

The Implementation of Translanguaging Used by The Teacher in Teaching English at Junior High School

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Introduction

Research Background:

- English language learning in 7th grade junior high school is very important as a foundation for students' language skills.
- Learning still faces various challenges:
 - a) Limited facilities
 - b) Low student motivation to learn languages
 - c) Materials that are not suited to students' abilities
 - d) The TBLT and CLT approaches are widely used, but they are still based on the assumption of monolingualism.
In fact, English classes in Indonesia are multilingual (Indonesian, regional languages, English).
- Translanguaging is a relevant approach because it:
 - a) Helps students understand difficult material
 - b) Increases student participation
 - c) Is in line with García & Vygotsky's theory

Introduction

Research Background (Research Gap)

- Previous studies have discussed translanguaging from various perspectives, including its role in improving communicative competence, teacher confidence, translanguaging strategies for young learners, and different types of translanguaging in EFL classrooms. However, these studies have paid less attention to how translanguaging is implemented by teachers in English classrooms at the junior high school level and the challenges teachers encounter during its implementation.
- In terms of population, most previous research has focused on university students, high school teachers, or elementary school students. In contrast, this study investigates an English teacher and seventh-grade students at SMPN 1 Candi, examining both the implementation of translanguaging and the challenges experienced in classroom practice.
- Regarding the research context, previous studies have mainly been conducted in settings such as Lesotho, Turkey, Aceh, and Sulawesi, each with different educational levels and research focuses. This study addresses that contextual gap by exploring translanguaging in English language learning at a junior high school in East Java, Indonesia, specifically at SMPN 1 Candi.

Introduction

Novelty:

- The novelty of this research lies in examining translanguaging in a seventh grade EFL classroom at a public junior high school. The study highlights how translanguaging supports students' confidence, interaction, and understanding of vocabulary and grammar, while also identifying challenges related to different levels of English proficiency.

Research Questions

1. How is the implementation of translanguaging used by the teacher in teaching English at Junior High School?
2. What factors affect the teacher's implementation of translanguaging in teaching English at Junior High School?

Research Methodology

- **Research Design**

This study employed a qualitative descriptive design to examine the implementation of translanguaging and the challenges teachers encountered in English language teaching without manipulating the learning conditions.

- **Research Setting**

The research was conducted at SMPN 1 Candi, Sidoarjo Regency, Indonesia, during March–April in the second semester of the 2025/2026 academic year. This school was selected because it provides a multilingual learning environment where translanguaging is practiced in English classrooms.

- **Research Subject**

The participants consisted of one seventh-grade English teacher, selected through purposive sampling based on experience in implementing translanguaging, and seventh-grade students taught by the selected teacher. The teacher served as the main participant, while the students participated as supporting participants to strengthen the observational and interview data related to classroom interaction.

Findings

Table 1. Examples of Observed Implementation of Translanguaging in English Teaching (Verbal Data)

No	Aspects /Indicators	Theory	Description	Meet 1	Meet 2	Teacher and students' utterances	Function
1	Dynamic Bilingualism	Gracia	Teacher and students alternate between English and Indonesian to explain meaning and maintain interaction.	✓	✓	Teacher: "Open your book please! Ayo dibuka bukunya anak-anak." Teacher: "Every night in Indonesian apa artinya? Artinya setiap malam"	Helps teacher and students communicate more effectively by using English and Indonesian language flexibly during classroom learning.
2	Unified Linguistic Repertoire	Gracia	Students and teacher use both languages as a single integrated repertoire to ask or clarify meaning.	✓	✓	Student: "Bu,when will it be held artinya apa?" Teacher: "Open your page number one hundred twenty-seven, halaman seratus dua puluh tujuh)."	Helps teacher teach students to understand the material, instructions, clarify meaning, and express their ideas during classroom interaction.
3	Translanguaging as Cognitive Process	Gracia	Teacher explains English concepts using bilingual explanations to support understanding.	✓	✓	Teacher: "Ada yang tahu artinya 'told'? ...artinya memberi tahu ya." "boils artinya mendidih"	Support students' thinking process by using first language (Indonesian) with target language (English) to improve their material comprehension.
4	Scaffolding	Vygotsky	Teacher provides step-by-step verbal support to help students construct correct language forms.		✓	Teacher: "kalau Subject nya I, you, they, we pakai verb 1 tanpa 's', and kalau Subject nya she, he, it, tetap menggunakan verb 1 jangan lupa ditambahin 's'.	Gives guided support that helps students understand material and build correct sentences in English learning.
5	Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)	Vygotsky	Teacher gives guided assistance to stretch students' ability.		✓	Teacher: "Kalau Interrogative pakai apa awalnya? Do atau Does anak-anak, Harus disesuaikan dengan subject nya."	Help students achieve higher language ability through guidance, questions, and assistance from the teacher during learning process.
6	Internalization	Vygotsky	Students produce language independently after receiving guidance.		✓	Student: "My sister eats cereals in the morning." Student: "My sister doesn't eat cereals in the morning." Student: "Does my sister eat cereals in the morning?"	Help teacher to observe the development of students' ability to use English independently after receiving explanation and guidance during learning process.

Findings

Table 2. Examples of Observed Implementation of Translanguaging in English Teaching (Nonverbal Data)

No	Aspects/ Indicators	Theory	Description	Meet 1	Meet 2	Classroom Activities	Function
1	Translanguaging Pedagogy	Gracia	Teacher designs bilingual learning activities.	✓	✓	Week 1: Teacher asks students to translate dialogue Week 2: Teacher asks students to make group discussion to create sentences from pictures.	Support the development of a bilingual learning strategy that improve students' material understanding, participation, and engagement in the classroom.
2	Translanguaging Space	Gracia	Classroom becomes a safe space where students freely use booth languages.	✓	✓	Students discuss in groups using mixed Indonesian and English during sentence-making activity.	Creates a comfortable learning environment where students can actively use both English and Indonesian language during classroom interactions.
3	Psychological Tools	Vygotsky	Teacher uses mediating tools (texts, images) to support comprehension.	✓	✓	Week 1: Text "Zebra" worksheet. Week 2: Images illustrating activities (Eating cereals, play with toy cars, read a book).	Help teacher in explaining the material more effectively through use supporting media such as texts, image, and worksheets during the learning process.
4	Semiotic Mediation	Vygotsky	Teacher uses visuals and symbols to support meaning-making.		✓	The teacher utilizes visual materials and asks students to describe what they see in the pictures.	Help students develop their creativity in constructing sentences in English through use of symbol, images, and visual media to support language learning.
5	Social Interaction	Vygotsky	Students learn through collaborative activities.		✓	Group discussion: students create (+), (-), (?) sentences together.	Help teacher encourage active classroom participation through discussion, collaboration, and interaction with classmates during learning process.
6	Appropriation	Vygotsky	Students apply language patterns after guided practice.	✓	✓	Students can answer worksheet in week 1 and week 2.	Help students practice and use English more independently during classroom activity.

Findings

Based on the interview findings, the researcher found several challenges faced by the teacher in implementing translanguaging during English learning.

- The teacher faced difficulties because students had different levels of English proficiency, and some students still struggled to understand full English instruction.
- Encouraging students to actively speak English remained challenging since many students lacked confidence and had limited vocabulary to express their ideas.
- The students still had difficulties understanding vocabulary and grammar, therefore the teacher needed to guide the students more patiently during the learning process.
- Achieving the learning objectives within the planned time became challenging because students required repeated explanations and material review.
- Limited exposure to English outside the classroom and students' fear of making mistakes influenced their confidence in speaking English.

Discussion

Main Findings

- Translanguaging supported English language learning by facilitating students' understanding of learning materials.
- The use of Indonesian and English encouraged students' active participation during classroom activities.
- Students became more confident in asking questions, expressing ideas, and collaborating with classmates.
- Translanguaging promoted both verbal interactions (teacher explanations and student responses) and nonverbal interactions (learning media, classroom environment, and social interaction).

Research Contribution

- This study provides a more comprehensive perspective by examining both verbal and nonverbal translanguaging practices.
- The study integrates García's Translanguaging Theory and Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory to explain language and cognitive development in the classroom.

Limitations

- The study was conducted in a limited classroom setting and within a short observation period.
- The research focused on qualitative classroom interactions rather than measuring students' language development quantitatively.

Conclusion

The implementation of translanguaging supported both teachers and students during English learning process. Teacher used both language (Indonesian and English) alternately to make it easier to deliver material, give instructions, and enable students to understand vocabulary and grammar better. Meanwhile, students found it easier to follow lesson and became more active in learning activity because they felt more comfortable using translanguaging (Indonesian and English language) during classroom activity. In addition to supporting students' understanding of the material, translanguaging also contributed to development of students' speaking skills. Students became more confident to asking question, expressing opinion, and trying speaking English without afraid of making mistakes. However, bot teacher and students also faced several challenges, such as differences in students' English proficiency, limited vocabulary mastery, and students' hesitation to use English during classroom activity.

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