



Indonesian Students' Perception on Translanguaging Challenges in The Efl Class

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Abstract

Translanguaging is believed to better promote students' academic performance including in learning English as Foreign Language (EFL). On the other hand, there are many scholars who still perceive the practice of alternating languages in classroom may also bring challenges. However, those challenges may be perceived differently in Indonesian context especially from the students' lens. Hence, this research aims: 1) to investigate students' perception of student-directed translanguaging challenges in Indonesian EFL class, 2) to investigate students' perception of teacher-directed translanguaging challenges in Indonesian EFL class. A descriptive qualitative study was employed. The data were collected using questionnaires of 20 students of a private Junior High School in East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia. The data were analyzed through following activities: (1) data condensation, (2) data display, and (3) conclusion drawing/verification. The result indicated five challenges from student accounts for both type of classroom translanguaging (student-directed and teacher-directed translanguaging) namely indigenous language diversity, English only ideology, desire to be familiarized with English, and students' guilt. These findings shed light on a multilingual pedagogical practice and further research, which we would like to discuss further within this article.

Keywords: Challenges; Indonesian EFL class; Students' Perception; Translanguaging

Introduction,

Since translanguaging is coined by Cen Williams as a pedagogical practice in Welsh/English classrooms (Hornberger & Link, 2012), the concept and strategy of translanguaging are increasingly adopted in educational context. It is believed that by using a complex discursive process involving students' and teachers' all language practices, the learning process become more meaningful for the multilingual students (García & Wei, 2014). Baker even argues that translanguaging is not only beneficial to foster students' language skills but also to prompt the better understanding of the subject matter being studied (Baker, 2001) because during the process, students will experience a language practice in which two or more languages are used to achieve the pedagogical purposes. He points out at least 4 benefits of using translanguaging; First, it results in a deeper and fuller understanding of the learning material because the use of two languages demands a process that never happens in the monolingual system. Second, the language they have not yet mastered well will be strengthened. Third, parents who speak minority languages can help students' development in minority languages by communicating in that language at home. Fourth, it enables students who have better English proficiency to help those who do not.

On the other side, many still contend the use of translanguaging in schools and classrooms. They believe that only the "language" as defined in the national school curriculum and grammar books is important and needs to be used in schools while translanguaging seems to blur them all.

Another tension in translanguaging implementation is the perspective of those who believe that accepting the fluid language practices of bilinguals will weaken the non-dominant language or in EFL context, English as the target language (Wei & García, 2017). However, the further study to investigate students' perception on those challenges is urgent to be conducted. It is important to reveal what students really think about those challenges based on their real experience in learning. By understanding students' perception, the future actions can be made to cope with the challenges. The future decisions also can be taken whether to translanguagage or not to translanguagage.

Regarding the challenges on translanguaging, even Garcia and Wei (2017) who dedicate efforts to develop this theory realize this. Most schools have never granted translanguaging space for their students through their official school language policy because of the complexities that may be faced by the teachers and students in the classroom. Further researches involving scholars, teachers and students as research participants reported many more challenges such as side effects, goal formulation, learning the language of schooling, English and other semiotic resources, affective functions, effort, and confusion (Ticheloven et al., 2019). Other research revealed other possible challenges included logistics, prioritizing the target language, a contradiction between translanguaging pedagogy and monolingual assessment, different meaning across languages and awareness of spontaneous translanguaging use (Galante, 2020). Moreover, some interview and discourse analysis indicate students' negative attitude influenced by their language ideology and constructed language status in the wider socio-political context (Rasman, 2018; Vaish, 2019). This negative attitude is also possessed by teachers reflected in some school policies and in comments from teachers such as „Only speak English“ and „Leave your language at the gate“, which are sentiments noticed by the researchers in Australia (Oliver et al., 2021).

The present research in general will continue what have done by the previous studies but in different context and complexities especially in Indonesian multilingual classroom. If in the previous studies the challenges are revealed by teachers and scholars, the present study attempts to investigate the possible translanguaging challenges from Indonesian students' lens. The result of this study was expected to contribute towards the multilingual pedagogy in Indonesia.

In reference to the previously stated background, this study aims to answer these following questions,

1. How is students' perception on teacher-directed translanguaging challenges in Indonesian EFL class?
2. How is students' perception on student-directed translanguaging challenges in Indonesian EFL class?

Research Methodology,

The participants of this study were 20 grade VIII students of a private Junior High Schools located in East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia. They came from different regencies of East Nusa Tenggara where each regency had its own indigenous language. Therefore, during the EFL class the participants might speak English, Indonesian and one of indigenous language depending on where they came from. They were purposely chosen based on particular consideration that was related to the aims of the present research. The criteria employed to select the participants were EFL students who had direct experience through repeated exposure of translanguaging during EFL class and were open to share their perception on translanguaging challenges in their EFL class.

Data collection was obtained from questionnaires. The questionnaires consisting of two main sections with close-ended and open-ended questions were addressed to the student participants. The first section aimed to reveal participants' identity and language background. The second section aimed to investigate the challenges of translanguaging practice encountered by participants in the EFL classroom. In this second section open-ended questions were used to give more space for participants to express their view.

The collected data from student questionnaires were analyzed using activities as follows (1) data condensation, (2) data display, and (3) conclusion drawing/verification (Miles et al., 2014). Supporting these results, there were tables and excerpts that were gained from the analysis process.

Findings and Discussion,**Findings***Students' Perception on The Challenges of Teacher-directed Translanguaging*

The following table summarizes the challenges of teacher-directed translanguaging perceived by the student participants.

Table 1 The challenges of teacher-directed translanguaging

Student Accounts	
1	Indigenous language diversity
2	English only ideology
3	Desire to be familiarized with English

There are three themes emerge from student accounts: indigenous language diversity, English-only ideology, and the desire to be much more familiarized with English. Based on the questionnaires completed by the students, the majority actually liked it when their teacher spoke Indonesian and indigenous languages. They did not have any issues with it. However, because of the diversity of students' indigenous languages in the class, some students still believe that the teachers' native language might generate misunderstanding among pupils. One student, for example, was concerned about this issue.

"My friends and I come from different places and we speak different indigenous languages, if the teacher speaks Sikka, it cannot be understood by my friends from Ende, Bajawa and other places because they have their own indigenous languages"

Because most students came from a variety of linguistic backgrounds, the student did not believe that the teacher's native languages would aid them. If the teacher from Sikka regency spoke *Bahasa Sikka* in the EFL class, students from Ende, Bajawa, and other regencies would have no idea of what the teacher was talking about.

The next issue was about students' English only ideology. Without providing adequate arguments, some students just mentioned that EFL teacher should not use Indonesian and indigenous languages in the EFL classroom but English. For example, there was a student saying that,

"I feel odd, because if that is an English class, we have to use English and not Indonesian or indigenous languages."

Another student just simply said,

"It is funny and awkward."

Both comments indicated that the use of Indonesian or indigenous language might be inappropriate in the EFL class. They just simply associated EFL class with the use of English. They felt funny and odd when the teacher spoke Indonesian and especially indigenous language in the class.

Meanwhile, the last issue was expressed by a student who expected his EFL teachers to use more English to familiarize students with English.

"I like my teacher using English mostly. I think, to learn English students need to be familiarized with English"

The student demanded more English exposure given by the EFL teachers. It was thought as the way to familiarize students with the language they just learned. In this situation, the use of languages other than English may be undervalued.

Students' Perception on The Challenges of Student-directed Translanguaging

Students' perception on the challenges of student-directed translanguaging are performed in the following table.

Table 2 The challenges of student-directed translanguaging

Student Accounts	
1	English only ideology
2	Students' guilt
3	Indigenous language diversity

Regarding the issues of student-directed translanguaging, some students brought up English only ideology once again. They just simply said that in the EFL class they should use English only. The other students express their guilt when they used Indonesian and indigenous languages. They perceived that the use of languages other than English in the EFL class was a mistake and indicated their lack of English proficiency. For example, one student said,

"I can speak Indonesian and my indigenous language in English class without problems, but I know I have made a mistake. You cannot speak those languages in front of your English teacher."

The student voiced his reluctance to use other languages in the EFL lesson, believing it to be a mistake. In the next sentence, he expressed his worry to translanguaging in front of his teacher as he might be afraid of the teacher's reaction.

The third issue of student-directed translanguaging was indigenous language diversity. One student commented of the possible confusion they would encounter when each student enacted translanguaging involving their indigenous languages.

"I don't think my friends will understand what I mean if I speak my indigenous language. Otherwise, when they speak their indigenous languages, I will not understand it. Better for us to use Indonesian than indigenous languages."

As translanguaging practice encouraged the use of wide range of linguistic resources including indigenous languages, the student seemed to be reluctant to use his indigenous language in the classroom. The student believed that the indigenous language diversity could be the challenges to understand each other during the EFL class. He suggested to better use Indonesian to scaffold rather than indigenous languages.

Discussion

To bring the language practice from students' dailyness into the classroom and serve the pedagogical purposes must be conducted carefully. Besides its benefits, some challenges need to be realized as what has pointed out in the present research such as English only ideology, students' guilt, students' need to be familiarized with English and indigenous language diversity. Only by understanding both benefits and challenges, the further decision and action can be taken properly.

As stated by some scholars, monoglossic ideology is still the main issue in the foreign language pedagogy where in Indonesian, English is enacted as foreign language. This monoglossic or English only ideology refers to the assumption that legitimate linguistic practices are only those enacted by monolinguals (Garcia & Flores, 2012). This ideology is apparent from students' comments regarding both teacher- and student-directed translanguaging. The students have already the doctrine of correctness in language. The correct structure to communicate is associated with the way monolinguals do. Therefore, the language practice deviated from the standard use of English is seen as a mistake, including mixing the languages in the classroom as performed in translanguaging practice. The deviation from the standard practice even causes the sense of guilt specifically when they are not able to perform the target language "correctly".

Furthermore, students may demand more English exposure to get familiarized with the foreign language. If the previous researches reveal that one of the challenges of implementing translanguaging influenced by teachers desire to give enough English exposure for the students by prioritizing English rather than other languages (Galante, 2020), this research find out that the students may demand for more English exposure. Those students and teachers may assume if there are

other languages used in learning a new additional language, the use of the target language may decrease while the other languages may be overused (McMillan & Rivers, 2011) and it can give detrimental effect for students" learning.

Regarding language diversity, the implementation of translanguaging strategy is not easy to conduct in a highly multilingual classroom. Vaish (2020) argues in the environment where the languages are highly diverse, translanguaging pedagogy will only possible with a proper treatment. As students come with multiple linguistic backgrounds and the teacher is likely to speak in only one pair of languages (English and Indonesian) and his/her indigenous language, using the home language of students requires that the class must be broken up into as many groups as there are languages in the classroom (Vaish, 2019). However, it may encounter another problem when some students do not have pairs who speak the same indigenous language. Moreover, it is also believed that the teaching will need extra effort especially when students are already fluent in language of schooling but not so proficient in their indigenous or home languages (Ticheloven et al., 2019). The use of all linguistic repertoire including students home languages may slow down the lesson just to accommodate students" indigenous language while teaching and learning goals can be achieved by scaffolding in language of schooling or Indonesian.

Conclusion and Suggestion

Some tensions in implementing translanguaging pedagogy seems inevitable in many parts of the world including in Indonesian. Despite translanguaging actually offers a new paradigm to change the way multilinguals think about the use of language, the fact is the monoglossic ideology is still embedded in multilingual learners" mind. In translanguaging practice, some learners still perceive themselves as deviant monolingual speaker rather than emerging bilinguals who are achieving a multilingual competencies (García & Wei, 2014). Besides, some issues related to students" guilt, the need of English exposure and indigenous language diversity can be the other challenges that may be encountered in implementing the practice in the classroom. Therefore, to maximize the potential use of translanguaging pedagogy, stakeholders and teachers have to remind students not to hesitate to translanguaging in the EFL class as it actually helps them in scaffolding activities.

However, this present study is limited to reveal the potential challenges of translanguaging practice in the EFL class only. How to deal with students" need of enough English exposure and indigenous language diversity are still questionable and need future research.

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