

## Exploring the role of translanguaging in learning Indonesian as a foreign language: Practices and implications

Nurvita Anjarsari

Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Corresponding Author. Email: [nurvita@uny.ac.id](mailto:nurvita@uny.ac.id)

### Abstract

The role of the first language in learning a second language has recently been causing pros and cons. Various studies have proven that the use of the first language tends to provide negative transfer in second language learning than positive transfer. On the other hand, some research shows that the use of this first language has an important role and facilitates students to be able to master a second language or a foreign language as well. One of the important roles of the first language in mastering the second language is known as the concept of translanguaging. Translanguaging provides a new perspective on the debate over the use of the first language in the second language. This article aims to explore the role of translanguaging in learning Indonesian as a foreign language at Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta (UNY). The research method used is descriptive qualitative. The research subjects were foreign language speakers in the beginner-level class in 2021. The results showed that there are five types of translanguaging and three functions of translanguaging that are used as interactions between the first language and the second language. The implications of the practice of translanguaging at UNY are effective and optimal to help students as a new strategy in learning BIPA because it can be used to motivate and analyze students' problems in mastering Indonesian as a foreign language.

### Keywords:

translanguaging,  
Indonesian as a  
foreign language,  
learning Indonesian

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## INTRODUCTION

Learning Indonesian for speakers of foreign languages up to the present tend to use monolingual approach. Monolingual approach is the practice of one language as a bridge for learning a foreign language or target language. This monolingual principle regulates that input or communication in foreign language learning must always use the foreign language, both teachers and students (Macaro, 2005).

Based on research conducted by Wei & Garcia (2014) in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, foreign language teaching preferred monolingual practice by using the direct method, which applied foreign languages in learning. Furthermore, in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the audiolingual method developed based on the theory of behaviorism to enhance foreign language teaching through repetition. After that, communicative teaching methods were introduced that focused on interactions in foreign languages. These methods tend to use a monolingual approach.

The use of this monolingual approach somehow turned out to have several weaknesses. This was revealed by Wang (2019) that the monolingual approach causes many misunderstandings between teachers and students which will reduce the professionalism of the institution. Furthermore, Wang (2019) emphasized that this monolingual class is not only ineffective but also makes students disappointed and even demotivated them. The monolingual approach requires teachers to communicate only in a foreign or target language. Thus, students are also prohibited from using other

languages. In the case of beginner-level learners, this, of course, has implications for the interactions that appear in the class to be one-way only. Learning will be centered on the teacher (teacher oriented). In fact, the purpose of language learning is essentially to help learners to be able to communicate appropriately according to the context (student-oriented). Therefore, the monolingual approach causes communication between teachers and students to be more difficult and results in mastering a foreign language longer. On the other hand, students also cannot use the potential of their first language repertoire which can be used as capital for learning a foreign language.

Learning a foreign language involves the learner's first language linguistics repertoire, or more precisely, linguistics knowledge of the previous language mastered by the learner. As explained by García (2011), the success of learning a foreign language cannot be separated from the linguistic knowledge of the learner's first language. This is also closely related to multilingual contexts. Multilingualism is a reconceptualization of communication strategies used by multilinguals, both in classroom and social contexts, using their linguistics repertoire to gain knowledge, interpret other people's opinions, and create communication by using the languages they already mastered (Li, 2011; García & Li, 2014). In addition, it is also reinforced by the statement that the success of learning a second language is strongly influenced by the knowledge or system of the learner's first language (Dulay, et al., 1982; Lado, 1957; Weinreich, 1979; Corder, 1992; Brown, 2005).

The multilingual context is the beginning of the translanguaging model. The concept of translanguaging was discovered around the end of the 20th century. At that time, an education expert, Cen Williams introduced the term "trwasiethu" which is translated equivalently in English to translanguaging (Conteh, 2019). Translanguaging has become increasingly popular as its involvement has been recognized as a highly influential feature of successful foreign language learning. On the other hand, translanguaging is defined as a process of forming meaning, creating experiences, and gaining knowledge by using two languages (Baker, 2011).

Translanguaging is also similar to activating the speakers' multilingualism to enhance their language skills. A multilingual speaker has far more linguistics repertoire than a monolingual speaker and is more experienced at learning a new language. Furthermore, translanguaging utilizes positive transfers from the learner's first language to the target language (Conteh, 2019). Another definition of translanguaging is a multilingual context consisting of oral and written language interactions (García, 2009). In line with previous opinions, translanguaging is a tribute to the existence of the first/previous language mastered by the learner that uses it in class (Hall & Cook, 2012). Meanwhile, a more complex definition was conveyed by Wei & Garcia (2014) that translanguaging is an approach to language use, bilingualism, and bilingual education which considers the practice of using two languages not as two separate language systems a traditional way, but as a linguistic repertoire with socially constructed features. Translanguaging according to Garcia (2013) is not only limited to bilingualism, translation, and code-switching but also relates to language maintenance and language sustainability in which practically there is interaction with the social context in the target language.

Discussing the types of translanguaging, Saputra (2014) found that there are five types of translanguaging: 1) intra-sentential translanguaging, 2) inter-sentential translanguaging, 3) insertion translanguaging, 4) entire translanguaging, and 5) congruent lexicalization translanguaging. Intra-sentential translanguaging is a type of translanguaging at the clause level. Meanwhile, inter-sentential translanguaging is a type of translanguaging at the level of words and phrases. In addition, this type of insertion translanguaging occurs in lexical items from one language into another. On the other hand, the entire translanguaging type is the occurrence of translanguaging at the level of the entire sentence or utterance. And finally, the type of congruent lexicalization translanguaging occurs when there is an exchange of levels of grammatical structures used in the two languages.

Research related to translanguaging, was conducted by Zhou and Mann (2021) conducted a study entitled "Translanguaging in A Chinese University CLIL Classroom: Teacher Strategies and Student Attitudes" with the aim to explore translanguaging strategies used by teachers and how students' attitudes towards the strategies used. This research was conducted in a reading class at a university in China. The results of the study show the teacher's strategy in fully utilizing linguistic resources in the form of translanguaging to achieve learning objectives, which ultimately leads to the

formation of a pleasant classroom atmosphere. Students are highly motivated to be able to enhance their language skills and obtain the materials in a multilingual classroom context.

Rubinov (2021) also conducted research on translanguaging practices. In his research entitled "Making Use of Multilingualism at School: A Pedagogy of Translanguaging", the aim of this research is to practice translanguaging pedagogy when students discuss vocabulary, morphology, and syntax, to read and write, both individual task and group task. Observations of this research were carried out in Sweden with Russian speakers. The results of this study report various examples of how translanguaging practices are carried out by students, at various levels of language proficiency, how they express and discuss ideas, work in groups to create projects, and the results show that group work has a significant positive impact, and the role of the teacher is very important to organize and conduct the students' activity.

Furthermore, Hungwe (2019) observed "Using A Translanguaging Approach in Teaching Paraphrasing to Enhance Reading Comprehension in First-Year Students". The purpose of this research is to show how paraphrasing is used as a strategy that can be combined with a translanguaging approach to instruct students how to read and comprehend texts. The research subjects were first-year medical students. The results of the study show that teachers can help students to use translanguaging and paraphrasing as metacognitive strategies to help improve their understanding of texts. The use of the translanguaging approach is proven to improve the results of their paraphrasing and learning objectives can be achieved.

Another research was conducted by Michael & Haibo (2022) entitled "A Translanguaging Approach to Bilingual Theorising in Postgraduate Researchers' Education". The subjects of this study were Chinese bilingual researchers and their advisors, and the aim of the research was to find out the potential and practice of multilingualism and their capacities. As a result, these researchers always carry out translanguaging in their academic activities, including mentoring, interviews, presentations, and scientific writing. By practicing translanguaging, bilingual postgraduate researchers can improve their bilingual theoretical abilities to build a multilingual and multicultural intellectual space for successful communication.

On the other hand, Subin (2022) conducted a study entitled "Translanguaging....Or Trans-Foreign-Language?: A Comprehensive Content And Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) Teaching Model With Judicious And Principled L1 Use". The research subjects were students of class X whose L2 was English and L1 was German. This study aims to answer doubts about whether students who have language limitations or inadequate language can fully experience the benefits of translanguaging. Then a model was created to accommodate students' needs so that all knowledge could be accessed by students using a combination of three models namely comprehensive, CLIL, and differentiated learning. As a result, this model can be a learning model that integrates the use of L1 in various contexts as a basis for learning.

Another study was conducted by Aini (2020) entitled "An Arabic Text as Content in An Indonesian EFL Setting: Trans-language" which observed students' perceptions about the use of Arabic texts as a source in learning English as a foreign language using a translanguaging approach. This research was conducted in schools with the data source in the form of Arabic textbooks. The results of the study show that students can improve their mastery of English vocabulary, understand conversation, and improvise the use of grammar, especially those related to tenses, translation, and routine use of English.

Putrawan (2022) conducted research entitled "Translanguaging Practices in EFL Classrooms: Evidence from Indonesia" which discusses the perspectives of English learners as a foreign language on translanguaging practices in class with data sources or references in the form of articles that have been published based on the conditions certain requirements that must be met, such as 1) research methods, 2) positive and negative impacts of translanguaging, and 3) perceptions and attitudes towards the use of translanguaging. The results of the research show that most of these studies use a qualitative approach. The benefits of translanguaging are felt by both teachers and students, but with a note that the first language is used wisely. Translanguaging that occurs uses Indonesian, English, and local language practices. The use of translanguaging is generally agreed upon by teachers and students because it has a positive impact on foreign language learning.

From the explanation above, translanguaging has positive impacts on second language learning. However, there is still no study that observes the role of translanguaging and its impact on learning Indonesian as a foreign language. Therefore, this study aims to explore the role of translanguaging used by international students at Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta in learning Indonesian as a foreign language. In addition, this research also determines the impact of translanguaging in learning Indonesian as a foreign language. This research has an element of novelty and has positive implications, especially for Indonesian as a foreign language compared to previous studies. In addition, this research can be used to increase motivation and enhance students' language skills by using their linguistic repertoire.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

The design of method used in this research is qualitative research methods. Qualitative research according to Cresswell (2014) is a specific tradition in social science, which focuses on the exploration of the meaning of individuals or groups. Qualitative research tries to understand and interpret human and social behavior by participants in a particular social setting. To explore and investigate the role of translanguaging, this present study adapted aspects and features of a case study research design. A case study is a kind of qualitative research design that focuses on a single unit, such as one individual, one group, one organization, or one program (Ary et al., 2009). It implies a single occurrence of something that the researcher is interested in examining. Case studies are able to answer descriptive questions about why something happened by looking at the process (Ary et al., 2009).

The participants of this research are foreign students who study the Indonesian language at Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta, Indonesia. There were 28 participants ages ranging from 19 to 25 years. In addition, all participants' level of Indonesian language was beginner. Considering the purpose of the study, the participants were selected by using purposive sampling.

The techniques used in this qualitative research are observation (interactive) and interview. Cresswell (2014) mentioned four kinds of data collection techniques for qualitative study. There are observations, interviews, documents, and audiovisual materials. To explore the role of translanguaging practices and their impacts, this present study involved data collection from different methods, observation, and interviews.

Observation is used by the researcher to record whatever happens during the study, especially the language that used by the teacher and the students in Indonesian as a foreign language classroom, for example, while discussing the topic, explain the materials, greetings, asking and answering the students, giving some feedbacks, and others activity. The most important thing, the respondents were not aware of the recording or observation. On the other hand, the interview conducted in this research focuses to gather data from participants about the reason for using translanguaging in the classroom. In the present study, the researcher applied unstructured and open-ended questions to the participants. The data has been collected for two weeks in late April 2021. Both observation and interview were transcribed into a written conversation using Microsoft Word.

The next step is data analysis. Data analysis in qualitative research involves comprehending the phenomenon, synthesizing information, explaining relationships, theorizing about how and why the relationships appear, and reconnecting new knowledge that is already known (Ary et al., 2009). After transcribing the data, the researcher discovered the role of translanguaging and classified the practices and their implications. In the last step, the writer explained and interpreted the findings based on the role of translanguaging and its implications for foreign students. Regarding validity, the triangulation of data was conducted through multiple sources including interviews with the experts and field notes.

## **FINDINGS**

According to the data from observation and the interview found in this recent study, there were five types of translanguaging used by the participants in learning Indonesian as a foreign language. Those types of translanguaging are described as follows.

**Table 1. Types of Translanguaging**

Types of Translanguaging	Number of Appearances	Percentages
Inter-sentential TL	28	25%
Intra-sentential TL	37	34%
Insertion TL	15	14%
Entire TL	18	16%
Congruent Lexicalization TL	12	11%

Table 1 represents the types of translanguaging (TL) that occur based on the data of the research. There are the number of appearances and percentages as well which can be seen in the table above. First, the biggest number is intra-sentential TL, which has 37 appearances with 25% percentage. The second is inter-sentential TL with 28 appearances and 25% percentages. The third is the entire TL with 18 appearances and 16% percentage, followed by insertion TL with 15 appearances and 14% percentage. The last type is congruent lexicalization TL with 12 number appearances and 11% percentages.

### Types of Translanguaging

This section explains the findings of the research by dividing it into five categories: inter-sentential translanguaging, intra-sentential translanguaging, insertion translanguaging, entire translanguaging, and congruent lexicalization translanguaging.

#### Inter-sentential Translanguaging

Inter-sentential translanguaging occurs outside the sentence or the clause level. The examples below are some of the foreign students' inter-sentential translanguaging in the classroom.

*Mungkin pukul 12 ya!* But how many paragraphs do I have to write?  
 ((May be at 12! but how many paragraphs i have to write?))

The speaker is talking about the time of their meeting. He informs me that he will come at 12 pm, and then asks how many paragraphs he had to write. In this context, he uses Indonesian in the first utterance, and he changes his language to English in the second utterance. This data is identified as inter-sentential translanguaging since the language alternation happens in different utterances, at clause level from Indonesian to English.

*Terima kasih, вы тоже красивая очень очень.*  
 ((Thank you, you are also very beautiful.))

In the first utterance, the speaker says in Indonesian that she responds to the hearer by saying thanks because the hearer said that she is beautiful. Then, she uses Russian in the second utterance, which means you are also very beautiful as feedback to the hearer's compliment. This example is identified as inter-sentential translanguaging since the alternation language occurs in different clauses.

- S: *Memeriksakan? Apa itu ya? Root word?* ((Memeriksakan? What is that? The root word?))  
 T: *Periksa. Kata dasar "periksa" dan afiks me-kan, memeriksakan.* ((Periksa. The root word is periksa, and the affix is me-kan, so memeriksakan))  
 S: Ok, thank you.

The student asks the teacher by using inter-sentential translanguaging. In the beginning, the student uses Indonesian, but at the final position, it changes to English by saying "root words?". The same case occurs in the final utterances when the student responds to the feedback from the teacher by saying, ok thank you in English.

### ***Intra-sentential Translanguaging***

Intra-sentential translanguaging occurs within a sentence or a clause. I use the term Matrix Language as language in which the words are more frequently used in speech. While Embedded Language is the term of language in which the words are not dominant as Matrix Language. The foreign students' intra-sentential translanguaging from the data shown in the following example.

*Examnya akan mulai hari apa?*  
((When will the exam starts?))

There is only one English word in this utterance which is *examnya* but it is influenced by Indonesian. The exam is an English word and it is categorized as a noun. The suffix *-nya* is an Indonesian suffix used by the speaker to express the definite object. The function of this suffix is the same as the English definite article 'the'. The speaker blends the two languages in the word *examnya*.

### ***Insertion Translanguaging***

Insertion translanguaging often occurs to highlight lexical units from one language into another. The data is shown in the following example.

Is there any difference between “*mau*” and “*ingin*”?  
Same *lah*, no difference, same meaning.

The example above described the insertion translanguaging since the student used the words “*mau*” and “*ingin*” in the first language. The function of this insertion is to find out the meaning of these words. Literally, these insertions help the student to understand the meaning of vocabulary. Another function is discovered in the following sentence, the student, in this case, used the lexical word in the foreign language “*lah*”. The function of insertion translanguaging in the second sentence is to reinforce the statement.

### ***Entire Translanguaging***

The fourth type is entire translanguaging. The students tend to use entire translanguaging to build communication with the teacher. Since the students and the teacher shared the same linguistic repertoire, this translanguaging was used as a communication bridge. The data is shown below.

How do we say going up?  
How to say no to this question?  
What should we answer? What is the meaning of this word?  
Can you help me with this homework?

From the data above, entire translanguaging is used by the students to communicate with the teacher. Entire translanguaging can help the students understand well the meaning of vocabulary in a foreign language.

### ***Congruent Lexicalization Translanguaging***

Congruent lexicalization translanguaging is a condition that there are no structural constraints since all that is involved (word insertion) is into one single syntactic structure. In other words, the two languages share a grammatical structure that can be filled lexically with elements or units from other languages. The data is shown below.

It means from *Selasa* until *Sabtu*, yes yes the *dokter ada* di hospital.  
((It means from Tuesday until Saturday, yes the doctor is in the hospital))

The student tried to answer the question by using congruent lexicalization translanguageing. The student speaks two languages, Indonesian and English in one single syntactic structure “from Selasa until Sabtu” and “the dokter ada di hospital”.

## **DISCUSSION**

According to the data displayed above, the activities that involve translanguageing in Indonesian as a foreign language class such as giving a response to the teacher’s question, group discussions, interaction with other foreign students, and asking difficult terms. The function of using translanguageing during the learning process was to make the students understand the lesson without any difficulties. According to Garcia & Li (2014), translanguageing is recognized as a very influential feature of the success of learning a foreign language. This is proven to help students, for example, in understanding the meaning of a word.

In a learning context, it is often found that vocabulary in a foreign language is very difficult for students to understand, especially at the beginner level. Their vocabularies are still very limited, causing a barrier to understand the meaning. Therefore, translanguageing is highly needed to help students understand the vocabulary in a foreign language. For example, students ask the teacher as follows. "What should we answer, in language? What is help in language? And homework is?". With the use of translanguageing, it can be used as a bridge or as a *lingua franca* to improve students' Indonesian language skills. This is in accordance with the statement expressed by Conteh (2019) which states that the learner's first language is used for its existence in the target language that he wants to master. Likewise with the opinion of Baker (2011). In line with Conteh, Baker (2011) emphasized that translanguageing is a process of constructing words to understand the meaning, creating experiences, and gaining knowledge by using two languages.

The use of translanguageing also has a positive impact on creating class more enjoyable. Beginner students usually have limited vocabulary, they tend to be passive and result in teacher oriented. This causes the class to become monotonous and students also become bored and not interested in language learning because they are not involved in the learning activities. In fact, to master a second language, students need to be active in practicing their language skills. The participants in this study revealed that the use of translanguageing has an important role in creating the class more enjoyable. Translanguageing creates interaction or communication between teachers and students which makes the class more enjoyable. This of course has a positive impact in achieving learning objectives. As stated by Zhou and Mann (2021), translanguage has a positive effect on achieving learning goals, which ultimately leads to the formation of a pleasant classroom atmosphere. Students are highly motivated to be able to improve their language proficiency and obtain relevant material for learning with a multilingual classroom atmosphere. Likewise with the results of Hungwe's research (2019) which state that translanguageing is proven to enhance their skill in paraphrasing and learning objectives can be achieved.

The role of translanguageing has a great impact to minimize errors, and ambiguity, whether in practicing pronunciation or practicing the use of grammar. This role helps students from the beginning to understand the intent or explanation of the teacher regarding the rules of word spelling and grammar. However, if students tend to difficult to understand the teacher's explanation of the material from the start, this will have an impact on their language use skills and lead to many errors. In terms of pronunciation, for example, in the following data, the student pronounces "Tendin" for "Tendean" because of a negative transfer from the learner's first language. Of course, the teacher needs to explain the correct pronunciation by comparing the learner's first language system with Indonesian.

Based on the explanation above, the implications of using translanguageing can be used as a new approach in learning foreign languages since translanguageing plays a role in increasing the motivation of students. The existence of a conducive and fun class, two-way interaction, and media to be able to understand learning material well has a positive impact on increasing student motivation and interest in mastering a foreign language. In addition, the implications of the role of translanguageing can then analyze the problems faced by students so that mastery of foreign languages can be achieved optimally.

## CONCLUSION

From the results and discussion above, we can conclude that translanguaging that occurs in the foreign student's classroom is at the level of word, phrase, and sentence, and the results in this study, which is a common linguistics phenomenon in Indonesia, a multicultural country where bilingual or multilingual often interact more than just one language or variety in everyday communication. Foreign students as multilingual, often use translanguaging in any context. there are five types of translanguaging and three functions of translanguaging which are used as interactions between the first language and the second language. The implications of the practice of translanguaging have proven to be effective and help students as a new strategy in learning Indonesian as a foreign language because it can be used to motivate and analyze students' problems in mastering Indonesian as a foreign language. However, the findings obtained in this study lead to suggestions for further research, for instance, the investigation of the role of translanguaging in individual differences such as learning aptitude, learning strategies, and developing a translanguaging-based learning model.

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