



Exploring Translanguaging Practices of English Teachers in Classroom Interaction

Sabila Puspita Ningrum^{1*}, I Made Suta Paramarta¹, Dewa Putu Ramendra¹

¹Universitas Pendidikan Ganesha, Bali, Indonesia

*sabila@undiksha.ac.id

ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the application of translanguaging by English teachers during learning activities. The primary focus is to identify the types of translanguaging employed by teachers, determine its frequency across different phases of learning, and examine the reasons behind its use. A descriptive qualitative method was employed, utilizing classroom observations and in-depth interviews with two English teachers as participants. The results reveal that translanguaging consistently occurred in three phases of learning: pre-activity (24 instances), core activity (65 instances), and post-activity (18 instances). Teachers primarily used translanguaging to provide instructions, explain materials, ask and answer questions, give affirmations, offer praise, and manage classroom interactions. The findings further indicate that translanguaging appeared most frequently during core activities, particularly when explaining grammar and facilitating discussions. The teachers' reasons for using translanguaging included enhancing student comprehension, sustaining engagement, and fostering emotional connections. This study concludes that translanguaging is an effective pedagogical strategy in multilingual classrooms, as it supports students' understanding and fosters an inclusive learning atmosphere. Nevertheless, the findings are limited by the small number of participants and the single-site context; therefore, further research with a broader scope is recommended.

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

EFL Classroom;
English Teachers;
Teachers' Performance;
Translanguaging

How to Cite in APA Style:

Ningrum, S. P., Paramarta, I. M. S., & Ramendra, D. P. . (2025). Exploring Translanguaging Practices of English Teachers in Classroom Interaction. *IJLHE: International Journal of Language, Humanities, and Education*, 8(2), 591–602.

<https://doi.org/10.52217/ijlhe.v8i2.1944>

This is an open access article under [CC-BY-NC 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/) license.



INTRODUCTION

The paradigm of language learning in Indonesia has undergone significant changes since the implementation of the 1984 curriculum. This curriculum emphasized the mastery of grammar items as the primary goal of language learning. However, with the introduction of the 1994 curriculum, followed by the 2004 and 2006 curricula, the orientation shifted toward the development of four essential language skills: listening, reading, speaking, and writing. The focus of these curricula was to enhance students' ability to communicate effectively in both oral and written forms. Despite these reforms, the reality of English language learning in schools has often failed to achieve the expected level of language proficiency among students (Syahputra, 2014). English, as a foreign language in Indonesia, has been taught formally since the issuance of the Decree of the Minister of Education and Culture Number 096 of 1967 dated December 12, 1967.

A recent study by Liando et al. (2022) examined the role of translanguaging practices in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching in Indonesia. The research revealed how English, *Bahasa Indonesia*, and local languages are integrated in the classroom, enabling students to draw on all the linguistic resources available to them. Such practices were found to foster better comprehension and improve language skills by creating an inclusive learning environment. The study also highlighted how translanguaging assists students in overcoming linguistic and cultural barriers, thereby enriching their learning experiences. Overall, this research demonstrates the positive potential of multilingual approaches in foreign language education in Indonesia.

Translanguaging can be defined as the use of two or more languages to construct meaning. As a teaching strategy, translanguaging allows learners to transfer knowledge between languages and facilitates deeper understanding. Lewis et al. (2011) describes it as both a natural ability to move fluidly between languages and a pedagogical approach that encourages such practices in the classroom. In multilingual and trilingual contexts such as Indonesia, where local and regional languages coexist with the national language, translanguaging becomes not only acceptable but also practical (Putrawan, 2022). Canagarajah (2014) emphasizes that while there is no fixed set of strategies for translanguaging, its value lies in allowing multilingual learners to expand their linguistic repertoires and engage in richer classroom interactions. Consequently, translanguaging has become an attractive area of focus for both educators and researchers seeking to enhance language pedagogy.

In Bali, the educational context reflects the island's rich cultural and linguistic diversity. The three dominant languages are Balinese, which functions as a regional language; *Bahasa Indonesia*, which serves as the national language; and English, which is widely used in the tourism sector and in education with an international focus. According to Dhanawaty (2013), Balinese is taught in schools as a *muatan*

lokal (local content subject) to preserve cultural identity and traditions. At the secondary school level, it is often offered as an elective subject, though its teaching faces challenges such as a shortage of qualified teachers. Additionally, Balinese is frequently considered less important compared to subjects like Mathematics and English, which are perceived as more relevant for academic success and career development. In this context, translanguaging emerges as a practical solution, as students and teachers naturally alternate between Balinese, *Bahasa Indonesia*, and English in classroom interactions.

Based on preliminary observations, English teachers in a secondary school in Bungkulan Village, Sawan Sub-district, Buleleng Regency, regularly employ translanguaging in their instructional practices. Teachers integrate it across all phases of teaching—pre-activity, main activity, and post-activity. For instance, during the main activity, a teacher may explain key concepts in English, followed by student discussions conducted in *Bahasa Indonesia* or Balinese. Afterward, students are asked to present their understanding in English. This dynamic use of languages demonstrates how translanguaging supports comprehension while still promoting English production.

This study seeks to address the research gap by providing an in-depth examination of how English teachers in this local context apply translanguaging in their teaching practices, as well as the challenges and successes encountered. The study contributes not only to the localized understanding of translanguaging in Bali but also to the broader body of research on multilingual pedagogy in Indonesia. Moreover, the findings hold potential implications for teacher education and training, offering valuable insights for the development of more effective, inclusive, and contextually relevant teaching methods nationwide.

METHOD

This study aimed to explore the use of translanguaging in English language classes. To achieve this objective, the researcher employed a qualitative descriptive design, which is widely used to investigate social phenomena in natural contexts through descriptive and interpretative data. As Creswell (2007) states, qualitative research provides an approach for exploring and understanding the meanings constructed by individuals or groups in relation to a social or human problem.

Data were collected through classroom observations and in-depth interviews. The researcher observed two English teachers over the course of six classroom meetings, each lasting approximately 120 minutes, in order to document how translanguaging was applied across different phases of instruction. An observation sheet and field notes were utilized to record the frequency, functions, and contexts of translanguaging practices. To complement the observations, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the same two teachers after the classroom sessions.

Each interview lasted approximately 15–20 minutes and focused on teachers' reasons and perspectives regarding their use of translanguaging.

For data analysis, the researcher employed a qualitative content analysis approach. The observation data were coded by categorizing translanguaging practices according to their functions, such as giving instructions, explaining, affirming, and managing classroom interaction. The interview transcripts were analyzed thematically to identify recurring patterns in teachers' motivations for using translanguaging. To ensure credibility, triangulation was carried out by cross-checking data from both observation and interviews.

In terms of ethical considerations, informed consent was obtained from all participants. Their identities were protected through the use of pseudonyms, and care was taken to ensure that the data collection process did not interfere with the natural flow of teaching and learning activities.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The Teachers' Use of Translanguaging During Classroom Learning Activities

Based on the results of the study, it was found that teachers employed translanguaging in almost all stages of classroom learning activities, namely pre-activity, main activity, and post-activity. Translanguaging was used when teachers explained the material, posed questions, facilitated discussions, gave instructions, and provided feedback to students. The alternation between English and Bahasa Indonesia was intended to help students understand the material more easily, particularly when the content presented was difficult or unfamiliar to them.

In addition, the use of translanguaging was found to contribute to creating a more comfortable classroom atmosphere and to enhancing student engagement. Teachers allowed students to use both languages during discussions and when expressing their opinions. This practice made students more confident and reduced their anxiety about making mistakes when speaking in English. Overall, translanguaging emerged as an effective teaching strategy to support the learning process in a bilingual classroom setting. The following table presents the use of translanguaging in the learning activity process:

Table 1. Translanguaging used by teachers during learning activity

Learning Phase	Learning Activity	Language Used
	Giving Direction	
Pre-Activity	Asking and Answering Questions	English and <i>Bahasa Indonesia</i>
	Agreeing	
	Affirming	
	Giving Compliment	
Main – Activity	Asking and Answering Questions	
	Explaining	

Post - Activity	Agreeing	English, <i>Bahasa Indonesia</i> , and <i>Balinese</i>
	Affirming	
	Giving Compliment	
	Giving Direction	
	Making Observation	
	Asking and Answering Questions	English and <i>Bahasa Indonesia</i>
	Affirming	
	Explaining	
	Giving Direction	
	Giving Compliment	

Translanguaging was used by teachers during classroom learning activities at each stage, such as pre-activity, main activity, and post-activity. As for some learning activities that used translanguaging, they included giving directions, asking and answering questions, agreeing, affirming, explaining, giving compliments, and making observations. Translanguaging occurred during learning activities because of the conversations between teachers and students, whether it was when teachers explained the material, discussed with students, or gave assignments to students.

The Frequency of Translanguaging Use by Teachers During Learning Activity

The frequency of translanguaging used by teachers at SMP Negeri 2 Sawanduring the learning process was one of the main focuses observed in this study. The observation results showed that translanguaging was not only used sporadically but was applied consistently and in a planned manner by teachers at various stages of learning, both at the pre-activity, core (main activity), and closing (post-activity) stages. This practice could be seen in various forms of interaction, starting from the delivery of subject matter, giving instructions, managing class discussions, to when the teacher asks and answers students' questions.

In a number of observed learning sessions, teachers were seen flexibly switching between English and students' first language to clarify information, emphasize the point, and ensure that all students could follow the lesson well. The high frequency of translanguaging indicates that this strategy is not something that is done randomly but is part of a planned pedagogical approach. Therefore, understanding how often and in what context translanguaging is used is important to emphasize its role in supporting learning in a bilingual or multilingual classroom, especially when students are still at the stage of developing English language competence. The following is a table of the frequency of translanguaging used by teachers during learning activities:

Table 2. The frequency of translanguaging used by teachers during the learning activity

Learning Phase	Learning Activity	Frequency
Pre - Activity	Giving Direction	3

Learning Phase	Learning Activity	Frequency
Main - Activity	Asking and Answering Question	1
	Affirming	1
	Total	4
	Asking and Answering Question	24
	Explaining	23
	Agreeing	9
	Affirming	3
	Giving Compliment	12
	Giving Direction	20
	Making Observation	1
	Total	92
Post - Activity	Asking and Answering Question	1
	Compliment	1
	Making Observation	1
	Total	3
Total Occurrence		99

The table 2 above illustrates the frequency of translanguaging used by teachers in the English learning process, which was categorized into three stages: pre-activity, main activity, and post-activity. The total use of translanguaging recorded across all stages was 99 instances.

In the pre-activity stage, translanguaging occurred 4 times. The observed practices included giving directions (3 instances), asking and answering questions (1 instance), and affirming (1 instance). These findings suggest that, during the opening stage, teachers employed translanguaging primarily to provide initial instructions and establish basic interactions with students, thereby creating a supportive foundation for the lesson.

In the main activity stage, translanguaging was used most frequently, with 92 instances recorded. Asking and answering questions appeared 24 times, followed by explaining (23 times), giving directions (20 times), and offering compliments (12 times). Other functions included agreeing (9 instances), affirming (3 instances), and making observations (1 instance). The high frequency of translanguaging in this stage indicates that teachers relied on it extensively to explain material, provide instructions, motivate learners, and sustain interactive exchanges with students during the core instructional process.

In the post-activity stage, translanguaging was observed 3 times. The activities included asking and answering questions, offering compliments, and making observations, each occurring once. Although the frequency was lower compared to the main stage, translanguaging was still employed at the closing of the lesson to deliver feedback and reinforce the key points, ensuring students' comprehension of the material presented.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that translanguaging was consistently and strategically integrated by teachers throughout all stages of classroom instruction.

Its dominant use during the main activity highlights its crucial role as a pedagogical strategy to facilitate students' comprehension, particularly in the context of learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL). These results suggest that translanguaging functions not only as a communicative tool but also as a key element in creating a more effective, interactive, and comprehensive learning environment.

The Teachers' Reasons for Using Translanguaging in English Classroom Activities

The interview findings provided insights into teachers' reasons for employing translanguaging in classroom instruction. In response to the research question focusing on the rationale for using translanguaging, the Grade 8 English teacher explained that it was primarily a strategy to support students' comprehension. She emphasized that many students were not yet proficient in English, and translanguaging facilitated classroom interaction while making lesson content more accessible. The teacher stated:

"The main reason is that most of the students I teach are not yet very proficient in English, so I use translanguaging in the classroom to facilitate interaction with them, particularly when dealing with lesson content. That is why I emphasize the use of translanguaging in delivering instructional material. Translanguaging also helps foster students' confidence, as they do not feel burdened by having to use English exclusively during lessons."

Based on the interviews, teachers used translanguaging because many students had limited fluency in English. It enabled learners to grasp lesson content more effectively, especially when dealing with difficult grammar points or complex language structures. Teachers also reported that translanguaging encouraged students to speak and participate in classroom discussions, thereby fostering confidence and engagement. Their strategy was to use English as much as possible, while strategically incorporating Bahasa Indonesia or Balinese when necessary to aid comprehension.

Teachers further noted that translanguaging contributed to creating a more interactive and supportive classroom atmosphere. However, they expressed concerns that excessive reliance on translanguaging might reduce students' exposure to English and hinder their ability to become accustomed to hearing and using the target language consistently.

Overall, teachers viewed translanguaging not only as a pedagogical tool but also as a means of building emotional connections with students. By adjusting language use to match students' needs, teachers were able to explain difficult concepts more effectively, particularly in vocabulary and grammar instruction. The

use of translanguaging was described as both intentional and spontaneous, often reinforced with non-verbal communication such as gestures and facial expressions, especially when giving instructions or offering praise.

These findings suggest that translanguaging fulfills multiple functions in the classroom, ranging from cognitive support and communicative facilitation to the development of emotional bonds between teachers and students. The interviews thus reveal teachers' nuanced perspectives on the pedagogical and affective dimensions of translanguaging in English language teaching.

Discussion

In classroom learning interactions, language serves not only as a medium for delivering instructional content but also as a bridge for fostering students' understanding and engagement. In multilingual learning environments, particularly in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms, translanguaging has emerged as an important pedagogical strategy that helps students comprehend lesson material, participate actively, and develop stronger emotional connections to the learning process.

As discussed in the previous chapter, translanguaging refers to the intentional or spontaneous use of students' first language alongside the target language, English, in various classroom activities. This aligns with Velasco and García (2014), who argue that translanguaging enables teachers to shift between languages in order to clarify concepts, manage classroom activities, and build closer relationships with students. Translanguaging is not limited to code-switching between two distinct languages; rather, it represents a flexible and holistic communicative practice that prioritizes meaning-making and effective interaction.

The findings of this study demonstrate that teachers employed translanguaging across all stages of classroom learning. At the beginning of lessons, translanguaging was used to greet students, check attendance, and elicit responses. For example, one teacher remarked: *"Bapak akan absen nama kalian, yang bapak panggil mention types of regular activities about cleaning your house"* (Observation, 10 February 2025). This illustrates how translanguaging supported classroom management while simultaneously reducing anxiety and making students feel more comfortable. Sharma (2021) emphasize that opening skills are essential for creating a conducive learning environment, and translanguaging fulfills this function by engaging students and lowering barriers to participation. Similarly, Riswanto (2022) observed that teachers often employ translanguaging to greet students, open lessons, and introduce topics. Liando et al. (2022) further note that combining English with local and national languages fosters stronger engagement in Indonesian classrooms.

During the main activity, translanguaging occurred most frequently, particularly when teachers explained material, asked and answered questions, and

provided instructions. For instance, one teacher stated: *"Please look at the picture in the book on page 130, disana terdapat gambar yang menunjukan sampah terbagi menjadi dua organic and non-organic waste"* (Observation, 10 February 2025). This example demonstrates how translanguaging helped clarify concepts by linking English terminology to students' prior knowledge in *Bahasa Indonesia*. According to Velasco and García (2014), translanguaging enables teachers to draw on students' full linguistic repertoires, while Canagarajah (2014) emphasizes its value in bridging knowledge across first and second languages. These findings are supported by Ramadhani and Maharsi (2024), who observed that teachers frequently use translanguaging to clarify instructions and facilitate Q&A sessions. Likewise, Efendi and Syafryadin (2024) reported that translanguaging helped overcome students' limited vocabulary and encouraged greater participation. Thus, translanguaging serves clear cognitive and pedagogical functions (Sapitri et al., 2018), particularly in explaining complex material and promoting interactive learning.

In the closing stage, translanguaging was used to summarize lessons and end classroom activities. For example, one teacher stated: *"Thank you so much for being active in this class, saya suka kelas yang ramai tapi ramainya karena diskusi, I hope you guys already understand about the material that I have teach today"* (Observation, 10 February 2025). This reflects how translanguaging functioned both as cognitive reinforcement and as emotional affirmation. Sharma (2021) argue that closing skills are important for consolidating comprehension, and the use of both Indonesian and English allowed teachers to review material while motivating learners. Similarly, Riswanto (2022) found that teachers frequently used translanguaging to review and summarize lessons at the end of instruction. Ratminingsih et al. (2024) also highlighted that translanguaging increased students' confidence and motivation, particularly when teachers used it to affirm learning outcomes.

Teacher interviews revealed that the main rationale for using translanguaging was to make complex material more comprehensible, especially for students with limited English proficiency. Teachers also explained that translanguaging fostered a more interactive classroom environment by encouraging dialogue and student participation. These findings support Efendi and Syafryadin (2024), who emphasized the role of translanguaging in clarifying instructions, addressing vocabulary gaps, and enhancing engagement. The evidence underscores the pedagogical, managerial, and interpersonal dimensions of translanguaging as identified by Sapitri et al. (2018), demonstrating its capacity to strengthen comprehension, foster participation, and cultivate positive teacher-student relationships.

In conclusion, translanguaging was consistently applied across all stages of classroom instruction. Its functions ranged from classroom management and lesson

openings, to clarifying material and sustaining interaction, and finally to reinforcing comprehension and affirming students at the end of lessons. These findings align with prior research (Riswanto, 2022; Efendi & Syafryadin, 2024; Ramadhani & Maharsi, 2024) and confirm theoretical perspectives advanced by Velasco and García (2014) and Canagarajah (2014), which highlight translanguaging as a flexible and effective pedagogical strategy. Overall, translanguaging in EFL classrooms fulfills cognitive, managerial, and interpersonal roles (Sapitri et al., 2018), thereby supporting inclusivity, comprehension, and student engagement in multilingual learning contexts.

This research focused specifically on the translanguaging practices of English teachers in a secondary school context. To date, no prior studies have examined translanguaging performance in this setting. The preliminary observations revealed that teachers' use of translanguaging plays an important role in classroom interaction and instructional delivery. By analyzing the translanguaging practices of English teachers, this study contributes new insights to the field of education, particularly in the context of EFL learning, and underscores its relevance for developing more effective and inclusive teaching strategies.

CONCLUSION

In English classes at SMP Negeri 2 Sawan, translanguaging was consistently used by teachers at every stage of learning: pre-activity, main activity, and post-activity. In the pre-activity, translanguaging was applied to greet students and ask simple questions. In the main activity, teachers used translanguaging to ask and answer questions, explain materials, give instructions, and provide praise as a form of appreciation. In the post-activity, translanguaging was used to review and close the lesson. Translanguaging occurred most frequently during the main activity, while its use in the pre-activity and post-activity was less dominant. The high frequency in the main activity indicates that translanguaging is particularly important for explaining materials, clarifying instructions, motivating students, and responding to questions during the core of the lesson.

The Teachers used translanguaging primarily because most students were not yet proficient in English and were more familiar with their mother tongue, such as Indonesian or Balinese. Translanguaging helped teachers explain complex materials more effectively, facilitated classroom interaction, and increased student participation in discussions. Beyond these findings, the study also implies that translanguaging should be managed strategically in order to balance comprehension with language development. While translanguaging is effective in ensuring understanding and participation, teachers need to gradually increase the proportion of English use so that students are continuously exposed to the target language. In this way, translanguaging can serve not only as a pedagogical bridge for

immediate comprehension but also as a scaffold that supports the long-term development of students' English proficiency.

REFERENCES

- Canagarajah, S. (2014). *Translingual practice*. New York, NY: Taylor & Francis.
- Creswell, J. W., Hanson, W. E., Clark Plano, V. L., & Morales, A. (2007). Qualitative research designs: Selection and implementation. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 35(2), 236–264. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0011000006287390>
- Dhanawaty, N. M. (2013). Perlunya pembelajaran bahasa Bali yang rekreatif di sekolah dasar multikultural dan multilingual. *Madah: Jurnal Bahasa dan Sastra*, 4(2), 120–130. <https://doi.org/10.31503/madah.v4i2.76>
- Efendi, M., & Syafryadin. (2024). Translanguaging in EFL classroom: Reasons and impacts. *English Education: Journal of English Teaching and Research*, 9(2), 216–231. <https://doi.org/10.29407/jetar.v9i2.23185>
- Lewis, G., Jones, B., & Baker, C. (2012). Translanguaging: Origins and development from school to street and beyond. *Educational Research and Evaluation*, 18(7), 641–654. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13803611.2012.718488>
- Liando, N. V. F., Tatipang, D. P., & Lengkoan, F. (2022). A study of translanguaging practices in an EFL classroom in Indonesian context: A multilingual concept. *Research and Innovation in Language Learning*, 5(2), 178–191. <https://doi.org/10.33603/rill.v5i2.6986>
- Putrawan, G. E. (2022). Translanguaging practices in EFL classrooms: Evidence from Indonesia. *CaLLs: Journal of Culture, Arts, Literature, and Linguistics*, 8(1), 69–86. <http://dx.doi.org/10.30872/calls.v8i1.7973>
- Ramadhani, A. U., & Maharsi, I. (2024). Teachers' translanguaging practice in vocational EFL classroom: An observational study. *CaLLs: Journal of Culture, Arts, Literature, and Linguistics*, 10(2), 154–168. <http://dx.doi.org/10.30872/calls.v10i2.15479>
- Ratminingsih, N. M., Padmadewi, N. N., Nitiasih, P. K., Artini, L. P., & Ana, I. K. T. A. (2024). Does translanguaging enhance learning? Examining EFL students' perceptions and success in Bali. *Voices of English Language Education Society*, 8(3), 195–210. <https://doi.org/10.29408/veles.v8i3.27261>
- Riswanto, R. (2022). Exploring translanguaging as a pedagogical strategy used by the English teacher in EFL classroom setting. *Jurnal Penelitian Guru Indonesia*, 7(1), 96–103. <https://doi.org/10.29210/021948jpgi0005>
- Sapitri, N. M., Batan, I. G., & Myartawan, I. P. N. W. (2018). Functions of teachers' translanguaging in the EFL classroom at two junior high schools in Singaraja. *Lingua Scientia*, 25(1), 13–24. <https://doi.org/10.23887/ls.v25i1.18821>

- Sharma, G. (2021). Addressing monolingual dispositions with translingual pedagogy. In *Translingual pedagogical perspectives: Engaging domestic and international students in the composition classroom* (pp. 17–38). University Press of Colorado. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv1wgvbjj>
- Syahputra, I. (2014). Strategi pembelajaran bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa asing. *Jurnal Penelitian Sosial Keagamaan*, 11(2), 129–146. <https://dev-ojs.uin-suska.ac.id/index.php/Kutubkhanah/article/view/813>
- Velasco, P., & García, O. (2014). Translanguaging and the writing of bilingual learners. *Bilingual Research Journal*, 37(1), 6–23. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15235882.2014.893270>