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## The English Pre-service Teachers' Perception Toward Translanguaging in EFL Classroom

Dwi Lestari, Muhammad Asrori, Ellisa Indriyani Putri Handayani

English Education Department  
Teacher Training and Education Faculty  
Sebelas Maret University of Surakarta  
e-mail: [dwilast21@student.uns.ac.id](mailto:dwilast21@student.uns.ac.id)

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**Abstract:** The objectives of the study are to (1) understand the English pre-service teachers' perception toward translanguaging; and (2) understand how the English pre-service teachers perceive the use of translanguaging in the EFL classroom. This study falls into a mixed-method research design, which employed an explanatory mixed method that employs quantitative and qualitative data. The participants of the study were 50 English pre-service teachers who study in their 2nd and 3rd years. The data were collected by distributing a questionnaire and interviewing six respondents. The study's findings showed that the English pre-service teachers positively perceive translanguaging since it can facilitate learning English. Regarding translanguaging use in the EFL classroom, they considered it a natural occurrence for bilingual students. Besides, the students and teachers could benefit from utilizing it concerning instruction, material, and communication. Moreover, the English pre-service teachers also viewed translanguaging as a scaffolding tool rather than a weakness in the EFL classroom. They also stated that they would like to implement translanguaging if they become an English teacher to reduce the students' anxiety during learning in the classroom. Moreover, since they will teach junior and senior high school students, they think it is appropriate to use translanguaging adequately.

Keywords: pre-service teacher, perception, translanguaging, EFL classroom

### INTRODUCTION

Language is generally associated with nations and states, Japanese with Japan, French with France, Bahasa with Indonesia. As Indonesia, the country with various vernaculars also has an association between language and region (e.g., Java with Javanese). Language is also used to maintain political influence and marginalize minorities who speak a different language or language other than those in government (MacSwan, 2017). Accordingly, only one language is superior or has special privileges in its use compared to other languages (in this case, first language).

Teaching and learning English as a foreign language is the leading cause of using the mother tongue or first language (L1) in the class to facilitate learning. However, within the leverage of prevailing nationwide philosophy and language subtlety in discrepant nations, the monolingual approach has been the standard in language pedagogy in the classroom (Wang, 2019). Many teachers believe that this approach is appropriate for teaching English to the students, but the classroom's reality is not monolingual. The reality that the students are bilingual results in unavoidable L1 use. Therefore, the translanguaging approach could be more appropriate for EFL implementation rather than using the monolingual approach.

Translanguaging, as an approach to language, bilingualism, and bilingual edification, acknowledges the entire language origin accessible to pupils without dividing their exertion and is crucial on enhancing twenty-first-century student learning (Moody et al., 2019). As Canagarajah (2011) stated, translanguaging is the capability of multilingual speakers to use and combine different language resources to build their voices.

English is taught as a foreign language regarding Indonesia education's scope since Indonesia has a nation and regional language. Therefore, considering the situation, the implementation of translanguaging is more appropriate than a monolingual approach because the students can utilize their L1 in the learning process. Moreover, there is no restriction that students use English-only in the classroom. Therefore, they can get scaffolding from their L1 to understand English materials.

Several studies have discussed translanguaging matter in the education scope, particularly in the language major. Wang (2019) stated that the linguistic repertoire of the teacher affects the use of translanguaging in the class. The study found that many teachers had different views on translanguaging based on their experience and belief. Notice from the students' perception that translanguaging occurs naturally and that they do it since it senses it is the best action to do. They do it for purpose, hint at the main content, give an opinion, offer a critique, and validate their understanding of a given topic (Escobar, 2019; Zhang et al., 2020). Escobar added that the students feel relaxed learning in the classroom using translanguaging.

The study from Moody et al. (2019) found a positive perception from the bilingual and multilingual students. The study revealed that translanguaging could facilitate bilingual students' communication. Concerning the implementation of translanguaging in the multilingual classroom, the students faced challenges since they were not sharing the same L1. Therefore, Galante stated that pedagogic translanguaging in a multilingual class emerges more intricate than in a bilingual class (2020).

The previous study had conducted a study about perception on translanguaging from the view of graduate students out of various majors. That is, the context is not merely focusing on language learning. Besides, the result only in the form of a questionnaire's score without further explanation of the reason behind the score. Accordingly, this study investigates perception about translanguaging specifically in the language teaching context, English as a foreign language. Furthermore, the current study also explains further from the interview section aside from the questionnaire.

The language teachers in Indonesia have to be aware that they teach English as a foreign language to the mostly bilingual students. As stated before, translanguaging is quite appropriate to implement in the EFL classroom; this research was conducted to answer the aims of the study. The aims of the study are to (1) know the English pre-service teachers' perception toward translanguaging and (2) understand how the English pre-service teachers perceive the use of translanguaging in the EFL classroom.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Definition of Translanguaging

In the latest years, there has been an augmented amount of literature on the discussion about translanguaging. However, the term is still unfamiliar to general people. This issue emerges as globalization, wherein mobility often includes the versatility of linguistic and sociolinguistic capital (Bloomaert, 2010). In this situation, it will be said that a multilingual phenomenon emerged first. Typically, the term multilingual receives the language relationship in an additive way. It provides the image of the languages inserted one over the other to create multi multilingual competence. However, the term multilingual does not correspond to current reality. As Canagarajah (2013) stated, languages are always in contact with each other and have mutual effects. The situation raises a new term, translanguaging practice or translanguaging.

According to Vaish and Subhan (2014), translanguaging differs from the notion of codeswitching or code-mixing. Translanguaging involves codeswitching, and it likewise puts translation varies through these two fundamental activities (Garcia and Sylvan, 2011). Garcia explains that instead of concentrating upon the language and how each other can refer to the manners a monolingual equal is utilized and represented, translanguaging theory establishes it clear that there are no apparent margins amid bilingual languages (2009). Thus, translanguaging offers the flexible utilization of language in bilingual communication.

Translanguaging is an approach in language education that view language not as two independent language system but as one language-producing repertoire of traits to gain knowledge, express one's feelings, make sense, and communicate regarding language usage by utilizing the students' L1 alongside the target language (Wei, 2011; Garcia and Wei, 2013). Dicamilla & Antón (2012) stated that using L1 in foreign language classrooms could alleviate the students regarding second/target language acquisition.

### Perception of Translanguaging

A human cannot be separated from the process of perception in their daily life. Perception falls into the cognitive process where people could decide or create a conclusion. Perception is the process by which a person array, store, and retrieve particular information/occurrence through their sensory input to make it significant (Galotti, 2007; Wagner and Hollenbeck, 2010; Robbins and Judge, 2012). The sensory input regarding what they see, feel, do, et cetera. The result of the perception process could be different from one individual to another.

Linking perception to the current study about translanguaging, some perceptions toward translanguaging are revealed. Rivera and Mazak state that translanguaging is usual and occurs in practically every class (2019). In line with Rivera and Mazak, Moody

et al. (2019) also state that translanguaging is a natural bi- and multilingual practice. Besides, translanguaging could support the L2 learning that Moody's study generates positive perception of translanguaging. However, they found an inclination to assume translanguaging indicative of low L2 abilities.

Accordingly, to specify the perception of translanguaging in EFL classrooms or the field of language majors, the study took the English pre-service teacher as the object. A pre-service teacher is a student enrolled in an undergraduate teaching degree to be prepared as a teacher in tertiary education (Ferry and Kervin, 2009; Gonzalez and Balderas, 2016). However, they are still qualified through their higher education institutions to become experienced teachers (Zacharis. 2020). Therefore, it can be said that pre-service teacher has not yet taught professionally.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This study is a mixed-method research design, an approach to an investigation that includes quantitative and qualitative data (Creswell, 2014). Specifically, it is a mixed explanatory method that the quantitative phase was conducted first then followed up by the qualitative phase. It was conducted in English education majors at one of the universities in Surakarta. The participants of the study were 50 English pre-service teachers who were in their 2nd and 3rd year of study.

The data were collected through questionnaires and interviews. The questionnaire was distributed first to generate the result. Then, the respondents for the interview section were chosen based on the questionnaire result. Six English pre-service teachers became the interview respondents, wherein every three respondents had the highest and lowest questionnaire score. The data were separately analyzed since it was in the form of quantitative and qualitative data.

The study employs a different way to validate the data based on its quantitative and qualitative data in terms of data validity. First, the quantitative data were validated using its instrument's internal validity and reliability. Therefore, the data were obtained to generate valid data. Meanwhile, the qualitative data was validated by presenting a question in the interview that resulted in negative information toward the research theme. This negative information makes the respondent aware of the topic being discussed to give a valid and realistic answer (Creswell & Clark, 2018). Furthermore, the research also utilized methodological triangulation since the data were collected through questionnaires and interviews (Noble, 2019).

## **FINDINGS**

The study's findings were divided into two kinds of data form: quantitative and qualitative. Both of them are used to answer the study's research question (RQ). This division was based on the collecting data method, quantitative and qualitative phase. Hence, the quantitative phase in the questionnaire results' form and the qualitative phase in the field notes' form.

### **The Quantitative Phase**

Through this phase, the participants' data were collected for the research matters. The age of participants was in the range of 18-21 years old. All participants came from Java

Island, where the regions are around East Java, Central Java, and Yogyakarta. Hence, the participants' L1 mostly are Indonesian (62%) and Javanese (38%).

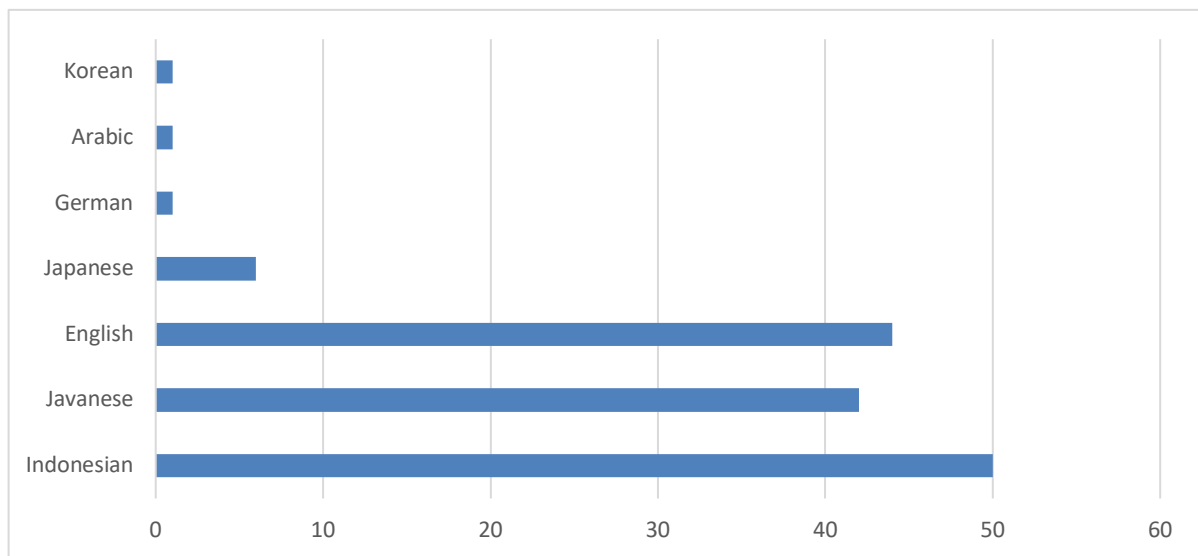


Figure 1. Histogram of The Language the Participants Speak

At this point, it can be said that the participants mostly share the same L1. Accordingly, the participants were bilingual since they knew two languages before learning English.

Referring to figure 1, the participants are primarily multi multilingual great measure, the participants spoke in 3 languages, and mostly all of them spoke in Indonesian, Javanese, and English. Those three languages were the most familiar languages to all of the participants. Indeed, the participants had the experience of translanguaging since they were bi/multi multilingual, shared or spoke various languages inside or outside the classroom. Still, they were not familiar with the term translanguaging itself posited from the questionnaire – only 16 of 50 respondents were familiar with the term translanguaging.

The questionnaire's result for the RQ1 showed that the English pre-service teachers perceive translanguaging as a positive thing since the average overall statements score was 3.74. or 75%. The statement with the highest score was *Translanguaging helped me learn English (4.18)*; this statement was used in the interview section to find out the rationale behind this result. Meanwhile, the lowest score was *Translanguaging indicates a lack of linguistic proficiency in your second/foreign language (3.74)*. As this is a negative statement, the score was reversed (1=Strongly Agree; 5=Strongly Disagree). Therefore, from this result, the participants disagreed that translanguaging indicates a lack of linguistic proficiency in a second/foreign language.

The result for the RQ2 revealed that the participants positively perceived the use of translanguaging in the EFL classroom. It was based on the overall score that turned out 3.96 or 79%. The statement with the highest score was *I would like to implement translanguaging to reduce the students' anxiety (4.06)*. The depth answer of the RQ2 would be shown in the qualitative phase result.

### Qualitative Phase

This phase used the interview to collect the data from the participants. The result from this phase was used to find the rationale of quantitative results which answer the

RQ1. In great measure, the interview section was used to answer the RQ2. In-depth explanations were gained from the interview section related to the positive perception toward translanguaging by the English pre-service teachers (EPT). The participants explained that translanguaging helped them learn the language or provided scaffolding. Scaffolding is related to instruction, comprehending the material, context clues, and mediating communication within the classroom.

“Translanguaging can help the student to catch the instruction and the material quickly.” (EPT2)

“When learning a language, I think it will be faster to comprehend when communicating with each other. Therefore, because of that, we need the existence of L1 to help us.” (EPT4)

The use of translanguaging in the EFL classroom was perceived positively from the questionnaire result. The interview section revealed how the English pre-service teachers perceive translanguaging in the EFL classroom. They viewed translanguaging as a scaffolding tool in learning English since translanguaging utilized L1. The existence of L1 made learning a language fun and made the learner feel pleasant. Nevertheless, they were aware that the L1 should not be used excessively to avoid translanguaging turn as weakness.

“When the lecturer taught, sometimes insert Indonesian/Javanese, I feel more pleasant and easier to understand the material.” (EPT5)

Furthermore, the EPT explained that translanguaging in EFL classrooms was natural since the students were bilingual. Besides, English was not their L1, so translanguaging was undeniable for bi/multilingual students.

“Yes, translanguaging is natural. We could see it on television when the person talked by mixing Indonesian and English. So do us, when we talked more likely to mixed one language to another.” (EPT1)

In the education’s scope and a social setting, they explained that they usually saw the practice of translanguaging in their surroundings. Therefore, when L1 is forbidden, or the class was employed an English-only policy, the students would face hardship in learning, leading to anxious feelings.

“Even if we were the ones who choose the English major when it comes to the strict rule (English-only policy) would be like, oh my goodness.” (EPT2)

The participants agreed that translanguaging helped them reduce their anxiety during a lesson in the classroom. Therefore, they precisely knew what they should do and could deliver the point of their utterances well, leading them to enjoy the learning activity.

“As if there is a teacher who asks using Indonesian, I feel more tranquil. Not highly fear and be more enjoy the lesson.” (EPT3)

They realized that translanguaging gave advantages for them when they utilized it in the EFL classroom related to understanding the instruction, getting more engaged with the lecturer, and enjoying the lesson. However, they were also aware that translanguaging could become a weakness if not appropriately utilized. Everything used for too much is not good, so do translanguaging. The excessive use of L1 in the English classroom caused the students to get less exposure to the target language.

“Translanguaging could be weaknesses when the portion of L1 utilization being excessive compared to the utilization of English.” (EPT6)

Finally, the English pre-service teacher participants stated that they would utilize translanguaging as they would be a teacher in junior or senior high school. Moreover, they figured out that their students’ level emphasized the material’s comprehension, particularly junior high school students. Therefore, the participants did not hesitate to implement translanguaging since they realized it could scaffold the students in comprehending the material. Moreover, the students would not be reluctant to communicate with the teacher since translanguaging could reduce their anxiety. Accordingly, it explained the result from the questionnaire wherein the statement *I would like to implement translanguaging to reduce the students’ anxiety* got the higher score among the other statements” regarding answering the RQ2. In addition, the participants would like to implement translanguaging because it makes the learning process less intimidating.

“The cause is to make the class less intimidating. Because at the moment we force the students they will be afraid. Also, they will not enjoy the learning process.” (EPT6)

To sum up the findings, the result from the quantitative and qualitative phases would be linked. The English pre-service teachers perceive translanguaging positively because it could scaffold the students in learning English in terms of instruction, material, and communication. They also perceive translanguaging in EFL classrooms as something positive since it gave many advantages for the students. Furthermore, the participants view translanguaging as a natural occurrence in the social and educational setting. Therefore, the use of translanguaging in the EFL classroom was undeniable.

At the moment L1 is forbidden in the classroom, the students would face hardship in learning, leading to anxious feelings. Hence, translanguaging also helps the participants reduce their anxiety and feel more settled. The questionnaire’s result generates a higher score for the statement *I would like to implement translanguaging to reduce the students’ anxiety*, which becomes one reason for the participants to implement translanguaging in the future. They want to create an enjoyable learning circumstance, whereas the students do not feel anxious. They are aware of gaining the advantages of translanguaging; they ought to implement it properly by deliberating the students’ level. Consequently, translanguaging does not turn out to be a weakness.

## DISCUSSION

### 1. How English Pre-service Teachers Perceive about Translanguaging

Based on the quantitative and qualitative data, the English pre-service teachers perceive translanguaging as a positive thing. This result corroborates with Moody et al. (2019), wherein the graduate students from various majors also had a positive perception of translanguaging. Furthermore, the participants explained that they positively viewed translanguaging as its ability to scaffold the students in learning English since it allows them to utilize their L1, similar to *what* Anton and DiCamilla (2012) stated.

Regarding the statement that gained the highest score on the questionnaire, *Translanguaging helped me learn English* (4.18), the participants explained how translanguaging helped them learn English. The way translanguaging could help them

learn English is regarding instruction and aid in comprehending the material more easily. These findings were in line with the previous study that found translanguaging was used to give students guidance for an activity or instruction and aid students grasp the teaching content (Zhang et al., 2020; Wang's, 2019).

Moody et al. (2019) study found an inclination notion that translanguaging was indicative of low L2 abilities. However, these findings contrast with the current study due to the questionnaire's result. The questionnaire's statement with the lowest score belonging to *Translanguaging indicates a lack of linguistic proficiency in your second/foreign language* (3.18) statement. Furthermore, it indicates that the participants disagreed if translanguaging was indicative of L2/target's language proficiency. Otherwise, they view it as a scaffolding tool to learn English.

## **2. How English Pre-service Teachers Perceive the Use of Translanguaging in EFL Classroom**

The perception of translanguaging in EFL classrooms also generates a positive result. Thus, it can be said that translanguaging in the EFL classroom is acceptable, likewise in Moody et al. (2019) study, which took the study about perception towards translanguaging in various majors classrooms. The significance is that whether translanguaging is applied in language majors or others still gets an optimistic view, indicating that it is not a weakness. Further explanation of how the English pre-service teachers perceive translanguaging in EFL classrooms was gained through the interview section.

The use of translanguaging in the EFL classroom was perceived as a natural occurrence by the English pre-service teachers. Particularly for the bilingual students who had schemata of specific languages. This finding agrees with the previous study, which found that translanguaging is a usual and natural practice for bi/multilinguals (Mazak, 2019; Moody et al., 2019). Accordingly, when the students' L1 is forbidden to use in the classroom, they lose a tool to aid them in learning. Dicamilla & Antón stated that using L1 in foreign language classrooms could alleviate the students in terms of learning second/target (2012). However, this condition leads them to hardship in the learning process, resulting in the students' experience of feeling anxious.

Regarding the feeling when using translanguaging, the participants explained that translanguaging helped them reduce their anxiety during a lesson in the classroom. Consistent with the study of Escobar (2019), which found that students agree that they like the use of translanguaging; hence they feel relaxed. Consequently, they understood what they should do and could deliver their utterance well. All that had been explained were the advantages the participants gained from translanguaging. However, advantages are not detached from weaknesses.

Translanguaging can turn out to be a weakness if it is not properly utilized. The participants reckon that the excessive use of translanguaging (L1) in the English classroom caused the students to get less exposure to the target language, particularly for an advanced level student. Therefore, this issue becomes a challenge for the participants to properly implement translanguaging in the EFL classroom. However, the findings did not reveal the challenges as Galante (2020) stated that pedagogic translanguaging in multilinguals emerges to be over intricate than bilingual class since the study was



conducted in a bilingual classroom and participated by students who mostly shared the same L1.

Related to the participants' future work as English teachers regarding translanguaging, they stated they would like to implement it. Consider that they will teach junior or senior high school students. They thought that translanguaging would fit with their students' level. They will teach at the level that emphasizes the material's comprehension rather than English skills (speaking, listening, and writing), especially for the junior high school students. The participants liked to utilize translanguaging to scaffold the students in comprehending the material as they had experienced it as a student. These findings showed what Wang stated that the linguistic repertoire of the teacher affects the use of translanguaging in the class (2019).

Moreover, the participants reckon that translanguaging could reduce their students' anxiety in the classroom since they want to make a less intimidating learning process. Thus, they will not be reluctant to communicate with each other or the teacher during the classroom. This explained the questionnaire's result that got the higher score regarding why they would implement translanguaging. The statement which got the highest score was *I would like to implement translanguaging to reduce the students' anxiety* got the higher score among the other statements.

## CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

According to the study's findings and discussion, it can be concluded that the English pre-service teachers' perception toward translanguaging in EFL classrooms is positive since it can facilitate the students in learning English. Then, the participants also consider the situation of their students as bilingual students. It is something natural for them to use their L1 as a tool for them to learn English (another foreign language). However, English-only policy implementation is not appropriate for junior and senior high school students because of English teaching as a foreign language in Indonesian education. This condition will cause hardship for students in learning English as they lose one of their tools to learn a new language, L1.

Besides aiding the students in learning, translanguaging also reduces students' anxiety during learning activities in the classroom. As a result, they can enjoy the learning activity and comprehend the material facilely. Regarding the result that the English pre-service teachers perceive translanguaging as a positive thing, it can be concluded that translanguaging is not a weakness or an indication of L2's lack of proficiency. The thing that turns translanguaging into weakness is when it is used excessively, notably in the intermediate to advanced level, resulting in the students not getting enough English exposure. Indeed, the English pre-service teacher can take advantage of translanguaging implementation. Accordingly, the English pre-service teachers are not hesitant to implement translanguaging if they become a teacher.

Following the translanguaging issue, it is suggested that in/pre-service teachers know the role of L1 in the language learning process, especially for a foreign language like English. Hence, both the teacher and student can utilize it properly and take the maximum advantages through translanguaging. Therefore, there must be a process of renewing the English teacher's knowledge about translanguaging. As a result, the stereotype that using

L1 in the EFL classroom is a weakness and indicates that the target language (English) lacks proficiency can be deprived. Moreover, further researchers are supposed to study deeper in translanguaging matter such as its implementation in EFL classrooms or other majors.

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