Translanguaging as a Pedagogical Strategy in Multilingual English Classrooms: A Qualitative Study from Indonesia

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Abstract

This study explores translanguaging practices as a pedagogical strategy in English language teaching within multilingual classrooms in Indonesia, focusing on public schools that reflect local linguistic diversity. In Indonesian English education, an "English-only" approach remains dominant despite students' heterogeneous sociolinguistic realities. Conducted at SMP Negeri 5 Pekanbaru, Riau, where students use Minangkabau, Malay, and Indonesian in daily interaction, this qualitative case study collected data through four classroom observations, semi-structured interviews with one English teacher and twelve students, and document analysis of teaching materials and school policies. Thematic analysis was applied to identify patterns of translanguaging practices, students' perceptions, and supporting and inhibiting factors. Findings reveal that translanguaging occurs in three structured and contextualized forms: (1) using local and national languages to mediate complex vocabulary and grammar concepts, (2) managing classroom instruction and discussions through combined use of Minangkabau, Malay, and Indonesian to ensure equitable understanding, and (3) linking local cultural examples to explain English idioms and expressions. Students responded positively, as these practices enhanced comprehension, linguistic inclusion, and participation. Key enablers included linguistic diversity as a learning resource, teacher flexibility, and cultural proximity; barriers included rigid "English-only" policies, limited teacher training, and conservative views toward local language use. The study's novelty lies in documenting a tri-lingual classroom context (Minangkabau–Malay–Indonesian), expanding translanguaging research beyond typical bilingual settings. Conceptually and practically, this study contributes to education and applied linguistics by offering a context-responsive pedagogical model and advocating for more flexible language policies in Indonesian classrooms.

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INTRODUCTION

Indonesia, with more than seven hundred local languages still actively used, is one of the most multilingual nations in the world. Within the context of formal education, this linguistic diversity represents not only a rich cultural heritage but also a complex challenge, particularly in the teaching of foreign languages such as English. For decades, the "English-only" approach has continued to dominate English language teaching practices in Indonesian schools (Nasir et al., 2019; Rasmitadila et al., 2019). This approach is based on the assumption that full exposure to the target language accelerates language acquisition and simulates native-speaker environments. However, such an assumption often overlooks the sociolinguistic realities of Indonesian students who live in trilingual or even multilingual

environments. In classrooms, students frequently blend local languages, Bahasa Indonesia, and English in a single learning interaction. Rather than being viewed as an obstacle, this phenomenon reflects a significant pedagogical potential when consciously accommodated through translanguaging strategies (Sagita, 2018; Zein et al., 2020).

Empirical evidence shows that students often struggle to comprehend English learning materials when teachers rely exclusively on the target language. In many public junior high schools, especially outside major urban centers, diverse linguistic backgrounds among students create uneven comprehension of classroom instruction and materials (Daar & Ndorang, 2020). An observation at SMP Negeri 5 Pekanbaru revealed that students with Minangkabau, Malay, and Indonesian language backgrounds often translated and explained lessons to their peers in their mother tongues. The teacher also frequently used Bahasa Indonesia and Malay to clarify complex grammatical concepts or cultural nuances (Kurniatillah et al., 2022). Although such practices occur spontaneously, teachers often feel guilty for violating the school's "English-only" policy. This situation illustrates a tension between formal policy and actual pedagogical practice and highlights the need for more flexible and context-sensitive teaching approaches.

With the advancement of applied linguistics studies, translanguaging has been increasingly recognized as a pedagogical strategy that facilitates language learning in multilingual contexts. In educational settings, translanguaging is not merely a matter of language mixing but a conscious strategy to utilize all of students' linguistic resources during learning. Several studies have demonstrated that translanguaging enhances conceptual understanding, active participation, and learners' linguistic identity (Raharja & Ghozali, 2021; Rahman, 2018).

Research in various global contexts supports these findings. Yuvayapan (2019) found that translanguaging in bilingual classrooms fosters student engagement and reduces language anxiety. Similarly, Pinho Feller (2022) confirmed that translanguaging helps students negotiate intercultural meanings in academic contexts. In Asia, Wei and Lin (2019) discovered that translanguaging in English classes in Hong Kong enables teachers to build conceptual bridges between local and global languages. Likewise, Poza (2018) described translanguaging in South Korea as a form of pedagogical resistance to English hegemony.

In the Southeast Asian context, several studies have begun to highlight the relevance of translanguaging in multilingual classrooms. Hasanuddin and Ciptaningrum (2021) emphasized the importance of acknowledging the reality of "Englishes" in this region, where English use is intertwined with local identity. In Malaysia, Tiwari (2021) demonstrated that translanguaging helps students understand the cultural context of English while maintaining a connection to their mother tongue. In the Philippines, Munandar and Newton (2021) found that translanguaging not only enhances learning but also strengthens the linguistic confidence of students from minority backgrounds. Collectively, these studies indicate that translanguaging serves both social and pedagogical functions in multilingual education across non-Anglophone countries.

However, studies on translanguaging in Indonesia remain limited and are generally concentrated in bilingual English–Indonesian contexts in large cities. For instance, Widiasri (2019) examined translanguaging practices in an East Java university and found that it helped students comprehend complex academic terminology. Wijaya and Ong (2018) investigated international schools in Jakarta and reported that translanguaging increased student engagement, though most respondents came from upper-middle-class backgrounds. Hartono et al. (2021) explored English teachers' translanguaging practices in Yogyakarta and found that the primary constraint was the lack of institutional policy support for mixed-language use. While these studies reveal the benefits of translanguaging, they focus mainly on urban and bilingual environments, leaving unexplored the more complex multilingual settings found in regions such as Sumatra, Maluku, and Kalimantan.

Furthermore, most Indonesian studies on translanguaging remain descriptive, rarely addressing the interaction between pedagogical strategies and institutional language policies. For example, Hidayat et al. (2022) discussed how translanguaging enhances student confidence but did not examine how teachers navigate "English-only" policies in public schools. Similarly, Tanjung (2018) explored translanguaging in online learning during the pandemic, yet the temporary nature of that context limits its generalizability. Consequently, there remains a scarcity of research that positions translanguaging as a deliberate pedagogical strategy within formal school policy frameworks.

This research gap becomes particularly compelling when considered in the context of highly multilingual regions such as Pekanbaru, where students are not merely bilingual but actively use more than two languages in their daily lives. Translanguaging practices in such environments involve complex interlingual dynamics, with local culture playing a central role in shaping classroom meaning-making and social relations. Few studies have examined how translanguaging operates as a bridge between monolingual national policies and multilingual classroom realities. Thus, it is essential to conceptualize translanguaging not merely as a communicative practice but as a pedagogical strategy capable of transforming English teaching paradigms in Indonesia.

This study aims to address this gap by presenting an empirical account of translanguaging practices in English classrooms at SMP Negeri 5 Pekanbaru, a public school characterized by linguistic diversity encompassing Minangkabau, Malay, and Indonesian languages. Rather than viewing translanguaging as a deviation from "English-only" norms, this study interprets it as a form of contextual pedagogy arising from teachers' critical reflection on their students' linguistic and cultural needs. This approach highlights not only how translanguaging is consciously implemented in teaching but also how students from different linguistic backgrounds perceive and experience it in their learning processes.

More broadly, this research seeks to enrich the understanding of translanguaging practices in Global South contexts, where English functions as a foreign rather than a second language. By examining the social, cultural, and policy dynamics within a unified analytical framework, this study extends translanguaging theory, which has been predominantly developed from Western bilingual contexts. The findings are expected to contribute to the

development of a more inclusive, humanistic, and contextually grounded English language pedagogy in Indonesia.

The objectives of this study are threefold: (a) to describe how translanguaging is implemented by English teachers in multilingual classrooms; (b) to explore students' perceptions of this strategy; and (c) to identify the factors that facilitate and hinder its practice. Through this, the study not only contributes to the academic discourse on translanguaging but also offers practical insights for language education policies that promote linguistic justice and contextual responsiveness.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach with a case study design to gain an in-depth understanding of how translanguaging is implemented, interpreted, and negotiated by teachers and students in multilingual classrooms. The qualitative approach was selected not merely to describe phenomena but to interpret the social meanings underlying linguistic practices occurring naturally within classroom interactions. As Sarfo et al. (2021) argue, qualitative research enables scholars to understand human experiences within specific sociocultural contexts. In this sense, translanguaging is viewed not simply as a teaching technique but as a social practice rooted in identity, policy, and power relations in language education. The case study design was chosen because it allows an intensive exploration of a real-life situation in a particular context, in this case, a public junior high school in Pekanbaru that embodies Indonesia's characteristic multilingual complexity.

The research site, SMP Negeri 5 Pekanbaru, was selected based on both theoretical and empirical considerations. Theoretically, this school represents a learning space still bound by a monolingual "English-only" policy but populated by students with diverse linguistic repertoires. Empirically, the school's balanced composition of Minangkabau, Malay, and Indonesian-speaking students allows natural multilingual interactions both inside and outside the classroom. Additionally, the school's openness to provide research access enabled direct observation and interviews, ensuring rich and contextual data collection. Hence, the site selection reflects a methodological alignment with the study's objective to uncover the dynamics of translanguaging in authentic multilingual learning environments.

The participants comprised one English teacher and twelve eighth-grade students, selected using purposive sampling. The teacher was chosen because she was the sole English instructor for the observed class and had over five years of teaching experience at the school. This selection enabled a deeper exploration of how pedagogical decisions regarding translanguaging were made and justified in daily practice. Meanwhile, the twelve students represented diverse linguistic backgrounds, four Minangkabau speakers, four Malay speakers, and four whose primary language was Indonesian, reflecting the classroom's linguistic heterogeneity and offering insight into how students with different language repertoires perceived and experienced translanguaging.

Data were collected over six weeks using three primary techniques: classroom observation, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. Classroom observations

were conducted during four English lessons to record translanguaging practices between the teacher and students. The researcher acted as a participant observer, following Kodithuwakku (2022), with limited involvement to maintain the natural flow of classroom interaction. Field notes and audio recordings were used to capture language use, situational contexts, and student responses to translanguaging strategies.

Following the observations, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the teacher and all twelve students. The teacher interview focused on pedagogical motivations, decision-making processes, and perceptions of school language policy. The student interviews explored their perceptions of translanguaging, its helpfulness (or potential confusion), and their views on the role of their mother tongue in learning English. The semi-structured format provided flexibility to pursue emerging issues while maintaining alignment with the main research questions (Khan, 2019). All interviews were recorded with participants' consent and transcribed verbatim for analysis.

In addition, document analysis was performed on lesson plans, textbooks, and school policy documents related to language use in English instruction. This analysis provided contextual understanding of the institutional language policies surrounding classroom practice and the extent to which formal regulations support or constrain teachers' linguistic flexibility. These documents also served as a triangulation source for observational and interview data.

Data analysis followed a thematic approach consisting of three key stages: initial coding of interview transcripts and field notes, identification of recurring themes related to translanguaging practices, and interpretation of these themes within sociocultural and policy frameworks. To ensure data credibility, triangulation was conducted by integrating three data sources, observation, interviews, and documents, to verify the consistency of findings (Muskat et al., 2018). This triangulation allowed cross-validation between observed practices, reported experiences, and written policies. Furthermore, member checking was carried out by discussing preliminary interpretations with the teacher to confirm alignment between the researcher's analysis and actual classroom realities.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Translanguaging as a Contextual Pedagogical Practice

Within the English language learning context at SMP Negeri 5 Pekanbaru, translanguaging appears not as a spontaneous linguistic phenomenon, but as a consciously developed pedagogical strategy emerging from the contextual needs of a multilingual classroom. In a learning environment characterized by the coexistence of Minangkabau, Malay, and Indonesian languages, translanguaging manifests as a creative adaptation by the teacher to accommodate students' sociolinguistic realities. Classroom observations revealed that the teacher actively managed language alternation with clear pedagogical intentions, not due to an inability to maintain the target language, but as a deliberate effort to ensure inclusivity and comprehension of lesson content.

Across four classroom observations, the teacher systematically used Indonesian and local languages in three main contexts: bridging vocabulary and grammar comprehension, managing classroom interactions, and connecting local culture with English idioms or expressions. For instance, during a session on *phrasal verbs*, the teacher explained the meaning of *give up* by linking it to the Malay expression "*jangan cepat menyerah*" and the Minangkabau equivalent "*indak usah putuih asa*." The explanation was delivered in a relaxed tone and received with enthusiasm from students, who appeared to grasp its contextual meaning more clearly. After class, one student (M, Grade 8) stated, "I only understood *give up* when the teacher said it's like *putuih asa*," illustrating how translanguaging served as both a cognitive and affective bridge for student comprehension.

This practice indicates that translanguaging is not random "code-mixing," but a deliberate instructional design to bridge the gap between the formal language of instruction (English) and the students' everyday linguistic worlds. In line with the concept of translanguaging space (Ammade et al., 2018; Rido et al., 2020), the classroom at SMP Negeri 5 Pekanbaru can be understood as an arena where students negotiate their linguistic identities while simultaneously constructing new meanings. Li Wei emphasizes that a translanguaging space is not merely a site where languages meet, but a dynamic environment where meanings, experiences, and identities are reconstructed. In this sense, the teacher acts as a facilitator who opens this space, enabling students to productively utilize their full linguistic repertoires.

In another session focusing on grammar, particularly the simple past tense, the teacher began the explanation in English, switched to Indonesian for structural clarification, and occasionally used Minangkabau to elaborate temporal nuances. "In Minangkabau, people might say '*kemarin aku makan di pasar*', that's already in the past," she said, while writing "*I ate at the market yesterday*" on the board. This moment exemplified how translanguaging functioned as a conceptual bridge connecting local grammatical logic with English structures. Observations showed that students became more active in asking questions after such explanations, suggesting that the linguistic flexibility made them feel secure and more willing to participate.

These findings confirm that translanguaging functions as a scaffolding strategy that allows teachers to guide student understanding without reducing content complexity (Khair, 2022; Renandya et al., 2018). This approach challenges the traditional "English-only" pedagogy still prevalent in Indonesian public schools. In practice, such policies often create cognitive and affective barriers for students from diverse linguistic backgrounds. As the English teacher, Mrs. R, explained, "If I use English all the time, the students go silent and are afraid to make mistakes. But when I occasionally explain in their language, they immediately connect." This statement illustrates the teacher's reflective awareness that translanguaging is a contextual and empathetic pedagogical strategy responsive to students' linguistic experiences.

In managing classroom interaction, translanguaging also ensures equitable understanding and participation. When the teacher asked an open-ended question such as

"What did you do last weekend?", some students replied hesitantly in English, while others responded in Indonesian or Malay. The teacher then replied in the students' language before reformulating their answers in English, creating an inclusive dialogic cycle. This process reflects what Marwa et al. (2021) refer to as dynamic translanguaging practice, a continuous movement across linguistic systems that enables natural and meaningful learning interactions.

Beyond facilitating conceptual understanding, translanguaging also emerged in cultural contexts, particularly when the teacher related English idioms to local values. When teaching the idiom "break the ice," for example, she explained it through a familiar Malay social scenario: "*In our culture, we say 'cari angin dulu biar suasana cair', that's similar to 'break the ice.'*" The explanation elicited laughter while clarifying the idiomatic meaning through a culturally resonant analogy. Observations showed that this strategy not only clarified linguistic meaning but also affirmed students' cultural identities, transforming the classroom into a learning space that celebrates linguistic and cultural diversity.

From a theoretical perspective, this practice signifies a paradigm shift from deficit-based pedagogy to resource-based pedagogy, where local languages are not perceived as obstacles but as valuable learning resources (Kartika-Ningsih & Rose, 2018; Zainil & Arsyad, 2021). Teachers and students at SMP Negeri 5 Pekanbaru collectively construct meaning by mobilizing their linguistic repertoires, demonstrating that language diversity is not something to be eliminated but harnessed. In this sense, translanguaging serves as a form of contextual pedagogy, a teaching approach that not only accommodates students' linguistic realities but also enriches English learning through authentic and locally relevant experiences.

Empirically, the translanguaging practices observed in this classroom underscore the teacher's agency in negotiating rigid educational policies. Although school policy mandates the exclusive use of English during lessons, the teacher exhibited productive resistance by adjusting her approach to remain responsive to students' actual conditions. Such an approach reveals not only pedagogical flexibility but also epistemic courage, the assertion that local knowledge and linguistic practices hold legitimate positions within formal education spaces.

Student Perceptions: Linguistic Affordances and Emotional Engagement

In the English classroom at SMP Negeri 5 Pekanbaru, translanguaging not only presents an adaptive pedagogical strategy but also generates strong affective dynamics among students from Minangkabau, Malay, and Indonesian backgrounds. Beneath this multilingual practice lies a deep emotional dimension, students feel more accepted, confident, and willing to express themselves. Data from interviews and classroom observations indicate that translanguaging serves a dual function: it facilitates cognitive understanding while constructing a safe linguistic space where students can negotiate their identities and emotions toward English learning.

During several sessions, the classroom atmosphere was relaxed yet focused. When the teacher asked, "What did you do yesterday?", some students spontaneously answered using mixed English and Malay, such as "I go to pasar with my mother." Instead of immediate correction, the teacher smiled and replied, "Good! So, you *went* to the market. Go becomes

went, right?" The teacher's acceptance and continuation of dialogue, rather than interruption, fostered a non-intimidating environment. In such moments, translanguaging operated as an emotional bridge that reduced language anxiety and enhanced affective engagement. Field observations revealed that previously passive students became more active participants, even those known for their shyness. When their local languages were acknowledged, they felt they "had a space" in the learning process.

In interviews, several students stated that translanguaging helped them feel less afraid of making mistakes. One student (L, Grade 8) remarked, "When the teacher mixes languages, I feel brave to speak because if I forget an English word, I can switch to Malay." Another student (F) added that when grammar was explained in Indonesian, "it feels easier to understand, I don't get stressed thinking about grammar all the time." These statements highlight the affective dimension of translanguaging: linguistic acceptance fosters emotional safety, which is foundational for effective learning. As Faturrochman et al. (2021) note, affective engagement in multilingual learning is crucial to language acquisition because emotional involvement promotes positive attitudes toward the target language and strengthens linguistic identity.

The English classroom in this school thus becomes a site of identity negotiation where students not only learn a foreign language but also construct new meanings through their linguistic repertoires. For example, when discussing the idiom "*hit the books*," the teacher explained, "In Minangkabau, people might say '*rajin mangaji*' or '*belajar betul-betul*'." Students laughed and responded, "Yes, study hard!" This moment reflected not only academic interaction but also recognition of their cultural background. Such exchanges strengthened student solidarity and collective motivation.

Theoretically, these affective experiences align with Winanta et al. (2020), who argue that language learning in multilingual contexts operates on both cognitive and emotional levels. Within the affective engagement framework, they emphasize that when students feel linguistically and emotionally acknowledged, their language performance improves through enhanced confidence derived from positive experiences. Translanguaging thus creates a dialogic space where students feel safe to experiment, make mistakes, and participate without fear of judgment.

Observations across four meetings revealed that students' confidence grew over time. During the first session, most students were hesitant to speak. However, as the teacher consistently permitted the use of Indonesian and local languages, communication patterns shifted. When discussing *daily routines*, for instance, a previously silent student (A) began sharing: "*I wake up, terus saya bantu mama masak, then I go to school*." The teacher responded warmly and gently restructured the sentence without causing embarrassment. Such interactions demonstrate that translanguaging operates not only as a communicative tool but also as an affective mechanism that fosters confidence.

Furthermore, translanguaging created linguistic affordances, learning opportunities that arise from students' ability to combine and mobilize all linguistic resources. In an environment open to language mixing, students learned to connect English concepts with

their everyday experiences. When the teacher asked for sentences using the word market, several students mentioned *Pasar Bawah*, a traditional market in Pekanbaru, and incorporated it into English sentences. Learning thus became contextual and meaningful as students connected language to their social realities.

Interviews also revealed that translanguaging fostered a sense of linguistic inclusion. Students from Minangkabau, Malay, and Indonesian backgrounds felt their languages were not "forbidden" but recognized and valued as learning resources. One student (N) remarked, "When the teacher sometimes uses Minangkabau, it feels good, like we're not treated differently." Such recognition is crucial in Indonesia's multilingual society, where language often signals social identity and status. When students perceive their mother tongues as respected, they feel valued as individuals. This process strengthens linguistic identity affirmation, the development of positive identity through language learning experiences (Winanta et al., 2020).

Nevertheless, challenges remain. Some students expressed concern that excessive use of local languages might reduce their English practice. The teacher acknowledged this dilemma, striving to maintain a balance: "Mixing languages doesn't mean we're lazy to use English, it's to understand the meaning first. Slowly, we'll increase the English." This reflective stance shows that translanguaging can be used strategically to support gradual progression toward higher English proficiency.

From an affective standpoint, translanguaging also reshaped classroom power relations. By opening space for students' languages, the teacher reduced hierarchical distance between teacher and learners. The learning process became more egalitarian, with students feeling that their voices mattered. This aligns with Rahayu et al. (2020), who conceptualize affective agency as the emotional capacity that empowers learners to take active roles in their learning process.

Institutional Constraints and Ideological Boundaries

In Indonesia's public school context, English language teaching is shaped not only by teachers' pedagogical awareness and creativity but also by structural policies and underlying language ideologies that define their space of practice. Findings from SMP Negeri 5 Pekanbaru reveal that teachers and students operate within a policy framework emphasizing exclusive English use in classrooms, an implicit manifestation of monolingual ideology. Although translanguaging has proven effective for enhancing comprehension and engagement, teachers must navigate rigid ideological boundaries. The tension between formal policy and actual practice generates complex dynamics, a continuous negotiation between institutional compliance and pedagogical necessity.

Document analysis showed that the *Rencana Pelaksanaan Pembelajaran* (RPP) and internal school policy explicitly required "full English communication" during instruction. However, field observations revealed a different reality. In one *Describing People* lesson, the teacher explained curly hair using a picture and added in Indonesian, "This is what we mean by curly hair." Students nodded, with some joking in Malay, "Like my hair, Miss!" The teacher smiled and continued in English. This interaction demonstrated that the teacher did not reject

the monolingual policy but adapted it to meet students' communicative needs.

In interviews, the teacher admitted feeling she sometimes "broke the rules" by using local or national languages. "The school wants us to use English all the time," she said, "but if it's all in English, the students just stay quiet." This statement reflects the pedagogical dilemma faced by teachers: the institutional demand to maintain an "English-only" environment versus the practical necessity of linguistic flexibility. The teacher recognized that translanguaging enhanced student comprehension, yet she remained cautious to avoid being perceived as undisciplined. This tension shows that translanguaging in public schools is not merely a pedagogical act but also a social negotiation with dominant language ideologies.

This situation aligns with the concept of language ideology and classroom policy tension, which suggests that monolingual ideologies often create "discursive spaces hostile to multilingual practices," pressuring teachers to preserve target-language purity. At SMP Negeri 5 Pekanbaru, such ideologies are evident in written policies, administrative expectations, and perceptions among parents and supervisors who equate greater English use with higher teaching quality. Yet, as Pradana et al. (2022) argue, monolingual-oriented instruction risks marginalizing students' linguistic identities and constraining their cognitive potential.

Observations also showed that teachers often engaged in spontaneous translanguaging, especially when sensing students' confusion. During a reading comprehension session, when the teacher asked the meaning of neighborhood, students fell silent. The teacher then explained in mixed language: "It's like the area where you live, your housing complex." Students immediately responded with understanding, offering examples in Indonesian and Malay. This demonstrated that translanguaging remained an effective pedagogical tool, even when performed intuitively and without formal policy support, representing a subtle act of resistance to linguistic homogeneity.

However, one major challenge identified was the lack of professional training on translanguaging. The teacher noted, "In English teacher trainings, we never discuss translanguaging or local language use. The focus is always on the communicative approach, English-only." Consequently, teachers often lack a theoretical framework to justify their practices. They use translanguaging because they observe its practical benefits but struggle to articulate it academically. This situation renders translanguaging an informal, individualized improvisation rather than a formally legitimized pedagogical strategy.

This lack of training reflects the broader systemic absence of support for multilingual pedagogy in Indonesia. As Sulistyowardani et al. (2020) highlight, many education policies in developing countries remain rooted in colonial notions of linguistic purity, where foreign language proficiency symbolizes progress, while local language use is associated with intellectual deficiency. This ideology is evident in SMP Negeri 5 Pekanbaru, where some teachers and administrators believe that using Indonesian or local languages "lowers the standard" of English instruction. The challenge, therefore, is not only practical but ideological, concerning how value is assigned to particular languages within the education system.

From the students' perspective, although they appreciated the use of local languages in class, some felt that speaking Indonesian or Malay during English lessons was "wrong." A few even admitted being afraid of reprimand for "using too much Indonesian." This discomfort illustrates how monolingual ideology has seeped into students' linguistic consciousness, shaping perceptions of language hierarchy. Translanguaging thus encounters not only institutional boundaries but also deeply internalized ideological ones.

The phenomenon at SMP Negeri 5 Pekanbaru illustrates how institutional language policy serves as a site of tension between compliance and innovation. Teachers aware of translanguaging's pedagogical benefits must navigate a system resistant to linguistic flexibility. As Putri and Putri (2021) note, translanguaging often emerges "in the cracks of institutional structures," where teachers strive to balance pedagogical ideals with social realities. In Indonesia, therefore, the success of translanguaging depends not only on teacher competence and student readiness but also on the extent to which educational institutions allow space for fluid and contextually responsive linguistic approaches.

Translanguaging as an Inclusive Pedagogical Framework

The concept of translanguaging as an inclusive pedagogical framework is rooted in the view that language is not merely a tool for communication, but also a medium for representing identity, emotion, and cognition. In multilingual classroom contexts in Indonesia, particularly in urban areas such as Pekanbaru, where Minangkabau, Malay, and Indonesian are commonly spoken, translanguaging functions not only as a strategy to comprehend English but also as a social practice that enables each learner to participate fully in the learning process. Field observations indicate that such practices foster a more egalitarian learning ecosystem in which students feel valued, heard, and acknowledged in their linguistic diversity. Consequently, translanguaging may be understood as a form of inclusive pedagogy that integrates linguistic, cognitive, and affective dimensions within an organic and contextually grounded learning system.

Classroom observations further reveal that translanguaging serves as a pedagogical bridge between local and global languages. In one lesson on Describing Daily Routines, the teacher (Mrs. R) began the session by saying, "Let's talk about what you do every morning." When some students appeared hesitant, she added in Indonesian, "You can start by using Indonesian; we'll translate it together into English later." The classroom atmosphere, initially rigid, gradually became more relaxed as students began to share their routines using mixed languages, such as "saya bangun jam enam, terus langsung mandi" or "I go to school by motor." Rather than interrupting them, the teacher responded with gentle corrections, linking their utterances to more accurate English expressions. This interaction illustrates how translanguaging provides students with the freedom to navigate between the languages they know and the one they are learning, without fear of making mistakes.

An interview with a student (RZ) revealed how this approach reshaped their perception of English learning. RZ stated, "When the teacher allows us to use our local language, I feel braver to speak, not afraid of being wrong, because I can start from words I already know." This comment demonstrates how translanguaging creates an affective space

where participation is not constrained by linguistic competence but encouraged through emotional safety. In line with the theory of affective engagement in multilingual learning (Fitriyani & Andriyanti, 2020), such affective spaces are crucial for fostering meaningful learning engagement. Thus, translanguaging simultaneously facilitates cognitive comprehension and strengthens the affective dimensions of learners, dimensions often neglected in traditional monolingual models.

Theoretically, this practice aligns with Rasman's (2018) translanguaging pedagogy model, which emphasizes the creation of translingual learning spaces, learning environments where languages are not treated as separate entities but as dynamic resources for meaning-making. Within this framework, teachers are viewed not merely as instructors of the target language but as linguistic mediators who guide students in navigating their own linguistic repertoires. Field observations confirmed this model in action: teachers frequently facilitated shifts from Indonesian or Malay to English using contextual strategies, such as translating difficult terms, repeating instructions in two languages, or asking students to explain concepts first in their familiar language. For example, when discussing a text about "environmental pollution," the teacher asked students to define pollution in Indonesian before constructing English sentences. This approach should not be mistaken for simplification but rather seen as a pedagogical strategy that honors multilingual learners' cognitive processes.

Translanguaging practices in Pekanbaru also highlight their strong social dimension. Local languages, often perceived as irrelevant in English classrooms, emerged as sources of solidarity and humor that enriched classroom interactions. During a speaking practice session, one student joked in Minangkabau, "awak indak pandai nyo ngomong Inggris ko," which elicited laughter from peers and the teacher. Instead of reprimanding the student, the teacher smiled and said, "Come on, try to say it in English, you can do it." This seemingly minor moment exemplifies how translanguaging fosters social inclusion, transforming the classroom from a space of linguistic judgment between the "fluent" and "non-fluent" into a collaborative learning community where linguistic experiences are shared equitably.

Field data also refute the common assumption, often held by proponents of monolingual teaching, that translanguaging reduces academic rigor. On the contrary, teachers who adopted translanguaging reported that students maintained focus for longer periods, as communication became more natural. For instance, when teaching the simple present tense, the teacher did not merely provide grammatical formulas but contextualized them in Indonesian: "In our language, we say 'saya pergi ke sekolah'; in English, it becomes 'I go to school.'" This approach facilitated students' grasp of grammatical patterns by linking English forms to familiar linguistic systems. Consistent with Yuvayapan's (2019) perspective, the use of the first language in second-language learning functions not as a hindrance but as a cognitive tool that aids meaning-making and strengthens interlingual connections.

In interviews, another teacher (Mrs. S) noted that translanguaging made her feel closer to her students: "If everything is in English, the students become passive. But when I use their language occasionally, the atmosphere becomes more lively." Her statement indicates that translanguaging is not solely a linguistic strategy but also a relational one,

fostering emotional proximity between teachers and students. From the perspective of inclusive pedagogy, such closeness forms the foundation of a humanistic learning process. As Pinho Feller (2022) emphasizes, translanguaging pedagogy is relationally grounded, valuing the diversity of linguistic experiences as an integral component of learning rather than as deviations from the norm.

Conceptually, translanguaging in Indonesia's multilingual classrooms also challenges the native-speakerism paradigm. English language learning in policy and practice has often been measured by the "purity" of pronunciation and grammar in comparison to native speakers. However, classroom practices demonstrate that the primary goal for students is not to become native speakers but effective communicators. Translanguaging provides a viable path toward this goal by enabling learners to mobilize their full linguistic repertoires for contextual meaning-making. Within the Global South context, this approach offers an alternative pedagogical paradigm, one more relevant than Western monolingual models that often overlook the linguistic realities of local communities.

The classroom practices in Pekanbaru demonstrate this potential vividly. In a lesson on Local Tourism, for example, students enthusiastically described local destinations using mixed languages: "We can go to Bono waves, tempat surfing yang terkenal," or "There is traditional food called rendang Riau, almost like Minang style." The teacher responded by expanding their English vocabulary without erasing local elements. Such instances illustrate that translanguaging not only strengthens English language competence but also fosters pride in local identity. In this way, translanguaging bridges local and global dimensions, positioning the classroom as a site of glocal learning where students become active agents in constructing meaning across languages and cultures.

CONCLUSION

This study affirms that translanguaging is not merely a spontaneous linguistic practice but a deliberate pedagogical strategy that bridges the complexities of language, identity, and emotion within Indonesia's multilingual classrooms. In the context of SMP Negeri 5 Pekanbaru, translanguaging emerges as an inclusive pedagogical practice that functionally integrates Minangkabau, Malay, and Indonesian languages in English learning, facilitating more participatory and contextualized learning processes. Through this practice, teachers act as linguistic mediators who balance the academic demands of a global language with students' local linguistic realities, while learners gain greater confidence and emotional engagement in their learning journey. Despite institutional constraints such as "English-only" policies, translanguaging demonstrates substantial potential as an alternative pedagogical paradigm for classrooms in the Global South, one that does not dismiss local realities for global standards but rather elevates them as primary resources for equitable, adaptive, and inclusive education. Consequently, this study extends the discourse on translanguaging beyond bilingual practice, positioning it as a conceptual framework that underscores the pedagogical value of linguistic diversity as the foundation of more humane and context-sensitive language education in Indonesia.

ETHICAL STATEMENT AND DISCLOSURE

This study was conducted in accordance with established ethical principles, including informed consent, protection of informants' confidentiality, and respect for local cultural values. Special consideration was given to participants from vulnerable groups to ensure their safety, comfort, and equal rights to participate. No external funding was received, and the authors declare no conflict of interest. All data and information presented were collected through valid research methods and have been verified to ensure their accuracy and reliability. The use of artificial intelligence (AI) was limited to technical assistance for writing and language editing, without influencing the scientific substance of the work. The authors express their gratitude to the informants for their valuable insights, and to the anonymous reviewers for their constructive feedback on an earlier version of this manuscript. The authors take full responsibility for the content and conclusions of this article.

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