



A Perspective on the Practice of Spontaneous Translanguaging in Indonesia

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Abstract. This qualitative research aims to explore the extent of how teachers in Jakarta, Indonesia have empowered their students' first language in their English classes. There were 100 teacher participants in the semi-structured interview gathered by snowball sampling. In the interview guide, prompts and probes were employed during data collection. The qualitative analytical flows were employed in an interactive model. There were two main conclusions made based on the findings. First, students mostly used *Bahasa Indonesia* in small group discussions, small talks, and brainstorming activities. Second, teachers used Bahasa Indonesia (1) to instruct home assignments, (2) to provide assistance for students during class activities, and (3) to brainstorm during class activities. The three purposes signified that, at stages where students need to build context and to confirm their understanding (stages 1 and 3), they prefer to use their native language. Therefore, translanguaging can be planned and practiced at these two stages. Moreover, English should be used at other stages in teaching-learning cycle to assure students' achievement in the learning process. There should be a boundary to make students familiar with using English as the classroom language. The research implication addressed by the researchers are that the practice of translanguaging in Indonesia is unplanned, spontaneous translanguaging. Thus, there should be future research to explore more on activities relevant in the integration of pedagogical translanguaging to the English Language Teaching.

Keywords: Translanguaging · Code-switching · Code-mixing

1 introduction

The goal of English language teaching is for students to become bilinguals. In the basic sense, becoming bilinguals means a person being proficient in two languages. Based on this, being bilingual or proficient in two languages indicates performance measurement which is examining students' capacity in mastering the language skills of English and their native language. For instance, English is taught as a foreign language in Indonesia, therefore students must be proficient in two languages, *Bahasa Indonesia* and English. Yet. Reflecting to those who are native bilinguals, there is no such measurement as language proficiency because they use both languages on a regular basis [1–4]. Bilingual persons often switch languages in their daily conversations not to convey their uniqueness

or expertise, but this is to demonstrate their solidarity with a group, or to take advantage of the extensive linguistic information accessible to them. Consequently, the fast track to become emergent bilinguals is to take a closer look at how native bilinguals deal with the two languages in their daily life.

Before discussing more on bilinguals, it would be prudent to differentiate the following terms “bilinguals”, “bilingualism”, “bilingual method”, “native bilinguals”, and “emergent bilinguals” from the researchers’ understanding. Bilinguals refer to individuals who can communicate well in more than one language. They rarely possess the same level of language competence in both languages. Their level of competence is influenced by the way each language is used in the social life and is frequently changing for various reasons [6, 7]. In short, “bilingualism” refers to the individuals’ ability to communicate in more than one language [8, 9]. Yet, this term is flexible as there is no specified measuring point for the speaker’s competence to be called bilinguals. Referring to Weinrich et al. in [9], bilingualism is defined as the practice of one speaker in using two languages alternatively. Moreover, the bilingual method is a foreign language instruction emphasizing the selective use of students’ native tongues as the most effective teaching tool. The last two terms are differentiated on the basis of how the individual acquires the two languages. Native bilinguals are those acquiring the two languages simultaneously since birth [6]. English learners are emergent bilingual [10].

Although once considered lower performers than the monolinguals [11], bilinguals are believed to be better performers in the literacy skills and at the same time in the acquisition of second or foreign language. Both teacher and students can take the most benefit of empowering the existing knowledge and language awareness to facilitate understanding and learning [12, 13]. The empowerment of these knowledge and awareness was the foundation of pedagogical translanguaging.

Translanguaging is not exclusively linked to the English Language Teaching, but it started with the success of teaching English in a bilingual environment in Welsh. In its implementation, the emphasis is on recasting students’ understanding of using two languages [14] and promoting natural bilingual practices based on the flexibility of using both languages in the language classroom [15, 16]. On the contrary, the flexibility of using two languages in classroom has been a debate-appealing topic for years. It is the fact that the use of first language has been discouraged for maximum exposure of ESL/EFL to students [17].

Translanguaging is described as a planned teacher-initiated pedagogical activity that involves the simultaneous use of two languages inside a lesson or assignment. The use of *-ing* form reflects students who are in progressive mode to actively meaning making. Meanwhile, studies also mirrored the adverse impact of spontaneous translanguaging. It is what has been called decelerator translanguaging which delays the learning process because it is unplanned, random, non-purposeful, non-creative, not necessarily supported by language acquisition, and used by both teachers and students [18]. Hence, teachers need to leverage their understanding to take the most benefits of the accelerator translanguaging, pedagogical translanguaging.

Previous studies have discussed principles and practices of pedagogical translanguaging in contexts of K-12 school settings. Higher education, teacher training, etc. It was reported that pedagogical translanguaging can provide new opportunities for

language learning and language awareness in the context of multilingual education at primary and secondary schools in Spain [19]. From the views of students, [20] reported that by practicing translanguaging students were posited as both language learners and experts in class which is a necessity to build students' positive self-concept. In short, pedagogical translanguaging offers a potential approach to empower students' first language in their foreign language learning. Indonesia, well-known for its multicultural and multilingual country, English is posited as a foreign language and a compulsory subject in all levels of education. This is a perfect environment to practice pedagogical translanguaging. Raised in a diversity of traditional languages, language learners are potential to be better performers in the literacy skills and in the acquisition of a second or foreign language through the practice of pedagogical translanguaging.

This qualitative research aimed to explore the extent of teachers in Jakarta, Indonesia have empowered Bahasa Indonesia to support their English language teaching and their perception of pedagogical translanguaging. Based on the result, there would be a suggested plan of integrating pedagogical translanguaging into EFL classes.

2 Code-Switching, Code-Mixing, and Translanguaging: Where's the Halfway Meet?

Both code-switching and code-mixing refers to the simultaneous use of more than one language in one's speech. However, for bilinguals who are fluent in two languages, there is a seamless transition when using both languages at once. The transition is of regular occurrences for bilinguals and can be witnessed. It is, in fact, the juxtaposition of passages from two distinct grammatical systems or subsystems inside the same speech exchange. It occurs often in informal communication such as conversation.

The function of codeswitching within a conversational event is that to create communicative and social meaning for the language users. It is seen as a speech style and do not show a lack of competence. For instance, code-switching is used to fill in for bilingual situations where the speakers are vocabulary deficiency or to report someone's utterances for bilingual addressees. Meanwhile, codemixing is often thought as interchangeable with codeswitching. This is not fully incorrect, but research refer codemixing as a state of an individual using two or more languages inside his/ her single utterance. There is a birth of totally separate code with its own structure and dynamics. There is an emphasis to show an argumentative structure showing different regularity when code-mixing occurs [5, 21, 22].

Furthermore, introduced by the Welsh educator, Williams, translanguaging was framed as the "planned and systematic use of two languages for teaching and learning inside the same lesson". Later, translanguaging is defined as a planned teacher-initiated pedagogical activity based on the intended concurrent use of two languages within a lesson or assignment [23, 24]. The word pedagogy was to show its important role is in promoting the natural bilingual practices based on the flexibility of using both languages in the language classroom [15, 16]. Moreover, the term "bilingual" and the sense of "flexibility" are embedded in translanguaging and can have an interpretation that translanguaging is a form or subform of either code-switching or code-mixing. In the practice, translanguaging does include both regular occurrences, but it goes beyond what

has been termed code-switching and code-mixing [14]. From the view of translanguaging, language is a progressive process which shapes communicative interaction and is shaped within the interaction on the basis of the social, cultural and political contexts. The use of *-ing* form is to represent the on-going process of active meaning making and the shift of students' first language (L1) and EFL as discrete language [25, 26].

Upon implementing pedagogical translanguaging in an EFL classroom, an analogy of digestion process was employed to show that both languages are at the same level within the process of English language learning [15]. In this process, students' L1 is the language input as in reading and discussing particular text, and afterwards, students' process the language output as a written product in EFL. From this standpoint, monolingual pedagogy viewed translanguaging has challenged the prescribed language learning theories of exposing students to target language (TL) and therefore EFL should be taken as the instructional language for better acquisition of TL [26, 16].

[27] affirmed that the implementation of translanguaging in class is "the instructional mobilization of students' whole linguistic repertoire and the fostering of constructive cross-linguistic communication". This shows that students' ownership of linguistic repertoire has placed students as an individual with proficiency in at least one language. It is only for the range of repertoire that is diverse among students as it is based on their background and includes current linguistic resources, actual skills, and personal competencies. In addition, [28] personally conceived linguistic repertoire as all the languages that a speaker has learnt either from the nearest nuclear family, school or self-study, and he/ she has been competence at various degrees of skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing, etc.).

3 Methods

This study was a qualitative research design aimed to explore the extent of English teachers in Jakarta have empowered students' first language when teaching English in their classes and to suggest a plan for integrating pedagogical translanguaging in English Language Teaching.

3.1 Instruments and Procedures

Semi-structured interviews with the interview guide, prompts and probes were employed in this study. The use of guide was meant to maintain the specificity of topics being discussed. This was also to increase the collected data systematic and comprehensive. Gaps for natural purpose of conversation can also be minimized by the prompts and probes can assist the interviewers in clarifying questions to anticipate ambiguity and misunderstanding. The snowball sampling was used from 56 names of teachers teaching in Jakarta gathered from researchers' contact lists. At last, there were 100 interviewees who were voluntarily participated in the study. The interviews were recorded and transcribed. After that, the data were interpreted using content analysis and making conceptual theoretical coherence [29].

There were three main questions in the interview guide, they were (1) For what purposes, students and teacher use Bahasa Indonesia in English session; (2) How do English

language teachers usually employ Bahasa Indonesia in their classes; (3) What are their perception of translanguaging pedagogy. The concept and definition of translanguaging as an alternative pedagogy of English language teaching were also discussed at the end of interview.

3.2 Data Analysis

In this study, after data were collected, a series of parallel activity flows was employed in data analysis (1) data condensing, (2) data display, and (3) conclusion drawing/verification.

Data condensation was the process of choosing, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, transforming data included in the interview transcripts. It was meant to strengthen data collected after the process was undergone. Data condensation is a kind of analysis that sharpens, sorts, concentrates, discards, and organizes data in order to develop and verify “final” findings. Next was the presentation of data, *data display*. It was a structured, compacted collection of data that enables conclusion drawing and action. *Conclusion drawing* is the third flow of the employed analysis model. It was the interpretation of data displayed. In this interactive model of qualitative data analysis, a continual, iterative process is compulsory [30].

3.3 Research Participants and Context

This subsection discussed the demography of research participants and the context of research. They were all teachers at secondary schools in Jakarta. They are teachers in either a public or private school. 76% of research participants are female. Around half of the participants are bachelor graduates. 25% has associate degree in English, English Language Teaching or English Literature. The rests are holders of Master and Doctorate degrees. Most of the associate degree holders are now pursuing a bachelor’s degree for higher financial earnings and sustainability in teaching career. There were four classes of age classification in this study Most of the participants are pre-service teachers or teachers with few lengths of service (around 5–8 years of teaching service). Only less than 30% are senior teachers. Four of them are now school principals.

During interview, the question of “how many students are taught in the sessions of English subject” became one of the leading questions to the research context. This was also meant to find out each participant’s class characteristic. It was found that both pre-service teachers and senior teachers can have a large class or a small class. In this study, the definition of whether a class is large or not was based on [31]’ research. There is no definite number of students to decide the class size. It solely depends on teacher’s perception whether the number of students influenced the progress of students’ English achievement.

In this research, most participants teach in a class with 10–20 students. A participant was a pre-service teacher in a new private school teaching only 10 students. But most of them teach in class of 18–20 students. Based on what have been discussed, there are two contexts in this study. Most of participants are pre-service or junior teachers and they are teaching 10–20 students in each session. See Table 1 for the summary of participants’ social demography and research context.

Table 1. Participants' Demographic Aspects and Research Context

| | Participants' Demographic Aspects | Percentages (%) |
|------------------------------------|--|------------------------|
| Sex | ✓ Female | 76 |
| | ✓ Male | 24 |
| Age | ✓ 26-30 years old | 72 |
| | ✓ 31-35 | 8 |
| | ✓ 36-40 | 4 |
| | ✓ More than 40 years old | 16 |
| Educational Background | ✓ Associate Degree in English, English Language Teaching or English Literature | 24 |
| | ✓ Bachelor Degree in English Language Teaching | 56 |
| | ✓ Master Degree in Language Teaching | 16 |
| | ✓ Doctorate Degree in Language Teaching | 4 |
| Length of Teaching Service | ✓ Less than a year | 16 |
| | ✓ 1-3 yeears | 44 |
| | ✓ 3-5 years | 20 |
| | ✓ More than 5 years | 20 |
| Number of Students in Class | 10-20 students | 40 |
| | 21-30 students | 32 |
| | 31-40 students | 8 |
| | More than 40 students | 20 |

4 Findings

This section discussed research findings by visualizing them in relation to the research questions.

4.1 For What Purposes, Students Use Bahasa Indonesia in Their English Subject Lesson?

Based on the interview, there were three purposes for students to use Bahasa Indonesia or their first language. The first purpose was that when they were discussing lessons or activities in a small group. Then the other purposes were relating to students having small talks with their classmate. The talks can be about the activities, materials, contents of English or different subjects. A surprising finding was that when they were interacting to each other or having the small talks, they were more eager to provide peer assistance in the on-going class activities. Based on this, it can be assumed that students' translanguaging has raised their behavioral engagement in the English class. Yet, there should be a boundary to make students familiar with using English as the classroom language.

The second purpose was relevant with teacher's conducting the brainstorming session, responding to difficult questions and making excuses. From the participants' perceptions, brainstorming was usually done as part of the lead-in task, ice breaking activities or building the topic's context. At this time, students often use Bahasa Indonesia to express their curiosity on the topics discussed; ask questions to confirm English synonyms; ask the meaning of difficult English words/ phrases; or simply to confirm what

was going to be the class activities or lesson objectives. Sometimes, students also used Bahasa Indonesia in class to respond to difficult questions. For this, teacher participants clarified that difficult questions were not in the real sense that the students could not answer them. It was in the sense that students encountered difficulties in choosing the accurate expressions or they had difficulties in answering using English. Interlanguage and codeswitching were usually used at this time. The last one was to make excuses for students' refreshment.

4.2 Is It Necessary for English Teachers to Use Bahasa Indonesia During Class Session?

As most monolingual pedagogy classes, the use of Bahasa Indonesia or students' native tongue is discouraged for exposure to English language during class session. There were three main purposes when teachers use Bahasa Indonesia based on the interviews: (1) to instruct for home assignment; (2) to provide assistance for students during class activities; (3) to brainstorm during class activities. The second purpose was relevant to students' need in exploring the text social context, features of general cultural context in the text; and the social purposes for employing the text. Also, the third purpose has been similar to teachers' observation for students' purposes in using their native language.

It is believed that the first main purpose has different intention. Reasons for doing this ranging from assuring students to do the home assignment or in short teacher's dynamic assessment. Assigning students for home activities or follow up activities is for teachers to investigate how today's lesson can be related to both past and future cycle of teaching. During interview, most teachers put emphasis on using Bahasa Indonesia to assign students.

Another finding was that a teacher never starts or closes the class using Bahasa Indonesia. Unfortunately, researchers failed to explore more in this area. This should be one limitation of this study and need future investigation.

4.3 What is Teachers' Perception of Pedagogical Translanguaging?

At the end of interview, researchers told interviewees about definition and concept of pedagogical translanguaging. More than half of total interviewees heard or knew about it but they were not familiar with the practice in classes. Almost all participants questioned whether or not the translanguaging was similar to code-switching or code-mixing. On hearing that the concept was to plan the code-switching during teaching-learning cycle, they would like to find out more on strategies to integrate the pedagogical translanguaging in the classroom activities.

5 Conclusions and Discussion

There were three main conclusions made based on the findings. First, translanguaging is practiced unplanned and spontaneously. The practice has not so far empowered students' existing knowledge and language awareness to facilitate understanding and learning. Second, students mostly used Bahasa Indonesia in a small group discussion for small

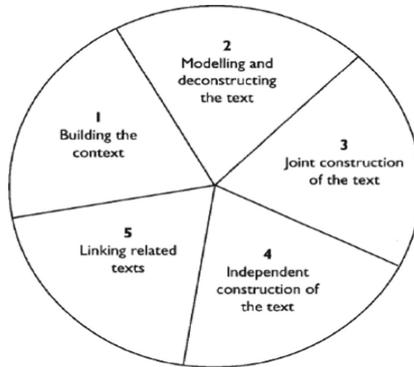


Fig. 1. The Teaching/ Learning Cycle (Feez, 1998)

talks and class brainstorming. To verify the first finding, it is necessary to look at the stages in lesson planning at which the lesson should be organized and delivered in class. For this, the teaching-learning cycle taken from the text-based syllabus design was employed to give a clear perspective on the conclusion [32].

Based on the teaching-learning cycle, there are five stages to achieve English learning objectives which are developed in relevance to the genre-analysis incorporated [33]. The stages are (1) building the context; (2) modelling and deconstruction of the text; (3) joint construction of the text; (4) independent construction of the text; and (5) linking related texts. Each stage is associated with different types of activities (Fig. 1).

Referring back to what has been the first finding in this study, students often use Bahasa Indonesia in two stages: building the context and joint construction. At the first stage, students can have a discussion to establish the social purpose of specific text through class discussion, small-group discussion, or peer discussion [34]. This matched students' purposes to use Bahasa Indonesia, they were (1) to discuss about the activities, materials, contents of English, (2) to provide peer assistance in on-going class activities and (3) sometimes in the brainstorming activities or responding to teachers' difficult question. This stage is especially important for teachers to contribute significantly for students' progress so that they can determine the following activities or practices in class.

At stage three, joint construction of the text, students start their contribution to learning, and the teacher gradually reduces his/her contribution [34]. Activities associated in this stage are among other teacher/ students' question and answer, and small group construction of text. This stage enabled students to use Bahasa Indonesia in peer discussion or small group discussion, i.e., to assist their peers in deeper understanding about what has been constructed during the first two stages and representation of the student's level of independent performance increase.

The last conclusion was that teachers used Bahasa Indonesia (1) to instruct for home assignment; (2) to provide assistance for students during class activities; (3) to brainstorm during class activities. The three purposes signified that at stages where students need to build context and to confirm their understanding (stages 1 and 3), Bahasa Indonesia can actively support students' to be ready for independent performance.

There are two implications addressed by the researchers. First, the practice of translanguaging in Indonesia is unplanned, spontaneous translanguaging, and most teachers interviewed were not familiar with translanguaging. Hence, there should be a model to practice pedagogical translanguaging in English language teaching at secondary level in Indonesia.

Second, pedagogical translanguaging can be planned and practiced at stage 1 and 3 in the teaching-learning cycle. In other words, to obtain the most benefits of pedagogical translanguaging, a teacher needs to practice it at the two stages. Teachers can use Bahasa Indonesia and English simultaneously when giving meaningful inputs for students. As the output, students can produce a new text and perform in English. The input in Bahasa Indonesia and the output in English reflects students' critical and creative manner. In the end, the employment of English and Bahasa Indonesia are believed to create a more dynamic learning environment and to facilitate understanding and learning. Thus, there should be future research to explore more on activities relevant in the integration of pedagogical translanguaging to the English Language Teaching.

Authors' Contributions. The authors confirm contribution to the paper as follows.

1. Study conception and Design: Nurhasanah Halim.
2. Analysis and Interpretation: Ilza Mayuni
3. Manuscript Preparation: Samsi Setiadi

All authors reviewed the results and approved the final version of the manuscript.

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