

CHALLENGES AND PEDAGOGICAL STRATEGIES IN IMPLEMENTING TRANSLANGUAGING AMONG INDONESIAN EFL TEACHERS: A CASE STUDY

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Article Info	Abstract
Article History Received: March 2025 Revised: August 2025 Accepted: September 2025 Published: October 2025	<i>This study investigates the challenges and strategies faced by Indonesian EFL teachers in implementing translanguaging pedagogy in their classrooms. Translanguaging, which involves using multiple languages in the learning process, offers both opportunities and difficulties in multilingual contexts. The purpose of the study is to explore EFL teachers' challenges and how they manage translanguaging in the classroom. A qualitative case study was used in order to explain the use of translanguaging. The study conducted with three junior high school EFL teachers, the research employed classroom observations and semi-structured interviews. The findings revealed several challenges, including students' over-reliance on their native languages, lack of clear translanguaging policies, and insufficient exposure to English, which hindered language development. Teachers faced difficulty in balancing English use and students' reliance on their daily languages, with some struggling to establish consistent rules for translanguaging. To address these issues, teachers implemented strategies such as setting clear classroom rules, encouraging English practice outside the classroom, and gradually increasing English exposure in lessons. However, the study highlighted the lack of clear strategies and support from institutional policies, making it difficult for teachers to effectively manage translanguaging. It can be implied that without clear institutional policies and targeted teacher training, the potential benefits of translanguaging in EFL classrooms may not be fully realized, as teachers struggle to balance English exposure with students' use of their native languages.</i>
Keywords Challenges; EFL Teachers; Strategies; Translanguaging;	
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INTRODUCTION

Many English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers frequently problematize the practices of using languages among their students in the English Language Teaching (ELT) classroom (Xu & Krulatz, 2023). In the context of language used in the classroom, it is known as “translanguaging,” a pedagogical approach to support multilingual learners by utilizing their abilities in several languages. Translanguaging often serves as a teacher resource but can also present problems in ELT settings. Rasheed (2017) explored that teachers in multilingual classrooms may struggle to manage varied linguistic backgrounds. It can lead to challenges in ensuring that instructional materials are accessible to all students, maintaining consistent communication, and effectively addressing the different proficiency levels. This complexity of translanguaging can affect teachers' ability to teach, ultimately impacting the overall efficacy of ELT. Therefore, there is a need to explore the topic of translanguaging in order to gain more insight into the impact of translanguaging, especially in ELT classrooms.

The study underlined the topic of translanguaging because it is essential due to the rise of multilingual education, which necessitates examining teachers' practices on translanguaging in ELT settings. Examining how teachers utilize translanguaging in ELT settings is essential, as this can determine if multilingualism is a beneficial or challenging issue (Xu & Krulatz, 2023). Furthermore, addressing and understanding translanguaging challenges or practices are crucial for policymakers and English language practitioners in conducting teaching and learning (Silwal, 2021). Therefore, seeking a practices of translanguaging among EFL teachers is important to identifying how teachers deal with multilingualism and how they utilize it in the class.

Translanguaging in EFL teaching has gained significant attention from previous researchers, emphasizing its potential benefits and challenges. For instance, Sobkowiak (2022) highlights that Polish EFL teachers employ translanguaging to clarify complex concepts and foster a more interactive classroom environment despite resistance from proponents of monolingual teaching. Anderson (2022) finds that flexible language use as translanguaging facilitates student participation and exam success, suggesting a shift from monolingual policies. Nugraheni et al. (2023) demonstrate that Indonesian EFL teachers' positive attitudes towards translanguaging influence their classroom practices, promoting the use of local languages alongside English to enhance learning. Finally, Triastuti et al. (2023) show that incorporating translanguaging in Indonesian ESP courses aids vocabulary retention and student interaction. These studies underscore the importance of recognizing the potential of translanguaging to create more effective, inclusive, and engaging EFL teaching strategies.

Although previous research has examined translanguaging, a gap needs to be explored more in translanguaging in ELT settings. Sobkowiak (2022), Anderson (2022), Yolanda et al. (2024), and Triastuti et al. (2023) underlying the gaps do not elaborate on how the strategies of the teachers to manage challenges the multilingual ability of the ELT settings. A study needs to focus on how teachers perceived translanguaging and managed multilingualism in ELT settings. It is intended to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the practice of multilingualism in ELT classrooms. While these studies acknowledge the existence of multilingual classrooms, they provide limited insights into the practical, classroom-based strategies employed by teachers to address linguistic diversity. Furthermore, there is insufficient discussion on how these strategies are adapted to different cultural and institutional contexts. This lack of specificity creates an incomplete understanding of how translanguaging can be effectively implemented to support both language development and subject learning. However, based on the gaps explained, this topic still needs more exploration by researchers in order to gain intention on how the teachers should use and manage languages in ELT classrooms. Therefore, based on the problems and the gaps the study examines these research questions: 1) What challenges did Indonesian EFL teachers face when implementing translanguaging pedagogy? 2) What strategies did Indonesian EFL teachers use to overcome the above challenges? The study expected in order to give more clear opportunity in using translanguaging in EFL classroom more structurely.

Literature Review

The Definition of Translanguaging

Translanguaging originated in the 1990s with Cen Williams, who used the Welsh term "trawsieithu" or "translation" to describe the practice of alternating languages for learning in bilingual Welsh/English classrooms. Translanguaging is a concept in multilingual education that views languages as an integrated system rather than separate entities (Zheng & Peng, 2022). Translanguaging supports a more inclusive and equitable language learning environment by allowing bilingual individuals to use language authentically and naturally. Furthermore, in recent years, translanguaging refers to people utilizing their entire linguistic repertoire to communicate and make sense of their bilingual worlds (García & Kleifgen, 2019).

Based on the experts, translanguaging can be defined as bilingual or multilingual people using all of their language skills to communicate and learn, helping to create more inclusive and supportive learning environments.

Translanguaging is a pedagogical approach that utilizes learners' entire linguistic repertoire to enhance language and content learning in multilingual contexts (Cenoz & Gorter, 2021). This approach involves using multiple languages within a single conversation or lesson, enhancing comprehension and engagement. For multilingual students, translanguaging helps bridge the gap between their home language and the language of instruction, making learning more accessible and meaningful. It recognizes and values all the languages students bring into the classroom, fostering a more inclusive and supportive learning environment. This method not only aids in language development but also deepens content understanding, as students can use their complete linguistic resources to engage with the material (Silwal, 2021). Furthermore, teachers implementing translanguaging strategies can better connect with students, making the material more relatable and accessible. Therefore, translanguaging is significant in helping learning, especially in multilingual settings.

Translanguaging, as García suggests, is an approach in multilingual classrooms where students use all their languages together to improve learning and understanding. Instead of separating languages, translanguaging lets students draw on everything they know linguistically to grasp new concepts, participate more fully, and express their ideas in a way that feels natural to them. This approach recognizes that multilingual students have unique language skills and experiences, which can be valuable tools for learning. Based on the García & Lin (2017) there are several forms of translanguaging such as translation, transliteration, code-switching and code-mixing.

In Indonesia, translanguaging is very useful because people use many languages, such as local languages, Bahasa Indonesia, and foreign languages at school. With translanguaging, students can use all the languages they know to understand lessons, connect new knowledge with what they already know, and explain ideas more easily. For example, in an English class, the teacher can let students discuss in their local language or Bahasa Indonesia first, then present the results in English. This way, students can learn better, appreciate local languages, and make learning more inclusive.

Challenges in using Translanguaging

Translanguaging in multilingual classrooms faces several challenges that hinder its adoption and implementation. Many teachers are unsure how to integrate it into their teaching practices, and there is often a lack of understanding of how to support students in developing their translanguaging skills. According to García and Wei (2014), teachers may find it difficult to balance the use of translanguaging in the classroom. Additionally, they often struggle to reconcile the goal of fostering students' bilingual capabilities with the demands of traditional academic assessments that prioritize standardized language norms (García & Wei, 2014). Moreover, institutional policies that favor monolingual practices further limit the potential for translanguaging to flourish in educational settings (Rosiers, 2018). Addressing these barriers requires targeted teacher training, supportive policies, and assessment reforms that value linguistic diversity.

There is a concern that translanguaging might undermine the dominance of certain languages, particularly in regions where national or colonial languages are prioritized (Ali & Azim, 2024). Excessive reliance on translanguaging could reduce learners' exposure to the dominant language, potentially affecting their proficiency and socio-economic mobility. In multilingual classrooms, translanguaging can provide support for accessing meaning and instruction, and enable relationship-building through translingual caring. However, it may also lead to exclusion and aggression among students (Qin & Llosa, 2023). While translanguaging

fosters inclusivity for some learners, it can also be weaponized—intentionally or unintentionally—when certain language choices marginalize peers or reinforce social divisions. Therefore, effective implementation of translanguaging requires careful planning and sensitivity to the linguistic dynamics within the classroom.

Additionally, socio-political factors—such as the tension between multilingualism and monolingual education systems—further complicate the acceptance of translanguaging as a pedagogical approach (Bonnin & Unamuno, 2021). While translanguaging offers opportunities for inclusivity and deeper learning, it also presents potential drawbacks, including L1 interference and confusion in communicative structures (Ranjit, 2024), dependency on the native language, and limited exposure to English (Deniega & Neri, 2024). These challenges suggest that the effectiveness of translanguaging depends not only on teachers' pedagogical strategies but also on the broader educational and policy contexts that shape language use in classrooms.

In Indonesia, the implementation of translanguaging in multilingual classrooms faces several challenges. Many teachers are unfamiliar with how to apply translanguaging effectively, as most are trained within a monolingual teaching framework that prioritizes Bahasa Indonesia or English in formal education. Institutional policies and curriculum standards often emphasize standardized language norms, limiting the space for flexible language use. This can make teachers hesitant to integrate local languages alongside the language of instruction, fearing it may reduce students' exposure to English or Bahasa Indonesia and affect their academic performance. These factors together create a challenging environment for adopting translanguaging as a sustainable and effective teaching approach in Indonesia.

Previous Studies

The study "Translanguaging in Academic Writing Classroom: A Case Study of EFL Pre-Service Teachers' Perception" by Yolanda, Setyaningsih, and Drahati (2024) looks at how EFL pre-service teachers feel about using translanguaging in academic writing classes. The teachers had a positive view, seeing translanguaging as a helpful tool to improve their writing skills. They found that using multiple languages helped them express complex ideas and understand academic content better. This highlights how translanguaging can be an effective teaching method for bilingual and multilingual learners, creating a more inclusive learning environment. The study suggests that using translanguaging in academic writing can support EFL learners' language and cognitive growth, preparing them for academic challenges.

Similarly, the study "Translanguaging Pedagogies in an ESP Course: A Case in Indonesia" by Triastuti, Nurkamto, and Sumardi (2023) examines how using local languages like Indonesian and Javanese alongside English helps students in Indonesian English for Specific Purposes (ESP) classrooms. It shows that using multiple languages makes it easier for students to understand and remember vocabulary and content. It also creates a more engaging and supportive classroom environment. Based on this study, translanguaging very useful approach in order to make students more engage into the classroom.

The study "The Translanguaging Practices of Expert Indian Teachers of English and Their Learners" by Anderson (2022) looks at how eight expert English teachers in India use multiple languages in their classrooms. The research found that while their practices varied, all teachers focused on encouraging student participation instead of sticking to one language. Students followed their teachers' example and used English more naturally in speaking, even while taking monolingual exams. The study suggests that schools should avoid strict language rules and allow flexible language use to include all learners.

These studies collectively highlight the positive impact of translanguaging in multilingual educational settings. They show that allowing students and teachers to use

multiple languages supports better understanding, expression, and engagement in learning, especially in EFL and ESP classrooms. However, successful implementation depends on creating supportive environments where flexible language use is encouraged rather than restricted by strict language policies.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

The study used a case study approach to explore how teachers challenges and implementation of translanguaging. A case study involves conducting a detailed examination of a specific case, which can include a program, event, activity, process, or individuals (Creswell & Poth, 2022). In this research, the focus was on multiple cases, specifically the practices of three teachers of junior high schools.

Research Participants

Purposive sampling was used to select participants who were the best fit for the research objectives, enhancing the rigor of the study. The selection criteria focused on EFL teachers with a bachelor's degree in English education, experience teaching multilingual classrooms, and willingness to share detailed insights. The purposive sampling of this study based on the steps that proposed by Creswell & Poth (2018).

Table 1
Research Participants

Teacher	Age	Degree	Teaching Experience
Teacher 1	Around 50	Bachelor's in English Education	Nearly 30 years
Teacher 2	In their 30s	Bachelor's in English Education	About 10 years
Teacher 3	In their 30s	Bachelor's in English Education (pursuing Master's)	Over 10 years

Instruments and Data Collections Procedures

When observed, this study used observation notes and audio recorded in order to get the data of practices in the classroom. The observation notes consist of detail information from each meetings of the class as long as 12 meetings for three participants. While, audio recorded used to transcript the interactions of the teachers during the class related to the challanges of translanguaging. The audio recorded using recorded tools after that transkrip manually for each observation. The observastion also recorded in notes and photo in order to improve the detail of the data. Semi-structured interview was used with more than 10 questions and other questions that asked to the participants after the observations. The interview used Creswell & Poth (2018) guidance about interview in order to improve the process of the interview.

Data Analysis

In analysing the data, thematic analysis was used to explore the participants' responses. The interview results were interpreted using the thematic analysis framework to map the beliefs and experiences of the EFL teachers regarding how they manage and utilize the translanguaging abilities of their students. According to Braun & Clarke (2021), the process involves several steps. The first step is initial preparation, where the researcher immerses themselves in the data to become familiar with it. Next, coding is done by grouping all information into possible themes. Then, developing themes involves verifying these themes with the coded extracts and the entire dataset, refining them by further dissecting or eliminating certain themes. Finally, the thematic analysis is completed by selecting relevant samples, analysing them, connecting the findings to the literature and research topic, and writing a report on the findings, followed by reflection and evaluation of the report. In the follow how the thematic analysis was used in the study.

Table 2
Thematic Analysis

Interview Excerpt	Codes	Theme
"Sometimes, students get confused when switching languages too often, and it slows down the lesson."	- Confusion from frequent language switching - Lesson pacing affected	Challenges of Managing Language Switched

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Research Findings

Translanguaging, the practice of using multiple languages in the classroom, has become an important strategy in ELT. While it can improve student engagement and understanding, teachers face several challenges when trying to use it. These challenges include concerns about relying too much on languages other than English, unclear rules for using different languages, and the risk of translanguaging becoming a habit rather than a focused learning strategy and many others. This section part discuss at the problems teachers face when using translanguaging in ELT and explores the solutions they use to overcome them. By understanding both the challenges and solutions, this research aims to show how translanguaging can be effectively used in different ELT settings.

Challenges that Indonesian EFL teachers face in implementing translanguaging Challenges

Based on the findings of the study, it found tenth challenges regarding the practices of translanguaging in the EFL classroom. Those kinds of challenges discussed in the belows sections:

Table 3
The Findings of Challenges

Main Challenges of the Teachers	Teachers
<i>The classroom relies on their daily languages</i>	Teacher 1, 2 and 3
<i>Language Policy Problem</i>	Teacher 1 and 3
<i>Lack of Strategy in Implementing Translanguaging</i>	Teacher 1 and 3
<i>Translanguaging become a habit in EFL classroom</i>	Teacher 1, 2 and 3
<i>Lack of English Exposure</i>	Teacher 1 and 2
<i>How reducing daily languages in classroom</i>	Teacher 1, 2 and 3

The classroom rely on their daily languages

Based on the observation, teachers faced similar challenges with students relying on their daily languages, regardless of their grade level. This happened because students were used to freely using any language in class. For example, when asked a question like "Who wants to answer number 2?" students would raise their hands and go to the whiteboard to write their answers without speaking English. Most students who spoke English were in the ninth grade, but they only used simple sentences and communicated with friends in their native languages. Despite the use of native language can clarify difficult concepts, especially grammar, which may enhance comprehension when used appropriately (Zhou, 2014). However, if to relying on it overuse can hinder English development if not properly managed (Kavaliauskienė et al., 2010). Teachers did not enforce English use, allowing students to easily rely on their native languages, which led to a lack of practice and improvement in English.

Language Policy Problem

From the observation, there are no clear rules about how to use translanguaging in the ELT classroom, which allows both teachers and students to use any language freely. This leads

to students developing the habit of not using English in conversations, making them feel no obligation to use it during class. The issue is difficult to address due to students' varying language abilities and the limited time spent on English lessons in schools. Furthermore, the lack of clear guidelines from both the government and teachers causes students to rely on languages they are more comfortable with, strengthening the habit of avoiding English. In some cases, only one teacher attempts to set rules, such as requiring students to use English when asking to go to the bathroom. However, these rules are not consistently enforced, so students continue to fall back on their daily languages.

"The challenge is how to reduce the use of languages other than English, of course." (26/11/24)

In the data, the teachers is faced how to reduce this relying on the daily languages. It acknowledged that students often use their daily languages, which can limit their percentages and practice with English. This happened probably because of Lack of clear translanguaging guidelines leads to inconsistency in enforcing English use in classrooms. Teachers and students often revert to their native languages, undermining English language development (Liu & Fang, 2020). Furthurmore, this policy is important in order to achieve the target of the learning English.

Lack of Strategy in Implementing Translanguaging

From the observation, it found lack of a clear strategy for using translanguaging in the classroom that creates a big challenge for both teachers and students. Without clear rules or planning, translanguaging becomes a random mix of languages rather than a helpful tool for learning. Teachers may switch languages to help students understand, but without a plan, this can cause confusion and inconsistency. As a result, students may not benefit from translanguaging if it's not used to support their learning. In the study, only one teacher had a strategy to manage translanguaging by setting rules for students, but other teachers did not have any strategies. Without a clear strategy, students may not know when or how to use different languages in class and might not see the point of using English if they can switch to their native language freely. This leads to missed chances to improve their English skills, as students often rely on their native language instead of practicing English. When translanguaging is not used strategically, it can hold back students' progress in learning English. As Liu & Fang (2020) explored without a clear pedagogical strategy often results in random language mixing, which can confuse learners and limit its educational effectiveness. Furthurmore, only some teachers plan translanguaging use; most rely on spontaneous code-switching, which reduces its value as a structured learning aid and may lead students to undervalue English use (Rauteda, 2024).

Translanguaging become a habit in EFL classroom

Translanguaging can be helpful for EFL teachers, but it can also become a bad habit for students if there are no rules or attention given to how it's used. In interviews, teachers mentioned that students often continue using their daily language instead of focusing on the target language. They believe that as long as they understand other languages, it's not a problem if they don't fully understand English. One teacher noted,

"From the teacher himself, maybe the students find it difficult to get used to English" (26/11/24).

The data shows that students rely heavily on their native language, making it harder for them to practice English. This indicates that using too much translanguaging can become a bad habit if not properly managed. Instead of practicing English, students might keep using their native language, which can slow their progress. Furthermore, Rahayu et al., (2023) mentioned that teachers in Indonesia reported that students continue using their daily languages even during English class, as translanguaging is used habitually rather than strategically. To help students improve, teachers need to find ways to encourage more use of English in class.

Lack of English Exposure

Translanguaging can lead to students not getting enough exposure to the target language (English). When students rely too much on their first language, they miss out on learning new vocabulary, understanding grammar, and connecting with the culture behind the language. Furthermore, overuse of the native language in EFL classes reduces students' English exposure, limiting their opportunities to practice vocabulary, grammar, and spoken fluency (Liu & Fang, 2020). Without enough practice in English, students may struggle to communicate confidently or understand English in real-life situations. As one teacher mentioned:

"Yes, the challenge when we teach English, because we use various languages, so the main language, English, is what is lacking for them. Because they are dependent on using Indonesian. That is the challenge" (26/11/24).

This data highlights that students lack exposure to English because they prefer using their comfortable, everyday language. The more they rely on their native language, the harder it becomes to learn English, which means they miss opportunities to practice the language. This lack of practice is the core issue affecting their language development.

How reducing daily languages in classroom

Reducing the use of daily languages in translanguaging within the classroom is an important step in encouraging students to use English more consistently. However, this presents a challenge for teachers, as it requires finding a balance between promoting English use and ensuring students still understand the lesson. As one teacher mentioned:

"The challenge is how to reduce the use of languages other than English, of course" (26/11/24).

The data reveals that students often rely on their daily languages, which limits their opportunities to practice English. While it is essential to encourage English as the primary language, teachers must ensure that students can still follow and comprehend the lesson. The main challenge is finding effective strategies to gradually reduce the use of non-English languages while supporting students' understanding. Furthermore, Bouguerra (2024) pointed out that balancing between English-only instruction and L1 use is essential for effective learning, and teachers in multilingual classrooms are increasingly acknowledging the importance of strategic translanguaging to support comprehension without reducing English practice. By carefully managing this shift, teachers can help students improve their language skills while maintaining their comprehension. This balance is crucial in fostering a more effective and immersive language learning experience for EFL students.

Indonesian EFL teachers' strategies in overcomes the challenges that face in implementing translanguaging

Overcoming translanguaging challenges in EFL classrooms demands a nuanced understanding of both linguistic and psychological aspects of learning. Teachers must strategically balance the use of students' native languages and English to maximize comprehension while promoting immersion in the target language. One effective approach involves scaffolding instruction—initially allowing limited use of the mother tongue to clarify difficult concepts, then progressively increasing English-only interaction as students gain confidence. Establishing clear language-use expectations helps maintain consistency, while engaging classroom tasks—such as role plays, group discussions, or project-based learning—encourage authentic English communication in meaningful contexts. Additionally, teachers can leverage visual aids, gestures, and contextual clues to reduce dependency on translation. Continuous feedback and positive reinforcement further motivate learners to take linguistic risks without fear of making mistakes. By thoughtfully integrating these strategies, teachers not only mitigate the challenges of translanguaging but also foster a classroom culture where

multilingualism becomes an asset rather than an obstacle. Ultimately, addressing these challenges with sensitivity and pedagogical creativity enables a more inclusive, communicative, and effective English learning environment.

Table 4
The Overcomes Challenges

Teacher Overcomes' Challenges of the Teachers	Teachers
<i>Implementing Classroom Rules and Language Policy</i>	Teacher 2
<i>Encouraging the Use of English Outside the Classroom</i>	Teacher 1 and 3
<i>Gradually Increasing the use of English</i>	Teacher 1, 2, and 3

Implementing Classroom Rules and Language Policy

Translanguaging, or using multiple languages in the classroom, can help students learn if used correctly (Wei, 2012). To make it effective, teachers need to set clear rules to guide when and how students use their native language and English (Cinaglia & De Costa, 2022; Kirsch, 2020). From the observation, one teacher in the study made a rule that students had to ask for bathroom permission in English. This simple rule encouraged students to use English in everyday situations, helping them build confidence and practice regularly. Without clear rules, students may rely too much on their native language, which can slow their English learning. By setting expectations and creating chances to use English, teachers can help students use both languages in a balanced way and improve their skills.

Encouraging the Use of English Outside the Classroom

Encouraging students to use English outside the classroom is an important way to reduce their reliance on translanguaging. While using multiple languages in class can help with understanding, students also need to practice English in real-life situations to build confidence and fluency. Teachers can support this by suggesting activities like watching English movies, reading English books, listening to songs, or using YouTube tutorials. These activities help students learn new vocabulary and get more comfortable using English in daily life. As one teacher explained,

“The strategy, usually I try to familiarize them with new vocabulary through various ways, such as songs, movies, or reading books. Then I ask them to open YouTube because there are many tutorials from learning that they can access anywhere” (26/11/24).

This shows how teachers use outside resources to support learning, especially when classroom time and materials are limited. However, the study also found that there are few strategies used inside the classroom to reduce translanguaging. Teachers noted that differences in students' abilities and limited class time make it hard to manage language use during lessons. As a result, encouraging English practice outside the classroom becomes a key strategy to help students improve their language skills.

Gradually Increasing the use of English

The teacher also shared a strategy to reduce students' dependency on translanguaging by gradually increasing their exposure to English. One teacher explained that the goal is to slowly build an English-rich environment, starting with basic vocabulary in the first semester and then expanding it in the second semester to help students become more familiar with English. As the teacher stated,

“We try to invite the children to the English atmosphere so that maybe from a little bit the children will have additional vocabulary. usually in the second semester we give them more to start inviting them to enrich their vocabulary” (26/11/24).

This shows a step-by-step approach that helps students adjust to English while still using translanguaging when needed for support. Furthermore, gradual integration of English is a common strategy in EFL classrooms, where teachers begin with basic vocabulary in early semesters and slowly introduce more complex language, reducing the dependency on translanguaging for comprehension (Efendi & Syafryadin, 2024).

Discussion

The objectives of this study focus on how the challenges were overcome while teachers used translanguaging in the classroom. Xu and Krulatz (2023) observed that many EFL teachers often problematize the use of other languages among students in the ELT classroom, which resonates with the present findings. In this study, teachers reported key challenges, including students' over-reliance on other languages, unclear school policies, translanguaging as a habitual practice, and a lack of English exposure. These issues echo García and Wei's (2017) argument that translanguaging, while potentially beneficial, can be difficult for teachers to implement effectively. One of the most pressing issues identified here—also noted by Yilmaz (2021)—was the difficulty of balancing translanguaging with sustained exposure to English. In several cases, teachers reported refraining from teaching directly in order to ensure students heard more English, reflecting a tension between linguistic scaffolding and maximizing target-language input. From a theoretical perspective, these findings suggest that while translanguaging can function as a scaffold to support comprehension and participation, its overuse may undermine English immersion.

Furthermore, some teachers in this study perceived translanguaging as a “forced” practice rather than a strategic choice, mirroring Vikøy and Haukås's (2021) concern that translanguaging must be carefully managed to yield benefits. This challenge also connects with García and Wei's (2017) framing of translanguaging as a tool for identity negotiation—an aspect that proved difficult in linguistically diverse classrooms where students' proficiency levels varied widely. In such contexts, teachers often faced dilemmas over how to integrate translanguaging in ways that supported both language development and students' sense of linguistic identity. These findings reinforce the need for clearer pedagogical guidelines that allow teachers to leverage translanguaging as both a scaffold for learning and a means of affirming students' multilingual identities, without compromising target-language exposure.

Translanguaging in education has the potential to improve multilingual learning, but it faces challenges in teacher training and policy support. This also aligns with Garcia and Wei (2017), which are related to questions of pedagogy or a lack of resources for teachers when they have to use translanguaging. According to Silwal (2021), Translanguaging in higher education showcases the potential for multilingual learning but faces barriers in teacher preparation and policy alignment. Teacher preparation was also found in the study, where the teachers did not have any clear strategy for controlling translanguaging. Furthermore, in multilingual classrooms, there is also a reliance on the dominant language, which makes it harder to include minority languages in teaching. As Galante (2020) points out, this focus on the dominant language often leaves minority languages out, preventing students from fully benefiting from their linguistic abilities. This problem was also faced by the teachers in the study, where the class did not have any rules about when or where students and teachers use language. To make sure translanguaging works better, changes are needed in teacher training and educational policies.

Previous studies often show translanguaging as a positive approach in EFL and ESP classrooms. Yolanda, Setyaningsih, and Drajadi (2024) found that pre-service teachers used it to express complex ideas, improve understanding, and build confidence in academic writing. Triastuti, Nurkamto, and Sumardi (2023) showed that using local languages alongside English in an ESP class helped students remember vocabulary, understand lessons, and engage more.

Anderson (2022) found that expert English teachers in India used translanguaging to encourage participation and make English use more natural, even in monolingual exam settings. However, the current study shows that in junior high school EFL classrooms, teachers face challenges when using translanguaging. Problems include students relying too much on other languages, unclear school policies, and reduced English exposure. Therefore, the teacher sees translanguaging as very helpful but sometimes difficult for the class. As Xu & Krulatz (2023) determined, multilingualism or translanguaging in an EFL classroom may be beneficial or a challenging issue. Therefore, teachers need to carefully manage translanguaging so students can benefit from reducing the issues that may arise during the class.

The way the teachers overcome the problems while using translanguaging in the class is quite limited. Teachers are more likely to push students outside the classroom in order to give them more exposure to the target learning. Previous study, Paudel, (2024), explored that native language can be used for explaining difficult concepts, while the majority of classroom interaction should take place in English.

The learning English must be applied to the daily life of students; therefore, the teacher pushed the students outside the classroom because the time in the class was not enough for them. In line with the challenges, Galante (2020) mentioned that teachers may, therefore, push students to learn in ways that go beyond formal instruction. To address this, schools can create clear and flexible language policies, give teachers ongoing training on translanguaging, balance English and native language use, adjust how other languages are used, and regularly monitor the process. If done well, this can lead to a balanced use of English and native languages, better English teaching, an inclusive classroom, confident teachers, active students using multiple languages effectively, and reduced language and social gaps.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights the challenges that teachers face when implementing translanguaging and their strategies to overcome these obstacles. While it is clear that teachers encounter a variety of difficulties in balancing translanguaging with classroom dynamics, many still lack clear, structured strategies to effectively manage these challenges. To better support teachers, it is essential to develop targeted training modules that focus specifically on practical content such as classroom management techniques for translanguaging, scaffolding bilingual instruction, and designing lesson plans that integrate multiple languages seamlessly. Furthermore, institutional policy reforms play a crucial role in fostering an environment conducive to translanguaging pedagogy. Educational authorities should consider revising language policies to formally recognize translanguaging as a valid instructional approach, provide resources and support for teachers, and encourage collaborative practices among multilingual educators. By combining well-structured teacher training with supportive institutional frameworks, the challenges of implementing translanguaging can be more effectively addressed, ultimately enhancing the learning experience for multilingual students.

This study has several limitations that should be considered. First, the research was conducted with a small number of participants—only three EFL teachers from junior high schools—which may not fully represent the broader experiences of teachers across different regions or educational levels in Indonesia. The findings are specific to these cases and may not be generalizable to all ELT contexts. Second, the study relied mainly on classroom observations and interviews, which may not capture all aspects of teachers' strategies and decision-making processes in managing translanguaging. Time constraints during classroom observations also limited the ability to explore long-term effects of the strategies used. Therefore, future research should involve a larger and more diverse sample of teachers and students across various educational settings. It is also recommended that researchers use a mixed-method approach, combining observations, interviews, and surveys over a longer

period, to gain a deeper understanding of how translanguaging can be effectively managed in ELT classrooms. Additionally, policymakers and teacher training programs should provide more support and practical guidance to help teachers develop clear strategies for integrating translanguaging while maintaining focus on English language development.

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