

TRANSLANGUAGING AS STRATEGY IN IMPROVING INTERACTIONS IN EFL CLASS AMONG PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS AND TEACHER IN SD N 5 KAMPUNG BARU

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to investigate the implementation of a translanguaging strategy to improve classroom interaction in English learning. It also explored students' and teacher's perceptions of the strategy and the challenges encountered during its implementation. This study employed Classroom Action Research (CAR) conducted in two cycles consisting of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting stages. The participants were students in a junior high school English classroom. Data were collected through classroom observations, questionnaires, interviews, and a teacher's diary. The data were analyzed to examine changes in classroom interaction and participants' perceptions of translanguaging. The findings revealed that translanguaging improved classroom interaction throughout the research cycles, with the overall classroom interaction score reaching 83.58%, indicating a high level of interaction. Students became more confident and actively participated in classroom communication. Both students and the teacher expressed positive perceptions of translanguaging, reporting that it facilitated lesson comprehension and encouraged participation. However, challenges remained in balancing the use of Indonesian and English during classroom interaction. Overall, translanguaging proved to be an effective strategy for enhancing classroom interaction in English learning.

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INTRODUCTION

Classroom interaction is an essential component of the teaching and learning process, particularly in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms. Through interaction, students have opportunities to practice language skills, exchange ideas, and construct knowledge collaboratively. However, effective classroom interaction is often hindered by language barriers, especially when students are required to communicate using a language that is not their first language. Limited English proficiency may reduce students' confidence and willingness to participate in classroom activities, resulting in passive learning and limited communication between teachers and students (García & Wei, 2014). Furthermore, cultural

differences and fear of making mistakes in a foreign language can negatively affect students' engagement and classroom participation (Canagarajah, 2011).

The importance of interaction in learning is emphasized in sociocultural theory, which views learning as a socially mediated process that occurs through interaction and collaboration (Vygotsky, 1978). In EFL classrooms, meaningful interaction enables students to develop both linguistic and cognitive abilities through communication with teachers and peers. Nevertheless, many students remain reluctant to participate actively due to linguistic challenges and low self-confidence. Preliminary observations conducted in a fifth-grade English classroom at SD N 5 Kampung Baru revealed that students frequently hesitated to ask questions, express opinions, and engage in classroom discussions. As a result, classroom communication tended to be dominated by the teacher, limiting opportunities for active student participation.

One approach that has gained increasing attention in multilingual education is translanguaging. García and Wei (2014) define translanguaging as the process through which multilingual speakers utilize their entire linguistic repertoire to communicate and construct meaning. Rather than separating languages into distinct systems, translanguaging allows learners to draw on all available linguistic resources to facilitate understanding and interaction. In educational settings, translanguaging enables students to use both their first language and the target language to clarify concepts, express ideas, and participate more confidently in classroom activities. Consequently, translanguaging has the potential to create a more inclusive learning environment that values linguistic diversity and encourages active engagement.

Previous studies have reported positive outcomes associated with the implementation of translanguaging in language learning. Liando and Tatipang (2022) found that translanguaging served as an effective strategy for facilitating understanding and supporting the learning process in EFL classrooms. Similarly, Kwihangana (2021) reported that translanguaging contributed to increased student participation and engagement despite some initial discomfort with its implementation. Other studies have shown that translanguaging can improve language awareness (Motlhaka & Makalela, 2016), speaking ability (Nagy, 2018), and students' motivation to learn English (Poza, 2019). Furthermore, Conteh (2018) highlighted that translanguaging practices foster positive relationships between teachers and students by creating a supportive and collaborative learning environment.

Although previous studies have demonstrated the benefits of translanguaging in language learning, relatively few studies have specifically examined its role in improving classroom interaction within Indonesian primary school EFL contexts. Existing research has primarily focused on language acquisition, language proficiency, and general perceptions of translanguaging, while limited attention has been given to how translanguaging influences interaction between teachers and students during classroom activities. Moreover, studies employing Classroom Action Research (CAR) to investigate the effectiveness of translanguaging in enhancing classroom interaction remain scarce.

Therefore, this study aims to investigate the implementation of translanguaging as a strategy to improve classroom interaction in English learning. In addition, the study explores students' and teacher's perceptions of translanguaging and identifies the challenges encountered during its implementation. The findings are expected to contribute to the growing body of knowledge on translanguaging in EFL education and provide practical insights for teachers seeking to create more interactive and inclusive English learning environments.

METHOD

This study employed Classroom Action Research (CAR) to improve classroom interaction through the implementation of translanguaging in English learning. The study adopted the model proposed by Kemmis and McTaggart (1988), which consists of four stages: planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. The research was conducted in two cycles, with each cycle designed based on the reflection results from the previous stage. Classroom Action Research was selected because it enables teachers and researchers to identify classroom problems and implement practical solutions to enhance the teaching and learning process.

The study was conducted at SD N 5 Kampung Baru during the academic year of 2024/2025. The participants were fifth-grade students enrolled in an English class. The class was selected based on preliminary observations indicating that students experienced difficulties in participating actively during classroom interaction due to limited English proficiency and low confidence in expressing their ideas. The classroom teacher also participated in the study by collaborating in the implementation and evaluation of the translanguaging strategy.

Several instruments were used to collect the data. First, classroom observation sheets were employed to record students' classroom interaction during the implementation of translanguaging. The observation focused on students' participation, responsiveness, questioning behavior, and interaction with teachers and peers. Second, questionnaires were administered to explore students' perceptions of translanguaging. Third, semi-structured interviews were conducted with selected students and the teacher to obtain more detailed information regarding their experiences and perceptions. Finally, a teacher's diary was utilized to document reflections, challenges, and notable events throughout the implementation process.

Data were collected throughout the two research cycles. Classroom observations were conducted during each meeting to monitor students' interaction and participation. At the end of the implementation, questionnaires were distributed to all students to gather their perceptions of translanguaging. Interviews were subsequently conducted with selected students and the teacher to gain deeper insights into the benefits and challenges of the strategy. In addition, the teacher's diary was completed after each lesson to record reflections on the implementation process.

The collected data were analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Quantitative data obtained from classroom observations and questionnaires were analyzed descriptively using percentages to determine the level of classroom interaction and students' perceptions. The classroom interaction score was calculated by comparing the observed interaction indicators with the maximum possible score and converting the result into a percentage. Qualitative data obtained from interviews and the teacher's diary were analyzed through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing following Miles and Huberman's (1994) interactive model. The findings from different instruments were triangulated to enhance the validity and trustworthiness of the study.

RESULTS

The implementation of translanguaging was conducted through two cycles of Classroom Action Research. During the instructional process, students were encouraged to utilize both Indonesian and English to facilitate communication, express ideas, and understand lesson

content. Translanguaging practices included explaining unfamiliar vocabulary using Indonesian, allowing students to discuss tasks in their first language before presenting responses in English, and using bilingual explanations to clarify instructions.

The observation results showed a gradual improvement in students' participation throughout the implementation process. In the preliminary stage, many students appeared reluctant to communicate in English and frequently remained silent when asked to respond to questions. However, after translanguaging was introduced, students became more willing to participate in classroom discussions and interact with both the teacher and their peers. The use of Indonesian as a supportive linguistic resource reduced students' anxiety and enabled them to engage more actively in learning activities.

These findings support García and Wei's (2014) view that translanguaging allows learners to utilize their complete linguistic repertoire to construct meaning and facilitate communication. The strategy created opportunities for students to negotiate meaning, clarify understanding, and participate more confidently in classroom interaction.

The findings revealed a significant improvement in classroom interaction following the implementation of translanguaging. Based on classroom observation data, the overall classroom interaction score reached 83.58%, indicating a high level of interaction. Students demonstrated increased participation in asking questions, responding to teacher prompts, expressing opinions, and engaging in peer discussions.

The improvement suggests that translanguaging successfully reduced linguistic barriers that previously limited students' classroom engagement. By allowing students to draw upon their first language when necessary, they were able to communicate ideas more effectively and gradually build confidence in using English. As a result, classroom communication became more interactive and less teacher-centered.

This finding aligns with Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory, which emphasizes that learning occurs through social interaction and collaborative meaning-making. Translanguaging facilitated these interactions by providing students with linguistic support that enabled them to participate in classroom discourse more actively. The findings are also consistent with previous studies conducted by Liando and Tatipang (2022) and Kwihangana (2021), which reported that translanguaging contributes positively to student engagement and participation in EFL classrooms.

The questionnaire and interview data revealed positive perceptions from both students and the teacher regarding the implementation of translanguaging. Most students reported that translanguaging helped them understand lesson content more easily and enabled them to communicate their ideas without fear of making mistakes. Students also expressed that the strategy reduced anxiety and increased their confidence when participating in classroom activities.

Similarly, the teacher perceived translanguaging as a useful instructional strategy that facilitated communication and supported students' comprehension. According to the teacher, the use of both Indonesian and English allowed students to understand instructions more clearly and encouraged greater participation during classroom discussions. The teacher also observed that students became more responsive and willing to engage in interaction compared to the

preliminary stage.

These findings support Conteh's (2018) argument that translanguaging promotes positive relationships between teachers and students by creating an inclusive learning environment that values learners' linguistic resources. The positive perceptions also indicate that translanguaging can function as an effective pedagogical strategy for fostering student engagement and supporting language learning.

Despite its benefits, several challenges emerged during the implementation of translanguaging. One of the primary challenges was maintaining a balance between Indonesian and English during classroom interaction. Some students tended to rely excessively on Indonesian when expressing ideas, which occasionally reduced opportunities to practice English.

Another challenge involved managing the transition between languages during classroom activities. The teacher needed to carefully monitor language use to ensure that translanguaging functioned as a support mechanism rather than replacing English entirely. In addition, varying levels of English proficiency among students required the teacher to provide differentiated support to maintain active participation from all learners.

Although these challenges were identified, they did not significantly hinder the effectiveness of the strategy. Instead, they highlighted the importance of careful planning and classroom management when implementing translanguaging in EFL settings. Similar challenges have been reported in previous studies, suggesting that balancing first-language support with target-language exposure remains a critical consideration in translanguaging pedagogy.

Table 1 Classroom interaction

No.	Stage	Score (%)	Category
1.	Preliminary Stage	51.37	Low
2.	Cycle I	60.00	Moderate
3.	Cycle II	83.58	High

Table 1 presents the improvement of classroom interaction throughout the implementation of translanguaging. The preliminary observation showed that the classroom interaction score was 51.37%, indicating a low level of interaction. Students demonstrated limited participation in classroom activities and were generally reluctant to communicate in English. Following the implementation of translanguaging in Cycle I, the score increased to 60.00%, indicating a moderate level of interaction. Further improvement was observed in Cycle II, where the classroom interaction score reached 83.58%, categorized as high. The findings suggest that the implementation of translanguaging contributed positively to enhancing students' participation and engagement during English learning activities.

The progressive improvement in classroom interaction indicates that translanguaging functioned as an effective strategy for reducing communication barriers in the EFL classroom. The increase from 51.37% in the preliminary observation to 83.58% in Cycle II demonstrates that allowing students to utilize both Indonesian and English facilitated greater participation

and interaction during the learning process. Students became more willing to ask questions, respond to teacher prompts, express opinions, and engage in discussions with their peers.

This finding supports the concept of translanguaging proposed by Ofelia García and Li Wei, who argue that multilingual learners benefit from drawing upon their full linguistic repertoire to construct meaning and communicate effectively. By integrating students' first language into classroom activities, translanguaging reduced linguistic anxiety and enabled students to participate more confidently. The findings also align with the sociocultural perspective of Lev Vygotsky, which emphasizes that learning occurs through social interaction and collaborative meaning-making. The increased interaction observed during Cycle II suggests that translanguaging created opportunities for students to engage more actively in collaborative learning processes.

Furthermore, the findings are consistent with previous studies conducted by Elsy Liando and Marlyn Tatipang, which reported that translanguaging supports classroom participation and facilitates learning in multilingual EFL contexts. Similarly, the study corroborates the findings of Fiona Kwihangana, who found that translanguaging encourages students to engage more actively in classroom communication. Therefore, the substantial increase in classroom interaction scores across the research cycles provides evidence that translanguaging can be an effective pedagogical strategy for fostering meaningful interaction in English language learning.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated the implementation of translanguaging to improve classroom interaction in English learning, explored students' and teacher's perceptions of the strategy, and identified challenges encountered during its implementation. The findings revealed that the implementation of translanguaging successfully improved classroom interaction. The strategy was implemented by allowing students to utilize both Indonesian and English during classroom activities, such as discussing tasks, asking and answering questions, expressing opinions, and clarifying instructions. The classroom interaction score increased progressively from 51.37% in the preliminary observation to 60.00% in Cycle I and reached 83.58% in Cycle II. This improvement indicates that translanguaging effectively facilitated communication and encouraged students to participate more actively in the learning process.

The study also found that both students and the teacher had positive perceptions of translanguaging. Students reported that translanguaging helped them understand lesson content more easily, reduced their anxiety when communicating in English, and increased their confidence in participating in classroom discussions. Similarly, the teacher perceived translanguaging as a useful strategy that supported students' comprehension and promoted greater classroom engagement. These findings suggest that translanguaging can create a more inclusive and supportive learning environment for EFL learners.

Despite its benefits, several challenges were identified during the implementation process. Some students tended to rely excessively on Indonesian, making it difficult to maintain a balance between the use of Indonesian and English. In addition, differences in students' English proficiency levels required the teacher to provide continuous support and guidance throughout the learning process. Nevertheless, these challenges did not outweigh the benefits of translanguaging in enhancing classroom interaction. Therefore, translanguaging can be

considered an effective pedagogical strategy for improving classroom interaction in English language learning.

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