current study show that pre-service teachers have different views on translanguaging, yet they consider translanguaging to be beneficial in facilitating learners understand the materials better. The findings of the current study also reveal that the participants consider translanguaging a beneficial tool to lower students' pressure for they can make use of their linguistic repertoire in their first language to support their foreign language learning. Through collecting data qualitatively and analyzing them, it can be concluded that the current research sheds light on the implementation of translanguaging in teaching practicum at the senior high school level in a multilingual context. Despite the various reasons that pre-service teachers have in translanguaging, all the participants translanguaged as they taught their students in their teaching practicum in a senior high school

context. This indicates that translanguaging is something useful and worth doing in teaching EFL within a multilingual context.

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