TRANSLANGUAGING AS A PEDAGOGICAL STRATEGY IN EFL CLASSROOM: A THEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW ON LEARNING OUTCOMES AND CLASSROOM PRACTICES

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ABSTRACT

This study's main focus is the most recent literature, published in 2020-2025, which represents the use of translanguaging as a teaching strategy in the English as a Foreign language classrooms. Nevertheless, translanguaging has gained popularity for its potential to support multilingual learners, many of the teachers still lack of guidance on how to implement it systematically. To address this gap, this study employed a thematic literature review of eight empirical articles selected across major academic database through strict inclusion and exclusion criteria. The research objective is to identify how translanguaging is practiced in EFL classrooms across various contexts, and what impact it has on EFL learning outcomes and classroom activities. The literature is pulled from a variety of journal articles related to the topic of the translanguaging, learning, and teaching in a multilingual framework. The final results pointed out that the use of translanguaging in the classroom has facilitated student's lesson comprehension, language comprehension, eliminates language anxiety and increases engagement. It helps the teacher to explain challenging information, learn student backgrounds, and connect the lesson to their personal life. However, it also showed several constraints namely teacher unpreparedness, school restrictions on language use, and student reliance on the first language. Therefore, the application of translanguaging has benefits and cons to the language teacher and students, thus it's effective use should be encouraged. This study contributes a synthesized overview of learning outcomes and classroom practices across diverse context by offering a clearer map of translanguaging's pedagogical value and its practical challenges. It suggests that additional teacher education on the matter is needed, and schools should allow a more lenient stimulation. Thus, this method can be successfully applied, because it is active and efficient.

Keywords: translanguaging, EFL classrooms, bilingual learning, teaching strategy, learning outcomes

INTRODUCTION

Until now, many English as a Foreign Language learners still find difficulty in understanding lesson only using English. This problem becomes even more serious in multilingual countries like Indonesia where students in the same class have different language backgrounds. Teachers find that students have difficulties to express ideas, ask questions, and understand academic terms if only the target language is used. This condition makes it almost impossible to reach good learning outcomes and student's active participation. The lack of connection between the student's native languages and English makes the classroom become a language barrier, reducing the students' confidence and motivation.

In recent years translanguaging has been found as one possible solution to minimize the problem. Translanguaging is the practice of using two or more languages in the learning process to help students understand the lesson better. Even though, translanguaging has been discussed widely over the past decade, earlier reviews have focus on broad conceptual debates or its application in bilingual classroom rather than in EFL classroom context. This article addressed this gap that have not fully explored by narrowing the scope by focusing specifically on pedagogical implementation within EFL classroom context. It provides a clear understanding of how translanguaging is being conducted in practice and what its instructional impact in EFL classroom contexts. A study in Indonesia found that teachers and students, especially in rural schools, use English, Indonesian, and the local language during lessons (Rasmin & Nur, 2023). This allows students to learn more comfortably and connect new knowledge of English with their daily language. In South Bhutan, the teacher uses English and the local language Cia-Cia to explain the meaning of grammar or vocabulary (Rasmin et al., 2024). Buansari et al. mentioned that it can have a positive impact to have students understood the hard concept, more engagement, and more bilingual language.

Nevertheless, the problem is that most teachers do not have proper guidance or a standard way to use translanguaging to teach. This problem creates a gap between what teachers actually need in the classroom and their current teaching methods. Even though some studies suggest the potential benefits of translanguaging, analysis of such benefits and the process itself in influencing the outcome of learning(s) has been occurring within the last five years. This research gap leads the article to s at these two research questions : Given the context, 1) how is translanguaging used in EFL classrooms as a pedagogical strategy and 2) what are its impact on the student learning outcome, and classroom practice? Based on the information retrieved, the purpose of the study is to examine recent literature from 2020 to 2025 regarding translanguaging.

METHODS

A thematic literature review is used in this study to gather, analyze, and interpret literature on translanguaging as a pedagogical method in English as a Foreign Language classrooms over the period 2020-2025. The thematic review is

chosen due to its focus on the identification of major themes, patterns, and gaps existing in the studies on the topic under consideration rather than any particular case.

A total of 35 studies were identified across Scopus-indexed journals, Sinta-indexed journals, Google Scholar, GARUDA, and institutional repositories during the initial database search. The selection process followed PRISMA-like flow namely first is screening, titles and abstract were reviewed by using the inclusion and exclusion criteria. It removed the studies published before 2020, inaccessible articles, non-English articles, and studies focused on unrelated translanguaging practices, resulting only 18 articles remain. Secondly, these 18 articles went through a full-text eligibility assessment. The studies that did noy report empirical findings, did not examine classroom practices or learning outcomes, as well as discussed translanguaging outside EFL classroom context will be excluded. As a result, a total of 10 articles were excluded in this stage. Finally, the remaining 8 eligible studies underwent a coding process. The coding process ensured that each study met all inclusion criteria. In this process, the researcher extracted information on research design, participants, translanguaging strategies and reported outcomes that contributed meaningfully to the thematic synthesis.

In order to ensure the relevance and credibility of the reviewed studies, the researcher applied the inclusion and exclusion criteria proficiency as follows:

TABLE 1 / Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria Linguistic Proficiency Review

Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Papers published from 2020-2025	Papers were published before 2020
Papers are accessible	Papers which its full paper are not accessible
Papers are written in English	Papers are not written in English
Papers focused on translanguaging practices in EFL classrooms	Papers focused on translanguaging practices outside EFL classrooms
Studies that reported learning outcomes and teaching practices	Studies that do not report empirical data related to learning outcomes and teaching practices
Peer-reviewed journal articles or academic publications	Non-academic sources (grey literature)

In addition, the researcher applied the inclusion and exclusion criteria to find relevant studies in reputable academic databases namely Scopus-indexed publishers, Sinta-indexed publisher, Google Scholar, GARUDA and institutional journal repositories. The researcher found a total of 35 articles during the initial search process that can undergo screening based on publication year, accessibility, language and relevance to translanguaging in English in EFL context. After going through the screening and eligibility checking, a total of 8 journal articles met all the inclusion and exclusion criteria and were considered highly relevant to the focus of this study. These selected articles were analyzed and synthesized by using

guidelines principles of translanguaging to ensure that the findings into structured understanding about learning outcomes and classroom practices of translanguaging in EFL context.

To obtain the data for this review, this researcher focused on finding academic works such as journal articles and institutional publications discussing the concepts of translanguaging, learning outcomes, and classroom implementation of EFL. All identified studies are published during the last five years to ensure the most recent trends and issues are under consideration. The process started with searching for the keywords, including "translanguaging", "EFL classrooms", "bilingual pedagogy", "learning outcomes".

TABLE 2/ Synthesis of guiding principles of translanguaging

Studies	Themes	Description
e.g. Rasmin & Nur (2023); Efendi & Syafryadin (2024); Ramadhan et al. (2022)	Learning outcomes	Refers to translanguaging helps students to understand grammar, vocabulary and academic content better
e.g. Sanjaya et al. (2021); Yoskapela et al. (2021); Yolandana et al. (2024)	Confident and participation	Refers to allowing students to use both English and their home language as learning tools
e.g. Karima et al. (2025); Efendi & Syafryadin (2024); Rasmin & Nur (2023)	Balanced language use	Refers to English as primary target language meanwhile L1 is used strategically needed
e.g. Riswanto (2022); Ramadhan et al. (2022); Efendi & Syafryadin (2024)	Active interaction and meaning-making	Refers to translanguaging supports classroom communication, collaboration and negotiation of meaning
e.g. Efendi & Syafryadin (2024); Rasmin & Nur (2023)	Educational purpose	Refers to language choice that always align with learning goals
e.g. Yoskapela et al. (2021); Karima et al.	Professional readiness and	Refers to teachers' training and instructional techniques used in translanguaging

(2025); Rasmin et al. (2024)	pedagogical planning	
e.g. Ramadhan et al. (2022); Yolandana et al. (2024)	Classroom learning and students' real-life experiences	Refers to the use of students' linguistic and cultural background to make learning meaningful and relevant

Afterwards, the studies are carefully read to understand its objectives, methods, results/findings, and implications. The results are then grouped into seven major themes, namely learning outcomes, confident and participation, balanced language use, active interaction and meaning-making, educational purpose, professional readiness and pedagogical planning, classroom learning and students' real-life experiences. After all major themes are identified, the researcher selects one representing study from every group to analyze and compare the material being considered.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The review of eight studies conducted between 2020 and 2025 indicates that translanguaging is one of the most common approaches used in Indonesian EFL classrooms to support students in understanding their lessons and building confidence. The lack of exposure and use of the English language in other schools results in foreign language anxiety among students who can feel stressed when the teachers' instructions are provided only in that language. According to Sanjaya et al., (2022) the effectiveness of translanguaging is justified by the fact that students can use their L1 to clarify meaning and make it easier to follow the instructions in the classroom setting where both languages are recognized. Consequently, students with the opportunity to mix languages are less stressed about making mistakes and, thus, become more self-confident. This trend of the approach is good for emotional education and general English learning. Efendi and Syafryadin (2024) forecasts that translanguaging has practical implications in the lives of EFL teaching. The approach is used to make instructions clearer, avoid misunderstandings, and promote active and enjoyable learning. The current review indicates that there are eight reasons for translanguaging, and all of them have a positive impact. Thus, students are actively involved, better understand lessons, and enjoy the overall learning process.

Riswanto (2020) even illustrated how teachers practice translanguaging in real EFL classroom conditions. His teachers used three techniques, namely mixing languages while explaining, translating to ensure understanding, and switching languages to enable interaction. All three approaches allowed the students to better understand the teacher's explanation and actively react to them. As a result, the outcomes indicated that translanguaging does not only support understanding but also assists in interaction between teachers and students. Moreover, Yoskapela et al. (2021) discussed teacher's awareness about translanguaging. Most teachers had a positive attitude and considered it essential for a student-centered class, certain support, and contextual understanding. However, many teachers still felt unsure about it due to the lack of training and certain benchmarks.

In contrast to the majority of articles, Karima et al. (2025) focus on translanguaging in rural vocational schools. They define that it is more likely to make students participate in class activities. Moreover, both teachers and students admitted the importance of translanguaging by the feeling of better understanding and self-confidence. Although the authors reveal that often students overuse their native language and have restricted vocabulary, they stated that teachers do not favor local languages, such as Javanese. When asked which language combination from English and Bahasa Indonesia is more appropriate to use, teachers replied that it is proven by their practice with students. Another study that covers translanguaging investigates translates strategies in EFL classes related to listening. The authors concluded that it had a positive impact on students' comprehension of difficult topics and a willingness to express their thoughts actively. Nonetheless, again, students announced that it is easier to refrain from participation when translation is allowed because they use their native language.

Translanguaging was also studied by Ramadhan et al. (2022) and showed that it helps to establish links between students speaking Minangkabau, Malay, and Indonesian. Teachers used these methods to explain difficult words, regulate the course of the discussions, and establish connections between English classes and the daily life of students. Students reacted positively because such learning became more understandable and meaningful for them. The study also found several complications, such as the dominance of English in many schools and the absence of special courses for teachers to use translanguaging in practice. These factors made it problematic for them to use translanguaging in a free form. The researchers concluded that schools and policymakers have to provide them with additional support and the freedom to choose this method to apply in practice according to the language requirements. Thus, translanguaging can also act as a "bridge" between languages and cultures in the EFL.

Yolandana et al. (2023) found that translanguaging also influences the students' participation and self-assurance levels. Some of them need further hearing of English to boost their abilities, while there are students who understand lessons better when parts are explained in Indonesian. Thus, some students may need a balance in their language environment based on their personal preferences and capabilities. The researchers also found that translanguaging makes the students feel more welcomed and proud of their bilingual experience.

Overall, these studies demonstrate that translanguaging can promote students' English learning by making their learning more comprehensible and reducing anxiety to speak. As a result, it boosts students' confidence and activeness in class by letting them use both English and their home language simultaneously. It also helps teachers to elaborate lessons and link them with their students' life. To address these problems, the teacher need to balance translanguaging with sufficient English exposure by using students' first language strategically, activating prior knowledge, and clarifying complex ideas. Purposeful and meaningful lesson plan and reflection helps teacher to check and maintain this plance. Meanwhile, the schools can support this by adopting flexible language-use guidelines, providing development on multilingual pedagogy and allowing translanguaging across EFL contexts. Admittedly, there still exist many problems, such as inadequately trained teachers, school policies that restrict language quantity, and over-relied on home language. Nevertheless, translanguaging is still considered good, adaptable approach to help students learn English conveniently.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, the review revealed the significance of translanguaging in assisting EFL Indonesian students in understanding the lessons, overcoming learning anxiety, and boosting their confidence to speak English. Regardless of the school levels and classroom conditions, the clear benefits of translanguaging for both teachers and students are obvious because it makes the lessons easier and links the content with students' existing language knowledge. Furthermore, the classroom becomes more open and informal, and the students do not seem to be afraid even of making mistakes, which is good. However, today, there are multiple obstacles, including the lack of teacher preparation, poor school regulations, and the excessive use of a native language.

In the recommendation, teachers might need more support and guidance to use translanguaging effectively, while schools seem to need to be allowed more flexibility in language use. In further research, it may be worth exploring finding a balance in English and native language use for various subjects and areas of skill to ensure that translanguaging in EFL classrooms will lead to more successful outcomes in terms of learning and communication.

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