

PORTRAYING HOW EFL TEACHERS APPLIED TRANSLANGUAGING IN THE SPEAKING CLASSROOM

Rosa Yustini Novianti¹, Irsyad Nugraha², Yustika Nur Fajriah³

Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, Institut Pendidikan Indonesia Garut (IPI Garut)

[1rossayustininovianti@gmail.com](mailto:rossayustininovianti@gmail.com), [2irsyadnugraha@institutpendidikan.ac.id](mailto:irsyadnugraha@institutpendidikan.ac.id),

[3yustikanurfajriah@institutpendidikan.ac.id](mailto:yustikanurfajriah@institutpendidikan.ac.id)

ABSTRACT

Translanguaging has emerged as a transformative pedagogical orientation in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms, challenging traditional monolingual norms by utilizing learners' full linguistic repertoires. However, how teachers systematically manage and execute translanguaging strategies during oral speaking activities remains under-explored. This qualitative descriptive study portrays how EFL teachers apply translanguaging strategies to manage classroom interactions and facilitate students' oral English production. Data were gathered through non-participant classroom observations using structured checklists across three senior high school classes and semi-structured in-depth interviews with three English teachers at a multilingual senior high school in West Java, Indonesia. Utilizing thematic analysis, the findings reveal four core instructional translanguaging strategies: (1) instructional scaffolding through linguistic starters and synonym prompting, (2) non-disruptive reformulation and modeling, (3) strategic code-switching for conceptual clarification and instruction, and (4) peer-collaborative translanguaging to mitigate speaking anxiety among low-proficiency learners. Observational evidence confirms that deliberate translanguaging regulation acts as a vital cognitive bridge that enhances student participation without reducing exposure to the target language. The study highlights that managing translanguaging requires a flexible, goal-oriented balance where the first language serves as a temporary scaffolding mechanism while maintaining English as the primary communicative goal.

Keywords: *Translanguaging, Instructional Strategies, EFL Speaking Classroom, Pedagogical Scaffolding, Multilingual Education.*

ABSTRAK

Translinguisme telah muncul sebagai orientasi pedagogis transformatif dalam kelas Bahasa Inggris sebagai Bahasa Asing (EFL), yang menantang norma monolingual tradisional dengan memanfaatkan seluruh repertori linguistik siswa. Namun, bagaimana guru secara sistematis mengelola dan menerapkan strategi translinguisme selama aktivitas berbicara masih belum banyak dieksplorasi. Penelitian deskriptif kualitatif ini bertujuan untuk menggambarkan bagaimana guru

EFL menerapkan strategi translinguisme untuk mengelola interaksi kelas dan memfasilitasi produksi lisan siswa. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi kelas non-partisipan menggunakan lembar observasi terstruktur di tiga kelas sekolah menengah atas serta wawancara mendalam semi-terstruktur dengan tiga orang guru Bahasa Inggris di sebuah SMA multibahasa di Jawa Barat, Indonesia. Menggunakan analisis tematik, hasil penelitian mengungkapkan empat strategi utama translinguisme instruksional: (1) perancahan (scaffolding) instruksional melalui pemantik linguistik dan petunjuk sinonim, (2) reformulasi dan pemodelan tanpa memotong pembicaraan, (3) alih kode strategis untuk klarifikasi konsep dan manajemen kelas, serta (4) translinguisme kolaboratif sejawat untuk mengurangi kecemasan berbicara pada siswa berkemampuan rendah. Bukti observasi mengonfirmasi bahwa regulasi translinguisme yang terencana berfungsi sebagai jembatan kognitif penting yang meningkatkan partisipasi siswa tanpa mengurangi paparan bahasa sasaran. Penelitian ini menegaskan bahwa pengelolaan translinguisme memerlukan keseimbangan yang fleksibel dan terarah di mana bahasa pertama berfungsi sebagai mekanisme perancahan sementara dengan tetap mempertahankan Bahasa Inggris sebagai tujuan utama komunikasi.

Kata Kunci: Translinguisme, Strategi Instruksional, Kelas Speaking EFL, Scaffolding Pedagogis, Pendidikan Multibahasa.

A. Pendahuluan

Developing oral communication skills in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts poses complex cognitive, socio-affective, and linguistic challenges for high school learners. In countries like Indonesia, where English is not widely spoken outside formal educational settings, classroom interaction serves as the primary arena for language acquisition (Afriadi & Hamzah, 2021; Rasmin & Nur, 2023). However, conventional language pedagogy has long been dominated by monolingual ideologies, which mandate the exclusive use of the target language

(L2) and view students' first language (L1) or local dialects as sources of linguistic interference (Macaro, 2009; Wei, 2018). Consequently, when EFL learners encounter lexical gaps or grammatical complexity during spontaneous oral practice, strict monolingual enforcement often leads to communication breakdowns, heightened speaking anxiety, and widespread learner passivity (Horwitz et al., 1986; Kwihangana, 2021).

To address the limitations of rigid monolingualism, recent SLA and educational literature has increasingly embraced translanguaging—a dynamic linguistic framework wherein

multilingual speakers draw upon their integrated linguistic repertoire to construct meaning and facilitate communication (García & Wei, 2014, 2018; Canagarajah, 2017). Unlike traditional code-switching, which views languages as separate autonomous codes, translanguaging considers all available linguistic resources—including Bahasa Indonesia and regional languages such as Sundanese—as an interconnected system (García & Lin, 2017; Cenoz & Gorter, 2020). Through flexible language practices, learners are empowered to process complex ideas, negotiate meaning, and express themselves with greater communicative confidence (Baker, 2011; Creese & Blackledge, 2015). Despite the recognized cognitive and socio-affective benefits of translanguaging, its pedagogical implementation requires systematic instructional management. Unstructured language mixing can inadvertently result in over-reliance on L1, thereby diminishing target language exposure (Cenoz & Gorter, 2020; Wahyuni & Sari, 2023). Previous empirical studies in the Indonesian context have largely explored translanguaging from the

perspectives of student perceptions, learning outcomes, or general classroom attitudes (Anjarsari, 2022; Raja et al., 2022; Efendi & Syafradin, 2024; Kuncoroningtyas, 2025). However, there remains a notable empirical gap concerning how teachers deliberately structure, execute, and regulate translanguaging as an active instructional strategy during English speaking tasks.

Addressing this issue, the present study portrays how EFL teachers apply specific translanguaging strategies to manage speaking practice in multilingual secondary classrooms. It focuses on the concrete mechanisms—such as scaffolding, prompting, non-threatening reformulation, and strategic switching—that teachers deploy to balance L1 support with L2 target development. By investigating real-time classroom interactions alongside in-depth teacher interviews, this study clarifies the instructional decisions that convert spontaneous multilingual behavior into a goal-oriented pedagogical tool.

B. Metode Penelitian

This research employed a qualitative descriptive design to

provide an in-depth portrayal of teachers' instructional strategies in managing translanguaging during English speaking practice (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Tenny & Brannick, 2022). The descriptive qualitative design is suited for examining dynamic, context-bound classroom interactions without manipulating variables or imposing predetermined experimental conditions (Cleland, 2023; Lim, 2025).

The study was conducted at a public senior high school located in West Java, Indonesia. This educational setting represents a rich multilingual context where regional languages, Bahasa Indonesia (national language), and English (target foreign language) naturally interact in daily communication and academic practice. The research participants comprised three English teachers handling senior high school classes, selected through purposive sampling based on their active integration of translanguaging practices during speaking instruction (Creswell, 2014). To adhere to research ethics and confidentiality standards, the participating teachers are anonymized as Teacher 1 (T1, observing Class A), Teacher 2 (T2,

observing Class B), and Teacher 3 (T3, observing Class C).

Data were collected through two complementary techniques: non-participant classroom observations and semi-structured interviews. Classroom observations were conducted across three classes (Class A, Class B, and Class C) using a structured observation checklist adapted from Boblett (2012), Wei (2018), Creese and Blackledge (2015), Baker (2011), García and Wei (2018), and Kuncoroningtyas (2025). The checklist focused on six core instructional dimensions: scaffolding, prompting, reformulation, strategic switching, teacher's control of L1/L2, and supporting speaking participation. Field notes were recorded simultaneously to capture detailed contextual interactions and verbal exchanges. Subsequently, face-to-face semi-structured interviews lasting 15 to 25 minutes were conducted with each teacher in Bahasa Indonesia to ensure depth and clarity.

The gathered data were analyzed following the thematic analysis framework outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). The analysis proceeded through six structured phases: (1) data familiarization

through verbatim transcription of audio recordings and thorough reading of observation field notes; (2) generation of initial qualitative codes; (3) searching for potential themes across interview excerpts and observational records; (4) reviewing and refining themes to ensure internal homogeneity and external heterogeneity; (5) defining and labeling four final analytical themes; and (6) synthesizing the qualitative narrative. Data trustworthiness and credibility were established through method triangulation—cross-verifying interview accounts with observational checklists and field notes—as well as member checking with the participating teachers (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

C.Result and Discussion

The thematic analysis of classroom observations and teacher interviews revealed four primary instructional strategies employed by EFL teachers to manage translanguaging during English speaking practice: (1) instructional scaffolding through linguistic starters and synonym prompting, (2) non-disruptive reformulation and collective error modeling, (3) strategic code-

switching for conceptual clarity and task instructions, and (4) peer-collaborative translanguaging for affective support.

Instructional Scaffolding through Linguistic Starters and Synonym Prompting

Classroom observations and teacher accounts demonstrate that learners frequently experience hesitation when attempting to articulate spontaneous oral responses in English. To prevent complete communication breakdown, teachers utilize translanguaging as a cognitive scaffolding mechanism (Boblett, 2012; Tai & Li, 2021). When students struggle to formulate an initial sentence, teachers provide L2 sentence starters or guide students to identify L2 synonyms through L1 contextual cues.

During interview sessions, Teacher 1 (T1) described using synonym prompting when students encounter vocabulary obstacles during opinion-sharing tasks regarding schedule changes:

"Di kelas kan kita bertanya nih sebagai guru: 'What do you think about the time schedule change?' Mereka tuh jawabnya 'I agree', 'I

disagree'. 'Why?' 'Because... eh itu Miss... eh apa ya?' 'Oh, what do you mean? Is it tiring?' Atau 'tiring apa?' 'Cape.' 'Oh iya Miss, cape.' 'Oh berarti tiring... Jadi di-mix-nya itu berdasarkan bisa jadi pakai sinonimnya dulu, kalau mereka udah ngeh, baru.'" (Teacher 1 Interview)

Similarly, Teacher 2 (T2) highlighted how structural starters and guided questions are provided during student-centered speaking tasks to help students initiate their speech:

"Petunjuk pemicunya itu biasanya 'What do you mean?', 'Is this what you mean?' Ketika mereka jawab iya, diperjelas lagi dalam Bahasa Inggrisnya, jadi enggak dalam Bahasa Indonesia lagi." (Teacher 2 Interview)

Teacher 3 (T3) reinforced this scaffolding approach by providing structural sentence starters:

"Kalo misal anak-anak disuruh menyampaikan ide, dan mereka bingung memulainya, biasanya saya akan membantunya dengan memberikan awalan seperti... I think..., in my opinion, dll." (Teacher 3 Interview)

These empirical excerpts align directly with observational records across Class A (T1), Class B (T2), and Class C (T3), where criteria for scaffolding (active teacher-learner

interaction to accomplish tasks) and prompting (providing cues and follow-up questions) were consistently present. Teachers deliberately refrain from immediately supplying full translations; instead, they provide targeted L2 cues ("Is it tiring?", "What do you mean?") to prompt learners to bridge their L1 thoughts with appropriate L2 vocabulary (Wei, 2018).

Non-Disruptive Reformulation and Collective Error Modeling

Maintaining learners' oral communicative flow while addressing grammatical and phonological inaccuracies represents a central challenge in EFL speaking instruction. The findings indicate that all three teachers adopt a non-disruptive reformulation strategy (Creese & Blackledge, 2015). Rather than interrupting students mid-utterance—which teachers noted causes severe affective distress and reluctance to speak—corrections are deferred until the student has completed their presentation or are addressed collectively to the entire class.

Teacher 1 (T1) explained a specialized collective modeling technique used during

mispronunciation events, ensuring individual students do not feel singled out or embarrassed:

"Ke depan dulu ya, kita sebagai guru ke depan, kemudian ditulis katanya apa. Kayak 'students', tadi kan bacanya 'staden', tapi enggak langsung ke point out ke siswa yang tadi, cuma 'Please repeat this word, students, students. Ada lagi study, study. Nah ini beda ya...'. Terus kita invite some students to repeat the words. Jadi enggak hanya ke siswa yang melakukan mispronounce aja, tapi beberapa siswa random aja."
(Teacher 1 Interview)

Teacher 2 (T2) similarly emphasized maintaining a non-formal, humorous tone during corrections to ensure students do not take offense:

"Ibu agar siswa memang tidak merasa tersinggung atau merasa disalahkan, Ibu biasanya tidak menegur dengan nada yang tinggi. Ibu biasanya lebih ke bercanda gitu... tapi nunggu mereka selesai bicara dulu."
(Teacher 2 Interview)

Teacher 3 (T3) explicitly noted the sequence of praise followed by delayed correction:

"Yg pasti saya tidak langsung mengoreksi, tp dipuji dulu misalnya 'that's great'. Kemudian baru saya memberikan arahan seperti

memberikan contoh pengucapannya, dan membiarkan siswa mengulang ucapannya." (Teacher 3 Interview)

Observation records confirm that communication flow remains smooth during correction sequences. By utilizing delayed reformulation and randomized whole-class repetition, teachers establish an affectively safe environment that preserves students' willingness to communicate while systematically improving linguistic accuracy (García & Wei, 2018; Tai & Li, 2021).

Strategic Code-Switching for Conceptual Clarity and Task Instructions

Strategic switching involves the purposeful alternation between L1 and L2 to achieve specific pedagogical goals, such as explaining complex academic concepts or managing classroom guidelines (Baker, 2011; Cenoz & Gorter, 2020). The interview data reveal that teachers deliberately reserve full L1 or bilingual delivery for dense, technical, or complex instructional materials, while enforcing higher L2 ratios during interactive speaking activities.

Teacher 1 (T1) noted a pattern across textual genres, highlighting that

technical texts require higher L1 mediation compared to simple genre descriptions:

"Mungkin ke materi yang teksnya itu banyak technical terms. Kayak misalnya jurnal kesehatan atau sesuatu yang berkaitan dengan scientific approach... Tapi kalau teksnya biografi, biografi kan simple ya. Tapi kalau teksnya based on research, nah itu biasanya kita alih bahasakan semuanya ke Bahasa Indonesia." (Teacher 1 Interview)

Teacher 2 (T2) explained her bilingual approach when handling complex materials:

"Pada saat memberikan materi yang rumit... Karena kalau materi yang rumit dan kita kekeh menggunakan Bahasa Inggris, takutnya materi tersebut tidak tersampaikan. Jadi Ibu biasanya bilingual... menggunakan Bahasa Inggris dulu lalu diterjemahkan ke dalam Bahasa Indonesia, biasanya begitu." (Teacher 2 Interview)

Teacher 3 (T3) emphasized that L1 switching is specifically triggered when students show difficulty in understanding complex material:

"Ketika saya menerangkan suatu materi dan melihat anak-anak agak kesulitan untuk memahaminya, maka biasanya saya langsung beralih ke Bahasa Indonesia." (Teacher 3 Interview)

Observations across classes demonstrated that strategic switching was controlled and goal-oriented. While teachers utilized Bahasa Indonesia to clarify procedural guidelines or complex genre structures, they systematically shifted back to English once the task execution phase commenced, ensuring that L1 served as an instructional scaffold rather than a substitute for L2 practice (Li Wei, 2018; Chacón-Vélez, 2025).

Peer-Collaborative Translanguaging for Affective Support

In heterogenous EFL classrooms, significant disparities in students' language proficiency often lead to severe speaking anxiety among lower-achieving learners. To mitigate this gap, teachers employ peer-collaborative translanguaging, pairing lower-proficiency students with higher-proficiency peers or allowing temporary pair-based L1 consultations

before individual speaking performances.

Teacher 1 (T1) detailed how peer collaboration was structured during individual speaking tasks:

"Ada dua orang siswa... 'Gini Miss, kalau aku lupa Bahasa Inggrisnya, aku bisa tanya' katanya... Nah ketika di depan, 'Perwakilan apa Miss, perwakilan?' 'What do you mean? Representative?' 'Oh iya representative.'... Dan si siswa dengan kemampuan yang udah bagus ini dijadikan peer collaborative buat teman-temannya. Jadi kalau 'Miss, ini Bahasa Inggrisnya apa?' 'Tanya ke siapa' gitu, jadi enggak langsung ke kita." (Teacher 1 Interview)

Teacher 2 (T2) reaffirmed the positive affective outcomes on passive learners:

"Sangat membantu... Kalau misalkan kita memperbolehkan siswa untuk menggunakan Bahasa Indonesia walaupun tidak semuanya, beberapa persen saja, biasanya anak yang tadinya takut untuk menjawab karena tidak bisa Bahasa Inggrisnya, mereka jadi mau... Perubahannya pasti mereka jadi lebih terbuka, lebih

aktif lagi, dan tidak malu-malu." (Teacher 2 Interview)

Teacher 3 (T3) similarly observed that peer-mediated vocabulary sharing increases classroom engagement:

"Sangat membantu, karena memberikan kepercayaan diri kepada siswa supaya jangan takut salah atau malu... Dan salah satu cara belajar vocab yg efektif adalah dengan saling memberi tau sesama teman dibanding menghafal kamus." (Teacher 3 Interview)

Observational Triangulation across Observed Classes

To cross-verify the qualitative statements obtained from teacher interviews, data from non-participant classroom observations were thoroughly examined across the three observed senior high school classes (Class A, Class B, and Class C). The observational findings confirmed that all six core translanguaging criteria—scaffolding, prompting, reformulation, strategic code-switching, teacher control of L1/L2, and supporting student participation—were actively present across all observed classes. Specifically, Teacher 1 (Class A), Teacher 2 (Class B), and Teacher 3 (Class C) were all observed providing

temporary linguistic support, reminding students to return to English, correcting mispronunciations without interrupting flow, using Indonesian purposefully for complex topics, maintaining control over L1 over-reliance, and successfully engaging passive students during oral activities.

D. Conclusion

This study portrays how EFL teachers systematically apply translanguaging strategies to manage classroom interactions and facilitate students' speaking performance in a multilingual senior high school setting. The empirical evidence demonstrates that translanguaging is executed through four primary instructional strategies: instructional scaffolding through linguistic starters and synonym prompting, non-disruptive reformulation and collective error modeling, strategic code-switching for technical concepts and task directions, and peer-collaborative translanguaging to support passive learners.

Far from being an unguided or random language mixing practice, translanguaging in these classrooms operates as a goal-oriented

pedagogical framework. Teachers act as strategic language managers, using Bahasa Indonesia and regional languages as temporary cognitive and affective scaffolds while maintaining English as the primary communicative goal. This balanced approach significantly reduces speaking anxiety, enhances student participation, and enables lower-proficiency learners to engage meaningfully in oral production tasks.

The pedagogical implications of this study suggest that language teacher education programs and curriculum planners should move beyond rigid monolingual policies. Instead, teachers should be trained to design explicit translanguaging guidelines that define when, why, and how multilingual repertoires can be leveraged to maximize L2 acquisition. Future research should examine the longitudinal impacts of managed translanguaging on specific dimensions of oral proficiency, such as grammatical accuracy, phonological development, and discourse fluency across diverse educational contexts.

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