

Translanguaging as a Strategy to Enhance Students' English Learning Engagement and Understanding in Elementary Schools: Teachers' Perspectives

Supriadin^{1*}, Nurlaila Wattiheluw², Baiq Nurul Layali³

¹Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, Universitas Negeri Makassar, Makassar, Indonesia

²Tadris Bahasa Inggris, Institute Agama Islam Negeri Ambon, Ambon, Indonesia

³SMPIT Insan Qur'ani Sumbawa, Sumbawa, Indonesia

*Corresponding author: supriadin1991@gmail.com

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji persepsi guru sekolah dasar terhadap translanguaging sebagai strategi pedagogis untuk meningkatkan keterlibatan dan pemahaman siswa dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris di kelas multibahasa. Dengan menggunakan desain studi kasus kualitatif, data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara semi-terstruktur dengan guru dari dua sekolah dasar di Kabupaten Bima, Indonesia. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa translanguaging secara signifikan membantu pemahaman siswa dengan memungkinkan mereka mengakses kosakata dan konsep bahasa Inggris melalui bahasa ibu mereka. Selain itu, penggunaan bahasa Bima dan bahasa Indonesia dalam pengajaran bahasa Inggris meningkatkan partisipasi, motivasi, dan kenyamanan siswa di kelas. Namun, guru juga menghadapi tantangan dalam penerapan translanguaging, seperti kebutuhan akan kesabaran, kemampuan beradaptasi, dan upaya ekstra dalam mengelola pengajaran multibahasa secara efektif. Temuan ini menekankan perlunya dukungan kelembagaan dan pengembangan profesional untuk membekali guru dengan keterampilan dan kerangka kerja yang diperlukan dalam menerapkan pedagogi translanguaging secara sukses. Translanguaging bukan hanya alat pengajaran praktis, tetapi juga pendekatan yang responsif secara budaya yang mengakui dan menghargai identitas linguistik siswa.

Kata kunci: Translanguaging, pembelajaran bahasa Inggris, keterlibatan siswa, persepsi guru

Abstract

This study explores elementary school teachers' perceptions of translanguaging as a pedagogical strategy to enhance students' English learning engagement and understanding in multilingual classrooms. Employing a qualitative case study design, data were collected through semi-structured interviews with teachers from two elementary schools in Bima Regency, Indonesia. The findings reveal that translanguaging significantly supports students' comprehension by allowing them to access new English vocabulary and concepts through their mother tongue. Additionally, the use of Bima and Indonesian languages in English instruction increases student participation, motivation, and comfort in the classroom. However, teachers also face challenges in implementing translanguaging, including the need for patience, adaptability, and extra effort to manage multilingual instruction effectively. These findings underscore the need for institutional support and professional development to equip teachers with the necessary skills and frameworks to implement translanguaging pedagogy successfully. Translanguaging is not only a practical teaching tool but also a culturally responsive approach that acknowledges and affirms students' linguistic identities.

Keywords: Translanguaging, English learning, student engagement, teacher perception

INTRODUCTION

In an age of expanding linguistic diversity and globalization, the domain of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction has experienced an intensified focus on teaching methodologies that acknowledge students' multilingual contexts. Translanguaging has arisen as a dynamic and empowering method that enables students to flexibly utilize their entire language repertoire for meaning-making, communication, and learning. In elementary educational settings, when language acquisition is in its initial phases, translanguaging can significantly enhance engagement, confidence, and comprehension among young learners.

This research investigates elementary school teachers' views on translanguaging as a way to improve student engagement and comprehension in English learning, analyzing its perceived advantages and actual limitations.

Translanguaging, a concept advanced by García and Wei (2014), contests the conventional perception of languages as distinct, confined systems. Rather, it perceives multilingual speakers as having a cohesive linguistic repertoire from which they judiciously choose elements to convey meaning and execute communicative functions. In educational contexts, translanguaging methods may permit students to utilize their first language (L1) in conjunction with English (L2) for activities such as brainstorming, reading comprehension, vocabulary enhancement, and collaborative discourse. Rather than indicating linguistic inadequacy, these activities are widely acknowledged as valuable assets that can enhance learning, intensify cognitive engagement, and facilitate comprehensive language development.

In the Indonesian setting, the execution of English instruction in primary schools offers distinct opportunities and challenges. Although English has historically maintained a distinguished role as a global language franca and a crucial element for academic and professional achievement, its prominence within the national primary school curriculum has experienced considerable alterations. English is no longer a mandatory topic in Indonesian elementary schools; it is now classified as *muatan lokal* (local content) (Zein, 2011), allowing individual schools and local education authorities to determine its inclusion. Notwithstanding its non-mandatory status, numerous elementary schools nationwide persist in providing English instruction, motivated by parental demand, institutional initiative, and overarching sociolinguistic tendencies that regard English ability as an indicator of educational progress and future prospects.

This policy change has ignited significant discourse among educators and policymakers. Eliminating English as a mandatory subject at the basic level aimed to reduce cognitive overload for young learners and enable schools to concentrate more extensively on essential subjects like mathematics, science, and Indonesian. Conversely, the persistent prominence of English instruction in numerous institutions, frequently initiated in the first or second grade, signifies a prevalent belief in English as an essential competency in the 21st century. This results in a highly decentralized and variable English education in primary schools, characterized by disparities in instructional hours, teacher credentials, curricular materials, and pedagogical methodologies.

In this diverse environment, translanguaging emerges as a versatile and context-aware strategy capable of tackling fundamental issues in early English education. In Indonesian schools, young learners mostly communicate in Bahasa Indonesia or regional languages, like Javanese, Sundanese, Minangkabau, and Bugis, among others. For many individuals, English serves as a tertiary language introduced in an educational environment, with few opportunities for genuine application beyond the classroom. This linguistic disparity can obstruct comprehension, involvement, and motivation—obstacles that translanguaging may alleviate by using students' current linguistic assets as instruments for learning instead of perceiving them as hindrances.

Educators, as primary executors of educational innovation, are pivotal in determining the comprehension and use of translanguaging in classroom settings. Their views, attitudes, and pedagogical practices profoundly affect the perception of translanguaging as either a valid and effective method or as counterproductive and harmful to English acquisition. Consequently, analyzing teachers' views is essential for comprehending the practical feasibility of translanguaging in elementary school EFL instruction. Examining how

educators conceptualize and implement translanguaging provides insight into the practical dynamics influencing its uptake and effects.

Recent studies have underscored the potential and intricacy of translanguaging in multilingual educational settings. Research has demonstrated that translanguaging can improve student autonomy, cultural identification, and linguistic confidence, especially when applied with explicit instructional goal (Canagarajah, 2011; García and Kleyn, 2016). Conversely, some educators articulate apprehension that the utilization of pupils' L1 may impede absorption in English or diminish their exposure to actual linguistic input. The difficulties are most pronounced in primary schools, where educators frequently possess inadequate training in bilingual pedagogy and may under pressure to provide quantifiable language results within a restricted instructional period. Furthermore, the concept of translanguaging as a dynamic and learner-centered practice may contradict conventional perspectives on language learning, which regard it as the attainment of standardized, codified forms. In numerous EFL contexts, English education remains predominantly governed by grammar-centric curricula, textbook-oriented instruction, and a bias towards monolingual immersion. These paradigms frequently restrict the adaptable and responsive utilization of students' L1s, potentially framing translanguaging as an atypical or even subversive practice. For translanguaging to achieve wider acceptability, a transformation in pedagogical philosophy and institutional support structures is essential, encompassing teacher education programs, curricular requirements, and classroom evaluation methods.

This study aims to contribute to this evolving conversation by focusing on how elementary school teachers perceive and implement translanguaging strategies in their English classrooms. Drawing on qualitative interview data, it investigates the ways in which teachers use, negotiate, and reflect upon translanguaging in response to students' needs, classroom realities, and institutional expectations. Specifically, it addresses the following research questions: (1) How do elementary school teachers perceive on the implementation translanguaging towards the students English understanding? (2) How do elementary school teachers perceive on the implementation translanguaging towards the students learning English engagement? (3) What challenges do teachers associate with the use of translanguaging in their classrooms?

The rationale for focusing on interaction arises from its crucial significance in the success of language acquisition, especially in young learners. Engagement includes behavioral elements like attention and engagement, as well as emotional and cognitive characteristics such as curiosity, enjoyment, and perseverance (Fredricks et al., 2004). In elementary school environments, where students are cultivating basic literacy skills and are significantly affected by emotional elements, fostering engagement is an essential educational objective. Translanguaging, by affirming students' native languages and offering accessible pathways to English acquisition, may function as a potent tool for promoting engagement. Nonetheless, comprehending the practical implications necessitates meticulous consideration of educators' experiences and the socio-educational environments in which they function. This study is positioned within a wider educational discourse that acknowledges the significance of inclusive and adaptive teaching techniques in multilingual contexts. As Indonesia navigates the intricacies of language policy, national identity, and educational justice, the imperative to effectively assist young learners in acquiring English proficiency while preserving and honoring their linguistic heritage has become increasingly urgent. Translanguaging presents a viable approach that respects linguistic variety while facilitating significant and efficient English language acquisition.

This research highlights the practical realities of implementing translanguaging in EFL environments by prioritizing the perspectives of teachers who directly engage with primary school pupils. It illustrates how educators manage conflicting expectations, modify tactics to

accommodate their students' requirements, and make instructional choices that reconcile creativity with pragmatism. This endeavor seeks to enlighten both policy and practice by emphasizing the potential of translanguaging, not merely as a theoretical framework but as a practical method capable of transforming English learning experiences in varied and dynamic manners.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Frameworks

The theoretical foundations of translanguaging are based on sociolinguistics, bilingual education, and language acquisition theories. García (2009) asserts that translanguaging is based on the premise that language is not a static construct but a fluid resource for communication. This viewpoint corresponds with Vygotsky (1978) sociocultural theory, which underscores the social context of learning and the significance of interaction in cognitive growth. Furthermore, translanguaging contests conventional ideas of language segregation and fosters a comprehensive perspective on language utilization, urging students to leverage their complete linguistic repertoire to improve comprehension and involvement (Canagarajah, 2011). This theoretical foundation is essential for establishing translanguaging as a valid educational approach in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) courses.

The Concept of Translanguaging

Translanguaging is a term that has evolved significantly since its inception, rooted in the practices of bilingual individuals who fluidly transition between languages in their communication. The concept emerged from the Welsh education system in the 1980s, where it was originally used to describe the pedagogical approach that allowed students to use their home language alongside the target language (Williams, 1994). Translanguaging is a concept in language studies and education that highlights the flexible and dynamic use of different languages possessed by humans. The idea was initially formulated by Cen Williams within the framework of bilingual education in Wales and subsequently broadened and disseminated by scholars such as García (García, 2009; Li, 2011) in a global scope. García (2009) posits that translanguaging is an educational method enabling learners to utilize their complete linguistic repertoire flexibly during the learning process. This concept transcends mere code-switching or code-mixing; it embodies a whole cognitive and communicative framework in which language is perceived not as a separate construct, but as an interconnected system within the individual's mind. Li (2011) asserted that translanguaging constitutes not only a linguistic occurrence, but also a social practice that reflects an individual's identity, creativity, and linguistic acumen in communication. He contended that translanguaging can enhance

Benefits of Translanguaging for Language Learning

Translanguaging has demonstrated multiple advantages for language acquisition, especially in English as Foreign Language situations. A notable benefit is the improvement of understanding and memory retention. Studies demonstrate that allowing students to utilize their home language in conjunction with English enhances their comprehension of intricate topics and terminology (Garcia & Kleifgen, 2010). A study by MacSwan (2017) revealed that pupils utilizing translanguaging strategies had superior reading comprehension compared to those who solely used English. Moreover, translanguaging cultivates a sense of belonging and alleviates fear, as students are more at ease articulating themselves in a language in which they are proficient, so substantially augmenting their overall participation in the classroom (Wei, 2018).

Challenges and Critiques

Despite its advantages, translanguaging faces obstacles and criticisms. A primary problem is the possibility of interference between languages, which may result in erroneous language usage and impede the acquisition of standard language forms (Swain and Lapkin, 2000). Moreover, educators may encounter challenges in efficiently applying translanguaging procedures, especially if they lack competence in the students' home languages. Critics contend that in the absence of adequate training and resources, educators may unintentionally perpetuate language segregation instead of fostering seamless language integration (Cummins, 2007). Furthermore, translanguaging may be viewed as indicative of insufficient English ability, thereby fostering unfavorable perceptions of bilingualism in educational contexts (Lindholm-leary, 2001).

Student Engagement in Language Learning

Learning engagement is a complex construct that includes emotional, cognitive, and behavioral elements (Fredricks et al., 2004). Emotional involvement pertains to students' sentiments regarding learning activities, encompassing their interest and motivation, whereas cognitive engagement entails the allocation of mental effort towards learning tasks. Behavioral engagement is manifested in students' participation and involvement in classroom activities. In language acquisition, engagement is essential since it directly influences students' readiness to communicate and interact in the target language (Dörnyei, 2001). Comprehending these elements is crucial for educators aiming to cultivate a more stimulating EFL classroom atmosphere.

Factors Influencing Student Engagement

Various elements affect student participation in language acquisition, such as educator support, classroom atmosphere, and peer interactions. Reeve (2013) research underscores the significance of supportive teacher-student connections in fostering engagement, as students are more inclined to partake in learning activities when they feel appreciated and comprehended. A conducive classroom atmosphere that fosters collaboration and transparent communication can markedly improve engagement levels (Skinner & Belmont, 1993). Moreover, peer interactions are essential in language acquisition, as collaborative activities can incentivize students to utilize the target language more often and proficiently (Norton, 2016). Comprehending these characteristics is essential for executing efficient translanguaging techniques that augment student involvement.

Previous Studies on Translanguaging and Student Engagement

An increasing volume of research has underscored the crucial function of translanguaging in enhancing student engagement in English as Foreign Language (EFL) classes. Translanguaging, as articulated by García and Wei (2014), denotes the dynamic and strategic employment of various linguistic resources by bilingual or multilingual individuals to construct meaning, mediate comprehension, and enhance communication. In the EFL environment, translanguaging is widely acknowledged as an educational approach that facilitates language growth while also augmenting student engagement, motivation, and identity formation. In the context of English as Foreign Language, study by Cenoz and Gorter (2017) emphasized the cognitive and emotional advantages of translanguaging. Their research indicated that allowing students to strategically utilize their first language (L1) during English lectures enhanced their participation in classroom discussions, collaboration with peers, and willingness to take intellectual risks. The findings indicate that translanguaging may alleviate anxiety and enhance learner autonomy in language schools. Additionally, Lee and Canagarajah (2019) performed a qualitative study with EFL students in

South Korea, revealing that translanguaging markedly enhanced learners' classroom participation. Students indicated that the capacity to alternate between English and Korean enhanced their understanding of intricate activities, maintained their concentration, and facilitated more active participation. The study indicated that translanguaging strategies enabled learners to close gaps in comprehension and fostered more inclusive and supportive educational environments.

Raja et al. (2022) investigate teachers' attitude towards translanguaging practice and its implication in Indonesian EFL classroom. Their findings indicated that all the participants used translanguaging in a number of common scenarios. Participants continue to employ translanguaging in their instruction and identify it with positive qualities despite their differing opinions about it. These observations correspond with those of García (2009), who highlighted the significance of translanguaging in empowering students and democratizing classroom interactions. Guo (2023) investigate what is it and why is it needed by the Chinese primary school students' translanguaging in EFL classrooms? The results encourage educators, legislators, and language instructors to reconsider the English-only education policy in EFL classrooms and to better comprehend translingual practices from the viewpoints of learners.

These prior research collectively highlight the potential of translanguaging to serve as a catalyst for student participation in EFL classrooms. Translanguaging promotes a more inclusive and equitable educational environment by affirming students' linguistic identities and utilizing their current language resources. These findings offer a significant framework for the present study, which aims to further explore how English teacher perceive and experience translanguaging as a way to augment students' learning engagement and understanding.

METHODS

This research utilizes a qualitative case study methodology to investigate the viewpoints of elementary school teachers in Bima Regency concerning the implementation of translanguaging as a tool to improve student involvement in English instruction. A case study methodology is particularly appropriate for this research as it facilitates a comprehensive examination of intricate occurrences within their real-world environment (Yin, 2018). The study concentrates on two educators to obtain comprehensive insights into their experiences and perceptions, which may be crucial for comprehending the integration of translanguaging techniques in English language instruction.

This study will involve two elementary school instructors from a chosen institution in Bima Regency, Indonesia, specifically SDN Pela and SDN Tangga. Participants will be selected by purposive sampling, focusing on students who have engaged in translanguaging techniques throughout their English classes. This selection approach is selected to guarantee that participants possess pertinent experiences and perspectives that might illuminate the study topics.

This study will utilize semi-structured interviews for data collecting. Semi-structured interviews will be administered to three participants to obtain comprehensive insights into their views on translanguaging and its influence on students' learning engagement. This approach facilitates adaptability in inquiry, permitting the researcher to explore certain topics of interest that may emerge throughout the interviews (Rabionet, 2011). The interview questions will aim to extract teachers' experiences with translanguaging, their views on its efficacy in improving engagement in EFL learning, and any problems they may have faced. All interviews will be audio-recorded with the participants' consent and later transcribed for

analysis. The utilization of open-ended questions will facilitate participants in articulating their opinions freely, yielding substantial qualitative data for the study.

The final data analysis for this study will employ thematic analysis, a prevalent qualitative analytical method that facilitates the identification and interpretation of patterns (themes) within qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis is particularly appropriate for this study since it allows the researcher to systematically arrange and interpret the extensive data gathered from interviews, thereby emphasizing the principal themes concerning teachers' opinions on translanguaging and its influence on their learning engagement.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULTS

Teachers' Perception on the Implementation of Translanguaging towards the students' understanding

Here are the relevant quotes from two teachers' interview results in three different schools regarding their perception on the implementation of translanguaging towards the students' understanding:

Teacher 1 views English instruction at the elementary level as an introductory phase where students are still unfamiliar with the language. She believes that students are not yet capable of understanding full English instruction. Therefore, she employs Bima (the students' mother tongue) to introduce English vocabulary, rarely relying on the national language, Indonesian. This reflects a deliberate use of translanguaging to bridge comprehension gaps and ease students into English learning using a familiar linguistic base.

Extract 1

"Pelajaran bahasa Inggris pada tingkat SD adalah pengenalan awal mereka. Mereka belum bisa kalau pakai bahasa Inggris full. Saya memperkenalkan kosa kata menggunakan bahasa Bima. Jarang pakai bahasa Indonesia." (English lessons at elementary school level are their initial introduction. They can't use full English yet. I introduce vocabulary using Bima language. I rarely use Indonesian.)

Teacher 2 emphasizes the essential role of students' mother tongue in facilitating their understanding of English, even at the most basic level such as vocabulary. She regularly uses Bima to re-explain both individual words and complete sentences in English. This indicates her belief that translanguaging is not just helpful but necessary for effective EFL instruction at the primary level, particularly for ensuring clarity and comprehension.

Extract 2

"Anak-anak butuh Bahasa Ibu untuk bisa memahami Bahasa Inggris walaupun sekedar kosa-kata. Saya biasanya selalu menggunakan Bahasa Bima untuk menjelaskan Kembali baik kosa kata maupun kalimat dalam bahasa Inggris." (Students need their mother tongue to be able to understand English even just vocabulary. I usually always use Bima language to explain both vocabulary and sentences in English.)

Teachers' Perception on the Implementation of Translanguaging towards the students' Learning Engagement

Here are the relevant quotes from teachers' interview results in two different schools regarding their perception on the implementation of translanguaging towards the students' learning engagement in elementary schools:

Teacher 1 associates active student participation in English learning with the use of their mother tongue. She deliberately incorporates the students' native language into instruction as a means of increasing engagement. Her observation that students are "very

happy" suggests that translanguaging creates a more inclusive, comfortable, and motivating learning environment, enhancing emotional engagement and willingness to participate.

Extract 3

“saya ingin siswa berpartisipasi aktif dalam belajar bahasa Inggris. Untuk itu saya menggunakan bahasa Ibu mereka untuk mengajar bahasa Inggris ini. Sejauh ini mereka sangat senang.” (I want students to actively participate in learning English. That is why I use their mother tongue to teach English. So far they are very happy.)

Teacher 2 notes that students are fairly engaged in English learning when instruction involves both Bima and Indonesian languages. She finds this bilingual approach highly beneficial, implying that translanguaging supports not only comprehension but also sustained student involvement. It suggests that providing linguistic accessibility through familiar languages can boost students' attentiveness and participation.

Extract 4

“Anak-anak cukup terlibat dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris dengan instruksi bahasa Bima dan bahasa Indonesia. Dan itu sangat membantu sekali” (The students are quite engaged in learning English with Bima and Indonesian language instruction. And that is very helpful.)

Teachers' Perception on the Challenges of Implementation of Translanguaging in English Classroom

Here are the relevant quotes from teachers' interview results regarding the challenges on the implementation of translanguaging in elementary schools:

Teacher 1 identifies patience as a key challenge when implementing translanguaging in EFL classrooms. The need to teach gradually and adapt to diverse student personalities requires considerable emotional labour. Her comment highlights that while translanguaging supports understanding, it also demands a sensitive and differentiated instructional approach, which can be time-consuming and complex.

Extract 5

“sebagai guru baru sabar dalam mengajar siswa. Jadi tantangannya adalah butuh kesabaran. Kita harus pelan-pelan mengajar mereka. Karena karakter siswa berbeda-beda” (As a teacher, you have to be patient in teaching students. So the challenge is that you need patience. We have to teach them slowly. Because the characters of the students are different)

Teacher 2 sees the main challenge in the hard work required and the need to be attuned to students' learning moods. Since young children learn best through play, the teacher must exert extra effort, switching among English, Bima, and Indonesian to ensure understanding and engagement. This reveals the demanding nature of translanguaging pedagogy, especially in early education, where instructional energy, creativity, and responsiveness are paramount.

Extract 6

“Tantangannya lebih kepada kerja keras sih dan pandai melihat mood belajar mereka. Karena anak-anak ini harus belajar sambil bermain. Ini kita butuh tenaga extra mengajar anak-anak karena harus menggunakan bahasa Inggris, bahasa Bima, bahasa Indonesia agar mereka mengerti dan mau ikut belajar.” (The challenge is more about hard work and being good at seeing their learning mood. Because these children have to learn while playing. We need extra energy to teach the children because we have to use English, Bima, and Indonesian so that they understand and want to learn.)

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study reveal three significant insights into teachers' perceptions of translanguaging in elementary English classrooms: (1) translanguaging as a facilitator of student understanding, (2) translanguaging as a catalyst for student engagement, and (3) the practical challenges faced by teachers in its implementation. These findings reinforce and extend current literature on translanguaging pedagogy, particularly within multilingual contexts like Indonesia, where the interplay of local languages, Bahasa Indonesia, and English presents both pedagogical opportunities and challenges.

Translanguaging as a Facilitator of Students' Understanding

The first theme highlights the strategic use of students' mother tongue to aid comprehension in English language learning. Teachers' frequent use of Bima, rather than Indonesian or English, as a medium of instruction in explaining vocabulary and sentence structure, suggests an intentional pedagogical decision grounded in students' linguistic familiarity. This finding is aligned with García and Wei's (2014) argument that translanguaging is not simply code-switching, but rather a pedagogical strategy that allows learners to access and make sense of academic content by drawing from their full linguistic repertoire.

Research in bilingual education has consistently supported the cognitive benefits of such practices. Cummins (2007) posited that knowledge and skills learned in one language can transfer to another, a phenomenon known as cross-linguistic transfer. Therefore, by introducing new English vocabulary through Bima, teachers are leveraging students' existing linguistic knowledge to scaffold English acquisition. Moreover, Baker (2001) emphasized that bilingual learners should not be forced to compartmentalize their languages but should be encouraged to use their languages dynamically as resources for meaning-making.

The case in Indonesian elementary schools, where English is often introduced as a third language after the mother tongue and Bahasa Indonesia, makes the use of translanguaging even more relevant. Many young learners face difficulty in processing input that is solely in English, as they lack the foundational knowledge or exposure to the language. By utilizing Bima for clarification, teachers ensure that students do not merely memorize English words but understand their meanings and contextual applications. As noted by García and Kleyn (2016), translanguaging offers equitable access to content and enhances the quality of understanding, particularly in linguistically diverse classrooms.

Furthermore, the limited English proficiency of students at the elementary level underlines the inadequacy of monolingual instruction. Teaching purely in English may result in cognitive overload, disengagement, or rote memorization without meaningful learning. Thus, the teacher's use of the mother tongue to support understanding is not a sign of pedagogical weakness but of responsiveness to learners' developmental and linguistic needs.

Translanguaging as a Catalyst for Student Engagement

The second key finding centers on the role of translanguaging in fostering student engagement in the English learning process. Both Teacher 1 and Teacher 2 emphasized that the use of Bima and Indonesian in instruction increased student participation and enjoyment, suggesting that translanguaging positively affects the affective dimensions of learning.

This finding is supported by Vygotsky (1978) sociocultural theory, which posits that language plays a central role in the development of higher-order thinking and that learning is most effective when it occurs within the learner's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Translanguaging, in this context, becomes a mediational tool that allows learners to access

new knowledge within their ZPD, using their stronger language to acquire competence in the weaker language. Through this process, learners feel more capable and confident, which in turn enhances motivation and classroom engagement.

Engagement is especially crucial in elementary settings, where students are still developing attention spans and intrinsic motivation for academic learning. Fredricks et al. (2004) distinguish engagement into three domains—behavioral, emotional, and cognitive—and translanguaging has the potential to positively influence all three. Behaviorally, students are more likely to participate when they understand the instructions and content. Emotionally, they feel valued when their home language is included in the classroom. Cognitively, they are able to connect new information to prior knowledge more effectively.

The inclusion of students' linguistic identities in classroom interaction also reflects the principles of culturally responsive pedagogy (Gay, 2010). By affirming students' linguistic backgrounds, translanguaging promotes a sense of belonging and respect, which is fundamental for young learners' emotional development. In this way, translanguaging acts not only as a linguistic tool but as a sociocultural bridge that affirms identity and promotes inclusive learning environments.

Additionally, in the context of early English instruction in Indonesia—where English is not a required subject in the national curriculum but still widely taught as a local initiative—the importance of engagement becomes even more pronounced. With limited instructional hours and varied teacher qualifications, translanguaging offers a means to make English lessons more accessible and enjoyable, thereby sustaining students' interest and positive attitudes toward language learning.

Practical Challenges of Implementing Translanguaging

Despite its pedagogical potential, the implementation of translanguaging is not without challenges, as reflected in the third theme. Teachers reported the need for heightened patience, increased physical and emotional energy, and the difficulty of managing diverse student needs. These challenges align with previous findings that translanguaging requires more than spontaneous language switching—it necessitates thoughtful planning, linguistic awareness, and adaptive classroom management (Creese and Blackledge, 2010).

One of the main concerns voiced by the teachers was the additional cognitive and emotional labor involved in using three languages—English, Bima, and Indonesian—during instruction. This multilingual juggling demands not only proficiency in each language but also the ability to decide when and how to use each language effectively to support learning outcomes. As Ofelia et al. (2017) argue, translanguaging pedagogy is not a prescriptive method but a flexible orientation that demands professional judgment and cultural sensitivity from teachers.

Another significant challenge is the lack of training and institutional support for translanguaging pedagogy. Most teacher education programs in Indonesia do not yet systematically incorporate translanguaging theories or practices, leaving teachers to rely on intuition and experience. This often results in inconsistent or unsystematic use of students' home languages, which may limit the full benefits of translanguaging. Hornberger and Link (2012) emphasize the need for systemic support, including curriculum development and assessment strategies, to empower teachers to adopt translanguaging in informed and effective ways.

Moreover, there is still a persistent belief among some educators and stakeholders that using the L1 in English classrooms may hinder English acquisition. This misconception, rooted in monolingual ideologies, overlooks the growing body of evidence demonstrating that translanguaging enhances rather than obstructs language learning (Lewis et al., 2012).

Changing such mindsets requires not only empirical research but also advocacy and awareness-raising efforts at both school and policy levels.

Finally, the challenge of classroom management in a multilingual and playful environment was highlighted by teachers. Teaching young learners requires integrating play-based strategies, emotional regulation, and attention to learning moods. Adding the complexity of translanguaging into this already demanding setting can lead to teacher burnout if not supported adequately. As such, the success of translanguaging implementation depends not only on individual teacher efforts but also on institutional frameworks that promote teacher well-being and professional development.

To sum up, this discussion has explored how translanguaging supports student understanding and engagement while also presenting challenges for educators in multilingual primary education. Teachers in this study demonstrated that translanguaging is not only a practical tool but also a relational act that values students' linguistic identities. However, to sustain and expand its implementation, greater institutional support, teacher training, and a shift in pedagogical paradigms are urgently needed. Translanguaging, when fully embraced, offers a pathway toward more equitable, inclusive, and effective English language education in elementary schools.

CONCLUSION

The results indicate that educators view translanguaging as a successful pedagogical approach to enhance understanding, especially for students with minimal English experience. Educators purposefully employed students' native language (Bima) to elucidate vocabulary and sentence structures, so enhancing the accessibility and significance of English instruction. These methods correspond with theoretical frameworks that regard translanguaging as a resource-based pedagogy, utilizing students' comprehensive linguistic repertoires to facilitate learning. Moreover, educators saw that translanguaging enhanced student engagement, enjoyment, and readiness to communicate during instruction. Translanguaging fostered inclusive and culturally responsive learning environments by confirming students' linguistic identities and integrating familiar languages into instruction, so enhancing emotional comfort and cognitive engagement. These advantages are particularly vital in basic environments, when emotional variables significantly impact language learning. The execution of translanguaging presents some obstacles. Educators indicated a necessity for heightened patience, emotional investment, and pedagogical adaptability in delivering education in English, Indonesian, and Bima. The lack of formal training and institutional support for translanguaging exacerbates its incorporation into everyday teaching methods. In the absence of explicit norms or professional development, educators may depend exclusively on intuition, which could constrain the pedagogical efficacy of translanguaging.

In conclusion, although translanguaging has significant potential for improving EFL education in multilingual elementary classrooms, its effective application necessitates institutional support. Teacher education programs must include translanguaging theories and practices into their curricula. Educational policies ought to acknowledge translanguaging as a legitimate and efficacious instructional strategy. Ultimately, educational institutions ought to cultivate supportive atmospheres that enable educators to innovate both linguistically and pedagogically. Translanguaging can realize its potential as a transformative technique for egalitarian, inclusive, and engaging English language teaching for young learners in Indonesia.

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