J-Shelves of Indragiri (JSI)
https://ejournal-fkip.unisi.ac.id/shelves
Email: jsipbifkipunisi@gmail.com
DOI: https://doi.org/10.61672/jsi.v8i2.3830

November 2026. Vol.8, No.2
e-ISSN. 2721-205X
pp. 192-205

TRANSLANGUAGING AS A PEDAGOGICAL STRATEGY IN EYL CLASSROOM

Tegar Aulia[1*], Lusi Nurhayati[2]
[1,2]Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta, Indonesia
Author (s) Email: [1]*tegaraulia.2025@student.uny.ac.id*, [2]*lusi_nurhayati@uny.ac.id*

*Corresponding Author Email: *tegaraulia.2025@student.uny.ac.id*

Article Info

Article History:
Received:30-09-2026
Revised:03-11-2026
Accepted:04-11-2026
Published:12-11-2026

Keywords:
English for Young Learners;
Multilingual classroom;
Pedagogy;
Teacher reflection;
Translanguaging

Abstract

English for Young Learners (EYL) classrooms in multilingual contexts such as Indonesia involve students who may draw on English, Indonesian, and local languages during learning. In such contexts, translanguaging has been increasingly recognized as a pedagogical resource; however, limited attention has been given to how teachers implement translanguaging purposefully in EYL classrooms and to the pedagogical purposes and challenges underlying their language choices. This study explores how teachers implement translanguaging as a pedagogical strategy in EYL classrooms, the pedagogical purposes it serves, and the challenges they encounter. A qualitative descriptive approach was employed with two EYL teachers in a multilingual elementary school in Jayapura. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and classroom observations and analyzed thematically using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step model. The findings indicate that teachers deliberately used translanguaging to clarify meaning, scaffold comprehension, enhance student participation, reduce anxiety, and support positive emotional engagement. The findings also show that translanguaging was used for classroom management and was informed by teachers' reflective practices, particularly in adjusting language use to students' comprehension and engagement. However, teachers faced challenges in balancing English exposure with the use of Indonesian and local languages and in responding to parental expectations of English-only instruction. The study concludes that translanguaging can function as a purposeful and reflective pedagogical strategy that supports inclusive and meaningful English learning for young learners in multilingual classroom contexts, provided that teachers use it strategically according to learners' needs and classroom conditions.

November 2026. Vol.8, No.2
e-ISSN. 2721-205X
pp. 192-205

INTRODUCTION

The teaching of English to young learners (EYL) has increasingly become a central concern in applied linguistics, particularly in multilingual contexts such as Indonesia. In these settings, children are exposed to multiple languages local languages at home, Bahasa Indonesia as the national medium, and English as a foreign language introduced through formal schooling. This multilingual reality creates both opportunities and challenges for teachers, who must navigate between languages to ensure effective learning and classroom engagement (Dewan, 2025; Fu & Aubain, 2025). Recent shifts in language education emphasize the need to embrace multilingualism as a resource rather than a hindrance, positioning translanguaging as a key pedagogical strategy that enables learners to use their full linguistic repertoires to make meaning (Cenoz & Gorter, 2022; Makoe, 2018)

Translanguaging has emerged as a transformative concept in sociolinguistics and language education, challenging the long-standing dominance of monolingual ideologies in English Language Teaching (ELT). Rather than enforcing an English-only classroom, translanguaging encourages learners and teachers to fluidly draw upon all linguistic resources available to them. This pedagogical stance aligns with culturally responsive and inclusive teaching principles, as it allows learners to connect their prior knowledge with new linguistic input (Lewis et al., 2012; Ossa Parra & Proctor, 2021). Furthermore, recent scholarship suggests that translanguaging enhances learner participation, fosters emotional engagement, and promotes deeper comprehension in multilingual classrooms (Song et al., 2022)

Empirical research in both international and Indonesian contexts substantiates the value of translanguaging in facilitating English language learning. Indonesian teachers employed translanguaging to mediate meaning and scaffold students' understanding in EFL classrooms (Aribah & Pradita, 2022). Similarly, (Gülveren, 2023) observed that translanguaging practices helped reduce students' anxiety while improving their confidence to communicate in English. further noted that teachers' strategic use of Indonesian and English enabled more effective vocabulary instruction and classroom management (Haque et al., 2024). In the

November 2026. Vol.8, No.2
e-ISSN. 2721-205X
pp. 192-205

international context, translanguaging contributes to identity construction, metalinguistic awareness, and linguistic equity in bilingual education. Collectively, these findings highlight that translanguaging is not a random alternation of languages but a deliberate pedagogical act that supports multilingual learners (Yilmaz, 2021).

Recent Indonesian studies published in indexed journals have expanded this discussion by highlighting teachers' perceptions and practices of translanguaging. EFL teacher candidates perceived translanguaging as an inclusive and effective instructional strategy (Yuvayapan, 2019). (Doiz & Lasagabaster, 2017) discovered that teachers' positive beliefs toward translanguaging significantly influenced their language choices and classroom discourse. Similarly, (Saeli & Rahmati, 2023), in Studies revealed that translanguaging promotes affective engagement and peer collaboration among young learners. These studies collectively suggest that translanguaging pedagogy, grounded in sociocultural theory (Rajendram, 2023; Sangeetha & Sridhivya, 2025)), plays a critical role in bridging linguistic gaps and enhancing learner participation.

Despite the growing number of studies on translanguaging in Indonesian education, few have focused specifically on English for Young Learners (EYL) contexts. Young learners' classrooms differ from secondary or tertiary settings, as learning is intertwined with play, affect, and interactional sensitivity (Britton, 2015). Teachers often switch between English, Indonesian, and local languages to explain new concepts or manage behavior; however, such practices are rarely analyzed through the theoretical lens of translanguaging pedagogy. Moreover, limited attention has been given to teachers' reflective experiences and the pedagogical purposes underlying their language use in EYL classrooms.

Therefore, this study aims to explore how teachers implement translanguaging as a pedagogical strategy in English for Young Learners (EYL) classrooms, the pedagogical purposes it serves, and the challenges they encounter. The significance of this research lies in its contribution to expanding the understanding of translanguaging within the early English education context in Indonesia, where multilingual realities shape classroom interaction. This study

November 2026. Vol.8, No.2
e-ISSN. 2721-205X
pp. 192-205

offers a novel perspective by situating translanguaging within the lived experiences of EYL teachers, thereby bridging theoretical discussions of multilingual pedagogy with practical insights from classroom practice.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach to explore the implementation of translanguaging as a pedagogical strategy in English for Young Learners (EYL) classrooms. A qualitative design was chosen to provide a detailed and context-sensitive understanding of the life experiences, perceptions, and teaching practices of teachers. The research location was an elementary school in Jayapura that had a multilingual learning environment, involving two EYL teachers selected through purposive sampling. Both teachers had more than two years of experience teaching EYL. Data were collected through two main methods: semi-structured interviews and classroom observations. The interviews aimed to explore the teachers' perceptions, pedagogical reasons, and challenges in implementing translanguaging. Meanwhile, observations were conducted to document real-time language practices and the pedagogical functions of translanguaging. The collected data were analyzed thematically using (Braun & Clarke, 2006) six-step model inductively, where themes emerged directly from the data. To ensure the validity of the findings, data triangulation and member checking were conducted. The entire research process complied with ethical considerations, including obtaining written consent and maintaining participant anonymity by using pseudonyms.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of interview and classroom observation data revealed five themes concerning the implementation of translanguaging in English for Young Learners (EYL) classrooms. The themes describe how teachers used multiple linguistic resources during instruction, the pedagogical purposes underlying their language choices, their role in supporting student participation, the challenges encountered in practice, and the reflective processes that guided teachers' decisions. Pseudonyms, Teacher A and Teacher B, are used to maintain participant anonymity.

November 2026. Vol.8, No.2
e-ISSN. 2721-205X
pp. 192-205

Translanguaging Practices in the Classroom

Classroom observations showed that translanguaging was integrated into teaching as a regular pedagogical practice rather than occurring as an occasional or random shift between languages. Both teachers used English alongside Indonesian and students' local languages to explain instructions, introduce vocabulary, model sentences, and manage classroom interaction.

Teacher A explained that she commonly introduced new vocabulary in English before providing an explanation in Indonesian. She also allowed students to describe unfamiliar concepts in their local language before attempting to express them in English. For example, when introducing the words "elephant" and "giraffe," students who were unfamiliar with the English terms were encouraged to describe the animals using a familiar language before practicing the English expressions together. This sequence provided students with an accessible starting point before they were expected to use English.

Similarly, Teacher B allowed students to use their home language when repeating or discussing sentences before moving toward English production. She explained that this process helped students understand the meaning of the expressions and increased their confidence when subsequently speaking English. The observation data supported this account, showing that students were given opportunities to use Indonesian or local language resources before producing English during classroom activities.

Translanguaging was also observed in classroom management. Teachers used students' familiar languages to remind them of classroom rules, redirect attention, and manage transitions between activities. This suggests that translanguaging served both instructional and interactional functions. Rather than separating languages strictly according to the language of instruction, teachers drew on available linguistic resources according to the immediate needs of the classroom.

Pedagogical Purposes of Translanguaging

The teachers' use of translanguaging was guided by specific pedagogical

November 2026. Vol.8, No.2
e-ISSN. 2721-205X
pp. 192-205

purposes. Interview data indicated that they used multiple languages particularly when students appeared confused, hesitant, or unable to understand English input. Translanguaging was therefore used as a form of scaffolding that helped students access meaning while continuing to work toward English use.

Teacher A described switching to Indonesian when students had difficulty understanding expressions such as “in front of” and “behind.” She combined the Indonesian explanation with physical demonstration before asking students to use the expressions in English. Teacher B similarly explained that she sometimes used Indonesian or a local language when students struggled to understand new vocabulary or concepts. These practices indicate that teachers did not view the use of other languages as an alternative to English learning but as temporary support for reaching English learning goals.

The teachers also associated translanguaging with students’ emotional experiences. They considered the use of familiar languages important for reducing frustration and anxiety, particularly when students encountered unfamiliar vocabulary or instructions. Classroom observations further indicated that allowing students to first express ideas in Indonesian or a local language helped them engage more confidently in subsequent English activities.

Enhancing Student Participation

Translanguaging also played an important role in encouraging student participation. The teachers observed that students who were shy or hesitant to speak were more willing to contribute when they were allowed to initially express their ideas in a familiar language. Teacher A noted that some students became more willing to answer questions when they could first explain their ideas in Indonesian. Teacher B similarly observed that students naturally combined languages when interacting with their peers, which created opportunities for greater classroom interaction.

Observation data provided further evidence of this process. During a storytelling activity, students initially narrated events using Indonesian and occasional local-language expressions before being encouraged to retell the story

November 2026. Vol.8, No.2
e-ISSN. 2721-205X
pp. 192-205

in English. This gradual movement from familiar linguistic resources toward English enabled students to participate in the activity and produce simple English sentences.

The practice also supported peer interaction. Students were able to discuss ideas in a familiar language before contributing in English during whole-class activities. Thus, translanguaging created opportunities for students to participate even when their English proficiency was still developing. In this context, participation was not limited to immediate English production but involved a gradual process through which students could use their existing linguistic resources as a foundation for English communication.

Challenges in Implementing Translanguaging

Despite its pedagogical value, the implementation of translanguaging presented challenges for teachers. One major challenge was maintaining an appropriate balance between English and other languages. Both teachers recognized that excessive use of Indonesian or local languages could reduce students' opportunities for exposure to English. Teachers therefore needed to make continuous decisions about when additional linguistic support was necessary and when students should be encouraged to remain in English.

Differences in students' linguistic abilities also complicated these decisions. Students did not always require the same degree of support, meaning that teachers had to monitor students' comprehension and adjust their language choices during instruction. Translanguaging consequently required teachers to respond flexibly rather than follow a fixed language-use pattern.

Another challenge involved parental expectations. Teacher A reported that some parents preferred English-only instruction and questioned the use of Indonesian or local languages. Although the teacher considered strategic use of familiar languages beneficial for comprehension, not all parents shared this perspective. This tension placed teachers in a position where they had to negotiate between their pedagogical judgments and external expectations concerning what effective English instruction should look like.

November 2026. Vol.8, No.2
e-ISSN. 2721-205X
pp. 192-205

Teachers' Reflective Practices and Strategies

The final theme concerns the reflective practices that shaped teachers' use of translanguaging. Both teachers described evaluating their language choices after lessons and considering whether particular language switches had supported or hindered students' learning. Reflection therefore influenced not only what teachers did during lessons but also how they planned subsequent instruction.

Teacher A explained that she reflected on whether she had switched languages too early and whether students could have attempted more English independently. Teacher B similarly considered the timing and purpose of language switching, particularly whether students had understood the lesson and participated actively after additional explanation was provided.

Observation and interview data suggest that these reflective processes helped teachers adjust the amount and timing of linguistic support. When English-only activities resulted in low engagement, teachers could incorporate brief explanations in Indonesian or a local language. At the same time, they recognized the importance of not providing such support too quickly when students were capable of attempting English themselves.

These practices indicate that translanguaging in the observed classrooms was not simply a matter of alternating between languages. Instead, teachers made situated decisions based on students' comprehension, participation, and emotional responses. Reflection enabled them to balance linguistic support with opportunities for students to use English independently.

DISCUSSION

The findings address the three main aspects explored in this study: how teachers implement translanguaging in EYL classrooms, the pedagogical purposes underlying its use, and the challenges associated with the practice. Overall, the findings suggest that translanguaging functioned as a purposeful pedagogical resource through which teachers responded to the linguistic, cognitive, and affective needs of young learners. This interpretation is consistent with the view of translanguaging as a pedagogical approach that allows multilingual learners to

November 2026. Vol.8, No.2
e-ISSN. 2721-205X
pp. 192-205

mobilize their complete linguistic repertoires for meaning-making rather than treating languages as strictly separated systems (Cenoz & Gorter, 2022; Lewis et al., 2012).

With regard to the implementation of translanguaging, the findings indicate that teachers moved between English, Indonesian, and local languages according to classroom demands. This supports the argument that pedagogical translanguaging involves teachers deliberately organizing students' linguistic resources to support learning rather than simply switching languages without a pedagogical purpose (Cenoz & Gorter, 2022). The observed movement from familiar languages toward English is also consistent with research emphasizing the role of teacher scaffolding in translanguaging pedagogy. Cui and Pacheco (2023), for example, highlight how teachers can use students' linguistic resources to support meaning-making and collaboration. In the present context, this is particularly significant because young learners may have limited opportunities to encounter English beyond the classroom.

The findings also contribute to understanding the role of translanguaging in young learners' participation and emotional engagement. The teachers' decisions to provide linguistic support when students appeared hesitant or frustrated suggest that translanguaging can create a more accessible classroom environment. This interpretation is consistent with Song et al. (2022), who connect translanguaging with social and emotional dimensions of learning, and with Ossa Parra and Proctor (2021), who emphasize the importance of translanguaging for meaning-making. The significance of this finding in EYL contexts lies in the developmental characteristics of young learners, for whom confidence, interaction, and emotional security can influence willingness to participate in classroom activities.

The findings further suggest that translanguaging can support participation without replacing the target language. Instead, familiar languages may function as a bridge toward English use. This is important because the use of Indonesian or local languages could otherwise be interpreted through an English-only framework as insufficient exposure to English. The teachers' practices in this study indicate a more nuanced position: the pedagogical value of translanguaging depends not simply on whether other languages are used, but on how, when, and why they are

November 2026. Vol.8, No.2
e-ISSN. 2721-205X
pp. 192-205

used. This interpretation is consistent with Yilmaz (2021), who conceptualizes translanguaging as a purposeful pedagogical practice that can support equity for linguistically diverse learners.

The challenges identified in the study also demonstrate that translanguaging is shaped by broader language ideologies. Teachers had to negotiate the tension between providing sufficient English exposure and responding to students' immediate comprehension needs. Parental expectations of English-only instruction further demonstrate that classroom language practices are influenced by beliefs about what constitutes effective English teaching. This finding resonates with research showing that multilingual classroom practices are connected to language policies, ideologies, and expectations surrounding language use (Fu & Aubain, 2025; Koyama & Kasper, 2022). Thus, teachers' decisions cannot be understood only as individual classroom choices; they are also shaped by the wider expectations surrounding English education.

An important implication concerns the role of teacher reflection. The teachers in this study did not describe translanguaging as a fixed technique that could be applied in the same way in every lesson. Instead, they evaluated students' responses and adjusted their language choices accordingly. This reflective dimension strengthens the pedagogical interpretation of translanguaging because it positions teachers as decision-makers who assess when linguistic support is beneficial and when students should be encouraged to use English more independently. Such a perspective is consistent with the broader understanding of translanguaging as a flexible and context-sensitive pedagogical practice (García, 2019; Goodman & Tastanbek, 2021).

Taken together, the findings suggest that translanguaging can contribute to more inclusive EYL instruction when it is used strategically and reflectively. Its significance is not that it increases the amount of non-English language used in the classroom, but that it enables teachers to use students' existing linguistic resources to facilitate access to English learning. For teachers, this implies the need to develop awareness of students' linguistic backgrounds and to make deliberate decisions about the timing and purpose of language use. For schools and teacher educators,

November 2026. Vol.8, No.2
e-ISSN. 2721-205X
pp. 192-205

the findings suggest that multilingual practices should be recognized as part of teachers' pedagogical decision-making rather than automatically treated as a departure from effective English instruction. At the same time, the challenges surrounding English exposure and parental expectations indicate the need for clearer communication about the pedagogical rationale behind strategic translanguaging.

The study therefore extends the discussion of translanguaging by situating it within the specific context of EYL classrooms in a multilingual Indonesian setting. While previous research has established the value of translanguaging for multilingual language learning, the present study highlights how its pedagogical significance is realized through teachers' moment-to-moment decisions, reflective practices, and negotiation of classroom expectations. This perspective reinforces the importance of understanding translanguaging not merely as language alternation, but as a pedagogical stance shaped by learners, teachers, and the multilingual context in which learning takes place.

CONLUSION

This study concludes that translanguaging can serve as a practical pedagogical strategy in English for Young Learners (EYL) classrooms, particularly in multilingual learning contexts. The findings show that teachers used students' linguistic resources to support their understanding of English instructions, explain unfamiliar vocabulary, clarify learning materials, and encourage classroom participation. Rather than treating students' first languages as a barrier to English learning, teachers incorporated them strategically to facilitate communication and maintain students' engagement in classroom activities.

In relation to the research objective, the study demonstrates that translanguaging was implemented flexibly according to students' needs and classroom situations. Teachers generally moved between English and students' familiar languages when they considered it necessary to make meaning clearer or to ensure that students could follow the lesson. This suggests that translanguaging can help create a more accessible and inclusive learning environment for young

November 2026. Vol.8, No.2
e-ISSN. 2721-205X
pp. 192-205

learners, especially when students have different levels of English proficiency.

The study also implies that translanguaging should not be viewed simply as a replacement for English instruction. Instead, it can function as a supporting strategy that enables teachers to gradually develop students' English competence while making use of their existing linguistic resources. For EYL teachers, the findings highlight the importance of using translanguaging purposefully and responsively rather than relying on students' first languages throughout the lesson. For teacher education and professional development, the study suggests the need to provide teachers with greater awareness of how multilingual practices can be integrated into English language teaching. Further studies may explore translanguaging practices across different elementary school contexts and examine how teachers' language choices develop as students' English proficiency increases.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author would like to express sincere gratitude to the Indonesia Endowment Fund for Education (LPDP) under the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Indonesia for providing financial support for the author's graduate study and research. This support has contributed significantly to the completion of this research.

REFERENCES

Bedoya Restrepo, D. F., León García, A., & Moncada Henao, R. A. (2016). *Reflecting upon a translanguaging and CLIL implementation as dynamic bilingual education in a state school*.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *3*(2), 77–101.

Britton, A. M. (2015). *Assessment for Learning in teaching English to Young Learners: teachers' understanding, classroom practice and impact on interactions*. University of Reading.

Cenoz, J., & Gorter, D. (2022). Pedagogical translanguaging and its application to language classes. *RELC Journal*, *53*(2), 342–354.

Cui, Y., & Pacheco, M. B. (2023). Meaning-making and collaboration: Teacher scaffolds within a translanguaging pedagogy. *Journal of World Languages*, *9*(3), 371–399. https://doi.org/10.1515/jwl-2023-0021

DeNicolo, C. P. (2019). The role of translanguaging in establishing school belonging for emergent multilinguals. *International Journal of Inclusive*

November 2026. Vol.8, No.2
e-ISSN. 2721-205X
pp. 192-205

Education, *23*(9), 967–984.

Dewan, M. S. (2025). Fostering Language Proficiency Through Literature: Navigating Challenges and Opportunities in Multilingual and Multicultural Classrooms. *The Handbook of English Language Education in Nepal*, 126–137.

Faltis, C. J. (2019). Pedagogical codeswitching and translanguaging in bilingual schooling contexts: Critical practices for bilingual teacher education. In *Codeswitching in the classroom* (pp. 39–62). Routledge.

Fu, S., & Aubain, Y. (2025). Navigating power in multilingual classrooms: teachers' engagement with language education policies. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, *46*(7), 2018–2030.

García, O. (2019). Translanguaging: a coda to the code? *Classroom Discourse*, *10*(3–4), 369–373.

García, O., & Kleifgen, J. A. (2020). Translanguaging and literacies. *Reading Research Quarterly*, *55*(4), 553–571.

Goodman, B., & Tastanbek, S. (2021). Making the shift from a codeswitching to a translanguaging lens in English language teacher education. *TESOL Quarterly*, *55*(1), 29–53.

Koyama, J., & Kasper, J. (2022). Transworlding and translanguaging: Negotiating and resisting monoglossic language ideologies, policies, and pedagogies. *Linguistics and Education*, *70*, 101010.

Lewis, G., Jones, B., & Baker, C. (2012). Translanguaging: Developing its conceptualisation and contextualisation. *Educational Research and Evaluation*, *18*(7), 655–670.

Makoe, P. (2018). Translanguaging in a monoglot context: Children mobilising and (re) positioning their multilingual repertoires as resources for learning. In *Translanguaging as everyday practice* (pp. 13–30). Springer.

Ossa Parra, M., & Proctor, C. P. (2021). Translanguaging to understand language. *Tesol Quarterly*, *55*(3), 766–794.

Otheguy, R., & García, O. (2024). Translanguaging. In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Linguistics*.

Rajendram, S. (2019). *Translanguaging as an agentive, collaborative and socioculturally responsive pedagogy for multilingual learners*. University of Toronto (Canada).

Ratminingsih, N. M., Padmadewi, N. N., Nitiasih, P. K., Artini, L. P., & Ana, I. K. T. A. (2024). Does Translanguaging Enhance Learning? Examining EFL Students' Perceptions and Success in Bali. *Voices of English Language Education Society*, *8*(3).

Song, J., Howard, D., & Olazabal-Arias, W. (2022). Translanguaging as a strategy for supporting multilingual learners' social emotional learning. *Education Sciences*, *12*(7), 475.

Tai, K. W. H. (2025). Unequal translanguaging: the affordances and limitations of a translanguaging space for alleviating students' foreign language anxiety in language classrooms. *Applied Linguistics Review*, *0*.

Tomter Alstad, G. (2024). Language ideologies at play in early childhood teacher education: A study of syllabi and textbooks. In *Researching educational*

November 2026. Vol.8, No.2
e-ISSN. 2721-205X
pp. 192-205

practices, teacher education and professional development for early language learning. Taylor & Francis.

Yilmaz, T. (2021). Translanguaging as a pedagogy for equity of language minoritized students. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, *18*(3), 435–454.

Zein, S. (2018). Translanguaging in the EYL classroom as a metadiscursive practice: Preparing prospective teachers. In *English Language Teacher Preparation in Asia* (pp. 47–62). Routledge.